

Survey of Urban History of Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period

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THE SUBJECT OF the urban history of Arab cities is a very vast one, since we have a scholarly literature dating back from the early decades of the XXth century for cities like Cairo, Fez and Aleppo and given the vast territory where these cities lie. The present paper cannot claim to cover all the Arab cities of the Mashriq and the Maghrib nor can it claim in these few pages to cover all the major studies that were undertaken with regard to Arab cities, many of which are changing the way that we today look at the field.¹ It will therefore use Cairo as a basis and bring up occasional comparisons with some other cities in Bilad al-Sham and the Maghrib, each of these deserving separate studies, since the literature is very rich. Space limitations will allow for the consideration of a few of the trends in the scholarly works of the last ten to fifteen years. Many other themes will be left out. It is to be hoped that other scholars may pursue this work at more length.

The recent interest in Ottoman studies has brought to light a much larger number and wider range of primary sources from the XVIth – XVIIIth centuries than was available to earlier researchers.² These works include some new sources that were recently unearthed in addition to the publication of certain sour-

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1 For an overview of the literature on cities, see Masashi Haneda and Toru Miura, *Islamic Urban Studies, Historical Review and Perspectives*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1994. This comprehensive work surveys the literature on cities. It includes a section on the Maghrib, one on the Mashriq, as well as sections on Turkey, Iran and Central Asia.

2 In recent years, the Temimi Centre in Zeghouan, Tunis, has been very active in activities related to Ottoman studies. Since 1990, it has undertaken the publication of *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies*. Moreover, the center has a series about the Arab provinces in the Ottoman period which has been publishing among other things the symposiums that the center sponsors regularly. It has a second series, the *Etudes d'Histoire Morisque* which also includes many titles relevant to urban history among its publications.

ces which were known but not published, thus making them more accessible. These publications, which include historical manuscripts as well as archival material, tax registers, waqfs and court records, are voluminous.³ They have added enormously to research possibilities.

One consequence of bringing these sources to light has been that, in recent years, scholars on Arab cities have been able to do extensive empirical work. As a result, their approaches to these studies have to a large extent moved away from models like the 'Middle Eastern city' or the 'Islamic city,' which many historians do not find to be useful tools for the study of cities in the Ottoman period. The 'Islamic city' model has in fact been criticized by many historians in the last few years.⁴ The questions that many earlier studies asked, as to whether or not a city was Islamic and their attempts to elaborate on what

3 These are too numerous to mention the totality, but a few examples regarding the recent publication of such documentation for Cairo will illustrate the trend. The historical manuscripts recently published include: Ahmad al-Damurdashi Katkhuda Azaban, *Al-Durra al-Musana fi Akhbar al-Kinana*, Daniel Crecelius and Abdul Wahab Bakr (ed.), Cairo: Dar al-Zahra, 1992; Mustafa b. Ibrahim tabi' Hasan Agha Azaban al-Damurdashi, *Tarikh Waqai Misr al-Qahira al-Mahrusa*, Salah al-Haridi (ed.), Cairo: Dar al-Kutub wal Wathaiq, 2002; Al-'Awfi. *Yawmiyyat Ibrahim Abi Bakr al-Sawalhi al-'Awfi*, Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman Abdul Rahim (ed.), Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Jami', 1997; Al-Bakri al-Siddiqi, Muhammad b. Abil Surur (Shaykh al-Islam), *Al-Nuzha al-Zahiyya fi Dhikr Wulat Misr wal Qahira al-Mu'iziyya*, Abdul Raziq Isa (ed.), Cairo: Al-Arabi Publisher, 1997; Al-Damiri, *Qudat Misr fil Qarn al-'Ashir wal Rub' al-Awal min al-Qarn al-Hadi Ashir*, Abdul Raziq Isa and Yusuf al-Mahmudi (eds.), Cairo: Al-Arabi Publisher, 2000; Yusuf al-Malawani, *Tuhfa al-Ahbab biman Malaka Misr min al-Muluk wal Nuwwab*, Imad Hilal and Abdul Raziq 'Isa (eds.), Cairo: Al-Arabi Publisher, 2000; Khalil b. Ahmad al-Burji, *Tarikh al-Wazir Muhammad Ali Basha*, Daniel Crecelius, Hamza Badr and Husam al-Din Ismail (eds.), Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiyya, 1997. The publication of cases from the court records include: Abdel Rahim Abdelrahman, *The Documents of the Egyptian Courts related to the Maghariba*, Zaghuan: Publications du centre d'etudes et de la recherche ottomans, morisques, de documentation et d'information, vol. I: 1992, vol. II: 1994, vol. III: 1999, vol. IV: 2004; Salwa Ali Milad, *Al-Wathaiq al-Uthmaniyya, Dirasa Arshifiyya Wathaiqiyya li Sijillat Mahkama al-Bab al-Ali*, 2 volumes, Alexandria: Dar al-Thaqafa al-Ilmiyya, 2003; Ismail al-Khashshab, *Le Diwan du Caire, 1800-1801*, Mohammad Afifi and Andre Raymond (eds.), Cairo: IFAO, 2003. The publication of historical sources on Bilad al-Sham is also impressive: Muhammad al-Makki Ibn Khanqah, *Tarikh Hums*, Umar Najib Umar (ed.), Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1987; Ibn al-Siddiq, *-Gharab al-Badai wa Ajab al-Waqai*, Yusuf Nuaysa (ed.), Damascus: Dar al-Marifa, 1988; Ibn Kannan al-Dimishqi, *Al-Mawakib al-Islamiyya fil Mamalik wal Mahasin al-Shamiyya*, Hikmat Ismail (ed.), Damascus: Manshurat Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1993. Mikhail Brayk al-Dimishqi, *Tarikh al-Sham 1720-1782*, Ahmad Ghassan Sabano (ed.), Damascus: Dar Qutayba, 1982; Muhammad al-Khalili, *Tarikh al-Quds wal-Khalil*, Muhammad Adnan Bakhit and Nufan Raja al-Sawariah (eds.), London: Furqan Foundation, 2004; Sharaf al-Din al-Ansari, *Nuzha al-Khatir wa Bahja al-Nadhir*, Adnan Ibrahim and Adnan Darwish (eds.), Damascus: Ministry of Culture, 1991.

4 To cite an example, Andre Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views", *BRISMES*, 1994, vol. XXI, no. 1, s. 3-18.

was an Islamic city,⁵ questions perhaps relevant with regard to the towns evolved or created by the early Muslim armies in newly conquered territories, are generally regarded as irrelevant by the time we reach the 16th century.

Empirical studies have explored other approaches. They have considered other kinds of urban categories such as 'port cities,' 'large cities' and 'medium cities.' The model of the 'port cities,' with certain shared features in common at a particular moment in time, is a useful one. It has been proposed as a theoretical model, based on the Anatolian experience, to understand the role of port cities as the doors through which European capitalism found its way into the Ottoman territories.⁶ It has also been used empirically, in studies of Mediterranean and Red Sea ports. Daniel Panzac's work showed a distinction in structure between the inland cities of Bilad al-Sham, which had political, religious, economic functions, and its Mediterranean ports (Lazaqiyya, Tripoli, Beirut, Saida, Sur, Akka, Haifa, Yaffa) which underwent, in the XVIIIth century, a dramatic expansion of activity because of the increase of international trade.⁷ Likewise, using the Red Sea ports of Jedda, Suez, Tur, Mukha, as focal point, Michel Tuchscherer, shows certain common geographical and cultural aspects, along the lines proposed by Braudel for the Mediterranean and studied by Chaudhuri for the Indian Ocean, which gave a certain coherence to these ports, in spite of the distance between them and the borders that separate them. They all shared such features as their meager resources, their involvement in trade, the fact that they were very relevant to state finance and the instability of their populations.⁸ In this respect, the Dutch documents related to Yemen (1614-1630) which C. G. Brouwer and A. Kaplanian translated into Arabic, are particularly interesting for a region about which we still have a lot to learn.⁹

5 Among these are: Kenneth Brown, "The Uses of Concept: 'The Muslim City,'" *Middle Eastern Cities in Comparative Perspective*, London: Ithaca Press, 1986, p. 73-82; Janet Abu-Lughod, "What is Islamic About a City? Some Comparative Reflections" *Urbanism in Islam, Proceedings of the International Conference held October 22-28, 1989*, Middle Eastern Culture Center, Tokyo, 1989, p. 193-217.

6 Caglar Keyder, Y. Eyup Ozvered and Donald Quataert, "Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire, Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives", *Review*, vol. VI, no. 4, 1993, 519-558; Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (eds.), *Modernity and Culture, From Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002.

7 Daniel Panzac, "Commerce et commercants des ports du Liban sud et de Palestine (1756-1787)", *Villes au Levant, Hommages a Andre Raymond, Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Mediterranee*, 1990, no. 55-56, p. 75-93.

8 Michel Tuchscherer, "Trade and Port Cities in the Red Sea –Gulf of Aden Region in the sixteenth and seventeenth century", Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (eds.), *Modernity and Culture*, Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 28-42.

9 C. G. Brouwer and A. Kaplanian, *Early Seventeenth-century Yemen, Dutch Documents relating to the economic history of Southern Arabia, 1614-1630*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.

Andre Raymond's numerous works on the 'great' Arab cities has tended to emphasize some of the parallels that Cairo, Aleppo, Tunis, Damascus, Algiers, shared in the Ottoman period.¹⁰ Studies on smaller cities or medium sized cities have also been undertaken although they are still limited in number. This is important insofar as it helps us to move away from the larger metropolis that have always been the focus for historians and as it brings to light the variants that distinguish certain cities from others. One should recall that the trend to study medium and small cities is more apparent in some regions than in others. In Bilad al-Sham, it is much more evident than it is in Egypt for instance, where scholarship is still largely focused on Cairo.¹¹ One could add that in comparison to other cities in the region, Cairo is probably the best covered in secondary scholarship. On the other hand, historians have explored numerous towns and cities in Syria, where studies have covered other than the capital Damascus and the commercial capital Aleppo. There are books and/or articles about the urban history of Jerusalem, Gaza, Hama, Acre, Aleppo and Damascus.

One issue of concern has been to study the way that the size of a city could distinguish it from a large metropolis: The town of Hama in terms of its society and economy;¹² or that of Constantine in Algeria in terms of urban activities.¹³ These studies reach several conclusions. Whereas the smaller towns often shared a parallel structure as the one found in large cities, social polarization was much less accentuated; populations were less diverse in terms of inhabitants, with fewer if any non-indigenous communities which most of the large cities had; relationships with the rural hinterland was somewhat different from that of large cities. Abdul Karim Rafeq's study of the sijjil of Hama in 942-943/1535-1536, for instance, shows the presence of rurals in this register to an extent that was probably more noticeable than one would find them in a metropolis.¹⁴

10 *Grandes villes arabes a l'epoque ottomane*, Paris: Sindbad, 1985.

11 A project, involving the Institut francais d'archeologie orientale, the Centre d'etudes et de Documentation (CEDEJ); and the Egyptian Society for Historical Studies is under way for the study of Alexandria. It involves a team of researchers from Egypt and a number of European countries who are systematically studying court records, consular reports, shipping documents etc. of the Mediterranean ports that had dealings with Alexandria. It will take some time before the results are published.

12 Vladimir Glasman, "Les Documents du tribunal religieux de Hama. Leur importance pour la connaissance de la vie quotidienne dans une petite ville de Syrie centrale a l'epoque ottomane", Daniel Panzac (ed.), *Les Villes dans l'Empire Ottoman: Activites et Societes*, Marseilles: CNRS, 1991, p. 17-40; Abdul Karim Rafeq, "Madhahir Iqtisadiyya wa Ijtima'iyya min Liwa Hama, 942-943/1535-1636", Abdel Karim Rafeq (ed.), *Dirasat Iqtisadiyya wa Ijtima'iyya fi Tarikh Bilad al-Sham al-Hadith*, Damascus, 2002, p. 11-60; James Reilly, *A Small Town in Syria, Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Bern: Peter Land, 2002.

13 Andre Raymond, "Les caracteristiques d'une ville arabe 'moyenne' au XVIII^e siecle: le cas de Constantine", Andre Raymond, *Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period*, Hampshire: Ashgate Variorum, 2002, p. 113-133.

14 Rafeq, "Madhahir Iqtisadiyya", p. 22-23.

Thomas Philipp's study of Acre in 1740-1830, highlights a city that was relatively small (twenty five to thirty thousand inhabitants), and of which, during this period, was oriented to overseas export trade and dealing with one major cash crop that was a government monopoly. The despotic governorships of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar and of Sulayman Pasha, and the fact that the city had a population almost entirely made up of immigrants were possibly behind a singular situation of the absence of guilds in the city, long thought to be an essential part of all cities.¹⁵

Advances have been made in the domain of historical demography. Research on the population of Arab cities was confronted by the absence of systematic tax registers such as those which Omar L. Barkan used for Anatolia. They were either too incomplete, as in Bilad al-Sham, or non-existent, as in Egypt and North Africa.¹⁶ Those taxation registers that do exist in Bilad al-Sham are few and far apart. On the basis of one of these census, of 955/1548 and 977/1569 in Damascus, Jean-Paul Pascual suggested an increase of population in the first half of the century followed by a decrease, a trend parallel to the one that Omar Barkan found in Anatolia.¹⁷ On the other hand, for the period of the French Expedition in Egypt (1798-1801), estimations of the population of Cairo were made, which included a certain amount of details about the composition of its inhabitants. More important, even though less well known, is the population census of 1846-1848 undertaken by Muhammad Ali, the first one in the Ottoman Empire to count individuals rather than households. Today it is kept in the Egyptian National Archives in several thousand volumes.¹⁸

For periods or regions where such sources were not available, some scholars developed various other mechanisms to measure population. Andre Ray-

15 Thomas Philipp, 'Social Structure and Political Power in Acre, 1740-1830,' *Etudes sur les villes du Proche-Orient, XVI^e-XIX^e siècle, Hommage a Andre Raymond*, Şam: Institut Français de Damas, 2001, p. 166-171.

16 Halil Inalcik, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. I, 1300-1600, Cambridge University Press, 1994, Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History, An Introduction to the Sources*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 90-92.

17 Jean-Paul Pascual, *Damas a la fin du 16^{eme} siècle d'apres trois actes de waqf ottoman*, Damas: IFEAD, 1983, p. 22-24; see also Zohair Ghazzal, *L'economie Politique de Damas Durant le XIX^e siècle, structures traditionnelles et capitalisme*, Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1993, p. 33-46.

18 A major project, started in 1994 by the Centre de Documentation (CEDEJ), Cairo, on this census has resulted in a few articles, but the main publication of the project has yet to appear. See Ghislaine Alleaume and Philippe Fargues, "La naissance d'une statistique d'Etat, le recensement de 1848 en Egypte", *Histoire and Mesure*, 1998, vol. XIII, no. 1-2, p. 147-193 and "Voisinage et frontiere: Resider au Caire en 1846", Jocelyne Dakhli (ed.), *Urbanite Arabe, Hommage a Bernard Lepetit*, Paris: Sindbad, p. 77-112. On an earlier census, in 1821, in which houses were counted, see Muhammad Hakim, "Al-'A tab wal Ru'us, al-Takwin al-Ijtima'i lil raqam fi Misr ma bayn 1821 wa 1824", *Mutun 'Asriyya*, 2000, no. 1, p. 89-99.

mond tried to identify elements that could be used as indicators of population growth in urban areas. One of these indicators was a phenomena taking place in Tunis, Cairo and Aleppo towards the end of the XVIth century, on the basis of which Raymond postulated an increase in urban expansion of population.¹⁹ He has suggested that certain public buildings of current use, such as public baths and elementary schools, could also be used as indicators of urban expansion because they could commonly be found in most parts of the city and used by large sectors of the urban population. The urban expansion that could be detected by one method or another was a way of challenging the decline paradigm, urban growth being usually linked to a dynamic economy.

Recent studies on cities have made it possible to characterize certain sectors like the trade and merchant sectors, thus opening up avenues for exploration along various channels. One approach is to show the existence of similarities or parallels between cities in Anatolia and in the Arabic speaking world in commercial activities which were a primary function in the cities of these different regions of the Ottoman Empire.²⁰ Another approach is that of inter-city relationships, of inter-dependence and of movement from one city or region to another. The study of trading networks, whether local or long distance, and of the movement of people and of commodities, the study of communities settling in a city for trading purposes, the investments made by people living in one city in another city, the role of the courts, which recognized the deeds issued in a city as valid in another city, all these factors indicate some ways in which cities were connected by trade. The same applied to the pilgrimage, another form of movement which linked cities and people to each other. The yearly pilgrimage to Mecca linked the towns and cities along the long route that brought the pilgrims from faraway regions, to some of the important stopping centers like Damascus on the Anatolia-Mecca route. Studies of Damascus as a main stopping place for the pilgrimage stop show the importance that this function gave to it at a time when its commercial activities were overtaken by Aleppo. On the human side, the multiplicity of peoples of different classes and backgrounds arriving there on their way to or from their destination had to be accommodated for periods of variable length.²¹

19 Andre Raymond, "Le déplacement des tanneries a Alep, au Caire et a Tunis a l'époque ottomane: un indicateur de croissance urbaine", *Revue d'Histoire maghrébine*, January 1977, p. 192-200.

20 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West, Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

21 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans, the Hajj Under the Ottomans*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1994; Colette Establet and Jean-Paul Pascual, *Ultime voyage pour la Mecque, les inventaires après décès de pèlerins morts a Damas en 1700*, Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1998.

This research challenged the concept of the city as an isolated entity. It put cities in a larger regional framework which could imply a hierarchy between different cities and which further work could incorporate into a historical process.

Antoine Abdel Nour in his book on the cities of Bilad al-Sham, one of the earliest and most complete attempts to study a series of cities in a single book, explored the relationships to each other and the networks that tied some of them to the others or to their hinterlands, implying the existence of a hierarchy.²² He showed the structural relations tying up some of the urban centers. He essentially showed that there was certain coherence between the cities he studied.

Another dimension of the interaction between cities is through the movement of people. The Temimi Center in Tunis has held a number of seminars and has published several studies on the Andalusian population which settled in North Africa following the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain, addressing issues of integration and interaction between these newcomers and the indigenous societies where they settled.²³ Several works explore the migration, settlement, integration of various communities in different urban centers. Syrians and North Africans figure prominently among them. Husam Abdul Mu'ti has found that there was a significant migration of merchants from Fez to Cairo in the XVIIIth century, attributing it to the unrest in that city and to the structures that these merchants could fit into upon arrival in Cairo. Within a short time they had managed to reach great prominence among the merchant community of the city. Trade was a major factor in these migrations but certainly not the only one. The influx of Christian Syrians into Egypt was in fact the consequence of inter religious conflict.²⁴ These studies challenge the idea of the isolation of cities by showing an inter connectedness, both in the population move and in its integration in a new urban environment.

One of the features which characterized large cities was precisely the existence of non indigenous communities of different origins. The presence of Maghribis in Cairo was but one of several such communities which included Turks, Syrians, Armenians, and others. Maghribis were also present in Damas-

22 Antoine Abdel Nour, *Introduction a l'Histoire urbaine de la Syrie Ottomane (XVI^e-XVIII^e siecles)*, Beirut: Librairie orientale, 1982, esp. Chapter 8.

23 Abdeljelil Temim (ed.), *Famille Morisque: femmes et enfants*, Zaghuan: Fondation Temimi, 1997; *Le gouvernement ottoman et le probleme morisque*, (in French and in Arabic), Zaghuan: Fondation Temimi, 1989; *Los praticas musulmanes de los moriscos musulmans (1492-1609)*, (in Arabic and in Spanish), Zaghuan, 1989. These represent a few of a much larger list of works on the subject.

24 Andre Raymond, *Grandes Villes arabes a l'epoque ottomane*, Paris: Sindbad, 1985, p. 101-107. Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt 1725-1975*, Stuttgart, 1985; Husam Abdul Mu'ti, "Fez Merchants in XVIIIth century Cairo", Raouf Abbas and Nelly Hanna (eds.), *Society and Economy in Egypt and the Levant, 1600-1900, Essays in honor of Andre Raymond*, American University in Cairo Press, forthcoming 2006.

cus, as were numerous Kurds and Turks. In Tunis resided a large number of Algerians and an important community of refugees having fled from Andalusia. Christians of Bilad al-Sham came in significant numbers to Egypt in the XVIIIth century. Coming at different times and from different geographic regions, these populations brought significant cultural diversity to many large cities of the region.

Another dimension of this issue goes around urban investment. There were patterns of long-term investment by the XVIth century Ottoman governors in cities to which they had only a transitory connection. The extensive building of some of these pashas in Egypt, Sulayman Pasha, Sinan Pasha, Ahmad Pasha, in the port cities of Bulaq, and the Mediterranean port of Rashid, of commercial structures (*wikalas*, *qaysariyyas*, shops and store rooms), and secular structures like baths and living units, suggest a commercial motive. More important, the large financial investments involved in such construction contrasted with the short periods of the governorship of most pashas, an indication that these long term investments could be overseen from Istanbul when the pashas returned there and contrasted favorably with other investments they could make far from home.²⁵ This kind of perspective offers a more nuanced way of looking at center-province relations, one that explores the province without marginalizing it. Moreover, all these aspects that link one city to another, by the movement of people, goods or money, bring up a more coherent perspective on the regional level.

Urban studies are in fact also showing the diversities between one Arab city and another and consequently indicating that one cannot take for granted that conditions in one city necessarily applied to the other. One subject in which this is evident is the involvement of non Muslim merchants in long distance trade. For long, the dominant presence of non Muslims in international trade was taken for granted throughout the Ottoman Empire. Doubtless, in some regions, non Muslims played a dominant role in long distant trade. Sadok Boubaker's study of XVIIth century Tunisian trade with the Mediterranean indicates the preponderance of Europeans in this trade;²⁶ likewise, the silk trade of Aleppo was in the hands of Armenians and Christian Arabs from Aleppo.²⁷ On the other hand, non Muslims are absent from the long distance trade of Egypt,

25 Nelly Hanna, *An Urban History of Bulaq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods*, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1984. For a different perspective of the issue, see Richard van Leeuwen, *Waqfs and Urban Structures, The Case of Ottoman Damascus*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.

26 Sadok Boubaker, *La Regence de Tunis au XVII^e siècle: ses relations commerciales avec les ports de l'Europe méditerranéenne, Marseille et Livourne*, Zaghwan: Centre d'Etudes de Recherches Ottomans et Morisco-Andalouses, 1987.

27 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West*.

whether the transit trade for coffee and Indian textiles or the trade within Ottoman lands, or even from local trade as far as we can tell, all of it being in Muslim hands. Comparisons of this kind dispel long-held views about Muslim merchants and at the same time show the range of diversity that existed within certain regions and periods.

Recent advances also allow us to look at the administration of cities in a more complex way than had been done in earlier studies. Andre Raymond considered the involvement of different urban groups, the guilds, the inhabitants of residential areas (*hara*) and of religious communities in the administration of the city. The functions that these groups undertook was not fixed or set down clearly, but depended upon circumstances. They could be called upon to keep security in a *hara*, to maintain law and order in a time of crisis, or to help run a residential area, supervising entries or exits, in more ordinary times.²⁸ The role of the qadi as seen in the court records has added an important dimension to the picture. The qadi's role in urban administration also touched on a function that had previously been within the domain of the muhtasib, notably the inspection of buildings, windows, doors, and streets that were illegal; in the pricing of basic commodities. The role of the courts and the qadi in the urban setting represent a subject worthy of further study and of comparisons between the different regions that formed the Ottoman Empire.²⁹

The advances made in the study of social life in Arab cities have been numerous. We know, thanks to many studies which appeared in the past few years, much more about gender and family history, about households. Various dimensions have been explored, such as the households as a political structure, in relation to the Mamluks of Cairo; families in relation to their sources of wealth and investment in Tunis and in Mosul; family strategies in Aleppo; family in the context of the home and use of private space in Cairo.³⁰ The studies undertaken about guilds and urban waqf are too numerous to treat here.

28 Andre Raymond, "The Role of Communities (*Tawa'if*) in the Administration of Cairo in the Ottoman Period", Nelly Hanna (ed.), *The State and its Servants, Administration in Egypt From Ottoman Times to the Present*, American University in Cairo Press, 1995, p. 32-43.

29 The Egyptian Society for Historical Studies in Cairo has been holding a monthly 'Ottoman Seminar' for the past ten years. Recently some of the presentations have been published, see Nasir Ibrahim and Imad Hilal, *Al-Adala bayn al-Shari'a wal Waqi' fi Misr fil Asr al-Uthmani*, Cairo: Markas al-Buhuth wal Dirasat al-Ijtima'iyya, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, 2002.

30 Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, 1997; Margaret Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count in Ottoman Aleppo*, Austin: Texas University Press, 1999; Dina Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834*, Cambridge University Press, 1997; Abdelhamid Henia, *Propriete et Strategias Sociales a Tunis (XVI^e-XIX^e siecles)*, Faculte des Sciences humaines et sociales de Tunis, Tunis, 1999; Nelly Hanna, *Habiter au Caire, les Maisons moyennes et leurs habitants aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siecles*, Institut francais d'archeologie orientale, 1991.

Each of these topics deserves a separate survey of recent literature which is very abundant.³¹

There have moreover been some breakthroughs in the study of religious communities between the XVIth and the XVIIIth centuries. Magdi Guirguis has questioned the usefulness of the categories that are usually used to study non Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. He finds the terms 'non Muslim community' and 'religious community' to be meaningful only to denote the relationship between such a community and the state, but otherwise they are too static and unchanging. He proposes a more dynamic analysis when talking of these communities in their social context. His study of Copts in the Ottoman period emphasizes not only the changes in relationship between them and the state but also within the community and its leadership.³² By the XVIIIth century, Coptic notables had reached a position of wealth and influence not only within the community but in society as a whole, the leadership of the community falling as a result in their hands rather than with the religious leadership. Nasir Ibrahim's study of the French Expedition brings out another important dimension of the Coptic mubashirin (secretaries) who were in the employment of Mamluk beys in the XVIIIth century and were installed in the financial department by the French Expedition. Their power, vis-a-vis the French occupants, rested on their monopoly of knowledge about the financial system in general and about taxation in particular. They only imparted it to the French when severe pressures were used, and then only in a partial and imprecise way. These studies move the Copts into the historical process and away from the perspective of pre-modern societies as made up of a religious mosaic, with each religious group having clear cut characteristics. The question remains as to the extent that such approaches could be applied to non-Muslim communities elsewhere than in Cairo or whether these conditions were peculiar to this city.³³

Whereas Raymond, in his landmark book, *Artisans et Commerçants au Caire au XVIII^e siècle* was concerned with those groups which were economically active, as producers, traders and merchants, providers of services and to those who exploited them through the tax farming system, new work is appearing

31 A survey of trends in recent scholarship about guilds is Nelly Hanna, "Guilds in Recent Historical Scholarship", *the Islamic City*, MIT, (forthcoming).

32 Magdi Guirguis, "The Organization of the Coptic Community in the Ottoman Period", Raouf Abbas and Nelly Hanna (eds.), *Society and Economy in Egypt and the Levant, 1600-1900, Essays in honor of Andre Raymond*; Magdi Guirguis, "Athar Al-'Arākħina 'alā 'Awdā' Al-Qibt fi Al-Qarn Al-Thāmin 'Ashir", *Annales Islamologiques*, 2000, sy. 34, p. 23-44.

33 Nasir Ibrahim, *Al-Fransiyyun fi Sa'id Misr: al-Muwajaha al-Maliyya (1798-1801)*, Cairo: Silsilat Misr al-Nahda, Dar al-Kutub wal Wathaiq al-Qawmiyya, 2005, (chapter 4), p. 135-191. Recent work on non Muslims in Bilad al-Sham, unlike that in Egypt, has tended to focus on the transformations of the XIXth century and their sources in the period before that. See for instance Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World, the Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

precisely on those who were not always able to play an economically active role, or who were on the margins of the economy, whether in the services, or in entertainment. In the past decade, scholars have sought ways to study those that did not have a voice, that were on the margins of society or of the economy, those that did not make use of the written word, and those on the margins of the law or acting outside the law.

Sayyid Ashmawi has addressed this issue by his consideration of the poor and the social rejects of society in Ottoman Cairo through the proverbs, poems and songs that the chroniclers of the period recorded; in other words by taking a close look at the language and the words that they themselves used rather than that which was said about them by others. His studies of marginal groups highlight their culture, their language, those that they considered to be their heroes, in short a culture on itself, with a rich vocabulary of resistance to authorities expressed by these proverbs and poems. Ashmawi also explored the violence, real or verbal, linked to bread and to hunger, a phenomenon which was very real in the city.³⁴

Those on the margins of the law or outside the law, such as prostitutes, have aroused the interest of scholars, not only with regard to their conduct, but also on the way that they were perceived by the inhabitants of their quarters and by the courts and qadis.³⁵ A full length study of marginals and poor in Tunis (18th-19th centuries) by Abdelhamid Lagueche traces the evolution of attitudes and relations of the state, the police and of society towards the poor and marginals, including prostitutes and male and female prisoners.³⁶ Along similar lines, Abdelhamid Henia studied prison populations in Tunis. Basing himself on an unusual document dated 1762 that provides the names of prisoners; he nevertheless manages to analyze its contents in a broader framework, exploring the issue as a mirror of the social structure and its inequalities.³⁷ The state is much more visible with regard to the treatment of prostitution and of

34 Sayyid Ashmawi, "'Unf al-Jiya': Intifadat al-Khubz fi Misr al-Uthmaniyya," Ubada Kuhayla (ed.), *Al-Thawra wal Taghyir fil Watan al-Arabi abr al-'Usur*, Cairo: Markaz al-Buhuth wal-Dirasat al-Ijtima'iyya, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, Egyptian Society for Historical Studies, 2005, p. 164-193; Sayyid Ashmawi, *Al-Jama'at al-Hamishiyya al-Munharifa fi Tarih Misr al-Hadith*, Cairo: Matbu'at Markaz al-Buhuth al-Ijtima'iyya, Cairo University, 2003. See also Nasir Ibrahim, *Al-Azamat al-ijtima'iyya fi Misr fil Qarn al-Sabi'-ashir*, Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiyya, 1998, the consequences of plagues and famines on the urban population.

35 Abdul Karim Rafeq, "Public Morality in XVIIIth Century Ottoman Damascus", *Villes au Levant, Hommage a Andre Raymond*, p. 180-196.

36 Abdelhamid Lagueche, *Les Ombres de la Ville, Pauvres, marginaux et minoritaires a Tunis (XVIII^e et XIX^e siecles)*, Centre de publication universitaires, Faculte des Lettres de Manouba, 1999.

37 Abdelhamid Henia, "Prisons et prisonniers a Tunis vers 1762: systeme repressif et inegalites sociales", *Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine*, vol. X, no. 31-32, p. 223-252.

poverty in the 19th century, as the work of Imad Hilal and Mine Ener show. The poor were channeled towards institutions which lodged and fed them while at the same time they were invisible in the street, prostitutes banished outside the capital.³⁸

As a matter of fact, available sources for urban history in Egypt undergo a dramatic change between the end of the XVIIIth and the XIXth centuries, with a marked reduction of court records, an even greater reduction of chronicles and biographies, and an enormous increase of state archives, covering numerous administrative, economic and educational matters, emerging parallel to the expansion of state competences and activities.³⁹ Thus, available sources have not made it easy to see continuity between these two centuries. A few historians are nevertheless attempting to do just that, but they are still few in number.⁴⁰

There are certain trends that have dominated urban studies in the XIXth century. The penetration of European capitalism and its consequences has been a major theme. It has touched on urban production, on social transformations and on economic relations. Scholars have considered the impact of capitalism on local producers who, unable to compete with imported merchandise, had to find a variety of ways to cope with change which ultimately impoverished them.⁴¹ They have also considered the impact of growing international trade on the size and composition of the foreign communities who settled in cities, especially port cities. Robert Ilbert's monumental work on Alexandria

38 Imad Hilal, *Al-Baghaya fi Misr, Dirasa Tarikhiyya Ijtimaiyya, 1834-1949*, Cairo: Al-Arabi, 2001; Mine Ener, *Managing Egypt's poor and the politics of benevolence, 1800-1952*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

39 Of the 15 courts in Ottoman Cairo, the last registers of twelve courts date from 1811-1812 or slightly earlier; the registers of the Qismas dealing in inheritances continue till 1875 and 1880; only the Bab Ali survived to 1923, albeit with different functions than it had had: see Salwa Ali Milad, *Al-Wathaiq al-Uthmaniyya, Dirasa Archifiyya Wathaiqiyya li sijillat mahkamat al-Bab al-Ali*, 2 vols., Alexandria: Dar al-Thaqafa al-Ilmiyya, 2000 [vol. I, p. 148-174]. The only chronicle of the first half of the XIXth century is Shaykh Khalil b. Ahmad al-Rajabi, Daniel Crecelius, Hamza Badr and Husam al-Din Ismail (ed.), *Tarikh al-Wazir Muhammad Ali Basha*, Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiyya, 1997.

40 Pascale Ghazaleh, "Manufacturing Myths: Al-Khurunfish, A case study", Nelly Hanna (ed.), *Money, Land and Trade, An Economic History of the Muslim Mediterranean*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2002, p. 124-138; "The Guilds: Between Tradition and Modernity", Nelly Hanna (ed.), *The State and its Servants, Administration in Egypt from Ottoman Times to the Present*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995, p. 60-74; idem., "Masters of the Trade: Crafts and Craftspeople in Cairo, 1750-1850", *Cairo Papers in Social Sciences*, vo. XXII, no. 3, American University in Cairo Press, 1999.

41 Abdul Karim Rafeq, "Craft Organization, Work Ethics and the Strains of Change in Ottoman Syria", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1991, vol. CXI, no. 3, p. 495-511; idem., "The Impact of Europe on a Traditional Economy: the case of Damascus, 1840-1870", Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont and Paul Dumont (eds.), *Economie et societe dans l'Empire ottoman*, Paris, 1983, p. 419-432.

examines the changes that occurred in the city's social makeup and topography, as a dual structure emerged, signifying different communities and different modes of life.⁴²

Finally, more recently, there is a trend to bring back the Ottoman presence in the picture of late XIXth century cities. This trend is partly an answer to the studies that put the west as the only reference for change, such as those using the world-economy approach. Several articles in *The Empire in the City, Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, propose to bring the Ottoman state back into the analysis a few decades before its final demise.⁴³ By then, of course, relations with Istanbul had become radically different between one Arab city and another, some of them partly colonized, others on the way to colonization.

Survey of Urban History of Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period

Nelly HANNA

Abstract

The study considers a few trends in recent scholarship on the urban history of Arab cities under the Ottomans. One important development of recent years has been the publication of source material, both chronicles and archival material such as waqfs and court cases. This has helped researchers to develop approaches other than the models, like that of 'the Islamic city' or the 'Middle Eastern city'. Among the recent trends has been an interest in historical demography, in the study of trading networks and the movement of people, urban investment. Thus cities are studied in relation to each other, which is in itself a significant development because it gives certain coherence to the region as a whole and moves us away from the isolation paradigm. Another theme that new research has covered is that of marginals, prisoners, prostitutes and people outside of the economy.

Keywords: Historical Demography, Communities, Trading Networks, Marginals, Islamic City, Egypt.

42 Robert Ilbert, *Alexandrie 1830-1930*, 2 volumes, Cairo: Institut francais d'archeologie orientale, 1996 [vol. I, p. 197-202].

43 Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, *The Empire in the City, Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, 2002, see esp. the introduction, p. 4-10.

Osmanlı Dönemi Arap Şehir Tarihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı dönemi Arap şehirleri tarihi üzerine yapılan son akademik çalışmalardaki bazı temayülleri değerlendirmektedir. Son yıllardaki önemli gelişmelerden birisi, vakıflar ve mahkeme davaları gibi gerek kronik gerekse arşiv belgelerinden oluşan kaynak materyallerin de yayınlanması olmuştur. Bu, araştırmacıların “İslam şehri” yahut “Ortadoğu şehri” gibi modeller dışında yaklaşımlar geliştirmesini sağlamıştır. Son yıllardaki temayüllerden biri de tarihsel demografi, ticaret ağları ve insan hareketleri ile şehirdeki yatırım çalışmalarına duyulan ilgidir. Böylece şehirler, birbirleriyle ilişkili olarak incelenirler. Bu durum, bir bütün olarak bölgeye bakmayı sağlaması ve bizleri tecrit paradigmasından uzaklaştırmasından ötürü başlı başına mühim bir gelişmedir. Yeni çalışmaların ilgilendiği bir diğer konu ise mahkumlar, fahişeler ve ekonominin kısıyında kalmış insanlar gibi marjinal gruplardır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Tarihsel Demografi, Cemaatler, Ticaret Ağları, Marjinal Gruplar, İslam Şehri, Mısır.