


celebrations of military victory, oath-taking ceremonies, deployment of religious symbols and rhetoric). A short concluding section reviews the causes of the downturn in Ibn Tulun's fortunes prior to his death and the legacy of the state inherited by his son and successor, Khumarawayh.

This biography provides a much-needed replacement for Zaky Hassan's outdated study, *Les Tulunides* (1933). An exceptionally well-written, tightly constructed, and immersive study of a leading Abbasid personality, Gordon's work makes the reader think about the social and political environment in which he acted and the nature of the surviving evidence of his life. It addresses the knotty problem of the source material for Ibn Tulun's life, noting the lack of archival materials as well as physical evidence (the one exception being Ibn Tulun's mosque), as well as the difficulties of using the two important biographies of Ibn al-Daya and al-Balawi. Constructed mainly from anecdotal testimony, these biographies present a mostly favorable view of their subject, praising him for his moral commitment and piety, as well as his determination and energy. But too little is known about their authors to judge how far their largely positive endorsement reflects the realities of his rule. As for the wider historical context, Ibn Tulun's biography prompts us to wonder how was it that the Turkish *ghilman* corps, to which Ibn Tulun's father belonged, had come to dominate the caliphal court by the time that Ibn Tulun set out for Egypt. What happened to the eastern Iranian noblemen and their Transoxanian soldiers that al-Mu'tasim had billeted alongside the Turkish military slaves in the barracks of Samarra less than three decades earlier? Second, where (and who) were the Egyptian elite in this story of the emergence of Egypt's first independent Islamic governorate? The first opponents whom Ibn Tulun faced on his arrival were mostly expatriate members of the Abbasid elite, with strong connections to the caliphal court. The absence of local power brokers and militias at the center of power in Greater Fustat is striking, and provides a marked contrast to the politics of emergent regional polities elsewhere. The notion of a Tulunid "dynasty," itself a product of the taxonomic imperatives of earlier scholarship, is rightly called into question by Gordon's exposure of the fragility of ties that held the Tulunid household together after its founder's death. Although the restricted format of the series in which the book appears precludes extensive contextualization, some reference to the wider issue of the emergence of contemporary "successor" states (Aghlabids, Saffarids, and Samanids) would have been helpful, in highlighting both the uniqueness of Ibn Tulun's situation (in that he remained throughout his governorship a fully engaged member of the Samarran Turkish elite) and the diverse origins of contemporary regional governors. That apart, Gordon's careful and judicious reconstruction of the career of Ibn Tulun provides a model for the kind of fine-grained biography that needs to be replicated for other rulers of emergent regional polities, before the causes and consequences of the decline of Abbasid authority and power in the later 9th century CE can be properly assessed.

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Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire

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Malte Fuhrmann leads his readers on a formidable tour of three “leading port-cities” of the Eastern Mediterranean, which he intentionally identifies with their old names: Salonica, Constantinople, and Smyrna (p. 31). With innumerable languages at his fingertips and an impressive familiarity with multiple Ottoman and post-Ottoman contexts, Fuhrmann crafts an elegant, if sprawling, narrative of cultural life and Ottoman imperial dissolution in these three maritime locales from the early 19th century to the aftermath of the World War I. He seamlessly weaves together “complex, colorful, well-connected, and yet particularly local cultures” (p. 403) with wider historical processes, addressing the strong, yet tangled, connections between these particular coastal spots, their hinterland, and places further afield.

On its glimmering surface, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean* probes the “colorful milieu” (p. 25) of three lively urban centers and builds on the well-established notion that the Mediterranean “had been a two-way route of exchange for cultural goods and phenomena long before the 19th century” (p. 99). Fuhrmann, in particular, is concerned with exploring the “Levant’s infatuation with Western culture and the hybrid forms this produced,” and proving that such forms offered examples of local negotiation and reinterpretation (p. 7). But churning deeper down and animating his whole work are anguished and far-ranging dilemmas about identity and history. What, ultimately, was these maritime cities’ historical role? How did their residents shape their identities? How were dwellers’ hopes for reciprocity, cultural exchange, and mutual respect met by an increasingly aggressive European front? “Neither hell on earth nor utopias,” Fuhrmann concludes, these port cities were rather sites of contradiction and ambivalence, whose residents could avail themselves of a multitude of identities “neither clearly European nor its Other” (p. 408). The author, then, emphasizes the in-betweenness of these centers and their dwellers and claims that it could result in opportunity, burden, or transitory status, depending on the changing circumstances.

The structure of *Port Cities* is unconventional, and it reads like multiple books nested in one. Incorporating a few of his prior publications, the author has reworked them but, most importantly, has framed them in a unifying yet multicentered analysis. The book’s six “parts” are further divided into smaller sections, with Part 1 offering a sweeping historiographical introduction. Part 2 deals with spatial relations of power and shows how the reshaping of Salonica, Constantinople, and Smyrna and especially their waterfronts impacted locals and were, in turn, shaped by them. Likewise, the author demonstrates that processes of urban remaking came to embody perceptions of a cultural bifurcation between tradition and modernity, home and abroad. Part 3 concerns the forms of entertainment, arts, and consumption that became available in the three port cities. Fuhrmann shows that new pastimes coexisted with old ones and that the available entertainment options did not simply mimic European practices, but rather stemmed from local desires and innovations. Part 4 pulls the reader in several different directions, but overall chips away at teleological readings of the formation of national loyalties in the pre-World War I period. It shows that European models mattered when it came to shaping identities on the Eastern Mediterranean shores, but that they were sheer ingredients in a mix that tasted of both confusion and opportunity. This part of the study examines foreign schools, the French-language press, changing gender and class roles, Levantine communities, and working-class migration. It champions the idea that identity in the late Ottoman sphere was in flux, but also puts such discussions in perspective by claiming that split identities affected urbanites across Europe. In Part 5, Fuhrmann argues that local claims and adaptations of Europeanness prevented the formation of large and stable anti-European alliances. He also lingers over the identities and loyalties of marginalized migrant women who had arranged for themselves a life astride the European and Ottoman worlds. Part 6 brings the book to a close with a reflection on the consequences of the unraveling of port city society and the implications of the 19th century on the 20th. Overall, *Port Cities* points in many different directions. Although ambitious in scope, its relatively loose structure can be disorienting.

As one dives further into the book, it becomes clear that Fuhrmann’s higher pursuit is going beyond in-depth case studies to write the history of port cities as elements of a common space. He tries to build such a space by indefatigably sustaining comparisons among the

three port cities of Salonica, Constantinople, and Smyrna, chosen because of their shared “Greco-Turkish cultural imprint” and previous “highly mixed status” (pp. 31, 33). This task, however, is constantly challenged by the “specific meanings local residents projected on forms of European culture” (p. 9). Against this comparative background, Fuhrmann admits that, for example, Smyrna generally spearheaded developments in leisure practices, or Constantinople remained the outlier when it came to reconstructing its quays, partaking in evening strolls, and even facing contemporary urban planning. Comparative forays into Egypt’s history, meanwhile, strike an uneven effect. Some references, like the ones to Khedive Ismail’s 1871 statement that Egypt no longer lay in Africa but in Europe, Alexandria’s Place des Consuls, the 1882 “anti-Western riots” in that port city, and prominent Alexandrine characters, may distract from his vision about shores further north. The bridges built by the author appear more solid when comparisons turn into connections, as with the traveling theatrical troupes passing by Egypt, or the couple moving from Smyrna to Salonica and possibly spurring the development of opera in their new home.

Fuhrmann also enriches our knowledge of Eastern Mediterranean urban culture by embracing an eclectic multitude of voices and perspectives, including the literati, administrative, social elites, and the nonelite residents. His sources range from Ottoman state documents, consular records, and ecclesiastical papers to visuals like postcards and photographs, as well as printed sources, such as memoirs, travelogues, and pamphlets, but also novels, writings by Westerners on the East, and advice literature. Even when entering institutional archives in Berlin and Vienna, he pays attention to petitions, letters, court interrogations, probate records, and testimonies. Thanks to a striking literary sensitivity and keen eye for details, Fuhrmann handles sources critically and often juxtaposes them effectively. At the same time, he concedes that they are sometimes uneven in quality and focus, as when he clarifies that women’s migratory paths were not nearly as well documented as those of men. Overall, Fuhrmann pays systematic attention to historical actors’ own views. Moreover, he broadens the horizons of readers within the confines of US academia by relying on an expansive body of scholarship that includes relatively less-known works, such as Mafalda Ade’s research in German, or his own 2006 book *Der Traum vom deutschen Orient: Zwei deutsche Kolonien im Osmanischen Reich 1851–1918*.

To conclude, Fuhrmann successfully moves away from top-down, center-periphery approaches to Mediterranean and Ottoman history; overcomes the sterile debate about whether the driving forces behind change in the late Ottoman empire were domestic or imposed from abroad; and captures port city residents’ creativity in designing their own identity, lifestyle, and social practices. Although he steers clear of conceiving Europe as an amorphous, hostile, or static entity, approaching it instead as a “locus for local attributions of meaning” (p. 14, pp. 29–30), he does sometimes equate “Europeanization” and “modernity,” using the latter, nonchalantly, to describe items as different as picnics, quay promenades, the interconnected world, watches, leisure sites, and institutions. Yet historical actors themselves may have conflated all these things. Accounting for the characteristics of what he terms the “modern, quickly evolving world” of Eastern Mediterranean port cities is no easy feat (p. 8). Fuhrmann elegantly bears the challenge and forces us to reappraise the history of Salonica, Constantinople, and Smyrna and beyond. His analysis of urban reform in maritime centers, entertainment as a “world where the rules of exclusion were less severe or overcome” (p. 95), the complexity of migration and migrant identities, and the purging and violence that came with homogenizing societies bear on the study of all the other port cities in the Eastern Mediterranean. At once, *Port Cities* offers rich local studies, an overarching Mediterranean narrative, and insights on the import of cultural history. As such, it resists categorizations and will appeal broadly to students and scholars of Ottoman, Mediterranean, and European history, as well as urban and cultural history at large.