Introduction

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In the English language, "crossroads" has multiple meanings. It can refer to an intersection, a place where two streets meet, and thus where people, ideas, worldviews, and goods come into contact or pass each other on the way to their destinations. It can also describe a pivotal situation, a significant point in time, in which a fateful decision has to be formulated, a path has to be chosen, a choice crucial for the future has to be made.

This volume plays on these two meanings of "crossroads". It seeks to demonstrate that for the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World, the interwar years were full of "crossroads" in both meanings of the term. In the first sense of the term, the interwar years saw the advent of many new crossroads as places to meet, as well as the expansion of existing ones. The multitude of complex encounters, entanglements, exchanges, and connections in the years between the World Wars makes observing these crossroads central to understanding not only the histories of the Middle East or the North Atlantic but also their common history in its global context. At the same time, the interwar years were a formative era for both the Middle East and the North Atlantic – and, again, also for their common history as well as the global processes that informed it. The significant influence that these years had on the future entailed an abundance of "crossroads" in the second meaning of the term. This brings the two dimensions of "interwar crossroads" together: If the interwar years were so important for the history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World and the multiple entanglements, connections, mutual transfers, and exchanges were so important for the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World during the interwar years, it is necessary and fruitful to study them together, to focus on the entangled histories of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World during the interbellum period. This is why "interwar crossroads" serves as the two-dimensional central theme of this volume.

Relevant Fields of Research

In following this approach, this volume builds on several existing fields of research that have previously taken similar approaches, dealt with similar themes, or contributed groundwork to the topic of this volume. At the same time, each of these fields has its limitations, set by its, methodical, thematic, or spatial approach. Most of the existing research on both the North Atlantic and the Middle East has remained within the confines of national histories, often taking the borders of contemporary states as spatial and methodological boundaries for historical inquiry. While these works provide crucial empirical historical knowledge, their explanatory force is of course limited by their approach. By imposing hard borders where there were only highly permeable ones or, in the spatial consciousness of historical actors, none at all, this approach neglects processes and interactions that cross these boundaries or influence the subject of research from beyond them.[1]

In particular for the interwar history of the Middle East and North Atlantic, there is a second well-established and highly relevant strand of historical inquiry focusing on the reach of North Atlantic imperial powers into the Middle East (a concept that was created only by and through this imperial incursion). From this perspective, the interwar period in the Middle East is frequently seen through the lens of the Great War and the many consequences arising from it, most prominently the partition of the Ottoman Empire by the imperial powers. These works have contributed a plethora of insights to this volume's topic, as imperialism was a formative force for the history of the interwar years, shaping the history of the mandated, colonized, and otherwise controlled territories as well as of the North Atlantic metropoles.[2] At

1 For general reflections on this issue see, for instance, David Thelen: "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History", in: *The Journal of American History* 86:3 (1999), 965–975; Christopher A. Bayly et al.: "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History", in: *American Historical Review* 111:5 (2006), 144–1464; Sebastian Conrad: *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 2–5.
On the Middle East in particular, see Cyrus Schayegh: "The many worlds of 'Abud Yasin; or, what narcotics trafficking in the interwar Middle East can tell us about territorialization", in: *American Historical Review* 116:2 (2011), 273–306, here 274–277, 305.

2 For examples, see David Fromkin: *A Peace to End All Peace. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Holt, 1989); D.K. Fieldhouse: *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); James Barr: *A Line in the Sand. Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011); T.G. Fraser: *The First World War and its Aftermath. The Shaping of the Middle East* (London: Gingko Library, 2015); Laura Robson: *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).
In some analyses, the history of the North Atlantic appears somewhat detached from imperialism on the ground in the Middle East. It is the merit of works inspired by approaches from cultural history and new imperial history to have connected the events in the Middle East to

the same time, however, while focusing on the imperial powers' policies and activities, this imperialism-centered approach frequently entails an emphasis on unidirectional transfers and top-down histories. Imperial histories that focus on the activities of imperial actors and present imperialism as the almost universal root cause of past and present developments and conflicts run the risk of denying the agency of non-imperial actors. This perspective places the Middle East in a passive role vis-à-vis the North Atlantic, and thus subliminally presents the latter as the originator of all kinds of exports to the Middle East, thereby creating a dualist image with clear role assignments.[3] This is why it is important to study imperialism without neglecting the local, global, and regional contingencies, processes, continuities, forces, and agencies it encountered. Similarly, research on the international system, newer international histories, and attempts to examine events and processes with global implications from a global point of view are also valuable for this volume's topic, especially those works that focus on the interwar years. All too often, however, the call to de-center history and "provincialize Europe",[4] which is already more than two decades old, is not realized consistently, and works on the interwar period's international history frequently put vastly more emphasis on the North Atlantic than on the Middle East.[5] In recent years, however, many more nuanced works have emerged at the intersections of new imperial history, new international history, and Middle East studies providing new and innovative perspectives and thematical approaches to the fields outlined above and especially on the interwar years.[6]

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the cultural frameworks, discourses, and processes in the metropoles. See, for instance, Priya Satia: *Spies in Arabia. The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

3 This is exemplarily illustrated by the titles of books such as Walter Reid: *Empire of Sand. How Britain Made the Middle East* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011); Bernard Lewis: *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

4 Dipesh Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). This call has been debated widely, see, for example, Carola Dietze: "Toward a History on Equal Terms: A Discussion of "Provincializing Europe", in: *History and Theory* 47:1 (2008), 69–84; and Chakrabarty's response: Dipesh Chakrabarty: "In Defense of "Provincializing Europe": A Response to Carola Dietze", in: *History and Theory* 47:1 (2008), 85–96; Natalie Zemon Davis: "Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World", in: *History and Theory* 50:2 (2011), 188–202.

5 See, for example, Piers Brendon: *The Dark Valley. A Panorama of the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 2000); Robert Boyce: *The Great Interwar Crisis and the Collapse of Globalization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Richard Overy: *The Inter-War Crisis*, third edition (London: Routledge, 2016). Also, significantly more studies exist on the international history of Europe than on the Middle East during the interwar period.

6 For an overview see Simon Jackson: "From Beirut to Berlin (via Geneva): The New International History, Middle East Studies and the League of Nations", in: *Contemporary European History* 27:4 (2018), 708–726.

Two additional fields of historical inquiry have contributed to this volume's topic. In the first instance, histories of religions and religious groups in the North Atlantic, mostly Muslims but also groups like Sephardic Jews, have assembled stories of how actors from the Middle East and elsewhere have influenced the intellectual life, religious landscape, and much more within the North Atlantic. Some of these have explicitly focused on the interwar years.[7] While these works have contributed important insights to this volume's field of interest, they remain committed to a perspective focused on one religious community (as diverse this community might have been) in just the North Atlantic and therefore do not have the same comprehensive approach to a de-centered entangled history that this volume promotes. Second, many important works have been published in global history and closely related fields. Case studies situating their subject in global contexts and interrelations have provided valuable examples of the many ways the Middle East and the North Atlantic were connected.[8] Approaches that take either the Middle East, the North Atlantic, or parts of either as units of analysis and systematically place them in a global context, such as several recent edited volumes committed to the "Global Middle East", have similarly provided fruitful approaches, while centering on one of these spatial units.[9]

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7 See, for example, Götz Nordbruch/Umar Ryad (eds.): *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe. Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Bekim Agai/Umar Ryad/Mehdi Sajid (eds.): *Muslims in Interwar Europe. A Transcultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Nathalie Clayer/Eric Germain (eds.): *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (London: Hurst, 2008); Sina Rauschenbach/Jonathan Schorsch (eds.): *The Sephardic Atlantic. Colonial Histories and Postcolonial Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

8 See, for example, Sevket Pamuk/Jeffrey Williamson (eds.): *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (London: Routledge, 2000); Cyrus Schayegh: "The many worlds of 'Abud Yasin"; Liat Kozma: *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017); Cyrus Schayegh: "Imperial and Transnational Developmentalisms: Middle Eastern Interplays, 1880s–1960s", in: Stephen J. Macekura/Erez Manela (eds.): *The Development Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 61–82; Deniz Kuru/Hazal Papuççular (eds.): *The Turkish Connection. Global Intellectual Histories of the Late Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022).

9 See, for example, the *Journal of Levantine Studies* 10:1 (2020), which as dedicated to the topic "Beyond Connectivity: The Middle East in Global History", edited by On Barak and Haggai Ram; Liat Kozma/Cyrus Schayegh/Avner Wishnitzer (eds.): *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Allen James Fromherz (ed.): *The Gulf in World History. Arabia at the Global Crossroads* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). Some studies of the Ottoman Empire also place it within global interconnections. See, for example, Suraiya Faroqhi: *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Karen Barkey: *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); M. Erdem Kabadayı/Kate Elizabeth Creasey: "Working in the Ottoman Empire and in Turkey: Ottoman and Turkish Labor History within a Global Perspective", *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82

In addition to the fields outlined above, there are many other publications and research projects that present different ways of approaching the historical interconnectedness of the Middle East and the North Atlantic. One group of works focuses on contemporary history viewed through the lens of current (geo)political issues.[10] Other projects and publications examine the activities and experiences of actors from the Middle East in the North Atlantic and vice versa, or trace the mutual reception of philosophy, religion, and ideas.[11] Many studies have stressed the interconnectedness and relations between empires, states, and other polities of the North Atlantic and the Middle East[12] or highlight the flow of objects, people, and ideas between them. At the same time, some of these research projects are not only turning to and developing new fields and topics of research but are also pursuing innovations of new and established methods and theories.[13]

(2012), 187–200; Pascal Firges/Tobias Graf/Christian Roth: *Well-connected Domains. Towards an Entangled Ottoman History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

10 See, for example, B.A. Roberson (ed.): *The Middle East and Europe. The Power Deficit* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998); Samir Amin/Ali El Kenz: *Europe and the Arab world. Patterns and Prospects for the New Relationship* (New York/London: Zed Books 2005); Meir Litvak (ed.): *Middle Eastern Societies and the West: Accommodation or Clash of Civilizations?* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2006); David Lesch (ed.): *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (New York: Avalon, 2007).

11 See, for example, Abbas Amanat/Magnus Bernhardsson (eds.): *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters. A Critical Survey* (Gainesville: Univeristy Press of Florida, 2007); Laura Nader: *Culture and Dignity: Dialogues Between the Middle East and the West* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Angelika Neuwirth (ed.): *Europa im Nahen Osten – Der Nahe Osten in Europa* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010); Albert Hourani: *Europe and the Middle East* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

12 Many scholars have thematized the interconnectedness of polities of the Middle East and North Atlantic, not just in modern and contemporary history but also before, including Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens. Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: C.H. Beck, 2000); Edmund Herzig/Willem Floor (eds.): *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012); Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire*; Firges et al. (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains.*

13 See, for example, the work undertaken within the DFG priority program *Transottomanica* and the research projects affiliated with it: Stefan Rohdewald/Stephan Conermann/Albrecht Fuess (eds.): *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken. Perspektiven und Forschungsstand* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019); Evelin Dierauff et al. (eds.): *Knowledge on the Move in a Transottoman Perspective. Dynamics of Intellectual Exchange from the Fifteenth to the Early Twentieth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021); Arkadiusz Christoph Blaszcyk/Robert Born/Florian Riedler (eds.): *Transottoman Matters. Objects Moving through Time, Space, and Meaning* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022). See also the works cited in footnote 9.

Goals and Premises

The forgoing outline of relevant fields of research is by no means complete. Many more works and subject areas can be drawn upon to approach the entangled histories of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World in the interwar years. Still, the outline testifies to a dynamic field of research, in which many approaches are employed. Several of these have foregrounded the interconnectedness of the Middle East and the North Atlantic and placed the idea of entanglement at the heart of their analysis. Yet much remains to be done to advance perspectives that think the North Atlantic and the Middle East together and to reach a comprehensive understanding of their intertwined histories. This volume seeks to contribute to such efforts toward a de-centered entangled history of the Middle East and the North Atlantic and enrich this dynamic field of research by employing the framework of "interwar crossroads" and building on the following premises:

(1) This volume takes the call for de-centering history seriously. It has no focus on either the North Atlantic or the Middle East. Instead, its contributions amount to what can be called an entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World (more on this concept below). Taking up ideas and suggestions from various historiographical currents, the volume examines processes and discourses that involve actors from both the Middle East and the North Atlantic. While drawing on the historiographical approach of Entangled History, this book does not seek to present an Entangled History in a narrow sense.[14] While Entangled History almost exclusively deals with entanglements on a transnational level, this volume takes into account entanglements, connections, exchanges, and transfers on various levels. It furthermore does not treat its subjects of inquiry as determined by these entanglements, nor does it simply assume their importance, but always critically asks whether, how, and how far such entanglements informed and shaped specific historical contexts. In the context of this volume and the approach and viewpoint taken here, the use of the term "entangled history" seeks to express that there are no histories of the Middle East and North Atlantic as separate units of analysis; rather, they are so densely interwoven that certain historical contexts only become visible and understandable by thinking them as one framework of analysis and taking those interwoven connections into account.

This volume, therefore, strongly argues that the connections, mutual transfers, and exchanges are crucial to understanding the histories of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World. It seeks to pursue this argument without undervaluing the

14 On Entangled History, see Michael Werner/Bénédicte Zimmermann: "Beyond Comparison. Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity", in: *History and Theory* 45:2 (2006), 30–50; Margrit Pernau: "Whither Conceptual History? From National to Entangled History", in: *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7:1 (2012), 1–11; Conrad, *What is Global History*, 41–42, 44–48.

importance of local actors, contingencies, and continuities. Thus, it examines in a careful and nuanced way how specific historical contexts were influenced by or connected to transnational, transregional, and global processes, institutions, and discourses, and how exactly these processes, institutions, and discourses were appropriated, amended, shaped, or rejected by the actors involved. From this point of view, national borders, considered as essentialized categories, must be overcome, while at the same time the analysis must remain aware of how (globally circulating) ideas of national or other socio-spatial entities shaped the actions of historical actors, thus structuring historical realities and developing historical efficacy.[15] Efforts to control new movements, mobilities, and modes of exchange on the part of the imperial powers, and the hurdles and inhibitive mobility regimes that this entailed also developed such efficacy and therefore have to be part of this book's analysis. The same applies to restrictions connected to categories such as race, class, and gender, and the experiences of those subject to them.[16] This volume is thus the attempt to develop a history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World with a consistent focus on reciprocal and mutual entanglements, while at the same time maintaining an openness that does not make those entanglements absolute and critically reflecting upon their significance. The entanglements, relations, connections, and exchanges are not analyzed by and for themselves but understood within and brought into dialogue with their local and global contexts.

(2) The volume is committed to presenting new perspectives. While this should be the aim of almost all historical research, for this volume, it is a principal concern to present topics and arguments that have not yet received much scholarly consideration, or develop innovative perspectives and new interpretations of familiar and partly well-researched topics. Thus, the volume not only demonstrates that its approach can be pursued by re-reading and re-analyzing familiar subjects under new premises, and that the field of research in which it is situated is still dynamic and open to innovation, it also seeks to encourage such innovation by contributing and enriching diverse scholarly debates.

(3) The volume presents a variety of methodological approaches and is inherently interdisciplinary. This interdisciplinarity is the logical result of the volume's goals and the two preceding premises. All too often, however, such interdisciplinarity fails to reach its full potential in anthologies with a historical focus that promise

15 On this, see, for example, Conrad, *What is Global History*, 135; Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation", 1463.

16 On the importance of taking into account differing access to mobility see, for instance, Jordi Tejel/Ramazan Hakkı Öztan (eds.): *Regimes of Mobility: Borders and State Formation in the Middle East, 1918–1946* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022); Nina Glick Schiller/Noel B. Salazar: "Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe", in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39:2 (2013), 183–200.

to pursue it, or is confined to certain closely related disciplines. The current volume not only draws on a variety of approaches from the theoretical and methodical toolbox of the discipline of history, e.g., international history, global intellectual history, new imperial history, gender history, microhistory, and many more, but also turns towards other disciplines such as architecture, comparative political science, and translation studies. This helps to generate a broader and more multi-layered analysis, offering new methodological means for nuanced analysis and contextualization of entanglements and their significance. Piecing together a fragmented collection of approaches, methods, and topics within the framework of "interwar crossroads" ultimately allows for a more comprehensive take on the entangled histories of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World.

(4) The volume focuses on the interwar years. It is one of the main arguments of this book and its "interwar crossroads" framework that the interwar years were a formative period within world history, and especially for the entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World. The interwar years have long been considered as exactly what the term "interwar" suggests, a post-war period in which its own transformation into a new pre-war period was already determined. More recent historiographical approaches, though, emphasize not only the undetermined and open character of the interbellum period but also its character as a period of time on its own right and with great significance for subsequent history.[17] Such a view of this period becomes even more visible when the focus on the North Atlantic is left behind. Jürgen Osterhammel, for instance, sees the interwar years as a time of worldwide reorientation, a "hinge period" (*Schanierperiode*) between a long 19th and a short 20th century.[18] In their edited volume, Sönke Kunkel and Christoph Meyer emphasize the global significance of the 1920s and 1930s as an era in which many historical developments aligned and global constellations were reconfigured, terming them the "departure to the postcolonial era."[19] While such a term runs the risk of undervaluing longer continuities, it is right in stressing the significance of the interwar

17 For reflections on the significance of the interwar years see, for example, as well as the works cited below, Dominique Kalifa: "L'entre-deux-guerres n'aura pas lieu", in: *Littérature* 193 (2019), 101–113; Horst Möller: *Europa zwischen den Weltkriegen* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998), 117–120. For works more concerned with the historical analysis of some of the interbellum period's formative features, see footnote 23. Taking the World Wars as definitive historical caesuras is criticized by Lucian George: "Periodization Challenges and Challenging Periodization. Interdisciplinary Reflections", in: Lucian George/Jade McGlynn (eds.): *Rethinking Period Boundaries. New Approaches to Continuity and Discontinuity in Modern European History and Culture* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 1–3, here 8.

18 Jürgen Osterhammel: *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München: C.H. Beck, 2009), 1300.

19 Sönke Kunkel/Christoph Meyer (eds.): *Aufbruch ins postkoloniale Zeitalter. Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2012).

years for many anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements and therefore for the history of almost the entire world from the end of the Second World War to the present day, as many recent publications have underscored.[20] Kunkel and Meyer further argue that the period should be understood as a constitutive phase of experiments in which problems, solutions, approaches, and practices of the 20th century, often responding simultaneously to both local and global experiences, have been caused, tested, rejected, and invented, thereby stressing long-term dynamics and continuities and laying important foundations for the future.[21]

And indeed, the interwar years were shaped by a vast set of distinctive processes and events that had lasting effects on legal, political, and social orders as well as on peoples' lives around the globe. Starting from the first attempt to create a truly global order of lasting peace,[22] in the interwar years imaginaries of space and distance shifted; new types of mass media changed the way politics and society worked and were experienced. Mass participation created new demands. New products and consumer habits became available. New and old visions of modernity came together to create novel concepts from the arts to rurality. The establishment of communist governments fueled the global competition of ideologies and utopias. Democracies were founded and destroyed. The nation state became the predominant unit of political organization but competed with other concepts of space and territory. Empires were simultaneously extended and challenged. New political entities were created, causing new currents of migration and displacement. Cooperation between governments and civil-society groups within international and transnational organizations flourished. A new kind of internationalism brought about significant advances

20 Besides the volume edited by Kunkel and Meyer, see, for example, Michele Louro: *Comrades Against Imperialism. Nehru, India, and Interwar Internationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Michael Goebel: *Anti-Imperial Metropolis. Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Tim Harper: *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021); Erez Manela: *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007). On how the League of Nations facilitated the crisis of empire, see Susan Pedersen: *The Guardians. The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

21 Sönke Kunkel/Christoph Meyer: "Dimensionen des Aufbruchs: Die 1920er und 1930er Jahre in globaler Perspektive", in: Sönke Kunkel/Christoph Meyer (eds.): *Aufbruch ins postkoloniale Zeitalter. Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2012), 7–36.

22 For global perspectives on the Paris Peace Conference and its consequences see, for example, Jörn Leonhard: *Der Überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt 1918–1923* (München: C.H. Beck, 2018); Urs Matthias Zachmann (ed.): *Asia After Versailles. Asian Perspectives on the Paris Peace Conference and the Interwar Order, 1919–33* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017); Marcus Payk/Roberta Pergher (eds.): *Beyond Versailles: Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and the Formation of New Polities after the Great War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

in global governance. The crisis and ultimate survival of capitalism engendered new concepts of welfare, of the state's role in the economy, of the usefulness of state planning and the technical forgeability of society. Almost all these processes, discourses, and experiences were not confined to certain spaces but were more or less global, affecting all parts of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World. This highlights the lasting importance of these years, which does not merely derive from the wars that frame them.[23]

By laying the focus on the interwar years, this volume seeks to analyze how some of these processes, discourses, and experiences shaped the entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World. It seeks to demonstrate how the analysis of the interwar years under the premises and principles outlined above entails a deepened understanding of this entangled history, encouraging further research on this period and especially its lasting importance. At the same time, by de-centering the historical focus, the volume also contributes to efforts that go beyond conceptualizations of the interwar years, together with the World Wars, as a single "Age of Catastrophe" and towards a multi-facetted understanding of this period.[24]

Temporal and Spatial Organization

While centering on the interwar years as globally formative in their own right, this volume does not regard the interbellum period as one, clearly defined period of

23 For examples of studies emphasizing the global historical significance of the interwar years from various perspectives, see Kunkel/Meyer, "Dimensionen des Aufbruchs"; Adam Tooze: *The Deluge. The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order* (London: Allen Lane, 2014); Daniel Laqua: "What is interesting about the interwar period?", in: *Exploring and Teaching Twentieth-Century History* (Winter 2019), 18–21; Richard Carr/Bradley Hart: *The Global 1920s: Politics, Economics and Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Marc Matera/Susan Kent: *The Global 1930s: The International Decade* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); Daniel Gorman: *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jens Hacke: "Zwischenkriegszeit", in: Michael Festl (ed.): *Handbuch Liberalismus* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler 2021), 425–432. The importance of the interwar years for the history of the Middle East is highlighted by Schayegh, "The many worlds of 'Abud Yasin", 305–306; Cyrus Schayegh: *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2017), 8–13. See also the works cited in footnotes 7 and 20.

24 Eric Hobsbawm: *The Age of Extremes. A History of the World 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994). In the introduction, he describes the years from1914 to the end of the Second World War as an "Age of Catastrophe" for the society of the (western) civilization of the 19th century. Part One – "The Age of Catastrophe" – takes up this understanding. Since Edward Hallett Carr's seminal book, there has been a long line of studies and textbooks interpreting the interwar period as a single crisis. See, for instance, Edward Hallett Carr: *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939, An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939); Overy, *The Inter-War Crisis*; Boyce, *The Great Interwar Crisis.*

time. While for many Western Europeans this period might have lasted from 1918 to 1939, the many ends of World War One and continuities of violence after its formal armistices on one side, and the gradual geographical expansion of World War Two on the other side render the beginning and the end of the interwar period somewhat vague.[25] The interwar period had different temporal configurations depending on the space under consideration. At the same time, just as the processes taking place during the interbellum period were global, the two World Wars that delimited it had worldwide effects and consequences and therefore marked caesuras for the entire Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World.[26] Thus, despite the vagueness of its limits, the interwar years ultimately still mark a definable period that lends itself as a temporal framework of analysis. The World Wars should, however, not be understood as all-encompassing breaks. As Kozma, Schayegh, and Wishnitzer observe of the "Global Middle East", important processes and historical trajectories were effective before and beyond these caesuras.[27] The interwar historical contexts analyzed in this volume took place within the framework of earlier developments and – this is one of the book's arguments – had impacts long after the Second World War's guns had fallen silent. Furthermore, some of the immediate contexts analyzed here had been formed before the First World War or subsisted even after the Second. Thus, while it focusses on the interwar years, this volume treats its delimitations not only as shifting but also as open and permeable for longer continuities. Consequently, the temporal organization of the various contributions is conditioned by their spatial and historical focus.

Not only the temporal, but also the spatial categories and organization of this volume deserve further explanation. Rather than employing conventional terms to delineate its spatial unit of analysis, this volume proposes the *North Atlantic and Middle Eastern World* as a spatial-analytical concept. By using this term, the volume seeks to emphasize the de-centering historical focus and to turn away from essentializing

25 For reflections on an alternative periodization of the First World War in the Middle East see, for example, Jonathan Wyrtzen: "Relational History, the Long Great War, and the Making of the Modern Middle East", in: Natana DeLong-Bas (ed.): *Islam, Revival & Reform. Redefining Tradition for the Twenty-First Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2022), 141–159. On the continuities of War after 1917/18 in Eastern Europe, see, for instance, Jochen Böhler/Wlodzimierz Borodziej/Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.): *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe's First World War* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

26 On the globality of World War One, see, for example, Jörn Leonhard: *Die Büchse der Pandora. Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (München: C.H. Beck, 2014); Jay Winter (ed.): *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume I: Global War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

27 Liat Kozma/Cyrus Schayegh/Avner Wishnitzer: "Introduction", in: Liat Kozma/Cyrus Schayegh/Avner Wishnitzer (eds.): *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 1–15, here 4–5.

terms such as 'the East'/'the Orient' and 'the West', which are culturally discursive constructions that assume an "other" and create the notion of a clear and irreconcilable divide, dichotomy and opposition between two seemingly clearly defined, monolithic, unchanged and natural regions. Within the intellectual framework of this divide, these terms not only refer to geographical spaces but are temporalized and spatialized concepts that have come to designate spaces – both clearly delimited and yet remaining vague – with a "clear ideological edge through the polarized opposition to distinct antonyms."[28] In this, "the West" is stylized as the cultural superior, inherently possessing seemingly universal values of progress and modernity. These conceptualizations have been rightly criticized and reflected by many scholars since Edward Said's seminal study *Orientalism* was published more than four decades ago.[29] Subsequently, sparked by postcolonial theory and fields such as subaltern studies, new terminologies and concepts have been introduced to talk and write about these spatial units or to create new spatial frameworks of analysis.[30] Such thoughts have been taken up in the 'global', 'transnational', and 'spatial' turns that inspired much new research and both theoretical and conceptual considerations about these units.[31]

At the same time, many geographical terms and spatial units of analysis used today remain burdened by their historical genealogy and still perpetuate such constructed divides and dichotomies. This is particularly true of the term "Middle East". By now, many studies have explored its historical origins and pointed out how this term was the product of the imperial imagination, and ultimately established itself during the First World War and the period under consideration here.[32] The imperial

28 Riccardo Bavaj: "'The West': A Conceptual Exploration", in: *European History Online*, 21 November 2011, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/bavajr-2011-en (accessed 2 July 2022).

29 Edward Said: *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979). Part of this critical reflection was to re-orient the "orientalist gaze" that by Said observed, and this has been taken up in several works since. See, for example, Susannah Heschel/Umar Ryad (eds.): *The Muslim Reception of European Orientalism. Reversing the Gaze* (London/New York: Routledge, 2019); Hamid Dabashi: *Reversing the Colonial Gaze. Persian Travelers Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

30 See, for example, Nile Green: "Rethinking the 'Middle East' after the Oceanic Turn", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34:3 (2014), 556–564; Nile Green: "The View from the Edge: The Indian Ocean's Middle East", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48 (2016), 746–749.

31 See, for instance, among others Schayegh, *The Middle East*; Dierauff et al. (eds.): *Knowledge on the Move.*

32 See, for example, James Renton: "Changing Languages of Empire and the Orient: Britain and the Invention of the Middle East, 1917–1918", in: *The Historical Journal* 50:3 (2007), 645–667; Schayegh, *The Middle East*; Osamah F. Khalil: "The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construct of the Middle East, 1902–2007", in: *Diplomatic History* 38:2 (2014), 299–344; Thomas Scheffler: "'Fertile Crescent', 'Orient', 'Middle East': The Changing Mental Maps of Southwest Asia", in: *European Review of History* 10:2 (2003), 253–272.

origins of "Middle East", its arbitrariness as one of the mental maps projected upon Southwest Asia, the monolithic and essentialized region it suggests, and the orientalist notions to which it is connected on one side, and the heuristic and methodological need for spatial units for historical analysis, the continuing presence of this term in academic, public, and political discourse as well as its use in many languages on the other side, have created an ongoing scholarly debate about whether the concept "Middle East" should be used and what exactly it should designate.[33] Although "Middle East" has this difficult conceptual history and must necessarily be reflected upon critically, it still serves as an effective spatial-analytic concept for many studies.

The problem of suggesting an essentialized, hermetically delineated entity applies, to a certain degree, to any concept of a (world) region.[34] When space is understood as relational and created by social interactions, however, regions undoubtedly exist as clusters and agglomerations within this relational space. These clusters lead to patterns of similarities and shared paths of development.[35] Regions are therefore still useful categories for historical analysis, provided there is congruency between the posited region and the cluster of relations that are the subject of the given research interest. Thus, to avoid treating regions as essential "container" spaces and imposing them on a historical context in a way that undermines analytical efficacy, the spatial framework of any historical study should be thoroughly reflected upon and adapted for each study depending on the kinds of relations and clusters analyzed. In practice, this self-reflective approach often hits a wall when, especially in larger projects such as anthologies, overarching and comprehensive units of space are to be used. Ultimately, moreover, all spatial-analytical concepts remain subject to the tension between the heuristic need to categorize space in order to make it

33 This debate has been on-going for many decades, see, for instance, Roderic H. Davison: "Where Is the Middle East?", in: *Foreign Affairs* 38 (1959/60), 665–675; Nikki R. Keddie: "Is There a Middle East?", in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4:3 (1973), 255–271. For a more recent contribution on this debate, see Michael E. Bonine/Abbas Amanat/Michael Ezekiel Gasper (eds.): *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

34 Christian Büschges: "Global History and the History of World Regions. An Inventory of German-Language Research", in: *Comparativ* 29:2 (2019), 7–19, here 11–12.

35 Some insightful observations on the concept of 'region' in relation to the Middle East can be found in Cyrus Schayegh: "Regions and Global History: An Arab-Iranian Case Study and Three Observations", in: *Journal of Levantine Studies* 10:1 (2020), 25–44. For exemplary studies of the more general interdisciplinary conceptualizations of 'regions' see Anssi Paasi: "From Bounded Spaces to Relational Social Constructs. Conceptualisation of the Region in Geography", in: Paul Kohlenberg/Nadine Godehardt, Nadine (eds.): *The Multidimensionality of Regions in World Politics* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2021), 17–35; Krisztina Varró/Arnoud Lagendijk: "Conceptualizing the Region – In What Sense Relational?", in: *Regional Studies* 47:1 (2013), 18–28; see also the contributions in *European Review of History* 10:2 (2003).

accessible for research and the inadequacy and historical conditionality of such categories.

With the concept of the *Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World*, the volume suggests a reaction to this tension. The term Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World is lexically as well as conceptually multi-layered and includes at least three dimensions: (1) Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World can suggest a denotation of each region separately. Such an understanding, of a Middle Eastern World and a North Atlantic World, uses the term "world" to indicate the vast inner variety and diversity of both the Middle East and the North Atlantic, thus highlighting the inadequacy of treating them as essentialized and homogenous entities. (2) Understanding the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World as one, joint world stresses the dense entanglement and interconnectedness of the two socio-spatial units. Such a perspective suggests that, because it is marked by such a density of relations and interconnections, certain historical processes and contexts can only be explained if viewed through a lens that sees the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World as one historical region and unit of analysis. (3) The term can also be read in a way that the Middle East and the North Atlantic, taken together or separately, are specific parts of one, larger world. This dimension of the concept emphasizes how they are deeply immersed in global processes that go beyond both national and supposed regional borders.

The term Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World is thus deliberately ambiguous and multi-layered to allow for different spatial notions, perspectives, and analytical units. Each of these dimensions can include international, transnational, and transregional approaches as well as studies presenting local cases against the background of processes spanning the Middle East and the North Atlantic as separate or converged spatial units of analysis. While the above-described heuristic needs and limitations make it sometimes necessary to write about the Middle East and the North Atlantic or to use other spatial denominations, we use the overarching concept of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World to encompass all of these spatial denominations and perspectives while at the same time drawing attention to the fact that the spatial conceptualizations of both historical actors and analytical approaches can vary, shift, overlap, and change depending on the specific context.

By proposing the analytical framework of "interwar crossroads" and the multi-layered spatial concept of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World, the present volume seeks to offer new ways of thinking about the Middle East and North Atlantic and to highlight little known or unknown aspects of their entangled histories. It emphasizes the interwar years as a formative period, without undervaluing continuities or constructing new historical determinisms. It stresses the importance of processes of exchange, mutual transfers, entanglement, and interconnection of the interwar years, while consistently taking into account the significance of continuities, contingencies, and the agency of historical actors. Despite understanding the interwar years as an era of intensified interconnectedness, the contributions do

not tell a story of progressively increasing and all-encompassing entanglement, exchange, globalization, or mobility but present a more complex, nuanced, and differentiated view of how such processes of growing interconnectedness were accompanied and challenged by countervailing trends, how mobility and immobility, de-territorialization and re-territorialization, globalization and moments of de-globalization,[36] connection and disconnection, the establishment of new borders and the persistence of old ones all happened simultaneously and were all significant for the entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World.

Contributions

Taking up one of the main themes of this volume, **Felicitas Remer**'s chapter on the evolution of the national idea and its ultimate culmination in the practice of territorial partition in early 20th century Palestine seeks to overcome the historiographical emphasis on imperial intrusion and the accompanying notion of the unidirectional transfer of ideas. Instead, by bringing together research on ethnonational separatism and partition and the approach of global intellectual history, the chapter argues that the consolidation of the national idea in Palestine involved interaction between global and local forces that cannot be reduced to the imperial encounter with Britain during the Mandate period. Focusing on the case study of Jaffa-Tel Aviv as a microcosm of a larger set of processes connected to the national idea and its specific forms of spatialization, the chapter analyzes local papers, considering how "a growing but uneven consciousness, among both Jewish Zionists and Palestinian Arabs, of the de-territorializing influences of increased mobility and global integration caused a turn towards localized, reterritorialized forms of attachment." From this perspective, the establishment of the British Mandate was not a decisive break with existing trends but operated within dynamics, realities, and discourses that already existed and were being shaped by the experience of the global. These same forces simultaneously influenced British perspectives and decision-making. Since the Mandate government possessed the political power to order local socio-spatial organization, however, it played a decisive role in nation-building and the creation of ethnonational separatism and served as a mediator and arbiter of globalization in Palestine and especially Jaffa-Tel Aviv.

36 While some studies picture the interwar years as period of de-globalization (see, for example, Harold James: *The End of Globalization. Lessons from the Great Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Boyce, *The Great Interwar Crisis*), Kunkel and Meyer consider this interpretation to be a myth based on a narrow understanding of globalization (Kunkel/Meyer, "Dimensionen des Aufbruchs", 9–10).

Through this perspective, Felicitas Remer's chapter stresses the importance of developing a more complex understanding of the circulation of ideas by emphasizing the necessity of taking into account the continuity of local trends and agency as well as the global and transregional processes that inform them. In a certain sense, the two following chapters are variations of this theme. **Joseph Leidy** analyzes the Village Welfare Service (VWS), a youth volunteer movement based at the American University of Beirut in the 1930s and 1940s. His chapter situates the VWS at the intersection of overlapping Lebanese and American mobilities, contending that the Service's transnational social and institutional contexts gave rise to a vision of rural service *by* and *for* young people that appealed beyond the immediate realm of American missionary education. He traces how the actors behind the VWS discussed, amended, appropriated, and rejected transnational discourses on youth, modernity, and rurality. This connected them to the North Atlantic and other parts of the globe, and they went on to develop their own understanding of rural modernity. The chapter then sheds light on the conceptual afterlife of these visions in the 1940s, when Afif Tannous, a crucial figure in the history of the VWS, began a career in international development in the United States and introduced the ideas that emerged in the VWS into post-war developmentalism. The chapter suggests that, in this way, the VWS's tethering of youth to the question of rural revitalization was a preview of the developmentalism of the mid-20th century. By tracing youth as a border object between the local middle-class and American proto-developmental projects, the chapter demonstrates that the VWS reflected entangled imaginaries of elite-led social change clustered around youth as an ideal bearer of developmental energy and expertise.

The chapter by **Thomas E. Jakob** offers a different perspective on the transnational circulation of concepts by posing the question of why the notions of organized labor held by communist organizations and groups from the Europe and the Soviet Union failed to spread to Lebanon during the French Mandate. By employing the method of single-case analysis from comparative political science, the chapter identifies several reasons why communists were not successful in establishing their concept of organized labor in interwar Lebanon in any lasting way. On one side, it points to the Mandatory Power's anti-communist policies and the absence of extended international support from other actors such as the International Labor Organization, which also failed to gain a foothold in Lebanon. On the other side, the chapter also identifies the strong nationalist current, which was also anti-colonialist and therefore shared a key appeal with communism, as well as the resilience of the Ottoman guild system in Lebanon's mutualist unions as pivotal factors for the communist organizations' failure to successfully introduce their ideas of organized labor. Thus, the chapter draws attention to the insights that can be obtained by thinking about how and why certain kinds of intended organizational and conceptional connections failed to materialize and plans to spread certain ideas were unsuccessful.

While Thomas E. Jacob's chapter analyzes the shortcomings of interwar communist internationalism, **Leon Julius Biela**'s chapter turns to interwar internationalism as it was embodied in the League of Nations. The chapter takes the international regulation of arms traffic in the Persian Gulf on arms-control conferences under the auspices of the League, which largely emerged from imperialist ideas of how to stabilize the empires after the Great War, as a case study. It first describes how arms-traffic control in the Gulf was shifted to the international level by the British, who sought to obtain international sanctioning of their imperial practices of control. The chapter then traces how Iranian diplomats seized on this decision and linked the issue of arms-traffic control with questions of sovereignty in order to promote their anti-imperial agenda of erasing structural inequalities in the international system and pushing back British influence in the Gulf. Hence, while the League and the international system of the interwar years were largely conceived by empires, the Iranians turned international arms-traffic discussions into an opportunity to openly challenge imperial visions of order and to prevent their codification in international law. While the conferences ultimately failed to produce an arms-traffic convention and the British imperial power was still able to wield a decisive influence, the chapter argues that the Iranians were successful in opening new spaces for the contestation of imperialism, shifting international discourse on arms control in the Gulf from the rhetoric of a 'civilizing mission' to discussing the relation of imperialism and sovereignty, and pushing the British into an increasingly weak position on the international stage. In this way, the chapter advocates a different perspective on interwar internationalism's and the League's role in the entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World that understands them not only as imperial instruments but is also aware of moments of anti-imperial appropriation.

Where Leon Julius Biela understands international arms-traffic conferences as institutionalized spaces of international exchanges open to appropriation by less powerful actors, **Semih Gökatalay**'s chapter makes a similar argument focusing on the World's Fairs of 1933/34 in Chicago and 1939/40 in New York as spaces of connection, international exchange, and transnational networking. The chapter's analysis of the role of post-Ottoman diasporas in these World's Fairs draws attention to how these spaces could be appropriated by groups who were marginalized in other contexts. The chapter argues that the post-Ottoman diasporas in the United States used the Fairs as a unique means of negotiating their identity between the cultural heritage of their countries of origins and the will and expectation to integrate into American society. By using the Fairs as opportunities to present their native cultures, the diasporas and particularly their leaders sought to appropriate this framework to dispel negative stereotypes and to situate themselves as part of larger American society. Furthermore, despite the diversity of the post-Ottoman diaspora communities, their shared experiences at the Fairs were an avenue to foster inter-diaspora contacts and a heightened sense of unity among post-Ottoman diasporas.

Finally, the Fairs, in which diasporas sometimes had to represent their country of origin on their own, sometimes in cooperation with the respective governments, offered a new forum for the creation of contacts and connections between the diasporas and their post-Ottoman countries of origin and gave the diasporas significant influence over how these countries were represented. The chapter also traces how all these processes were influenced not only by intra- and inter-diaspora dynamics, inequalities based on class and race, and the organizational framework of the fairs, but also the political developments in the diaspora's countries of origins.

Anna-Elisabeth Hampel's chapter, too, focuses on processes and means of self-representation of Middle Eastern diasporas living in the North Atlantic. Analyzing Muslim Journals of Weimar-era Berlin and taking up approaches from translation studies, the chapter argues that for Muslims from the Middle East and other places living in Berlin, multiple forms of translation were a key instrument in the pursuit of self-representation and the negotiation of their relationship with "Europe". In these journals, produced for and in collaboration with a European non-Muslim audience, Muslims helped to shape the discourse on the relationship of "Islam" and "Europe" and on how Islam was to be understood and lived in the modern, globalized world formed by imperialism. They had to defend themselves against European epistemic logics, prejudices, and narratives of superiority while meeting the standards set by "the West" for the legitimation of political demands. Translation was thus a "difficult balancing act of engaging with the logics and categories of a hierarchized discourse in order to simultaneously question and overcome them," with "Europe" as a partner for dialogue but not a central reference point, making it, therefore, too simplified to situate the journals' discourses as either conformist or resistant. The chapter emphasizes the significance of translations as a central – even if unconscious – part and means of this discourse. The journals' multilingualism was always accompanied by processes of selection and omission in conscious or unconscious alignment with the translator's agenda, legitimation strategies, and the assumed expectations of the target audience, which reflected the ambivalence of the Muslim journals' discourse but also testified to well-functioning networks between the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, and beyond. Thus, the chapter's approach sheds light not only on a further form of networks and entanglements between Europe and the Middle East in the interwar years but also on how Middle Eastern actors in Europe helped to shape contemporary imaginations of these regions and their relation.

From a different angle, **César Jaquier**'s chapter also illuminates contemporary imaginations, perceptions, and experiences of the spaces of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World. Drawing on microhistorical approaches to mobility and connectivity, César Jaquier's chapter offers new insights into the transregional connections that developed between London and Baghdad in the 1920s and 1930s by examining the journeys of Yusuf Ghanima and Freya Stark. Instead of focusing primarily on the transport system that placed these two cities within nine days of travel in the

interwar years, the chapter foregrounds the experience of these two travelers as they journeyed through the spaces in between. Their travel narratives, examined alongside other sources, expose how they became aware of and reshaped their perceptions of space, distance, and alterity. Their travel accounts also reveal the coexistence of different forms of mobility along the same routes and demonstrate that people on the move enjoyed different travel conditions and different treatment by states, based on social, racial, and gender categories that underpinned different mobility regimes. In examining the travel experience of Yusuf Ghanima and Freya Stark, the chapter contributes to moving beyond the sometimes overly simplistic narrative of accelerated mobility and increased connectivity put forward in global history and mobility studies.

While this volume seeks to move beyond simplified narratives of the European powers' imperial intrusion into the Middle East during the interwar years as the sole force of transfer and the spread of ideas and concepts, it remains pivotal for an entangled history of the Middle Eastern and North Atlantic World to understand how the ordering power of imperialism interacted with local agency. The last two chapters of the volume thus center on European imperialism in the interwar Middle East, while questioning common narratives about its role and stressing perspectives and agencies marginalized by imperialism and its historiography.

Written from the perspective of architectural history, **Margaret Freeman**'s chapter focuses on "architecture as a key pillar in Mandate Britain's strategy for control of the 'desert periphery' of Transjordan and Iraq and its nomadic inhabitants." Seeing themselves in an imperial tradition stretching back to the Roman Empire, British administrators sought to imitate what they understood as their imperial predecessors' strategic approach to desert control through architecture. Going beyond the narrative of top-down mechanisms of imperial control, however, the chapter sheds light on Bedouin contributions to the built environments of the desert regions the British sought to control. It highlights the role of Bedouins as builders and patrons of architecture, thereby offering new insights into their history as well as the architectural history of the region and the nature and extent of British imperial desert control. By setting this focus, the chapter complicates simplified notions of nomadic peoples and lifeways as being opposed to the construction and use of permanent architecture – notions that were solidified and perpetuated by British Mandate officials, who arrived in the mandates with such notions already entrenched. The chapter argues that for them, based on a vision of architecture as an expression of imperial ideology, a matter of strategic importance, and a tool to subjugate nomadic people, it was both politically expedient and symbolically significant to lay sole claim to the desert's built heritage and imperial legacies. By analyzing how these ideas, informed and mutually reinforced by decision-making in the field, were reaffirmed in the publications and presentations these officials produced for the British public, the chapter scrutinizes how notions about the

Bedouins that still circulate in the North Atlantic World and elsewhere were shaped by externally constructed narratives and orientalist myths. Shedding light on the complexities of Bedouin relationships with both imperial actors and "imperial" architecture during the Mandate period and understanding the built environment of the deserts during the interwar years as shaped by both Bedouin and imperial actors, ideas, and concepts, the chapter helps to overcome notions of the Bedouin and their relationship to architecture that prevail to this day.

The chapter by **Katie Laird** also reflects critically upon narratives that were shaped by interwar imperialism and remain relevant up to today. The chapter restores historical depth to the phenomenon of "honor crimes", which, in the current political discourse, continue to be presented as some kind of contemporary and essential "Middle Eastern" or "Muslim" problem, by analyzing the British Mandate's authorities' legal approach to them in interwar Palestine. Taking the observation that British Mandate officials systematically downplayed "honor crimes" and commuted the sentences of "honor killers", while simultaneously upholding death sentences for murderers with other motives as a starting point, the chapter locates the reason for this British leniency toward "honor crimes" in interwar Palestine in the British concept of masculinity that had been forming since the late 18th century. This concept was centered on the ability of men to protect women, whose femininity was constructed around moral purity and innocent fragility, from other masculinities perceived as subordinate. Thus, British officials sought to demonstrate to the public at home and to the world the need for their control over other masculinities and therefore the Mandate's population by rhetorically condemning and stressing the brutality of 'honor crimes' and the need to protect women. At the same time, their concepts of masculinity and femininity led British officials and judges to showing tacit tolerance for the killing of women whom they perceived as threats to their own masculinity. Based on the analysis of multiple 'honor killing' cases from different court levels as well as the private correspondences of judges, the chapter argues that, from the British officials' perspective, "to allow Palestinian women […] to disobey their own fathers and brothers and husbands would set a precedent that could ultimately destabilize the dominant masculinity" to which they laid claim. Hence, by defining when the alleged "bad character" of a woman could mitigate a murder, the British officials made themselves the "ultimate arbiters of what constituted acceptable femininity", thus stabilizing their notion of gender hierarchies and masculinity.