Summer 2011. I am in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, visiting an exhibition of Israeli artist Eran Reshef, and this fridge is disturbing me. It is those mean streaks of dried blood and that gutted and tied-up chicken, I think first. Uncanny ... But as I move on, my unease deepens. Reshef paints everyday objects of a long gone Israeli childhood in a photographic hyper-realist style, which makes his paintings look dead and at the same time alarmingly alive. I keep moving, stroll from an anti-bug spray to a light switch to an ironing board, and then back to the fridge. I take a second look – and now it hits me. To me, this fridge is uncanny not only because of its look but because in a flashback it reminds me of a home that is a world apart from today’s Tel Aviv, and yet very near it.

Marjayoun, southern Lebanon, summer 2008. I have just finished interviewing Cecil Hourani, brother of the late historian Albert Hourani, in his family’s beautiful, cool stone house in the middle of town. We get up from our chairs in the living room, take a look at the lush garden in the back and walk to the kitchen for a glass of water. And there it is: the oldest-looking fridge I have ever seen. I am curious. ‘When did you get this fridge?’ ‘In the early 1950s; the family imported it through Haifa,’ Hourani answers. Now I am intrigued. Who brought Hourani’s fridge from Israel, which has been in a state of war with Lebanon since 1948? Do other Marjayounis possess such a model?
As it turns out, they do. Hourani’s fridge is ordinary. In fact, there are innumerable objects like it in the Levant: objects that seem to belong to one place, but examined up close make us think of connections between and beyond Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon, which Britain and France created out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire between the end of World War I and 1921. Stories that are fascinating if not uncanny to an outsider like me are often ordinary in the eyes especially of elderly Arabs and Israelis, who know them galore.

To Israelis, they have a local significance that was eclipsed by the rise of a self-consciously national Zionist community, a process sharpened after 1948 by political isolation in the Arab world. The eyes of Shulamit Yaari, born 1920 in Metula, on the Lebanese border, glittered when she described to me the Beiruti “patent leather shoes with buttons” that her better-off childhood girlfriends received at Jewish high holidays, and she recalled with amusement how a Palestinian Arabic teacher she had as an adult commented on her Lebanese accent. Still, she is an Israeli through and through; already thirteen years before the establishment of Israel, a formative experience of her life was moving to Tel Aviv, where she trained as a school teacher for Jewish children.

A very different view of cross-border stories, one held by many Arabs who grew up in urban areas especially in Syria and Jordan, inscribes them into a unitary “Bilad ash-Sham,” a Greater Syria that embraces Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine-Israel. In contrast, Arabs who grew up in a rural border region often remember that area as the definite locus and focus of their lives. Salim Tannus, born 1932 in the south-western Lebanese village Alma Shaab, talked of “qaraba” to neighboring Palestinian villages like Bassa. This “closeness” was existential as much as geographical, nourished by marriages and friendships, economic transactions and land holdings. It grew
and its economic nature shifted when in the 1930s, unprecedented numbers of southern Lebanese, including some of Tannus’ relatives, worked especially in Palestine’s north, in boomtown Haifa. In short, elderly Arabs and Israelis see cross-border stories through many different lenses. So different that they remain just that: stories. A mass of them, intriguing to some, ordinary to many – yet disjointed to all.

Perhaps for this reason, and certainly because of the now almost centenary existence of the Levant’s post-Ottoman countries and of the power of their state institutions and national narratives, transnational stories are not the first thing that comes to our minds when we think about the Levant. A few scholars, it is true, study politics and ideologies across the region, and some make references to other regional links. Also, calls for regional studies are being answered by a handful of graduate students, especially those examining the 1920s-1940s, when the Levant’s new countries were British- and French-ruled League of Nations mandates. But by and large, academic as well as popular writing about the Levant has been circumscribed by the ‘national’ borders drawn following World War I. To be sure, this focus is well justified. Not only have the Levant’s countries developed powerful state institutions, they have become elementary frameworks for their citizens’ everyday life and identity. But they were not the only framework, and they did not grow in isolation from each other or from other – local, regional and international – frameworks. Hourani’s fridge and countless similar stories of objects and people who moved around and beyond the Levant are as significant as ‘national’ stories for our understanding of that region’s development. Still, they are an elephant in the room.

* * *

This elephant is what my book is about. I will tell stories crisscrossing the Levant’s countries because they ought to be part of what we know about this region, and analyze them because they ought to inform how we think about it. Put plainly, I am re-writing the history of the post-Ottoman Levant during the mandate from a regional perspective. This perspective does not negate the importance of the Levant’s new countries (and respective studies). It qualifies them by demonstrating that they were not the only thing of importance in the region – and that they therefore can neither be the only theme nor the only analytical framework for students of this region.

What I argue is simple though perhaps somewhat counter-intuitive. While a majority and a minority of historians have studied the region’s divisions or connections, respectively, I find that in the core areas of the mandate countries, the two were often causally linked: division begot integration. Moreover, the mandate authorities often did not have the means or interest to seriously control (or invest in) the border areas; there especially, division remained incomplete. The precondition for this situation was the considerable political, cultural, and socioeconomic integration tying together the Levant’s different if not heterogeneous areas at the end of the Ottoman era.
While the mandate countries became powerful new frameworks for their nationals’ lives after 1918, many old webs of personal relationships persisted – some below national borders, others across and beyond them – and new ones emerged, too. Such persisting regional ties were energized by two new, related principles. Politically, the Levant’s division created a backlash boosted by most Levantines’ sense of a common fate. Socioeconomically, especially in the mandate countries’ core areas, opposites attracted: people who now lived in different countries with different (yet historically linked) economies
all possessed something – money, labor, social connections etc. – that the others did not have and/or coveted.

After World War I, a sense of ‘regionality’ that was rooted in the late Ottoman period continued to grow amongst the Levant’s Arabs not only despite but not the least also because of the political division of this region by two European empires, and because of the Zionist presence. Without doubt, Arabs’ attitudes to these newcomers covered a vast range, from rejection via avoidance to accommodation, collaboration, and support. And because Zionists settled only in Palestine (creating the so-called Yishuv), Levantine Arabs’ experience of their presence varied. There were differences also between the French and the British, the former being more opposed to Arab nationalist movements and often seen to rule with a heavier hand than the latter. But despite these distinctions, many Arabs – including the many who accepted their respective country’s separate existence or even affirmed its national identity – felt that they basically had a shared fate. This sense shaped and drew on newspapers (and even state radio stations) that, although local and national, exhaustively covered regional events too. It was based on the historical understanding that Paris and London had colluded to divide the region, and fed by current events: Zionist land purchases and settlement plans in Transjordan and Syria, similar economic and political challenges in all mandate countries, and two bloody revolts – one in Syria and most of Lebanon from 1925-1927, the other in Palestine from 1936-1939 – that reverberated in the region as a whole.

Division begot integration not only in politics but also in other areas like socioeconomic relations and administrative practices. As the few extant regional studies examine politics, I focus on the two latter fields, particularly on socioeconomic relations, which were key to the development of the mandate Levant as a region.

The Levant’s mandate-era colonial and local administrators faced the consequences of the region’s division: a mass of people whose movements now happened to cross a border. In response, they at times (and in some cases routinely) set aside rivalries, cooperating or even coordinating policies. The result were patterns of administrative and state-run infrastructure integration in the Levant, and partly beyond. These patterns included police coordination and information exchanges about criminals and, in some cases, rebels; legal procedures such as extradition agreements and border-area tribal courts; the link-up of telecommunication infrastructures; and coordination or even joined actions in reaction to environmental threats like locust attacks or veterinary diseases. Without doubt, the main story of state institutions in the Levant’s four mandates lies in their separate developments and in their rivalries, including that between the French and the British empires. But this story alone cannot explain state formation in the mandate Levant. What I argue here is that inter-administrative communications in response to cross-border movements of animals and of people and their goods and ideas helped to shape the various mandate countries’ administrations. They thus had an integrative tendency, i.e. became linked in some areas and/or more similar to each other.

As far as socioeconomic relations are concerned, the Levant’s division-integration pattern was shaped by several factors. Some, external, pushed the region’s countries into closer ties; others, internal, pulled them together. Between 1918 and 1939, the Levant’s neighbors – most importantly Egypt, Iraq
and Turkey, which had been integral (in Egypt’s case nominal) parts of the Ottoman Empire – all reduced their trade ties with the region. Intent on building up a national industry, Turkey started isolating itself already in the 1920s. Egypt maintained intense trade relations with the Levant in the 1920s, but erected a high customs wall when the Great Depression hit; Iraq and further east Iran did the same. In no shape or form did this mean that mandate countries entertained economic relations only amongst themselves, however. In fact, the big European economies, the USA and Japan in particular were its leading trade partners.

Still, socioeconomic relations in the Levant, dense already by 1918, became denser and geographically more varied thereafter. In short, the Levant became more integrated: in trade, in other economic relations like capital investment and labor migration, and in webs of personal relationships. As mentioned above, the historical precondition for this pattern was the survival of dense webs of personal relationships that had carried the late Ottoman Levant’s political, cultural, and socioeconomic ties. France and Britain had neither the means nor the will to destroy these older webs but rather sought to keep tabs on them and to build powerful ‘national’ structures. In turn, this meant that webs with different content – political-ideological, cultural, socioeconomic, etc. – were mutually reinforcing. In addition, socioeconomic ties in particular were facilitated by the establishment of a mandate-wide no-customs area. Its effect was amplified by the mechanization, acceleration and expansion of ground transport. It was further strengthened (but also linked with renewed force especially to Egypt and Iraq) in World War II, when the occupying Allied forces in the Middle East adopted an autarkic economic policy.

* * *

The socioeconomic relations created by the factors mentioned above were catalyzed as well as structured by the division of the Levant into countries with different economies. How did this structure look like? To answer that question, we first need to outline the economy of the late Ottoman Levant, a mainly agricultural region that included some manufacturing centers too. Around 1850 – shortly after European powers had forced the Ottoman Empire to drastically lower its customs barriers – Beirut had eclipsed rival ports Tripoli, Sidon and Acre to become the Levant’s principal international port and trade hub. In the Levant, Beirut traded mostly with the narrow north-south coastal plain, the Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (the center of two north-south ranges paralleling the coast), the Bekaa Valley dividing them and, furthest east, the former Ottoman vilayat (province) Damascus. The city had been powerful enough to convince Istanbul, in 1863, to build a modern road across two mountain ranges to Damascus and, in 1888, to change the Levant’s map, creating a vilayat Beirut that governed the coastal plain from Latakia to Jaffa. Some Beirut merchants invested money outside trade. In the Mount Lebanon, some dealt with the cash crop silk; others bought agricultural land, for instance in the Marj ibn Amer (Jezreel) Valley east of Haifa. Roughly in between these areas lay the Galilee and the Jabal ‘Amil. Together with the Jawlan Heights and Irbid (in today the north-western-most part of Jordan), these formed a hilly agro-
nomadic area that local traders, many based in Marjayoun, linked to outside centers.\textsuperscript{30} The main center, Damascus, was situated between the Anti-Lebanon and the Syrian Desert. Like Aleppo, to its north, Damascus' standing as a manufacturing center and international caravan trade hub had been undercut by European goods starting in the 1840s and by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, respectively. However, both cities maintained middle-distance trade, Damascus for example with Nablus and Cairo and, especially during the Hajj through caravans and since 1908 through the Hijaz railway, with Medina. Also, both cities penetrated their hinterlands more thoroughly, Aleppo mainly in central, northern and eastern Syria, Anatolia and northern Iraq. Damascus in central and southern Syria, northern Palestine and Jordan. They exported textiles and other goods produced by their somewhat revived, leaner manufacturers. In return, they imported and re-exported (mostly through Beirut) animal and agricultural products, which in Damascus included grains from the nearby fertile Hawran plain.\textsuperscript{31} Also, by the late 1800s, Damascene merchants, taking advantage of Istanbul's tribal pacification east of the Jordan River, started to settle in towns like Irbid and Karak and to buy land. Merchants from Palestine's trade hub and soap manufacturing center Nablus, in Palestine's hilly heartland, did the same in towns like Salt.\textsuperscript{32} But Nablus itself, though still well connected to Damascus and Egypt, was losing ground to the rising coastal towns Jaffa and Haifa.\textsuperscript{33}

In short, the late Ottoman Levant was an economically diverse place composed of linked hubs and areas. The resulting hierarchies, together with new developments, explain the structures of the Levant's socioeconomic division-integration pattern after 1918. In Lebanon, France buttressed Beirut's role as the Levant's leading international trade hub and the French mandates' financial service center and, to a lesser degree, the site for many of Lebanon's few modern factories (it did little for Lebanon's largest economic sector, agriculture, or for traditional manufacturing). Beirut's expanding suburban slums absorbed much of Mountain Lebanon's poor surplus population, which was joined by other Lebanese and some Syrian peasants and by Armenian refugees. Some of the city's merchants continued to invest in the mountain's declining silk production and maintained trade with Lebanon's agricultural north, east and south and with Palestine. There, however, many sold lands to Zionist organizations. Indeed, it was Syria that remained Beirut's premier trade partner, connected through improved and expanded roads and railways.\textsuperscript{34} As for Lebanon's agricultural areas, they maintained strong cross-border connections, not the least because Beirut's merchants and France neglected them. In the north, Akkar was linked both to Tripoli and to the coastal plain south of Tartus and Safita; in the east, the Bekaa Valley looked to Syria – especially Damascus, Homs and Hama – as much as to Beirut; in the south, the Jabal 'Amil remained part of the Jabal-'Amil-Galilee-Jawlan-Irbid agro-nomadic area.\textsuperscript{35}

In Syria, agriculture continued to be the main economic sector, receiving a little more attention from the French and from Syrian investors than in Lebanon. At the same time, industrial-type manufacturing continued to grow, mainly in Aleppo and Damascus. Workshops and a few dozen factories produced textiles as well as other goods like cement and food conserves.\textsuperscript{36} Capital was limited, however, a handicap that Syria's economic elites somewhat lowered by raising money abroad. Thus, Palestinians and Lebanese invested repeatedly in Syrian factory shares.\textsuperscript{37} Meanwhile, Syrian workers' and peasants' low wages made Syrian goods competitive,\textsuperscript{38} also in Palestine and in the mandate no-customs area in general. Still, times were difficult even for manufacturers and traders. Besides upheavals like the 1925-
27 revolt, Syria was hit hard by the Ottoman Levant’s division. Declining trade with Iraq was bad. Worse was Turkey’s high customs barrier, cutting off Aleppo from its Anatolian hinterland. The damage was somewhat eased by smuggling, tacitly encouraged by France, and by increased exports to the mandate no-customs area as well as to Egypt and overseas. The Levant’s division hit Damascus, too. But it continued exporting to the West and especially in the 1920s to Egypt. It also was perfectly positioned to use the mandate no-customs area, which covered its entire Ottoman-time economic hinterland: central and southern Syria but also eastern Lebanon, northern Palestine and northern Transjordan.

Indeed, Syrian merchants especially from Damascus continued moving to Transjordan. They were attracted by Britain’s and the Hashemite emir Abdallah’s continuation of the late Ottoman tribal settlement policy and agricultural investments. Coming from the north, they mingled with local merchants mainly in Transjordan’s northern half, in towns like Mafraq, Irbid, Karak, Salt and in Amman, the country’s small but mushrooming capital. Their Palestinian counterparts moved along west-east axes. Tiberian merchants dealt with Irbid; Nabulsi and Jerusalemite traders came especially to Salt and Amman, Khalilis (from Hebron) to Ma’an and Amman. They earned some money from transit trade between Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Palestine, and profited from increasing husbandry and agricultural exports and manufactured goods imports from and through Syria and Palestine.39

Of all four Levantine mandates, it was Palestine that changed most dramatically. The late Ottoman bureaucratic-landowning notable elite continued to dominate politics, protecting its status through the sale of crops and some lands and by dabbling in trade and manufacturing.40 But in the 1930s, an entrepreneurial middle class matured that expanded the export especially of citrus fruits to the West, entered manufacturing and invested in urban construction. These developments took place mainly in the coastal plain, including its two largest cities, Jaffa and Haifa. Nabulsi producers and traders of olive oil and soap continued to play an important national and regional role, but their city and Palestine’s hilly heartland in general continued losing economic power to the coast.41 And as British attempts to help peasants stay put largely failed in the face of rising peasant debts and some Zionist land purchases, peasants’ labor migration followed the same geo-economic trend. Another – indeed the most important – reason for Palestine’s economic change was the growth of the Yishuv, which since the early 1930s experienced massive immigration and investments by mainly European Jewish immigrants, by the Jewish Agency and affiliated Zionist executive organizations, and by foreign investors, many Jewish. In Palestine, these changes increased consumption, energized industrialization especially in and around the coastal cities Haifa and Tel Aviv as well as agriculture, boosted citrus fruits exports to the West, and triggered a strategic attempt to create a separate Jewish labor, production and consumption market.42

There were consequences for the Levant too. European Jews working in agriculture or industry expected higher living standards than Palestinians, thus earning more than them and, incidentally, their Levantine counterparts. In consequence, Zionist products were costly, relatively speaking. Some Jews – those who had money and/or ideological fervor – paid up. Still, in a relatively poor immigrant society, there was much demand for cheap ‘non-Jewish’ products. This demand magnetized Arab producers and exporters in Palestine and across the Levant’s no-customs area, all the more so because the massive Jewish immigration of the 1930s was only partly met by increased Zionist production.43 But the thriving Yishuv, and Arab Palestine, attracted not only goods. People came too. Some were merchants and
entrepreneurs, others white-collar professionals. But most arrivals – overall tens of thousands – were destitute peasants-turned-day wage laborers from the Hawran and Transjordan and slightly better off though still poor ‘Amili peasants, including young women. They came, sometimes left again, or commuted seasonally throughout the mandate era. But it appears that arrivals peaked twice. In the early to mid-1930s, especially Hawrani and Transjordanian peasants, devastated by the Great Depression and a protracted drought, were drawn to booming Palestine. In World War II, British army production facilities working overtime attracted also non-Palestinian Arab laborers. Labor migration to mandate Palestine – as well as to other Levantine cities like Beirut and, crucially for the Hawran, to nearby Damascus – followed Ottoman-time patterns. In this sense, it was all but normal. On the other hand, regional labor migration grew and its nature shifted. In the Galilee, some Hawarneh (Hawrani, pl.) tilled patches of land of peasants who had migrated to cities. But most immigrants settled in cities, often living in terrible conditions and performing the toughest jobs for a pittance for the British, Palestinians and Jews alike. They were integrated into the very bottom of Palestine’s booming economy (to this day, Israelis call a person who looks shabby and eats in haste a Hurani). They thus are a good if sad illustration that the Levant’s national economies were in fact very regional. A last aspect of this fact, as far as the Yishuv is concerned, was the export to its Levantine neighbors of certain goods that were not produced or much more expensive there. Together with Syrian exports to the Yishuv, this pattern created a fascinating rivalry between two ‘national economies,’ both of which wanted to both protect themselves and dominate the regional market. This competition at times involved also Lebanon and Transjordan, included the first boycotts of Zionist products and especially in the Yishuv featured a partly successful attempt to have people buy ‘national’ products.

* * *

Socioeconomic relations make us look not only beyond the nation but also beyond the region. The Levant’s integration was partly driven by its division into mandate areas that were British and French, and by the British and French empires’ global geo-strategy and regional economic rivalry. The latter factors helped shape the regional effect of a new technology: cars. Automobile transport promised to ease the damage wrought by the Suez Canal by energizing trade from Iran and Iraq to the Levant and, more important, overseas. Everybody – from the mandate High Commissioners to national politicians, traders and truck drivers – wanted a slice of the pie. The French mandates had a head-start. The largest old caravan routes, upgraded to roads, linked Iraq’s Mosul to Syria’s Aleppo and Baghdad to Damascus; their distances were shorter than roads to Transjordan; and they continued to ports in Syria and Lebanon, principally Beirut, rather than to Palestine. French mandate officials valued the contribution of this trade to their meager budget; their superiors in the Quai d’Orsay thought it could not hurt France’s tenuous strategic position between the Mediterranean and Indochina. Meanwhile, Britain did not sit by. In the early 1930s, it started modernizing a road from Iraq via Mafraq and Irbid in northern Transjordan to Haifa (trailed by the British-controlled Iraq Petroleum Company’s (IPC) Mediterranean-bound pipeline, built from 1932-34) and in 1937, it revised the Palestinian-Iraqi trade agreement to further
attract Iraqi transit traders. These steps served imperial interests: they reinforced ties between countries that were ruled by or allied with London and that secured the eastern flank of a British-controlled global trade chokepoint, the Suez Canal.

But they happened to affect the Levant too. Although Iraqi and Iranian goods in transit were of secondary importance to the Levant’s overall trade, the imperial politics of transit trade could only encourage regional socioeconomic integration. After World War I, some traders in Palestine received Iraqi (and Iranian and Turkish) goods through Syria; from the 1930s onwards, Lebanese and Syrians sometimes received Iraqi and Iranian goods via Transjordan. Integration was supported by another case of French and British imperial geo-strategy and regional economic rivalry. As mentioned, after 1918 Beirut remained the Levant’s unchallenged premier trade hub, which France buttressed by making the city its mandate area’s capital and the French navy’s eastern Mediterranean headquarter, and by investing in the port and in Beirut-bound railways and roads. In the early 1930s, however, the mushrooming Zionist investments and Palestinian businesses in Palestine received an extra boost in Haifa when London made two geo-strategic decisions. It expanded Haifa’s port to improve its trade capacity and its role as an eastern Mediterranean British navy base, and chose it as a IPC pipeline terminus-cum-refinery. Together with the city’s role as rail hub between Damascus and Cairo and as terminus of roads from Damascus, Transjordan and Iraq, these steps made Haifa a serious rival of Beirut. It increasingly attracted business also from and Damascus and the Hawran breadbasket, which were connected to it by roads and, since 1905, by a lateral line of the Hijaz railway. As a result, in Beirut, France was forced into a costly second port expansion. Across the Levant, integration, while basically driven by regional socioeconomics, was further encouraged by London’s imperial geo-strategic decisions about Haifa. More even than Palestine in general, that city attracted increasing numbers of entrepreneurs, traders, and laborers from across the Levant and beyond it.

Socioeconomic integration was reinforced by another ‘fact of empire,’ as it were: the Levant’s division into a British and a French mandate area. No doubt, this act did have divisive economic consequences. Although the League of Nations forbid mandate powers to economically favor their own nationals – importantly, a mandate country’s customs rate needed to be levied equally on imports from all League of Nations member states – reality was more muddled. Also, British and French traders dealing with the Levant naturally tended to be more comfortable in ‘their’ respective area (which however did not mean that they limited themselves to it). For this reason, and because London and Paris sometimes applied low customs rates to certain goods imported to the metropole from their mandates, traders and producers in Palestine and Jordan tended to have specially good relations with British counterparts. The same was true for Syrian and Lebanese traders’ connections to Frenchmen. On the other hand, however, this division encouraged commerce in imported British and French (and other foreign) goods between traders based in the French respectively the British mandate area. And the simple fact that British and French mandate areas levied differing customs rates on non-mandate goods made the smuggling of such goods between Transjordan/Palestine and Syria/Lebanon all but common-place.

The consequences of World War II for the Levant’s division-integration pattern is a last example of the ‘empire effect.’ The nature of this effect changed, however. Franco-British political and economic rivalry gave way to a military confrontation that pitched Britain and a junior US ally against Italy and Germany.
In North Africa, British, Commonwealth and US troops confronted and in 1943 forced to surrender the Axis, with Vichy-controlled Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia playing a minor role. In the Levant, Britain occupied Vichy-held Lebanon and Syria in 1941 and co-administered it, often in hidden competition, with Free French Forces. Across the Middle East, the Allies’ major economic challenge was to help free, for the war, resources outside the Middle East and to counteract the effects of reduced international trade by raising and controlling regional production and trade. They tackled this challenge in 1941 by establishing the Middle East Supply Center (MESC), which was headquartered in Cairo, with a Beiruti branch (the so-called Spears Mission) responsible for the Levant.\textsuperscript{55} The MESC’s dirigiste policy of economic autarky relied on and further developed extant social webs of entrepreneurs and merchants. It plugged the Levant with renewed force into other Middle Eastern countries, most importantly Iraq and Egypt. But it also deepened the Levant’s internal socioeconomic integration by raising regional production, consumption, trade and investment. While the war ruined a few people, it made many fortunes and benefited even poor people, some of whom found work in the many newly established factories. Structurally, it strengthened gray and black markets and accelerated the industrialization and the regional reach especially of the Yishuv and Syria.\textsuperscript{56}

But the war-time increase of national economic production capacities – together with the independence of Lebanon (1943), Syria (1943/46) and Jordan (1946), and intensifying post-war political tensions between the Yishuv and the Arabs – also prepared the ground for the post-war disintegration of the regional division-integration pattern examined here. As I will outline in the Postscript of this book, the structural inequalities of the various areas of the mandate Levant were reaching a breaking point, with the post-independence regional economy looking considerably – though by no means totally – different from the mandate period.\textsuperscript{57}

*  *  *

In the last two sections, I have outlined how empires and national economies played out in the Levant’s socioeconomic division-integration pattern. Or have not I? As far as national economies are concerned, I certainly did talk about “the Yishuv” or “Syria,” for example. And it is true that in each mandate country, cut-up parts of several late Ottoman economic areas were stitched together into one national economy that was subject to one state policy. But the language I used to describe the structures and hierarchies of regional division-integration has a geographical inflection. This inflection was not limited to nation or empire: I for example underlined Beirut’s role as the Levant’s premier trade hub or mentioned the axis between Nablus and Salt. In short, while starting this Introduction by looking beyond the nation, to the region, I ended up looking also below the nation.\textsuperscript{58} After 1918, socioeconomic actors often operated inside late Ottoman economic areas that did not match the new national territories. Hence, integration often happened along cross-border axes that tied together ‘sub-national’ locales.

An example? In the 1930s, the shore of Haifa east of its harbor witnessed the establishment and rapid expansion of a slum neighborhood called Harat al-tanak, ‘tin quarter.’ It was populated by thousands of
destitute labor migrants; many others lived elsewhere in Haifa, not the least on its streets. They came from the Palestinian interior as well as from adjacent countries, especially the southwestern Syrian region Hawran. As mentioned above, these Hawarneh were attracted by Palestine’s booming economy and propelled out of their homes by a protracted drought (that sent many of them also to adjacent cities like Damascus). But there is an additional reason why in Palestine, Haifa was a preferred destination: some Hawarneh had started flocking to Haifa when in 1905 the Ottomans linked the rising port city to the Dera (Hawran) station of the Hijaz Railway.

The Hawarneh’s concentration in Haifa illustrates that the Levant’s division-integration pattern had a geographical logic that often unfolded along cross-border axes between ‘sub-national’ locales. It also shows how unequally structured that pattern was, how in each country, there were stronger and weaker actors, areas that led and others that bled. In the 1930s, for instance, even the poorest worker in Damascus probably fared better than most peasants in the Hawran.

Then again, appearances can be deceptive. I have noted further above that mandate authorities (and local entrepreneurs) invested more in national core areas than border peripheries. As a result, those remained marginalized and relatively speaking underdeveloped. But as most borders were only thinly policed, they themselves were the silver lining in the dark cloud hanging over them. To use one example, the Jabal ‘Amil-Galilee-Jawlan area linked the cannabis and opium poppy fields of Lebanon, Syria and Turkey with Egyptian narcotics users, and the now-diverging economies of new neighboring mandates created demands that were met not the least by smuggler-suppliers from across the border. While seen from a country’s core area, a border area was an isolated periphery, together these peripheries formed transit hubs for regional trade. The fact that a substantial part of this trade was gray or black highlights that there was a geographic logic also to different types of the Levant’s economy.

The above argument that socioeconomic connections often happened between ‘sub-national’ locales has an additional aspect: the role of religious and ethnic affiliation. There are two sides to this issue. On the one hand, these affiliations retained a certain importance especially for trade. Thus, Christian traders quite often dealt with each other inside and across new national boundaries. In fact, their ties tended to become tighter (and more secular) through the expansion of Christian denominational clubs in many towns and cities of the mandate Levant. Also, for political reasons, Jewish traders and entrepreneurs in the Yishuv often had Christian rather than Muslim partners in the Arab Levant. On the other hand, in trade and in the economy in general, ‘everything went,’ as it were. Poor migrant laborers did not have the luxury to pick and choose their employers. In border areas, traditional ties between denominations not only persisted but were strengthened by the slow but steady expansion of local motorized transport. This development affected longer-distance inter-city traders too – not the least in gray and black markets. But for the purpose of this book, the crux of the matter is that both intra- and inter-denominational ties were manifestations of how it was often sub-national locales, rather than simply national units, that created a larger regional socioeconomic pattern.

All this does not mean that ‘the national’ played no role or that ‘national economies’ were a fiction. The boom of Zionist Haifa formed part of a national economic effort and many of the ‘Zionist’ products manufactured there were meant for the national Zionist market. Or to use a regional examples, the
national economic competition between the Yishuv and Syria that started in the 1930s pitched two nations against each other. To be more precise, it helped two societies to act and define themselves as nations.

* * *

This correction is a good starting point for reflecting how this book may contribute to ongoing historiographic debates beyond modern Middle Eastern history, most particularly about the nation and transnationalism. My original critique – that there are limitations to choosing nation-states as units of analysis – is hardly earth-shattering. As I have written elsewhere, it “underlies current debates about globalization and transnationalism.” Scholars now frame these as “dialectical process[es] of de- and re-territorialization,” or, in the words of Charles Maier, as the waxing and waning of territoriality: “the properties, including power, provided by the control of bordered political space, which . . . [from ca. 1860 to 1970] created the framework for national and often ethnic identity” around the globe. On a related note, Christopher Bayly and other scholars have argued that at least since the nineteenth century, regional and global historical processes have developed in constant interaction. Not unexpectedly, programmatic overviews of global history call for studies of interactions between “localization, regionalization, nationalization, and transnationalization.” Many transnational historians take a similar approach, analyzing cross-border (and often transcontinental) movements without “claim[ing] to embrace the whole world.” Some historians of particular regions and countries are following suit. Jürgen Kocka, for instance, maintains that 1989 caused a “double shift of spatial coordinates,” of region and nation-state, in Europe.

What is more, scholars have insisted that the transnational did not succeed, or emerge from, already established national frameworks. This point is thrown into relief by the mandate Levant. Here, local, nation-state and transnational regional (as well as international) processes unfolded simultaneously. Or did they? Well, they did – unfold simultaneously. But to my mind, the interesting question is how and why they constituted each other. I hope that this question can contribute something to the aforementioned debates. For now, I think that this something is the observation that to think beyond ‘the national,’ for instance to ‘the regional,’ ultimately forces us to look below ‘the national,’ to ‘the local.’ There is no doubt that today’s world – where real and virtual transnational movements get ever more easy, cheap and prevalent – is driving home the importance of looking beyond the nation. Still, the voice of historians who have simply written off the national has peaked (a trend that was sped up by current events, namely the role of sovereign nation-states in the recent economic crisis). But my observation sidesteps this national-versus-transnational historiographic debate, not by adding one more geographical layer but by arguing that layers constitute each other and hence are not fully distinguishable.

* * *

13
This argument translates into a practical problem, however. It is easy to state that the local, national and regional are mutually constitutive. But how to research and explain this situation and the underlying division-integration pattern? One could either ‘go macro’ or ‘micro,’ focus on the big picture or on a snippet, ask ‘what was the overall structure?’ or ‘how did division-integration function in one locale?’. But because I think of this book as an experimental tool to argue against and think with, posing questions as much as providing answers, I will try to combine these two approaches.

To do so with maximum clarity, however, I will focus on social webs and their underlying personal relationships at some times, and at other times take a step back and chart larger socioeconomic structures. In the first two chapters – one a historical analysis of the Levant’s socioeconomic situation in the very late Ottoman era; the other a study of the division-integration pattern in administrative practices – this zooming in and out happens inside each chapter. To a degree, this is true also for the third through the sixth chapters, on socioeconomics. At the same time, these form a unit of sorts. It starts with a chapter mainly of up-close shots, continues with a chapter that, while still staying close to the ground, starts to zoom out, peaks in a chapter that is mainly a panorama and ends with a chapter that combines the two approaches. Thematically, the third chapter dissects social webs, mainly of merchants and entrepreneurs; the fourth concerns labor migration; the fifth maps out the overall socioeconomic structure, including the geo-economic competition especially between the Yishuv and Syria; and in the sixth and last chapter, I take a step aside to look at the division-integration pattern from the perspective of material culture and its politics.

I develop each chapter by way of cases that cover all four Levant countries, urban and rural spaces and border and core areas. My hope is that they will add up to a preliminary but sound study of the division-integration pattern. Still, many things will fall by the wayside. While women appear in my story, gender as an analytical category does not. I lack the theoretical tools, and to drop references here and there would be superficial if not disingenuous. Second, I spend little time exploring the mandate Levant’s neighbors, most importantly Iraq and Turkey (I pay some attention to Egypt). This is problematic especially for Levantine locales that, like Aleppo, were strongly connected to these lands in the late Ottoman period. It also means that empirically (though not of necessity conceptually), my study cannot simply be applied to spheres other than socioeconomics. Egypt for instance played a central role in culture – music, film, literature – in the mandate Levant too, and sturdy ideological-political tied Iraq to the Levant. Still, I believe that my parameters are practical and sound. To make sense, a story needs boundaries. Mine holds that as far as socioeconomic and administrative relations (and to a degree politics) were concerned, the mandate Levant functioned as a region.

To tell that story I use various sources: newspapers, books and maps; pictures; archival sources from France and Great Britain, from Israel, Lebanon and Syria, and from the USA; and dozens of interviews conducted in all four Levantine countries, almost all with people born in the 1930s or earlier. To be frank, I first decided to conduct interviews because it excites me to see where people live and to hear their stories. But as time went by, I also more and more appreciated how recurrent stories can question or add nuance to official perspectives (for example, I understood only after many interviews, rather than
only by reading archival documents, just how porous the ‘Amili-Galilean-Jawlan-Irbid border area was but also what its glass ceiling looked like).

This point is doubly important because the archival material talks about some populations more than others, and because archives are unequally distributed. The British and French colonial archives in London (Public Records Office), Nantes and Paris (Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères) and Vincennes (Service historique de l’Armée de terre) are key to this book. But they as well as the archives in the Levant countries tend to cover core areas and politicians more than peripheries and regular citizens, including even merchants. Interviews help to redress this inequality. Also, for various reasons, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine have fewer and less developed archives than Israel. While this inequality is somewhat attenuated by the availability of material about the Arab inhabitants of the mandate Levant in Israeli archives, it is important to further even the odds – and a good way of doing so is interviewing people.

This poses methodological challenges, however. In my case, those are the Levant’s history since its countries’ independence and the usual problems related to the interplay between interviewer and interviewee. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians have had very different fortunes in the last sixty years. The Palestinians, Lebanon and Syria have gone through upheavals that, although very different in nature, all make finding certain kinds of people difficult. The nakba did not quite empty the Galilean border area, but it did almost root out the mercantile and entrepreneurial middle class. In Lebanon, many old people still live in the rural Jabal ‘Amil and the Bekaa Valley, for instance, and are easy to interview. But the 1975-91 civil war destroyed dozens after dozens of family archives in larger cities like Beirut and fueled the exodus of merchants and entrepreneurs. Many of their Syrian counterparts left their hometowns during the nationalization of the 1960s, and even before 2011 people found were often reluctant to talk. All of this does not mean that interviewees cannot be located. But it makes getting to them – mainly in various Arab countries, Europe and the Americas – more difficult. In comparison, Jordan and Israel have been relatively stable in the last sixty years. They suffered political crises and wars, for sure, but no protracted civil wars and nationalization campaigns. Hence, in both countries I easily found people from various walks of life who were willing to talk.

Me being a Swiss with an Iranian passport, who taught at the American University of Beirut and speaks Arabic has an effect on Palestinian, Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese interviewees. While I am not one of them and thus not fully trustworthy, I also am not a total outsider. The same holds for Jewish Israeli interviewees who understand that I am not Israeli but hear me speak Hebrew and – if they ask – learn that I have family in their homeland. But what does ‘having an effect’ mean exactly? For one, not many interviewees tell stories that directly involve them in ‘wrongdoings’ (although in border areas, for instance, more than one has had no compunction talking about smuggling as an everyday matter). Would I be one of them and/or live amongst them for a protracted period of time, I may hear more pointed stories. Similarly, because my persona helps shape the information and interpretations I receive, my own interpretative ability is limited. Still, I feel comfortable to assert that my interviews deliver usable information. I have interviewed dozens of people, which allows me to see patterns and come up with some interpretations that appear better than others. Also, ‘my’ period ended sixty years ago and thus is less likely to elicit ideologically tinged responses than the present. And perhaps most
importantly, I skirt politically sensitive topics, asking questions about everyday life that are for the most part very concrete: ‘with families in which locality did you have social and marriage ties?’, say, or ‘to which town’s market did you go Fridays?’

* * *

“To Bint Jbeil,” in Lebanon, answered Abu Rafiq Mahmud Hussein Sabeq when I interviewed him in 2010. He was born in Hurfesh, a Druze village now situated at Israel’s border to Lebanon, in 1907 – a good decade before the end of the Ottoman empire. His family’s visits of Bint Jbail’s Friday market when he was a boy continued after the Levant’s division. They were not exceptional. After 1918, people across the region continued routine trips and maintained social ties and economic connections that now happened to cross borders. What these routines had looked like and what kind of socioeconomic structure they had formed in the late Ottoman Empire: that is the subject of the next chapter.

---

1 This is the first draft of an Introduction to a book of the same title. I have written this draft in the form of an extended outline of my book and its central arguments.
2 Picture: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Eran Reshef. Paintings 2000-2011 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2011), 21. I would like to thank Dalit Matatyahu, a curator at the museum, for showing me around the different collections the day of my visit.
3 Interview with Cecil Hourani, September 9, 2008, Marjayoun, Lebanon.
4 Phone conversation with Cecil Hourani, August 8, 2011. Photo of the refrigerator sent by Cecil Hourani to the author, October 5, 2011.
5 Palestine was British occupied in 1917/18; became a British League of Nations mandate in 1920, and gained independence as Israel 1948; British mandate Transjordan, split from Palestine in 1921, became independent 1946; Lebanon was occupied by France in 1918, became a mandate in 1920 and reached independence in 1943; Syria, under Arab nationalist Hashemite rule 1918, was occupied by France in 1920, became a mandate and became independent in 1943/46. For the Franco-British World War I understanding behind the division of the post-Ottoman Levant, see “The Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 15–16, 1916),” in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict (London, 2008), 13–16.
6 Interview with Shulamit Yaari, April 7, 2010, Neve Efal, Israel.
7 This is also very often the view of people from younger generations, notably in Syria. Thus, after I interviewed the Hawrani Fayez Nasrallah (August 5, 2009, Suweida, Syria), who had worked in Jaffa from 1945-48, one of his daughters called him up; she told me “my father is an example for how people from everywhere in Bilad al-Sham would move around. It was one country.”
8 Interview with Tannus Salim Sayyah, June 5, 2007, Alma Sha’ab, Lebanon.

11 For the mentioning of smuggling, see for instance James Gelvin, Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 119, 132; Frank Peter, “Dismemberment of Empire and Reconstitution of Regional Space: The Emergence of ‘National’ Industries in Damascus between 1918 and 1946,” in Méouchy and Sluglett, eds., British and French Mandates, 422.


Thus, the title of the article “Asaba fi shumal,” Al-Urdu (August 21, 1926), p.6, very matter of factly referred not to the north of Jordan but to Aleppo in northern Syria. A decade later, the same newspaper documented Jordanians’ donations to Palestine during the Palestine Revolt: see e.g. “l’anat al-Zarqa li-mankubi Filastin,” Al-Urdu (June 9, 1936), p.4.
This regional perspective on state formation has various side effects, too. Most important, it forces us to take a closer look at how colonial and local administrative practices acted on the ground and to think about the role of the environment in state formation.

They also make us see with fresh eyes what we already know. While it is certainly true that colonial officials enjoyed great decision-making power, the connectedness of the Levant, i.e. the fact that one country’s economy and people was firmly linked to others’, acted as a powerful break on their freedom of action. And although politics in the mandates often was about nationalist struggles for independence from Paris and London, my socioeconomic focus shows that in the Levant too, politics was also about what, why, and how – a broad realm in which an ‘us-against-them’ logic was not necessarily dominant.

For the “locally integrated regions” in Bilad ash-Sham in the 18th and early 19th centuries, see Thomas Philipp, “Identities and loyalties in Bilād ash-Shām at the beginning of the early modern period,” in idem and Christoph Schumann, eds., From the Syrian Land to the State of Syria and Lebanon, 9-26.

With the exception of Juniyeh, the port of the Mutasarrifiya Mount Lebanon.

30 Services Spéciaux, Liban Sud, “Dossier politique I: Description générale: Géographie économique,” August 1931, box 2201, MAE-Nantes; Mostafa Bazzi, Al-takamul al-iqtisadi baina Jabal ‘Amil va muhitih al-l’arabi, 1859–1950 (Beirut: Dar Al-Mawasim lil-Tiba‘ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi‘, 2002); Mervin, Réformisme chiite, ch.2. See also Hanna Hardan al-Khuri, al Akhbar al-shahiyya ‘an al-l’iyyal al-marjayuniyya va al-taimiyya (Marjayoun: n.p, 1963). Information comes also from interviews in southern Lebanon and northern Israel. See e.g. interview with Cecil Hourani, September 9, 2008, Marjayoun, Lebanon and interview with Fayek Hourani, September 12, 2008, Beirut, Lebanon, about Marjayoun-based merchants who were active also in Palestine, the Jawlan, and northwestern Transjordan; interview with Jamal Abu Murad, September 9, 2008, Marjayoun, Lebanon, about a Marjanouni tailor who worked also in northern Palestine, mainly for Jewish women; interview with Maryam Mizal, April 27, 2010, Aramsheh, Israel, for the western sector of the Palestinian-Lebanese border; or interview with Hamhud Musa Hussein Nimr Hib, April 28, 2010, Tuba, Israel, about the linkage with the Jawlan region; interview with Lucine Taminian, June 22, 2011, Amman, Jordan, about the northern Transjordanian-Palestinian border.


34 For an overview, see Schayegh, “Abud Yasin,” 286-289, including N52.


ociété syrienne, esp. ch.1; Khalaf, –

For Syria, see Peter, Nation, 190; memoirs and biographies of Syrian personalities central to the development of economic nationalism with a regional twist include Umayyah al-Za‘im, Muhammad Sa‘d al-Za‘im: rajul al-iqtisad wa-l-adaab, 1905-1963 (Damascus: Matabi’ Alif-ba, 1996); Fakhri al-Barudi, Mudhakkirat (Beirut: Matabi’ Dar al-Hayah, 1951); Abd al-Rahman al-Kayyali, Al-marahil fi-intidab al-faransi wa-fi-nidalina al-watani 4 vols. (Aleppo: Matba‘at al-Dad, 1958-60). In the Yishuv, David Horowitz, Ha-kalkala ha-aretz israelit be-hitpathuta (Tel-Aviv: n.p., 1943), Alfred Bonné, Eretz Israel: ha-aretz ve-ha-kalkala (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1937) [original German edition 1935], and


Peter, Nation, 156. See also George Hakim, Labor conditions in Syria (Geneva: ILO, 1932).

Compare fn31. In Amman, I interviewed various merchant families that had immigrated from Syria and Palestine to Jordan in the interwar period. Damascus: see e.g. interview with Hamdi Tabba’a, June 21, 2011, Amman, Jordan, and interview with Marwan al-Hamawi, June 21, 2011, Amman, Jordan (whose father had first moved to Mafraq); Jerusalem: interview with Mufid Bashiti, June 14, 2011, Amman, Jordan.


Krämer, History of Palestine, 186, 243-49; Seikaly, “Meatless Days;” Seikaly, Haifa; LeVine, Overthrowing Geography; Nadan, Palestinian Peasant Economy, esp. ch.1; Khalaf, Politics in Palestine; Stein, The Land Question, esp. ch.5.

Metzer, Divided Economy; Bar’el and Karlinsky, eds., Kalkalah ve-hevrakah; Karlinsky, Perihat ha-hadar; Bernstein, Constructing Boundaries; a concise overview is Krämer, History of Palestine, 239-40.

See e.g. boxes S25/7377, S25/7378, S25/7379 and S25/10169, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel (hereafter, CZA), about the Jewish Agency’s thinking about trade with and exports from Syria. The main Syrian and Lebanese exports were agricultural product; for an interview with a Jewish wholesale importer who started working in the 1940s through Beirut, see interview with Shmuel Rabinow, April 15, 2010, Haifa, Israel. From the mid-1930s onwards, these imports came under some pressure by the Yishuv’s political and economic leaders, who wanted to raise production and decrease imports; for an analysis, see e.g. “Meshek ha-yerakot be-eretz Israel be-hitpathuto,” Ha-meshek ha-shitufi 4:4 (October 11, 1936): 273-75. This policy had a cultural dimension that took form even in songs such as “’Agvania” (Tomato) by Yehuda Karni and Yoel Engel.

For ‘Amili laborers picked up by the British police in Palestine, see Délégation générale de la France au Levant, Service politique, Bureau de Tyr, Bulletin d’information #28, July 22, 1944; interview with Lucine Taminian, June 22, 2011, who in the 1980s had interviewed two young ‘Amili women working in Haifa for a Jewish family and in Jaffa for a Greek Orthodox family, respectively, see interview with Rahma Saniyya, June 7, 2007, Aita Sha’ab, Lebanon, and interview with Aida Haddad-Fallaha, June 3, 2011, Mansouriyeh, Lebanon (whose maid, Kheiriyya, was from a ‘Amili village). For a Hawrani who worked in Jaffa from 1945-48, see interview with Fayez Nasrallah, August 5, 2009, Suweida, Syria; for Jordanian and Hawrani peasants laboring in the Jewish-owned Dead Sea potash factory, see interview with Abraham Hileli, April 7, 2010, Haifa, Israel, who worked there in 1944-45; interview with Lucine Taminian, June 22, 2011, who in the 1980s had done anthropological work in Jordanian villages on the Dead Sea and talked with various people who had worked in the potash factories until 1948; for the large number of Hawarneh and Jordanians laboring in port Haifa in the early 1930s (in winter 1934, for example, 1,100 out of 1,750 laborers), see the statistic “Po’alim yehudim ve-’aravim be-eretz Haifa, 1934-38,” file IV-250-7-2-319, Pinchas Lavon Institute for Labour Movement Research, Tel Aviv, Israel (hereafter, ILMR).

For example, in interview with Shiriban bint Nimr Ziyad – Abu Tarif, April 10, 2010, Yarka, Israel, she recalled that a part of the land in Yarka was called “Kaffat al-Hawarneh” and that the Hawarneh who labored in the village were extremely poor, normally living in the stables of Palestinian peasants for whom they worked.

Hence, Zionist protests then and now about Arab migration to Palestine neglect historical backgrounds and regional contexts and are disingenuous to boot.
Abraham Ulitzur, *Ha-hon ha-le’umi u-viniyan ha-aretz. ‘Uvdot ve-misperim* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1939) helped to conceptualize the ‘national market’ and its meaning. Bonné also wrote extensively on the regional economy; see e.g. Der neue Orient. *Eine Einführung in das wirtschaftliche und staatliche Werden der neuen Orientländer* (Tel Aviv: Hityahdut ‘Olei Germania, 1937); idem, *The Economic Development of the Middle East* (London: K. Paul, 1945); however, already in the 1920s, Zionists underlined Palestine’s central geo-mercantile position in the Levant and the Middle East more generally.

49 For the organization and culture of the Yishuv ‘buy national’ (Tozeret ha-aretz) campaign, see e.g. Ha-merkaz le-ma’an tozeret ha-aretz, *Madrikh le-tozeret ha-aretz*, 1936 (Tel Aviv: Zavieli Press, 1936), and a reading primer for children, Ha-merkaz le-ma’an tozeret ha-aretz, *Alef-bet tozeret artzenu* (Tel Aviv: Ahдут, n.d. [ca.1939]). For an example of Lebanese students trying to encourage the expansion of local industry, see “L’autourage et l’encouragement de l’industrie nationale,” *Commerce du Levant* (March 9, 1937), 2. The first Arab boycotts happened after the 1929 Wailing Wall incident. For subsequent years, see e.g. box M32/12 (‘Syrian boycott of Palestinian products’ [1934-34]), mandate files, Israel State Archive (hereafter, this collection as a whole is referred to as ISA); “Le boycottage des marchandises sionistes et l’encouragement de l’industrie nationale,” *Commerce du Levant* (January 1, 1937), 2; for an Arab critique, see “Syrie et Palestine: le boycottage va à l’encontre des intérêts de la Syrie,” *Commerce du Levant* (March 30, 1937), 1; see also “Hashpa’at ha-tnaim ha-mishkiim ‘al ha-iahasim ha-leumiim be-mizrah ha-tikhon,” *Ha-meshek ha-shitufi* 7:17-18 (November 14, 1939): 310-14. For the early post-World War II period, see e.g. box S52/22045-1t (‘Din ve-heshbon mi-et Kamil Beg Al-Shibiak ‘al-ha-pe’ulot she-‘asta memshleket Levanan, be-linian hahramat shura iheudit’) (1946), CZA.


51 For an early French report that also includes comments on the role of roads for security, see “Syrie: Les routes,” May 1924, 4H120 (Dossier 4), Service historique de l’Armée de terre, Vincennes, France (hereafter SHAT).

52 Regarding the road construction and certain tax exemptions and facilities granted, it is fascinating to see how traders tried to, and succeed in, playing the British against the French; see e.g. M86/48 and M86/49 (‘Grant of facilities to Haim Nathaniel’), ISA.

53 See e.g. “Beyrouth, Caïfa, et les voies d’accès en Irak et en Iran,” *Commerce du Levant* (June 22, 1937), 1.

54 This situation is reflected for instance in the number of agents active across the region; see e.g. The Palestine Association of Commission Agents, *Directory of Manufacturers’ Agents in Palestine*, 1938 (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1938), 17, 25, 27, 32, 36, 37, 43, 48, 50, 57, 62. See also interview with Aida Haddad-Fallaha, June 3, 2011, Mansouriyeh, Lebanon, whose family, traders in Jaffa, were partners with an Armenian trader in Beirut, selling him mainly British textiles.


57 For a MESC analysis of the reasons for black marketing, see MESC, ‘Organisation and present policy,’ p.29, London, December 28, 1942, FO371/35495, PRO. For Palestine, see also M54/32 (‘Prevention of hoarding’), ISA; see also the following satirical booklet: The Friends of the Black Market Society, *The Pocket Guide to the Black Market* (Jerusalem: No-permit Press, n.d. [during World War II]).

58 I clearly have not yet a precise enough understanding of the early post-World War II years.

59 Sometimes this meant staying within the nation; think of Beirut’s relationship with Mount Lebanon.

60 There were comparable (though smaller) slums also in other Palestinian cities, e.g. Jaffa.


63 Middell, “Der Spatial Turn und das Interesse an der Globalisierung,” 117. See also Saunier, “Learning by Doing,” 172.

64 “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” 1448.


67 I still have some archival research left, especially in courts; hitherto I have used, in Syria, the Markaz al-watha’iq al-tarikhiyya (as well as the Assad Library); in Jordan, the Central Library of the University of Jordan; and, in Lebanon, the state archives and the AUB, USJ and Kaslik libraries, treasure groves of newspapers and private papers. In Palestine, I hope to gain access to the Nablus Municipal Archive in January 2012. In Israel, I have used the Israel State, Central Zionist, Haganah, Histadrut, Tel Aviv municipality and Haifa municipality archives and the National and Jewish Library and have recently been getting access to business and company papers.