



A FACILITATED ACCESS MODEL AND OTTOMAN EMPIRE TOURISM

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Abstract: This paper proposes a “facilitated access” model to describe how local people make and have made use of tourism. Although Western travel accounts of the Arab Middle East have been studied by various disciplines, the Ottoman Empire has not been treated from a tourism studies approach. Travel narratives from 1835 to 1870 are used to reconstruct how, and tentatively why, Ottoman subjects adapted existing tourism services and expertise to the new Western tourists of the era. It is argued that Western tourism in the empire flourished in the foundational period before Cook Company tours began in 1869 because some Ottoman subjects could thus increase their own autonomy. **Keywords:** Ottoman Empire, tourism development, workers, travel writing. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Résumé: Un modèle d'accès facilité et le tourisme dans l'Empire ottoman. Cet article propose un modèle d'accès facilité pour décrire comment les habitants utilisent et ont utilisé le tourisme. Bien que les comptes rendus de voyages des Occidentaux au Moyen-Orient arabe aient été étudiés par divers disciplines, l'Empire ottoman n'a pas été traité avec une approche des études de tourisme. Des narrations de voyage entre 1835 et 1870 sont utilisées pour reconstituer comment et, de façon tentative, pourquoi les sujets ottomans ont adapté les services et l'expertise existants aux nouveaux touristes occidentaux de l'époque. On soutient que le tourisme occidental dans l'Empire a prospéré dans la période de début, avant le premier voyage organisé par l'agence Cook en 1869, parce que quelques sujets ottomans pouvaient ainsi augmenter leur propre autonomie. **Mots-clés:** Empire Ottoman, développement du tourisme, ouvriers, écrits de voyage. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was one of the most talked-about tourism destinations in the world. It was home to diverse communities of Arabs, Turks, ethnic-Greeks, Sudanese, and European expatriates. For centuries people from all these communities had been earning a living by providing transportation and hospitality related to family visits, intercity trade, and the seasonal political and leisure tourism of the Ottoman and Arab elites. Others tapped into the demand for pilgrimage experiences to Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem by offering hospitality and religious services to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim pilgrims from Asia, Africa, and Europe. For example, Jerusalem's main

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Figure 1. Easter Week, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem (ca. 1890)

business had long been religious tourism and souvenir production, and by 1900 approximately 11,000 Russians of very modest means visited the city yearly (Cohen-Hattab and Katz 2001; Doumani 1995; Katz 1985; Faroqhi 1994; Schölch 1993).

In those years, the Ottoman Empire also became especially significant to Western Europeans and Americans. The increasing practicality of tourism was crucial, facilitated as it was by new transportation technologies like steam shipping. In addition, related cultural developments in the West, such as the rise of evangelical Christianity and the new imperialism, coincided with phenomenal growth in Western information and entertainment industries, inspiring many to desire venturing overseas. Their experiences would provide the raw materials for newspapers, missionary periodicals, lyceum lectures, books, church sermons, and oral traditions depicting the empire. As travel narratives proliferated after 1830, in turn demand also increased for consumer products such as “Oriental” carpets and antiquities, as well as domestic theatre productions, mass produced illustrations, and dime museum

displays through which many more could explore their interest in Ottoman lands and peoples (Hoganson 2002; Schueller 1998; Sweetman 1988; Vincent 1993). The tourism that made such activity possible was practical and greatly enjoyable in large part because Middle Eastern entrepreneurs and service workers chose to make space in pre-existing networks for the new Western tourists they called *farangi*. This term was a colloquial Arabic equivalent to “Frank,” a word in turn denoting Europeans in the empire, long in use in India, relevant in the Ottoman Empire after the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1799. Western tourists called themselves Franks, while their Ottoman subjects commonly called them *farangi*. Local entrepreneurs and service workers would be successful enough in accommodating these tourists that by 1869 the Thomas Cook Company could profit from coopting part of the growing demand in order to provide guided tours in the empire (Brendon 1991; Hunter 2003; Swinglehurst 1982).

Although the cultural products associated with Western tourism in the 19th century Middle East have been studied by scholars in various disciplines, Ottoman tourism itself has only once been examined from tourism’s perspectives (Cohen-Hattab and Katz 2001). To further an understanding of the nature of the industry, this study puts local workers at the center of analysis as active historical agents who sought to shape Ottoman tourism to their own advantage. This research is aided by the most current scholarly work on Middle Eastern history and anthropological studies of tourist/host interaction describing tourism as a process of exchange between local people and foreign tourists. Travel narratives are used to examine the function of workers and entrepreneurs in the Arab Ottoman Empire, specifically Egypt, Greater Syria, Palestine, and Arabia Petraea—today the modern states of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. This is a broad region to be sure, but one that tourists tended to experience as a unit during a single voyage lasting several months. Thus, Ottoman subjects in all these regions encountered similar opportunities in gaining access to Western European and American customers.

The study begins by identifying problems in earlier treatments of Ottoman travel narratives, which have operated from what this project terms a “foreign intrusion and control” model to suggest that local people were exploited by American and Western European tourists. Instead, an alternative “facilitated access” model is proposed. In the context of the political changes of 19th century Ottoman Empire and Western tourism, the article sets out to provide an overview of how host subjects cultivated the activities of European and American tourists. Using a facilitated access model, this research offers tentative explanations for why Western tourism blossomed in the early 19th-century Ottoman Empire.

FACILITATED ACCESS AND OTTOMAN EMPIRE TOURISM

The existing literature on Western tourists in the Ottoman Empire proceeds from a cultural studies or literary analysis perspective. Almost

without exception, all of this work examines Western cultural products emanating from tourism in the 19th-century Middle East in order to produce detailed analyses of the experiences, perceptions, and ideologies solely of Western authors (Barrell 1991; Caesar 1988; Dann 1999; Kabbani 1986; Melman 1992; Obeidat and Mumayiz 2003; Obenzinger 1999, 2003; Pratt 1992; Queen 1996; Said 1978, 1993; Schueller 1998; Ziff 2000). Even the most sympathetic of these leave utterly silent the local people who actually made such adventures possible. Often this occurs because most of this work sets out explicitly to critique 19th-century European expansion and colonialism. As Campbell suggests, scholars thus attempting to reconstruct situations of intercultural interaction can often operate under “a teleological fallacy: knowledge of the later outcome of contact influences perception of the nature of early contact, . . . a history of displacement gives rise to explanations of first contact couched in terms of aggression and intrusion” (Campbell 2003:63). Collectively such research proceeds implicitly from what can be termed a “foreign intrusion and control” model of contact that proposes Westerners will always impose themselves on helpless local people. While this model may suit some situations in which indigenous people were carefully excluded from shaping tourism (Douglas 1997), it is certainly inappropriate for the Ottoman Empire between 1835 and 1870, where local people retained considerable personal autonomy and control over tourism businesses many centuries old.

The interdisciplinary field of tourism studies has had its own share of scholarship premised on the idea that “the tourist [is] the heart of the entire touristic field” of social science research (Nash 1996:9–11). As a result, the intrusion and control model has certainly operated in many studies in which local people, as Chambers explains, “are all too often left to play a passive role in the process, as the recipients of the largess provided them by tourists or as the victims of tourism” (2000:22–23). By such a perspective, the agency of the guest society is of little consequence. The tourist is an agent of colonial control and/or cultural imperialism who exerts great economic and cultural power over local people (Nash 1989; Palmer 1994; Turner and Ash 1975), or at the very least puts them in the primarily defensive role of “coping with tourists” (Boissevain 1996:20–21).

However, studies documenting the work of local people in actually cultivating tourism have begun to emerge. Notably, such work analyzes colonial and post-colonial contexts in which indigenous peoples with limited political or economic power still direct their agency toward encouraging contact with tourists. Anthropological studies of host/guest interaction emanate from Smith’s seminal edited collection, *Hosts and Guests*, which presents research describing tourism as a process of give and take between local people and foreign tourists in which both parties have power to maximize their own benefit from it (Smith 1989). In addition, many argue that Native Americans and Canadian Aboriginals, for instance, have actively sought out opportunities for commercial contact with tourists as a way to gain income and personal autonomy relative to tourists or the government (Blanchard 1984; Causey 2003; Chambers 2000; Nicks 1999; Philips and Steiner 1999; Ryan

and Crofts 1997). Together, although not explicitly or with coordination, such authors offer what this study will term a “facilitated access” model. That is, they assume local people have power because of their personal familiarity with a given region, assess their options, and then attempt to cultivate controlled tourist access by segregating tourists into specific areas or activities that provide economic autonomy for some local people.

Once explicitly identified, this facilitated access approach is especially useful for fully analyzing the most important and available sources on the topic of tourism in early 19th-century Ottoman Empire: American and European-authored travelogues. These narratives of the Arab Middle East were the most ubiquitous, detailed, and profitable to the producer of all the cultural forms Westerners created to depict Ottoman tourism. Yet, written by middle and upper-class white Westerners, these documents were subject to the interests of a given author, book editors, and audiences outside the region. They often promoted Middle Eastern tourism to Western readers by celebrating the agency of the tourist and minimizing the ingenuity and personhood of foreign peoples.

For the scholar to use travel narratives as historical sources can be controversial (Barrett-Gaines 1997; Brettell 1986; Herlihy 1975). However, the strength of these accounts lies in their specific presentation of anecdotal and qualitative data on the workings of Middle Eastern tourism that does not exist in any other source base. Since many Ottoman workers were probably illiterate, unable, or unwilling to record their experiences, sources on the industry authored by this key group of people themselves appear to be unknown (Reid 2002:64–65). The researcher is then left with local court records or other documents only tangentially related to tourism. As a result, commercial cultural products like travel narratives are still the most numerous sources to have recorded the day-to-day logistics and negotiations through which Ottomans and tourists perpetuated Western access to the region in that foundational period before 1870. Because they were designed for later tourists to use to plan their own trips, travel narratives give a sense of the practicalities of Ottoman tourism, favored destinations and activities, the nature of contracts and service agreements, as well as some idea of the relative power of Ottoman subjects in defining the tourist experience.

This study uses British, French, and American sources in books and periodicals, authored both by expatriate residents of the empire, as well as shorter-term tourists. Both kinds of observers made use of the same transportation networks, although long-term residents often gained insight from watching behind the scenes as the tourism trade operated. Most of the authors treated in this research were professional writers, who published work on other subjects, labored for newspapers and literary magazines; all of them were drawn from the upper and middle-classes in Europe and the United States, and thus had the skills with which to compose publishable travel narratives. Though exact figures are difficult to know, a large minority went abroad only due to the sponsorship of a newspaper that serialized their writings. Tens of

thousands of their fellow citizens would similarly go to the empire, compiling no published diary. As a result, the accounts remaining today—as numerous as they are—tend to over-represent males and those with a professional reputation for writing. The primary sources surveyed here also exclude non-white or working class authors, as these groups were largely unable to engage in such tourism. Even if the intentions of the local people employed in this business cannot be known with complete certainty, the narratives do document what Ottoman subjects did, and from this information there is much to learn. A facilitated access model is now used to analyze how, and tentatively why, some Ottoman subjects made use of Western tourism in the empire before 1870 (Figures 1–4).

The Ottoman Context

Many Ottoman subjects appear to have seen tourists as a way to increase their own autonomy in a doubly-colonial context. That is, Arab lands were part of the Ottoman Empire based in ethnically-Turkish Istanbul, while simultaneously experiencing the political and economic influence of various other foreign governments. In the 1830s, Muhammad Ali, governor of nominal Ottoman province Egypt, threatened the viability of the empire by his invasion of Levantine Ottoman provinces. With European help designed to save the empire from collapse, the Ottomans drove Ali's armies back to Egypt within the decade. This close call inspired the administration to initiate a period of reform known as the *Tanzimat* to centralize administration and develop infrastructure for labor and resource extraction in distant "frontier zones" and rural regions (Ahmad 2000; Bailey 1990; Quataert 2000; Rogan 1999; Schölch 1993). Common Middle Easterners experienced the *Tanzimat* by way of increasingly impossible taxation, Ottoman attempts at limiting local political autonomy, and growing European investments—economic, political, and emotional—in the empire.

Increasing Western access to the Arab Middle East did foreshadow the eventual shift from Ottoman imperial to British imperial control in Egypt in 1882, and growing informal European influence throughout the empire that would culminate in British and French mandatory governments in the Levant After World War I. Indeed, many subjects harbored substantial resentment over the inequalities of Ottoman and Egyptian rule, as well as European meddling in Ottoman and Arab politics, so obvious in the foreign missionaries and consuls moving about the region. Yet some Middle Easterners, who might be equally critical of the imperial context of their Ottoman subject-hood, nonetheless appear to have seen Western tourists as an economic opportunity. Because of those new tourists, many people were in a potentially powerful position. If they could retain control over tourism services, they could do business directly with foreigners without having to use the elite or established merchant families as middlemen (Bailey 1990:332; Doumani 1995:117–118; Fahmy 1997:99, 276–77; Makdisi 2000:8, 2002:785; Quataert 2000:106; Schölch 1993:139–44, 248,



Source: LC-USZ62-104824, Library of Congress.

Figure 2. Dragomen with Tourists outside City Walls, Jerusalem (ca. 1860)

253–54). In fact, the preponderance of Americans and Europeans actually contributed to the great growth in regional hospitality, transportation, and security services throughout the Middle East in the 19th century (Rabinowitz 1985:218–19,222; Robinson 1867(1):36, 133, 136–39; Schölch 1993:163–64).

Between 1835 and 1870, thousands of Western Europeans and Americans arrived in Egypt and the Levant. Most made the voyage in winter to Alexandria by ship, south through Egypt by boat on the Nile and back, then by camel and horse caravan across Arabia Petraea to Palestine, Syria, and perhaps Anatolia. There they sought out some combination of ancient ruins, “picturesque” countryside, exposure to local cultures, religious inspiration, and even business opportunities. Although precise numbers are difficult to pin down, in 1843 approximately 50 Britons visited Egypt as tourists (excluding the large groups that came through the “Overland Route” between Alexandria and Suez that served those on their way to or from India). Their numbers increased thereafter to 100s per year (Brendon 1991:120; Sattin 1988:44–49, 77). In 1850, 50 Americans registered with US consuls in the region. Ten years later, over 19,000 Americans would cross the Atlantic, and 500 of them toured Egypt, for instance (Finnie 1967:165–66; Hunter 2003; Reid 2002; Steinbrink 1983; Wegelin 1962:307). After a lull during the US Civil War, Americans again began to “swarm” regional tourism areas, as one Briton put it at the time (Gordon 1969:297).

Segregating the New Tourists

When growing numbers of Westerners began arriving, local entrepreneurs quickly began to accommodate and segregate them from existing customer bases. Before the late 1860s, there certainly were no Western-style resorts in the region, no Cook Company tours, and, after 1830, only a few Christian hotels primarily serving the India trade in Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez (Sattin 1988:47–49). Thus, tourists made informal arrangements on site with local people for individual- or group-guided tours to a series of destinations. The sample of authors whose narratives form the basis of this research traveled as solo adult men, as married couples, or in small groups of three or four formed spontaneously in steamer dining rooms and hotel lobbies. The sources surveyed here did not show any instances of Westerners traveling with minor children.

Once hired, Middle Eastern workers gave tourists directions, guided them through pyramids and other old buildings, piloted their vessels on the Nile, managed their boat and caravan crews, carried their gear, and handled stubborn pack animals. These men found tourists lodging with Christian monks or the few Western-style hotels. Regional financial and mail networks also enabled Westerners to voyage with letters of credit they exchanged for cash with merchants and consuls in different cities (Burckhardt 1829:1–5; Doumani 1998:4; Eames 1855:74; Morris 1847:302; Murray 1868(1):xlvi–xlvii; Prime 1857:161; Starkey 2002:263–64; Stephens 1991:236; Wellsted 1968(1):213).

Local service providers helped perpetuate most Westerners' desire to remain separate from local people. They offered help in various languages: English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Turkish, or all of these. Such 19th-century multilingual dragomen would seem to be in line with Nuñez's observation that host societies more recently have tended to accommodate tourists' language needs, providing some "economic mobility for people in service positions" (Nuñez 1989:266–67). This pattern of profitable cultural accommodation extended to other experiences. Resident cooks with limited equipment easily obliged foreign culinary tastes, especially the potatoes Americans and Britons often craved. Some reported that dragomen, salesmen, cooks, and guides seemed to believe that "the customer is always right" and were often very patient with clients who became irritable from culture shock, dysentery, heat stroke, or boredom. They even politely endured worn queries, such as the "repeated questions as to the distance we had still to go," with which Léon de Laborde had pestered his dragoman Hussein one afternoon (1832:229). Although de Laborde was a long-time resident of Cairo, once on the road to the famous rock-hewn city of Petra (today in Jordan), he employed one among a network of dragomen busy developing their expertise with foreign leisure tourists from the diplomatic and business clients with whom they usually contracted.

Often hired in Cairo or Alexandria, dragomen might travel with one tourist group through Egypt and the Sinai all the way to Jerusalem. The entrepreneurs who landed such work often did so because they had

privileged relationships with other dragomen, hotel owners, or missionaries who might recommend them to tourists, as well as limited amounts of capital to subsidize the trip until they received full payment at the end of the voyage. Contract dragomen and the poorer subjects who worked as laborers for boat and caravan groups further coped with limited pay, difficult working conditions, and minimal accommodations or no accommodations at all. One pair of men working as guards slept in a straw-lined trench on the shore of the Nile beside their customers' boat (Eames 1855:75). Authors often recalled boat and caravan crews talking, laughing, and singing late into the night, tourists believed, so as to relieve the resulting boredom, homesickness, and fatigue. Americans and Europeans often talked about these relationships with themselves in the position of employers of "servants." However, regular local use of the term *howadji* (Christian gentleman, merchant, or trader) toward Frank clients suggests that workers perceived Western tourists to be their customers, not necessarily their superiors (North American Review 1856; Prime 1857:153; Starkey 2002:267).

Selling Souvenirs and Experience

When they went to the Ottoman Empire, Westerners wanted specific things, including religious inspiration and a chance to contemplate fantastic sights that might illuminate the history of the region. These particular tourists also wanted to go shopping. In Alexandria, Briton Samuel Bevan described objects that in the 1840s were already becoming clichéd souvenirs: "I saw silver-mounted pistols sold for fifteen shillings the pair; Arab scymitars, jackets and waistcoats embroidered with lace, scarfs, ink-stands, and red caps, and some amber mouthpieces; of these some would fetch their full value, whilst others would go for a mere song" (Bevan 1849:32). A few years later, Eames, a Rhode Island native, similarly delighted in Cairo markets that could "dazzle the eye, and tempt the fingers to open the purse," to explain tourism as an experience in which consumption was central (1855:43, 104).

In Damascus, foreigners reported on the seemingly authentic lore shopkeepers appear to have been applying to objects tourists wanted. One purchased a sword marked, "Hegira, 181, which corresponds to A.D. 798." He went on to explain with delight,

This was during the Caliphate of Haroun Al-Rachid, and who knows but the sword may have once flashed in the presence of that great and glorious sovereign—nay, been drawn by his own hand! Who knows but that the Milan armor of the Crusaders may have shivered its point, on the field of Askalon! I kiss the crimson cords of thy scabbard upon my shoulder, and thou shalt henceforth clank in silver music at my side, singing to my ear, and mine alone, thy chants of battle, thy rejoicing songs of slaughter! (Taylor 1855:131).

If a contemporary artisan or shopkeeper did indeed mystify the sword with such an inscription, he may have predicted that when the tourist paid for the sword he would also buy a vicarious participation in the

famed stories of the *Arabian Nights*. Such evidence seems to suggest that in the mid-19th-century Middle East, producers and consumers of regional creative arts were already engaging in the kinds of negotiations over style and meaning that anthropologists and art historians have found at work between guests and hosts elsewhere in the world (Smith 1989). For instance, Wilson (1999) has used the term “mystification” to describe the process whereby Western purchasers and dealers cooperated to imbue Chinese dragon robes with regal histories and places of origin in order to give them a meaning that suited buyers’ need to purchase a perceived-historical artifact (Silverman 1999; Spooner 1986). Claims of regal provenance and handmade or one-of-a-kind status may similarly have been a tool Middle Eastern artists and salesmen were using to add value to souvenirs.

Some people in the region clearly looked upon such patterns of communication and commercial exchange, and chose to facilitate tourists’ desire for *anteekeh*. Here was a colloquial Arabic word derived from the robust trade in ancient pottery, stonework, scarabs, papyri, mummy parts, metal wares, and carpets. As the 1840s and 1850s passed, tombs and gift shops were emptied of their contents. Actual antiquities became more rare, such that artists and merchants were just as likely to offer “antique novelties” of recent local manufacture, or even imported objects from Europe (Browne 1855:140, 361–62; Burt 1868:137–38; de Laborde 1838:227; Morris 1847:173, 208; Taylor 1855:130). One Egyptian man, Mustapha Agha, told Lucie Duff Gordon of the new economy in *anteekeh*, “When I was young, men spat on a statue or the like, when they turned it up in digging, and now it is a fortune to find one” (1862–69:255). The commoditization of cultural artifacts and local arts as an adaptation to tourist interest could also serve to give new value to old objects or practices (Boissevain 1996:13). At the time, some said that people from Egypt to Persia who came into contact with Western tourists soon became especially suspicious of those who would pay money to see “old stones,” as locals termed it, and that many Arabs believed foreigners’ interest in the beauty or history of ruins was a ruse designed to cover up treasure hunting at the expense of hired guides or poor residents who often lived in or around ancient buildings (Dorr 1856:100, 115; Eames 1855:89, 99, 101; de Laborde 1838:227; Makdisi 2002:783–84; Morris 1847:192, 207; Sattin 1988:94; Stephens 1991:69, 113, 282; Thomson 1893:196–98; Wellsted 1968(1):177).

In the Levant, older industries of relic production were staples of the local economy. Jacob Abbott, a famous author of children’s literature in the United States, toured the Ottoman Empire in 1853. He explained that since Western tourists had begun arriving in the early part of the century, the trade in religious souvenirs had only become more lucrative:

Bethlehem is quite a manufacturing town. . . . They make a great number and variety of what may be called religious toys, consisting of crucifixes, images, beads, and other figures, representing holy places, persons, and events, which they sell to pilgrims and travelers. Some

of these figures are carved from wood obtained from various consecrated places; some are cut on shells or pearl, and others still are cast, some in lead or pewter, for the poorer pilgrims, and others in bronze or even in silver and gold. All visitors to the Holy Land become purchasers of these memorials. The pilgrims buy them as sacred relics, endued, in their imaginations, with some miraculous or magic power; while tourists and travelers prize them almost as highly, though in a different way, as souvenirs of their visits to these sacred grounds, and as the means of reproducing, in future years, the sublime and solemn emotions which were originally awakened in their minds by the scenes in the midst of which they obtained them (Abbott 1853:10).

Local people appear to have catered to tourists' needs for tokens of religious experience around holy sites in the region by developing networks of production and trade wherein objects were designed to communicate specific cultural meanings negotiated among producers, sellers, and customers. Such commercial hospitality made it more comfortable for most *farangi* to remain culturally distinct from Ottoman subjects. Franks also moved about in Western clothes, often conspicuously carrying large umbrellas for shade, and camping in obviously touristic white tents with enormous amounts of baggage—the party of Benjamin Dorr brought one hundred books on their trip (Dorr 1856:62). Local hosts analyzed these kinds of situations in order to identify Westerners by sight, and to predict and direct later their desires, whether a given tourist liked it or not. As one Egyptian man pointed out to a hesitant sightseer at the base of a large pyramid in Giza in 1852, “If you no go up, what for you come to pyramid?” (Bryant 1981:232).

Promoting Western Privilege

By the 1850s, a growing repertoire of specifically-touristic practices turned on commercial exchange of industry-standard experiences that literally claimed certain locations as Western turf. Boyard Taylor wrote of the years' worth of “human silliness” he found left behind by those graffiti-scrawling tourists who followed local guides from site to site. He cringed at

seeing Pompey's Pillar disfigured by “Isaac Jones” (or some equally classic name), in capitals of black paint, a yard long, and finding “Jenny Lind” equally prominent on the topmost stone of the great Pyramid (Of course, the enthusiastic artist chiseled his own name beside hers.) A mallet and chisel are often to be found in the outfits of English and American travelers (Taylor 1854:45).

Jenny Lind was the Swedish singer who achieved enormous celebrity in the United States under the promotion of P.T. Barnum in 1850–51, a celebrity of little probable significance to dragomen or the inhabitants of Alexandria or Giza. Yet, this type of touristic communication became *de rigueur* among many tourists and appears to have reshaped some sites substantially over the decades. Thus did dragomen help tourists mark such places as locations of Western dialogue beyond



Source: Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection, LC-USZ62-111696, Library of Congress.

Figure 3. Souvenir Sellers, the Holy Sepulchre Church, Jerusalem (ca. 1880)

any archaeological, biblical, or customary local significance by leading them to established sites over and over. When Middle Eastern guides used tourism industry names like Pompey's Pillar or Belzoni's Tomb, they too endorsed those Western uses of such locations. Once they became associated with foreign tourists, as [Greenwood \(1989\)](#) has argued with respect to Fuenterrabia, Spain, such places must have gained new local meanings defined by international commerce. Similarly, Mustapha Agha had described the new values of old things and places due to Western interest in them, and the entirely new economies of expertise emerging among local people engaged in such globalized regional trade.

In accommodating such touristic desires for specific activities, Middle Easterners also had to cope with behaviors that were highly controversial. Already in the 1830s, the young New Yorker, John Lloyd Stephens, had admitted to shooting an ancient statue of Isis in the eye while aiming at a pigeon one day in Egypt. He had also tried shooting crocodiles on the banks of the Nile, although others wrote that in practice few, if any, tourists ever killed a crocodile since their thick hides were impenetrable to contemporary pistol fire ([Crosby](#)

1851:63, 72; Morris 1847:185, 245; Spencer 1854:86; Stephens 1991:63–64, 69–70, 135). Many American and British tourists had pistols, using them for sport—“exploring a fine artificial cavern, . . . [w]e fired a pistol with grand effect”—and for hunting pigeons, geese, or gazelles (Crosby 1851:63). Other tourists and Western handbooks insisted pistols were crucial for protection against aggressively barking dogs, for warding off similarly-armed desert Arabs (some claimed at least), or for enforcing contracts with dragomen. Indeed, Murray’s handbooks recommended carrying firearms for just such reasons (Murray 1858, 1868).

The issue of armed tourists threw into high relief how the limited role of Ottoman and Egyptian officials could nonetheless have a great impact on the work of tourism because these governments permitted foreign consuls to privilege Westerners in the empire. For instance, in the 1850s, William Prime acquired a *firman* (decree) at the United States consulate in Alexandria. It allowed him to excavate tombs and export what he found, and also command officials in Upper Egypt “to furnish me with all necessary papers and assistance, letters to inferior governors and officers of whatever grade, and to provide men and beasts as I should demand, at any point on the river.” Most foreigners do not appear to have asked so much as Prime did, but were probably aware of the ease of such access. In fact, he had advised them, “The cost of this paper was a polite ‘thank you’” (1857:37–39). In fact, the Ottoman and nominally-independent Egyptian governments were ambivalent about Western tourism and did relatively little to facilitate it, save giving foreign nationals special status in the empire. Such tentative early alliances between foreign governments and local officials would only accelerate in the late 19th century as regional officials came under increasing pressure to satisfy outside interests, adding a political component to Westerners’ cultural distinctiveness (Ahmad 2000; Times of London 1868).

Thus had Gordon, a Briton resident in Egypt for some years in the 1860s, remarked unfavorably upon British tourists’ resulting bravado and consequent habit of shooting the pigeons Egyptians kept at their houses:

I am just called away by some poor men who want me to speak to the English travelers about shooting their pigeons. It is very thoughtless, but it is in great measure the fault of the servants and dragomen who think they must not venture to tell their masters that pigeons are private property. I have a great mind to put a notice on the wall of my house about it. Here, where there are never less than eight or ten boats lying for full three months, the loss to the fellaheen is serious, and our Consul Mustapha Agha is afraid to say anything (1969:122–23).

Egyptians who resented such behavior found themselves in a difficult bind. To tell these gun-toting *farangi* that their behavior was unacceptable was to invite the wrath of local officials, dragomen, or one’s own neighbors who made money off the tourist trade and fielded offended tourists’ complaints (Burt 1868:180; Gordon 1969:122–23). Duff had

only been exposed to this reality due to her many years residence in Luxor and the friendly relationships she developed with locals like Mustapha Agha.

Opportunities for Ottoman Hosts

Nonetheless, for those working the tourism business, competition over customers could be intense, providing some evidence that many men preferred this work for its earning potential. Segregated Western spaces in the Middle East appear to have served as meeting places for scores of people eager to get in on the trade. Waiting near sites or hotels, or spotting *farangi* walking by their home or place of work, men, children and occasionally women might ask for *backsheesh* (cash gifts) for small jobs giving directions or carrying baggage. For the least privileged participants of the industry, poor Arabs with little capital and no business relationships to more middling workers, the act of besieging tourists in groups could provide some leverage in the business. By following tourists, even when it was clear that this attention was unwanted, they created a type of cartel, a “monopoly” Morris called it in Egypt in 1842, that forced tourists to hire one individual in order to ward off the others (1847:238). Thus they guarantee that no tourist could exist outside the guiding and *backsheesh* networks controlled by local residents.

The Arabic term *backsheesh* was indeed a quick and constant irritation to those who resented being targeted because of their Western identity and the apparent lavish spending and tipping of earlier tourists. During her years in the empire, Gordon watched the southern Egyptian tourism trade with interest while traveling away from the increasingly recognized destinations herself. She believed that the seemingly ceaseless requests for *backsheesh* occurred “just where the English go. When I ride into the little villages I never hear the word, but am always offered milk to drink. I have taken it two or three times and not offered to pay, and the people always seem quite pleased” (1969:124). Touristic resentment over demands for *backsheesh* and other evidence of the agency of Middle Eastern workers made organized Cook Company tours and tourism manuals all the more appealing since they might reduce the need for local help. The English writer Wilkinson painted reference numbers on tombs in Egypt so that his readers could more easily identify them and read the appropriate descriptive passage in his handbook without the local interpretation of the dragoman.

Particularly astute guides resisted the encroachment of Western manuals and travelogues by successfully promoting themselves to tourists in ways that showed some were indeed aware of their role in foreign publishing. On a shelf of the library at the Christian convent at Mount Sinai in 1849 one guest spotted a copy of John Lloyd Stephens’ classic narrative, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (Crosby 1851:174). Dragomen often told tourists of their previous service to famous authors of Stephens’ era, like American biblical archaeologist Edward Robinson or French explorer Léon de Laborde (Crosby 1851:129, 201, 215; Dorr 1856:132; Gordon 1969:254; Robinson

1867(1):36; Stephens 1991:238; Taylor 1855:29; Train 1857:297). Some dragomen and guides further loitered around hotels and tourism sites “showily dressed” in colorful regional costume to attract romantic tourists’ attention (Bryant 1981 (3):256–57). As evidence of their trustworthiness, other men presented booklets of recommendation from former customers, both forged and genuine, such as those of Ibrahim of Damascus for whom someone had written, “as honest a man as any body could expect,” and “not the brightest guide in the world, but the best in Damascus, and one who knows the way through the city” (Browne 1855:259).

Travel narratives and handbooks provided various tributes to the business acumen of Middle Eastern hosts in the form of advice on reliable dragomen and merchants, tips on obtaining contracts, and current prices. Foreign nationals commonly engaged their local consul to write up contracts between themselves and Middle Eastern service providers. Tourists believed such legal agreements were necessary as they reported their “servants” were ready to renegotiate the route or fees along the way, often in situations where tourists had little recourse. These contracts specified the route and distance of the trip, the cost for providing food for the crew, duties of specific members, the number of pack animals required, the compensation due from customers, and special requests, such as no wake up calls before sunrise or stipulated time off in Asyut for crew members to bake bread for themselves in town ovens.

Middle Eastern workers certainly gained income and personal opportunities from tourism work, lending support for a facilitated access model, and a possible explanation for the motivations of some who worked with Western tourists. Yet, there was an added factor that may help account for why local people cultivated the new tourists’ access to the region. Individuals of any nationality in the employ of a foreign citizen within the empire or operating as a consul of a Western government enjoyed the same extraterritorial status as the citizens of these foreign countries themselves. All *farangi* (Franks) enjoyed privileged legal status while traveling or working in the empire, whereby they were not subject to Ottoman courts, but rather to the legal judgments of consuls appointed by their respective nations (Hale 1877; Van den Boogert 2005). Western governments had negotiated with Ottoman authorities for such extraterritorial rights, known as “capitulations,” to acknowledge and protect foreign economic and political investments in the empire (Ahmad 2000; Times of London 1868). In fact, some believed the Arabic term *farangi* as Westerners said, had actually originated in the Middle East before traveling to India and back, to denote the French citizens who first achieved such extraterritorial status in the empire in 1535 (American Journal of International Law 1914). It appears that Ottoman subjects made use of this situation to maximize their earnings and autonomy through regional tourism. Thus had a Bedouin man by the name of Beshara unsuccessfully asked the New Yorker Howard Crosby to help him become the appointed American consul for the Sinai in 1849 (1851:236). Mustapha Agha,

AGREEMENT MADE AT CAIRO, ON THE 6TH OF JANUARY, 1854, IN PRESENCE OF THE VICE-CONSUL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BETWEEN THE REVEREND BENJAMIN DORR AND HENRY D. GILPIN, CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND HASSANEIN BEDOUIN OF CAIRO.

1. Hassanein Bedouin agrees to attend the said Benjamin Dorr with his son, and the said Henry D. Gilpin, with his wife, and courier, John Muscat, as dragoman, on a voyage from Cairo to Thebes and back to Cairo.

2. He agrees to perform all duties of a dragoman; to comply in all things with the directions of said voyagers; to provide the boat selected by them for the voyage; to take care that it has on board, at all times, a good crew of twelve able full-grown sailors; in addition to the reis, pilot, and cook; to have the crew decently clothed; to have the boat always supplied with strong good sails, masts, oars, ropes, awnings, and a complete equipment; to have her thoroughly cleaned, and kept free from vermin, and everything offensive, and washed every day; to furnish her to the satisfaction of the said voyagers, with new and clean bedding, blankets, linen, sheeting, chairs, tables, crockery, glass, lights, candles, rugs, window glasses, and all things necessary in the opi-
Source: Dorr (1856).

nion of said voyagers for their comfort; to provide for their washing, food, and supplies of every description, except wine and beer; to take from Cairo sufficient food and groceries, and to obtain on the voyage fresh food, milk, vegetables, bread, and all other articles, in quantity and quality, to be approved of by said voyagers; to have on board an experienced cook, and complete cooking apparatus; and to give the meals as often as the said voyagers desire.

3. He agrees to pay all backsheesh, and payments of every kind, to the reis, crew, Arabs, and all persons employed on the voyage; to take care that none of the crew leave the vessel at any time, without consent of the voyagers; that two of them shall keep watch through the whole of every night; and that the sail-ropes shall always be held by hand, so as to be kept free.

4. He agrees that the voyagers shall never be responsible for any accident or damage to the boat or crew.

5. He agrees to begin the voyage on Monday, the 9th of January, 1854, at 4 o'clock P.M., and to complete it, and return to Cairo, in thirty days from its commencement; but he is to allow the said voyagers to stop for eight days, at such places, and for such time, as they desire; the said eight days being included in, and making part of, the said thirty days in which the complete voyage is to be made; and he

Figure 4. "Contract for a Nile Voyage"

Gordon's Egyptian friend, was in fact working as a British consul when she knew him (1969:122–23).

For workers of more modest means and political connections, service for a foreign national could also be useful simply because it exempted one from military conscription. Historians of the Middle East explain that, beginning in the 1820s, military conscription became an enormous problem for people all over the region as the Ottoman draft replaced volunteer militias supplied by regional elites (Fahmy 1997:89–93; Quataert 2000:63; Schölich 1993:261–65, 278–79). A nearly 50% military desertion rate, anti-conscription revolts in 1823 and 1824, *fellahin* (farmer) assaults on conscription officers, and draft dodging all attest to the lengths to which Ottoman subjects went in order to avoid serving (Fahmy 1997; Makdisi 2000). Beginning at least in the 1830s, local people were making use of service to foreign citizens to escape the draft by seeking out that work and asking their Western clients to intervene when draft agents attempted to arrest them (Stephens 1991:30–31, 127). Dragomen, boat, and caravan crews in Egypt or Arabia Petraea did so just as Ottoman subjects in Syria were also using the protection of foreign citizens to negotiate greater freedoms from authorities (Ahmad 2000; Makdisi 2000:87–88). Certainly numerous officials complained that Arabs' contact with Westerners was making them more defiant of state authority (Ahmad 2000; Burckhardt 1829:70; Fahmy 1997:276–77; Makdisi 2002:785; Obenzinger 2003:246).

CONCLUSION

The success of Middle Easterners' cultivation of Western tourism would in time leave them open to competition from British entrepreneurs. The Cook Company's success in coopting proven travel routes and expertise in those regions made Palestine and Egypt the agency's biggest money makers by 1872, helping the company capitalize round-the-world tours and other ventures later in the century (Brendon 1991:129, 135). Cook did hire many local people, but the recognizable brand name and European staff Cook provided for Middle Eastern tourism would make the company's services preferable to many, though not all, Western tourists. By 1874 the competition between Western and local transportation services was so great that Egyptian dragomen wrote a letter to the *Times* of London asserting that the Cook Company was illegitimately cutting in on a business local entrepreneurs had established through years of hard work (Brendon 1991:122).

Using a facilitated access model of analysis, the protesting dragomen are not evidence of touristic control, but of the ingenuity and business sense of professionals defending an industry they created, and believed they ought to continue dominating so as to preserve their own entrepreneurial independence. Further, the scale of Ottoman subjects' cooperation with and segregation of Western tourists in the empire before 1870 can be seen. Drawing from pre-existing business networks and expertise, local entrepreneurs and service providers created a place in Ottoman tourism for Western tourists by developing sights and practices specific to their interests. Because of Westerners' extra-territorial status, the income and legal protection locals gained from service to tourists presented political and economic opportunities for some, even if many did have to endure tourists' rude or dangerous behavior at times. Here was a kind of negative reciprocity, perhaps, in which each side sought to make the most of what was primarily a business relationship. If Ottoman workers had not welcomed Americans and Europeans before the 1870s, Western access for the purposes of tourism would have grown very slowly indeed.

This research describes Western tourism in the Ottoman Empire at a stage Butler's famous lifecycle model identifies as the "involvement stage." Specifically, local people provide lodging, transportation, and hospitality specifically for tourists with limited government support, have close contact with tourists and considerable power to shape their experience (Butler 1980:7-8). The nature of Ottoman tourism with respect to Westerners matches quite closely the state of tourism in Western Europe a generation earlier, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, just before the Cook Company began organized tours there (Towner 1985). Thus, the empire provides valuable historical data for comparison with other studies of how local people can direct tourism to their own needs, although this effort may make travel more accessible to outside entrepreneurs in the long run. Towner explains that such research can temper the seeming newness of patterns of development and cross-cultural exchange scholars find elsewhere (1988:48).

Moreover, in other colonial and post-colonial contexts, the facilitated access model of analysis can help discover if there are any other examples globally of indigenous entrepreneurs *pulling* tourists into their local economies.

What the facilitated access model and Western-authored travel narratives cannot explain in great detail is how tourism in the 19th-century Ottoman Empire shaped relationships among its subjects themselves. Is it possible the souvenir dealers, dragomen, and other workers who first mediated touristic Western access were resented by some of their fellow citizens and neighbors? Did they become “marginal men,” as Smith has termed such people, for helping Westerners gain access to the region (1989:80-81)? Further research using Ottoman-Turkish or Arabic language sources will hopefully help scholars ask these kinds of questions, and understand more directly how Ottoman subjects perceived the growth of Western tourism in the empire. **A**

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