

**Andrea E. Duffy. *Nomad's Land: Pastoralism and French Environmental Policy in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean World.***

**Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. xxiii + 306 pp.**

**ISBN 9780803290976**

The Mediterranean region long hosted different types of pastoralisms. In the nineteenth century, however, a combination of political, social, economic and ecological changes brought about the demise of pastoral nomadism throughout the region. The nineteenth-century marginalisation of mobile pastoralists around the Mediterranean has so far remained a relatively neglected topic in Mediterranean history and historiography. Andrea Duffy's *Nomad's Land* attempts to address the lack of historical knowledge on pastoral nomadism in the Mediterranean region. Drawing on French, British and Ottoman archival material, Duffy makes a broad case for colonial environmental and forest history as a way of understanding the swift decline of pastoralism in the Mediterranean region in the nineteenth century.

In *Nomad's Land*, Andrea E. Duffy uses three case studies, Provence, northern Algeria and southwestern Anatolia, to illustrate how the development and dissemination of French scientific forestry and, more broadly, the French imperial mission, served to marginalise the practice of mobile pastoralism in nineteenth-century Mediterranean world. Duffy notes that her choice of these places is not random. They represent northern, southern, and eastern borders of the Mediterranean; they all have rich historical pasts; they all witnessed the pastoral tradition ceasing to exist; and they all 'illustrate the value of a Mediterranean lens' which helps 'to expose both geographic and thematic connections' (p. xv).

*Nomad's Land* 'reflects the legacy of Fernand Braudel', as Duffy acknowledges, and uses the Mediterranean as a framework to make transboundary investigations, but it is more than a solely Braudelian study of history of pastoral nomadism across the Mediterranean. It brings together French colonialism, social and environmental history, history of science, forest history and Ottoman social and economic history. It captures complex relationships between colonisers and colonised, policymakers and local actors, and foresters and pastoralists in Provence, Algeria and Anatolia. In this respect, *Nomad's Land* is a

discussion of some of the broader, multifaceted effects and implications of French colonialism, science and environmental policy for our understanding of Mediterranean pastoralism in the nineteenth century.

*Nomad's Land* is divided into two parts. The first part, 'People, Place and Perceptions', focuses on the political, social, economic and ecological processes and discourses that led to the development of French scientific forestry and concurrent demise of pastoralism. There are three chapters in this part. Chapter 1, 'Land of the Golden Fleece', analyses the practice of Mediterranean pastoralism in the early modern era, the period prior to the passing of forest and reforestation laws in the nineteenth century. In this chapter, Duffy points to the social and environmental similarities between Provence, northern Algeria and southwestern Anatolia and highlights the significance of the 'political, societal, cultural, and geographical forces that bound Mediterranean pastoralists together' (p. 4). To emphasise the forces that connected pastoralists across the Mediterranean and the features that distinguished the Mediterranean region from other regions with a history and tradition of pastoralism, the author uses – and indeed introduces – the term 'Mediterranean pastoralism' instead of nomadism or transhumance (p. 4). Chapter 2, 'Black Sheep', documents the evolution of anti-pastoral narratives in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Mediterranean world. It shows how the scapegoating of Mediterranean pastoralists served to legitimise antipastoral policies and practices throughout the Mediterranean and, in the case of Algeria, to solidify and expand French colonial interests. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, overall, increased references to pastoralism's role in environmental decline fuelled criticism of pastoralists and pastoralism, and thereby, facilitated the state's imposition of control over nomadic pastoralist inhabitants. Chapter 3, 'Counting Sheep', chronicles the development of French scientific forestry and the role of Mediterranean pastoralism in the evolution of French forest science and administration. The roots of French forest administration date to 1346, when King Philip VI passed the first French forest code, but it was created and shaped by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century, the French Code of 1827 and subsequent training programmes for foresters allowed the French to gain a reputation as the leader for forestry in the Mediterranean and beyond.

The second part of the book, 'Growth and Transformation' includes four chapters (Chapters 4 to 7). Chapter 4, 'The Forest for the Trees', chronicles the barriers to and difficulties of implementation of French scientific forestry in Provence, Algeria and

Anatolia. It documents the various institutions, actors and agents included in the application of French ideas and ideals with regard to forestry. It also discusses how different actors and the ways bureaucrats, foresters, pastoralists and other power holders compromised and negotiated in these three contexts. Chapter 5, 'Against the Grain', discusses the processes of large-scale conversion of pastures into agricultural fields, or what Duffy describes as the 'waning of both "no-man's land" and nomads' land' (p. 108) throughout the Mediterranean world. In this period, the privatisation movement gained pace in all three contexts as the common idea was to turn 'unproductive' and 'unutilised' pastures into agricultural fields. In France, the government sold 'more than a fourth of its woodlands' to private buyers from 1814 to 1870. As a result, the number of sheep fell rapidly during the nineteenth century. In French colonial Algeria, indigenous access to forests and commons was restricted through antipastoral legislations, while policies of privatisation facilitated European settlers to claim land. Similar to the policies pursued by French colonists in Algeria, the Ottoman administration identified and defined the territories previously used by nomadic pastoralists. It used the legislation to expand arable land for the increasing peasant population and exert pressure on pastoral tribes. Chapter 6, 'Nature's Scapegoats', focuses on the nature and dimensions of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, epidemics, wildfires and locust invasions in Provence, Algeria and Ottoman Anatolia during the nineteenth century. In all three contexts, mobile pastoralists were quickly blamed for environmental destruction. Even though Mediterranean pastoralists suffered much from worsening environmental conditions, they 'became veritable scapegoats for nature' (p. 137). Environmental destruction was in the form of long periods of droughts, deforestation and flash floods in Provence; and wildfires, droughts and locust attacks in Algeria and Anatolia. Nineteenth-century natural and human-induced disasters allowed the French to propagate the idea that Mediterranean pastoralists were hostile and dangerous, and French foresters, engineers and officials were 'protectors of the earth and its human populations'. The final chapter, 'Sheep to the Slaughter', presents new perspectives on French scientific forestry and how they shaped the foresters and officials' approach to pastoralism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this period, the area of forests around the Mediterranean shrank and mobile pastoralists became much more marginalised because of the new perceptions and policies. In Provence and Algeria, environmental policies, especially forest conservationism, together with social, political and technical developments

hastened the decline of nomadic pastoralism. For example, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the number of sheep owned by indigenous Algerians had fallen by 25 per cent. In a parallel to France and Algeria, the Anatolian tradition of nomadism disappeared by the twentieth century. The process of disappearance of pastoralism in Provence, Algeria and Anatolia, however, was 'not simply a tale of exploitation and expropriation, of the triumph of the state'. It was a combination of factors 'including developments in transportation, technology, communication, population expansion, natural disasters and climate change, and the transformation of the global wool market, as well as the agency of Mediterranean pastoralists themselves' (p. 182).

The task of encapsulating French colonial history, history of French scientific forestry and the environmental history of Mediterranean pastoralism in less than 200 pages is not an easy one. Andrea Duffy does this to the best of her knowledge and expertise. In *Nomad's Lands*, she covers not just the changes in physical and human landscape in the territories in which nomadic pastoralists lived, but also the relations and interactions between pastoralists and foresters, officials, settlers and other stakeholders. This comprehensive, yet well-written and easy-to-digest book can serve as a textbook for lecturers and as a reference book for researchers of social and environmental history, rural history, Mediterranean history, French colonialism, Ottoman history and history of pastoralism.

*Onur Inal*

*Near Eastern Studies Department  
University of Vienna*

*Email: onur.inal@univie.ac.at*