



ACADEMIC SEMINAR

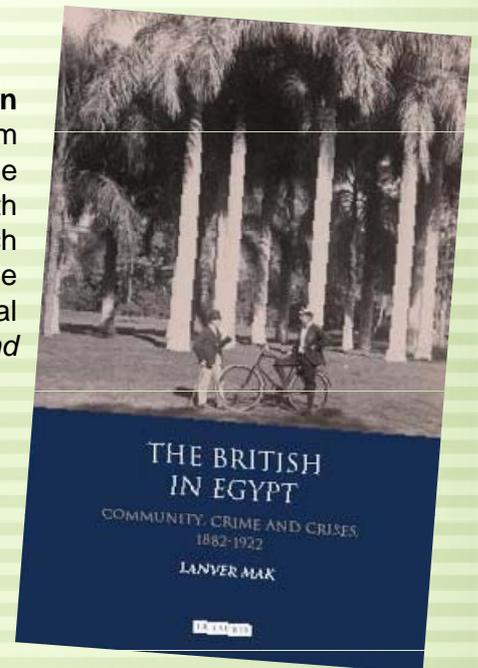
Clerks, Crooks and Combatants: The Untold Stories of British Non-Elites in Occupied Egypt, 1882-1922

Abstract

Egypt during the British occupation (1882-1922) was a strategically important site for securing British interests in the region. Most studies of the British in Egypt during this time tend to focus on the British elites in business, the military and the civil service. However, further examination of private manuscripts, census data, court records and business and missionary archives challenges the commonly-held impression that the British community in Egypt during this period consisted solely of those from the law-abiding upper and middle-classes. Accounts of Britons from the lower and working classes as well as those who engaged in professional misconduct and criminal activity have largely been missing from the historical literature. This paper tells the stories of lower class Britons such as clerks, tradesmen and carriage drivers. It compares their income levels with their counterparts in Britain to discern their possible motivations for working in Egypt and considers the hardships and snobbery that they encountered. The discussion also brings to light the criminal behaviour of the British in Egypt and focuses on particular villains guilty of fraud and theft. Finally, it explores some of the incidences where non-elite Britons in Egypt were at odds with the British authorities, particularly during the revolutionary period of 1919-1922. Since little research has been done regarding lower and working class Britons in Egypt and those who were criminals during the British occupation, this effort hopes to contribute to Egyptian history, 'history from below' or the history of non-elites, the burgeoning field crime history, and the various expressions of British imperial history.

Speaker: Dr Lanver Mak

Lanver Mak is the author of the newly published book **The British in Egypt: Community, Crimes and Crises, 1882-1922**. His Ph.D. is from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and he has recently been Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. His research relates to expatriate communities and their encounters with Middle Easterners during the British imperial era. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and has also published in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*.



Date 6 March 2013 (Wednesday)

Time 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Venue AM308, Amenities Building

Language English

All are Welcome

Enquiry: Viney AU 2616 8339