Book Reviews

Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire

This volume is a welcome contribution to the study of the last centuries of the existence of the Byzantine state, the 'empire' that until its demise in 1453 had dominated the Bosphorus and the link between Europe and Asia Minor, even though its political authority was minimal from the early years of the 14th century. Yet authority and legitimacy aside (for the Byzantines always saw themselves as the legitimate heirs to the Roman empire) it exercised both a fascination for those around it as well as an having an importance and, until quite late on, an influence far in excess of its actual military or economic power. Necipoğlu's book focuses on the politics of the empire, more particularly on the ways in which different groups within the empire adopted, fought for, or abandoned particular views of their situation within Byzantine society and in the wider world, and more particularly in the context of the influence, cultural, military and economic, of the regional powers around it. The empire's Latin neighbors in the southern Balkans on the one hand, along with the central Balkan powers of Serbia and Bulgaria (albeit minimally for the period in question), and the rising Ottoman power in Asia Minor and then Thrace on the other hand, frame this portrait, and the chronology is set by the last almost-century of the empire's existence, from the 1360s and 1370s to the 1450s. But the author's real interest is not foreign relations or military events, but rather the ideological, one might even say psychological,

make-up of the various groups and factions within Byzantium, especially in Constantinople, Thessaloniki and in the southern Peloponnese, which can be detected in the sources of the period.

Preceded by an opening section consisting of a useful survey of the various sources, historical and archival or documentary, and a political-historical introductory chapter, the book is broken up into three subsequent sections, each taking a specific geographical-cultural focus as its setting: chapters three to five focus on Thessaloniki, chapters six to eight on Constantinople, and chapters nine to ten on the Morea under its various *despotai*. While the book is in its essence a carefully research and detailed political history of the fate of these three interlinked regions or urban centers, it succeeds in the course of telling its story in offering important new insights into the factional strife which racked the empire in its last years, as the various vested interests coalesced or fought against one another to influence imperial or city policy to whatever challenges had to be faced at any given moment—the challenge from the west, primarily an issue of cultural identity balanced by the urgent and ever-growing need for military aid; and the challenge from the Ottomans, initially to maintain at the least a relatively independent vassal status, from the time of Bayezid I to resist incorporation into the Ottoman state and direct rule. At the same time, each of the three areas the author has chosen to

examine had its own particular regional needs in these respects, needs which were not always in harmony, and, after the loss of Thessaloniki to the Ottomans in 1430, for the Morea and Constantinople, even with their shared Aegean hinterland, seemed to have had even less in common than before Morea had enjoyed a greater degree of independence and fewer attempts at actual conquest from the Ottomans than had the citizens of Constantinople or Thessaloniki. As a consequence Constantinopolitan approaches to the Ottomans were characterized (largely) by the desire for compromise and accommodation, whereas those in the Morea—anyway a much larger territory with a number of factional groups contending for their own relative autonomy within the Byzantine province—were typically far less willing to consider such tactics. In terms of small-state politics, and in respect of the social and economic tensions inherent in the structures of the empire in its last years, the skill with which the rulers at Constantinople and their advisors managed to maintain a tenuous independence is impressive, and Necipoğlu brings this out well. She also brings out the contradictions within the dominant elites in both Thessaloniki and Constantinople, showing how the increasingly desperate situation combined with political isolation brought out sharp factional oppositions and revealed more starkly the vested interests of particular groups. In particular the fact that merchants and others with investments and interests in commercial activities tended to belong to more than one political sphere, with interests extending well beyond any political boundaries, and had attitudes and commitments to match. This is not a tale of the heroic resistance of a monolithically united people against outside aggression, but one of highly nuanced concerns, interests, fluctuating identities and complex trans-political relationships and associations, even if religious identity complicated matters by appearing to paint one group or another as uniformly the same. In the end, material interests, access to wealth and its sources, and economic survival were the key motifs which characterized elite responses to conquest, the threat of conquest, and loss of political-territorial integrity.

What the author has not done is problematize the structural nature of the question—we learn, to be sure, about the workings of the rump Byzantine empire and its court, the relations between different groups in the cities of the empire, something of the effect of these political events on the producing population in the countryside; but it would have been especially interesting to have a more theorized discussion of the workings of a small medieval state system, the extent to which we might even talk of 'states' as opposed to kin- and clan-managed estates and territories, and the ways in which issues of resource management were the focus for competition between 'state' and 'non-state' aspects of late Byzantine society and governance. The result is that, while the account the author delivers is persuasive, the causal logic in respect of the way the late Byzantine 'empire' functioned—an empire that was, in effect, a congeries of small competing social groups—remains largely implicit.

This is a minor criticism, however, in comparison with the author's main achievement. The present volume is a sensible and well-balanced discussion of the last 70-80 years of Byzantine history, which quite rightly highlights the social, ideological and economic diversity of Byzantine soci-

ety, places it in a broader context, and is thereby able to offer carefully grounded and plausible motives for the actions of both individuals and groups. The author is to be congratulated on a scholarly and rigorously researched contribution.

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Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940-45: Strategy, Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean

By *Nicholas Tamkin*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 267 pp., ISBN 9780230221475, $74.95.

Turkey, due to its geopolitical position, was subject to political and military pressures by the Great Powers during and immediately after World War Two. During the war, the Great Powers exerted substantial pressures on Turkey to obtain its compliance in operating the Straits policy in accordance with their own strategic interests. This situation led to collaboration and competition among the Great Powers. In fact, the rivalry and collaboration of the Great Powers in the eastern Mediterranean during these periods, and the interaction of British, Soviet and American policies with those of regional states, has been examined by a number of Turkish and foreign researchers in recent years. Nicholas Tamkin is one of these authors and he has meticulously trawled through British archives and other published and unpublished sources available in Britain to elucidate Turkey's role in British strategy and diplomacy during World War Two. He makes a significant contribution on the formulation of British foreign policy and wartime strategy towards Turkey with a special emphasis given on Turkey's place in the uneven relationship between Britain and the Soviet Union.

Tamkin starts with a thesis stating that British policy towards Turkey during World War Two was misapprehended and misguided as Turkey's belligerency against Germany would only have been a burden on the Allied side and would not bring much benefit to them due to Turkey's military weakness and inadequate preparedness. The author skillfully demonstrates the ups and downs which took place in the trilateral relationship of Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union with well organized and outlined arguments in the nine chapters. Tamkin is perhaps too skillful, which leads to the loss of the complexities and ambiguities that characterized the relationships among these powers.

It is remarkable that throughout his book the author reveals the pragmatic attitude of Britain towards Turkey which at many times was ambiguous and as a result damaged Anglo-Turkish relations. One of the striking examples which explains this situation well occurred at a time when London to some extent recognized Ankara's fears of Moscow before the start of operation 'Barbarossa' and then the critical approach taken by Britain on the same Turkish fears after the German invasion of the USSR as London became an ally of Moscow and wanted to reconcile the sharp differences between Turkey and the

Soviet Union at the expense of Turkey (pp. 19-31).

It is within this general framework that the author presents four key stages in exploring Turkey's role in British wartime and post-war strategy: the first is in the Balkans in the winter of 1940-41; the second is on the 'Northern Front' in 1941-42; the third is in the Mediterranean theatre during 1943; and the fourth stage deals with Turkey's role in British post-war planning starting from late 1943 onwards. Turkey's role is scrutinized through different viewpoints incorporating the views of different departments and key figures such as Prime Minister Churchill, Anthony Eden and other prominent officials in the Foreign Office (FO), and the Chiefs of Staff (COS).

The inconsistent attitude often shown towards Turkey's role in the British war effort is clearly demonstrated in the book as the British War Cabinet and COS in late 1940s began to ask for Turkey's belligerency in the belief that the German military build-up in the Balkans not only targeted the Balkan states but also Turkey when in fact Berlin was making preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union. This view was strongly supported by Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Eden as well. A few months earlier, however, both the COS and FO had taken a view that Turkey's neutrality was far more beneficial to Britain than its entry into the war. The worst part was the fact that Britain wanted to get Turkey on its side without providing for any effective assistance as Britain was itself in an immense shortage of man and military equipment in the Middle Eastern front.

Confusion about British objectives in Turkey became greater in the British War Cabinet when discussions on the Turkish issue brought about a clash of views

between the two key departments from late 1940s onwards. While the British COS, with an idea of establishing a Balkan front, urged for Turkey's participation in the war, and was endorsed by Churchill, the FO realistically realized that Turkey's neutrality constituted a barrier to Germany and it could better assist Britain thorough diplomatic channels which sought a political cooperation rather than military action in the Balkans against the Axis powers.

Towards the end of April 1941, when the Balkans fell under Nazi occupation, Turkey then began to be considered in the British war strategy within the context of the 'Northern Front' of the Middle Eastern theatre. This strategy was based on the idea that Britain could rely on Turkey's resistance to protect the Middle East in case the Soviet Union collapsed in the Caucasus (the Northern Front) against Germany. As a result Britain had retreated to a policy which acknowledged the position of Turkey's neutrality as the latter was began to be thought of as a natural bulwark to the German advance towards the Middle East.

This strategy, however, was bound to change, as often occurred, due to Allied military achievements in North Africa and the stagnation of the German drive in the Caucasus during late 1942. These crucial successes led Churchill to draw up a new strategy which contemplated a strike against the German flank in the eastern Mediterranean. The realization of this strategy was based on the attainment of Turkey's entry into the war. To gain this objective Churchill, with the support of COS, took the Turkish matter into his own hands despite the opposition shown by the War Cabinet and the FO officials. The British COS, unlike Churchill, however, did not see much benefit in Turkey's belligerency without providing for

adequate military assistance. They believed that "the organizational and communicational weaknesses might make Turkish belligerency counterproductive" (p. 123). Moreover, Anglo-American war plans for the invasion of north-western France in 1944 diverted a great deal of the available British military resources to that theatre and this thus extremely limited the British war effort in the eastern Mediterranean. As a result Britain began to cut off the military supplies to Turkey promised by Churchill during the Adana Conference in January 1943. The British inconsistent attitude towards Turkey was thus the main reason which eventually brought about the near collapse in Anglo-Turkish relations during 1944.

I would, however, quarrel with Tamkin about who was responsible for the break down in relations between Turkey and Britain and how their relationship was put back on track after 1944. While the major responsibility for the aggravation of relationships lies with Britain, Turkey also had its share as well. Britain's inability to provide adequate military equipment for Turkey and İnönü's failure to take full control of foreign affairs against the pro-German party in Turkey were the main reasons for Turkey's not taking part in the war in time. The available Turkish and German documents point to the existence of strong pro-German elements in Turkey and the Turkish president was only able to take full control of the events after the forced resignations of Numan Menemencioğlu, the foreign minister of Turkey, and the old Marshall Fevzi Çakmak, chief of the Turkish general staff, in 1944.

It was for this reason that Turkey was able make a late request to Britain to join the war towards the end of January 1945, proposing either to fight on the Italian front or to clear up the Germans from the Aegean theatre. The British COS, despite Churchill's strong opposition however, rejected the Turkish request on the grounds that the employment of Turkish forces could delay Allied war plans and it would entail American approval, and hence there was not enough time. The Turkish request, therefore, was dropped. Regarding this point Tamkin inevitably reaches a wrong conclusion about Turkey's position related to the war (p. 162) when he readily accepts the findings of the existing literature and fails to consult my work on this issue since I am the first researcher to bring to light this issue.

Failure to consult available Turkish sources is the main weakness in Tamkin's work. The use of intercepted SIGINT documents, as the author asserts, in no way takes the place of Turkish documents about the issues related to Turkey's wartime strategy and foreign policy. This is particularly striking when Tamkin, to his surprise, asks why Turkey initially kept Britain dark about the negotiations regarding the renewal of its alliance with the Soviet Union (pp. 176-177). The reason was obvious: It was because Turkey was suspicious of British intentions. When the Turks realized that they could not come to terms with the Soviet Union alone did they have to call for British advice.

Despite these shortcomings this work is an impressive and valuable contribution to our understanding of the trilateral relationships between Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union during World War Two, an era which represented one of the most complex periods of modern history.

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A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture: Text, Context and Hermeneutics

By *Selen B. Morkoç*

Ottoman architectural history has generally remained within the bounds of empirical scholarship, its monuments being the subject of description, formal analysis, and taxonomic studies. However, over the last decade or so, the number of interpretative studies has increased. As examples, one may refer to Gülru Necipoğlu's work on the life and work of Sinan,[1] or Shirine Hamadeh's publications on 18th-century architecture.[2] With the exception of Jale Erzen's work on the aesthetics of Ottoman art,[3] these and other interpretative studies look to the patron as generator and consumer of meaning. A reception history about the experiences of the monuments' users (or even the architect's perception of his own creations) is still a major *lacuna*. It is this gap that Selen Morkoç attempts to fill, by conducting a hermeneutic analysis of several narratives: five 16th-century autobiographical treatises written by Mustafa Sa'i and Sinan, Cafer Efendi's early 17th-century *Risale-i Mimariyye*, and Dayezade's 18th-century *Selimiye Risalesi*.

In the Introduction, Morkoç justifies her selection of texts. Although historians have long perused Sinan's autobiographical memoirs (including the inventories of his buildings), she argues that they also have been "discounted as historical evidence due to their metaphoric expressions of so-called poetic clichés" (p. 4). Cafer Efendi's treatise presents the life and work of the chief imperial architect Sedefkar Mehmed, builder of the Sultanahmet Mosque, together with

an architectural glossary. (Sinan's building inventories and this glossary are not discussed since Morkoç focuses on the perception of architecture as expressed in "narrative"; however, as substantial and integral parts of the texts, these lists nevertheless would have deserved some discussion, given that they equally tell us about mentality.) The third text, the previously published Dayezade's *Selimiye Risalesi*, can be found in translation in the appendix.

"Part I: Ottoman Narratives on Architecture" introduces the Ottoman social and cultural context, as well as the literary genre of the biographical memoir (*tezkere*). Then, Morkoç describes the different narratives together with their authors and their specific historical contexts. (Her discussion of the 18th century would have profited from including more recent literature by Dana Sajdi and Shirine Hamadeh;[4] as is, it perpetrates the decline paradigm that Ottomanists are working so hard to combat.)

"Part II: Approaches" aims to "identify assumptions inherent in the modern historiography of Ottoman architecture and the influences these assumptions have had on the evaluation of Ottoman narratives of architecture…" (p. 99). Morkoç discusses Sinan scholars in four different groups: Early Republican historians, very much influenced by nationalist ideology; historians who emphasize the rationality of Sinan's architecture; those wanting to secure him a place in world architecture; and scholars favoring interpretative approaches. Hav-

ing thus surveyed the scholarship and situated herself, the author situates her texts in respect to orality and literacy, authority/legitimation, and Ottoman literature and suggests a new theoretical framework: hermeneutics, as proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer and elaborated by Lindsay Jones. Since an interpretation of architecture also includes the interpretation of the experience of architecture (as brought to paper with the narratives, as much as reception histories and early scholarship), the treatises present different ways in which contemporaries should experience the monuments—in Morkoç's words, they are "reception protocols" (p. 193).

"Part III: The Context: Interpreting Ottoman Narratives" peels away the different layers of meaning that the texts imposed on Ottoman architecure. For instance, in the texts the monuments were inextricably linked to the events, legends and rituals surrounding them. As examples, Morkoç mentions the gathering of marble columns for the Süleymaniye Mosque, Sinan's relationship to the Hagia Sophia, and the use of body and cosmological metaphors. A particularly valuable contribution is the section on "Spatial Sensibility." Based on the foregoing as well as the texts' structure, it posits that "Ottoman narratives, like miniatures, render space in an inter-subjective relationship between the audience and the represented phenomena rather than in an object-subject distinction" (p. 266) and that "the experiential is prioritised over the abstracted" (p. 268). However, instead of concluding on this strong note, Morkoç at this point adds a discussion of the *Selimiye Risalesi*, thereby diffusing its impact.

In conclusion, the author reiterates that "a hermeneutical approach helps interpretation to be outlined freed from separate categories of ideology and aesthetics, which are the prevalent interpretive strategies of architectural historiography" (p. 308). Indeed, her case studies convincingly advance this claim. However, given the disparate nature of the texts in terms of period as well as content—resulting in the need to jump back and forth not only between centuries, but also different bodies of scholarly literature (Sinan scholarship vs. 18th-century studies)—one wonders whether concentrating on one text might not have provided a sharper focus.

Another point of criticism one may raise is that, even though the foreword states that Morkoç revised every single sentence, many passages still very much resemble a dissertation, with long stretches of summaries of others' work. Here, the book could have gained much from an experienced editor. Moreover, for an architecture book, the figures in the middle of the volume are too small and of inadequate quality.

In spite of these shortcomings, Ottoman architectural historians may profit much from this book: it points to a fresh and promising direction of research and study—that is, the reception history of monuments. While there may not exist a large number of Ottoman narrative sources in addition to the ones already discussed here, even these may still yield more when approached from a different angle, and new ones may emerge from archives and manuscript libraries. Moreover, there is an abundance of poetry and architecture-related documents that at first sight do not lend themselves to a phenomenological study of architectural experience, but that will help us understand how Ottomans perceived their built environment, if we follow Morkoç's example.

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Endnotes

1. Gülru Necipoğlu-Kafadar, "The Süleymaniye Complex: An Interpretation," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 92-117; idem, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

2. Shirineh Hamadeh, "Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 19 (2002): 123-148; idem, "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the 'Inevi-table' Question of Westernization," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63 (2004): 32-51; idem, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

3. See, for example, Jale Nejdet Erzen, "Aesthetics and Aisthesis in Ottoman Art and Architecture," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (1991): 1-24.

4. Dana Sajdi (ed.), *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), especially 1-40. For Hamadeh, see note 3.

Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance and National Identity in Istanbul

By *Amy Mills*

Georgia: Georgia University Press, 2010, 248 pp., ISBN 978082035742, $24.95.

Recent neoliberal/post-Kemalist shifts in Turkish culture and politics have ushered in, among other things, a rekindled interest in Istanbul's cosmopolitan past and in the remaining vestiges of its historical urban fabric. While an increasingly sophisticated culture industry is mobilized to recast the former as an object of nostalgia for popular consumption, gentrification projects are transforming the social landscape of historical neighborhoods in new and often controversial ways. Amy Mills's ethnographic study of Kuzguncuk offers a compelling account of these processes at work in a picturesque neighborhood on the Asian shores of the Bosporus, widely accepted to be the paradigm of multi-ethnic coexistence, neighborliness and aesthetic charm in a city that has lost most of these qualities to republican urban/social modernization during the latter half of the 20th century. As Mills uncovers in six thematic chapters, this image of Kuzguncuk as the idealized *mahalle*—as the embodiment of belonging and familiarity as well as ethnic/religious harmony and tolerance—in fact obscures deeper histories of discrimination, conflict and violence that went hand in hand with nationalism, "Turkification" and successive episodes of migration. "Nostalgia constitutes the flip side of silence", writes Mills (p. 210), and *Streets of Memory* makes a convincing case of how cosmopolitan nostalgia, along with its silences, ultimately bolsters the very same Turkish nationalist narrative that it claims to contest.

The first chapter opens with a historical overview of the shifts in Kuzguncuk's ethnic, religious, and class composition, especially the departure of non-Muslim residents in the aftermath of the "wealth tax" imposed on minorities in the 1940s and the pogroms of 1955, and coinciding with these, the arrival of Muslim-Turkish migrants from rural Anatolia. Chapter 2 addresses how these social fragmentations and painful memories are suppressed in the more recent "re-constructions" of an idealized Kuzguncuk, both in the popular media (as a stage-set for television series

and films) and by gentrifying newcomers (mostly architects, academics and professionals). The contested story of the market garden is told in Chapter 3, showing how the confiscation of this property from a Greek family in 1977 is glossed over during the current confrontation between private developers who want to build on the site and Kuzguncuk residents who want to preserve it as a produce garden. By tracing competing claims to property ownership, Mills thus reveals another crack in Kuzguncuk's narratives of neighborhood unity. Chapter 4 focuses on Icadiye Street, the main thoroughfare of Kuzguncuk and the celebrated space of everyday encounters and communal events like festivals, funerals, etc. By juxtaposing these narratives of multiethnic harmony with the powerful silence surrounding the 1955 pogroms against Christians, Mills highlights the ways in which memory produces its own imagined cultural spaces. In Chapter 5, the discussion shifts to gender and the practice of "neighboring" among women in Kuzguncuk. Drawing upon Michel de Certeau, Mills articulates the concept of "propriety" that regulates norms of social behavior, inclusion/exclusion and public/private within the *mahalle*. The final chapter on Jacob Street zooms in specifically on Kuzguncuk's Jewish community, tracing their historical roots in Ottoman Istanbul and their subsequent migrations from Kuzguncuk to other neighborhoods within the city, as well as to Israel after 1948. Through lengthy interviews, Mills finds that Jews in Turkey have aligned themselves with state discourses of secularism, modernity and harmony, while those who have migrated to Tel Aviv are more open to share their stories of discrimination and dispossession. Arguably, Mills's detour to

Tel Aviv introduces some unevenness to the research since the author does not do the same to other non-Muslim groups and does not, for example, follow Kuzguncuk's Greeks to Athens or Armenians to Lebanon or to America. Nonetheless, it highlights how multiple geographies are involved in histories of migration, emigration and exile, complicating place-based ethnography.

Collectively, these chapters convincingly uncover the role of landscape and memory (both personal and collective) in the making and negotiation of identities. The book engages with other authors, contributes to a number of important theoretical debates at large and appeals to a much wider interdisciplinary audience beyond Turkish studies. Particular homage is paid to ideas of "symbolic landscape" (Henri Lefebvre) and "collective memory" (Maurice Halbwachs), as well as to critical theories of landscape that expose how nature is culturally constructed as "landscape" by erasing histories of human intervention (Denis Cosgrove is cited while William Cronon and Raymond Williams are not). With obvious mastery of these theoretical sources, *Streets of Memory* successfully deconstructs the making of Kuzguncuk into the "historical and natural theater of *mahalle* life…even while it erases history" (p. 84). Meanwhile, comparative references to other studies, such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's study of Hindu-Muslim intercommunal relationships in Bengali society during partition of 1947 (p. 133) or Tone Bringa's study of Catholic and Muslim women in a Bosnian village before its collapse in the civil war (p. 160), allow the reader to move back and forth between the specific story of Kuzguncuk and the larger questions pertaining to the making, contestation and negotiation of identities everywhere.

As also acknowledged by the author, by positing "urban landscape as the physical, cultural and geographic dimension of the intertwining of state and society in Turkey" (p. 210), *Streets of Memory* complements Esra Ozyurek's recent book *Nostalgia for the Modern*. Whether it is nostalgia for Kemalist images of modernity (Ozyurek) or for Kuzguncuk's lost cosmopolitanism (Mills), both books articulate how nostalgia leads to the privatization and commodification of an imagined/ idealized past and compels individuals to internalize state narratives in their daily lives. Particularly significant is Mills's notion of "actually existing cosmopolitanism", a place-based version, which rejects the common identification of cosmopolitanism with globalization and trans-national life styles and instead sees cosmopolitanism and nationalism not as oppositional but as interrelated (especially pp. 214-215). In mid-century Istanbul, Mills writes, "...cosmopolitan social relations existed alongside a process of nationalization of urban space and culture, and eventually were destroyed by the ways in which nationalism and urbanization coincided" (p. 213).

Based on the author's participant-observations and interviews and amply supplemented by secondary research, *Streets of Memory* is a compelling example of place-based ethnography, with all its merits, as well as its difficulties. The absence of hard data, quantitative analysis and historical documentation regarding Kuzguncuk's history is one conspicuous gap, also acknowledged by the author (p. 227). Another minor flaw, at least to this reviewer, is that the repetitiveness of the main arguments breaks the narrative flow in the book. In the introduction, at the beginning and end of each chapter, and then again in the conclusion, the author repeatedly summarizes what she is doing and how she is doing it. The result reads like a dissertation with all the accompanying "wordiness" and academic jargon. Lastly, there is a missed opportunity in that Mills does not look more closely at the actual urban fabric and architecture of Kuzguncuk. She comes very close in different parts of the book: for example, the differentiation between residential streets versus the main street (p. 139), how gentrifying newcomers use space differently (p. 152), or how women watching the street from their windows police *mahalle* propriety (p. 144). Yet such observations remain marginal rather than constitutive of the book's main arguments and there is little visual evidence other than one very helpful street plan in the beginning (and a few not very helpful photographs). Exactly what kinds of windows lend themselves to such street surveillance? How important are the widths of the streets? Is a cul-de-sac more conducive to the closed community lives of *mahalles* whereas a thoroughfare or grid plan suggests a modern, open society (as Murat Gul argues in his recent book on the modern urban history of Istanbul)? What do old houses "restored" with concrete structures and painted wood finishes say about authenticity, nostalgia and "themed environments"? These and many other good questions can be asked to make this ethnographic study even more strongly "place-based". Expanding the research in that direction, supplementing it with more visual material and perhaps collaborating with urban/ architectural historians (as, for example, in the recent publication, *The Architecture and Memory of the Minority Quarter in the Muslim Mediterranean City*, 2010) are only some of the many exciting prospects that this book inspires.

Ultimately however, the profound question raised by Mills's study of Kuzguncuk is whether the *mahalle* can truly be "a space of cosmopolitanism". I would suggest that if cosmopolitanism is primarily about urban encounters with alterity and difference (Richard Sennett) and about the blasé attitude that the metropolitan condition imposes upon individuals (Georg Simmel), then it is by definition the opposite of familiarity and closed community life that informs the very concept of *mahalle*. This dilemma appears, for example, in the ambivalence of Kuzguncuk's gentrifying newcomers, especially professional women, towards *mahalle* life: their search for a sense of belonging at the same time that they

reject the invasion of privacy that comes with it (p. 141). That *mahalle* life also implies *mahalle* oppression (*mahalle baskisi*) is a particularly poignant issue today when interest in and idealization of the *mahalle* is rampant, among both conservative Muslim communities and the "white Turks" of gated suburbia who in their own different ways, idealize the presumed homogeneity, safety and familiarity of the old *mahalle*. Compared to these, one is thankful that Kuzguncuk's cosmopolitan nostalgia is at least, urban, ambivalent and interested in minority histories, albeit in the sterilized ways that Mills uncovers.

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Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present

By *Christopher I. Beckwith*
New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009, 472 pp., ISBN 9780691135892.

With the assertion of being the first complete history of Central Eurasia from ancient times to the present day, Christopher Beckwith's *Empires of the Silk Road* is a complex and well argued book. Beckwith unites the history of the peoples of the world's largest landmass into a remarkable history by describing the rise and fall of the great Central Eurasian empires such as the Scythians, the Huns, the Turks, and the Mongols under Genghis Khan.

The book is composed of twelve chapters, a prologue and epilogue, and two appendices exploring the spread of Proto-Indo-Europeans and Central Eurasian peoples. Each chapter opens with a brief

summary of the arguments in the chapter and that makes for easier reading. The other strong aspect of the book, in addition to the footnotes, is that there is an extended set of endnotes that elaborate on the topics discussed in the text.

The author's aim is to clarify some issues in Central Eurasian history through writing "a realistic, objective view of the history of Central Eurasia and Central Eurasians" (p. xii). Beckwith rejects the stereotypes of pastoral nomads as warlike, difficult to defeat, poor, and entirely distinctive peoples. Throughout the book, he seeks to refute the popular notion of Central Eurasians as barbarian nomads (see especially

the Epilogue). He argues that agrarianism and urbanism were both part of the steppe empires and the central economic dynamic in the interaction between steppe peoples and the agrarian peoples was trade: "the trade in luxury goods (along the Silk Road) constituted a very significant part of the internal economy within Central Asia" (p. xii).

Beckwiths's main arguments and approach can be seen in the Prologue. There Beckwith builds the argument that a cornerstone of the "Central Eurasian Culture Complex" is the socio-political ideal of the heroic lord and his *comitatus*, a war band and his friends sworn to defend him to the death (p. 12). Maintaining such a system required significant resources, which were most efficiently obtained through trade and tribute. Accordingly, Beckwith's second major argument that trade was the basis of the Silk Road economy and not raiding, which was instead used only when avenues of trade were closed. In all chapters, trade is the key element of his argument and the answer to the question of "why trade?" is the leader's need to acquire goods to support himself and his *comitatus*.

The author conceptualizes Central Eurasian history in terms of the continental and the periphery. He sketches a historical pattern in which a Central Eurasian people build a trade-based empire in which its economic and cultural achievements attract the attention of regional powers on the periphery. When the regional powers expand inward, they disrupt the trade networks that maintain *comitatus*-based societies; having conquered Eurasia, the regional powers gradually decline themselves, and the cycle repeats.

In the subsequent chapters, he examines different empires and periods. The second

chapter is devoted to the rise of the first steppe empire, the Scythians. In that chapter he notes that the classical philosophical works were produced approximately in the same period and this might be due to the effects of the far-reaching Silk Road trade system. In this chapter he emphasized that Central Eurasia was not simply a conduit, but "an economy and world of its own" (p. 74).

In the third chapter Beckwith analyses the rise of the Roman and Chinese empires. He argues that the attempts of China and the Rome to conquer the Central Eurasians were not sustained, probably because they curtailed trade. The resulting internecine fighting led to a decline in the size of Central Eurasian cities, and probably contributed to the relative collapse of the classical civilizations.

In the fourth and fifth chapters he discusses the Huns and the rise of the Türk Empire. During this period, the Central Eurasian Cultural Complex spread from Europe to Japan and he suggests that this was when nations began to be defined by people "bound by oaths" (p. 107) and the lack of sharp geographical divisions on the steppe allowed easy movement, whereas among the peripheral agrarians states borders were "macrocosmic reflections of the borders between agricultural fields" (p. 108).

In the chapters 6 and 7, Beckwith argues that in a 13-year period in the eighth century "every empire in Eurasia suffered a major rebellion, revolution or dynastic change" (p. 140): The Türk dynasty emerged following Uighur, Byzantine and Tibetan rebellions, and Abbasid and Carolingian revolutions. He notes that, most of these "were led by merchants or people closely connected to merchants and in-

ternational commerce" (p. 141). During that period, world religions, accompanied with literacy, spread widely across Central Asia and trade shifted further north. Additionally, because of transactions between peoples, new technologies, such as paper, were transferred from China to the West. All those changes and developments suddenly collapsed in the ninth century and Beckwith's explanation is not sufficient. Then, the rise of many small princely states and economic recovery started. The small size of the states allowed for more movement and intellectual growth. Islamic science and philosophy arose in Central Asia at this time and spread throughout the Islamic world, and later to Europe.

In the chapters 8 and 9, Beckwith focuses on the Mongol Empire which turned most of Eurasia into one commercial zone, spread many of the new Chinese inventions, and helped the spread of deadly diseases. During the Timurids and under Tamerlane the urban areas became the cultural and political center of Eurasia for the first time. While the Mongols facilitated trade they did not change the cultural and ethno-linguistic divisions in Eurasia. By the 15th century maritime states were raised in the Central Eurasia. While Russians spread to the coasts, the Portuguese and Dutch entered the eastern oceans. The Ottoman and Mughal empires were also rising in that period. This was an era when the littoral states began to surpass the continental states as centers of trade.

The main narrative of the 10th chapter is related to how the Silk Road was closed by the late 17th century leading to the partitioning of Central Asia. He discusses the rise of European domination of the Central Eurasian littoral which eventually put the Silk Road out of business. For Beckwith the rise of the littoral trade was not "imperialistic colonization but international trade" (p. 250). With the collapse of large pastoral nomadic states and associated trading cities, the Silk Road was no longer nourished, and faded away. As a consequence, "Central Eurasia suffered from the most severe, long-lasting economic depression in world history" (p. 261).

Chapter 11 is concerned with the spread of modernism throughout Eurasia. Beckwith suggests that the "Central Eurasian culture suffered the most of any region of the world from devastation of Modernism in the twentieth century" (p. 288). The closing chapter examines the contemporary era, what Beckwith sees as the fourth regional imperial era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union most of Central Eurasia again became independent but had no unifying agency. In this new period, the author hopes that the new Central Asian states will recover economically and culturally. Beckwith argues that much of modern world culture does come from Central Eurasia, not the agrarian peripheral states of the earliest civilizations. The real homeland of Europe is Central Eurasia and he hopes that the new Central Eurasia would create "an enlightened, liberal confederation like the European Union" (p. 313).

In sum, despite the fact that Beckwith's determination to avoid macro theories handicaps him from exploring causality, *Empires of the Silk Road* is appealing to both general and academic audiences. His arguments are persuasive, and are backed by considerable empirical evidence. His clear writing and helpful system of notes make the book an interesting Central Eurasian perspective on world history.

Mitat Çelikpala, *Kadir Has University*

The Borders of Islam: Exploring Samuel Huntingtons's Faultlines, from Al-Andalus to the Virtual Ummah

Edited by *Stig Jarle Hansen, Atle Mesoy* and *Tuncay Kardas*
London: C. Hurst & Co., 2009, 388 pp., ISBN 9781850659723.

The Borders of Islam gives an insider's view of the so-called "Islam's bloody borders" through an examination of the countries that straddle two cultures/civilizations from across various regions. The book makes an enormous contribution to debates on "clash of civilizations" by critically examining various cases of war and conflict, which is one of the key elements of the thesis formulated by Samuel Huntington and popularized by the media. Hansen, Mesoy and Kardas take on Huntington's main thesis with an aim to falsify it. The book stands out as one of the strongest counter-arguments to the main premises of the clash of civilizations thesis. It does so by arguing that the clash sometimes is constructed, as is the case of various internal and external conflicts taking place in and around Iraq, or it neglects the division within the Islamic civilization, as is the case with Lebanon where the Sunnis have a different agenda than the Shiite Muslims, or that the clash between Muslims and Christians is not necessarily religiously-driven in Nigeria, Ethiopia or Sudan. While laying out this argument, the book sets out to understand whether religion could be considered as the most tangible source of conflicts involving groups that hold different religious faiths.

Rigby and Johansen argue that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is often oversimplified and reduced to an Islam-Judaism duality. They contend that the core of the conflict lies with the fundamental nationalists from both sides. By analyzing approaches from fundamentalist Muslim, Jewish and Christian beliefs in Israel, they conclude that despite their differences in religious beliefs, fundamentalist are united in the same goal: boosting the potential for inter-communal conflict.

Bou Nasif's arguments are particularly helpful for the book's overall purpose of falsifying Huntington's thesis. For instance, while Huntington sees the main reason for Lebanese civil conflicts as the fight between Maronite Christians and Shia/Sunni Muslims, Bou Nasif argues that many of the bloodiest clashes were between the different Muslim sects within the country. He further contends that a sole focus "on the Muslims vs. non-Muslims side of the fault line conflicts" results in portraying "a static vision of Islam that ignores some of its major internal and deeply conflictual dynamics" (p. 43). Similar to the Lebanese case, Khory and Schulze show that the problems in Pakistan and Indonesia are *intra*-religiously motivated conflicts. They stress that at the center of problems in these countries is the politicization (Pakistan, pp. 65-82, and Ethiopia, pp. 148-150) and radicalization (Indonesia, pp. 83-98) of Islam rather than the natural givens of the Islamic faith. Therefore, it is erroneous to define the conflicts originating from these countries as specifically inter-religious (or inter-civilizational). The Sudanese case is analyzed by Gerard Prunier who gives a similar picture. In obvious disconfirmation of Huntington, Prunier shows that Sudan's ethnic identity has always been

prominent, surpassing religiosity, and that this African-Arab ethnic separation is at the very centre of the Sudanese conflicts.

Imperial historical divisions of a country are another causal pathway through which tribal conflicts, regardless of religious affiliation, play a prominent role in today's geopolitical landscape. As Ben Reid's argument on the Philippines reveals, the conflict in the Philippines is not between Islam and Christianity/Westernism, but over the struggle to end the historical legacies and consequences of the formation of the colonial Philippine state. This is also the case in Sakah Mahmud's case study on Nigeria. By categorizing the conflicts in Nigeria into three groups, Mahmud concludes that the Nigerian case presents at least three counter arguments to the clash of civilization thesis.

"European borders of Islam" are tackled through four case studies. In the Bosnian and Chechen cases, it is argued that the interaction of religion and nationalism sparked the first fire. James Hughes highlights the importance of temporality in his argument. He points out that the conflict between Chechnya and Russia initially started as a nationalist conflict. The conflict in Chechnya originated not as a historically fault line of religious war, as Huntington argued, but as a contingent secular nationalist revolution that rejected Soviet colonization (p. 173). The Chechen problem turned into a religiously motivated jihadist conflict *only after* the Russians accelerated the level of conflict from political arena to the actual fighting. Huntington's explanation for the Chechen war as a religiously motivated clash is yet another misinterpretation of a secularist nationalist conflict.

In the next chapter Kardas challenges the very basic and core premises of Hun-

tington's thesis. Who depicts Islam as a monolithic, dogmatic, essentialist, trans-historical, and ontologically different religion on a collision course with the Western world? Kardas puts to test such a view by analyzing the spectacular transformation of political Islam in Turkey in both discursive and practical terms. According to his findings, Turkey's predicaments and domestic political conflicts have largely emerged not from its Islamic credential but from the extra-political methods of securitization of the secular and Islamic identities by the state.

Bosnia is another case that contrasts Huntington's thesis. Monnesland argues that deep underlying differences in religion and conceptualization of history found in the Balkans have been engraved into conflicts, but are not in themselves the cause of the conflicts. Monnesland's chapter concludes that the conflicts in the Balkans should be interpreted as more 'normal' than is usually the case for they are mainly conflicts between competing interests, similar to conflicts found in other parts of Europe.

Complementing other chapters, Elena Arigita stresses the impact of Islam on Spanish cultural identity. She argues that the Islamic religion is one of the spiritual beliefs that have configured the historical personality of Spain. Unlike Huntington she reckons that an interaction between religions has happened and is happening and this process is unavoidable. For instance, this very interaction led two countries from two religions, namely Spain and Turkey, to initiate a project in order to tackle the thesis of clash of civilizations, i.e., the Alliance of Civilizations Initiative.

The final chapters of the book deal with the "Western borders of Islam". The main argument here is that if Huntington's claims

were correct there would be conflicts and wars where the West and Islam collide. These chapters verify this fact by emphasizing the level of radicalization among Muslims in Western societies. It is noted that a higher level of democracy would allow for various processes of radicalization among Muslims living in Western societies as is the case in Britain. For Dominique Thomas, who studies the case of Britain, the radicalization among the West's Muslim communities cannot be explained merely as a result of a clash between two civilizations. The French case, analyzed by Farhad Khosrokhavar, also shows almost the same result with regard to the radicalization of Muslims in France.

Despite many of its rich empirical contributions, the book fails to offer a comprehensive explanation of the changing nature of 'clash.' It is undeniable that there is and will be 'clashes' between the two civilizations. What is often ignored is that such clashes may not take place in a form as envisaged by Huntington. Overall, although the book covers almost all the 'usual suspects' that fall within the ambit of the clash of civilizations discourse, it is clear that the thesis would have been better served had the book included chapters on some of the other African countries as well as India and Germany, which are on the frontlines of the so-called clash in many ways. It has never been easy to mount a sound systematical challenge to a highly topical and controversial theme of world politics, such as the clash thesis. Hansen, Mesoy and Kardas have made a bold attempt to achieve just that.

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The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire

By *Allen J. Fromherz*
London: I. B. Tauris, 2010, 274 pp., ISBN 9781845116514.

As a dynasty based in medieval North Africa and southern Spain, the Almohads have received relatively little attention from Anglophone scholars in Islamic Studies, many of whom work from a Middle Eastern perspective. Allen Fromherz's book is thus a very welcome contribution to the field. His over-arching aim is to present an account of the rise of the Almohads by looking at the Almohad movement's leader, Muḥammad b. Tūmart; the Maṣmūda Berber tribal environment in which the empire arose; and the doctrines by which Ibn Tūmart galvanised these tribes from the High Atlas mountains of Morocco.

He introduces the Almohads in a lively and engaging way, using primary sources as the basis for the arguments presented in each chapter. He begins with a brief summary of the Almohad empire's history and then he wisely discusses the sources and their pitfalls, especially their mythic and legendary aspects (although inevitably he must also rely on them for his facts). He also flags up what he considers the neglected 'Berber' dimension within accounts of the rise of the empire.

Chapter one then explores Ibn Tūmart's life and the early years of the Almohad movement with an insightful look at tribal society in the High Atlas and the implications of Ibn Tūmart's genealogy. Using the biography/hagiography written by his follower, al-Baydhaq, alongside other sources, the chapter then traces Ibn Tūmart's intellectual formation in the Islamic east and the main events which occurred on his lengthy journey back to Marrakesh. Fromherz deftly analyses Ibn Tūmart's meeting with ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, the future caliph of the Almohad empire, and his encounter with, ʿAlī b. Yūsuf, the ruler whose empire he sought to overthrow.

The second chapter focuses on the Berber tribal contribution to the Almohad movement and points out that while Ibn Tūmart's message of Islamic reform rejected aspects of the tribal past, it also assimilated, used and modified many of them. Fromherz gives a particularly useful analysis of the roles of the āsmās, a communal meal to confirm alliances, and the tamyīz, a review of the tribes which the Almohads used as a tool to purge and kill disloyal elements as well as an occasion to recognise devotion to the cause. The tribes participating in the movement are then described in turn giving a thorough overview of who actually participated in the movement. The chapter ends with a summary of the Almohad hierarchy of power which emerged from this environment.

In chapter three, Fromherz looks at the doctrines put forward by Ibn Tūmart and his claim to be the mahdī. In keeping with other scholars, especially Maribel Fierro, he shows how the Almohad sources depict Ibn Tūmart's life as an imitation of the life of Muḥammad and the central

importance of his claim to be the mahdī. This claim enabled him to demand complete obedience to his message by virtue of his status. The reformed Islam which he promulgated is partially described in his book, the Aʿazz mā Yuṭlab (The greatest of what is sought), the subject of the rest of the chapter. Despite much scholarly disagreement as to whether all the book's contents were actually authored by Ibn Tūmart, Fromherz believes they were and gives a good explanation for their form and function in the Almohad movement.

Chapter four which looks at the rise of the Almohads in a broader context is brief and seems something of an afterthought. The analysis of what constitutes a tribe could have been omitted or integrated into chapter two. In fact, the main drawback to the book is the sometimes awkward placing of materials and repetition of similar points. The first chapter finishes with sections on gender and ethnic labels which interrupt the narrative flow. The description of tribal economy similarly disrupts the flow at the end of the second chapter. It is not that these asides are irrelevant but they do not seem sufficiently integrated into the book as a whole. This sometimes gives the work the feel of an. On the other hand, the large number of sections and sub-headings does make it easy to navigate and potentially helpful as a reference.

One underlying question that the book raises is the particularity of the Maṣmūda Berber as opposed to tribal component to the rise of the Almohads. Ibn Khaldūn, whom Fromherz cites as instrumental in creating the Berber myth of the empire's origin, did not consider the Berbers unique but claimed that the blend of ʿaṣabiyya and religious inspiration that they demon-

strated was equally apparent in the Arabs and indeed other tribal peoples. While it is true that the Maṣmūda supported Ibn Tūmart because he was one of their own, there is more research to be done on the specific colour which their origin contributed to the movement.

Despite its merits, this book presents some minor irritations to the specialist. The Arabic transliteration is frequently incorrect, or idiosyncratic. For example, furūʿ is rendered furuʿ throughout; bū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf is used instead of the standard Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (p. 164) and Abū Shiyyba instead of Abū Shayba. Fromherz also translates kafīr (sic) and jāhiliyya as 'the unbelievers and the ignorant' when the unbelievers are kuffār and jāhiliyya is more rightly the time of ignorance not ignorant people (juhhāl or juhalāʾ). (p. 162) This seems strange when his careful analysis of primary sources including the com-

plex Aʿazz mā Yuṭlab demonstrates his scholarly competence.

In addition, the copious notes function almost as an academic commentary on the main text but they are situated somewhat inaccessibly at the end rather than at the foot of each page. This seems to reflect a tension in the book between striving for simplicity and appeal to a general audience and recognition as an academic monograph. Ultimately it is very difficult for any book to be both and Fromherz's work oscillates between the two imperatives. It is nevertheless a good accessible introduction to the history of the Almohads, and for the most part an enjoyable read which also presents the key issues, doctrinal, political and social, relating to the rise of this fascinating empire.

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Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam

By *Kecia Ali*
Harvard University Press, 2010, 272 pp., ISBN 9780674050594, $39.95.

This brilliant, eloquent and insightful book is not, despite its title, a provocative one. It does not claim that in Islam being a wife is like being a slave. Nor does it support the overly simplistic view of an egalitarian ethical Islamic core corrupted by social hierarchies. Instead, the author brings to the fore a very rich legal discourse, dating from the early centuries of Islam, in which the rights of wives and the rights of slaves are repeatedly compared and analysed in relation to each other. This discourse, the author shows, was central to the way the

major Sunni jurists understood what rights and duties are entailed in marriage.

The main point of the book is to tease out from the legal texts the central notions that shaped Muslim jurists' views of marriage. Specifically, the author shows that marriage involved a transfer of authority to the husband over a wife's sexual availability. The author says, and amply demonstrates, that the central notion about marriage was that the marriage contract granted a husband a dominion (*milk*) over his wife's sexuality. The same term was used for the

general ownership of a slave, and more specifically, it was the same kind of dominion that allowed a husband to have sex with his wife that allowed a master to have sexual access to his female slaves.

For jurists like al-Shāfiʿī, al-Shaybānī and the authors of the Māliki Mudawwanah, marriage was *milk*, or dominion. But the logic of this analogy was that they all also recognized the differences between slaves and free persons, regardless of gender. These competing ideas—both legal—often rubbed against each other, and the author does a great job of mining these tensions as they are explained by the jurists. The best example, undoubtedly, is that of a female owner who wished to take her male slave as a sexual partner. The logic of dominion, and the analogy with the male owner of a female slave, both suggest that she has a right to do so. This apparently outrageous suggestion is completely in line with analogy, and, as Ali brilliantly shows, the solution to this problem requires al-Shāfiʿī to define licit sexual relations as inherently hierarchical—it is only the male (husband/owner) who has sexual dominion over the female (wife/concubine).

There are other fascinating instances of the tension between the conception of marriage as dominion and the rights of wives as free women. Chapter Three, "Claiming Companionship", takes up the issue of rights of each wife in a polygamous marriage as a test-case for juristic discussion of women's rights in marriage. Do women have a right to sexual satisfaction in marriage? A lot of modernist writings about gender in Islam highlight the passage in al-Ghazālī where men are commended to pay attention to the sexual contentment of their wives. But, as Ali shows, this is an ethical injunction, not a legal one. The logic of dominion meant that women owed

sexual availability to their husbands in return for financial support. The husbands, as the dominating partner in this sexual relationship, were not obliged to be sexually available to their wives, even as the jurists recognized the sexual needs of women.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of this book is that it brings the discussion of slavery from the periphery into the centre of modern debates about Islamic law. A lot of what is currently exchanged with regard to slavery in Islam is polemical. Ali avoids this tendency here, and she treats slavery as it was treated by medieval jurists: a fact of life. Although this is not a book about slavery, she advances our understanding of slavery in Islam by embedding concepts of slavery in the medieval societies which produced these texts. We cannot understand past Islamic societies without slavery because, at least for the discussion of marriage, disregarding slavery fundamentally distorts the jurists' ways of thinking.

It is difficult to overstate the contribution of this book to our understanding of gender, marriage and slavery in Islam. The ideas are complex, but the style is beautiful, steering away from any jargon. It does not make for easy solutions, and, as the author points out, it is not another book about the rights of women in Islam. On the contrary, it challenges facile vindications. The comparisons with other legal systems, mainly Jewish and Roman, are sophisticated and enriching, and also soften any polemical bite in understanding the slavery-constructed notions of gender and marriage in all these legal systems. But we need to acknowledge this medieval legacy of marriage as a dominion in order to ground modern debates in a sound historical basis.

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A History of the Middle East: From Antiquity to the Present Day

By *Georges Corm*
Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2010, 228 pp., ISBN 9781859647.

The Lebanese economist and historian Corm has written a timely book contributing to our understanding of a Middle East which is marked by complexities and conflicts. By putting the region's long history into perspective, Corm aims to help reader go beyond the stereotypes that the media and many Western and Middle Eastern policymakers seem to use to legitimatize the violence that has taken over the region for over two centuries.

Corm starts his discussion by showing the diversity of a region that has existed at the geographical level since ancient times. For a complete account of this complex geography Corm examines the "geographical foundations" of the region. Hence, the book has given a lot of attention to what Corm refers to as the geographic "arabesque" that has historically characterized the Middle East, in which the Anatolian, Iranian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian empires were built. As a result, in the first part of the book Corm examines the Mesopotamian, Anatolian, Iranian and Egyptian civilizations as the major strata of Middle Eastern history.

Corm's account of the history of the Middle East reflects the "geology of cultures." Corm criticizes the consideration of Muslim society in the region as if it were one unified ethnic or national body. The second chapter of the book is entirely dedicated to the exploration of the Middle East as geology of cultures with extraordinary cultural wealth and population complexity. According to Corm, the Middle East is a land of great diversity, a mosaic of different cultures and therefore it cannot be reduced to a uniform bloc. In this regard, it is problematic to view the diverse societies of the region as one, which presupposes that Islam is a living, unified being that exists in a precisely defined territory. In his opinion, religion is misused to explain purely political issues. Corm views Islam as only one aspect of the development of Muslim societies. He argues that numerous actors have been exploiting Islam in order to preserve their power, and that this is not the fault of the religion.

Part two of the book goes from the rise of the Western powers in the 18th century to the present day. In this book, the dynamics of the relationship between the West and the Middle East are explained from a Middle Eastern perspective. Corm argues that the main geopolitical and historical roots of the idea of a divide existing between the Middle East and the West did not originate in the clashes of religious and cultural differences as argued by Samuel Huntington, but came rather from the historical traumas they suffered. Anglo-French rivalries of 1919-1956 period, US-Soviet rivalries in the Cold War and the American domination of the post-Cold War era have determined the recent state of affairs in the region. Through the five chapters of part two, Corm overviews the engagement of the competing Western powers in regional affairs. In this part Corm examines the major events that have shaped the modern Middle East, namely European mandates,

the Arab-Israeli conflict, the first Gulf War and the US invasion of Iraq following 9/11. Besides these major events Corm also highlights some other socio-economic factors including the rise of Pan-Arabism during 1950s and 1960s, the existence of oil resources in the region, and the imposition of democracy by the Western powers.

Last but not least, part three deals with the question of how to address the complexity of the Middle East. In this part Corm discusses the methodological difficulties of writing the history of the Middle East, and the causes behind the decadence of Middle Eastern civilisations. In the last part of the book, Corm explores the advent of Islam, Western influence, socio-economic factors and sweeping upheavals as the main causes behind the decadence of the civilisations in the region. Mainly, European colonialism and Western interventions in the Middle East is seen as powerful obstacles to the dissemination of the principles of modern governance and democracy in the region. Corm concludes arguing that the tension between the adherents of liberalism and the supporters of the authoritarian rule of a religious order will remain as long as the

democratic West continues to offer interest-based justifications in its relations with the countries of the Middle East.

The book ends with a concise chronology of the Middle East, which covers a long period from 1768 Russian-Ottoman War to 2009. The chronology ends with the election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the US. This concise chronology provides an essential source for readers.

Overall, this book is a good source for scholars and students as well as policymakers who seek a deeper understanding of the Middle East and its relations with the West. Corm has stepped outside the box and engaged in a wider discussion of how to address the complexity of the Middle East from a historical perspective. At the end of his depiction of the Middle East, Corm concludes that unless some drastic changes occur in relations with the West, it is likely that the games of power and rivalry, and the phenomena of oppression, will continue to characterize the region, plunging it into decadence.

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Identités culturelles et citoyenneté européenne. Diversité et unité dans la construction démocratique de l'Europe

This book brings together ten articles that were presented at a regional conference series on "Cultural Identities and European Citizenship" organized by the Forum Europe des Cultures. Forum Europe des Cultures, an organization founded in Brussels

in 2003 (see pp. 149-151 for its brief foundation history, objectives, members and activities), aims to uncover the question of how cultural identities could be recognized, one of the most debated issues in the process of European integration, by organizing six

conferences in one year in Bruges, Rennes, Strasbourg, Santarem, Corfu and Brussels.

Papers presented at these six conferences have concentrated on one fundamental problematic: how could the dilemma between the *indivisible integrity of the state* principle, still conceived of as a sacred principle, and *cultural identities* be overcome? In this respect, how could the tension between the national sovereignty principle and the European Union Project be reduced?

In the introduction, Mark Dubrulle reminds readers of some of the thinkers, such as Denis de Rougemont, Salvador de Madariaga and Hendrik Brugmans, who have advocated a cultural-centered construction process in Europe in the post world war two era (p. 10). These people have argued that the existing cultures in Europe have some common fundamentals other than ethnic roots, language and religion, and that these have created unity in diversity through evolving in interaction. According to Dubrulle, this idea has stayed under the shadow of the common market, and then of the economic community, and finally of the idea of a hybrid union that could also be named as confederation.

The first article by Gabriel Fragniere, "Identity, Nationality and Citizenship: New Paradigms of European Political Culture", deals with the transformation of European political culture from the Westphalian peace of 1648 through to the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. The author concludes that Europe in the aftermath of world war two has undergone unification and diversification simultaneously (p. 22). The most important watershed in the Westphalian order was the emergence of the European citizenship concept in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. In this new period, Europe has developed into a new socio-political organism where cultural differences have been recognized, and various nationalities and different political systems have coexisted with a common citizenship understanding.

The second article, co-written by Christian Demeuré-Vallée and Yann Fournis, "From European Citizenship toward Regional Citizenship", examines the dilemma and clash between the trans-national citizenship of the Project of European citizenship, and regional citizenships, in the case of the Breton region. The authors say that the contributions that regional identity demands would provide for the development of a European citizenship and a democratic culture in Europe.

The third article, by Mark Eysken, "People or Population: the Case of Flanders", analyses the situation of Flemish identity within the context of European integration in particular and of the globalizing world in general. Calling to mind the salad bowl theory, the author argues that Europe resembles more a salad bowl than a melting pot, and draws attention to the differences between the European Union and the United States. Reversing the remarks of Auguste Vermeylen that "We should be flaman first in order to be European", Eysken claims that it would be more appropriate to state "we should be European to stay Flaman".

The fourth article, by Linda Cardinal, "Which Citizenship for the Minorities? A Neo-Republican Response", covers the citizenship issue of national minorities. In response to the views of Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor, prominent representatives of the liberal and communitarian approaches, the author looks into the ideas of the neo-republican John Pocock and James Tully. Highlighting the significance of the intellectual contributions of neo-

republicans to the citizenship of minorities debates, Cardinal calls on everybody to re-examone the issues of citizenship of minorities and self-determination within the framework of the new-republican contributions.

The fifth article, "Globalization: Monoculturalism or Multiculturalism?", by Rik Pinxten, compares mono-culturalism, which has also been referred to as neocommunitarianism, with multi-culturalism and states that both approaches have positive and negative sides. The author concludes that multi-culturalism in particular runs the risk of swinging towards racism in practice (p. 76).

The sixth article, "Cultural Identities and Citizenship in the Enlargement of the European Union", by Mark Dubrulle, discusses how unity in diversity could be materialized within the context of cultural identities and European citizenship. The author kicks off a new debate on the ideological background lying behind European enlargement. To Dubrulle, Turkey's membership is of utmost importance for Europe in terms of cultural and geo-strategic consideration. A European Union that has secured a 60-year peace between France and Germany could play a new role in diminishing the tension between the Christian and Islamic worlds.

The seventh article, by Léonce Bekemans, "Intercultural Dialogue in Europe: A Regional Reality and a Global Duty," focuses on the new openings that the EU Project could offer against Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis. The author looks into the roles that such actors as the European Council, the European Union and the Foundation of European Culture could play in establishing a more democratic and multi-cultural world system.

The eighth article, "Brussels, the Multiculturality in the Capital of Europe," by Koen de Wandeler and Annette Kuhk, contends that Brussels is becoming a world city with its political significance, economic dynamism and cultural activities of global reputation. The authors focus on how these characteristics of the city have impacted its institutional and political structure. Also, the authors investigate the repercussions of economic development on environment and social relations.

Pedro Canavarro's "The Mediterranean Area as the Indicator of the European Identity" discusses the significance of the Mediterranean basin in the construction of European identity. He stresses that Mediterranean culture should play a key role in the evolution of a European identity. In this respect the author maintains that it is important that Turkey, as a successor of a great empire in Europe and the Mediterranean, be given a membership in the EU.

The last article, by Mark Von de Voorde, "Europe: Heritage and Community", argues that rather than a natural phenomenon, Europe is cultural phenomenon whose borders follow a zigzag course. He goes on to claim that the strengthening of the relations between distinct regional cultures would help develop a common European culture.

The book provides important clues so as to understand the social transformation and cultural demands that have emerged during the European integration process. The questions of how the EU has responded or should respond to these demands are discussed with concrete cases by authors of different opinions. In this respect the book stands out as an original work that is a herald of similar works in the future.

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Religious Pluralism, Globalization and World Politics

Edited by *Thomans Banchoff*
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 348 pp., ISBN 9780795323412.

As the link between religion and international affairs has come under special scrutiny especially since 9/11, there has been an increase in the number of books and articles that investigate the issues of the public sphere from a faith-based perspective. Edited books have especially enjoyed considerable attention since they bring diverse voices in manageable bits. Some have explored theoretical links between international relations and religion, while others have drawn attention to more practical issues on the ground. Thomas Banchoff's *Religious Pluralism*, falling between these purely theoretical and completely practical projects, is a book worth reading especially given the diverse backgrounds of the 12 scholars it brings together. These contributors draw attention to the multiple roles religious actors have been playing in the international arena. Religious ideas constitute a market with its supply and demand side and the volume explores the actors, obstacles and possibilities in such a market. Especially with the trauma of 9/11 —and one can make the argument that the trauma actually started with the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran— there has been a disproportionate attention given to the violent manifestations of religion. Therefore, the acknowledgement of the constructive role of faith-based initiatives can still be considered a relatively new topic both to the academic and policy worlds. The authors discuss a number of contentious issues that have been subject to heated debates but due to the space limitations that pose a challenge to a thorough

review of edited volumes, only a couple of issues are highlighted in this essay.

The first issue that is explored throughout the volume is the meaning of religious pluralism and the terms of communication across faith traditions. Banchoff (p. 5) states that religious pluralism "denotes a politics that joins diverse communities with overlapping but distinctive ethics and interests". Although this sounds commonsensical and easy at first glance, Pratap Bhanu Mehta (p. 66) cautions that the challenge is to reconcile pluralism with a common political identity—how can a recognition of multiple religious identities go hand in hand with the modern aspirations of the state and the accompanying definitions of citizenship? Can we represent religious pluralism in our existing political identities, or do we need to revise our traditional conceptions such as the twinning of nation and state? How do religious groups challenge the states? In his chapter, for example, John Voll draws attention to the soft power capabilities of even violent networks such as Al-Qaeda, which work like a business corporation eliminating the divisions among its potential members. Undoubtedly, violent or not, religious organizations compete with the state in multiple settings across the world and the book notes the challenges such a competition poses.

A second related issue is the tension between religious rights and the concerns surrounding proselytizing. In her chapter, Jean Bethke Elshtain (p. 91) examines the question of whether proselytization is fully compatible with the politics of recognition

or a challenge to it. Elshtain (p. 102) argues that "opposition to proselytization is opposition to a central dimension of religious freedom and therefore incompatible with a robust international human rights regime". John Witte Jr. (p. 107) states that what we are seeing in part of the world today is a "theological war, as rival religious communities have begun to demonize and defame each other and to gather themselves into ever dogmatic and fundamentalist stands". Although Witte Jr.'s labeling is bold and contestable, the clashing insecurities of political communities, be it religious or not, result in restrictions in the market place of religious ideas which Elshtain sees as an infringement of individuals' rights. Even if not at the state level, these interreligious insecurities are overcome through peaceful religious movements and groups which are open to engagement with the other traditions. Thomas Michel notes how the Risale-i Nur movement has encouraged Muslim-Christian dialogue, and how the Gulen Movement has widened this partnership to "the conscientious followers of all religions" (p. 243). Michel cites Said Nursi's call to join forces not only with pious Muslims but also with pious Christians in the face of "aggressive atheism" (p. 236). In other words, not only interreligious insecurities are challenged, but also the gap between the religious and the non-religious is deepened in the process.

The volume recognizes and explores the diversity of religious actors in the international arena. Scott Appleby (p. 128) reminds the reader that the failure of religious leaders to perform their potential peace-building roles within the local community and the insufficient exploitation of their strategic capacity as transnational actors has resulted in a gap when it comes to peace-building in religious communities. Appleby gives the examples of Buddhist peace-building in Cambodia, the efforts of the Catholic Sant Egidio in Mozambique, and peaceful Islamic networks that are part of a trend that beats the traditional modes of thinking that see peace-building as an exclusively secular domain. Leslie Vinjamuri and Aaron Boesenecker explore how religious actors can play crucial yet diverse roles in transitional justice mechanisms of divided societies. They identify five types of religious actors (capacity-builders, peace-builders, legalists, pragmatists and traditionalists) and four types of secular actors (truth-seekers, pragmatists, legalists and traditionalists) (p. 167). Are collaborations easier between like-minded actors, such as two pragmatists, regardless of their religiosity, or between two religious actors? Given the centrality of transitional justice to post-conflict reconstruction, this is a question that warrants utmost attention.

In another chapter, Katherine Marshall explores the relevance of faith-based perspectives to economic governance and development. Marshall reports that since it began its operation in 1946, the World Bank has barely engaged with faith-based institutions, but this is now changing. The World Bank has launched partnerships with faith-inspired organizations and Guatemala, Ethiopia and Tanzania have been chosen for interfaith engagement on poverty issues (p. 201). In a number of countries, local religious organizations have been the most trusted actors, so why not tap into this resource? Elizabeth Prodromou states that all these resources must be embraced with an informed redirection of the American foreign policy. "The religious political culture of the United States, anchored in its Christian majority, expressed in its civil

religion, and articulated in its presidential rhetoric, is not going to disappear" (p. 315), Prodromou notes. What matters is how the United States will end up using its material resources to strengthen international law and global governance.

In sum, the volume is a recommended read especially for those who are curious about the new roles religious actors are assuming and what kind of challenges the inclusion of religious actors into political dialogue brings. Not that we will be able to find the answers to our questions on faith and politics anytime soon, but at least we will enrich the terms of our debates on religious pluralism and we will challenge our long-existing assumptions.

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The Ethos of Europe: Values, Law and Justice in the EU

By *Andrew Williams*
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, ISBN 9780521134040 (Pb), £23.99; 9780521118286 (Hb) £60.00.

Although the analysis offered in this book is not very innovative in its details, the overall project is of some originality. Andrew Williams's main contention is that the EU project has developed its own institutional ethos, and that this is the product of both the entrenchment in European public discourse of a number of values, and of the way in which the European legal system (and its underlying philosophy) promotes and protects such values. Williams, however, is critical of the particular ethos that to date has supported the EU polity since he finds it partly incoherent in the articulation of its central values, and relatively uncommitted in the way in which it sustains them. The ethos's incoherence lies, in his view, in the way in which the values at the heart of the EU project are both ambiguous and indeterminate; while the lack of commitment is the product of the half-hearted way in which the institutional framework (in particular European law) supports a public philosophy for Europe, while functioning more as a prop for European governance.

According to Williams, incoherence and lack of commitment are not insuperable. The aim of the book is indeed to show how this ethos has formed and is operating through a series of narratives of self-understanding and institutional practices; and how it can be reformed in order to develop into a fully-fledged public philosophy capable of inspiring and legitimating the EU polity. The book therefore engages in two operations, one more reconstructive in scope, charting the main values underpinning the European ethos, and its character as a whole; the other operation is of a more propositive kind, offering in outline a proposal for justice in the EU, or, to be more specific, a suggestion of what is needed for turning the EU into a just institution.

Chapters two to seven mainly engage in the reconstructive enterprise. Williams identifies peace (Chapter 2), the rule of law (3), human rights (4), democracy (5),

and liberty (6) as the foundational values around which EU institutions have tried to make sense of the EU project, organize the overall structure of the polity, and make both internal and external policies. The result, according to Williams, and as already suggested, is stronger on rhetoric than in substance. None of these chapters changes fundamentally our understanding of the EU, but they offer some interesting insights in how these values have resonated in the debates on the function and character of the EU (and of the community institutions that have lead to the EU) and how they have given institutional and legal substance. Analytically, each chapter tells the story of a partial failure. The dominant theme is how each of the main values has only partially guided European policy making and institution building, while its understanding has been characterized by the market-centered project that has come to dominate the integration process at a European level. Peace, therefore, risks being subordinate to "preserving power and prosperity in Europe" (p. 69); the rule of law, no more than a procedural mechanism for the functioning of the European regime; the human rights discourse, a rhetorical flourishing, but with no meaningful practical application; democracy, a value to pursue effectively in relation to others, but with no internal application; liberty, finally, as the character of a generic, but mainly economic 'area' of action, rather than the principle for a political 'regime' (p. 240).

Chapter 7 summarizes the institutional ethos analyzed through the operationalization of the different values by suggesting that at the bottom of the EU institutional ethos there is a theory of law that view this as an instrument of 'interpretation' rather than an instrument of 'justice' (p. 252). This means that EU law is almost programmed to avoid conflicts by eschewing issues of value, or interpreting them within an economistic framework. For Williams, the law is the best way in which the institutional ethos is both revealed and made to work. It is no surprise, therefore, that his more positive suggestions are mainly directly to a philosophy of just and legitimate institutions centered on the legal paradigm. Williams's own suggestion is to place human rights as the keystone for the reform of the European ethos. He considers this as both a substantive conception of justice and a viable pluralist project, capable of giving purpose to a consensual agreement between different visions (p. 328). In more practical terms, Williams's vision is focused around a new constitutional settlement at the European level, that, presumably, will revitalize the half-failed constitutional project of the last decade, and that may result in a "consolidated institutional Bill of Rights" (p. 330), inspired more by international and cosmopolitan norms, rather than a Eurocentric vision. Within this scheme, the European Court of Justice will have to play a more purposeful and value-inspired role, so to ensure that EU law will guarantee both the respect and the fulfillment of an expanded notion of human rights, at the basis of a public philosophy finally an animating and legitimating the European integration project and the EU polity.

Such a vision remains subject to the kind of criticisms that are usually moved against over-legalistic and purely cosmopolitan views of the nature and character of the EU but it is perhaps more interesting to raise a different set of questions in the case of this book. Questions may be directed to the more original aspects of Williams's analysis, and to his use and development

of the idea of an ethos. This is done in the introductory chapter, but, unfortunately, in a rather brief and compressed way so that it is not always clear to understand precisely how Williams defines ethos and how the ethos of an organization, or a 'polity', like the EU, may relate to the ethos of more traditional unitary states. For Williams, an ethos is a set of sentiments and attitudes that define and support a "general pattern of activities", bringing together the character and the customs of a community, as well as ethical values as these coagulate in institutional practices (p. 10). This complex definition has many influences, which would have been interesting to explore in themselves, but in the present context the main question is how such a definition can effectively be interpreted in a way in which institutional practices reflect meaningfully and coherently a vision of well integrated values. For this is what Williams asks of the European ethos and of the underlying philosophy of EU law. In his view, the European ethos fails such a standard. But would any other institutional ethos be capable of meeting the strict standards that Williams sets? A different question is whether a community and its institutions are capable of acting in a way that commands a sense of justice and that is regarded as legitimate by the members of the community itself. Williams asks such a question at different times, and in a way this is the question at the bottom of his search for a European ethos. As he says at the end of the paragraph in which

he outlines his view of what the institutional ethos is about: "As soon as the crisis visits, as the economic depression that began in 2008 might provoke, what hope is there for justice to be the determining factor in making decisions?" (p. 14). This is indeed a crucial issue for the EU today. Can, under the test of a crisis, its decisions carry conviction with the people that are meant to be subjected to them? It can only do this if European citizens in some way recognize that they need to make such decisions, and see them as expressing some sense of justice and commonality. For Williams, in order for this to happen, there is neither the need of an ethos, nor, in the words of Delors and other European politicians, of a 'soul' of Europe. In a more concrete way, Williams thinks that an "institutional ethos" may do the job—but his view of the ethos is more substance than form. It is a substance made up of a cosmopolitan vision of human rights, which can be identified through and by the judgment of a supreme court, and institutionalized through the law. To all intent and purposes, this is an apolitical vision of the institutional ethos that, as Williams himself illustrates in the book, has so far failed to produce a convincing and motivating set of substantive values. It remains unclear how it may eventually arrive at some core shared valued in a way that carries the European peoples with it, but without engaging them in some form of politics.

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