

***The Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook***, edited by Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi, and Michael Bonner (Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts: 83), (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011), xxvi + 385 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-19435-9; €75.00 / \$107.00 (hb)

The articles that constitute this Festschrift have in common that they are fine pieces of scholarship that testify to the quality of Michael Cook as a teacher. Aside from a focus on the multiple connections between religious concerns and historiography, they have little in common in terms of material and methodology. Therefore, a survey of the individual articles will do them more justice than a summary discussion of the entire book.

R. Stephen Humphreys (pp. xxi-xxvi) opens the volume, offering an account of Michael Cook's career and scholarship from the publication of his first monograph, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia, 1450-1600* (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) to the more iconoclastic Hagarism. Through his meticulous scholarship, Cook frequently analyzes not only what the sources can tell us, but also what they cannot tell us.

In his introduction (pp. 1-12), Michael Bonner briefly discusses the main areas of scholarship of those of Michael Cook's students who have contributed to the Festschrift and how they relate to Cook's work: early Islamic history, early modern and modern Islamic history, juridical and intellectual history, and a field that can be described as 'reinterpretations and transformations.'

*Early Islamic history.* In his own contribution ("Time Has Come Full Circle': Markets, Fairs and the Calendar in Arabia before Islam," pp. 15-47), Michael Bonner explores evidence concerning the calendar system used in pre-Islamic markets, its implication for the movement of goods and people across the peninsula, and changes in early Islamic times. Najam Haider ("The Waṣiyya of Abū Hāshim: the Impact of Polemic in Premodern Muslim Historiography," pp. 49-83) discusses accounts of the ideological preparations for the 'Abbāsid revolution in medieval historiography and the credence given (or not

given) to these preparations by modern scholars. Haider also examines different premodern historiographical strategies of dealing with contested veracity and historiographical polemics in the Mamlūk period. In “Building an Egyptian Identity” (pp. 85-105), Petra M. Sijpesteijn explores how a regional identity developed in the course of the Islamization of Egypt in the ninth and tenth centuries that integrated pharaonic culture but maintained a distinctly Islamic outlook. Maribel Fierro (“The Battle of the Ditch [*al-Kbandaq*] of the Cordoban Caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III,” pp. 107-129) addresses similar issues of how Muslims outside of the central lands of the ‘Abbāsīd empire created their own history. The campaign against Christians in 934 marked the beginning of reenactments of prophetic history for the Andalusī Umayyad. Fierro analyzes the political language used by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III against the backdrop of earlier Islamic history, both prophetic and Umayyad. Nancy Khalek (“Dreams of Hagia Sophia: the Muslim Siege of Constantinople in 674 CE, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, and the Medieval Islamic Imagination,” pp. 131-146) examines the use of biographies of Muḥammad’s companions in early Islamic history. Her focus is on Abū Ayyūb, who was connected to Constantinople by different groups and in different ways. In Ottoman times, his biography developed into a hagiography.

*Early modern and modern Islamic history.* Adam Sabra (“The Second Ottoman Conquest of Egypt’: Rhetoric and Politics in Seventeenth Century Egyptian Historiography,” pp. 149-177) discusses the way the Ottoman state and provincial politics are presented in accounts of a mutiny of Ottoman *Sipahis* in 1609 when the *tulba*, a rural tax, was abolished. He compares political rhetoric and theory and examines how the mutineers interacted with the authorities. Jane Hathaway (“Ḥabeṣī Meḥmed Agha: the First Chief Harem Eunuch (Darüssaade Ağası) of the Ottoman Empire,” pp. 179-195) explores the career of the first person to hold the title of Chief Eunuch of the imperial harem of the Ottoman Empire. The rise of this function reflects the growing significance of the harem, a response to the dynastic crisis, which became obvious through cultural patronage, among other ways. Samer Traboulsi (“I Entered Mecca ... and I Destroyed All the Tombs’: Some Remarks on Saudi-Ottoman Correspondence,” pp. 197-217) presents the curious case of a letter allegedly sent by Su‘ūd ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, heir to the Saudi throne, to the Ottoman Sultan Selim III (r. 1789-1807) following the fall of Mecca. He traces the

letter, which is first discussed in a European source, to a collaboration between a South Arabian ḥājī and an English nobleman.

*Juridical and intellectual history.* Nurit Tsafir (“The ‘Āqila in Ḥanafī Law: Preliminary Notes,” pp. 221-238) writes about the legal problem of holding men known as ‘*āqila* liable to pay blood money. Ḥanafīs regard these to be fellow soldiers, an interpretation that provides insights into military history. Nimrod Hurvitz (“Legal Doctrines, Historical Contexts and Moral Visions: the Case of Sectarians in the Courts of Law,” pp. 239-263) offers a broad study of the ways sectarians were treated at court, including actual cases and an analysis of the underlying legal, religious, and social views. The legal schools disagreed on larger issues of how moral standing, theological views, and political conduct were related and how those in power should address different kinds of dissent. Justin Stearns (“The Legal Status of Science in the Muslim World in the Early Modern Period: an Initial Consideration of *Fatwās* from Three Maghribī Sources,” pp. 265-290) explores the legal status of science, a form of authority that differed from that represented by the legal scholars, and shows that it remained a matter of lively interest and controversy. The results of his study challenge the conventional idea of stagnation. A particular concern is the different views among legal scholars concerning the validity of empirical evidence. A parallel to the article by Hurvitz is that Stearns also addresses evaluations of witnesses by medieval jurists and the implications of the medical profession, for example, for the respectability of a witness.

*Reinterpretations and transformations.* Karen Bauer (“‘I Have Seen the People’s Antipathy to this Knowledge’: the Muslim Exegete and his Audience, 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” pp. 293-314) studies the flourishing genre of *tafsīr* and its readerships in the context of the educational system of the time. In particular, she analyzes medium-length works that were directed at an audience of learned non-specialists and discusses how length relates to purpose and readership in other cases. Leor Halevi (“Lex Mahomethi: Carnal and Spiritual Representations of Islamic Law and Ritual in a Twelfth-Century Dialogue by a Jewish Convert to Christianity,” pp. 315-342) compares two views of Islamic law in the dialogue of the Jew Moses and Petrus, particularly the significance of the Christian view of Jews as carnal readers. Rather than taking the form of a monologue with a unified view of Islam, the dialogue form allowed Petrus to present different

aspects and interpretations of Islam. Asad Q. Ahmed ("Systematic Growth in Sustained Error: a Case Study in the Dynamism of Post-Classical Islamic Scholasticism," pp. 343-378) discusses a similar problem as that addressed by Stearns, examining Ottoman logic in the eighteenth century. In particular, the author analyzes the example of a productive misattribution to Avicenna.

To conclude, this is a beautiful collection of articles. Like the scholarship of Michael Cook, they will appeal to a readership well beyond the circle of those concerned with the same source material.

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