

nationalism and identity, and who argue for multilayered loyalties and belongings, and shifting communal identifications (e.g., Michelle Campos, Khaled Fahmy, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, Mercedes García-Arenal & Gerard Wiegers, Akram Khater, and Ussama Makdisi). Yet, this work most excels at describing how by the late 19th century musical theater emerged as a local cultural genre, and how it flourished, despite a hierarchized and discriminative cultural economy, within a dynamic multicultural cauldron of local and expatriate impresarios, playwrights, and artists.

Less persuasive, however, is the author's overarching contention that by the 1890s patriotic representations had reached urban and rural elite and "ordinary Egyptians." Indeed, most of this work is concerned with elite audiences and artistic productions; the "schools" that became "prime sites" of "diffusion of patriotism" were few and selective (p. 129); and the so-called "countryside" that troupes visited refers in fact to large, significant, provincial towns such as Tanta, Asyut, and Zagazig (pp. 13, 214, 226, 228, 229). Evidentiary strictures might explicate the omission of vernacular culture and hence Mestyan's view of Arabic musical theater as a normalizing, rather than potentially subversive institution (p. 14). Mestyan thus cites, without actually examining them, socially inclusive "smaller" troupes and cafés-concerts (pp. 228, 281–82). One is thus left wondering what political imaginations vernacular or grass-roots performances (including *Aragoz*) might have conveyed to "ordinary" rural and urban audiences, including peasants and day laborers, which the book's section on class falls very short of addressing (pp. 270, 275–76). Mestyan's multifrontal exploration—merging narratives drawn from his thesis, two previous articles, as well as original research—thus raises one's curiosity and will be of interest to an eclectic academic readership specializing in the arcane of 19th century literary and artistic life, and the Arab intellectual renaissance, and it might also be useful to students of nationalism, imperial identities, and Ottoman elite culture.

NOBUAKI KONDO, *Islamic Law and Society in Iran: A Social History of Qajar Tehran* (New York: Routledge, 2017). Pp. 210. \$149.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780415711371

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doi:[10.1017/S0020743818000338](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743818000338)

Islamic Law and Society in Iran is a history of Islamic law in Tehran, the capital city of the Qajar dynasty. The book is a welcome departure from previous scholarship that focused on the introduction of Western-style law in Iran and the related process of legal modernization. Instead, Nobuaki Kondo delves into the nitty-gritty of Islamic legal documents with an eye towards shedding light on the Qajar judicial system and, to a lesser extent, the urban history of Tehran. His extensive use of such legal documents constitutes an original contribution to the historiography of modern Iran. He is justifiably critical of previous scholars who relied too heavily on European-language sources in describing the relationship between law and society in Iran. Kondo, therefore, sets out to avoid any assessments of whether Iranian legal modernization was a "success" or "failure" by instead attempting to understand the legal system on its own terms (p. 2).

Kondo is at his best when analyzing the Islamic court documents of individual jurists. His statistical analysis shows a deep understanding of these texts and serves as a solid benchmark for future evaluations of similar sources. Throughout the book, Kondo provides valuable tables with facts and figures culled from primary sources. His analysis of endowment (*vaqf*) records, royal inventories of crown and endowment properties, and government surveys and reports about buildings, reveals the usefulness of such sources in rewriting the urban history of Tehran. A similar methodology could be employed in future studies of other major Iranian cities.

Although Kondo has amassed an impressive set of sources, he could have provided the reader with a roadmap of the book's organization. The introduction does little to lay out the arguments of the book or to provide the reader with the underlying logic of subsequent chapters. It ends rather abruptly with a discussion of the primary sources. Chapter 1 is an overview of urban history in Qajar Iran and Chapter 2 is a summary of the Iranian judicial system more generally. Chapters 3–5 deal with various aspects of shari'a courts while Chapters 6–8 address Islamic endowments. Throughout the book, the connection between urban and legal history is left unclear, as is the rationale for focusing on Tehran. Is focusing on a city crucial for understanding shari'a in Iran because of the prominence of the *mojtaheds* who resided there? And if so, how did these courts differ (if at all) from their rural counterparts?

In a similar vein, the organization of individual chapters could have benefited from greater attention to analytically driven concerns. At times, the author provides lists of documents and thorough content analysis without much analytical framing or elaboration on the broader significance of specific legal cases. Chapter 5, for example, is largely a discussion of five types of legal contracts and transactions backed by statistics and tables. There is little in the way of an argument in the chapter's introduction (p. 74). Only in the concluding section does the reader learn about the significance of these transactions: namely that "*shari'a* courts were indispensable to the city's economic and social life" (p. 98), a somewhat vague claim requiring a broader discussion of how exactly such transactions shaped the city's socioeconomic life. In later chapters, the book reads like a chronological manual of Islamic legal documents rather than a work of history.

Among Kondo's main arguments is that law in Qajar Iran was essentially Islamic law. Agreeing with Christoph Werner, Kondo views the state's function as being the mere executor of laws produced in shari'a courts (p. 34). When the state produced rulings outside of shari'a procedures, this is explained as being an innovation outside of shari'a (p. 25). He considers the state's jurisdiction over the punishment of criminals, usually without the consultation of the shari'a court, as essentially an administrative function (p. 25). Presumably, this is because he cannot locate a body of normative texts or a legal code that explains state punishments and rulings relating to crime. Such a narrow definition of law seems selective and meant to reinforce his claim that what constituted law in Qajar Iran was ultimately shari'a (p. 71). Moreover, his own description of disputes tells a different story. When considering the function of the royal *divankhaneh*, for example, he defines it as an "administrative institution" rather than a legal one although he admits that "it also occasionally dealt with judicial cases" (p. 60). Elsewhere, he writes that "both parties frequently referred to the state and religious authority" and "there was no preference or distinction in their choice" (p. 69). This would seem to suggest that *in practice* the state was indeed considered a major authority in settling disputes and that what constituted the law cannot be reduced to shari'a.

A more thorough engagement with the concept of custom (*'orf*) and customary practices may have provided Kondo with another framework for understanding state punishments instead of trying to situate such punishments outside the realm of the legal. Given Kondo's claim to adopt an anthropological lens (p. 2), this is precisely what the reader may have hoped for. The contribution of anthropologists to the study of law in non-Western contexts has been to avoid overly rigid definitions of law and courts and a strict separation between administration, law, social sanction, and custom. The reason for doing so is clear: to avoid judging the operation of law in one society by the paradigmatic yardstick of another (in this case European). Instead, by the end of the book, Kondo does what he explicitly claims he would not do: compare Qajar law to modern law in terms of modern standards such as "efficiency" (p. 169). Elsewhere, he suggests that the shari'a court "differs from a modern court of justice in many ways" but does not elaborate on how (p. 54). Although he occasionally discusses parallels and differences with Ottoman shari'a courts, a more comparative approach to contemporary legal systems in Muslim societies, especially in the introduction and conclusion, would have helped situate Kondo's important study within the broader field.

Kondo's book would have benefited from a discussion of how power affects the judicial system. We learn a great deal about the *mojtaheds* as legal experts but less about their vested interest in promoting shari'a courts as a means of bolstering their power. Kondo examines state budget records in order to analyze the pensions of leading *mojtaheds*. He concludes that the Qajar state did not control the *mojtaheds* through pensions and they were therefore largely autonomous from the state (p. 53). While this may indeed have been the case, the *mojtaheds* were still beholden to the interests of their rank-and-file followers, rich merchants, and other powerful notables. Kondo never explains how these networks may have shaped the legal outcomes of the shari'a court. Finally, this reviewer wondered how religious minorities may have used the shari'a court for their own purposes. Given the popularity of the shari'a courts with Jews and Christians in the Ottoman context, the question of whether Jews and Christians in Iran similarly made use of shari'a courts, especially in cases involving inheritance and property rights after conversion to Islam, is an intriguing one that deserves greater attention.

Despite these criticisms, Kondo's book is undoubtedly an original contribution to the fields of Iranian legal and urban history. Given that it deals with highly specialized materials and often complex legal texts, this book would be most suitable for graduate seminars in Iranian and Islamic studies, or advanced seminars in legal studies more generally.

BEHNAZ A. MIRZAI, *A History of Slavery and Emancipation in Iran, 1800–1929* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2017). Pp. 324. \$34.95 Paper. ISBN: 9781477311868

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doi:[10.1017/S0020743818000363](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743818000363)

Behnaz Mirzai has written a monumental monograph in her study of slavery and emancipation in early modern and modern Iran. Focusing primarily on the 19th-century boom in the importation of “black” eastern African slaves from the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, the “white” slaves from the northeast Caucasus villages across the Aras River, and Persian, Kurdish, and Baluchi slaves from the northeastern and eastern Turcoman and Afghani rural regions beyond Khorasan and Baluchistan, Mirzai presents what is to date the most comprehensive study of slaving and its emancipation in Iran's past. To document her findings, Mirzai has dug deep into the rich archival materials in Tehran, such as the National Archive and Library of the Islamic Republic, the Gulistan Palace Photo Collection, the Central Library of the University of Tehran's rare books collection, and the Foreign Affairs Center of Documents. She also used the Center of Iranian Studies in Bushire and the National Archive in Tabriz. Finally, she drew on the holding of the Juma Al-Masjid Centre of Culture and Heritage in Dubai, the Zanzibar National Library in Tanzania, the Quai d'Orsay Foreign Office Archives in Paris, and the British foreign office materials and manuscripts in the Kew Gardens' National Archives and in the London British Library. In the process, Mirzai had already published a score of articles, and produced two DVD documentaries on the Afro-Iranian communities in Southern Iran's Fars, Kerman, and Baluchistan provinces. She implies that in her copious endnotes—so important to read along with her text—she carried out field interviews but, unaccountably, did not incorporate them into this monograph.

Mirzai sets out to “provide an account of the development and ultimate decline of the institution of slavery in modern Iran” through her research into the lives of 19th- and early 20th-century urban domestic female slaves (*kanizīn*) and household male slaves (*ghulāmīn*), their roles within Iranian families and Iranian communities, the legal status and social relationships with their masters, and the complicated procedures for their eventual freedom, whether in death, by escape,