

al-Islām-i Tabrīzī, executed by the Russians in 1911. He was one of the most ardent supporters of the constitutional movement, justifying the parliamentary system and the practice of consultation (*shūrā*) mainly on religious and historical grounds by invoking the role model of the prophet. Also ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Lārī (d. 1923/24) came out in defence of constitutionalism and parliament against the monarchy which was, for him, tantamount to autocracy and suppression. He, however, makes an important qualification, as Mohammad Baqer Vosuqi (“Remarques sur la pensée politique de l’ayatollah Lārī durant le mouvement constitutionnel”, pp. 171–80) shows: any form of constitutional government is legitimate only under the final supervision of the Shiite clergy, among whom he accords a particular role to the “just religious judge”. Vosuqi waits until the very last lines of his article to drive his point home: this was one of the many roads that led to Khomeini’s political theory of the “Guardianship of the Jurisconsult” (*Vilāyat-i faqīh*) and to the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

All in all, the book is carefully edited; the number of misprints and errors is negligible. Unfortunately, however, there are neither indexes nor any bibliography, so that making connections between the articles and finding references is sometimes a little cumbersome. Nevertheless, the present volume offers a number of fine articles that testify to a most vibrant and lively part of Shiite intellectual history.

**Rainer Brunner**

DAVID NICOLLE:

*Late Mamlūk Military Equipment: Travaux et Études de la Mission Archéologique Syro-Française Citadelle de Damas (1999–2006) vol. III.* 396 pp. Damascus: Presses de ifpo, 2011. \$68. ISBN 978 2 35159 045 4. doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000195

Great interest has been generated by the excavations and investigative works on the citadel of Damascus undertaken in the years 1999–2006 by a Syrian–French archaeological mission under the auspices of the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums and the Institut Français du Proche Orient. Some seven volumes are projected to result from this scholarly investigation, of which this, volume III, is the first to appear. What it catalogues and analyses is some wholly astonishing material found in the eastern end of a building in the south-west of the citadel. The finds consist largely of military material of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggesting that this building was used as an armoury in late Mamluk and perhaps early Ottoman times. The actual excavation was conducted by J.-B. Gardiol, who discovered most of the material in a light-well which had been covered by joists, and in the beaten earth floor. The discoveries had been sealed away from light and damp, and this enabled cloth and other materials to survive. In this volume the finds are catalogued and discussed by David Nicolle, whose knowledge of Middle Eastern military equipment is unrivalled. As befits a collection of such importance the book has been superbly produced, although it is a pity there is no index. However, there are almost 200 fine illustrations, mostly colour photographs. Some of these are of comparable material discovered elsewhere. Nicolle has chosen to divide the finds into seven categories which are contained in chapters 2–8 as follows: 2. Armour; 3. Soft armour; 4. Hardened leather and laminated armour; 5. Horse armour; 6. Archery; 7. Firearms; 8. Daggers and miscellaneous items. Each

find is cross-referenced to the illustrations and their captions which comprise pages 259–69. The whole is introduced in chapter 1, “Military–historical background and context”, in which Nicolle carefully and succinctly explains the place of Damascus in the history of the Mamluks and Ottomans and discusses the likely influences upon arms manufacture in the city. In the process he skilfully introduces many of the kinds of objects and much of the language used to describe them which will recur in the more specialized chapters which follow. Some of the most important finds in the citadel were of armour. Islamic illustrations of the various kinds of mail, lamellar, scale and soft armours are rare and difficult to decipher, and the language used to describe them in written sources is imprecise, so to have real examples is very important. Perhaps the most spectacular piece found was half a *qar-qal*, a short jacket of scales covered in beautifully dyed material, designed to be worn either with or without sleeves. This was clearly very like the western *brigandine*, of which a fifteenth-century example found at Xalkis in Greece is illustrated here. The discussion of armour types and their spread across Asia and Europe is very wide-ranging. It is remarkable that fragments of soft armour were unearthed and the short chapter on this illuminates a somewhat neglected form, stressing that European examples, notably the *aketon*, were described by words derived from Arabic. Leather, moulded or layered, was used intensively in medieval armour and much has been preserved in the Damascus material, though some may have been used to protect horses rather than men, as outlined in the next chapter. Archery remains figure large in the finds at Damascus and lead Nicolle into an interesting discussion of the importance of the crossbow, sometimes called “the Frankish bow” (p. 146). A substantial number of whole powder horns or fragments thereof were found in the citadel, and Nicolle’s discussion brings out the importance of such weapons in Middle Eastern warfare in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The whole discussion of the Damascus Citadel finds is characterized by a brilliant grasp of the technicalities of production and use. The comments on the working and use of iron and other metals are particularly impressive, but Nicolle is equally at home discussing other, softer, materials, often in the finest detail. Nicolle has an impressive knowledge of arms and armour worldwide, and his ability to draw comparisons and suggest derivations is compelling. However, although *Aketon* is derived from the Arabic for cotton (p. 100), this does not necessarily mean that padded undergarments originated in the Middle East – they probably had a long existence before the Crusades. Similar needs can, after all, produce similar solutions to problems of protection in different cultures. But overall this is a truly remarkable book and a brilliant start to the sequence of volumes which will eventually describe all the findings of the Syrian–French archaeological investigation of the citadel of Damascus.

**John France**

ALLEN JAMES FROMHERZ:

*Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times.*

xiii, 190 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011. £19.99. ISBN 978 0 7486 4483 4.

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It is often noted that no full scholarly biography of Ibn Khaldun has been written, and that the appearance of such a work would, at any time, be most welcome. With