

While Nasrallah's trail from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic might end with *Fuḍāla*, the culinary tradition she has followed continued, seaborne, further to the West – (the Far West?) – from the Canary Islands to the New World. The syncretization continued but that is another story. Anyway, after her two superb finished translations we can say that lacking Arabic-language skills is no longer a valid excuse for not knowing about the culinary art of the Arab–Islamic culture.

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ROBERT GLEAVE and ISTVÁN T. KRISTÓ-NAGY (eds):

Violence in Islamic Thought from the Mongols to European Imperialism. (Legitimate and Illegitimate Violence in Islamic Thought.) viii, 240 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018. ISBN 978 1 47441300 8. doi:10.1017/S0041977X19000843

The notion of violence looms large in the study of the history of ideas. The editors of *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Mongols to European Imperialism* have taken their cue from Hannah Arendt, who famously argued that violence can be justifiable by its ends, but it can never be legitimate. The volume brings together eleven articles topically organized in four parts. The first part of the volume focuses on the late medieval period under the Mongol and Timurid dynasties. Michal Biran's article qualifies the common perception of the Mongol invasions as an overwhelmingly violent act. Biran convincingly argues that the Mongols were strategic in exerting violence on conquered regions and populations, and that many individuals or groups survived the invasions unscathed either because they submitted to the Mongols proactively or they possessed certain skills that the Mongols found useful. According to Biran, the issue of the "legitimacy" of violent action was not at the core of contemporary debates, because both the Mongols and the Muslims of the Middle East explained the Mongol invasions as an expression of God's will. The next article, by Timothy May, expands on the same point, with a caveat on the legitimacy of the Mongol invasions, and presents a detailed overview of the ideas on the place of the Mongols in Muslim eschatology. Both Mongol and non-Mongol narratives agreed that the Mongol invasions were part of God's plan: hence they were justified, though not entirely legitimate. István Vásáry contrasts the Mongol *yasa* and the Islamic *sharī'a*. He argues that the Mongol and Islamic views of law and violence are compatible with each other, except that they agree on the ultimate superiority of the Mongol or Islamic perspectives on politics respectively. Beatrice Manz discusses "unacceptable violence" in Mongol and Timurid Iran. She argues that contemporary historians highlighted the violence of the Mongols and the Timurids in order to present them as the scourge of God and bring them to the fold of an Islamic universalist outlook.

In the second part of the volume, Jon Hoover discusses Ibn Taymiyya's views on legitimate violence. Ibn Taymiyya argued that even unbelievers can eventually go to Heaven if they are adequately punished in this world. Marie Thérèse Urvoy introduces the notion of moral violence in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*. According to this text, non-Muslims living in places controlled by Muslims are protected under the law, so they cannot be subjected to "effective

violence”, but they can be inflicted by “moral violence”, such as forcing Christians and Jews to wear distinctive clothes. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya blurs the distinction between a *dhimmi* and *kāfir* in the name of upholding the interests of the Muslim community. Robert Gleave’s article is also a close reading of an early modern text, *Jāmi’ al-maqāṣid* by the Safavid cleric ‘Alī al-Karakī. Gleave argues that al-Karakī was less concerned about the actual historical circumstances of his time than the conventions of legal scholarship. He focuses on the problem of the *imām*’s endorsement of the *jihād*: if the *imām* is in occultation, would a *jihād* conducted without the *imām*’s endorsement be legitimate? Al-Karakī’s answer is negative, but he still considers the Safavid authority legitimate, because according to him the existence of a political authority is always preferable to anarchy.

In the penultimate part of the volume, Miklós Maróth discusses the concept of violence in the philosophical systems of al-Fārābī, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn Khaldūn. Maróth argues that violence was legitimate in the ideas of these three philosophers as long as it contributed to the development of the Muslim community. Vasileios Syros’ article is a cross-cultural examination of Ibn al-Muqaffa’, Ibn al-Tiṭṭāqā, and Machiavelli. Syros discusses how the link between ethics and politics weakened throughout the Middle Ages both in Europe and the Middle East, and finally snapped with Machiavelli. Therefore, for these authors the maintenance of good order was more important than the creation of an ideal society through politics.

In the final part, Iván Szántó traces the narrative and visual depictions of flaying as a punishment inflicted upon irreligious people, and argues that this was a performative act through which the victim becomes “a messenger of the power of law”. Colin Imber asks if the *fatwās* issued by Ottoman jurists against the *kızılbaş* of Anatolia were warrants of genocide, and his answer is negative. Not only did these *fatwās* not mean a blank cheque for killing all the *kızılbaş* – as, for instance, Ebū’s-Su’ūd’s famous *fatwā* allows for the execution of only the *kızılbaş* soldiers and their ringleaders – they were also mainly issued at a time of active military conflict between the Ottomans and the Safavids. Imber argues that these *fatwās* were pieces of Ottoman propaganda against the Ottoman elite in the Ottoman Empire.

There is no doubt that each article contributes to its respective field. However, in edited volumes, rarely connecting the points of individual articles makes a straight line of argument, and this book is no exception. Terminological opacity is partially to be blamed for this. Robert Gleave in his introductory essay says that “there is no obvious term or notion” in the period covered by the volume. The issue of violence was most forcefully introduced to scholarship by Max Weber, but the term that Weber used in German, that is *Gewalt*, has a much broader spectrum of meanings than a single direct English translation such as “violence” would suggest. “Force” and “governance”, for example, are just as much part of the semantic spectrum of *Gewalt* as “violence”. I must respectfully disagree with the editors of the volume, as there is indeed a term that encapsulates most, if not all, of the issues discussed in this book, and that term is *siyāsa*. It is very well known that *siyāsa* refers to both public or formal violence and governance in the early modern period. It is also a pity that the book excludes two forms of violence that are fundamental to our understanding of the term in this context. The issue of *fitna*, or civil war, is not discussed in any significant detail: there are references to the issue in several chapters, but *fitna* as a philosophical, theological, and legal topic deserves to be discussed separately. The second form of violence which does not receive attention here is the Messianic violence in the period covered by the book. In this period only Messianic movements exerted “revolutionary” violence. They were sparks

rather than movements in the post-Mongol period, and the successful ones evolved into a new form of law, or *siyāsa*, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the heuristic allure of these cases is unavoidable, and I believe they need to be studied in their own right in this context. Finally, the chronological and geographical coverage is very imbalanced. The late medieval period is unfairly privileged, and large chunks of geography are simply ignored, including post-Timurid Central Asia, South Asia, North Africa, and al-Andalus. Nevertheless, this is a valuable contribution to the history of ideas in the late medieval and early modern period, and the editors and the contributing authors are to be commended for this achievement.

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JEAN-CHARLES DUCÈNE:

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Islamic knowledge of, and interest in, Europe is a politically charged aspect of scholarship on medieval Islam. In his *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, Bernard Lewis described the attitude of the Muslim world towards Europe as that of disdain, a myopic lack of interest that had eventually led to the decline of Islamic civilization. André Miquel explained Muslim authors' lack of detailed knowledge of Europe, which he compared with al-Bīrūnī's comprehensive epitome on India, by the absence of Muslim merchants or ambassadors in Europe who could serve as informants.

But as Jean-Charles Ducène's hefty *L'Europe et les géographes arabes du Moyen Âge* shows, there was in fact no absence of interest nor lack of knowledge. Muslim geographers did not view Europe as a unified entity, and used the term "Europe" very rarely. But they did write extensively about the territories north of the Mediterranean, mixing late antique traditions with first-hand accounts by native Europeans, travellers and captives. This volume under review very much confirms the conclusions of Daniel König's recent *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West* (2015), but also goes beyond it by offering a comprehensive tour-de-force of Islamic knowledge of central and eastern Europe. It also draws attention to the way knowledge of European territories developed over time, especially the knowledge of the geopolitical map of Europe shown by authors working in the Mamluk chancery in late medieval Cairo.

The focus of the first part of this volume is the early Arabic geographical literature of the ninth and tenth centuries, when the classical term "Europe" was replaced by references to the ethnic groups of the Franks, the Byzantines (*Rūm*) and, to an increasing degree, the Slavs. The geographical area north of the Mediterranean was often called *al-arḍ al-kabira*, the "Great Landmass", and was often thought to be an island, separated from Asia by the Don or the Dneiper. This "Great Landmass" was also defined by its otherness, and therefore did not normally include Muslim Spain.

From the start, two European cities attracted the attention of Muslim geographers: Rome and Constantinople. For Rome, the earliest first-hand report comes from a ninth-century Muslim merchant, yet geographers' accounts of Rome combine