Perhaps the most remarkable section on the Peel Commission concerns its deliberations after concluding the collection of evidence and testimony. Revisiting the root of Britain's mission in Palestine, Lord Peel and Horace Rumbold, another commissioner, faulted the fundamental ambiguity of the Jewish National Home policy, going so far as to suggest that the government had originally only promised a cultural center for Jewish settlers, not a haven for millions of oppressed European refugees. Dispensing with this criticism, Coupland advocated partition, which was outside the scope of the commission's terms of reference. When his fellows remonstrated that the commission had not collected evidence regarding the prospects for partition, Coupland protested that this didn't really matter (p. 110). Reassured by support for the idea from Douglas Harris and Lewis Andrews, two senior Palestine officials, and against a background of Peel's ailing health, Coupland was able to get partition "tacked onto the report at the last minute" and with comparatively little elaboration (pp. 103, 133)—with everlasting results. Far from resolving the situation, partition set off howls of protest from Labour leader Clement Attlee and former PM Lloyd George in Britain, divided the Zionist movement, and triggered the second, deadlier phase of the Palestinian insurrection in the latter 1930s that ultimately forestalled it for a decade.

The book's last chapter tracks partition's resurrection in the 1940s, when it continued to divide British policymakers. The clearest through-line in this era is the role of the heretofore unknown Harris—dubbed "the uncrowned ruler" of Palestine by a top official of the Jewish Agency (pp. 159–60) —who emerges as a key proponent of partition inside the Mandatory regime and later served as secretary to the Cabinet committee on Palestine after World War II. An air of surrealism surrounded the idea of partition by this point: while the UN commission that recommended partition in 1947 spoke farcically about protecting human rights and preventing forcible population relocation, partition, far from being an act of "selective decolonization," in fact liquidated the British position in Palestine.

The account offered in *Partitioning Palestine* is illuminating and draws worthy attention to the haphazard qualities of Britain's overall management of Palestine. Still, some aspects of the partition story are left out of the frame. The Palestinians barely appear in the narrative, but they were more vocal about the threat partition posed, not least via their political activism, than the book would lead one to conclude. Similarly, the book stops short of recognizing that partition was, at least in the Mandate era, a recipe for war. Its first act in 1937 set off two years of hostilities and its second act ushered in the 1948 war. Responsible parties knew that this would be the outcome, yet the British in much of the 1940s, the Truman administration (whose own CIA told him partition meant war), and the UN, not to mention the Zionist movement, continued to advocate it. Sinanoglou's book is a timely reminder that, just as the Peel Commission's call for a "surgical operation" to remedy "the disease from which Palestine is suffering" came to naught, the promise of territorial separation in Palestine/Israel has proved to be a dangerous illusion.

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Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib. Ramzi Rouighi (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). Pp. 261. $79.96 cloth. ISBN: 9780812251302

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A wide-ranging, critical reappraisal of the fundamental underpinnings of Berber identity, Ramzi Rouighi's *Inventing the Berbers* sets its sights on deconstructing a staple of the Middle East's ethnic makeup. Joining a now growing body of scholarship questioning long-held notions about pre-modern Middle Eastern ethnic categories, Rouighi's book underlines the importance of this work in the round: these are efforts to understand how identities were constructed and how they acquired meaning. And

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thus, as opposed to sending feelers into the past to alight on the "true whereabouts" of the first Berber people and attempting a new empirical history from that spot onwards, Rouighi's quarry is the more significant task of tracing the discourses about Berberness as an idea over time.

Rouighi reveals that "Berber" was not a social category in pre-Islamic North Africa, whereas early Muslim-era Arabic texts summoned the term *barbar* to label an array of peoples and categories of slaves, and, via an uneven process, "Berber" eventually became increasingly synonymous, but not entirely so, with non-Arabic North Africans. Then Berberness suffered the indignity of becoming "science," i.e., a modern-era empirical label which poured all Berber speakers into one ethnic silo, classifying them as North Africa's "natives," and creating the tremendous inertia of Berber racial/ethnic identity which Rouighi critiques. Rouighi maintains that "Berber" was not a clear-cut identity with a stable meaning, and hence is a misleading gentilic to label non-Arabic North Africans across time. The pertinent phenomena which Rouighi argues we should be studying instead is the history of "Berberization," the processes by which disparate peoples were brought under a Berber umbrella (his rationale is clearly put in pages 44–49).

The Devil's advocate might contend that Rouighi's enterprise is a quibble, since North Africa has been inhabited by non-Arabic-speaking peoples for millennia, languages labeled "Berber" have existed for nearly as long, and thus why not keep the "Berber" ethnonym, common as it is in modern parlance, as the label-of-convenience for those populations from Late Antiquity to the present? But Rouighi has a cogent counter, which contains a key lesson for conceptualizing identity in the pre-modern Middle East: the questioning of ethnic labels is not merely a semantic exercise, but a necessary deconstruction that gives history back to pre-modern North Africans by freeing their pasts from an ahistorical, monolithic category (p.107).

Rouighi's logic is appealing since identity is a pluriform and performative affair, and traditional approaches that have privileged the search for Berbers as a *people* rather than Berberness as an *idea* have yielded misleading generalizations. The appearance of an express "Berber" in a historical record neither *necessarily* tells us much of importance about that person, nor about the meaning of that identity, and treating groups of Berber speakers across time as a demographic unit risks misinterpreting the identity's significance and function. Rouighi astutely treats Berberness as a hybrid idea and his questions about Berberization shine focus onto texts where concepts of Berberness are on display. This reveals historical polyvalence in discussions of Berber identity, the significations of being (or being labeled) Berber, and allows more sensitive appraisal of the relationship between Berberness and historical actors. Further application of such method on a wide front will greatly help bring the Academy's understanding of the Middle East's pre-modern ethnic identities up-to-date with contemporary critical scholarship on the historical peoplehoods of Europe and elsewhere.

Studying Berberization does come with particular challenges. There is a dearth of Berber-language texts, and, from the outset, citations about Berbers came exclusively from the perspective of outsiders. Some subsequent medieval writers considered themselves "Berber," but the Arabic discourses in which they wrote would influence how they described Berberness, and Rouighi well-details the broad impact of French colonial-era Berber archetypes built upon reinterpretations of earlier Arabic sentiments. An "emic" view on medieval Berberness is therefore quite unattainable, and Rouighi is right to often take refuge in remarking upon the difficulty of ascertaining whether various pre-modern populations we would call Berbers today actually felt as such, or were aware of how such an identity might impact their sociopolitical alignments. Readers will therefore not find a "solution" to the Berber question: *Inventing the Berbers*' contribution is in laying bare the complexities in which Berberness has been marshalled, and emphasizing the difficulties which a historian today assumes when summoning the term "Berber" to articulate a particular identity or to identify a tangible agent in the history of North Africa.

Given the sedimentary solidity of the several centuries' worth of scholarship on "the Berbers," Rouighi's deconstruction is necessarily macro: he must cover North African and Andalusian political and intellectual history from Late Antiquity to Postcolonialism. The book accordingly blazes very quickly over crucial and complex events (particularly in Chapter 2), and while Rouighi marshals a good array of Arabic texts and submits several to close reading, there is naturally wide scope for alternative interpretations and questions about the testimony from other sources.

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Chapter 1 substantially replicates Rouighi's 2010 article "The Andalusi origins of the Berbers?" (*Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2, no. 1: 93–108), and thus unfortunately does not avail itself of the wider scope a book-length study affords to develop the article's open questions; particularly the dichotomy of Andalusian vs. Maghribi perspectives on Berberness, which, notwithstanding the scarcity of sources, deserves fresh light. And perhaps this could be impactfully augmented with more use of Arabic poetry: Rouighi does cite verses ascribed to Imruʾ al-Qays and ʿAdi ibn Zayd (not "ʿUdayy" as named p. 15) to estimate pre-Islamic Arabian notions of "Barbaria," but these two poets are unfortunately amongst the most problematic pre-Islamic voices, since their oeuvres contain considerable Muslim-era forgeries, and reliance upon more secure pre-Islamic poetry would be helpful. For the Muslim-era, praise poems addressed to regional governors, and the wealth of Andalusian *adab* literature is not probed, and likewise, given that the early Fatimids relied upon support from the Kutama 'Berbers', it would be helpful to consider how they expressed Berberness in verse (the poetry of Ibn Haniʾ al-Andalusi particularly comes to mind). Similarly, North African prosopographical sources such as al-Maliki's *Riyad al-Nufus* (The Gardens of Souls) are not plumbed for their perspectives on Berbers in the biographies of local notables. Rouighi astutely engages Arabic terminology for clues about their concepts of peoplehood, but the survey of *jins* and *umma* (pp. 81–85) covers but two of some ten premodern Arabic peoplehood terms, and hence these conclusions can be developed too.

In sum, debating the particulars will keep Rouighi and interested scholars busy for the foreseeable future, as he has revealed the elephant in the room of Maghribi historiography, and any study of Muslim-era North Africa will need to take note.

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The Making of the Modern Mediterranean: Views from the South. Judith E. Tucker (ed.) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019). Pp. 214. $34.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520304604

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The title of this edited collection echoes the "clumsy" one E.P. Thompson defended in 1963, suggesting that the "modern Mediterranean," like his English working class, "was present at its own making." With an introduction and seven chapters organized in rough chronological order, *The Making of the Modern Mediterranean* challenges European scholarly traditions that deny agency to the peoples who lived along the sea's southern and eastern shores between the 16th and the 20th century. At the same time, the book invites scholars of Arab and Ottoman lands—a region more commonly studied in national, imperial, and other geopolitical units—to consider the Mediterranean as a useful frame of historical analysis.

The Making of the Modern Mediterranean came out of a 2013 conference at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University held in honor of the late Faruk Tabak (1954–2008). A noted sociologist who put environmental history at the center of his final work, he saw the preindustrial Mediterranean as one "pulsating unit." While the contributions to this volume adopt different methodologies, exploit more diverse types of evidence, and come to disparate conclusions about the sea's cohesiveness, they all pay homage to Tabak's geographic scope. Analyzing Ottoman and Islamic juridical rulings, European treatises and bilateral treaties, Arabic chronicles, novels and ship logs, among other materials, the authors tackle big questions about the nature, parameters, and meaning of the Mediterranean across time and space.

Though trained in literature, Nabil Matar has made major contributions to the field of history, in part by examining European paradigms "through Arab eyes." His chapter argues against conceptions derived from European sources of a unitary early modern Mediterranean and for a recognition that Ottomans

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