

State-building, political thought, and the Other in Muslim imperial peripheries

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Abstracts

Menashe Anzi

A Re-Examination of Mawza' Exile in Yemen: Qasimid Yemen, The Indian Ocean, and the Jews

The Mawza' exile in 1679 was the most traumatic event in the history of Yemenite Jews, and its results are evident in a variety of fields. It had a decisive influence on the relations between Jews and Muslims, the religious and liturgical world of the Jews, their geographical place in Yemen, and more. Nevertheless, the precise facts available on the case are surprisingly sparse. It seems that until the present time, the most basic questions regarding the affair have not been definitively resolved.

These questions arise because of the paucity of documents and testimonies about the affair, which makes it difficult to understand its nature and purpose. A great deal of assistance in understanding the affair came to us with the recent discovery of several Muslim sources, chronicles of the time.

In my paper, I want to suggest a new way of looking at the events. I will rely on Jewish and Muslim sources and analyze them. Central attention will be paid to understanding the place of the Qasimids within the geopolitics of the region in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Faika Çelik

The Roma in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Governmentality (1880s-1930s): An Analysis of Continuities and Ruptures

Despite the growing scholarly and public interest since the turn of the twenty-first century, research on the Roma in Middle Eastern history in general and Ottoman –Turkish historiography in particular still occupies a marginal status in contemporary scholarship. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to contribute to this growing yet still limited literature by focusing on the Roma during the late Ottoman and early republican period. More precisely, the aim of this paper is to scrutinize the ways and techniques through which the late Ottoman and early republican state produced and governed its Roma “subjects” but also examine how, if, and when the Roma resisted, negotiated or accommodated their positionings.

Exploring Roma in the late Ottoman Empire and early republican period is particularly interesting because it was a period when the center itself was rapidly changing in a myriad of ways and spheres. To observe, therefore, what was happening on the margins when the center is itself rapidly changing is both fascinating and instructive. Furthermore, the government policies designed for the Roma and their

responses to these policies allow us to heterogenize the existing historiographical narrative on continuities and ruptures inherited from the late Ottoman Empire to the early Turkish Republic.

In addition to limited existing research, I use a varied array of primary sources in this paper including but not limited to archival documents cataloged under Cevdet Tasnifi and Cumhuriyet Arşivi housed in the State Archives in Istanbul. My findings on the basis of these sources demonstrate that the most significant concern of the late Ottoman and the early republican states was to sedentarize and “civilize” (islah) the Roma to make them “useful” citizens. My sources also indicate that both the late Ottoman state and the early republican polity were coping with external migration on the part of Roma. It appears from the documents that the abolition of the Roma slavery in Romania and emergence of new nation-states in the Balkans and exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece realized as a part of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, brought about massive Roma immigration waves first into the late Ottoman Empire and later to the newly founded Turkish Republic. In an attempt to control these migrations, first the late Ottoman state and later Turkish Republic, indeed, continuing on the former’s footsteps, introduced certain measures such as deportation regulations, strict border controls and settlement regulations. From all these measures, it appears that like the reformist Ottoman Ruling Elite, the early Republican cadres attempted to develop policies to make the Roma an integral part of the labor force. Yet the same cadres, more often than not, continued certain exclusionary discourses and practices of the late Ottoman bureaucracy towards the Roma.

Edith X. Chen

Revenues and Patronage in the Ilkhanid Satellite States

How scholars viewed the Mongol rule of Iran involves a peculiar paradox. First, it was widely seen as being devastating to the lands and people on its path. The destruction from the war and the high tax rates were thought to have led to the decline of Iran. On the other hand, scholars often portray the 13th century as the heights of Persianate culture. The era produced a flowering of poetry literature that are considered the classics of New Persian, including notable poets such as Sa’di Shirazi and Rumi, as well as being the heights of Persian historiography. This paper looks at this paradox, particularly in the finances and the patronage of Islamic culture under the local rulers. Drawing on local histories from Fars, Yazd, Kirman, and elsewhere, I look at who these local allies were, their unique relationship with the Mongol rulers, and compare the nature and kinds of patronage that these local dynasties engaged in before and after the establishment of the Ilkhanate in 1260. I argue that patronage declined after 1280 as a result of the Mongols’ interest in confiscating surplus revenue in these dynasties. Furthermore, I examine the kinds of patronage projects taken up by the Mongol amirs who had converted to Islam, as well as by Mongol-appointed governors to these areas after the fall of the local dynasties by the end of the 13th century, in order to investigate the pattern of cultural patronage in Mongol Iran.

Tom Fogel

The politics of Ziyāra in Yemeni-Jewish folktales

The Jewish community in Yemen practiced Ziyāra (pilgrimage to a holy place) mainly to the tomb of the 17th century scholar and poet Mori Sālim al-Shabazi. His tomb had drawn Jewish pilgrims from all across Yemen. Jewish folktales confront Shabazi with the 13th century Sufi scholar Aḥmad Ibn Alwān,

whose tomb is located not far from that of his Jewish adversary. In my lecture I will address the Jewish folktales as reflecting the reality of Ziyāra, that connected and confronted these two historically unconnected figures, and discuss the polemic regarding Ziyāra between Jews and Muslims in 20th century Yemen.

Edmund Hayes

Excommunication, execution and exile in the early Islamic empire: a comparative perspective

Inhabitants of the early Islamic empire of the Umayyads and the Abbasids had a number of mechanisms for policing boundaries, some of which emerged from the shared experiences of Arab conquerors and migrants as they settled across the empire, some of which drew upon older genealogies endemic to late antique Middle East, and others which arose as responses to the functional needs of society. When faced with religio-political challenges, among the central mechanisms available were execution, exile and excommunication. In this presentation, I will look at a number of case studies in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods to compare how these tools were wielded by ruling governmental actors and by non-hegemonic Muslim and non-Muslim groups, especially the Imami Shi'a. I will argue that the way these tools were wielded depended more upon the structuring of institutions of authority in a community, than upon doctrine.

Kerstin Hünefeld

Between Self and Other: dhimmis, „oppressors“ (*buġāt*), and „sinners“ (*fusāq*) in Zaydi Jurisprudence (*fiqh*)

When it comes to Others in Islamic Law and political thought, research often focuses on *dhimmis* (“protected people”) and other non-Muslims. But what about all the other Others, such as “corrupt” or “sinning” Muslims, or those rising to or holding political power that from a Zaydi point of view is “illegitimate” or “unjust”?

Based on comparative Yemeni Zaydī works of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), such as the *Sharḥ al-Azhār* by Ibn Miṭāḥ (d. 1472), this paper sets out from shedding light on how these politically or morally “deviating” Muslims are positioned towards dhimmis, who on their part are clearly defined as religious “others”, but do not exist outside the political notion of “self.” It then opens up to a broader discussion about how these conceptions may serve pragmatic purposes such as creating a space in which cooperation with Sunni imperial powers in Yemen becomes ideologically possible.

Claudia de Martino

“Ila al-Amam” Party Legacy in the Moroccan Political History: An early but failed Endeavour to Reconcile Islam and Modernity

The Jewish activist and intellectual Abraham Serfaty has been a central figure in the fringe Communist Party in post-independence Morocco. He staunchly decided to be willing to contribute to the

project of nation-building drawing inspiration from the liberation movements sponsored by the International Communist Movement while trying to reconcile Moroccan religious identity with the secular model spurred by the Communist parties worldwide. In other words, he expressly posited the theoretical question on how to adapt socialism to Arab culture, a political agenda concomitantly raised by other major Sunni Arab intellectuals of the time, such as Abdel-Malek in Egypt (*La pensée politique arabe contemporaine*, 1970) and Abdallah Laroui in Morocco (*L'idéologie arabe contemporaine. La crise des intellectuelles arabes*, Paris, Maspero, 1974). He focused his attempts to sketch out an original “Moroccan national way to Communism” in the footsteps of the 1970 overall quest for “national ways” to accommodate Communist international standards to local communities and contexts, at a time when the Arab intelligentsia felt at loss with the multiple failure of nationalist secular movements, Pan-Arabism and Arab socialism in the aftermath of the 1967 War with Israel.

To the 1967 crisis many intellectuals reacted by dropping their Arab identity altogether and taking on a Western perspective and outlook, growing away from the Arab collective culture, while others would rather embark on the opposite direction, discarding everything that did not look autochthonous and unique to Arab culture and projecting the return to Islam as the only way forward to realize Arab peoples’ true independence. Since the 1967 watershed, Arab intellectuals would be fairly distributed along those two colliding lines, rarely confronting each other, but rather building up two separate epistemological communities based on opposite and mutually exclusive worldviews.

Halfway between the two instances it is possible to locate the intellectual and political legacy of Serfaty and his party colleagues, who strived to reach out a compromised solution bridging Arab Islamic mass identity with Communist values, such as workers’ rights advancement and national liberation struggle. Moreover, Serfaty and his colleagues carried out a theoretical critique of the standard Marxist doctrine revolving around the notion of “proletariat” trying to widen its premises to embrace the Moroccan underclass, mostly made of an informal sector and non-unionized workers. A difficult quest to balance off a critique of the Makhzen from the vantage point of the broader working class, criticizing the regime’s self-representation as a Western-looking “moderate” and open political system, while at the same time rooting the local Communist party struggle into the national context, thus outdistancing it from the Soviet Union’s patronage. Their struggle would clash with King Hassan II “terror policy” of widespread repression since 1963, particularly associated with the terrible prison of Tazmamart, where many opponents would end up with life-sentences.

The foundation of the Marxist-Leninists splinter group “al ila-Amam” in 1970 would mark the climax of this attempt to coalesce those two different identities into a single national political project likely to conquer a broader percentage of the Moroccan working class, but would also mark Serfaty’s head-on collision with the Makhzen and his following life-sentence indictment as a threat to “State security” (1974), to which followed suit the disruption of the movement, labelled as a “terrorist organization”, undermining the potential merger of Marxist-inspired workers’ liberation doctrine and Moroccan popular understanding of modernity.

Abraham Serfaty and his political movement, mostly associated with their critique to Israel and Zionism, did pose a major threat to the Moroccan regime, openly confronting the Makhzen on particularly sensitive issues such as the Sahrawi dispute, and the Rif war (1958-9), which killed around 3000 Berber activists resisting the Makhzen policies of neglect of the Northern region, due to continue ever since its clampdown. Subsequent the 1975 Green March, the option of a Moroccan way to reconcile modernity and traditionalism proposed by “al-ila-Amam” fell into oblivion, however some of the ideas and theoretical frameworks sketched by the group outlived in other reform-gearred contemporary movements such as the

20th of February (2011) Protest Movement but also Islamist-leaning major forces, such as ‘Adl wa al-Ihsane.

Ekaterina Pukhovaia

Zaydi tribal leaders as ‘partners of the empire’ in early modern Ottoman Yemen

After the expedition of Koca Sinan Pasha (1569-71), Ottoman governors in Yemen increasingly relied on local tribal leaders in the governance of local affairs. Thus tribal shaykhs, previously allied with the Zaydi imamate, found new employment under the Ottomans. Ottoman financial documents, discussed in this talk, demonstrate the variety of functions that these newly minted ‘partners of the empire’ fulfilled. The talk suggests that the inclusion of tribal leaders into the administration was an innovation only in part, as previous Zaydi state formation already relied on tribal support for their survival. At the same time the Ottomans introduced qualitative and quantitative changes to the collaboration of the state with the tribes. This talk charts Ottoman innovations in this area. It argues that they created a new pattern of tribal-state relations that continued to influence the structure of subsequent Zaydi states up to the late nineteenth century.

Avi-ram Tzoreff

Between Tanzimat and Emancipation: Competing Discourses of Modernity in the Writings of R. Yosef Hayyim of Baghdad

Since the emergence of the Tanzimat reforms in 1839 the Ottoman Mashriq crystallized as a contact zone where different understandings, interpretations and discourses regarding the reforms were evaluated. The European powers, who saw themselves as the defenders of the non-Muslim Ottoman communities, understood the reforms as a part of a transformation from despotic Islamic authority to progressive European Christian culture. The discourse that was enhanced by the Sublime Porte, on the other hand, emphasized the meaning of the reforms as a component in the attempt to maintain the unification of the empire as a political unit. These discourses were reflected in various understandings of the local communities of their own status and roles within the developing political framework. In my paper I will examine this contact zone through the discussion of the writings of one of the well-known sages of the Baghdadi Jewish community – R. Yosef Hayyim (1834-1909). I will focus on the various ways in which he depicted the contested discourses of "modernity", while relating to other Baghdadi Jewish perspectives on this issue. I will argue that while Hayyim negated the European emancipatory model – and identifying as a false suggestion for redemption – he adopted, though hesitantly, the Ottoman model of the Tanzimat, which he identified as an early level of redemption.

Short biographies of speakers

Menashe Anzi is a senior Lecturer and Rosen Family Career Development Chair in Judaic Studies in the Jewish History department at Ben-Gurion University, Israel. His areas of specialization include the history of Yemenite Jews and Iraqi Jews, the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Islamic cities, and the trade networks and Jewish migration and diaspora along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. His book: *The Şan'ā'nīs: Jews in Muslim Yemen, 1872–1950* (2021, Zalman Shazar Center, in Hebrew) was awarded the Ben Zvi Prize for research of the Jewish Communities in the East in 2022.

Faika Çelik is a historian of the socio-political and legal history of the early modern and modern Middle East with a particular focus on the history of Ottoman Empire and Turkey. She graduated from Bogazici University with a B.A. in History. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from McGill University. Her dissertation, entitled as "*Community in motion*": *Gypsies in Ottoman Imperial State Policy, Public Morality and at the Sharia Court of Üsküdar (1530s-1585s)* funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada explores socio-legal and economic position of Gypsies / Roma in the sixteenth century Ottoman Istanbul. Currently, she works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Manisa Celal Bayar University in Turkey. At Celal Bayar, she teaches a broad range of courses on world history, colonialism and modernity in the Middle East, women's and gender history in Turkey and socio-political history and historiography of Modern Turkey. A specialist in the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey with a keen interest on disadvantaged and marginalized communities, she authored several articles and book chapters on Roma people in the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey as well as studies on history and historiography of Ottoman law, marginality and limits of socio-legal exclusion in the Ottoman society.

Edith X. Chen is the Boskey Fellow in Global History at Exeter College, University of Oxford. She works on post-Mongol Islamic history and the history of Iran, especially local history and sedentary-nomadic relations. Previously she received her PhD in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University in 2021.

Tom Fogel is an Ephraim E. Urbach Post-Doctoral Fellow, at The Folklore Research Center, Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He received his PhD from the Hebrew University in 2020, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for the Study of Conversion and Interreligious Encounters at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. His research centers on Yemeni Jewish folklore and folkloristics in the 19th and 20th century. His current project deals with ethnographic representations of Yemeni Jewish occult traditions.

Edmund Hayes is a researcher at Radboud University, Nijmegen. He gained his PhD from the University of Chicago in 2015. He has authored numerous articles at the intersection between the intellectual, religious, and social history of early Islam, including on the institutions of the Shi'i Imamate, Islamic revenues, charity and taxation, excommunication, ethnicity and gender and sexuality. His monograph *Agents of the Hidden Imam: Forging Twelver Shi'ism, 850-950 CE* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2022.

Kerstin Hünefeld is a postdoctoral Fellow at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She received her PhD (Islamic Studies) from Freie Universität Berlin. During her PhD research, she was an associated visiting researcher at the Yemen Center for Studies and Research in Sanaa. She taught at the departments of both Islamic and Jewish Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Potsdam, UIN Sunnan Kalijaga State Islamic University in Yogyakarta/Indonesia and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and held visiting fellowships at UIN and the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Kerstin Hünefeld has published a monograph and several articles on Yemen; a new monograph that looks at the (dhimma-)relationship between Imam Yahya Hamid al-Din and the Jews of Sanaa from an Islamic legal point of view is in preparation. Her new project examines conceptualizations of the Other and the Self in Islamic law and political thought.

Claudia de Martino is Contract Professor in Post-Colonial Studies at CORIS Department, La Sapienza University of Rome and Professor of History and Philosophy at the public High School in Rome. In 2016 she was Postdoc Fellow at the Orientale University of Naples within the EUspring ('Arab Springs') project (2015-2016) and DAAD annual scholarship recipient in 2015. She received her PhD in Social History of the Mediterranean at the Ca' Foscari University in 2012. She got a EMU2 scholarship at the Hebrew University (2008), was teaching assistant at the Chair of History of Europe and the Mediterranean at Roma Tre University (2008 - 2012) and authored three books (*Israele, Pace senza prosperità*, Castelveccchi, 2019; *Il nuovo ordine israeliano*, Castelveccchi, 2017; and *I mizrahim in Israele*, Carocci, 2015) and a number of articles/book chapters, such as "Israel and the Italian Communist Party" (*Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 2015) and "The Social Legacy of the Yom Kippur War" (in *The October War*, Hurst 2013).

Ekaterina (Kate) Pukhovaia is a Postdoctoral Fellow at The Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. She received her PhD from Princeton University in 2021. Her research centers on the development of state institutions and transformation of elites in pre-modern Zaydi Yemen.

Avi-ram Tzoreff is a Postdoctoral Fellow at The Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. His research focuses on the cultural and political history of Jews in Late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, Ottoman Iraq and Habsburg Galicia and on the intersections between questions of religion and secularism, nationalism and colonialism.