

EDITOR'S NOTE

Claude Cahen's "Some Reflections on the Application of the Term 'Feudalism'" (Au seuil de la troisième année: réflexions sur l'usage du mot de 'féodalité') is presented here in Hebrew as part of our section which offers translations of important studies originally published in foreign languages. Cahen's article, published in 1960, is still very relevant to the ongoing historiographical debate regarding the application of the term 'feudalism' in the Middle Eastern studies. Cahen raises a methodological problem related to the application of terms originally deriving from European history to describe phenomena in other regions of the world.

I wish to thank Dr. Tal Shuval for editing the translation of Cahen's article and for his active participation in the publication of this issue of the journal.

Avi Rubin

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RETHINKING THE EGYPTIAN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE: THE CULTURAL REPERTOIRE OF TAHA HUSAYN AND THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN MODERN EGYPT

Etty Terem

According to traditional historiography, the construction of modern Egyptian identity should be examined in the framework of a struggle between two mutually exclusive cultural forces: the Egyptian-territorial and the Islamic-Eastern. This study proposes a different approach to the examination of the intellectual effort involved in the articulation of Egypt's national culture and collective identity. By focusing on the writings of Taha Husayn and applying the polysystem theory, the study argues that during the 1920s and 1930s Husayn's articulation of national culture included components from both the Egyptian-territorial and the Islamic identities in Egyptian culture. Thus, the polysystem repertoire included seemingly contradicting cultural definitions. Husayn's imagined community was not exclusive, but rather a synthetic and realistic one which consisted of components from both cultural approaches.

A FEW COMMENTS ON ORIENTALISM, JEWISH STUDIES AND ISRAELI SOCIETY

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

One allegation leveled against Edward Said's *Orientalism* has been its neglect of the German Orientalist tradition. This study does not focus on the allegation itself but uses it as a departure point for discussing some aspects of Israeli-Zionist consciousness. While it is true that unlike British and French Orientalism, German Orientalism was not directly involved in colonial activity, it was nevertheless from within the German Orientalist discourse that the debate on the relationship between Germany and the Jews had been waged. The question was

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whether the Jews were Oriental, and thus alien to European culture, or whether they were strictly a religious group and thus able to become part of that culture. This study contends that Jewish modern, national-territorial identity was based on the adoption of the same German Orientalist discourse that enabled the exclusion of the Jews and on Orientalist images of the east, which developed within the German context. Furthermore, based on previous scholarship, this study attempts to highlight how this very same Orientalism shaped Zionist attitude toward the Arabs and toward Oriental Jews. Lastly, it tries to arrive, from within the corpus of Orientalist scholarship, at some different definitions of Jewish collectivity in Palestine.

EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA: LINKAGE AND DISCONNECTION

Haggai Erlich

The article analyzes cultural and religious dimensions that have linked two ancient entities - Egypt and Ethiopia. Connected by the Nile River and the strategy of the Red Sea, Ethiopia and Egypt shared the same church while their multifaceted dialogue was affected by a Christian-Islamic dichotomy. The rise of modern nationalism and of revolutionary ideologies influenced both societies. The discussion also examines the modern history of Church relations and their impact on the one hand on Ethiopian state-building, and on the other on the demise of Coptic institutionalized autonomy in Egypt.

REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF THE TERM "FEUDALISM"

Claude Cahen

Claude Cahen urges historians to be more aware of the language they use in their research. The example Cahen discusses is the term feudalism. The indiscriminate use to the term, Cahen argues, has made it obscure and a category for a variety of phenomena, which can hardly be described, after a scrupulous study, as feudal. Moreover, Cahen points at the ways instinctive Eurocentrism has distorted history and

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suggests some ways to overcome it. Having examined the basic problems surrounding the term feudalism, Cahen turns to view the evolution of the institution of *iqta'* in the Muslim Empire and compares it to Western feudalism. Cahen concludes that elements of feudalism can be found in both the East and the West, and that the variations between them stem from historical circumstances. In this way the article contributes to the blurring of the dichotomy of East and West.