

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN THE BALKANS: ORIENTALIST PERCEPTIONS, HISTORICAL MYTHS AND MEMORY

EYAL GINIO

The Balkans are an integral part of Europe. Yet, following a different historical path, this region is perceived in Europe as a borderland that was moulded outside the shared European experience. The long Ottoman presence in the region further contributed to this perception of otherness. In this paper I explore four different narratives of the Ottoman past. In the West, one can gauge two competing master narratives: both stem from the same assumption that regards the Balkans as a borderland. Yet, while the Balkanist narrative perceives the Balkans as the untamed Wild East of Europe, another narrative which can be called the bridge narrative underlines the region's cultural contribution to European civilisation due to its geographical location between East and West. In the region itself, we also find two competing narratives: Among Balkan Christians, there is a clear tendency to describe the Ottoman presence as a period of decline and enslavement that devastated the peninsula and drew its inhabitants to poverty and ineptitude. For the Muslims of the Balkans, in contrast, the Ottoman past was a golden age that shaped their distinct identity. While these four narratives were constructed in different backdrops and for different purposes, they are not mutually indifferent and they continually challenge and complement each other.

"THE ISLAMIC PARTY OF KENYA": AN ANATOMY OF AN ETHNIC PARTY

ITAY YASKIREVITCH

In early 1992, the announcement of a multi-party election in Kenya reshaped the national political arena and enabled the establishment of an

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Islamic party. While this party gained much Muslim support in the coastal city of Mombassa, it was later disqualified for elections and lost its place in the official political arena under the official pretext that no religious party was allowed to stand for election. Nevertheless, the party still continued to draw an important Muslim public, which demanded more significant political representation. This partisan activity invoked a lively debate among government officials, local journalists, and researchers who mainly presented the Muslim party as fundamentalist and radical. In this article, I show that such a conventional narrative is misleading. Based on contemporary research on ethnic and religious identities in Africa, I demonstrate how the activities of the Islamic party mirror ethnic divisions in this country's political-cultural framework.

ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN JERUSALEM DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES; 583-922 H. / 1187-1516

HATIM MAHAMID

The article examines the development of Islamic educational institutions in Jerusalem during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. During the first period, there was a limited number of such institutions operating in Jerusalem, and most were established by the Ayyubid sultans soon after the city was captured in 583H./1187. By the end of the Mamluk period, however, there were more than 70 educational institutions of various kinds: *Madrassa*, *Khanqah*, *Ribat* and *Zawiya* in operation. The article discusses political, economic, social, and religious factors that promoted this rapid growth. It shows that the sanctity and religious importance of Jerusalem brought the rulers of the city, princesses, and other members of the Ayyubid and Mamluk political elite, to invest much attention and resources in building philanthropic establishments, in order to increase their personal fame and enhance their political stature. This was especially true in years of peace and economic stability. Nevertheless, throughout the late Mamluk period and especially during the 9/15th century, when other Syrian cities suffered decline, educational establishments in Jerusalem continued to flourish.

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IRANIAN MILLENARIANISM AND DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT IN THE 19th CENTURY

JUAN COLE

This article examines the relations between the establishment of the Baha'i religion during the second half of the nineteenth century and liberal-democratic ideas, which circulated among reformist groups in Iran during the same period. It argues that Bahā-A'llah (1817-1892), who established the Baha'i religion, was an enthusiastic supporter of representative government and constitutional monarchy. Furthermore, in his numerous writings he promoted these ideas to his followers. Based on a close reading of texts by Bahā-A'llah, his son and heir 'Abd al-Bahā and other leading contemporary Baha'i thinkers, the author concludes that millennial aspirations for a more just and egalitarian world, as envisioned in the new Baha'i religion, urged democratization and liberalization in Qajar Iran. Even more so, the liberal-humanistic thought of Bahā-A'llah was influenced by other reformist movements such as the Young Ottomans and Egyptian activists during the 'Urābī revolt. Thus, this new perspective on Bahā-A'llah's scholarship and on supporters of Baha'i religion shows that they were not conservative royalists as assumed in past research, but rather innovative reformists.