

LAW AND ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST. Edited by Daisy Hilse Dwyer. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990. Pp. viii + 168. \$39.95.

The overarching aim of these essays is to examine the "relation of Islam in and to law-related behavior" in a number of contemporary Middle Eastern contexts. Of the seven contributions, three in particular address issues with broader theoretical significance for the comparative study of religion. Michael M. J. Fischer takes issue with the impact of judicial systems, utilized by both clerics and secular lawyers, on the conception and exercise of power. By comparing the Islamic idiom of the 1977-79 Iranian revolution to the legal language of modernization, Fischer illustrates a sort of competition between these two camps whose types of punishments and strategies of conflict resolution index different moral contentions.

Incisive in its close analysis of small-scale social ties' affect upon the legal impact of Islamic courts is the essay of Richard T. Antoun. It examines the role of traditional views of family in forming litigation strategies shown particularly in the resolution of husband-wife and parent-child disputes. This same sort of relationship between legal principles and their social uses is taken up by Brinkley Messick as a question of literacy and its role in the production of legal undertakings. Messick contends that the holding and exchange of documents in Ibb [highland Yemen], as well as the social status of local document specialists, demonstrates a concept of legality while the use of documents in litigation shows an instance of social conduct toward that law.

All three of these essays employ a dichotomy between a more traditional notion of Islamic law and a contemporary or local appropriation of that notion to demonstrate the tension separating a normative ideal from its actual application.

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ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW. Edited by Chibli Mallat and Jane Connors. Arab and Islamic Laws Series. London, Dordrecht, and Boston: Graham and Trotman, 1990. Pp. xiv + 395. N.p.

Contains papers of seventeen participants in a conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London). The majority of the papers is concerned with developments relating to Islamic family law that have occurred within recent decades, during which (as the introduction puts it) social peace among religious communities has given way to "communitarian unease" and Islamic family law has come to be regarded much more as the basis of Muslim communal identity vis-à-vis non-Muslim communities. To a large extent, therefore, the papers deal with Islamic family law in the context of communal relationships both in countries where Muslims are the majority (or are divided into Shi'i and Sunni) and in countries where they live as minorities. Wide-ranging problems relating to the re-

form and implementation of Islamic family law are covered. On the whole, the book is suited mainly to the needs of specialists in the field of Islamic law or comparative law.

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MERCHANT CAPITAL AND ISLAM. By Mahmood Ibrahim. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. Pp. x + 246. \$28.00.

Examining the relationship between economic structures and religion in the social and political transformation of the Middle East, this book highlights the role of "merchant capital," defined as a product of an economic exchange between human participants (in contrast to "industrial capital" where technology determines the relations between the participants [5]) on the emergence, expansion, and politico-economic tensions in Islamic history. Approaching early sources on Islam from the paradigm of political economy, Ibrahim brilliantly demonstrates the determining role of pre- and post-Islamic merchant capital on the shaping of political economy of Islam. Thus, he brings forth the atypical (neither strictly capitalist nor socialist) characteristics of economic practices, structures and forces affecting Muslim economic thinking and behavior. The author maintains methodological consistency, writes lucidly, and provides an extensive bibliography. The only noticeable shortcoming of the work is lack of maps illustrating the economic impact of politico-religious events discussed in the book. Still, it is an excellent scholarly contribution to the ongoing debate about the relation between Islam and economics. Highly recommended to students of religion and social sciences, this book should be part of any college library collection on Islam.

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THE PSALMS OF ISLAM: AL-ŞAHĪFAT AL-SAJJĀDIYYA. By Imām Zayn al-'Ābidin. Translated with an introduction and annotation by William Chittick. London: The Muhammadi Trust (Distributed by Oxford University Press), 1988. Pp. xlvi + 301. \$94.00.

This sumptuous volume (complete with gold-trimmed pages) features an elegant hand-copied Arabic text of the prayers of supplications (*du'ā'*) of Zayn al-'Ābidin, the fourth Shi'i Imam, along with an English translation. The translator succeeds in bringing across the simplicity, personal tone, and reflective cadences of the original. Chittick's introduction takes up the historical figure of Zayn al-'Ābidin ('Alī ibn al-Husayn, d. ca. 95 H / 713 CE), the works attributed him, and the significance of supplication as a mode of prayer in Islamic thought and life. Particular attention is paid to the role of the divine names in supplication, the theological positioning of supplication as "*tawhīd* in the devotional mode," and the function of supplication in "shaping of

the imagination" of the supplicant in accordance with Islamic norms. Chittick notes that the more intimate aspects of the tradition are frequently neglected in presentations of Islam; the literary, theological, and historical dimensions of this volume vividly and conclusively restore a more balanced perspective. Essential for any serious library collection (public, undergraduate, or research) on Islam.

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LOGIC AND ARISTOTLE'S "RHETORIC" AND "POETICS" IN MEDIEVAL ARABIC PHILOSOPHY. By Deborah L. Black. Islamic Philosophy and Theology: Texts and Studies, 7. Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1990. Pp. xii + 290. \$77.25.

This remarkably learned and rather difficult book examines in great detail reasons for, and implications of, the ascription of logical character to the subjects discussed in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*—an ascription that, although it may strike modern students as bizarre, was widespread in the medieval Aristotelian tradition. After reviewing early versions of this ascription (which, with its accompanying rationales, she labels the "context theory") in the Greek commentatorial tradition, the author focuses on al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd, illustrating along the way how the "context theory" both reflects and entails sophisticated speculation on the nature of human knowledge, language, and society. Specialists in the history of logic, rhetoric, and poetics, as well as in the philosophy of language and in Arabic-Islamic philosophy generally, will find some interesting insights here. Future work is promised on the career of the "context theory" within the Latin tradition.

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MUSLIMS UNDER LATIN RULE, 1100-1300. Edited by James M. Powell. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. Pp. 221. N.p.

This extremely useful book is a collection of essays on a topic too often ignored by both medievalists and other scholars interested in interreligious relationships: the medieval Muslim communities that lived under Latin Christian rule for centuries. Both the editor, who provides an introduction, conclusion, and valuable essay on papal policy toward such communities, and the authors of the other essays on Muslim communities in specific regions are leading scholars in their fields: J. O'Callaghan on Portugal and Castile, R. Burns on the Crown of Aragon, D. Abulafia on Sicily, B. Kedar on the Frankish Levant. These essays, based on a variety of primary sources ranging from archival to narrative, vividly illuminate the diversity of circumstances that characterized these Muslim communities. As a whole they demonstrate, as Powell is keen to point out, that contemporary notions of tolerance and op-