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 insight into a subject previously condemned to speculation due to scarcity of Ottoman sources and pragmatic ones on Ottoman expansion and Byzantine politics. Instead, in the Introduction, the author presents us with a detailed account of the rich and largely unused Genoese state archives. Notary deeds and cartulari (bound collections of deeds) as well as the financial records and the accounts of the commune in the Archivio di San Giorgio, the Antico Comune and the Archivio Segreto are used in the book alongside other published Western sources, mainly Venetian. She critically examines previously known sources in Western, Ottoman, Byzantine and Arabic languages. Her aim is to display economic activity in Turchia (using a term from Western sources, to refer to Turkish-ruled Asia Minor and, after the Ottoman advance in Europe, to the European series of today’s Turkey) as an integral part of trade in the Mediterranean basin. The book is structured, thus, in a manner most suitable for this aim.

Chapter i is a historical outline of Ottoman advances and briefly depicts Geno’s policies towards the Turkish principalities in view of its long rivalry with Venice. As Dr Fleet argues, the Genoese policy being largely dictated by the Genoese in the colonies was much more pragmatic than the Venetian one. The epitome of this policy was the success of the Genoese of Pera in maintaining relations with the Turks while, simultaneously, siding with the defenders of Constantinople during the 1453 siege.

In chapter ii the many types of currency which predominated in the Eastern Mediterranean are discussed. Western merchants adopted various methods of payment, such as cash and bartering. According to the author, the establishment of banking in Italian cities, chief among them Genoa, expanded to the Eastern Mediterranean as well. She provides us with many notary deeds dealing with bills of exchange between Italy, Constantinople, Bursa, Gebelou and Edirne. Such a novelty was not, however, without difficulties, as sometimes receivers refused to accept them.

Chapter iii gives a full account of commodities traded by Westerners and Turks in Turchia such as soap, aromatic mastic, gems and glass, horses and livestock, furs, foodstuffs and timber. The author discusses, based on a series of documents, the places of production and export, prices, and taxes imposed on them in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Chapter iv concentrates on the most important commodities in Genoese-Turkish trade, that is, slaves, grain, wine, alum, cloth and metals. In chapter iv the author deals with ‘a trade in which Turks took part both as traders and as trade items, slavery’. Although slave prices were difficult to establish since they varied according to the condition at purchase and the availability of merchandise, the author, acknowledging such a handicap, uses a series of documents to shed some light on trading centres and pricing. Another source of income generation, ransom, exercised through either official or private channels, is also discussed. The author brings to our attention the security risk presented by Turkish slaves in places like Rhodes or Crete and the number of rules resulting from such fear. Chapters v and vi deal with the grain and wine trades respectively. Types of grain mentioned in Western sources are viewed critically. Dr Fleet, after giving details on prices and taxation, concludes that there is a relationship between tax increases and Ottoman expansion. As for wine, there are both imports and exports in Turchia. Again the author critically revises the view that wine was a state monopoly in Mentese and Abydon and explores the meaning of the term namatari.

Chapter vii deals with the alum trade, the mining, production and export of which was in Genoese hands. The author, after discussing trading and production centres, pricing and taxes, reconstructs the view that the Ottoman take-over of Kütahya in 1381 led to a complete paralysis of the alum trade in Mentese and Abydon. She concludes instead that Ottoman political strength resulted in price increases. In chapter viii the export of raw material and luxury silk and the import of European cloth is discussed. Such a lucrative trade did not leave traders short of attempts to cheat Genoese tax officials. The last commodity to be discussed is metal. Apart from the gold and silver trade, iron, copper and lead were part of a circular movement, the extent of which is difficult to determine owing to lack of evidence. Despite the trading and production centres, pricing and taxes, the author argues for Genoese-Turkish relations being neither profane nor religiously motivated by a religious scruple but rather based on a religious sericulture but rather based mainly in profit.

EUGENIA KERMELI


Stretched between once mighty political neighbours and surrounded by areas with a strong indigenous cultural identity—the Indian Subcontinent to the south-east, Persia to the west and the Central-Asian republics to the north—the modern nation-state of Afghanistan has received little attention as an independent and
separate cultural entity in modern scholarship. This is especially true in the wider field of Islamic studies and more particularly regarding Sufism. This is partly due to the complex and heterogeneous cultural reality at the periphery of the core areas of Islamic culture that characterizes this country which lies between the Amu Darya river in the north and the barren Baluchi desert in the south, the heights of the Khyber pass in the east and the endless plains of Khorasan in the west.

With the intention of at least partially filling this gap the author of the present book, in a revised version of her Ph.D. thesis, sets out to sketch the religious landscape of Afghanistan. Focusing particularly on the question of how Islamic mysticism is integrated into Afghan society, both in the past and, more particularly, in recent history since the Soviet invasion of 1978–79 and the following years of war. To achieve this declaredly sociological purpose, Wieland-Karimi begins her analysis in the first of the three major sections of her work by trying to assess the overall importance of the Sufi tradition in Afghan society over the centuries as the one underlying element of unity based on Islamic principles and the extent to which this has been internalized into the daily reality of a society that largely organized along tribal lines of loyalty, authority, honour and respect. Before and since the introduction of Islam into that mountain-rugged, multi-ethnic country, its geographical position at the crossroads of numerous trading routes has kept it in the remote valleys and manifests itself in a deep-rooted sense of piety expressed through veneration of the saints (awliya'), the master-disciple (pir-murid) relationship and the pilgrimage to the tombs and shrines of revered holy men, as well as through the production of a vast body of poetry, music, spiritual practices and healing methods. In the general fashion the author delineates the close coincidence and reciprocal interdependence between religious, scholarly, economic and Sufi networks, which are often supported by a collective group of followers and which serve mutual purposes and interests.

Finally, section III, the most original part of the work, focuses on the way the installation of an indigenous communist regime and the Soviet military invasion that provoked years of resistance involving large sections of the Afghan population have affected the socio-religious structures described previously. While singling out in some detail the role of Sufi authorities and their network in the formation of the organized resistance against the communist and atheist foreign invader that developed largely around the Islamic concept of jihad, Wieland-Karimi stresses the cultural and religious heterogeneity of the tanzimat or 'organization of rule', thus identifying the fragmentation of Afghan society within the unifying folder of Islam. In perhaps one of the most enlightening parts of her book, the second part of this section then tries to throw some light on the devastating impact the last 20 years, first under a communist regime and then under the Taliban (fundamentalists guided by puritanical interpretations of Islam) have had on the functioning and subsistence of the Sufi network. Ironically it thus emerges that while it was the Sufi infrastructure based on the unifying Islamic element in the country's society that provided the base and inspiration for a well co-ordinated and ultimately successful rejection of an ideology that proved too alien to Afghanistan's profoundly religious population to set its roots, it was that very structure that suffered most from the consequences of the reaction it supported.

Owing to the unsettled political circumstances that made research directly in the field impossible, the author unfortunately had to rely exclusively on a wide range of Afghan informants living in exile, mostly in neighbouring Pakistan and in her home country Germany. This is perhaps the main criticism of this work and limits its reliability to a considerable extent. Although of undoubted interest in its intention and in the choice of its topics, this book will, however, leave somewhat disappointed all those who expected to gain some valuable insight into the subtle reality of Sufism in that part of the world.

THOMAS DAINHARDT


The question of the role of the Quran in the development of Islamic law is a fundamental