

For Gerber this is adequate evidence that the Ottomans made every effort to provide justice and protection to their subjects from local power-holders. For others, such as myself, who readily acknowledge the help that these documents provide in pursuit of a sophisticated understanding of the Ottoman legal system and practices, such assertions would be premature without knowing how often the provincial populations approached the Imperial Council to seek justice and how effectively their complaints were brought to satisfactory conclusions, information that is unavailable in complaint registers.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not comment on the publisher's role in this volume. The book is poorly edited. In addition to the occasional spelling errors, the discussion lacks citations and adequate referencing. At one point (p. 53), Gerber refers to a certain "Arnold" ("As Arnold shows . . ."), who does not appear in the footnotes or the bibliography. Also, almost identical comments regarding a particular article appear in two separate places in the text (pp. 47–48 and 58–59). These are issues that could have been corrected by competent editing, which is the publisher's responsibility at least in part.

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Islam and the Rule of Justice: Image and Reality in Muslim Law and Culture. By LAWRENCE ROSEN. Chicago: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 2018. Pp. xi + 279. \$105 (cloth); \$35 (paper and ebook).

Lawrence Rosen's *Islam and the Rule of Justice* opens by acknowledging the climate of prevalent "Western fears and misunderstanding . . . about Islamic law," and enumerates a series of common misperceptions about Islamic law, including its emphasis on tradition, rules, duties, and jihad, its reliance on brutal punishment, its bias against women and minorities, and, somewhat paradoxically, its domination by the state, the full discretion of judges, and the flexibility of jurisconsults in stark contrast to the inflexibility of courts. Rosen argues that seeing "Islamic law as a living system" (p. 3) allows for context, contingency, agency, culture, and meaning, and that each element of the book comes together to provide a "synoptic view" of Islamic law, embedded in culture (p. 12). He concludes the book by setting out a series of "cultural precepts" that emerge from this synoptic view, which might then be turned to a basis for new constitutional arrangements in North Africa and the Middle East: justice as equivalence, reciprocity and structured personalism, ambivalence to power, and property as trust (p. 179). The analytic project—a synoptic view that builds on selected vignettes from Islamic law as a lived system—is given political meaning, therefore, by this background of Western misperception and the foregrounding of political transformations in the wake of the Arab Spring.

The book is divided into two parts; the first, "Following the Law," comprises four chapters on everyday life in a Muslim court, women in Muslim family courts, "shadow law" in Morocco, and Muslim–Jewish partnerships, and the second, "Justice in an Imperfect World," is made up of four chapters on "The Culture of Corruption in the Arab World," "A Guide to the Arab Street," the middle class in the Middle East, and the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui. Two chapters serve to draw out broader questions at the start and end of the book: "Approaching Islamic Law" begins with discussing "misperceptions of Islamic law," which the chapters aim to probe and contextualize, and "The Rule of Law or the Rule of Justice?" concludes the volume with a discussion of the significance of the concept of justice "in Arabs' individual and collective sentiments" (p. 167). While of uneven length, this introduction and epilogue are generally brief interventions into contemporary debates in US media and policy, based on previous primary research in Morocco (Sefrou in particular), and beyond Morocco, and on published studies ranging across the Middle East and some Muslim majority states beyond the MENA region.

Addressing potential concerns about the ability to generalize from these selected cases to the Arab world, Arabs in general, Muslims, Islam, and Islamic law, Rosen advocates that we seek "a range of variations on shared themes" (p. 2), which might prompt more careful and precise questions about Islamic law and its lived realities. At its base, this project pushes back against oversimplifications of Islam made possible and plausible by its abstraction from the tensions, historical conditions, and nego-

tiations through which all “lived Islam” functions and draws meaning for the majority of the world’s Muslims. Three issues recur throughout the book that undermine this project: firstly, a consistent lack of clarity about how the particulars in each chapter (for example, litigants in a courtroom in Sefrou in chapter one) might, or should, be understood to teach the student of Islamic law about law and local practice among Arabs, among Muslims, or in normative understandings of Sharia. Secondly, a lack of historical specificity (as in chapter two, on the fate of women as litigants in Muslim family law courts), such that data compiled on postcolonial courts in Morocco and Malaysia are compared to that of Palestine in the 1900s or North Africa and Andalusia in the period 1100–1500 to refute present expectations that the courts are biased against women. Thirdly, a lack of attention to institutional power that affects the framing of encounters between opposed parties: corruption understood in terms of bribery or favoritism in chapter five, the middle class understood in terms of their preferences for regime types in chapter seven, an accused 9/11 conspirator understood in terms of his testimony and conduct before a US Federal court judge in chapter eight.

This last vignette, drawn from a public discussion with the judge in the Moussaoui case, trial documents, and published reports, serves perhaps as an illustration of all three issues, and underscores a final strand in the book that might have benefited from explicit treatment—the centrality of the “Western” observer, a figure whose misperceptions, puzzlement, and fundamental difference from the Arab Muslim serves as a foil in each chapter. In chapter eight, “Trying Terror,” this Western observer is the trial judge in the case, whose inability to understand Moussaoui serves as the provocation that begins the chapter. Despite the author’s caveats, it remains unclear how the reader is to understand the choice of Moussaoui as an analytic strategy: how can this accused and now convicted terrorist conspirator serve to contextualize and sharpen understandings of Islamic law as lived reality? How might his Moroccan heritage and his French citizenship, his outbursts against the nature of US justice, his perceived strategies in the courtroom, be read alongside the large and complex literature on Islam and colonialism in the Maghreb, and on US imperial power, the politics of global security, and the rule of law in the wake of 9/11? Repeatedly qualifying his analysis (Moussaoui may not have been centrally involved in the planning of the 9/11 attacks, was raised in France unable to speak Arabic, was unknown to have any background in Islam or Islamic law, was in a questionable mental state during his confinement), Rosen nonetheless makes the point that bringing culture back into the frame allows elements of “an Islamic legal ethos” to inform our understanding. In this, Rosen argues, instead of silencing Moussaoui and insisting on his incomprehensibility, allowing Arab culture, Moroccan norms of communication, Islamic court processes, the opportunity to be translated in the US courtroom, might have benefited the public interest. Toward the end of the chapter, Rosen quotes the US judge saying to Moussaoui, “for the rest of your life you will never get a chance to speak, and that is a fair and appropriate ending” (p. 164).

The book’s subtitle is “Image and Reality in Muslim Law and Culture.” Rosen’s intellectual project relies upon a heuristic assumption: misperceptions of Islamic law (the image), though rife, may be remedied through deeper contextual and culturally specific investigation (of the reality). Allowing the student of Islam and Islamic law opportunities for immersion in the complexity and contradictions of everyday life in the courts, in the shadow of state law, in inter-communal relationships, on the “Arab street,” might therefore provoke more profound and careful questioning of long-held assumptions, about Islamic law, but also of law, culture, and the daily life of social meaning more generally. However, closer and more critical treatment by Rosen of the entanglements between image and reality might have shed more light on widespread assumptions of the incommensurable difference between Arabs and the West, of the blurring of boundaries between Arabs and Muslims, and of the persistence of tropes such as Arab corruption, the Arab street, and Arab/Muslim culture.

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