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PUBLIC ORDER IN ISLAM

*Proceedings of the 22nd Congress
of L'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*

edited by
B. MICHALAK-PIKULSKA
and
A. PIKULSKI



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TIRÉ À PART



Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam, Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of L'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, ed. by B. Michalak-Pikulska and A. Pikulski, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, t. 148, Peeters Publishers and Department of Oriental Studies, Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA, 2006, 484 p.

The Union of European Arabists and Islamicists (UEAI) is a scholarly body of specialists in Arabic and Islamic Studies with national representatives in 14 countries and a General Secretariat in Grenoble (France). Due to its elected mission, “to facilitate meetings and the exchange of ideas and information among Arabists and Islamicists”¹, the UEAI has provided for over forty years one of the finest examples of European scientific cooperation in projects connected with Near and Middle Eastern research. It is moreover, as far as I know, one of the first European scholarly bodies to have welcomed membership from the countries that only joined the EU recently, which are now represented by national Chapters in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and one Romanian member. Thus, a wider platform for discussions on the Arabic and the Islamic cultures has been provided, as shown by the variety of topics and perspectives proposed at Congresses, held every two years.

According to Michael G. Carter, editor of the UEAI *Newsletter*, “the Union is a fortunate organisation: over the years its members have always been able to hold their Congresses in the most interesting and attractive cities in Europe, as guests of the most agreeable colleagues and institutions”². The 22nd Congress, convened in excellent conditions in Krakow, Poland, from 29 Sept. to 4 Oct. 2004, also enjoyed the worthy attention of a major publishing house, Peeters in Leuven, who took charge of yet another volume of UEAI Congress *Proceedings*, continuing a series that already comprises several editions.

The 22nd Congress of the UEAI, gathering almost one hundred participants, was held in the impressive setting of the Jagellonian University of Krakow, established in 1364 and flourishing as ever. Evolving around the principal topic, *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam*, the seventy contributors addressed various issues of the history, literature and culture of the Arab and Muslim World. The volume of *Proceedings* only includes thirty-seven of the delivered papers, divided into four sections: *Theology and Philosophy*, *Literature*, *History of State and Society*, *Philology and Linguistics*. Sections are not separated within the volume; however, a simple calculation shows that papers on *History* and *Literature*, with 209 pages (14 items) and 126 pages (11 items) respectively, are better represented than *Theology & Philosophy*, with 119 (10 items), and *Philology & Linguistics*, with only 25 (2 items).

The two editors, Barbara Michalak-Pikulska and Andrzej Pikulski, provide in the *Foreword* (pp. XI–XII) a brief report on the significance of this event for the Polish school of Oriental studies³

¹ *Constitution of the UEAI*, Ch. 1.

² M. G. Carter (ed.), *UEAI Newsletter*, Winter 2005, p. 1.

³ Which is represented as a rule in scholarly meetings worldwide, such as the one recently held in Bucharest, the *Third International Congress on Islamic Civilizations in the Balkans*, 1–5 November

and the advance towards finding answers to some urgent questions concerning contemporary values, the place of the individual in society, the meaning of 'authority', etc. Since such issues are not simple, neither is their survey: as noted by the editors, quite a number of contributions belong to interdisciplinary fields. The central topic of the congress is best reflected by the third chapter of the *Proceedings*, i.e., *History of State and Society*, where most papers focus precisely on issues related to the social and political impact of Islamic authority (often, that embodied in the Ottoman sovereignty), to the reactions of Non-Muslims, and various aspects of social life in diverse environments, from Classical times to our days.

Starting from the message of the Qur'ān and the early organisation of the Muslim state, Muhammed Aruçi (Gostivar, Macedonia) discusses *Islamic Authority and Its Attitude towards Non-Muslim Groups and Minorities in Muslim Societies* (pp. 249–266). His comments on 'the policy of appeasement (*istimâlet*) in the Ottoman State', further considered in connection with *The Ottoman Period and the Balkans*, provide important data for historical researchers of South-Eastern Europe. Some of the author's over-optimistic statements, such as "[in Ottoman times], Non-Muslims have also enjoyed personal rights and freedom same as Muslims" (p. 257), remain debatable. One of his conclusions, though, could be considered as a topic for a future colloquium: "The Ottoman historical experience has also contributed to the development of the concept of peaceful co-existence of religions and cultures. [It is a] fact that different religions and cultures have lived side by side in peace in Anatolia and in the Balkans for centuries" (p. 266).⁴

Based on the works of major legislators of the *mālikī* school (11th to 15th centuries), Maria Arcas Campoy (Tenerife) surveys the issue of legal competences, attributed or assumed, in her paper *Sur l'autorité (Sultān) dans l'administration de la justice: le juge, le gouvernant et le juriste* (pp. 281–293). An interesting outline of the division of authority and charges between the *qāḍī*, the governor and the *faqīh* ('legislator'), while mostly based on examples from Muslim Spain, this text offers an insight into mechanisms of legal practice that undoubtedly extended to other European lands that were later conquered by the Turks.

In his paper *Pouvoir DE IURE et pouvoir DE FACTO dans la pensée politique islamique classique*, placed in the first chapter of this volume (pp. 29–40), Paolo Branca (Milan) presents an outline of the major theories on government and social order during the Xth–XVth centuries, as reflected in the works of the most outstanding Muslim thinkers, such as: Al-Bāqillāni, Al-Māwardī, Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, etc. Considering the influence that these scholars' works had on the elaboration of a political tradition in Islam, this survey also provided useful data for a clear understanding of other contributions included in the volume, like the one hereafter.

Focusing mainly on the territories later to become Syria and Lebanon, Dimitry Zhantiev (Moscow) discusses the *Islamic Factor In The Consolidation Of The Ottoman Rule In The Arab Provinces During The Reign Of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1908)* (pp. 453–458). After a brief survey of the instruments of Islamic propaganda, such as the education system, emerging publications and efforts of the Sultan's apologists, the author concludes that "the Islamic factor played a key role in the consolidation of the Ottoman power in the Arab lands. It helped much to slow down for several decades the development of a new political consciousness based on territorial and ethnic identity" (p. 458). A significant assessment of the post-Ottoman evolution of the Near East, this contribution offers a fresh angle regarding the much discussed topic of national identity and self-definition proper to the peoples of those troubled lands.

2006, where two of the papers reflected the work and projects of the Polish Orientalists, i.e., *Traces of Ottoman Civilisation in Polish Culture* (by Danuta Chmielowska) and *Turcological Studies in Poland and the Studies on Ottoman Heritage in the Light of Turcological Research in Krakow* (by Halil Ibrahim Yakar).

⁴ For instance, at the above-mentioned *Congress of Islamic Civilizations in the Balkans* one paper, delivered by Kâmil Çolak and Numan Elibol (Eskişehir, Turkey), focused on *An Experience of Coexistence in the Balkans: The Case of Rusçuk*.

The impact of the Ottoman rule on the Romanian lands is evoked by the present writer, in *Ottoman Authority in the Romanian Principalities as Witnessed by a Christian Arab Traveller of the 17th century: Paul of Aleppo* (pp. 295–309). An outstanding testimony of the society, politics and religious life in this region of South-Eastern Europe, where he spent three years and a half of his journey, Paul's work is scrutinized for the first time from this particular point of view, based on the Arabic text that is provided in attached excerpts translated into English. The author concludes that this should be regarded as one of the richest and most reliable sources supporting the special status of the Romanian Principalities: "The *ḍimmī* status was not applied to the Romanians, who enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in political, religious and economical matters, provided they observed certain obligations towards the Ottoman authorities" (p. 298).

Lutz Berger (Tübingen) made a similar effort of text interpretation, extended to a corpus of Syrian Arabic literature, in his *There and back again: The changing Image of the Turk in Ottoman Arab Literature* (pp. 121–131). Starting from presumed *dicta* of the Prophet, the author searched the positive and negative traits ascribed to Turks in Arabic literature, finally focusing on the criterion of *language*, applied to biographical texts from Ottoman Damascus. This kind of survey has already led to interesting conclusions when carried out on Romanian literary works of the Ottoman period.⁵ Pushing this research further may reveal similarities accountable for by the comparable rapports between the local Christian populations and the ruling Turks in the Romanian Principalities and the Fertile Crescent. In addition, considering both the interest in the *Image of the Other* as a topic in studies of 'Mentality' and the recent discussions over Turkey's objective to join the E. U., a comparative study of interactions between the old Turkish civilization and the populations of the Near East, as well as of South-Eastern Europe, may result in interesting conclusions.⁶

An enlightening issue as to the fabric of Muslim society is discussed by Richard van Leeuwen (Amsterdam) in his paper *Social Functions of the Waqf Institution* (pp. 407–421). At a time when the social mission of religious establishment(s) finds itself again under the scrutiny of the media and the ordinary people, such a thorough description of the administrative setup, functions, personnel, and the financial management of Islamic *waqfs*, i.e., donations with special community destinations, provides significant data for a better understanding of the Muslim culture. Reading that "in the course of Islamic history, agricultural fields, orchards, vegetable gardens increasingly became part of *waqf* complexes, related to specific institutions or private families, and were thus exploited according to a specific set of rules and regulations" (pp. 409–410) makes us think that the drive towards generous donations, seen as acts of piety, is a common feature not restricted to religion or region. The influence of the Islamic model of social and charitable institutions on the non-Muslim peoples engulfed in the Ottoman Empire is another topic worth surveying by an international team of researchers.

Alongside the search for elements concerning policies, social life and institutions that are specific to the Muslims, the Qur'ānic text is surveyed from other points of view as well. Thus, in his paper *Les éléments apocryphes dans la démonologie coranique. Les nouvelles découvertes* (pp. 41–49), starting from the general opinion that Prophet Muḥammad enriched his teachings based on the Jews' and the Christians' beliefs, Krzysztof Kościelniak (Krakow) finds echoes of *Bartholomew's Gospel* in the Qur'ānic episode regarding Iblīs (Satan) and revisits the tradition about Solomon's power over the *djinn* ('devils'). Based on the works of old Arab grammarians, specific elements of the Qur'ānic language were surveyed by Pierre Larcher (Aix-en-Provence) in *Neuf traditions sur la langue coranique rapportées par al-Farrā' et alii* (pp. 469–481). In the same chapter on *Philology and*

⁵ See Laurențiu Vlad, *Turcul. Un personaj al imaginarii populare*, in *Caietele Laboratorului de Studii Otomane*, nr. 2, București, 1993, Editura Universității București, p. 144–163 (followed by a *Résumé*); Cornelia Călin Bodea, *Românii și otomanii în folclorul românesc*, București, 1998, Editura Kriterion, 253 p. (with English and Turkish summaries).

⁶ Such as Maria-Matilda Alexandrescu Dersca-Bulgaru has drawn, in countless published contributions, regarding the impact of the Ottoman power and influences on the Romanian people, see e.g. the recent volume *Seldjoukides, Ottomans et l'espace roumain*, publié par les soins de Cristina Feneșan, in *Analecta Isisiana LXXXVII*, Les Éditions Isis, Istanbul, 2006, 626 p.

Linguistics, Michael G. Carter (Sydney) resumes his comments on Classical Arabic terminology with *Approaches to the Technical Terms of Arabic Grammar* (pp. 459–467), applying two recently expressed points of view in the interpretation of the term *jumla*, read as either ‘sentence’ or ‘clause’.

A number of texts included in the chapter on *Theology and Philosophy* focus on Islamic movements other than the Sunnī mainstream. In his work *‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ibād and the Origins of the Ibādiyya* (pp. 51–57), Wilferd Madelung (Oxford), one of the most prolific researchers into Islamic civilization, whose scholarly interests cover most fields of Oriental studies, examines the birth of the Khārijī sect of the Ibādiyya in Baṣra (Iraq), in 683. Several other contributors address similar topics: *History, Language and Ideology in the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’s View of the Imāmate* by Carmella Baffioni (Naples) (pp. 17–28); *An Ismā‘īli Interpretation of Ṣubḥiha lahum (Qur. IV, 157) in the Kitāb ṣaḡarat al-yaqīn*, by Antonella Straface (Bari) (pp. 95–100), etc.

Eva-Maria von Kemnitz’s contribution *International Contacts of the Portuguese Arabists (XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries)* is an inspiration for the Romanian (and possibly other) specialists in Arabic studies (pp. 369–386): solidly documented, the paper provides an outline of the Portuguese scholars’ interest in Oriental studies over two centuries. This may well become a chapter in a foreseeable *European History of Oriental Studies*, and a model for similar enterprises that are still awaiting (including in Romania), alongside other monographs on individual figures of the scholarly world of Orientalism.⁷

Angelika Hartmann (Giessen) provides a detailed definition of a modern psychological theory concerning the relationship *space – memory* in her paper *Mental Maps, Cognitive Mapping and Mental Space in Contexts of Near and Middle Eastern Societies* (pp. 329–339). In brief, the author states that maps, be they ‘city maps, street maps, atlases, [and] spatial concepts of all kinds’ (p. 329), do not reflect objective realities, but bear signs of a subjective authorship. Her paper offers the results of an interdisciplinary study carried out by the Giessen Special Research Area ‘Erinnerungskulturen’ (‘Cultures of Remembrance’).⁸ Based on the analysis of various cultural expressions (Nazim Hikmet’s *Human Landscapes*, Palestinian literature of the 20th century, Shiite concepts of sacred space, etc.), the team members redefined the relation between memory on the one hand and imagination and representation of space on the other, as tributary to ‘the historical social-spatial circumstances’ (p. 339). Definitely, the information that remains imprinted in our memory, being influenced by personal and transitory factors, often differs to a certain extent from the reality in the field, or that perceived by others. The concluding axiom, ‘Space is crystallized time’⁹, leaves the reader thinking.

The second paper that bears the clear mark of psychological concepts is *On Wit and Elegance: the Arabic Concept of karf* (pp. 101–119), by Zoltán Szombathy (Budapest). Based on the *Muwashshā* of the medieval scholar Al-Washshā, the author defines *larf* as something more than the usual features of ‘refinement’, ‘wit’ or ‘elegance’, i.e., a set of ‘patterns of behaviour’ that is ‘almost a faithful replica of the ancient Arabic concept of *muruwwa*’¹⁰ (p. 111). Beside other points, the analysis is also useful in view of a reconsideration of the concept of ‘chivalry’, essential to the accurate interpretation of the literary *genre* of ‘court poetry’, which has long been correlated to Arabic pre-Islamic poetry.¹¹ Certain elements in this respect are to be found as well in *Qays et Lubnā. Victoire de l’amour sur l’autorité du Père et de la tribu*, by Krystyna Skarzyńska-Bocheńska (Warsaw)

⁷ Such as the outstanding work of Alastair Hamilton *William Bedwell the Arabist (1563–1632)*, E. J. Brill / Leiden University Press, Leiden, 1985, 163 p.

⁸ The results of this research were published in S. Damir-Geilsdorf, A. Hartmann, B. Hendrich (eds.), *Mental Maps – Raum – Erinnerung. Kulturwissenschaftliche Zugänge zum Verhältnis von Raum und Erinnerung* (Kulturwissenschaft. Forschung und Wissenschaft 1), Münster, 2005, 304 p.

⁹ Possibly retraceable to Manuel Castells, as quoted in the footnote on p. 339.

¹⁰ Ar. for ‘virility’, ‘chivalry’.

¹¹ See Denis de Rougemont, *L’Amour et l’Occident*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1972, Book II, *Sources religieuses du mythe*, chapter on *Les mystiques arabes*.

(pp. 133–144), who investigates the circumstances of a successful love story as presented in this historical romance, atypical for Arabic literature.

Another approach to women's status in Islam is proposed by Christopher Melchert (Oxford) in his paper *Whether to Keep Women Out of the Mosque: A Survey of Medieval Islamic Law* (pp. 59–69), a survey of the attitudes displayed by the major schools of thought regarding the role and the acceptable degree of women's freedom in society. After sketching the historical evolution of the law system, he provides on p. 67 an interesting "spectrum from least permissive school to most", a useful guide to all contemporary researchers of women's position in Muslim societies. Interesting data regarding this issue may also be found in Gino Schallenberg's contribution *The Sheikh Al-Azhar's Authority Contested. Reactions of the State Press to Tanṭāwī's Statement on France's Ban of the Headscarf* (pp. 81–93). A detailed review of the development in facts and declarations pertaining to this issue, this text allows a better understanding of recent events that involved a re-defining of the status of Muslims living in Europe.

Beside the above, aspects of contemporary politics and culture in the Near East are also surveyed by Andrzej Pikulski, in *Citizens without citizenship in Kuwait* (pp. 447–452), Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, in *Literary Movement in the Gulf Countries* (pp. 179–187), and Baian Rayhanova (Sofia), in *Myth and Reality in Modern Arabic Prose* (pp. 189–202). The interest in literature that UEAI members seem to hold is visible in the large number of contributions focusing on novel interpretations of literary works, be they historical, religious or language-related. Thus, to the titles already mentioned the following may also be added: Miklós Maróth (Budapest), *Possible Sources of Sīr al-asrār* (pp. 71–79, commenting on a Pseudo-Aristotelian text preserved in Arabic); Giuseppe Scattolin, *A Critical Edition of Ibn al-Farīd's Dīwān. Reading a Sufi Text* (pp. 203–216); Paulina Lewicka, *When a Shared Meal is Formalized. Observations on Arabic "Table Manners" Manuals of the Middle Ages* (pp. 423–433). It is regrettable though that other interesting papers delivered at the congress did not find their way into this volume, such as the ones contributed by Hilary Kilpatrick (*Interpreting the Self. Arab Autobiographies of the 9th–19th centuries*), Galina Stefanova-Evstatieva (*Public Expression and Private Confession: Crypto-Christianity among the Bulgarian Pomaks in the Central Regions of the Rodopi Mountains*), Ian Richard Netton (*Private Caves and Public Islands: Islam, Plato ad the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*), Alex Metcalfe (*Going Round and Round in Circles: Defining the Lands of Sicily in the Twelfth Century*); Silvia Naef (*The 'Ulama and the Multiplication of Images in the Islamic World – Reactions and Opinions*).

As for the technical aspects of the reviewed publication, beside infrequent cases of misreading or spelling errors (such as, on pp. XXII, 254, 265, 266, 409 respectively, 'avections' instead of 'questions'; 'appeasment'; differnt'; 'toleration'; inegration' instead of 'integration'), and a certain inconsistency in using the upper case, this book rises to the expectations of the most exacting critic in terms of both accuracy and aesthetics.

To conclude, the collection of texts in this volume of *Proceedings* of the 22nd Congress of the UEAI is as diverse as the scholarly interests of the Union members; it shows a clear majority of the specialists in text interpretation and a large variety of periods and areas of specialization, preserving at all times the common preoccupation with Arab and/or Islamic culture and civilization. It remains the great merit of the editors, Barbara Michalak-Pikulska and Andrzej Pikulski, to have successfully blended together a variety of topics into a volume entitled *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam*.¹² Allowing additional impact for the 22nd Congress of the UEAI, this volume of *Proceedings*, which will undoubtedly benefit from the excellent distribution and coverage of its editors, Peeters Publishers and Department of Oriental Studies, contributes superbly to another major purpose of the Union stated in Ch. 1 of its *Constitution*: "to promote research into Arabic and Islamic studies".

Ioana Feodorov

¹² And for that matter, into a congress focusing on this leading topic.