

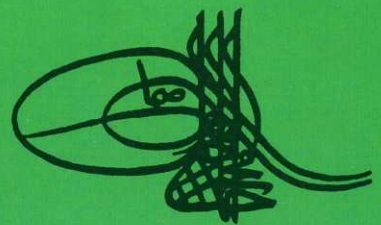
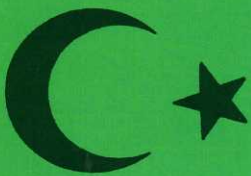
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comparable beliefs and practices wherever agrarian conditions prevailed, say in the Balkans and Asia Minor, such as Frederick Hasluck's *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929) and to recent ethnographic studies, such as Reinhold Loeffler's *Islam in Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988) is there anything distinctive about Syria and Palestine other than the density of biblical associations? Moreover, if agrarian religion is meant to encompass literate and illiterate traditions without effacing the substantial differences between them, Grehan is in a position to say more about the purposes served by religious specialists and their preoccupation with law and theology that derogated the urban social order and the political authority of Muslim monarchs. Perhaps agrarian religion's division between lettered and unlettered accents reflected a vertical power gradient descending from rulers to elite townsmen to urban commoners to villagers most vulnerable to an indifferent social and natural world. That Grehan's book raises a host of questions is reason to regard it as a valuable contribution to scholarship, not only in the historical study of religion on the eve of modernity, but also in the history of Ottoman Syria and Palestine. In the latter field, it complements Ussama Makdisi's *The Culture of Sectarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), in that both works advance arguments about the ways modernity reshaped religion, a point that Grehan addresses in the concluding chapter.

Through careful sifting and organization of his sources, Grehan has produced a timely account of the religious beliefs and practices of the unlettered, who are so often voiceless in historical accounts. His elegant, engaging writing makes *Twilight of the Saints* an enjoyable book to read and an excellent choice for college courses in Islam and Ottoman history, especially if the publisher issues an affordable paperback edition.

CIHAN YÜKSEL MUSLU, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014). Library of Ottoman Studies, vol. 36. Pp. 376. \$ 95.00 cloth.

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Over the past few years, with ever-increasing interest in interstate relations in the medieval and early modern periods, studies have considered various aspects linked to diplomatic relations (mainly politics, economy, and diplomatics). It is thus not surprising that the field of Islam is witnessing a marked upsurge of interest in similar issues, but if there is a discrepancy between Europe and Islam, it certainly lies in the nature of the historian's choice morsels, i.e., the documents. As a

consequence, most publications devoted to questions of diplomacy have been mainly concerned with periods and areas where documents have been preserved in greater number, that is, primarily from the seventeenth century onwards. For the Middle East, umpteen analyses of interstate relations exist for the Ottomans, on the one hand, and the Safavids and Qajars, on the other. In national archives, both in the Middle East and Europe, for events that took place roughly after 1600, there are more of the kinds of sources that give historians the instrumental grist to interpret the nature of the relationships between two states: original documents, instructions released to and reports written by the ambassadors. Anyone interested in earlier periods must rely on a narrower range of sources where original documents are scarce, which generates various shortcomings, not the least the question of reliance.

The researcher who nevertheless takes that risk with full cognizance and a carefully weighed approach to the sources can reach exciting results. Such an approach must undoubtedly consider aspects ruling over the political and ideological discourse between two powers that may appear imperceptible or negligible to a modern eye. In the case of a study devoted to diplomatic relations between two Muslim powers in the premodern period, it would be inconceivable to pay no heed to the issue of diplomatics, which hinges, among other things, on the conventions, protocols, and formulae widely used by those who composed the documents that were the vehicles of the leaders' political and ideological language. In recent years, this discipline also has witnessed a renewed attraction, seeding hopes that the works of the pioneers of the 1960s and 1970s, including S.M. Stern, J. Wansbrough, H. Busse, A. Zajaczkowski, V. Stojanow, and L. Fekete, will not remain in vain or unchallenged.

Considering all that precedes, the book under review is a most welcomed contribution to the field of diplomatic studies in terms of both diplomatic interstate relations and diplomatic protocol. It encompasses the diplomatic exchanges between the Ottomans and the Mamluks from the emergence of the former as an Anatolian principality up to its transformation into an empire and the progressive waning of the latter until its fall under the blows of what was once a provincial entity. The chronological window starts with the first attestations of diplomatic relations established between these two powers in the 1360s and ends with Selim's ascent to the throne (1512). The author justifies the decision to neglect the five years that separate Bayezid II's abdication from the conquest of Egypt by the fact that they would have required another volume (22). Yüksel Muslu also firmly believes that the nature of the relations between the two powers was not only warmongering and that study of the beginning of Selim's rule would have been counterproductive given the military events that preceded the conquest. In this, she is probably correct as she tries to demonstrate that focus on the moments of conflict distracts from the richness of the long-term interactions between the two powers.

Yüksel Muslu sets the stage for her topic with a presentation of the tools of diplomacy. Here she details the various steps followed by the respective chanceries when preparing a diplomatic mission: selection of the envoy (the author uses indifferently the terms ambassador, envoy, and messenger without mentioning the words used by her sources, e.g., in the Mamluk sources, *qāšid*, envoy), preparation

of the letter, choice of the gifts, the arrival, housing and audience as well as the return of the ambassador. For this, she relies on data from her sources as well as on other, comparative pieces of information, pertaining mainly to periods posterior to the chronological window but, in some cases, to other interstate relations.

Yüksel Muslu is aware that her sources are unbalanced. While she could count on contemporary chronicles and chancery manuals for the Mamluks, her task was complicated by the relative lack of similar sources for the Ottomans. Nevertheless, the image that comes out of this first chapter is rather convincing. It must be emphasized that being fully aware of the material available for both sides, the author considered a vast array of sources, manuscript and printed, in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, and coins as well as documents. On the Mamluk side, she made use of the copies of letters housed at the French National Library in Paris (MS Ar. 4440), an instrumental repository for any scholar interested in the diplomatic exchanges between the Mamluks and other powers, given the paucity of original letters. She also utilized another important source of chancery manual, only recently identified as being al-Saḥmāwī's *al-Thaḡhr al-bāsim*, the unicum, known and profusely used since the nineteenth century, preserved in Paris (MS Ar. 4439) and finally published in 2009. On the Ottoman side, Yüksel Muslu mainly made use of Feridūn's work, notwithstanding the lack of a critical edition as well as of some documents housed in the archives of the Topkapı Sarayı (but she does not indicate whether these are original letters or copies).

The one hundred fifty years of diplomatic exchanges considered in this study are divided into five periods where we witness a crescendo in the political and ideological discourse and the self-representation of the Ottomans. This crescendo goes hand in hand with the progressive transformation of the small Anatolian principality into a major regional dynasty with an imperial ambition. Yüksel Muslu identifies these periods as follows: c.1350-1402 (perceptions in transformation); 1413-1451 (from titulature to geopolitical affairs: an age of negotiations); 1453-1481 (imperial ambition resurrected); 1481-1491 (from captivity narratives to a peace treaty: a new era of image building); 1491-1512 (from warfare to alliance: the intricacies of imperial diplomacy). Perusing the documents mostly preserved as copies in collections (*munsha'āt* in Arabic, *münşe'ât* in Ottoman Turkish), the chancery manuals, and the chronicles helped her to identify several diplomatic missions that are detailed in appendix 3 at the end of the volume. Her historical analysis is strengthened by taking into consideration the evolution of both the titles used by the Mamluks and the Ottomans in their correspondence and the ones they reserved for their counterpart to demonstrate very convincingly a shift in the usage made by the Ottomans, who were progressively claiming more recognition from the Mamluks. Her understanding of the intricacies of Mamluk chancery practices is sound and all the more commendable since our knowledge of Mamluk protocol in diplomatic letters remains largely understudied. If there is a point I must disagree with, it is in her consideration of the use made of the motto (*'alāma*) expressing the hierarchical position given by the sender to the recipient, i.e., either by the Mamluk sultan toward his Ottoman counterpart or vice versa. As she notes (119), in the letter Mehmed II sent to Khushqadam in 1464, he addressed the latter with "Our Brother"

rather than the conventional “Our Father.” She explains that “by addressing the 62-year-old Khushqadam in this manner, the 32-year-old Mehmed perhaps inadvertently disregarded the diplomatic convention of reverence for seniority.” I am not aware of any “diplomatic convention of reverence for seniority,” and, given that no reference to a chancery manual is provided here, I assume that this statement results from her own interpretation of the event: the Ottoman letter angered the sultan. Of course, the reaction on the Mamluk side clearly refers to a lack of respect and a breach of etiquette. However, this event must be understood in the light of the rules applied by the Mamluk chancery and what was expected in return. In agreement with those rules, the sultan wrote in his own hand on the letter his *tarjama* (the *intitulatio*) corresponding to three levels: *akhūhu* (His Brother), *wāliduhu* (His Father), or his name alone (e.g. Khushqadam) (see al-Sahmāwī, *al-Taghr al-bāsim*, Cairo, 2009, vol. 2, 645-46). The first two levels could also be accompanied by the name of the sultan. Each expression was correlated with the rank reserved to the addressee by the chancery according to very rigid rules. In the case under consideration, it is obvious that in the appreciation of the Mamluk chancery the Ottoman ruler did not deserve more than the second level, even though Mehmed II may have claimed a higher status given his conquest of Constantinople. His letter to Khushqadam, whom he addressed as “Our Brother,” proves that it was indeed his intention to see his status raised. That was not the position of the Mamluk chancery, though, and it explains the reaction of the sultan. Be that as it may, the question of age was not pertinent to analyze this event.

Other than this remark, Yüksel Muslu's analysis of the evolution of the titles and the protocol is accurate. Her intuition with regard to the value attributed to titles in the correspondence exchanged by the Ottomans and the Mamluks and the meaning of any change in the grid is valid. As such, this is the first study of its kind, and it is to be hoped that many others will follow the path Yüksel Muslu has contributed to tracing. As she fully recognizes (186-187), she could not envisage all the aspects linked to the diplomatic exchanges. Although in focusing exclusively on the correspondence and the attestations of diplomatic missions between the Ottomans and the Mamluks whole swathes of the intricate web of relations established in that part of the world are overlooked, this study partly unveils the complexity of the diplomacy in action. It thus strengthens the idea that we need more cooperation between specialists in the multiple powers who were active in the Middle East during the premodern period in order to get a better understanding of their diplomatic exchanges and all the correlated aspects of letters, protocol, and agents (envoys, interpreters, spies, ...). Yüksel Muslu has undoubtedly paved the way for such a collaboration.