

It is pertinent to point out that the author has placed the genesis of the Kashmir conflict in the binary of India and Pakistan, which diminishes Kashmir's own political history and provides a myopic view of the situation. Though Agarwal has been meticulous with her research methodology, positionality and ethics, the book fails to acknowledge the fact that interviewing army officers – whether active or retired – is a privilege associated with her own identity. Moreover, it is quite surprising to see the author talk about femininity and masculinity in Kashmir without referring to the works of Ather Zia, an eminent Kashmiri Anthropologist based in the United States, particularly her book *Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation and Women's Activism in Kashmir*, in which she showcases the construction of a Kashmiri Women Activist identity, her resistance and her everyday life. It also highlights the experience of Kashmiri men as well, particularly what makes them the perfect “killable” body. Zia's work mostly revolves around memory, agency and resistance.

Nonetheless this book is an essential read on the Kashmir conflict, as it contributes significantly to the scholarship on Kashmir, particularly masculinity studies, an area which has thus far remained under-researched. As an ethnographic study, the book has engaged multiple stakeholders in Kashmir, taking its cue from the theoretical insights from various conflict zones as well as from feminist approaches and critical masculinity studies, making it a rich resource for scholars across multiple disciplines.

*Aarash Pirzada*

MAHMOOD KOORIA, *Islamic Law in Circulation: Shāfi'ī Texts across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean*. (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. xv, 446 pages, 1 map, £105.00. ISBN 9781009098038.

How to narrate the history of Islamic law as both a process and a system of knowledge while remaining sensitive to the peculiarities of historical contexts? Mahmood Kooria's *Islamic Law in Circulation* provides a remarkable answer to this conundrum, by tracing the history of a specific family of texts belonging to the *shāfi'ī* school of Islamic law – from its origins in thirteenth-century Damascus via Mecca to Muslim societies around the Indian Ocean and to the offices of European colonial scholarship and officialdom in the twentieth century. The book reads as a travelogue, mapping the authors, their texts, their contexts and the routes along which texts were transmitted. What emerges is an intricate tapestry of engagements, challenges, negotiations and conflicts that reveal the

historical processes through which *shāfiʿī* knowledge was created, contested and, occasionally, undone. Apart from discussing a rich array of both Muslim and non-Muslim individuals, Kooria weaves a narrative in which the texts themselves appear as actors in the unfolding history of *shāfiʿī* legalism. What is particularly noteworthy is that he manages to convincingly write legal history not from fatwas or the surviving evidence of legal practice, but from texts that present substantive law. While these texts may appear to foreclose historical analysis by purporting to present unchanging law in a supposedly derivative manner, Kooria's contextualised readings reveal how much historians may gain from engaging with this domain.

The book consists of two main parts. In the first three chapters, which form the first part, Kooria sets the stage by discussing the framework and terminologies through which he endeavours to study *shāfiʿī* history. In the first chapter, "Circulation Networks", he presents the individual, social and institutional contexts and networks in which *shāfiʿī* thought was created, debated, transmitted and transformed. The second chapter, "Circulatory Texts", is dedicated to the peculiar textual engagements that provide the *shāfiʿī* school with both unity and diversity. Kooria is able to provide a framework to study *shāfiʿī* thought by engaging with what he calls "textual families" (p. 78), which developed from specific base texts through practices such as commenting, excerpting, editing and translating. The third chapter, "Architecture of Encounters", discusses the structure of *shāfiʿī* texts that enabled the production of textual families and the growth of their genealogies, and introduces the second part of the book, in which the author traces one of the textual families in detail. He labels this family the *Minhāj* family, after the *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* by the Damascene scholar Yaḥyā al-Nawawī (1233–1277), which forms the subject of the fourth chapter ("The Code"). This is followed by a chapter ("The Commentary") on a commentary on the *Minhāj*, the *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj*, written in Mecca by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (1504–1567). In the subsequent chapter ("The Autocommentary"), Kooria shifts away from the Middle East to Malabar in south-western India to discuss the works of a student of Ibn Ḥajar's, Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī (1524–ca. 1583): the *Qurra al-ʿayn*, and especially the *Fath al-muʿīn*, an autocommentary on the *Qurra*. Chapter Seven ("The Supercommentaries") is dedicated to two supercommentaries on Zayn al-Dīn's *Qurra* and *Fath* written in nineteenth-century Mecca by the Javanese Nawawī al-Bantanī (1813–1898) and the Egyptian Sayyid Bakrī (1850–1893). The final chapter ("The Translations") covers translations of these texts both by Muslim scholars into languages such as Kiswahili, Malay, Malayalam and Tamil, and by European colonial scholars and officials into Dutch, French, English and German.

Kooria's book is a tour-de-force through the history of one particular family of *shāfiʿī* legal texts. On every page, the reader is surprised by the breadth and depth of Kooria's scholarship, all the more remarkable as this is the printed

version of Kooria's PhD thesis at Leiden University. Every chapter could serve as a basis for further studies into one or the other subject, sometimes sparking a desire in the reader for more information. From my own perspective, this is particularly true of the final chapter, which deals with a large number of translations, especially Muslim ones, in a somewhat summarily fashion. This is hardly avoidable in a single volume, but it might have been helpful to give one or two Muslim translations the same space as the colonial translations. The mere thirteen pages dedicated to Muslim translations, versus more than 33 pages on European colonial translations, somewhat reinforce the notion that translation acts primarily as a tool of colonial subjugation rather than as a means for Muslims to engage with a sometimes highly parochial "*shāfi'ī* cosmopolis", as exemplified by Ibn Ḥajar's *Tuhfa*, which Kooria himself dubs "chauvinistic" (p. 194). Indeed, as much of the book's value derives from Kooria's persistent endeavour to "provincialize" (p. 382) Islamic law – by paying close attention to contexts and contestations in the texts he discusses – some attention to the operation of these texts beyond the limits of Arabic would have been helpful. But this should in no way distract from the fact that *Islamic Law in Circulation* is a wonderful and important book that should be read not only by scholars of Islam, but by anyone interested in Indian Ocean studies and in the methodology of global legal and intellectual history.

*Torsten Tschacher*

KERRY BROWN / GEMMA CHENGGER DENG, *China Through European Eyes: 800 Years of Cultural and Intellectual Encounter*. London: World Scientific, 2022. 272 pages, GBP 75.00. ISBN 978-1-80061-097-2 (hb)

Kerry Brown is best known for his work on Xi Jinping and contemporary China and a current project on China–United Kingdom relations. This book of writings about China by some of the most influential European thinkers has been compiled with the assistance of a postgraduate colleague, Gemma Deng, and is fully annotated with thoughtful introductory commentaries to provide context. The authors argue that, given the increasing global reach of a newly wealthy and powerful China in the twenty-first century, some understanding of "the ways in which it has figured in [the] Western imagination" (p. xxx) is essential. It is a salutary reminder that while much has changed, much has stayed the same, and that jumping to conclusions – especially for politicians, diplomats or the military – is potentially dangerous.

The body of the book is structured chronologically, beginning with some of the earliest documented encounters between Europeans and China. Whether