

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This issue marks the launch of a new *IJMES* cover. While it's not likely to please everyone—some of you may be nostalgic for the old maroon and yellow cover—we have opted for a design that enables the journal to highlight the visual culture of the Middle East. The image on the cover will change with each issue, and it is our hope that authors of articles and roundtable essays will be inspired to submit visual images with their work for consideration as that issue's cover. We thank our partners at Cambridge University Press, Laura Etheredge and Nancy BriggsShearer; *IJMES* board members, who encouraged us to move forward with a new design; and the MESA directorate, which supported the adoption of a new cover.

The first two articles in this issue examine social identities in contemporary Turkey, building on other recent scholarship that has shown how the shift to a neoliberal political and economic order has led, in the words of the first article author John McManus, “to a fragmentation of cultural identities in Turkey and a recasting of how individuals relate to and interact with one another.” McManus takes an ethnographic approach to the topic, exploring how members of *Çarşı*, a fan group of the Turkish football team Beşiktaş long known for its “anarcho-socialist” identity, have responded to the increasing commercialization of football by “establishing new conventions, new legends, built out of the detritus of the movement's socialist past and the present-day hyper-commodified society.” The cover photo of this issue features a Beşiktaş game. The second article, by Sabri Ciftci, approaches social identities in Turkey from an empirical political-science angle. Analyzing the results of an original survey he conducted among Turkish university students, Ciftci explores how identities based on national, religious, ethnic, and regional affiliations shape citizens' attitudes toward recent foreign policy shifts of the Justice and Development Party, which other scholars have framed as a “Middle Easternization,” “Islamization,” or even “Ottomanization” of Turkish foreign policy.

The next two pieces, paired under the subtitle “Political Economies,” look at state–economy interactions in different historical contexts. The first, by Kevan Harris, continues the previous two articles' focus on the current neoliberal age, by looking at the contradiction between the claims of Western policymakers and scholars that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has been rapidly centralizing the Iranian economy under its command and the assertions of Iranian officials that the government has been engaged in a massive privatization of state-owned assets. In contrast to both claims, Harris traces “a complex shift of economic ownership away from the state toward a variety of parastatal organizations,” leading to the emergence of a “subcontractor state,” and argues for “bringing the social back in” to analyze the particular form of capitalism that has taken shape in the Islamic Republic. Pascale Ghazaleh's article explores the changing social roles of merchants in Egypt during the first half of the 19th century, showing how new legislation and legal institutions chipped away at their jurisdiction over

commercial affairs and disputes, at the same time that other processes were undermining their political and economic leverage in relation to the state, thereby turning them into “mere merchants” by the end of the century. She also examines how both foreign and established local merchants engaged with this process and sometimes profited from it.

The last two articles focus on Ottoman studies. Masayuki Ueno begins by asking how the situation of Ottoman Armenians surfaced as a “problem” within the empire in the mid-19th century before it emerged as an international problem in later decades and goes on to examine the ways in which both metropolitan and provincial Armenians experienced and negotiated the Tanzimat reforms. Drawing on a rich source base of petitions written by Armenians in the eastern provinces and reports penned by their religious authorities and other elites in Istanbul, Ueno shows how both groups “equipped themselves with knowledge of the language and principles of the Tanzimat, interpreting and utilizing these for their own purposes.” The final research article in this issue, by Guy Burak, examines the institution of the “imperial provincial madrasa,” which “inscribed into the Ottoman urban fabric the connection between the Ottoman dynasty and its appointed juriconsults.” Burak focuses in particular on the institution chosen to serve this function in 16th-century Jerusalem after the Ottoman conquest, arguing that its differences and similarities with other imperial provincial madrasas at the time reveal aspects of both the Ottoman state’s increasing claims of authority over the application of Hanafi law and the various ways in which the dynasty sought to define its own boundaries.

This issue’s review essay, by Ruth Miller, resonates with some of the themes in the articles by Ghazaleh and Burak on legal jurisdiction and sovereignty. Miller looks at four recent books, dealing with a range of geographic and temporal contexts, that all “challenge the methodological usefulness (and historical existence) of territorial sovereignty and territorial jurisdiction,” emphasizing instead the “material, nonspatial qualities of law and sovereignty.”

On the topic of territorial jurisdiction, as an area-studies journal *IJMES* often confronts questions of where the “area” in question begins and ends or whether it even makes sense to think of it as a bounded territorial unit. The roundtable in this issue, organized and introduced by our board member Nile Green, explores the historiography on modern Afghanistan, one of a number of borderline countries that is often seen as almost but not quite falling within “the Middle East”—or any other region covered under the academic division of (most of) the globe into distinct areas of study.¹ The contributors address this challenge and others in responding to the question posed to them by Green: what is the future of Afghan history?

We hope you like our new look and our increased emphasis on visual culture in the Middle East. Watch for an upcoming roundtable on that very theme, curated by board member Zeynep Çelik. With this issue, we also begin rotating off board members who have served their terms. Please join us in thanking them for their service.

Beth Baron and Sara Pursley

NOTE

¹Another is Sudan. See the roundtable in our May 2012 issue, “Sudan Scholarship after the Breakup,” esp. Sondra Hale, “And Then There Were Two: What Is ‘Sudan’ Now?,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 321–23.