the ‘durable, politically successful, and territorially defined realities of the Tanzanian nation-state’ (200).

As a history of Dar, of Tanzanian race relations, and of Swahili terms for various identities, Brennan’s book has much to offer scholars in diverse fields. It is no surprise that it won the African Studies Association’s Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize, deemed the best book on East African Studies published in 2012. It should be required reading for those interested in Swahili.

*Katrina Daly Thompson*
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*


This welcome collection of thirteen essays explores two themes identified by the editors, who also contribute the first two introductory essays: 1. Intellectual and cultural interactions between the Christian and Muslim worlds (C. Norton), and, 2. Shared material culture (A. Contandini).

The first theme is the philosophical and religious discussions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe relating to the Muslim East, mainly to the Ottomans. The second theme refers to objects that were acquired through martial, commercial and diplomatic contacts with the East by Europeans, and how the objects themselves or their decorative motifs were absorbed and interpreted by local artists and craftsmen in Italy, particularly Venice. The contact with the Ottomans enhanced creative approaches to map-making, and added new subjects to the European repertoire of pictorial representations.

The essays dealing with the first theme are thought-provoking. In his chapter, Zweder von Martels encapsulates the ‘demarcation lines’ between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottomans that forms the contextual core for other essays on this theme. After the crucial date of 1453, the year when the Eastern Christian Byzantine Empire ceased to exist with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, the conceptual differences between the adherents of the two religions took a confrontational character of which repercussions still reverberate. Noel Malcolm’s contribution is on the positive European views of Islam and the Ottomans. The author strains to evaluate the writings of a few West European thinkers, of Jean Bodin (act. sixteenth century) particularly, which have kind sentiments about the Ottoman military being orderly and disciplined, and Muslims being tolerant of other religions.

Asaph Ben-Tov, in his chapter, discusses German and Dutch humanists’ attitudes toward the ‘Eastern peoples’ during the Reformation. His sources, Dernschwan and Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq (also spelled Augerius Gislenius Busbequius elsewhere in this volume), among others, express their disappointment with the ‘Turkified’ or Orientalized orthodox Greeks who were ignorant of their own glorious past.
Anna Aksoy’s article on Mehmed II’s interest in and promotion of Greek philosophy was the subject of the seminal study by Julian Raby on the Greek scriptorium of the sultan (1983), and in a more recent article by Gülru Necipoğlu entitled ‘Artistic conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople’ (2012). Aksoy, while she praises the sultan for his patronage of Greek-speaking contemporary thinkers from Constantinople, Pontus or Italy, does raise the question as to why there were no known followers of Mehmed II in the Ottoman dynasty.

Although the essay by Owen Wright is on music, I would include it among the theoretical essays in this volume because he poses the central question, ‘why there was no musical communication between the East and the West in the 15th and 16th centuries’. The Muslim armies, at least from the eleventh century on, included military ensembles with trumpets and percussion instruments, a tradition that the Ottomans also preserved as they marched in Europe to enlarge their empire; however, the echoes of the Turkish marching music were heard in European music only after Ottomans were no longer a threat. Because, Owen Wright says, in the Renaissance, there was an indifference to each other’s music; the musical modes were vastly dissimilar, and there was no interest in learning about the theories behind the music of the opposite culture. Wright’s explanation is simple but direct, ‘European assessments of Turkish music were matched by general indifference to, or disdain [of the Ottomans] for European music’ (p. 153). He points to the invitation of Mehmed II of Gentile Bellini to paint his portrait, but the invitation was not extended to Venetian musicians. Z. von Martels’ ‘demarcation lines’ between East and West are well explained by Wright.

When we turn to the theme on production and exchange of material culture, we are on firmer ground because the products were objects, some of which still exist. These objects are first-hand documents that artistic exchange between the Christian West and the Muslim East continued despite warfare, occupation of land, enslaving of peoples, misunderstandings, ignorance and avoidance. Commercial interests, as well as intellectual curiosity, and eagerness to own ‘exotica’ and luxurious items, trumped hostility towards each other. Objects, moreover, travelled as part of diplomatic gifting between countries. The Ottomans, especially, in order to show off their imperial status, were generous in giving robes of honour and precious objects, even manuscripts, to their opponents.

The Ottoman court invited European artists to record the likenesses of the sultans for posterity. Today, pictorial representations figure as historical evidence. In this volume several authors mention Gentile Bellini, who was invited by Mehmed II to paint one (or more) portraits of the sultan (and perhaps to decorate his royal residence, the Topkapi Palace, with murals). Ottomans were not the only royalty in the East that employed artists at their court. An anonymous painter, for example, produced a scene showing a Venetian envoy and his retinue meeting with the Mamluk representatives outside one of the gates of Damascus. The painting, The
Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus..., which is now in Paris, has become the subject of much discussion by art historians. In this volume, Caroline Campbell revisits the painting once again, and firmly dates it to 1511, a few years before the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt that ended the Mamluk sultanate. The date appeared during a recent cleaning of the painting.

Islamic textiles were immensely popular in Europe, and have become much discussed items in art-historical literature. Anna Contandini examines textiles in her introductory paper, and Suraiya Faroghi examines fabrics from the Ankara region made of mohair, known as sof (Turkish) or zambelotti in Italy. The production of this plain-looking luxury fabric as a commercial item was rather limited. The silk, however, remained as the preferred material both in the East and West, with its glossy and colourful appearance. As Contandini comments in her essay and Faroghi reiterates, silk fabrics of Ottoman and Italian manufacturing were so close in appearance, that it is at times impossible to identify the location of production. Luxurious silk was the favourite traded material, being light in weight, high in value and much in demand by the royalty, aristocracy, church and wealthy throughout the centuries.

Warfare between the Muslim East and the Christian West did not reduce the demand for trade in luxury items and raw material, and an ever-expanding network of caravan or naval routes necessitated a knowledge of the geography of the countries involved. Cartographic works, especially those by Venetian Giacomo Gastaldi, are the subject of essays by Palmira Brummett and Sonja Brentjes. Brummett examines pictorial maps of the Lepanto victory of the Venetians over the Ottomans in 1571, celebrated in Christendom as the end of the Muslim expansion in Europe. The Europeans marked the Victory of Lepanto as the symbolic beginning of the eventual colonization of great tracts of land by Western forces in Asia. Gastaldi, by 1571 an elderly cartographer, recreated the victory on paper by representing the naval strategies of the Venetians against the Ottomans for future generations. Sonja Brentjes offers in her contribution, ‘The evolution of a shared Venetian-Ottoman cultural space’, which looks at how Gastaldi and other cartographers in the course of the sixteenth century mapped the Ottoman world, especially Anatolia, so as to share a cultural space. Though to my thinking, the maps served martial and commercial ends, rather than being for sharing a ‘cultural space’.

In sum, the volume is a multifaceted addition to the literature on the relations between the Ottoman and Christian Europe from about 1450 to 1600. The collection would have benefited if there were a section, or at least one essay, on architectural interactions and common backgrounds. Both Venice and its environs, and, of course, Constantinople/Konstantanîye/Istanbul share a heritage of Byzantine architecture, some still standing, a common legacy of the two cities. Additionally, several of these buildings have retained their magnificent mosaic panels. It is a pity such a chapter is
lacking; it would have given the reader a clearer definition of the shared background and its effects on the subsequent built environment in both cities.

References

Ülkü Ü. Bates  
*Professor Emerita of Islamic Art History, Hunter College, CUNY*


Introductions to Islam and Islamic thought are fast becoming a key component of the market of Islamic studies. In this regard, *Controversies in Contemporary Islam* is but another introduction to the foundations of Muslim thought put into the context of current debates in the Islamic world. O. Leaman aims to present contemporary Islam as a sum of its current debates. For this reason, he endorses a dialectical approach, one previously charted successfully by several studies, opposing different Islamic views and weighing their arguments. This book is a very welcome publication. Its scope and variety are broad enough to include the main issues of discussion among Muslims today. Contrary to its competitors, it keeps its presentation to a reasonable size. More importantly, the author’s insights and analyses engage the reader and sustain dialogue throughout the book. Leaman fully exploits his philosophical skills to ask good questions, to challenge the Muslim positions and to assess Islamic thought critically. He also uses his encyclopaedic experience (as an editor and contributor to numerous entries) to write in a style accessible to a non-specialist reader. Furthermore, he covers the current hot topics such as economics, entertainment and European Islam. This provides the book with a thoughtful concern for the daily issues of Muslims.

The fourteen chapters of this book are exploratory and interpretative in nature. In the first, the author examines Islam and the leadership of the community. Herein, the author approaches the Sunni-Shi‘i divide, focusing on the Shi‘i narrative. This chapter is probably the weakest in the book. Not only is it unbalanced, but also reductive. Political debates in Islam, whether historical or contemporary, go far beyond the Sunni-Shi‘i issue. Chapter two discusses the debates over the Qur’an. It succinctly summarizes both traditional and modernist positions on Qur’anic interpretation. In the third chapter, the author studies theology. In particular, he inspects the arguments for the existence of God in Islamic philosophy and theology. The next chapter masterfully depicts the issue of Islamic design, dealing with the complex meaning of an Islamic city. In chapter five, he discusses Islam and nationalism. Unfortunately, this chapter lacks coherence as it concentrates on topics such as European Islam