

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

Aziz Al-Azmeh and **Effie Fokas**, eds., *Islam in Europe: Diversity, Identity and Influence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 236 pp. \$US 32.99 paper (978-0-521-67751-6), \$US 85.00 hardcover (978-0-521-86011-6)

Over the past years, a great deal has been written on the subject of Islam in Europe; any new addition should be clear about what it hopes to add to what has already been said. Inevitably, there will be some repetition, but the present volume distinguishes itself in two ways. First, as stated in the introduction, the contributions to this book seek to show the complexity of Islam in Europe, to move away decisively from the idea that there is, or will even ever be, a single or dominant "European Islam." Key chapters by Jorgen Nielsen and Jocelyne Cesari convincingly establish this important point, and it is a unifying theme throughout most of the rest. Second, the focus of the empirical chapters is, for the most part, on southeastern Europe — countries like Bosnia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey — with only occasional and comparative discussion of cases like France, Britain, and the Netherlands, the reference points of much of the literature (the exception is Nielsen's extended discussion of the Danish case). Moreover, in almost all the analyses, the institution of the European Union stands in for what is meant by Europe in the title. The relation of Muslims to that context, how the image, policies, and structures of the European Union have affected them, and how the Union has developed its policies and structures with respect to them, are themes through most chapters. It is the explicit theme of Bérengère Massignon's chapter on the European Commission's regulatory policies concerning religion; she puts particular emphasis on the evolution of these policies in light of Islam's increasingly important and recognized presence in Europe.

Within that general framework, the various chapters do, of course, make their particular, and in most cases quite interesting, contributions. A common feature of much of the literature on Islam in Europe is that it concentrates less on Islam as religion and more on Muslims as minorities: their fate, attitudes, actions, stories, and the orientations of non-Muslims to them. This book follows this pattern with the notable exception of Xavier Bougarel's chapter on Bosnian Islam. Here the variety of Islam in Europe is analyzed with reference to three Bosnian Muslim leaders, each of whom has a different conception of Islam, its relation

to the political sphere in particular. The point of the exercise, and really the strength of this book, is that the Bosnian case is not isolated from the more general question of Islam in Europe and indeed of Islam in the wider global society. The three perspectives are both particular and universal; they are peculiarly Bosnian in their details, but European in their implications and global in their reference.

In a somewhat similar sense, Dia Anagnostou's consideration of the stories of Muslim minority communities in Greece and Bulgaria uncovers how EU membership has brought new legitimacy to the efforts of these national minorities toward cultural assertion and a certain degree of political self-determination, not specifically because of their religious identity but because of the Union's emphasis on regional development. The redistributive policies of the EU are allowing subnational identities to (re)emerge from under previously dominant nation-state narratives with their "Westphalian" stress on one culture with one religion. Moreover, like the Bosnian Muslims, the Bulgarian and Greek communities are an historical legacy of the Ottoman empire, which points to the question of Turkey's place and the place of Turkish Islam/Muslims in the European imagination and in European realities. In a chapter appropriately titled "Breaching the infernal cycle?" Valérie Amiraux deals with the question head on. She points out that the evolving struggle within many EU member countries with religious and cultural pluralism and with the relation between religion and secularity (e.g., *laïcité*) is repeated in Turkey, where state-enforced secularism (*laiklik*) and official cultural uniformity have, in recent decades, faced religious (esp. Islamists, Alevis) and cultural (esp. Kurds) challenge at the same time as the country has sought EU membership. In an analogous vein, Werner Schiffauer analyzes both the Muslim religious diversity within the German Turkish population and the close relation between that diversity and transnational ties between this minority and Turkey as well as between the German and Turkish governments. Read as a whole, these four chapters concretize a central point made in Tarek Mitri's opening chapter: Islam in Europe is not just a question of how to integrate a new Muslim diaspora into a hitherto Christian subcontinent, of how to "domesticate" Islam, for instance. As Turkish/Ottoman Islam/Muslims demonstrate, Islam has been a part of Europe, physically and conceptually, for a very long time and the current issues are just the latest chapter in an ongoing relation.

With its emphasis on the multidimensional nature of the question and its empirical vector pointing solidly to the southeast, this volume makes a valuable addition to a burgeoning literature. It helps to provide balance to the discussion and that is always an important contribution.

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