

The Calligraphic State Textual Domination And History In A Muslim Society Comparative Studies On Muslim Societies

Weaving anthropological and philosophical reflections on the ordinary into her analysis, Das points toward a new way of interpreting violence in societies and cultures around the globe.

Yemen is a country that is critical to U.S. security and our political interests, yet most Americans know virtually nothing about it. This book unlocks its secrets and explains its complexities in simple yet compelling language. • Supplies a deep examination of a country that most policy experts only possess a superficial knowledge of • Provides insights into why tribes have been crucial throughout Yemen's history and even to the modern day • Reveals why characterizations of Yemen as "a weak state," "lawless," or "lacking a rule of law" are inaccurate and simplistic

This collection explores the dynamics of local/national political culture in seventeenth-century Britain, with particular reference to political communication. It examines the degree to which connections were forged between politics in London, Whitehall and Westminster, politics in the localities and the patterns and processes that can be recovered. The goal is to create a dialogue between two prominent strands in recent historiography and between the work of social and political historians of the early modern period. Chapters by leading historians of Stuart England examine how the state worked to communicate with its people and how local communities, often far from the metropole, opened their own lines of communication with the centre.

"Throws completely fresh light on non-colonial yet modern systems of legality and moral power. . . . The picture given of Islamic legal education and practice is one of the best available . . . a compelling read and a fine book for teaching."—Paul Dresch, Oxford University

"In early twentieth century British India, prior to the arrival of digital medias and after the rise of nationalist political movements, a small-town paper from the margins became a key node for an Urdu journalism conversation with particular influence in the United Provinces and Punjab. Understanding this newspaper's rise shows how a print public characterized by bottom-up as well as top-down approaches influenced the evolution of a new type of Urdu public in 20th century South Asia. Addressing a gap in scholarship on Urdu media in the early 20th century, during the period where it underwent some of its most critical transformations, this book contributes a discursive and material analysis of a previously unexamined Urdu newspaper Madinah, augmenting its analysis with evidence from contemporary Urdu, English and Hindi papers, government records, private diaries, private library holdings, ethnographic interviews with families who owned and ran the newspaper, and training materials for newspaper printers. Madinah identified the Urdu newspaper conversation both explicitly and implicitly with Muslim identity, a commitment that became difficult to manage as the pro-Congress paper sought simultaneously to counter calls for Pakistan, to criticize Congress' treatment of Muslims, and to emphasize Urdu's necessary connection to Muslim identity. Since Madinah delineated the boundaries of a Muslim, public conversation in a way that emphasized rootedness to local politics and small urban spaces like Bijnor, this study demonstrates the necessity of considering spatial and temporal orientation in studies of the public in South Asia"--

Scholar, mystic and visionary, Ibn 'Alwan lived through the transition from Ayyubid to Rasulid rule in thirteenth-century Yemen. He was well known in his time for his critique of the ruling elites and their governance, and left behind a substantial body of writings on Islamic mysticism, theology, law and exegesis of the Qur'an. Here Muhammad Aziz presents a comprehensive portrait of Ibn 'Alwan, delineating the religious

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and political background in Yemen, the development of Sufi orders, the interplay between Sufi, Shi'i and Sunni traditions, and the impact of Ibn 'Alwan on the history of Sufism and Islam. The first study of Ibn 'Alwan in English, "Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam" is essential reading for all those interested in mysticism, early Islam, Sufism, and religion and history more generally.

A collection of Palestinian Arab folktales which reflect the culture and highlights the role of women in the society.

A significant re-examination of the Tʔrʔkh al-fattʔsh, revealing it to be a crucial nineteenth-century source for history in West Africa.

Previous ed.: Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Historians of British colonial rule in India have noted both the place of military might and the imposition of new cultural categories in the making of Empire, but Bhavani Raman, in *Document Raj*, uncovers a lesser-known story of power: the power of bureaucracy. Drawing on extensive archival research in the files of the East India Company's administrative offices in Madras, she tells the story of a bureaucracy gone awry in a fever of documentation practices that grew ever more abstract—and the power, both economic and cultural, this created. In order to assert its legitimacy and value within the British Empire, the East India Company was diligent about record keeping. Raman shows, however, that the sheer volume of their document production allowed colonial managers to subtly but substantively manipulate records for their own ends, increasingly drawing the real and the recorded further apart. While this administrative sleight of hand increased the company's reach and power within the Empire, it also bolstered profoundly new orientations to language, writing, memory, and pedagogy for the officers and Indian subordinates involved. Immersed in a subterranean world of delinquent scribes, translators, village accountants, and entrepreneurial fixers, *Document Raj* maps the shifting boundaries of the legible and illegible, the legal and illegitimate, that would usher India into the modern world.

By examining the intersection of Islamic law, state law, religion, and culture in the Egyptian nation-building process, *Recasting Islamic Law* highlights how the sharia, when attached to constitutional commitments, is reshaped into modern Islamic state law. Rachel M. Scott analyzes the complex effects of constitutional commitments to the sharia in the wake of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. She argues that the sharia is not dismantled by the modern state when it is applied as modern Islamic state law, but rather recast in its service. In showing the particular forms that the sharia takes when it is applied as modern Islamic state law, Scott pushes back against assumptions that introductions of the sharia into modern state law result in either the revival of medieval Islam or in its complete transformation. Scott engages with premodern law and with the Ottoman legal legacy on topics concerning Egypt's Coptic community, women's rights, personal status law, and the relationship between religious scholars and the Supreme Constitutional Court. *Recasting Islamic Law* considers modern Islamic state law's discontinuities and its continuities with premodern sharia.

Despite their close geographic and cultural ties, Indonesia and Malaysia have dramatically different Islamic education,

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with that in Indonesia being relatively decentralized and discursively diverse, while that in Malaysia is centralized and discursively restricted. The book explores the nature of the Islamic education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia and the different approaches taken by these states in managing these systems. The book argues that the post-colonial state in Malaysia has been more successful in centralising its control over Islamic education, and more concerned with promoting a restrictive orthodoxy, compared to the post-colonial state in Indonesia. This is due to three factors: the ideological makeup of the state institutions that oversee Islamic education; patterns of societal Islamisation that have prompted different responses from the states; and control of resources by the central government that influences centre-periphery relations. Informed by the theoretical works of state-in-society relations and historical institutionalism, this book shows that the three aforementioned factors can help a state to minimize influence from the society and exert its dominance, in this case by centralising control over Islamic education. Specifically, they help us understand the markedly different landscapes of Islamic education in Malaysia and Indonesia. It will be of interest to academics in the field of Southeast Asian Studies, Asian Education and Comparative Education.

The book contains twelve essays on topics related to the subject "Media and Muslim Society." It is compiled as a textbook for students taking the course of the same title at the International Islamic Universiti Malaysia. Thus, the topics selected are those covered in the course. The topics include media at various stages in the development of a Muslim society, the role of communication in a Muslim society, media control, media effects on Muslim society and the roles of ulamas in influencing the media. A special topic on Muslim society is also included at the beginning of the book. The contributors of these essays are experts in their field. They have also helped developed and taught the course. In this first edition, most of the examples and discussions are based on two Muslim societies, i.e., Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia. This is understandable because most of the writers in this first edition are from the Malay world. We hope to include examples from other Muslim societies in the next edition when we get contribution from writers from other parts of the Muslim world. Finally, we welcome criticisms and suggestions to improve this book from our readers. We shall certainly consider these criticisms and suggestions in the next edition

One day Sophie comes home from school to find two questions in her mail: "Who are you?" and "Where does the world come from?" Before she knows it she is enrolled in a correspondence course with a mysterious philosopher. Thus begins Jostein Gaarder's unique novel, which is not only a mystery, but also a complete and entertaining history of philosophy. Wael B. Hallaq boldly argues that the "Islamic state," judged by any standard definition of what the modern state represents, is both impossible and inherently self-contradictory. Comparing the legal, political, moral, and constitutional histories of premodern Islam and Euro-America, he finds the adoption and practice of the modern state to be highly

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problematic for modern Muslims. He also critiques more expansively modernity's moral predicament, which renders impossible any project resting solely on ethical foundations. The modern state not only suffers from serious legal, political, and constitutional issues, Hallaq argues, but also, by its very nature, fashions a subject inconsistent with what it means to be, or to live as, a Muslim. By Islamic standards, the state's technologies of the self are severely lacking in moral substance, and today's Islamic state, as Hallaq shows, has done little to advance an acceptable form of genuine Shari'a governance. The Islamists' constitutional battles in Egypt and Pakistan, the Islamic legal and political failures of the Iranian Revolution, and similar disappointments underscore this fact. Nevertheless, the state remains the favored template of the Islamists and the ulama (Muslim clergymen). Providing Muslims with a path toward realizing the good life, Hallaq turns to the rich moral resources of Islamic history. Along the way, he proves political and other "crises of Islam" are not unique to the Islamic world nor to the Muslim religion. These crises are integral to the modern condition of both East and West, and by acknowledging these parallels, Muslims can engage more productively with their Western counterparts.

In this volume of 15 articles, contributors from a wide range of disciplines present their analyses of Disney movies and Disney music, which are mainstays of popular culture. The power of the Disney brand has heightened the need for academics to question whether Disney's films and music function as a tool of the Western elite that shapes the views of those less empowered. Given its global reach, how the Walt Disney Company handles the role of race, gender, and sexuality in social structural inequality merits serious reflection according to a number of the articles in the volume. On the other hand, other authors argue that Disney productions can help individuals cope with difficult situations or embrace progressive thinking. The different approaches to the assessment of Disney films as cultural artifacts also vary according to the theoretical perspectives guiding the interpretation of both overt and latent symbolic meaning in the movies. The authors of the 15 articles encourage readers to engage with the material, showcasing a variety of views about the good, the bad, and the best way forward.

A case study in the textual architecture of the venerable legal and ethical tradition at the center of the Islamic experience, *Shar'ah Scripts* is a work of historical anthropology focused on Yemen in the early twentieth century. There—while colonial regimes, late Ottoman reformers, and early nationalists wrought decisive changes to the legal status of the shar'ah, significantly narrowing its sphere of relevance—the Zaydī school of jurisprudence, rooted in highland Yemen for a millennium, still held sway. Brinkley Messick uses the richly varied writings of the Yemeni past to offer a uniquely comprehensive view of the shar'ah as a localized and lived phenomenon. *Shar'ah Scripts* reads a wide spectrum of sources in search of a new historical-anthropological perspective on Islamic textual relations. Messick analyzes the shar'ah as a local system of texts, distinguishing between

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theoretical or doctrinal juridical texts (or the “library”) and those produced by the shar??a courts and notarial writers (termed the “archive”). Attending to textual form, he closely examines representative books of madrasa instruction; formal opinion-giving by muftis and imams; the structure of court judgments; and the drafting of contracts. Messick’s intensive readings of texts are supplemented by retrospective ethnography and oral history based on extensive field research. Further, the book ventures a major methodological contribution by confronting anthropology’s longstanding reliance upon the observational and the colloquial. Presenting a new understanding of Islamic legal history, Shar??a Scripts is a groundbreaking examination of the interpretative range and historical insights offered by the anthropologist as reader.

In 1910, when Khedive Abbas II married a second wife surreptitiously, the contrast with his openly polygamous grandfather, Ismail, whose multiple wives and concubines signified his grandeur and masculinity, could not have been greater. That contrast reflected the spread of new ideals of family life that accompanied the development of Egypt’s modern marriage system. *Modernizing Marriage* explores the evolution of marriage and marital relations, shedding new light on the social and cultural history of Egypt. Family is central to modern Egyptian history and in the ruling court did the "political work." Indeed, the modern state began as a household government in which members of the ruler’s household served in the military and civil service. Cuno discusses political and sociodemographic changes that affected marriage and family life and the production of a family ideology by modernist intellectuals, who identified the family as a site crucial to social improvement, and for whom the reform and codification of Muslim family law was a principal aim. Throughout *Modernizing Marriage*, Cuno examines Egyptian family history in a comparative and transnational context, addressing issues of colonial modernity and colonial knowledge, Islamic law and legal reform, social history, and the history of women and gender.

Patrick Joyce offers a bold and highly original contribution to the history and theory of the state.

Moving from tourism to health propaganda, marriage to beauty contest, mass communication to music, *Middle Eastern and North African Societies in the Interwar Period* offers a vibrant and dynamic picture of the region which goes beyond state borders.

A Companion to the Anthropology of the Middle East presents a comprehensive overview of current trends and future directions in anthropological research and activism in the modern Middle East. Named as one of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles of 2016

Offers critical perspectives on the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical goals of anthropology in the Middle East Analyzes the conditions of cultural and social transformation in the Middle Eastern region and its relations with other areas of the world

Features contributions by top experts in various Middle East anthropological specialties Features in-depth coverage of issues drawn from religion, the arts, language, politics, political economy, the law, human rights, multiculturalism, and globalization

Gathering architectural pieces from all over the world, the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 introduced to fairgoers the notion of an imaginary journey, a new tourism en place. Through this and similar expositions, the world's cultures were imported to European and American cities as artifacts and presented to nineteenth-century men and women as the world in microcosm, giving a quick and seemingly realistic impression of distant places. elik examines the display of Islamic cultures at nineteenth-century

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world's fairs, focusing on the exposition architecture. She asserts that certain sociopolitical and cultural trends now crucial to our understanding of historical transformations in both the West and the world of Islam were mirrored in the fair's architecture. Furthermore, dominant attitudes toward cross-cultural exchanges were revealed repeatedly in Westerners' responses to these pavilions, in Western architects' interpretations of Islamic stylistic traditions, and in the pavilions' impact in such urban centers. Although the world's fairs claimed to be platforms for peaceful cultural communication, they displayed the world according to a hierarchy based on power relations. elik's delineation of this hierarchy in the exposition buildings enables us to understand both the adversarial relations between the West and the Middle East, and the issue of cultural self-definition for Muslim societies of the nineteenth century. Gathering architectural pieces from all over the world, the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 introduced to fairgoers the notion of an imaginary journey, a new tourism en place. Through this and similar expositions, the world's cultures were imported to European and American cities as artifacts and presented to nineteenth-century men and women as the world in microcosm, giving a quick and seemingly realistic impression of distant places. elik examines the display of Islamic cultures at nineteenth-century world's fairs, focusing on the exposition architecture. She asserts that certain sociopolitical and cultural trends now crucial to our understanding of historical transformations in both the West and the world of Islam were mirrored in the fair's architecture. Furthermore, dominant attitudes toward cross-cultural exchanges were revealed repeatedly in Westerners' responses to these pavilions, in Western architects' interpretations of Islamic stylistic traditions, and in the pavilions' impact in such urban centers. Although the world's fairs claimed to be platforms for peaceful cultural communication, they displayed the world according to a hierarchy based on power relations. elik's delineation of this hierarchy in the exposition buildings enables us to understand both the adversarial relations between the West and the Middle East, and the issue of cultural self-definition for Muslim societies of the nineteenth century.

In *Formation of a Religious Landscape: Shi'i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran*, Maryam Moazzen offers the first systematic examination of Shi'i educational institution and practices by exploring the ways in which religious knowledge was produced, authenticated, and transmitted in the second half of Safavid rule (1588-1722).

The Emancipation of Writing is the first study of writing in its connection to bureaucracy, citizenship, and the state in Germany. Stitching together micro- and macro-level analysis, it reconstructs the vibrant, textually saturated civic culture of the German southwest in the aftermath of the French Revolution and Napoleon's invasions. Ian F. McNeely reveals that Germany's notoriously oppressive bureaucracy, when viewed through the writing practices that were its lifeblood, could also function as a site of citizenship. Citizens, acting under the mediation of powerful local scribes, practiced their freedoms in written engagements with the state. Their communications laid the basis for civil society, showing how social networks commonly associated with the free market, the free press, and the voluntary association could also take root in powerful state institutions.

In this innovative legal history of economic life in the Western Indian Ocean, Bishara examines the transformations of Islamic law and Islamicate commercial practices during the emergence of modern capitalism in the region. In this time of expanding commercial activity, a

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mélange of Arab, Indian, Swahili and Baloch merchants, planters, jurists, judges, soldiers and seamen forged the frontiers of a shared world. The interlinked worlds of trade and politics that these actors created, the shared commercial grammars and institutions that they developed and the spatial and socio-economic mobilities they engaged in endured until at least the middle of the twentieth century. This major study examines the Indian Ocean from Oman to India and East Africa over an extended period of time, drawing together the histories of commerce, law and empire in a sophisticated, original and richly textured history of capitalism in the Islamic world.

Since the early 1990s hundreds of thousands of Tamil villagers in southern India have participated in literacy lessons, science demonstrations, and other events designed to transform them into active citizens with access to state power. These efforts to spread enlightenment among the oppressed are part of a movement known as the Arivoli Iyakkam (the Enlightenment Movement), considered to be among the most successful mass literacy movements in recent history. In *The Light of Knowledge*, Francis Cody's ethnography of the Arivoli Iyakkam highlights the paradoxes inherent in such movements that seek to emancipate people through literacy when literacy is a power-laden social practice in its own right. *The Light of Knowledge* is set primarily in the rural district of Pudukkottai in Tamil Nadu, and it is about activism among laboring women from marginalized castes who have been particularly active as learners and volunteers in the movement. In their endeavors to remake the Tamil countryside through literacy activism, workers in the movement found that their own understanding of the politics of writing and Enlightenment was often transformed as they encountered vastly different notions of language and imaginations of social order. Indeed, while activists of the movement successfully mobilized large numbers of rural women, they did so through logics that often pushed against the very Enlightenment rationality they hoped to foster. Offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at an increasingly important area of social and political activism, *The Light of Knowledge* brings tools of linguistic anthropology to engage with critical social theories of the postcolonial state.

In this pioneering work Siraj Sait and Hilary Lim address Islamic property and land rights, drawing on a range of socio-historical, classical and contemporary resources. They address the significance of Islamic theories of property and Islamic land tenure regimes on the 'webs of tenure' prevalent in the Muslim societies. They consider the possibility of using Islamic legal and human rights systems for the development of inclusive, pro-poor approaches to land rights. They also focus on Muslim women's rights to property and inheritance systems. Engaging with institutions such as the Islamic endowment (waqf) and principles of Islamic microfinance, they test the workability of 'authentic' Islamic proposals. Located in human rights as well as Islamic debates, this study offers a well researched and constructive appraisal of property and land rights in the Muslim world.

In December of 1845, Muhammad as-Saffar was sent by the reigning Moroccan sultan on a special diplomatic mission to Paris. During the journey, as-Saffar took careful notes and upon his return he hurriedly wrote this travel account. Why was the sultan, descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, and head of a dynasty that had ruled Morocco for more than two hundred years, so eager to read this account? Perhaps he thought it would illuminate some troubling matters: how the French acquired their power and their mastery over nature; how they led their daily lives, educated their children, treated their women and servants. In short, the sultan wanted to know the condition of French civilization and why it differed from his. As-Saffar provided the answers. Moreover, as we read the account, Muhammad as-Saffar comes alive for us. We see him reflecting on the beauty of women, contorting during his ritual ablutions, and suffering from boredom at endless dinners. His opinions and ideas infuse every page. For him the journey was more than a catalog of curiosities; it was a transforming experience. Given our very limited knowledge of the time and the absence of other voices that speak with equal clarity, this travel account

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enlarges our understanding of the relationship between nineteenth-century Morocco and France.

What is the state? The State of Freedom offers an important new take on this classic question by exploring what exactly the state did and how it worked. Patrick Joyce asks us to re-examine the ordinary things of the British state from dusty government files and post offices to well-thumbed primers in ancient Greek and Latin and the classrooms and dormitories of public schools and Oxbridge colleges. This is also a history of the 'who' and the 'where' of the state, of the people who ran the state, the government offices they sat in and the college halls they dined in. Patrick Joyce argues that only by considering these things, people and places can we really understand the nature of the modern state. This is both a pioneering new approach to political history in which social and material factors are centre stage, and a highly original history of modern Britain.

This book explores the changing socio-cultural world in early modern South Asia, and locates the agency of the Mughal state therein. The development of literacy and new forms of engagement between literacy and performance prompted the opening up of new spaces of social communication, and led to the development of a performative (and somatic) public sphere in South Asia. The work highlights the significance of legal spaces, along with the markets and coffeehouses, in shaping the emergent public sphere. While defending the case for legal pluralism, it argues that the Mughal state endured and enhanced the diversity in the legal order. Focusing on the socially embedded attributes of the state, it looks at how the state's relations with the local powers impinged on, and reproduced community identities, identity conflicts, legal pluralism, property relations, and different forms of social communication.

From ancient Mesopotamia to today, the epic story of how humans have used laws to forge civilizations Rulers throughout history have used laws to impose order. But laws were not simply instruments of power and social control. They also offered ordinary people a way to express their diverse visions for a better world. In *The Rule of Laws*, Oxford scholar Fernanda Pirie traces the rise and fall of the sophisticated legal systems underpinning ancient empires and religious traditions, while also showing how common people—tribal assemblies, merchants, farmers—called on laws to define their communities, regulate trade, and build civilizations. Although legal principles originating in Western Europe now seem to dominate the globe, the variety of the world's laws has long been almost as great as the variety of its societies. What truly unites human beings, Pirie argues, is our very faith that laws can produce justice, combat oppression, and create order from chaos. *Politics of Piety* is a groundbreaking analysis of Islamist cultural politics through the ethnography of a thriving, grassroots women's piety movement in the mosques of Cairo, Egypt. Unlike those organized Islamist activities that seek to seize or transform the state, this is a moral reform movement whose orthodox practices are commonly viewed as inconsequential to Egypt's political landscape. Saba Mahmood's compelling exposition of these practices challenges this assumption by showing how the ethical and the political are indelibly linked within the context of such movements. Not only is this book a sensitive ethnography of a critical but largely ignored dimension of the Islamic revival, it is also an unflinching critique of the secular-liberal assumptions by which some people hold such movements to account. The book addresses three central questions: How do movements of moral reform help us rethink the normative liberal account of politics? How does the adherence of women to the patriarchal norms at the core of such movements parochialize key assumptions within feminist theory about freedom, agency, authority, and the human subject? How does a consideration of debates about embodied religious rituals among Islamists and their secular critics help us understand the conceptual relationship between bodily form and political imaginaries? *Politics of Piety* is essential reading for anyone interested in issues at the nexus of ethics and politics, embodiment and gender, and liberalism and postcolonialism. In a substantial new preface, Mahmood addresses the controversy sparked by the original publication of her book and the

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scholarly discussions that have ensued.

The narratives and metaphors used in these constructions draw on resources close to hand such as the material organization of state factory compounds, state personnel encountered in the course of everyday life, and images of the family structure. By also exploring notions of state and personhood within the highest echelons of the administration itself, Alexander shows how ideas of 'the state' recede once one is actually 'within'. For officials the state becomes other institutions and Ministries with which they have little contact.

For more than three decades, preeminent scholars in comparative literature and postcolonial studies have called for a return to philology as the indispensable basis of critical method in the humanities. Against such calls, this book argues that the privilege philology has always enjoyed within the modern humanities silently reinforces a colonial hierarchy. In fact, each of philology's foundational innovations originally served British rule in India. Tracing an unacknowledged history that extends from British Orientalist Sir William Jones to Palestinian American intellectual Edward Said and beyond, *Archaeology of Babel* excavates the epistemic transformation that was engendered on a global scale by the colonial reconstruction of native languages, literatures, and law. In the process, it reveals the extent to which even postcolonial studies and European philosophy—not to mention discourses as disparate as Islamic fundamentalism, Hindu nationalism, and global environmentalism—are the progeny of colonial rule. Going further, it unearths the alternate concepts of language and literature that were lost along the way and issues its own call for humanists to reckon with the politics of the philological practices to which they now return.

For 250 years the Turkic Muslims of Tibet, who call themselves Uyghurs today, have cultivated a sense of history and identity that challenges Beijing's national narrative. The roots of this history run deeper than recent conflicts, Rian Thum says, to a time when manuscripts and pilgrimage along the Silk Road dominated understandings of the past.

Portrays the experiences of Egyptian Karaites in the San Francisco Bay Area as it explores the relationship between text and everyday life, between literal reading and its translation into bodily practices—especially as related to the female body.

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As we taste, chew, swallow, digest, and excrete, our foods transform us, while our eating, in its turn, affects the wider earthly environment. In *Eating in Theory* Annemarie Mol takes inspiration from these transformative entanglements to rethink what it is to be human. Drawing on fieldwork at food conferences, research labs, health care facilities, restaurants, and her own kitchen table, Mol reassesses the work of authors such as Hannah Arendt, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hans Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas. They celebrated the allegedly unique capability of humans to rise above their immediate bodily needs. Mol, by contrast, appreciates that as humans we share our fleshy substance with other living beings, whom we cultivate, cut into pieces, transport, prepare, and incorporate—and to whom we leave our excesses. This has far-reaching philosophical consequences. Taking human eating seriously suggests a reappraisal of being as transformative, knowing as entangling, doing as dispersed, and relating as a matter of inescapable dependence.

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The Problem of the State provides a new perspective on what the social and political sciences can contribute to understandings of the state and the ambivalent place it occupies in our collective affairs. Distinguishing two broad conceptual and methodological approaches to addressing the problem of how to study the state empirically rather than theoretically - the constitutionalist and constructionist positions – the author reviews the grounds and limits of both to reveal their common assumption: that it is up to the social and political sciences to define what the problem of the state is. Building on insights from Marx, Wittgenstein and Ethnomethodology, this book frees the study of the state from the limiting assumptions of common approaches and advocates a return of the problem to its proper environment, in social and political practice.

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