

## The Review Section

The current issue comprises three reviews that shed light on the dialectical relationship between the past and the present in the study of the Levant. Zur Shalev examines Sean Roberts's *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography*. By emphasizing the way in which Ptolemy's second-century CE text on geography and cartography was read during the Renaissance, and the influence it has had hitherto, Shalev highlights the "heritage" of knowledge. According to Shalev, Roberts's analysis of the way Ptolemy was interpreted during the Renaissance, when "geography was an integrated pursuit in which the moral poet, historian, mathematician, and mapmaker were one," reveals the roots of writing on geography and humanism. Shalev stresses the rising prominence of geography and cartography in Florentine culture, which regarded them as evidently intellectual capabilities, as an example of the legacy of books that, long after they have been written, allow a deeper understanding of the relevant communities' pasts, as well as our present.

Reviewed by Amy Remensnyder, Marvine Howe's *Al-Andalus Rediscovered: Iberia's New Muslims* focuses on the large-scale Muslim immigration to Spain and Portugal in the 1980s and 1990s, and the association—whether with strong or marginal implications—that this immigration had with the historical medieval presence of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. Howe argues that as a result of the historical circumstances, and the long political presence of Muslims in the region, their recent arrival was met with relatively liberal attitudes, especially in comparison with the reception Muslim immigrants have received in other European countries. Remensnyder highlights the contribution of the book to the ongoing debate over the place of Islam in Europe, as well as to gloomy interfaith predictions on the continent, yet she questions the extent of the influence that the image of al-Andalus—and its romanticization—has on contemporary research.

Laavanya Kathiravelu presents Neha Vora's *Impossible Citizens: Dubai's Indian Diaspora*, which investigates the middle-class South Asian diaspora in Dubai. Vora

sheds light on the in-betweenness in which the Indian diaspora lives, overlooked by both the Indian and the Emirati states, and the situation that has resulted from this, especially the community's loose sense of "belonging." While recognizing the aptness of these analyses to the larger debate on citizenship and the diaspora-host community relationship, Kathiravelu wonders whether the nostalgic perception of historical relationships between Indians and Emiratis has not influenced the book's take on this phenomenon.

These three works provide different perspectives on the complex connections between modern and historical research, looking at the concepts of geography, interreligious relationships, and migration. They vary in focus, location, perspective, and time, yet they bring to the fore critical questions relating to the production and dissemination of knowledge and ideas. Disclosing evidence on the influence that one period has over the perceptions of another, later, time, we are left with the dilemma as to what extent our "modern" knowledge has been constructed by the way we understand the past.

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