



Review: Islam and the Marinid State

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Reviewed work(s): The Berbers and the Islamic State: The Marinid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco by Maya Shatzmiller

Source: *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (2002), pp. 320-321

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4100517>

Accessed: 14/04/2008 15:39

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any other of which I am aware, support such an analysis of plans, motives and suspicions.

In sum, *Histoire de la Mauritanie* contains much useful information but does not reflect the state of current historiography.

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ISLAM AND THE MARINID STATE

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702268292

The Berbers and the Islamic State: The Marinid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco. By MAYA SHATZMILLER. Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publications, 2000. Pp. xvii + 200. £58.95 (ISBN 1-55876-209-4); £22.95, paperback (ISBN 1-55876-224-8).

KEY WORDS: Morocco, Islam, kingdoms and states, pre-colonial.

This book gathers together nine articles written by Maya Shatzmiller between 1976 and 1991 and updated for this volume. It is organized in sections on Berber historiography, the construction of the Marinid state and Marinid institutions. Theoretically all the articles tackle the thorny issue of Berber identity *vis-à-vis* Islam and Arabic, an issue central to Maghribi historiography and also to contemporary debates about identity within Morocco and Algeria, where the definition of the post-colonial state as Arab Muslim has provoked a reaction from those who consider themselves Berber and resent their *de facto* cultural exclusion and oppression by the state. Quoting the Algerian Berber writer, Kateb Yacine, Shatzmiller suggests a paradigm of repeated episodes of Berber resistance and acculturation to conquering cultures, Roman-Christian and then Arab-Islamic. Her aim is to investigate these processes during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries when the Zanata Berber Marinids ruled Morocco.

In the first section on Muslim Berber historiography Shatzmiller grapples with its ambiguity. What is specifically Berber about political or cultural artefacts if they are conveyed using Arabic and Islamic idioms? In support of a thesis of resistance, she presents an 'unofficial' Berber history which asserts that they were drawn to Islam before the Arab conquest in contrast to the 'official' Arab version of conquest followed by conversion. In Chapter 2 she discusses literary myths attributing an Arab genealogy to the Berbers and its widespread Maghribi rejection, and in Chapter 3 the development of literature praising the Berber race in response to Andalus Arab 'Berberophobia' (p. 35). This raises a query. Can one describe the Berbers as actively resisting when the catalyst for the generation of a counter-history is actually Arab hostility towards them? The Andalus source of this historiographical material also undermines the arguments for Maghribi resistance, a point Shatzmiller acknowledges by stating that 'For Berbers in North Africa the challenge was not Islamic or Arab normative legitimation, neither intellectual nor literary' (p. 38) but the construction of an Islamic state.

Section two on Marinid state formation is more convincing. Chapter 4 refutes the usual thesis that the Marinid state did not have a religious basis and shows how the Marinids used Islamic discourse to legitimize their political mission. Chapter 5 examines the difficulties they faced in fulfilling this mission by studying their relations with the Fasi scholars and their use of Jewish administrators. It suggests that although they wished to uphold Islamic norms they contravened them by employing Jews when it was expedient but then allowed persecution of the Jews in return for scholarly support. Chapter 6 looks at the disgracing of a Marinid official for embezzlement and the combination of Berber and Islamic legal mechanisms used to resolve the matter. Here one could argue that neither

pragmatic recruitment and dismissal nor recourse to customary methods of conflict resolution are specifically Berber, but rather are common occurrences in Islamic societies.

The final section looks at the Marinid approach to key Islamic institutions. Chapter 7 suggests that the Marinids introduced the *madrassa* primarily to create a new, possibly Zanata Berber, 'ulamâ' to counter-balance the frequently hostile Fasi 'ulamâ' who dominated the mosques. The next chapter analyses royal *waqf* and considers the Marinid preference for endowing *madrassas* and books rather than mosques. The final chapter looks at the extent to which landholding and taxation conformed to Islamic law. Presumably this section demonstrates Marinid acculturation to Islamic norms, but this is unclear.

It is debatable whether this volume achieves its stated aim. Several articles sit uncomfortably under its central rubric: an analysis of the relationship between the Berbers and the Arab Islamic state. That said, it usefully gathers together several thought-provoking articles which give insightful new perspectives on the Marinid state. As such, it is an invaluable addition to our knowledge of the rather understudied Marinid centuries.

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CATALOGUING PRE-COLONIAL ART

DOI: 10.1017/S0021853702278299

African Art and Artefacts in European Collections, 1400–1800. By EZIO BASSANI.

Edited by MALCOLM MCLEOD. London: British Museum Press, 2000. Pp. xxxix + 328 + diskette. No price given (ISBN 0-7141-235744).

KEY WORDS: Arts, pre-colonial.

This catalogue contains well over 800 entries, of which 681 deal with objects still kept in European or American collections and the remainder with objects of sub-Saharan African origin illustrated in Europe before 1800, as well as with undocumented ivories of African origin in Europe. Appendices about ivory horns from Calabar, two sculptures in wood by the master of Bamba, Kongo art and Afro-Portuguese ivories round off the volume. Bassani's book, the fruit of many decades of research, is a complete record of all objects still extant or illustrated in Europe and a nearly complete record of those mentioned in written sources as having been sent to Europe. It is a monumental achievement.

A catalogue such as this is a precondition for any well-grounded history of older art in sub-Saharan Africa. For along with a few illustrations drawn by Europeans in Africa, findings from archaeological sites (rather little apart from ceramics) and some antiquities brought to Europe only during the nineteenth century (think of Benin art), this constitutes the corpus on which such a history must draw. Hence the publication of this book constitutes a landmark, for by its very nature it is as of now an indispensable reference tool. It will be used and used again by generations of researchers, who probably will have no inkling of how much time, dedication and work was needed to compile it. They will just find its existence 'natural' and that may well be the highest of accolades for its author.

This catalogue should also attract the attention of social and economic historians because most entries concern objects used in daily life. True there are many entries concerning the well-known Western African ivories or Central African textiles and a few (five only) refer to figurative sculptures and one mask which are still found in collections today. But most of the entries concern ordinary objects such as items of dress or adornment, pipes, tableware, other household goods, musical instruments, weapons, charms and amulets and eighteenth-century carved