Islam and Modernity in Turkey. Brian Silverstein. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. h/bk 269 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-10982-7. Price £57.00.

The book opens by arguing that studying Islam in Turkey must be done by proceeding from a diagnosis of the status of the Turkish present. Silverstein does this by dividing his book into two parts: the critical history of the status of the present -- genealogy -- which is presented in the first part of the book forms the context in which the contemporary discourse appearing in the second part of the book can be interpreted. The book explores several levels of genealogy: Ottoman institutional reforms and the debates surrounding them; late Ottoman Sufis and their bureaucratization; contemporary Sufi devotional practices and traditions in Turkey; Islam oriented radio station, research foundation and think tanks; legislation regarding public and private spheres, and debates over EU accession. These narratives are examined through the specific articulation of a branch of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, the İskender Pasha Community and its relations with government and institutions since Ottoman times.

Silverstein illustrates that many Sufis and other Muslims in the Republic of Turkey have religious reasons for their secular attitude toward religion and politics. The mode of religiosity of the Naqshbandi Sufi order has been influential, especially in regard to their position, which not only does not forbid engagement with modern technologies, but rather sees it as an obligation for Muslims. He shows that, contrary to what many researchers have claimed until recently, the Ulema (Muslim theologians and scholars) cannot be portrayed as having an unchanged Islamic and traditional identity since the early years of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, unlike what is claimed, the Ulema even largely supported the CUP (What does CUP stand for?) against Sultan Abdülhamid. Furthermore, Sufi leaders gave religious arguments in favor of abolishing the caliphate, claiming that since Islamic traditions legitimize governance passed to the republican administration, the republic is an Islamic government. Silverstein even claims that the absence of certain Islamic features of the Republic of Turkey's past and contemporary institution was itself based on religious grounds. That is why Silverstein urges readers in the first part of his book not to see the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey

as simply a distancing of the new republic from Islam. The republican reforms, including those pertaining to religion and state, were not made during the republican period from 1923 onwards, but rather based on experience during the late Ottoman period (e.g., clothing reforms, which were already conducted in Ottoman times). Another example to this claim is that up until 1925 not only the state sponsored foundations from which modest stipends were provided to the Sufi lodges, but neither Atatürk nor his companions took hostile action against the lodges as nationalism worked closely with Sufi sheikhs in mobilizing the population in support of their efforts. Silverstein brings additional examples of Sufi's participation and involvement in the forming of the Turkish Republic. According to Silverstein, even the incorporation of modern techniques inside the empire in order to reverse military defeats in the Balkans was a decision taken in Islamic circles. In other words, the republican Turkish policies regarding Islam are largely continuations of the late Ottoman reforms of Islamic institution. Thus, the genealogy of Turkish secularism is grounded in Ottoman Islamic reasoning. Silverstein gives several examples to illustrate this concept.

The second part of the book examines the use of modernity within the İskender Pasha Community. Based on fieldwork, Silverstein examines the structural significance of mass broadcast media like radio and internet on the group's practice. Silverstein claims that the new cadre of capitalists that instigated the liberal economy, including the privatization of the Turkish economic and social institutions in the Eighties, was legitimized -- and even conducted by - pious observant, and often even activist, Muslims. Silverstein claims that the new Muslim bourgeoisie was the reason that the Kemalist élite lost its monopoly on public discourse as new private outlets in publishing and media appeared, including think-tanks and research foundations. This bourgeoisie is only one expression of two main important points which are the result, but also the reason for its existence. Firstly Islam has been transformed into religion on the liberal model based on personal choice and private belief. The roots of this process were linked to the last two Ottoman centuries, and the major moves were argued on grounds internal to Islamic reasoning. Second, the vast majority of Muslims in the Republic of Turkey identify Islam as a religion depending on personal choice: secular parties such as the CHP *(Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)* are not the sole representatives of political modernity, nor can they

monopolize Western values such as democracy. This past and present experience shows how it is possible to merge Islam and modernity, while perpetuating modernity through Islamic understanding.

Though the book adopts a bold methodology, it lacks coherence. Silverstein has a tendency to redefine terms as he is in the midst of expressing his opinion. This disrupts coherence and distracts the reader from the book's main points. Secondly, Silverstein frequently translates words from Turkish to English that were already translated earlier in the text, making the text too repetitive. Some descriptions are too long and ineffective, such as the paragraph dealing with dormitories and the way learners awaken in the morning (117). As for the content, I find that a detailed historical and cultural background of the İskender Pasha Community is unfortunately lacking. Despite its general title, I think that the book actually refers to Islam and modernity as practiced by Sufis only and not encompassing the general Muslim population in the Republic of Turkey. Furthermore, the book focuses on one group belonging to one Sufi order and the reader can't help but wonder whether what is described in the second chapter is true to all other orders and thus could be taken as a general assumption rather than specific understanding of a specific community. Nonetheless, this book is highly intriguing. It provides a new understanding of religion in the Republic of Turkey and that is why it is important to every scholar dealing with Islam and especially Sufism.

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