

n" (p. 113) that is per-
in circumstances, such
any widows: "Nobody
hat marrying four wom-
gious obligation ... The
ig more than one wife
five ... [Hence] the rule
woman" (p. 112).

nents on 9/11. For him,
fore, the act of murder
put terrorists outside of
lam. He asserts that the
he means; both should
h provides additional
nation of terrorism. He
perpetrated in the Mus-
onomic factors rooted
emporary exploitation,
n rule, and inadequate
).

len argues, has been
key, and there can be
m it (p. 47). He wants
tical tensions between
through mutual under-
ie. He defends the Ale-
eir own meetinghouses
eir texts "be placed in
so that this culture be
because things passed
t be passed on exactly
en sees the American
politics preferable to
ernatives (e.g., histori-
sm and currently Chi-
98). He is a supporter
neous membership in
and integration with
publics. Yet he is very
r "export[s] a sectarian
anding of Islam under
Islamic revolution" (p.
ia, which spreads Wah-
76).

slamic Conversations
ality of work if a) the
in 1997 and 2002 were
interview with Gülen,
re-ordered more sys-
particular Turkish top-
ssues, and c) the parts
a the Turkish context,
ow for American read-

ers, were removed. For example, the final
chapter, which includes Nevval Sevindi's
opinions, lacks the analytic quality she dem-
onstrates in other chapters. Certain portions
of that chapter sound like an apologetic de-
fense of Gülen. Sevindi's response to Hakan
Yavuz's criticisms, in particular, is not well
grounded. Yavuz has several recent publica-
tions on this issue and there is no need to
reprint an outdated debate that happened
eleven years ago. Despite these criticisms,
this book will be of use to those who are
interested in diverse interpretations of Islam
and their sociopolitical implications.

Dr. Ahmet T. Kuru, Postdoctoral Research
Scholar, Columbia University

YEMEN

Middle East Journal,
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**The Moral Resonance of Arab Media:
Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in
Yemen**, by Flagg Miller. Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 2007. xxiv + 461
pages. Figures. Maps. Photos. Appends.
to p. 472. Bibl. to p. 493. Index to p. 525.
\$29.95 paper.

Reviewed by Steven C. Caton

This brilliant interdisciplinary work
on media and tribal poetry in Yemen by a
superb Arabist is at once a significant con-
tribution to media studies, linguistic prag-
matics, poetics, and the anthropology of the
Middle East. The scholarship is thorough,
carefully building on previous research, but
also departing from it in original and imagi-
native ways.

The author focuses on a particular po-
etic form, the famous Arabic *qasida*, and an
exchange involving two or more such odes
(called *bid'a wa-jiwab*) by different poets,
which in modern Yemen are recorded on cas-
sette tapes and circulated throughout Yemeni
society. Through this window on poetic pro-
duction and circulation, much light is shed
on a host of fascinating topics. We learn, for
example, about sound media as they help to
constitute and propagate political debates in
the public sphere, the complex relations of
orality and writing in a certain elite sector

of tribal society as traced principally in its
poetry, and the multitudinous connections
of poets to Aden and to the wider Yemeni
diaspora that occasions the emergence of
"metropolitan genres" of verse.

Such themes are explored in chapters
packed with ethnographic and historical
detail, which are insightfully analyzed and
wittily written. There is a background chap-
ter on the southern Yemeni region, Yafi', the
primary site of the author's multi-year field-
work, and the socio-political place of poets
in that region (Chapter Two); a detailed lin-
guistic and poetic analysis of the main poetic
genre, the *qasida* (Chapter Three); a unique
history of the Adeni-based recording indus-
try (including cassette tapes of sung poetry)
dating from the late 1930s until the present
(who would have thought that, according to
Miller, it was at one time the second larg-
est recording industry in the Middle East,
after Egypt), along with a charming ethnog-
raphy of cassette studios (Chapter Four);
a fascinating social and artistic portrait of
one of Yemen's most charismatic tribal po-
ets (Chapter Five); the cultural construction
of 'character' as a moral problem of poetic
authorship illustrated in the career of that
leading poet and his oeuvre (Chapter Six);
and the narration of a rich event-history in
cassette poetry, complete with a surprise
about the charismatic poet's compositions
(Chapter Seven). We encounter people and
places that are finely wrought, providing an
intimacy that might have been lost in an eth-
nography so deeply immersed in the intricac-
ies of form and sound recording.

Linking these chapters theoretically is
what the author calls the "aesthetics of reso-
nance," developed in the Introduction and
referred to throughout the rest of the book,
which he contrasts to the "aesthetics of cir-
culation." Millar claims that "[the aesthet-
ics of resonance] enables reflections on the
emergence of such objects [as poems] from
the sensate, dynamic, and therefore partly
metaphysical qualities of media" (p. 26).
He discovered a similar distinction in the
writings of one of Yemen's greatest singers,
Muhammad Murshed Naji and it thus has
a certain *emic* value, though he also draws
on analytical concepts in recent literature
on media that have to do with attunement to

the "senses," and especially with listening
as a moral practice. Hence the key phrase
in the subtitle, "moral resonance." While ac-
knowledging that the two aesthetics of cir-
culation and resonance are integral to each
other, Miller argues that it is particularly the
aesthetics of "resonance" that is important
to understanding how moral authority, polit-
ical order (or disorder), and artistic success
are debated by Yemenis. This idea, and the
claims the author makes for it, will surely
occasion lively discussion and debate.

Dr. Steven C. Caton, Harvard University

**The Rules of Barat: Tribal Documents
from Yemen**, by Paul Dresch. Sanaa, Ye-
men: Centre Français d'Archéologie et de
Sciences Sociales and Deutsches Archäo-
logisches Institut, 2006. iii + 99 pages.
Supplementary documents to p. 114. Maps
to p. 66. Figures to p. 32. Gloss. to p. 327.
Bibl. to p. 339. 15.25 euros.

Reviewed by Najwa Adra

The Rules of Barat is a translation and criti-
cal edition of three Yemeni tribal documents
dating to the 18th century. The two main texts
(Texts A and B) specify tribal responsibilities
toward fellow tribesmen and non-tribal client
populations, and they affirm ties of brother-
hood between the signatories and their respec-
tive tribes and tribal sections. Although the two
documents share substantial content and a sig-
nificant number of signatories, Document B is
longer and was signed by representatives from
a wider range of tribal groups. Both documents
appear to have been drawn up after a period of
hostility. They refer to pre-existing agreements
to uphold the peace of the market, which is, in
principle, an inviolable space. The third text
(Text 1) is an example of a market guarantee.
For each text, Paul Dresch provides a photo-
copy of one version and a typed transcription
compiled from the different copies at his dis-
posal, followed by a translation and commen-
tary. (Photocopies of nine other tribal docu-
ments are also provided.) One of these texts
(B) has been published previously by Yemeni