

Dār al-islām / dār al-ḥarb
Territories, People, Identities

Calasso Giovanna and Giuliano Lancioni eds

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This bulky volume edited by Vanna Calasso and Giuliano Lancioni aims to investigate the various meanings and uses of the expressions *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* (commonly translated as ‘the abode of Islam’ and ‘the abode of war’) in a variety of sources, regions, and periods of the long and complex history of Muslim societies. These expressions, or better ‘categories,’ began to appear in late eighth-century legal discourse, when the Arab conquests had reached their peak; they were placed in circulation by jurists who were close to Baghdad, the center of the Abbasid caliphate.

The collection is divided into five parts: the first is devoted to definitions, and engages a variety of theoretical and methodological issues; the second explores the use and emergence of the terms in early texts (dating from the seventh to the early tenth century CE). The third part studies *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* in legal theory and practice; the fourth examines a variety of different regional contexts, while the fifth part examines modern and contemporary developments of *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. The volume is completed by an essay titled ‘Concluding Remarks,’ which seeks to make sense of the terminological array found in the sources and employed to express ideas connected to *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. Useful indexes of Arabic names and technical terms are included at the very end of the book.

As perhaps already implied, *Dār al-islām / dār al-ḥarb* is a rich volume, and its topic is extremely complex. In what follows I highlight some of the central ideas emerging from the book, as well some of its merits and drawbacks. I avoid describing the single chapters one by one. In all, there are 19 chapters, plus the ‘Introduction’ and ‘Concluding Remarks’ focused on terminology. I also draw attention to some important additional source materials relevant to the topic at issue.

As an expression, *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* is generic and indeterminate; over time it has remained rather stable, yet fluid. Its indeterminacy and deceiving simplicity, being simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, are surely among the factors that contributed to its resilience, and to its use and re-use in a broad variety of contexts. This point emerges in various chapters. According to Yaacov Lev (chapter 3), in Fatimid sources from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, and in Geniza documents, the basic terminology that was used to indicate Christian traders, the Byzantine empire, and foreign objects was *Rūm / Rūmī*. However, with the pressure of the Crusades, *Rūm / Rūmī* shifted towards the term *Ifranġ* (Franks). In the period considered, this terminology remained stable, despite the fact that those who employed it were well

aware of the varied composition of the Christian European world.¹ While at first sight only tangential to the topic of the book, Lev puts forth a forceful caveat: terminology can be deceptive, often purposefully generic, and we should not limit ourselves to it—or perhaps we should not take it only at face value when attempting to understand the worldview of our sources.

Calasso agrees only partially with this view; she considers terminology a starting point that scholars cannot dispense with. Continuing her previous research,² Calasso pursues different lines of enquiry. One line reviews recent relevant secondary literature to show how even in legal discourse—with special reference to the Ḥanafī school—the two *dār-s* were not necessarily conceived as being openly hostile to one another. Rather they served as jurisdictional spaces in which the life, properties, and freedom of each subject (both Muslim and non-Muslim) were inviolable and protected by the ruler, or in which Muslim law was in effect, even under non-Muslim sovereignty (this is an element emerging also in chapter 17 by Yohanan Friedmann, and in chapter 19 by Eleonora Di Vincenzo and Francesca Romana Romani).

The other line of investigation examines the relevant terminology in different literary genres, and reaches the following conclusions. Travelogues and geographical texts rarely use *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. In legal literature—where the terms initially appeared and were commonly used—the pair *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* is neither defined nor treated in specific rubrics, but each *dār* functions as a counterpoint to the other, the interest of legal scholars focused on highlighting the change of norms entailed in a movement from one *dār* to the other.

Another key theme comes into view here: the pair *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* is not ubiquitous. Some literary genres are utterly indifferent to it, for instance historical writings at large, but not so the historiography of specific areas—such as that of northern al-Andalus discussed by Maribel Fierro and Luis Molina (chapter 11), where the expression *dār al-ḥarb* occurs mostly within the contexts of military action with neighboring Christians. In the histories on northeastern Iran, writes Camille Rhoné (chapter 12), the divide, its lexicon, and implications are there, but only indirectly. In yet other cases the pair is surprisingly absent, challenging our expectations. The *Book of jihād* by the pious Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 797 CE), a crucial early text for the construction of *jihād* ideology, does not use the *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* terminology to describe the enemy's land (Roberta Denaro, chapter 5).

Absence, implicit presence, lack of definition of categories (which are assumed, but not explained): these elements surface in various essays. Thus it becomes important to look for explanations. Lexicography of the eighth to fifteenth centuries is explored by Giuliano Lancioni (chapter 2), who brings into the discussion two useful remarks. *Dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* are collocations, and collocations made of combined single words are more difficult to arrange in lexicons. Moreover, whereas

¹ A similar point is perceptively made by CAMILLE RHONÉ in her contribution to this volume (chapter 12) when dealing with the over-simplified representation of the Turks as the archetypal enemy in sources from the ninth to the eleventh centuries concerning northeastern Iran.

² GIOVANNA CALASSO, “Alla ricerca di *dār al-islām*. Una ricognizione nei testi di giuristi e tradizionalisti, lessicografi, geografi e viaggiatori,” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 83/1-4 (2010): 271-296.

dār al-ḥarb is at least once defined in classical lexicons, *dār al-islām* is never, and this may have occurred because the latter was perceived as an object of common knowledge that did not need to be defined. The pressing question then becomes: why devote such scholarly effort to a formulaic and conventional representation of the world that many Muslim sources, not only lexicographers, do not use (or, if they do, they lack interest in defining)? Calasso provides an answer in her introductory essay; ‘because this pair has to do with the crucial issue of how to conceive oneself and others and translate this idea into words’ (p. 3). Or, one may also say, because this is a representation that concerns us closely.

Those chapters devoted to the circulation of the two categories in specific regions are particularly felicitous. According to Francisco Appellaniz (chapter 9), early fifteenth-century Venetian traders were aware of the divide between *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* and the normative changes that this division implied. More precisely, Venetian traders knew that non-Muslim groups living under Mamluk control, such as the Fazolati in Cyprus, enjoyed different legal status, and tried to exploit such differences for their own advantage. Appellaniz shows that the Fazolati were a group of Syrian Christians who were treated as *dhimmīs* by the Mamluks, irrespective of the fact that they lived in Cyprus and that Venetians, who were well aware of their status, tried to gain the rank of Fazolati from Mamluk authorities in order to avoid expulsion from the Mamluk lands.

A fatwa concerning a group of Frankish merchants temporarily residing in Acre is mentioned in passing. The text is very important in many respects, and deserves attention. Issued in the year 754 AH (1353 CE) by the Shāfi‘ī jurist Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 1355 CE) at the request of the governor of Safad, it describes a public religious celebration arranged by the above-mentioned Venetian traders. Such a celebration included a procession to the local church; participants included a group of Muslims and the head of the province and the port (*muqaddam al-wilāya wa’l-minā*)—ostensibly they also approved of it. Al-Subkī was interrogated about how to address this public display of non-Muslim faith, which had entailed a violation of the safe-conduct enjoyed by the merchants—the safe-conduct allowed them to safely and temporarily reside in *dār al-islām* (here the Mamluk domains). The fatwa makes a neat distinction between local non-Muslims (*dhimmīs*) and foreign non-Muslim residents (*ḥarbīs*). Further, it illustrates what measures should be taken when a pact of *dhimma* and one of safe-conduct are violated. Al-Subkī advises that the merchants should be imprisoned and used as a ransom to free Muslim prisoners, while the Muslims officers who took part and approved of the procession should resign from office.³ Throughout his fatwa al-Subkī draws from the language of *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām*, demonstrating, as Appellaniz observes, that these ‘remained two necessary analytical

³ The fatwa is available in two editions whose respective texts contain some differences. Compare AL-SUBKĪ, TAQĪ AL-DĪN (1284-1355)/AL-MAQDISĪ AL-ṢĀLIḤĪ, SHARAF AL-DĪN ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT MŪSĀ IBN FAYYĀD (d. 1376), “An Unpublished XIVth-Century *Fatwā* on the Status of Foreigners in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria,” *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Nahen und Fernen Ostens: Paul Kahle zum 60. Geburtstag überreicht von Freunden und Schülern aus dem Kreise des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn*, ed. by W. HEFFENING and WILLIBALD KIRFEL (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1935), 55-68, and AL-SUBKĪ, TAQĪ AL-DĪN, *Fatāwā al-Subkī*, 2 vols, ed. by MUḤAMAMD ‘ABD AL-SALĀM SHĀHIN (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1424/2009), vol. 2, 388-391.

categories if only because they allowed them [i.e. jurists] to differentiate local *dhimmīs* from resident *ḥarbis*' (174).

This takes us to two further considerations which progressively take shape while reading the book. The first: some literary genres are more prone to host discussions on the topic in question, and fatwas in particular, since they respond to points of law that often stem from real-life incidents. Nicola Melis, who examines Ottoman sources, Appellániz, Fierro and Molino, Francesco Zappa, and Friedmann draw exemplary materials from this legal genre (to which I will shortly return). The second point is that after the formative period, *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* could be rather dormant categories (see chapter 8 by Éric Chaumont, at 157). It is in areas of intense interaction with non-Muslims because of trade, conflicts, or territorial vicinities, or otherwise in times of Islamic reformisms (eighteenth to nineteenth centuries), that the divide between *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* was reactivated, reacquiring in each context new relevance and diverse meanings.

The case of the northern region of al-Andalus painstakingly examined by Fierro and Molina has already been mentioned. Yet also exemplary is the case of northeastern Iran: between the ninth and the eleventh centuries, this was an area of intense interaction with the Turks as well as a region characterized by fluid steppe frontiers. Nonetheless, local dynasties copiously resorted to the *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* paradigm as a rhetorical device of legitimation and self-empowerment. Their appropriation of what was initially a legal tool elaborated by jurists close to the Abbasid court had little to do with territoriality or religious identity (Rhoné). Yet another case in point is that of western sub-Saharan Africa (*bilād al-sudān*). Discussing evidence from three different moments of the pre-colonial history of this area, Zappa (chapter 14), shows how the notions of *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* radically change in time, thus demonstrating the complexities of a region where the divide between *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* was never obvious, and the extraordinary potential of these categories to be molded in contrasting ways.

Colonial powers enacting an urgent confrontation of Muslim societies with the West, as well as contacts, circulations, migrations, and globalization: all these factors have triggered renewals of the *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* discourse in modern and contemporary Muslim societies. This is well illustrated in the last section of the book which considers modern India as well as Indonesian and colonial Tunisian contexts (chapters 17, 19 and 16). Minorities are also a privileged ground of enquiry, since they allow us to glimpse how the concepts at issue are negotiated according to specific agendas and historical circumstances (see Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti's chapter 4; Alessandro Cancian's chapter 15).

No volume on such a broad topic can ever be exhaustive. In this respect, I would like to draw attention to certain neglected source materials that add relevant clues to the topic in question. The first concerns early Khārijīs, who were perhaps the first to have articulated the idea of separate 'abodes' with a specific stress on the theme of emigration. We know that some early groups believed that the 'abode of their people' (*dār qaṣmi-bim*)—that is, of non-Khārijīs—needed to be distanced by way of emigration (*hijra*) and that, accordingly, they held *hijra* to be a duty.

A unique, very early epistle attributed to a difficult to identify Ibādī khārijī named Sālim ibn Dhakhwān, and dated between 750 and 792 CE (but possibly incorporating even earlier materials), describes the beliefs of various Khārijī sects while arguing against them. The locutions *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* do not appear fully-fledged there. However, in Sālim's description, the idea emerges starkly of true faith needing to be physically asserted by an act of separation from the abode of the unbelievers/non-Khārijīs (*dār qawmi-him*), that is by an act of emigration in emulation of the Prophet.⁴ Since the earliest occurrence of *dār al-islām* occurs in parallel to *dār al-hijra* in the work of the Ḥanafī jurist Abū Yūsuf (d. 798 CE),⁵ the contribution of these very early Khārijī materials must be taken in account in future explorations of the topic.

A second set of materials relates to the importance of fatwas as a literary genre particularly suited to hosting discussions on the subject here being considered. The Ḥanbalī jurist and theologian Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328 CE) delivered some important statements on *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. The eighteenth volume of his collections of fatwas is mostly dedicated to Hadith commentary, and one such commentary unfolds on the famous ḥadīth on intentions (*innamā al-a'māl bi'l-niyyāt ...*) where the last part mentions the *hijra*.⁶ In the final pages, Ibn Taymiyya explains the meaning of two famous and apparently contradictory traditions concerning the *hijra*; one stating that after the conquest (usually intended as the conquest of Mecca) there will be no more *hijra*, but only *jihād* and intention; the other tradition declaring that emigration will not end until the enemy has been fought.⁷

It is regarding the first hadith that Ibn Taymiyya tackles the meaning of *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām*, insisting on their dynamic nature, and the possibility of shifting from one *dār* to the other as happened to Mecca. Initially a territory of unbelief and war (*dār al-kufr wa'l-ḥarb*), Mecca switched to *dār al-islām* when it was conquered by the Prophet. Thus the first manifestation of *dār al-ḥarb* and *dār al-islām* is re-conducted to the life of the Muḥammad and the paradigmatic event of his migration from a territory of unbelief/war (Mecca) to one of faith (Medina). This is not surprising. It is also an element emerging forcefully in early *tafsīr* literature (see Roberto Tottoli at chapter 6 and Raoul Villano at chapter 7). But let us return to Ibn Taymiyya, who writes:

The fact that a land is the abode of unbelief (*dār al-kufr*), faith (*dār al-īmān*) or depraved people (*dār al-fāsiqīn*) is not an intrinsic quality (*lāzīm*), but rather an accidental one (*ṣifa 'arīḍa*) depending on its inhabitants. Every land whose inhabitants are God-fearing

⁴ PATRICIA CRONE and FRITZ ZIMMERMANN, *The Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106-107, 112-115, 140-141, 167 (providing references to other sources), 171, 204-205, 206, 207.

⁵ See GIOVANNA CALASSO, "Alla ricerca di *dār al-islām*", 277.

⁶ IBN TAYMIYYA, *Majmū' fatāwā shaykh al-islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya* (hereafter MF), 37 vols, ed. by 'ABD AL-RAḤMĀN IBN MUḤAMMAD IBN QĀSIM AL-NAJDĪ AL-ḤANBALĪ [Rabat, 1981], vol. 18, 244-284 (*Sharḥ ḥadīth innamā al-a'māl bi'l-niyyāt*).

⁷ IBN TAYMIYYA, MF, vol. 18, 281-285 (*Sharḥ*), translated and commented by YAHYA MICHOT, in: *Mardin. Hégire, fuite du péché et demeure de l'islam* (Beyrouth: Les Editions Albouraq, 1425/2004), 11-14 and 19-25. In English: YAHYA MICHOT, *Ibn Taymiyya: Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule* (Oxford: Interface Publications, 2006). For very different interpretations on the meanings of the two Hadīth, see WILFERD MADELUNG, "Has the Hijra Come to an End?," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 54 (1986): 225-237, and PATRICIA CRONE, "The First Century Concept of Hira," *Arabica* 41/3 (1994): 352-387.

believers is the abode of God's friends in that moment, every land whose inhabitants are unbelievers is the abode of unbelief in that moment,⁸ and every land whose inhabitants are dissolute (*fussāq*) is the abode of dissolution in that moment. And if a land is inhabited by people other than those we mentioned and is transformed by people different from them, then it is their abode (*fa-biya dāru-hum*).⁹

And again, 'conditions of places are like the conditions of its servants',¹⁰ writes Ibn Taymiyya, stressing that the quality of a given place depends on the qualities of those who live in it.

Another brief but famous fatwa regards the status of Mardin (in southern Turkey), a town that fell under Ilkhanid control at the end of the thirteenth century. Was it a place of war or peace (*balad ḥarb* or *silm*)? And, accordingly, was emigration (*hijra*) from it obligatory?¹¹ Ibn Taymiyya replied that Mardin was neither *dār al-silm* nor *dār al-ḥarb*, but that it corresponded to a third, composite type (*fa-biya murakkaba*), and that it was not obligatory for Muslims to emigrate if they could practice their religion. Otherwise emigration was preferable but not compulsory. Mardin was not an abode of Islam, Ibn Taymiyya explained, because the rulings or institutions of Islam (*aḥkām al-islām*) were not in place. At the same time it was not an abode of war, because its people were not unbelievers; it was something composite, in between the two. Whereas the first text openly refrains from associating the nature of a given territory with its rulers, the second fatwa is more ambiguous. This not the right place to engage in a detailed discussion, but I stress that we do find definitions here.

Like most edited volumes that are the result of different hands, *Dār al-islām / dār al-ḥarb* is a heterogeneous book. Chapters are extremely diverse, both in length and scholarly standards. Exhaustive and well-researched essays mingle with others whose style, structure, and language can be fairly disheartening.

All chapters revolve around the core theme; the binomial *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* is effectively the thematic linchpin to which all contributions relate. Yet contrasting elements do emerge from time to time, and produce a rather centrifugal effect. A conclusive note that makes sense of contradictions and diversities, and fixes the major historical and interpretative trajectories that emerge from the book would have been most helpful. Among these, the most prominent seems to be that, after the formative period (from the seventh to the early tenth century), in pre-eighteenth-century Muslim societies *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* could be latent categories. It is mainly in legal discussions or in relation to certain legal issues that the two expressions eventually crop up in diverse ways. As such, a strong essay from a legal scholar is missing from Part 3. Moreover, given the book's latitude, chapter abstracts would have been convenient. Author affiliations and short biographies are not necessary, but are usually welcome.

⁸ This sounds very similar to USMAN DAN FODIO's words cited and commented by FRANCESCO ZAPPA in the volume at 281—although USMAN DAN FODIO makes it very clear that the status of a given territory depends on its ruler.

⁹ IBN TAYMIYYA, *MF*, vol. 18, 282 (*Sharḥ*); Michot, *Mardin*, 76-77.

¹⁰ IBN TAYMIYYA, *MF*, vol. 18, 284 (*Sharḥ*); Michot, *Mardin*, 85.

¹¹ IBN TAYMIYYA, *MF*, vol. 28, 240-241; Michot in *Mardin*, 65-68 (translation), 1-28 (commentary).

These critical remarks are not meant to overshadow the merits of the book. As a project, it is in keeping with other recently edited collections that aim to place in time and space important ideas and cross-concepts for the history of the Muslim world. The volume on *takfīr* (charges of unbelief) edited by Maribel Fierro, Sabine Schmidtke, Camilla Adang and Hasan Ansari is a case in point.¹² The intent to explore how the categories of *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* were received and elaborated over time in a multifarious array of literary genres and sources is a challenge not yet undertaken by scholars, and a rewarding effort even when ‘silence,’ or ‘absence’ is the outcome. It is left to future scholars to take up the challenge to write a coherent history of these categories and their reception. In the meantime, this book significantly advances our knowledge on the topic and will surely become a key reference reading on it.

¹² CAMILLA ADANG, HASSAN ANSARI, MARIBEL FIERRO, SABINE SCHMIDTKE, eds, *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfīr* (Leiden: Brill: 2015).