

Olaf Köndgen, *A Bibliography of Islamic Criminal Law*, Brill: Leiden, Boston 2022, 467 p, ISBN: 978-90-04-44750-9 (hardback), ISBN: 978-90-04-47278-5 (e-book/pdf).

Commencing in 1952 under the editorship of Bertold Spuler, Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Hamburg from 1948 to 1980, Brill's *Handbuch der Orientalistik/Handbook of Oriental Studies* has become the leading series of monographs in the field of oriental studies. Its success can be measured by the fact that the *Handbook of Oriental Studies* is now organised in seven regions. Since its creation in 1964, *Section 1, The Near and Middle East* has seen the publication of more than 160 monographs, with the website of Brill stating that the series has published an average of ten volumes per year in the past five years.

Even in a series as eminent as the *Handbook of Oriental Studies*, Olaf Köndgen's *A Bibliography of Islamic Criminal Law* ["Bibliography"] stands out. As rightly noted by Rudolph Peters in his insightful and thoughtful Foreword, with more than 3,600 entries Köndgen's Bibliography is a "monumental academic achievement", being the most comprehensive and extensive bibliography on Islamic criminal law ever published. Indeed, as Köndgen himself notes in the Preface, its size surpasses all other bibliographies on Islamic law in general.

In imposing order on these many listings, Köndgen has divided the Bibliography in two parts, with the first part being concerned with particular themes or subject matters of Islamic criminal law, which are listed in alphabetical order, and the second part listing all entries with reference to a particular country, region, era or organisation. Preceding the first part, which starts with "abortion" and ends with "Zinā, Unlawful Sexual Intercourse, Fornication, Adultery", is a list of 180 entries headed "General and Reference". In it are listed publications that offer general introductions to Islamic law and Islamic criminal law. The themes listed in the first part cover a very wide range of issues indeed, capturing not only those that tend to be most closely associated with Islamic criminal law, such as the offences of apostasy or the consumption of alcohol, but also themes that have emerged only fairly recently, such as cyber-crime, transitional justice and bioethics. Part 2, headed "Countries, Regions, Eras and Organisations", lists in addition to all of the Muslim majority countries and those applying Islamic law also Germany and the USA, because, as Köndgen observes in the Preface, "existing scholarly articles linking these countries to Islamic criminal law justify separate chapters."

In addition, there is a comprehensive glossary of Arabic terms, an index of authors and an index of subjects and people.

The Bibliography covers works published in Western European languages that the author can access without the use of translations, albeit it that the majority of the entries are printed in English, thus reflecting the fact that

*de facto* it is English that has become the *lingua franca* of academia, including the study of Islamic criminal law. Excluded from the Bibliography are the relevant languages from countries that apply or are concerned with Islamic criminal law, such as Arabic, Farsi, Urdu or Bahasa Indonesia. As explained by the author, these languages were excluded not because of any lack of relevance, but because including them would have been complicated and time-consuming to a degree that would have rendered the whole project of the Bibliography unachievable.

At the risk of repetition, compiling and editing more than 3,600 entries on Islamic criminal law is a monumental academic achievement. But is the result a useful one, given that within the span of a few minutes the combination of search engines and on-line resources produces a great volume of information on every single of the themes, countries and eras listed in the Bibliography? The answer is in the affirmative, and emphatically so. The past forty years have seen an exponential growth in the production of studies in the field of Islamic criminal law. This growth reflects the transformation of this area of law from the spheres of jurisprudence and legal theory to the realm of lived reality. The phenomenon of the re-Islamisation of laws, and with it the introduction of codified Islamic criminal laws, can be observed in the legal systems of Pakistan, Sudan, Nigeria and, more recently, Brunei, to name but a few. As a result, studies of Islamic criminal law are not any longer confined to legal scholarship but are approached from a wide range of perspectives and disciplines, including reports produced by human rights organisations and NGOs. The Bibliography makes this mass of information manageable, allowing the researcher to gain an overview of the extent and scope of published information on any given topic of Islamic criminal law reliably and conveniently. In addition, with the Bibliography covering publications from the early 19th century to the present, each of the subjects in the thematic sections as well as each entry for particular jurisdictions and eras provide revealing and fascinating insights into the ebbs and flows of the interest in and engagement with particular issues of Islamic criminal law over the span of the past two hundred years.

In terms of coverage, two aspects deserve particular mention. First, Köndgen decided to exclude articles of dubious quality, published in journals with no or only rudimentary quality checks. This measure of quality control is as useful as it is commendable, in that it dampens the circulation of low quality articles and allows the user of the Bibliography to focus on those publications that are relevant and authoritative. Secondly, Köndgen has included in the Bibliography references to PhDs as well as MA and LLM dissertations that engage with Islamic criminal law. Whilst it is useful to know of these works,

their inclusion could also prove to be a source of frustration, given that in most cases MA and LLM dissertations cannot be accessed via university libraries.

Olaf Köndgen's *Bibliography of Islamic Criminal Law* will become an essential and indeed indispensable resource for researchers, students and scholars because there is no other bibliography on Islamic law that is more comprehensive, exhaustive, and, for want of a better word, user-friendly. As Rudolph Peters points out in his Foreword, with its coverage limited to Western European languages, the Bibliography could hopefully provide the impetus for similar endeavours in the languages spoken in the Muslim world. Olaf Köndgen deserves our congratulations for having produced this excellent *Bibliography on Islamic Criminal Law*.

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