



Advice for the Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam

Negin Yavari

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In *Advice for the Sultan* Negin Yavari excavates multiple, conflicting strands of Islamic political thought from the medieval past to the present, reassessing these ideas and their impact over the longue duree. Her aim is to revise our understanding of the relationship between modern history and the current master narratives of both Western and Islamic histories of political thought. She does this by re-examining Islamic advice literature, bringing it to life in novel ways. Yavari argues that if read laterally and closely, it promotes secular values such as reason and moderation as the most effective safeguard against political instability and divine rebuke. Related questions raised in this book include, can Islamic political thought be folded into the discipline of intellectual history? How do we write the history of political thought when its end-product is not seen as the march of a manifest destiny, or progressive secularisation, or the promotion of liberal values, such as is the case with the Islamic world today? Is it possible to read texts for context if the values adumbrated in them do not take hold in society, or to study those that produce political communities that differ radically from those that emerged in eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century Europe?

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