Collins's book is a significant contribution to a growing literature on the role of clans in Central Asia.1 She is to be commended for conducting three years of fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; one should not underestimate the difficulties a Western researcher may have to overcome in order to conduct research in Central Asia. Although her study is important, Collins clearly exaggerates the influence of clans in the post-Soviet societies of Central Asia. There is no solid evidence that clans always act as a monolithic rational actor; it appears that most clans are loosely linked and often suffer from internal disputes. Besides, Collins underestimates the role of Islam in bridging clan cleavages. Although politically divided, the Muslim world still forms a large and interconnected religious-cultural system. It was natural, as Central Asian states became integrated into the international community, for Muslims to adopt a new trans-clan identity, centered on the *ummah*.

More importantly, Collins does not provide a detailed description of what a clan looks like and how it is organized internally. In particular, the author needs to provide more evidence about her claim that each clan comprises 2,000 to 20,000 members (p. 18). Although it is not easy to gain information about such sensitive issues, Collins could have provided a mapping of Central Asian clans. A typology of clans could have been useful too, given the plurality of clans in the three countries under study. Some of her conclusions are incorrect; for example, Collins states that "in Kyrgyzstan Uzbekistan, there is little evidence to date of a proliferation of weapons" (p. 342). Yet following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Central Asia is awash with arms. The retreat of the Soviet army from Afghanistan in 1989 through Uzbekistan and the arming of the different factions in the Tajik civil war from 1992 to 1997 mean that rifles and pistols are easily obtainable on the black market.2 This notwithstanding, this book provides a comprehensive analysis of clan politics in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and is a good starting point for further research.

Emmanuel Karagiannis,
University of Macedonia

Endnotes

1. Edgar A., *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), Roy O., *The New Central Asia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Schatz E., *Modern Clan Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

2. MacFarlane N. and Torjesen S, *Kyrgyzstan: A Small Arms Anomaly in Central Asia?* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2004).

The Religions of the Book: Christian Perceptions, 1400-1660

Edited by *Matthew Dimmock* and *Andrew Hadfield*
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 213 pp., ISBN 9780230020047.

Religions of the Book adds to a growing body of scholarship on Christian perceptions of Muslims and Jews. The collection is somewhat uneven, but several strong

articles make this volume well worth reading.

Raphael Hallett's article on Luther and the Jews is polished and persuasive. This careful examination of Luther's writings challenges the view that the reformer radically changed his stance on the Jews toward the end of his life; instead, Hallett deftly argues, both Luther's early and later writings on the Jews exhibit a consistent anxiety about the group as a threat to Protestant identity. Colin Imber's "Crusade of Varna, 1443-1445" does a fine job unraveling the complex strands that formed the campaign in which Sultan Murad II defeated the Christian host led by King Vladislav of Poland and Hungary. Most Christian goals, he explains, were local and political, but papal involvement provided the glue that made it a crusade. This essay is best read as a companion to Imber's excellent *Crusade of Varna* (Ashgate, 2006) as it reveals how he interprets the texts he has edited and translated.

Palmira Brummett's article on Christian iconography c. 1550-1689 offers a sophisticated analysis of how Europeans used maps and rhetoric to show Ottomans and Europeans as polar opposites, and to situate the Europeans in a more favorable light. For example, European maps of Hungary and the Balkans where the Ottoman state was well established often misleadingly depicted Ottoman control as a temporary encampment. Eliane Glaser's article explores debates in England during the civil war period over religious toleration of the Jews, and the separation of church and state. Calls for tolerance have been interpreted as unmitigated support for the Jews, but as Glaser argues, the Jews were generally invoked as an extreme example: i.e. England should be so tolerant of all faiths that *even* the Jews should have freedom of conscience. The real goal, however, was tolerance of Christian sects, not non-Christians. Finally, Anthony Bale presents an intriguing discussion of different ways of "reading" Jews in late medieval England, which often extended beyond texts. The essay includes an edifying focus on Margery Kempe and the 'virtual' Jew in her visions of the Passion, despite the absence of Jews in England for over a century following their exile in 1290.

Other essays in the volume are less satisfying. Gerald MacLean's essay on Milton and the Muslims is a fascinating, but frustrating, read. MacLean unearths subtle references to Islam and contemporary Muslim empires, even noting lacunae in geographical descriptions that may reveal Milton's unease with the extent of the Ottoman Empire. But the references are oblique – depending heavily, for example, on adjectives often used in the English discourse of Islam, without directly mentioning anything patently Islamic. There is simply not enough clear evidence to support MacLean's view of Milton as significantly influenced by Islam. Nonetheless, it is a well written and provocative essay. The remaining essays are harder to comprehend, bearing the mark of conference papers in need of revision or fleshing out. Matthew Birchwood's essay has interesting points about the ways in which tumultuous English religious debates and politics may have stimulated an interest in the Polyglot Bible, heresy, and Islam. Unfortunately, the essay lacks organization and a clear central argument. More disappointing is the

article by one of the book's editors, Matthew Dimmock, on early Christian perceptions of Muhammad and Islam. Dimmock makes some useful observations, but there is no clear thesis or narrative to the essay, nor does he ever define what he means by "early Christian." His approach is also critically superficial and flat, citing multiple texts in succession without any discussion of the author, audience, or circumstances of composition.

Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield's editors' introduction to the book provides some useful historical and textual background by introducing several moments and works that shaped Christian perceptions of Jews and Muslims. The introduction succeeds in its goal of demonstrating the sense of a shared tradition between the three faiths, but more attention could be given to the antagonism between the faiths, particularly the rash of exiles and pogroms suffered by the Jews on the continent. Also missing is an articulation by the editors of what distinguishes the early modern period from others. Continuities and differences from the Middle Ages deserve to be highlighted to help the reader make better sense of the period as a whole and appreciate the larger importance of the volume to studies of the three faiths.

More problematic is the editors' contention that the self-other binary model is "naïve and reductive" (15). This suggests that scholars who employ the self-other dichotomy do so uncritically and without nuance, and that the approach in these essays is ground breaking. Yet one struggles to think of recent scholarship on perceptions and relations between the faiths that ignores the limits of the self and other model or fails to probe the gray areas between the poles. One also struggles to find studies that do not use the self-other binary as a starting or a central point. It is still a valid model that speaks to scholars who regularly encounter more hostile than tolerant rhetoric about the other in their sources. Indeed, every essay in *Religions of the Book* cites multiple sources that affirm the self-other model, even as they strive to show moments of cooperation, respect, or exchange. If the editors have found an alternative to a self and other model, whether nuanced or naïve, it is not apparent in the introduction or the essays.

The afterword by Jerry Brotton notes the scholarly work that remains to be done on a range of sources from all three traditions. Indeed, no single scholar or essay collection can hope to capture the panorama and complexity of perceptions, let alone interactions of the three faiths. Brotton also wisely cautions readers about the dangers of oversimplifying moments of seeming tolerance and openness, not the least of which is a tendency among British and American scholars to celebrate all things Ottoman in the Renaissance while ignoring the harsher realities of government by imperial theocracy. One shortcoming of this afterword is the peremptory discussion of recent scholarship, but Brotton succeeds in closing the work with some very good questions for further study.

Despite some of its shortcomings, this is a welcome collection of essays on a diverse range of subjects. The editors are to be congratulated for bringing them all together in this thought provoking publication.

Nancy Bisaha, *Vassar College*