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Cuneiform Studies 60, pp. 87–99). In addition to this there are two caches of Aramaic texts, the Arsames correspondence from Elephantine and the collection from Bactria now in the N. D. Khalil collection, and much valuable information can also be gleaned by combing the archives from Persepolis, especially the texts relating to the issues of rations *en route*.

In "The King's Word: Hellenistic Royal Letters in Inscriptions" Alice Bencivenni turns our attention to the royal letters from the time of Alexander the Great and his successors in the third and second centuries BCE, particularly the Seleucid, Ptolemaic and Attalid kings. Around 440 of these letters are known so far, preserved in Greek in lapidary inscriptions as well as in papyri and in literary texts. The classification of these letters - as addressed to cities, officials, individuals and groups - is discussed as are the criteria which led to them being inscribed on stone monuments for permanent display. In the case of letters to cities this was not a requirement set out in the letter but rather at the initiative of the cities themselves; on the other hand, in the case of letters to individuals and groups the requirement to create a public monumental record could indeed be a condition included in the text. It can be assumed that the originals written on papyrus or parchment were kept in the municipal chancery archives. As for the contents of the letters preserved, they deal, among other things, with diplomatic issues, the appointment of officials, the regulation of cultic matters, royal benefactions, the granting, confirmation and adjudication of privileges, the sale of royal land, the settling of colonists and the communication of administrative orders. A consideration of the mechanism of transmission of the royal orders leads on to a discussion of the final category of data, the sealed bullae from Babylonia and elsewhere.

Simon Corcoran brings up the rear with "State Correspondence in the Roman Empire: Imperial Communication from Augustus to Julian". Astonishingly, the texts of somewhere in the region of 9,000 imperial pronouncements have come down to us, preserved in legal compendia such as the Code of Justinian and the Code of Theodosius, inscriptions and papyri; only one actual original document has however been recovered so far, a letter of Theodosius II to a commander in Egypt. Roman imperial government had a very reactive aspect, the overwhelming majority of imperial letters and edicts being written in response to letters to the emperor from officials, individuals and cities. The matters covered fall into four main categories - referral of legal and administrative decisions, petitions for privileges or benefits, informational reports and felicitations. Procedural aspects such as composition, writing and archiving are discussed, as are formal aspects such as chancery scripts, greetings formulae, subscriptions (which in later periods could be written in purple ink), valedictions, monograms and sealing practices.

All in all this is a rich and fascinating volume. It will go far in introducing specialists in one empire to key features in the running of others. It will be read with pleasure and profit by a large audience who through doing so will surely contribute to a new wave of comparative and empire-specific research.
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ISLAMIC MYSTICISM AND ABŪ ṬĀLIB AL-MAKKĪ: THE ROLE OF THE HEART. By SAEKO YAZAKI. pp. xix, 196. London and New York, Routledge, 2013.
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The present work is the first scholarly monograph to appear in a European language on Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī. Based on the author's University of Edinburgh doctoral dissertation, the study is a welcome addition to R. Gramlich's multivolume German translation of the 10th century author's *Qūt al-qulūb*, J. Renard's English translation of its chapter on knowledge, and a number of articles and unpublished

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theses. Yazaki's work is divided into nine chapters. It begins with an assessment of what we are able to determine about the life of Makkī on the basis largely of medieval biographical literature. She explores the numerous works that have been ascribed to Makkī, concluding that while some of the attributions seem to be clearly spurious, of the works he did compose, none seem to have survived with the exception of the *Qūt*. (In her list of the nine modern editions of the *Qūt* [p. 7], the 1996 Cairo edition published by Dār al-Rashād and edited by Dr. ʻAbd al-Munʻim, seems to have escaped her). As for the ʻ*Ilm al-qulūb*, of which there are two extant manuscripts, she concurs with the conclusions of Pūrjavādī and Karamustafa, that while it is deeply infused by Makkī's own insights, it was not authored by his own pen (cf. Yazaki's full-length article on this subject in *Arabica* 59 [2012], pp. 1–35).

In the second chapter she outlines the role and nature of the heart across the world's major religions before proceeding to a brief inquiry into its place within Islam in general and Sufism and Makkī in particular. Yazaki also provides a very concise synopsis of the contents and structure of the *Qūt*, along with a list of the main authorities who appear throughout the text. In the two chapters which follow, she furnishes a detailed summary with some translated excerpts of the 30th section of the *Qūt* devoted to the theme of the heart. As a "paraphrastic translation" with little analysis, it breaks the overall flow of the monograph, this section might have been better off simply as a lengthy appendix. An even better option would have been to condense the two chapters into a single chapter made up of a more conceptual, analytic examination of the section which integrated some of the highly informative, well-researched footnotes into the main body of the text, and omitted the somewhat superfluous and pedantic details present in the current summary (as in the chains of transmissions).

The relation of the *Qūt* to the *Kitāb al-taʻarruf li madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf* and the *Kitāb al-luma*ʻ, contemporaneous works authored respectively by Kalābādhī (d. 995) and Sarrāj (d. 988), is the subject of Chapter Five. Altogether these works were, as A. Schimmel noted, three of the first major theoretical works of Sufism to appear in the early historical period of the tradition. Yazaki's conclusion on the basis of her comparison of these treatises is that the *Qūt* is the least "scholarly" of them and most concerned with the practical details of the spiritual life, an assessment which seems for the most part sound. She continues her line of inquiry in the chapter which follows to explore the reception of Makkī in Islamic history by examining a wide array of works authored by figures ranging from ʻAṭṭār (d. 1223) and Suḥrawardī (d. 1234) to Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640) and Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791). This is certainly one of the most engaging and informative parts of her study, since we learn of Makkī's tremendous influence on the later Islamic tradition, particularly from the thirteenth century onwards. There is however a certain unevenness to her analysis. Ghazālī (d. 1111) receives only scant attention, amounting to less than a page. While it is true that his reliance on the writings of Makkī is already well established (p. 99), a systematic inquiry into the precise nature of this influence has yet to be carried out. Yazaki might have taken the opportunity to at least summarise the terse findings of the research to date on this question, considering not only the *Iḥyā*'s profound debt to the *Qūt*, but also the aims of the chapter. The section on Ibn ʻAbbād al-Rundī (d. 1390) would have been enriched by an examination of his commentary on Ibn ʻAṭā Allāh's (d. 1309) *Ḥikam*. Not only does he mention Makkī by name in the famous *Sharḥ*, as Yazaki correctly points out (p. 111), he actually quotes him extensively.

Yazaki's treatment of Ibn al-ʻArabī's (d. 1240) use of Makkī is fascinating, as it brings to light an aspect of the Spanish Master's writings which has not been adequately examined. In this respect, her analysis, as brief as it is, is not only a valuable contribution to the study of Makkī but Akbarian thought. Ibn al-ʻArabī's use of the *Qūt* in the *Futuḥāt* to address certain "divine secrets", as Yazaki shows, suggests the former work was understood to deal with more than simply the basics of Islamic spirituality and ethics. Sadly, she leaves the broader questions raised by this peculiar use of the *Qūt* unexplored, despite the significant bearing they have in how to classify the text. The fact that the greatest exponent of Sufi metaphysical theory praised Makkī's penetrating insights and engaged his meditations in the *Qūt* when

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broaching certain points of mystical doctrine or *al-ʿilm al-mukāshafa*, and not simply of practice or *al-ʿilm al-muʿāmala*, should lead us, in the least, to question certain predominant views about the aims and audience of the text. It should also problematise the perception of the work as an unimaginative composition lacking in originality, exemplified by S. D. Goiten's rash judgment of it more than 45 years ago as "a rather unsystematic heap of quotations" ("A Plea for the Periodization of Islamic History", *JAOS* 88, no. 2 (1968), p. 225). Yazaki also loses the opportunity to shed some light on Ibn al-ʿArabī's use of a critical line from the *Qūt*, that "God never discloses Himself in a single form to two individuals, nor in a single form twice", an idea which would become a cornerstone of the *Doctor Maximus*'s ontology (cf. W. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge* [Albany, 1989], p. 103). She ends the chapter with a short but useful overview of Makkī's multifaceted representations in the encyclopedic medieval biographies.

In Chapter Seven Yazaki assesses the wide range of Ḥanbalī responses to Makkī. Her extensive discussion of Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 1201) complex attitude to Makkī as both an authority of Sufism and the *ḥadīth* sciences is penetrating, particularly in how she resolves the seeming tensions in the way he and his ideas are represented in the *Talbīs Iblīs* and the *Talqīḥ fuhūm ahl al-athar*. This may indeed be the highlight of the chapter. Unfortunately, her treatment of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who warrants more attention than Ibn al-Jawzī, is too brief and marred by some misconceptions. Her suggestion that the Ḥanbalī polemicist's main qualm with Makkī had to do with his use of weak *ḥadīth* is mistaken. It had instead to do with the much more serious accusation of his alleged espousal of the heretical notion of *ḥulūl* or "divine indwelling," as he makes clear in his *al-Risāla al-ṣafadiyya*, shortly before he turns to his criticisms of Ibn al-ʿArabī ([Beirut, 2002], pp. 264–265). This was the same charge he levelled against the twelfth-century Andalusian theologian, *ḥadīth* scholar and Qur'ān commentator, Ibn Barrajān, who, it has recently been argued, was himself heavily influenced by Makkī (see Yousef Casewit's forthcoming dissertation). Such a serious accusation should not have been left unexamined in an inquiry into Ibn Taymiyya's attitude towards Makkī and the *Qūt*. As for Yazaki's claim that Ibn Taymiyya "seems to approve of certain doctrines of al-Makkī and the Sālimiyya" (p. 139), the reader is left entirely in the dark as to what exactly these doctrines might be. Additionally, to say that "Ibn Taymiyya does not seem to approve of the latter's [= Ibn al-ʿArabī] doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*" (p. 139) is too understate the matter, when we consider that he is usually credited with instigating the anti-Akbarian polemic which would unfold in later Islamic history precisely because of the doctrine in question (cf. A. Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition* [Albany, 1999]).

A broader problem with her analysis of Ḥanbalī responses to Makkī centres on such statements as "the current general image of Ḥanbalīs [as anti-Sufi]," or "the prevailing view of Ḥanbalī hostility towards Sufism" (pp. 140, 174). This is, however, hardly a "prevailing view" in Western scholarship, as a familiarity with the contributions of L. Massignon, G. Makdisi and others would make clear. If, on the other hand, by "prevailing view" she has in mind more popular attitudes, (which, in any case, would be quite irrelevant to her study), it is only Wahabis and Salafis who are "anti-Sufi," but not necessarily self-identified Ḥanbalīs who consciously choose to follow a juridical school.

In the final section Yazaki turns to explore the relation of the *Qūt* to *al-Hidāya ilā al-farā'iḍ al-qulūb* by the medieval Jewish thinker, Ibn Bāqūdā (d. after 1080). Her conclusion is that a "direct link cannot be easily established between *al-Hidāya* and the *Qūt*" (p. 171). While a Makkīan influence on Ibn Bāqūdā is not the most significant aspect of Makkī's legacy, the merit of the chapter lies in its attempt to put to rest the theories of a number of a number of scholars in the field of Jewish studies who have speculated that the *Qūt* may have been a possible source of the *Hidāya*. Methodologically speaking, however, Yazaki's conclusion might have been strengthened through a meticulous, comparative analysis of parallel chapters in the *Hidāya* and the *Qūt,* (on *tawakkul, ikhlāṣ, tawba, zuhd* and *maḥabba*), which she does not seem to have carried out in a systematic fashion. This might have been more fruitful than a focus on their respective conceptualisations of the heart, to which Ibn Bāqūdā does not devote an

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independent chapter. Admittedly, such a task, if methodically carried out, would no doubt have been extremely laborious and time-consuming.

On the whole, many of the errors and weaknesses in the study seem, in the opinion of this reviewer, to be the consequence of the author taking on too large of a project for a single monograph, particularly at such an early stage in her professional career. There are very few who would be able to competently analyze Makkī and the whole gamut of thinkers whose works Yazaki looks into within the single sweep of a doctoral dissertation. She might have been better off confining herself to a narrower focus, one which, for example, concentrated simply on Makkī in the early period, or which compared his ideas of the heart with those of a restricted number of other thinkers. A much broader theoretical problem with the present work, and one already addressed by previous reviewers (I. Iqbal, *MWBR*, 33, no. 4 [2013], pp. 54–58; M. Nguyen, *JSS*, 2, no. 3 [2013], pp. 207–209), rests on the fact that Yazaki does not provide a clear definition of "Sufism" or "mysticism" in the preface to her study. While this is by no means necessary in the case of every work which deals with the inner tradition of Islam, it was essential in the present one because Yazaki often probes into whether a given historical figure or work should be described as "Sufi" or "mystical". Her failure to adequately define the categories in question may also be the underlying reason for some of the inconsistencies and tensions which pervade her work, and which leads her to oscillate between a notion of Sufism/mysticism which involves the unorthodox, the miraculous, and the subversive, on the one hand, and a more interiorised, ethical and conformist mode of piety, on the other. As an example, on p. 167 she writes that "[i]t does not even seem to be his intention to elucidate mysticism . . . the main concern of the book [*al-Hidāyā*] is religious ethics." Later, however, she concedes that "[e]thics and mysticism overlap" (p. 176).

To close, it should be noted that the aforementioned criticisms should not detract from the overall merit of the work. To do so would be to miss, in some ways, the forest for the trees. While there are some serious flaws in Yazaki's work, on the whole, it stands as a valuable contribution whose strengths, in the final analysis, significantly outweigh its weaknesses. Not only does it contain some real gems, many of Yazaki's leads will prove to be of great use for upcoming researchers. As the first monograph on Makkī in Western scholarship, it is the kind of book that no scholar can afford to ignore in any future inquiry into the early period of Sufism. <atif.khalil@uleth.ca>

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Muhammad Juki's Shahnamah of Firdausi. By Barbara Brend. pp. 214. London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Philip Wilson, 2010.
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The Shahnamah of Muhammad Juki, a masterpiece of the Islamic book, is the most famous manuscript in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society. While it has features in common with two other slightly earlier Timurid royal Shahnamahs, those of Baysunqur Mirza and Ibrahim Sultan, it is a work of extreme refinement, being devoid of the slightly rebarbative steely brilliance of the former and the mannered, archaic effect of the latter. It has never had the monograph it merited, and this it now receives in Dr Brend's sumptuous, but also very useful, publication.

The colophon is lost, but the script shares certain idiosyncracies with that of the Shah Rukh Khamsah in the Hermitage Museum, dated Rabiʿ ii AH 835 (December AD 1431) by a certain Mahmud

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