

(*siyāsa*), and should be seen rather as an occasional supplementary forum to the *qādī*'s court than as a superior alternative.

The historical section, after chapters on the formative and classical periods, includes chapters on both periods that have been widely studied, such as Ottoman law, and those which have not, such as the Mughal empire. As we know, the Ottoman period is open for studies of law in practice, as court records were widely retained from that time onwards. For example, Haim Gerber, in his article on the period, discusses recent works on the legal response to prostitution. These show, in some contrast to the letter of the law, that prostitution was seldom treated as *zinā*, fornication leading to the death penalty. Instead, the courts appear to have accepted the practice as an inevitable, though reprehensible, fact of life, and focused on keeping it out of the more genteel districts, or expelling prostitutes from the town altogether. In general, forced labour (short-term galley slavery) was a more common substitution for *ḥudūd* penalties. Surprisingly, in Gerber's article, there is little mention of *kanun*, normally seen as one of the most significant aspects of Ottoman law.

There is unfortunately far less source material on Mughal Islamic law, the topic that M. Reza Pirbhai examines. Indeed, many historians have effectively ignored the fact that the Mughals practised a specific Islamic law, with the exception of the "rigorist" sultan Aurangzeb. Thus, more attention has been paid to the manuals of law, such as the *Hidāya* (actually from Central Asia), and the later establishment of Anglo-Muhammadan law. From the 1980s onwards, however, some works have appeared that dispense with the classical dichotomy of Muslim vs. Indic law, showing how the Mughals assimilated Indic, Persian, and Turko-Mongol norms to Islamic thought and institutions.

This volume gives a comprehensive survey of the state of knowledge today. The provocative introductory essay by Ayesha Chaudhry denounces the traditions of "White supremacist Islamic studies" and "Patriarchal Islamic legal studies" that unite in a search for a "true Islam" to be found in the classical texts. The volume demonstrates how far we have now moved away from such essentialism, towards a study of Islamic law as a phenomenon that varies dramatically with historical and social contexts, and how the "texts" interact with these realities in myriad different ways. It is highly recommended for those who wish to be informed about the state of knowledge in the field today.

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ARIANNA D'OTTONE RAMBACH (ed.):

Palaeography between East and West: Proceedings of the Seminars on Arabic Palaeography at Sapienza University of Rome.

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This collected volume, edited by Arianna d'Ottone Rambach, contains works related to palaeography and philology from a variety of different fields. They are the result of a series of seminars with the same title held at La Sapienza University organized

by the editor with the explicit goal of bringing together scholars from all over the world focusing on the study of manuscripts and palaeography.

By design, the volume has articles on a variety of different topics. Due to its broad focus it is not possible to comment on each article in detail. I will therefore highlight several articles of particular interest to me.

The first of these is the contribution of Arianna D'Ottone Rambach and Dario Internullo (pp. 53–72). They present the exciting discovery of a papyrus letter in the Arabic language, presumably from around the eighth century, written in Latin script. Early examples of Arabic written in non-Arabic script are rare and usually only involve names. This text is a full Arabic letter and represents an essential piece of the puzzle of reconstructing the linguistic history of Arabic in the early Islamic period.

The decipherment of the letter is still quite fragmentary, but it will hopefully be improved in the years to come. The article comes with a fairly legible reproduction of the papyrus, but even better is that the papyrus is now digitized and available on the British Library website (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Papyrus_3124). A more in-depth understanding of the palaeography and of the linguistic features of its rather non-classical Latin may give us a better understanding of the provenance and the phonology of the letter. This should also aid interpretation of the transcriptions for the analysis of the phonology of Arabic.

A second article by the editor (pp. 123–39) discusses the Arabic glosses in the Bible of Cava, a ninth-century Latin Bible. She argues, contrary to what has been suggested before, that the Arabic glosses are both very early and by someone who also provided Latin glosses in the same ink, pointing to a scribe proficient in both. The main thrust of the article is convincing, although the quality of the photos provided leaves much to be desired. Certain claims about the ink and handwriting are difficult to evaluate.

Asma Hilali's contribution (pp. 141–52) concerns the Sanaa Palimpsest. This quranic manuscript is unique among those known, first because of it being a palimpsest – a rare phenomenon for quranic manuscripts – and second because the lower text is the only example of a text type different from the standard Uthmanic one that makes up its upper text. Because of the nature of the lower text, the upper text has understandably received less attention. Hilali focuses here on some of the palaeographic features of the upper text. This is important for understanding what the date and reasons for the replacement of the lower text may have been. Hilali (p. 144) claims that no fewer than four scribes worked on the upper text. Unfortunately, she does not substantiate this claim with evidence. A quick examination of the word (*ka-dālika*) on the folios of the allegedly different scribes containing one of the letters that is supposed to show this twice (*kāf*) clearly demonstrates that we are dealing with one scribe only (1A, l. 14; 5A, l. 19; 11A, l. 29; 24A, l. 6).

In her discussion of the tenth-verse markers, Hilali suggests that the ornament on 23A, l. 16 is an end-of-chapter marker, a feature that would be unique to this manuscript. However, the same ornament appears on 27A, l. 21 in a location where it is a tenth-verse marker. The reason why it appears at the end of the chapter on 23A is because *Sūrat al-Sajdah* has thirty verses.

Hilali ends her article with the speculation that the variety of verse markers gives the impression of a certain inconsistency. She goes on to argue that this suggests that the manuscript was written by non-professional scribes and was not commissioned for a specific use. She questions whether the manuscript was intended as a full Quran at all. These speculations strike me as having little connection to the evidence at hand. The ornamentation is not contemporary with the written text and the lack of Sura divisions may indeed suggest that the ornamentation was aborted early, but this

does not tell us anything about whether or not the text was (or was intended to be) a complete copy of the Quran. With about 40 per cent of the text present across the disparate sections of the Quran, with all the conventional Surah transitions present, I see no reason to assume that it was not.

Serena Ammirati (pp. 99–122) presents a survey of some of the Latin fragments from the Qubbat al-Khazna of Damascus. It gives useful historical insight into the work of B. Violet on this important store of a whole variety of oriental manuscripts, including many important quranic manuscripts. This article identifies for the first time a variety of Latin manuscripts found there that span a period from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries and a variety of different genres. They appear to have been imported.

Bruno Lo Turco (pp. 153–78) examines the function of the Gaṇeśa episode in the *Mahābhārata*, and recontextualizes the role that it plays. Importantly, he suggests the writer of the passage used Gaṇeśa to enhance the status of the scribe, and ironically plays with the claims of pre-composed unchanging oral form of the author's composition. Such commentary on the position of writing in traditions that (often paradoxically) revere the oral transmission – reminiscent of the Islamic tradition – helps to recontextualize the relation of the spoken and written in practice.

Lucio del Corso (pp. 29–52) discusses literary papyri in funerary contexts, exploring both bookrolls used as grave offerings and papyri reused as papier-maché shells of mummified bodies called *cartonnages*.

Michelle P. Brown (pp. 73–98) examines Latin manuscripts from St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai and identifies at least two Insular scribes at work in this region during the early Middle Ages. This reveals contact between the Near East and the British Isles.

Maria Migliore (pp. 179–91) explores the diplomacy of ancient Japanese administrative documents and their development.

The book is a welcome collection of articles that brings to light the broad field of palaeography and how it can contribute to our understanding of history.

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JONATHAN E. BROCKOPP:

Muhammad's Heirs: The Rise of Muslim Scholarly Communities, 622–950.

(Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization.) xi, 232 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. £75. ISBN 978 1 107 10666 6. doi:10.1017/S0041977X20002499

In 1980, Joan Gilbert (“Institutionalization of Muslim scholarship and professionalization of the ‘*Ulamā*’ in medieval Damascus”, *Studia Islamica*, 1980, 105–34) provided us with a neat periodization of Muslim learning: close to the end of the fourth/tenth century, the *madrasa* appeared as an institution in the Islamic world. This new mode of transmission of religious knowledge contributed enormously to making the ulama a professional class, in the sense that for their scholarship the ulama could now systematically receive a financial reward for teaching, and thus their scholarship could help them act as breadwinners. Additionally, Islamic knowledge was