

Turkic? Multilingual Afghanistan, too, is strangely absent from this book, appearing only briefly in the introduction and chapter 12. This, despite the fact that it is, as the editor makes clear, generally sidelined in scholarship on the Persian-speaking world. Tajikistan, which normally receives short shrift in histories of Persian literature, and hence could be considered marginal, is also ignored.

The attempt to de-centre Persian studies when linguistic interactions in the centre remain understudied leads to another issue: the extent to which the roles of Persian in the different contexts studied here should be considered comparable. For example, does the highly proscribed use of Persian in Ming imperial edicts, studied in chapter 3, reflect the same processes as the creation of the literary network of Munīr Lāhūrī, studied in chapter 5? If a common mechanism underlies these two examples, the book does not bring it out explicitly, and as interesting as the epilogue is, it does not sift through the evidence provided in the foregoing chapters and give us a more granular idea of Persographia. Now that this volume has made the case for the domain of cosmopolitan written Persian, could the concept perhaps be refined, not on the basis of geography, but rather with other concerns in mind, such as genre, context of production, and reception? The frontiers of the Persianate world were, after all, dependent on the bearers of the culture and their intentions, rather than on any fixed point in space.

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JONATHAN M. BLOOM:

*Architecture of the Islamic West: North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, 700–1800.*

320 pp. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020. £50.

ISBN 978 030021870 1.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X20002797

This beautiful and much-anticipated book is a continuation and expansion of the author's earlier work on Fatimid Cairo (Jonathan M. Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*, New Haven and London, 2007). It is extremely well illustrated, with clear insightful text, eschewing the current trend for overinterpretation and theorizing, that provides a comprehensive overview of the subject, and is accompanied by a series of new plans drawn by Nicholas Warner. It fills the major gap in the literature that was previously only covered by Georges Marçais (*L'architecture musulmane d'Occident*, Paris, 1956).

Although Felix Arnold's recent book (*Islamic Palace Architecture in the Western Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2017), brought a large number of new sites in the region to light, it only addresses palaces, while in this book Bloom covers all the major structural typologies across the region. In addition, despite the date 1800 occurring in the title, the volume covers from the earliest to the most recent buildings, including the still unfinished Djemaa El Djazaïr in Algiers, thus placing them all into the living continuum of architectural development in the region.

The book consists of an introduction, followed by nine chapters, each with numerous large colour photos that complement the text and, in several cases show the buildings as there were in the 1970s, before many of the more recent

alterations and restoration changed their appearance and much originality was lost. Perhaps the most striking example of this is the mosque at Tinmal, in Morocco.

After a personal, concise, and effective introduction, the first chapter addresses the monuments of the Umayyad period in al-Andalus, and Aghlabid Ifriqiya. As with the rest of the chapters, a brief historical overview is provided for the non-specialist reader, before attention turns to the surviving buildings. There is a detailed and evidence-based approach taken to the material throughout that clarifies the chronology of the buildings, especially the Great Mosque at Kairouan.

In chapter 2, attention turns to the early Fatimid sites of Mahdiya and Sabra-Mansuriya, as well as the Umayyad palace at Madinat al-Zahra' and the expansion of the Great Mosque in Cordoba. There is a convincing qualification of the older assumptions that link the mosque to Syrian architecture, and in between the study of the phases of expansion, there is a brief discussion of the significance of the Umayyad addition of minarets to mosques in Fez.

The third chapter addresses the developments during the long eleventh century, and is divided into three main sections, addressing the main structures at the Qal'a of the Bani Hammad, with a case made against there being links to Fatimid architecture, followed by a study of some key sites of Taifa al-Andalus. The chapter concludes with the Norman monuments in Sicily, and an argument that they have closer links to al-Andalus than to Egypt.

This is followed by a study of the architecture of the Almoravids and Almohads, covering the period from the mid-eleventh to the mid-thirteenth centuries. The focus is on Fez and Marrakesh, and shows the connections to earlier Andalusian building. The austere texture, and distinctive lambrequin arches, of the Almohads are clearly demonstrated by Bloom. The chapter concludes with a study of the vast, incomplete, mosque of Hassan in Rabat.

Chapter 5 is one of the shortest, and covers the architecture of the Nasrids, with a brief, clear, overview of the Alhambra. This is a site about which no end of monographs have been written, and thus does not require the level of detail seen in the other chapters, which mostly address far less well-known sites. The concluding section looks at the Mudéjar buildings in Seville and Cordoba in order to demonstrate the existence of a trans-confessional luxury architectural aesthetic in the Iberian Peninsula during the fourteenth century.

Chapter 6 is one of the longest, and covers the monuments built under the aegis of the various heirs to the Almohads during the fourteenth century, with the focus on Marinid buildings in Chella, Fez, and Salé. The final part then addresses some later Hafsid structures.

The next chapter examines the architectural impact of first Ottoman, and subsequently Hapsburg, domination of the region encompassing what is now Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The main focus is on a number of mosques built in Tunis and Algiers.

The penultimate chapter focuses on the developments under the Sharifan dynasties of Morocco, and covers the same general chronological span as chapter 7. Several mosques, palaces, and madrasas in Marrakesh are discussed, before attention turns to the early eighteenth-century monuments in Meknès.

The book ends with a study of the legacies of Maghribi architecture, which covers both the European engagement with, and at times appropriation of, aspects of architectural form and ornament in the nineteenth century, as well as the more recent revivalist structures built in Morocco in the latter decades of the twentieth century.

In this book Bloom highlights the more conservative and interiorized nature of Islamic architecture in the west, compared to the style found further to the east, as well as the reliance on wood for ceilings, and demonstrates the rich and

distinctive tradition of the region over many centuries. While there are more detailed studies on many of the regions, and in the case of the Alhambra, individual elements of buildings, covered in the book, this is the first work in English to address the Islamic architecture of the wider region over the *longue durée*.

In summation, this book represents the distilled essence of a lifetime of scholarship, does exactly what its stated aims are, and will remain the key work on the subject of Islamic architecture in the Maghreb and al-Andalus for many years to come.

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## SOUTH ASIA

DÁNIEL BALOGH:

*Inscriptions of the Aulikaras and their Associates.*

(Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State, 4.) xxi, 272 pp. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019. €64.95. ISBN 978 3 11 064472 2.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X2000302X

Although its history is only sporadically documented in Sanskrit inscriptions, the Aulikara dynasty of western India (ancient Avanti) is of interest as belonging to a critical period in the history of northern India during the declining days of the Gupta empire and the Hun invasions. This volume presents detailed editions and studies of 30 inscriptions (fifteen “major inscriptions”, ten “minor inscriptions”, and five previously “unpublished” inscriptions), all from Mandasaur (or Mandasor; ancient Daśapura, in eastern Madhya Pradesh) and surrounding areas, dating from the late fifth to the late sixth centuries CE. The major inscriptions are typical *praśasti* (eulogistic) records, composed in classical *kāvya* style and inscribed on structural stone slabs or free-standing pillars. The inscriptions are presented in complete editions including text, translation, and detailed commentary, except for the five previously unpublished inscriptions, which are given in partial or preliminary form, often because they are illegible or inaccessible.

The editions are carried out with extreme care in all respects. As far as possible the author has prepared superior new images based on his extensive fieldwork. The texts are presented first as a “diplomatic text” following the line-by-line arrangement and punctuation on the original stone, then as a “curated” text set up as numbered verses with the meter identified, compound junctures indicated by hyphens, and detailed footnotes on the readings. Each inscription is preceded by a detailed commentary, amounting in some cases to a verse-by-verse analysis.

Most of the inscriptions were previously published, including several known since the early days of Indian epigraphical studies and edited and translated by renowned epigraphists such as J.F. Fleet in his volume of Gupta inscriptions (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III, 1888). Nonetheless, Balogh has managed to propose improvements and corrections of “the occasional error in the original edition” (p. vi), legitimately claiming that “I do believe that I have corrected many small mistakes” (p. vii). For example, in the frequently published “Mandasaur inscription of the silk weavers”, he proposes to read *sarvva-dikṣūdāram* instead of *sarvam atyuddāram* of previous editions (line 20, verse 37b; p. 108).