

uses: the boiled meat as a cure for asthma; the dung smeared on to the body prevents lice and if taken by a woman prevents conception.

The paintings are analysed in depth in chapter 6, taking into account the landscape elements and the spatial relationships between the various elements in the paintings. There is, here, the first thorough study of *mise-en-page* of an Arabic medieval manuscript. The paintings of the *Na't* are discussed in the context of their relationship with other contemporary manuscripts such as the Dioscorides of 1224 and the al-Šūfī manuscript of the Reza Abbasi Museum in Tehran. Contadini points out that the date of the al-Šūfī manuscript of 554/1159 is a later interpolation based on the analysis of the ink and calligraphy, and given the close stylistic relationship that exists with the 1224 Dioscorides, it should be considered a manuscript of the thirteenth century. The book concludes, in chapter 8, with a discussion of the patronage and the milieu in which this manuscript was produced, with a number of possible scenarios providing an important insight into book production of this period. The author suggests that the manuscript was probably produced within a scholarly environment, reflecting the intellectual revival of late Abbasid Baghdad under the Caliph al-Nāṣir. The book has a comprehensive apparatus of appendixes, an impressive bibliography, and a useful, detailed, index.

In sum, although the book is centred around the manuscript of the *Na't al-Ḥayawān*, it is in fact a discussion of thirteenth-century Arab painting that deals with the subject in unprecedented depth. The research is grounded in meticulous scholarship and the chapters arranged so that they provide a rounded and complete picture of the manuscript and the context in which it was produced. The book is a significant contribution to the field and will remain a key work for many years to come. It is also a great pleasure to read.

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M.E. McMILLAN:

The Meaning of Mecca: The Politics of Pilgrimage in Early Islam.

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This book addresses the much-understudied question of the *ḥajj* in the early Islamic period. In so doing, it provides valuable material on the successive leaders of 120 *ḥajj* seasons, from the beginnings of Abū Bakr's caliphate to the coming of the Abbasids. It sheds light on the efforts of various rulers to imitate Muḥammad's precedent of the Farewell pilgrimage of 10/632, and on the place occupied by the *ḥajj* in the different political agendas of the caliphs. The pilgrimage to Mecca thus appears as a central ritual in the legitimation process of the caliphs as well as an ideal platform for rebels to make their own bids for power.

Leading the *ḥajj* was mostly a caliphal prerogative under the *Rāshidūn* until 'Uthmān's assassination in 35/656. 'Alī's tormented reign clearly marks a significant departure from this practice as the context of the first *fitna* prevented him from ever leading the pilgrimage, a challenge that some of his Umayyad successors would face again in the course of the second and third civil wars. Indeed, the *ḥajj* "could just as easily be manipulated by rebels as it was by rulers" (p. 38). This paradoxical situation is perhaps best exemplified by the pilgrimage of 68/688, when four

competing groups (Ibn al-Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Malik, but also Ibn al-ḥanafiyyah and the Kharijites) managed to raise their banners on top of Mount Arafāt, thus revealing the critical importance of the *ḥajj* in asserting their leadership over the *umma* (pp. 15–7, 75–6).

In the context of the Muslim expansion, the *ḥajj* “became part of the politics of empire” (p. 35) and a time during which caliphs could reaffirm their authority over their governors: “the *ḥajj* thus proved an invaluable way of absorbing the provincial periphery into the caliphal center” (p. 36). McMillan argues for a strong sense of continuity between the two branches of the Umayyad family (Sufyānids and Marwānids, pp. 89 ff.) and the early Abbasid caliphs (p. 158) with regard to their *ḥajj* policies, although Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik and ‘Umar II stand as notable exceptions. In fact, save for these two brief caliphates, the *ḥajj* became a family business and was considered the ideal venue to raise the profile of the heir apparent in order to prepare caliphal succession and as a way for the caliph to assert his authority and symbolic power. As such, it was the norm for the caliphs to lead the pilgrimage in person at least once during their reigns and the few exceptions were dictated by troubled times revealing political weakness in front of seditious movements. It is worth noting that many prominent characters in early Islam, such as the *Anṣār* or the *Ṣaḥāba*, were largely excluded from leading the *ḥajj*, as were the sons of ‘Uthmān, “the Umayyad martyr *par excellence*” (p. 61), while the leaders selected to perform this important task over the years reveal changing political strategies in the ḥijāz (this discussion should now be complemented by A. Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijaz: Five Prosopographical Case Studies* (Oxford, 2010)).

Although the data collected in this volume will certainly be helpful for future research on the topic, it is highly regrettable that the analysis of the raw material turns out to be so limited. This is chiefly due to the absence of any serious critical engagement with either the primary sources or modern scholarship, both relegated to two appendixes that add very little to our knowledge. As a consequence, the sources are usually taken very literally and no attention is paid to the images of some Umayyad caliphs for example, such as Mu‘āwiya, Sulaymān, ‘Umar II, or even al-Walīd b. Yazīd and his scandalous pilgrimage of 116/735. In all of these instances, the relevant scholarship is overlooked: for example, R.S. Humphreys, *Mu‘āwiya ibn Abi Sufyan: From Arabia to Empire* (Oxford, 2006); R. Eisener, *Zwischen Faktum und Fiktion: Eine Studie zum Umayyadenkalifen Sulaimān b. ‘Abdalmalik und seinem Bild in den Quellen* (Wiesbaden, 1987); A. Borrut, “Entre tradition et histoire: genèse et diffusion de l’image de ‘Umar II”, *Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph* 58, 2005, 329–78; S.C. Judd, “Reinterpreting al-Walīd b. Yazīd”, *JAOS* 128/3, 2008, 439–58. The same is true of other topics, such as the alleged attempt of ‘Abd al-Malik to make Jerusalem an alternative pilgrimage site when control of Mecca was lost to the Zubayrids (see, finally, A. Elad, “‘Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: a further examination of the Muslim sources”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35, 2008, 167–226); several works of O. Grabar are missing as well. Furthermore, the absence of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān* (Brill, 2001–2006) from the bibliography is quite puzzling, while it is now impossible to discuss early Islamic rituals without A. Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire* (Edinburgh, 2009). On the very subject of the *ḥajj*, the bibliography should notably be complemented by F.M. Donner’s recent article “Umayyad efforts at legitimation: the Umayyads’ silent heritage”, in A. Borrut and P.M. Cobb (eds), *Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain* (Brill, 2010, 187–211). The theoretical framework is almost non-existent and the book would have

benefitted for instance from a discussion of V. Turner's much-debated theories on pilgrimage as social process and rite of passage, instituting the *communitas* ("Pilgrimages as social processes", in *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human History* (Ithaca, 1974, 166–230).

The "politics of pilgrimage" are seen almost exclusively through the lens of the affirmation of political authority, or lack thereof. If the question of delegation of authority is occasionally touched upon, nothing is said about the challenges of exercising power at a distance in a pre-modern context. The possibility of connecting the *hajj* with a form of itinerant kingship is also overlooked, perhaps as the consequence of the total neglect of what anthropologists have taught us about power in motion (on itinerant kingship under the Umayyads see A. Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir: l'espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides* (v. 72–193/692–809) (Leiden: Brill, 2011, 383 ff.)).

Finally, several aspects of the *hajj* are not addressed, i.e. its economic dimension, the various pilgrimage roads, not to mention the question of other early Islamic sites of memory. The question of the Prophet's tomb could for instance have been discussed following L. Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York, 2007). Overall, the book offers a good deal of precious information on an important topic but largely fails to make full use of it.

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BETHANY WALKER:

Jordan in the Late Middle Ages. Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier.

(Chicago Studies on the Middle East.) xii, 338 pp. Chicago: Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, 2011.

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Jordan is at the forefront of Islamic archaeological research, boasting an extensive published corpus beginning with the volume on the astonishing frescoed bathhouse of the Umayyad era at Qusayr 'Amr by Alois Musil in 1907. Many excavation and survey projects in subsequent decades have added to an increasingly complex mosaic of data about its Islamic past. In recent years more studies have focused on what is here termed the Late Middle Ages, specifically the period of the Ayyubid and Mamluk sultanates. Documentary sources likewise provide many investigative avenues that are informative about southern Bilād al-Shām at this time, although the fact that Jordan formed parts of two administrative entities, the provinces of Damascus and Karak, means that accessing this material is a complex task.

The period of Mamluk rule in Jordan was accompanied by the expansion of the agricultural economy, linked by scholars to the political stability established in the later thirteenth century, and then countered by a long decline from the late fourteenth century. This view of Jordanian history is derived essentially from chronicles and other documents compiled in urban centres and outside of Jordan itself. Archaeological survey and excavation can provide an important counter-balance to this picture, revealing new data offering insights into many aspects of life at