REVIEWS

THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

COLIN TURNER (ed.):
The Koran: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies. Volume I: Provenance and Transmission; Volume II: Themes and Doctrines; Volume III: Style and Structure; Volume IV: Translation and Exegesis.
xx, 270 pp.; ix, 396 pp.; ix, 470 pp.; x, 401 pp. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. £525.

A collection of 75 reprinted journal articles and book chapters, all in English, ranging in date from 1891 to 2002, is presented here as a summary of Euro-American quranic studies. Turner's brief introduction (vol. I, pp. 1–9) remarks on the absence of 'critical thought' among Muslim writers on the Quran and, he says, 'we must remind ourselves that these volumes form part of a series whose rubric—*Critical Concepts*—must, by its very definition, exclude the vast majority of works written about the Koran by Muslim scholars who happen to believe in its veracity and authenticity'. It is odd then that Turner does not even comment directly on the contents of his volumes, which contain essays by Fazlur Rahman (drawn from his *Major Themes in the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989) and many other writers whose names at least suggest to me some Muslim heritage (far be it from me to judge their personal standing in faith). Be that as it may, the collection of articles (if not the introduction) is certainly less polemical than the recent collections compiled by Ibn Warraq (*The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1998) and *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2002)) and more wide ranging than this reviewer's own recent edited volumes, *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) and *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) which, by design, focus on the classical Islamic world only. Many of the authors of the anthologized articles are as expected: St. Clair-Tisdall, Nöldeke, Jeffery, Watt, Burton, O'Shaughnessy, Izutsu, Cragg, Denny, Haddad, Mir, Sells, Abdel Haleem, Johns, Neuwirth, Robinson, Ayoub—all central figures in the study of the Quran. Some significant people are missing, even taking into account that the selection is limited to articles written in English: Richard Bell is especially noticeable by his absence, as is Harris Birkeland, to isolate just two prominent names. Certain sources are reproduced disproportionately: fourteen articles are taken from just six issues of the *Journal of Quranic Studies*; six come from G. Hawting and A. Shereef (eds), *Approaches to the Qur'an* (London: Routledge 1993) and five from I. Boullata's edited volume *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000). Overall, this is a collection of articles that are fairly easily accessible elsewhere (with the possible exception of one by Alan Jones, 'The Qur'ān in light of earlier Arabic Prose', *University Lectures in Islamic Studies Volume 1* (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 1997) which I had not seen previously) but they have been brought together conveniently in

a pleasing uniform typeface. No attempt has been made to make the articles consistent in spelling, transliteration or reference style. A brief index has been provided at the end of volume 4. All the articles are models of scholarship and their 'critical concepts' vary widely, as is appropriate.

Certain elements of these volumes raise considerable concern, however. They are plagued by issues of accuracy and copyright. 'Von Isaiah Goldfeld', listed as the author (in three separate places!) of an article reprinted from the German journal *Der Islam*, is really quite humorous. Some typos are almost inevitable in volumes of this dimension and character, and it is pointless to list them here. The chronological list of the publication dates of articles will surely mislead beginning students in catastrophic ways because it prevents the reader from achieving any sense of the history of scholarship's approach to the Quran: articles by Nöldeke, St. Clair-Tisdall and Jeffery (by whom there are two pieces which are here blended into one with no explanation) are listed as having been published in 1998 because they are reprinted from Ibn Warraq's *The Origins of the Koran* rather than having their original dates of 1891, 1901, 1935 and 1937 (respectively) listed prominently. The same thing happens with two articles credited to my *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation* (1999) and six from my *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents* (2001). Furthermore, the reprints from these three volumes raise concerns about copyright that really should worry every scholar: in the case of my volumes, I do not believe that the publisher holds rights that could appropriately be reassigned to Turner's volumes. In one case (Bijlefeld), the original publication is found in *The Muslim World* (as is one of Jeffery's articles which was reprinted from Ibn Warraq's volume, with 'permission' granted by Prometheus and Brill [!]). That is a journal from which the editor apparently secured republication rights for several other articles; however, for this particular article which I republished in *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents*, credit is given to Ashgate. This is sloppy in the extreme and hardly excused by the legal 'disclaimer' at the beginning of the book which claims that 'every effort' has been made to contact copyright holders. Mistakes happen certainly, and one or two such obvious mis-assignments might be excused, but in these volumes it really goes beyond such limits.

A. RIPPIN

MICHAEL G. CARTER:
Sibawayhi.
(Makers of Islamic Civilization.) viii, 159 pp. London and New York: Oxford University Press, I.B. Tauris, 2004. £9.99.

This book is published as part of the Makers of Islamic Civilization Series, which explores outstanding figures in the history of Islamic culture and learning. The subject is the distinguished Arabic grammarian Sībawayhi, who lived in the mid-eighth century CE in the city of Basra. He was the author of a work which represents the earliest systematic study of the Arabic language. The text, appositely entitled *al-Kitāb* (the Book), served as the *magnum opus* of the classical Arabic linguistic tradition. Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* was distinctive not only in terms of its revolutionary attempt to examine the language of the Arabs within the framework of a general theory of language, but also because it adopted an inventive approach to the analysis of the syntactic, morphological, and

phonological features of the Arabic language, employing legal–ethical paradigms. The book under review is an attempt to introduce those interested in the history of Arabic grammar to the scholarly accomplishments of the author of this outstanding text, highlighting the historical context in which the *Kitāb* was conceived. Michael Carter is a respected authority on both classical Arabic grammatical thought and Sībawayhi's role in its refinement and development. His unpublished PhD thesis entitled 'A study of Sībawayhi's principles of grammatical analysis' (1968) remains an authoritative and discerning exposition of this original grammatical text. Indeed, as we shall witness, Carter's insights into the nature of the early Arabic grammatical tradition, together with his assured understanding of its conceptual complexities, are effectively marshalled to unravel the text's technical features.

Examining the origins of the development of Arabic linguistic thought, Carter argues that Arabic grammar did not exist as a comprehensively defined discipline before the advent of Sībawayhi and his *Kitāb*. Classical biographical literature, which places the beginnings of linguistic thought within the confines of the activities of the early codifiers of the Quran and those engaged in its functional preservation, is therefore of little utility in aiding the reconstruction of its genuine history. In Carter's view these accounts do not inspire confidence as they provide an idealized version of the inception of linguistic thought. He comments that there are no extant tracts or treatises to substantiate many of the claims found in these biographical notices. Furthermore, the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi shows no evidence of being critically shaped by the supposed enterprise of these earlier pioneers. The same biographical notices refer to a profusion of luminaries who are purportedly recalled as having been mentors of Sībawayhi. Carter explains that a circumspect review of the context in which Sībawayhi's peers and predecessors are mentioned in the *Kitāb* reveals that their opinions and thoughts are invariably adduced to illustrate an argument or perspective with which he disagrees, or which he qualifies; the *Kitāb* therefore represents Sībawayhi's unique and unsurpassed contribution to Arabic grammatical thought.

Carter concludes that there are two noteworthy scholars who can be justifiably regarded as genuine mentors of Sībawayhi. One is the celebrated Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (d. 175/791–2), noted for his enterprise in lexicography, prosody, and philology, and the other is Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 183/799–800), an individual whose reputation as a philologist and grammarian was exceptional. The former is quoted in the *Kitāb* on 608 occasions, the latter some 217 times. However, Carter takes the view that Sībawayhi had set out to discover the organizing principles of Arabic by adopting a deliberately descriptive approach to grammar. He surpassed the hitherto rudimentary enterprise of his peers, predecessors, and even those individuals designated as his mentors. It is evident that the informative chapters in this monograph on syntax, morphology and phonology demonstrate the advanced and sophisticated levels of theoretical discourse consistently maintained in the *Kitāb*. A further crucial point relates to historical developments in the subsequent emergence of the so-called schools of Arabic linguistic thought and the attempts by later linguists to associate themselves with the *Kitāb*. This was viewed as a text whose reputation was in the ascendancy. Carter also uses the subtle shifts in positions to explain the proliferation of biographical anecdotes placing earlier grammarians within the compass of critical thought expounded upon in the *Kitāb*, although it has to be admitted that the same biographical notices furnish critical details regarding its textual transmission.

The issue of the origins of Arabic linguistic thought is tackled on the basis that the oldest surviving exhaustive work of grammar is the *Kitāb*; *ex hypothesi*, grammar (*naḥw*) only comes into being proper with this very text. Carter argues there is no evidence to suggest that Greek, Syriac and Indian antecedents in the study of language served as the hypothetical basis for Sībawayhi's grammatical constructs. A number of scholars such as the late Rafael Talmon contended that the linguistic traditions of antiquity supplied the paradigms and the precepts for the development of Arabic linguistic thought, although his line of reasoning was always tempered with the realization that Sībawayhi's grammatical achievements represented a genuine break with existing conventions in linguistic thought. Another scholar, Kees Versteegh, concluded that early quranic exegesis served as the discipline through which grammatical concepts were originally cultivated and refined. Carter believed that the inspiration for the Sībawayhian model of grammar came principally from the discipline of Islamic law. Having been trained in this discipline, Sībawayhi was able to transpose standard legal–ethical concepts and methodologies into his own theoretical synthesis of the study of the phenomenon of language. Scholars who dispute this thesis advocate that there existed a rich stock of grammatical terminology and notions from which Sībawayhi was able to draw. It is also maintained that the *Kitāb* presupposes a distinct awareness of linguistic ideas among Sībawayhi's contemporaries and immediate predecessors; this is something Carter accepts, although he remarks that it does not diminish the unparalleled theoretical achievements of the *Kitāb*.

In presenting an overview of the sources utilized by Sībawayhi in the *Kitāb* Carter observes that quranic usages and structures were employed in the text to bring to light Sībawayhi's own ideas about grammatical constructions and models of speech. He concludes that the *Kitāb* did not set out to establish the grammatical features of the Quran as an archetype for ordinary communication. Sībawayhi's criticism of certain readings of the Quran is highlighted to give some perspective to the authority of readings at this early juncture in the history of the Islamic tradition. This also leads to the statement that there is no trace in the *Kitāb* of the concept of the linguistic inimitability of the Quran (the doctrine of *i'jāz*). However, in the grammatical literature of the early linguists the commanding status awarded to the language of the Quran is essentially *a priori*; it did not require qualification given the format and objectives of the *Kitāb.* The issue of Sībawayhi's approach to the grammatical authentication of quranic readings does not impinge upon the integrity of their established authority as sources within the early reading tradition, a tradition which attached particular value to these readings' devotional import. Moreover, one has to bear in mind that the nature of grammatical variance among these readings was infinitesimal in countenance. It is fascinating to observe that a pedantic treatment of the idiosyncratic grammatical features of quranic readings was championed by scholars before Sībawayhi and continued among grammarians even in the centuries after his passing. This very fact does not reflect attitudes towards readings within the Islamic tradition *per se*, although it does demonstrate the very broad confines within which grammarians were able to operate and express their views candidly.

It is difficult to do this book justice within the confines of this brief review; its principal achievement is that it succeeds in lucidly presenting not only the grammatical intricacies and workings of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, but also the extent of its legacy within the tradition of Arabic grammatical thought. I came across one typographical error on p. 34: complilation for compilation. This book will

serve as an invaluable introduction to the history of Arabic linguistic thought, serving researchers and interested readers. Students embarking upon the study of Arabic and Islamic studies would also benefit from reading this text.

MUSTAFA SHAH

ABBAS POYA:
Anerkennung des Iğtihād—Legitimation der Toleranz. Möglichkeiten innerer und äußerer Toleranz im Islam am Beispiel der Iğtihād-Diskussion.
178 pp. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003.

In this short book, Abbas Poya explores a possible relationship between the modern notion of tolerance and the Muslim juristic concept of *ijtihād*. The work raises some important questions for Muslims who might wish to use the scholastic tradition as a source for the justification of modern social desiderata, such as 'tolerance'. Poya places his analysis of both concepts (*ijtihād* and tolerance) within the epistemological structures which dominate classical juristic discussions. There are, on the one hand, doctrines which are known with certainty to be true. These include not only theological dogma (the existence of a single deity and the creation of the world, for example), but also certain general legal, moral and ritual duties (that one is commanded to pray or go on pilgrimage, pay alms and fast, for example). On the other hand, there are legal issues on which there is debate and dispute—and in these areas, the jurist is able to perform his personal juristic reasoning (these being the *masā'il ijtihādiyya*). This distinction (between certain doctrine and debatable jurisprudence) leads to an epistemological distinction between areas of religious investigation where knowledge is possible (*qaṭ'iyyāt*) and where it is not (*ẓanniyyāt*). The fact that there is a potential for diversity of opinion in the latter, and that the majority of both Sunni and Shii jurists have accepted this is, for Poya, a fissure in the apparently monolithic apparatus of Muslim Sharī'a discourse. Into this fissure, a modern concept such as tolerance might be wedged. Acceptance of juristic difference brought about by a jurist's *ijtihād* could be seen as a model for an expression of Islam which permits diversity of opinion (*contra* popular mythology), and from a broader perspective, an Islam which can participate fully in a democratic system. Or at least, so it might seem. In fact, as Poya concludes, the acceptance of juristic difference within the Muslim legal tradition does not necessarily lead to tolerance as it is usually conceived.

Poya's discussion begins with a survey of the various attitudes towards *ijtihād* found in both Sunni and Imāmī Shii traditions (pp. 19–44). These are competently presented, and Poya's analysis has the edge over nearly all other Western-language summaries of the topic in that it recognizes the vitality of the Shii juristic tradition. In this way, Shii *uṣūl al-fiqh* is treated as an equal partner with the Sunni tradition in the development of Muslim legal thought, and this may be due to Poya's own training: the analysis reveals the author to have a solid grounding in the work of both major modern Shii jurists (Āyatallāhs Muṭaharrī, Jannātī, Faḍlallāh, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, etc.) and Sunni legal commentators (Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Zuhaylī in particular). Also illuminated in this section are groups who denied *ijtihād* (such as the Shii

Akhbārīs) or were willing only to use the term in an idiosyncratic manner which denies the validity of personal juristic opinion (the Ẓāhirīs). Following this there are scholarly analyses of the role of *ijtihād* with respect to the other sources of the law (Quran, Sunna, *ijmā'*) and the connection (or lack of it) between *ijtihād* and related juristic concepts (*istisḥān, maṣlaṇa, qiyās*). The presentation is, however, frequently skewed by Poya's eagerness to demonstrate *ijtihād's* potential as a tool to be exploited in the reformulation of Islamic thought.

Perhaps the most instructive section of the work is a brief chapter on *taṣwīb* and *takhṭi'a* (pp. 123–44). Here the limitations of using 'tolerance' as a prism through which *ijtihād* (and the theoretical problems associated with it) come to the fore. *Taṣwīb* is the doctrine that 'all *mujtahids* are correct' (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*) or, perhaps put more accurately, all *mujtahids* are equally justified (having all fulfilled their duty to perform *ijtihād*). Their opinions, though they differ, are all (legally) valid. Such a doctrine would naturally appeal to one trying to characterize the Muslim legal tradition as potentially tolerant, since it recognizes (and legitimizes) a plurality of views within a single legal framework. However, as Poya points out (p. 129), the doctrine can descend into a legal relativism, in which jurists are charged simply with carrying out a procedure, and not with finding the actual legal ruling of God. For some supporters of *taṣwīb* in the classical tradition (references are given on pp. 130–31 to both supporters and detractors of the doctrine), there is not only no possibility of knowing which of the *mujtahids'* opinions is the truth, there is no truth to be found. There is merely an interpretative process to be followed, and an opinion to be formed by the trained jurist. *Takhṭi'a* occupies the contrasting position to *taṣwīb*. Under this doctrine one of the various opinions of the *mujtahids* is correct and the others are all incorrect. For some jurists, this correct opinion could be known to be correct, but many argued that there was a correct opinion, but that discerning it was impossible. The latter, in practical terms, comes very close to one of the variants of the *taṣwīb* position. Central for supporters of *takhṭi'a* is the question of the religious status of the incorrect *mujtahid*: is he a sinner (*āthim*), since he has not discharged his duty of *ijtihād* correctly? Or is there a category between sinner and obedient servant ('one who is erroneous in his judgement'—*mukhti'*) into which the errant *mujtahid* might be placed? Poya explores the issue of the *mujtahid's* sinfulness at a number of points (see for example, pp.128, 142), and correctly sees it as central to the '*taṣwīb-takhṭi'a*-Diskussion'.

The problems with the ethical–political concept of tolerance, then, mirror the central epistemological problems of the *ijtihād* debate. Does an acceptance that all divergent views are of the equal legitimacy consign one to relativism? Can one be tolerant and still hold that one's own opinion is the truth and all other views erroneous? Of course, the doctrine of *ijtihād*, as it is found in most Sunni and Shii juristic writings, restricts the range of acceptable opinion (and therefore might be described as intolerant). Views can only be tolerated after contemplation, thought and research (that is, after *ijtihād*) by a qualified, trained person who demonstrates no heretical tendencies. The acceptance of *zanniyyāt* is not a legal 'free for all'. The tolerance of difference in the classical tradition (and also found in some modern versions of Muslim jurisprudence) has its limits, not only within the Muslim community but, as Poya points out, also between Muslims and non-Muslims (i.e. *kāfirs*, pp. 145–6). The conclusion which does emerge from Poya's analysis—and to which he (almost) resigns himself—is that diversity of opinion within Muslim jurisprudence was viewed primarily as a necessary (but not desirable) outcome of scholastic dispute and

debate. Reading most classical works of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, one gains the impression that the long-term aim is for diversity to wither away under the influence of a creeping uniformity of interpretative method amongst the *mujtahids*. Tolerance, on the other hand, is an acceptance not only of synchronic diversity, but is allied with a valorization of diversity over homogeneity as a public good in a democratic society.

ROBERT GLEAVE

NAVA BERGMAN:
The Cambridge Biblical Hebrew Workbook: Introductory Level.
xiii, 375 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. £17.99.
(Originally published in Swedish, Studentlitteratur, Lund, Sweden, 2000).

As indicated in the title, this is a workbook rather than a textbook; there are 28 sections which cover the main areas of basic Biblical Hebrew grammar in a largely accurate and somewhat original fashion, though it needs to be used together with a regular textbook for complete information and grammatical charts.

Sections 1 and 2 cover the Hebrew alphabet, vowel signs, *dagesh* etc., while Sections 3–28 each contain most or all of the following elements (there is some variation): a page or two of (somewhat compressed) grammatical information; 'Grammatical cornerstones' (18 throughout the book), which are concise and summary presentations of the main basic grammatical structures; sections entitled 'Hebrew via Hebrew names' (16 throughout the book) which demonstrate and help consolidate grammatical points via the medium of Biblical Hebrew name structures (e.g. the Hebrew name for the biblical book of Chronicles is *Divrei ha-Yamim*, lit. 'the matters of the days', which is a noun chain/construct phrase); sections entitled 'Review and application of the rules', which highlight the sound change rules in the language and how they should be applied to newly introduced forms and structures; a word list; and finally, an extensive exercise section, preceded by 'remember' boxes, which reduce the burden on the student to search for material previously learnt and already forgotten.

A key to the exercises is found at the end of the book—this is a highly useful feature for students working on their own but renders the workbook less useful as a class textbook, since one would want exercises to form part of assessed coursework. This is a very great pity, as the range and design of the exercises in each section are excellent, perhaps constituting the best feature of the book and meeting a real need in the teaching of Biblical Hebrew. The exercise sections drill both morphological and syntactical structures (it is refreshing, for example, to find an exercise on the functions of *'asher*, 15.6, of *kī*, 18.9, the formation of purpose and result clauses, 20.3) and also incorporate both Hebrew-to-English and English-to-Hebrew translation exercises. Moreover, these sections focus on original biblical texts, a feature which will appeal strongly to students, who like to grapple with the real text as soon as possible.

At the end of the 28 sections, there are some text samples with vocabulary, designed to illustrate 'four styles of biblical prose', namely, narrative texts, legal texts, parables and proverbs, and prophetic speeches. These are followed

by three appendices (Hebrew via Hebrew names with exercises based on Hebrew names; regular sound changes in Hebrew; and a guide to grammatical terms). Finally, there are Hebrew-to-English and English-to-Hebrew vocabularies, followed by the Key to the Exercises. There is no index, but there is a useful summary of the contents of each section at the beginning of the book.

The presentation is generally clear and mostly accurate, although there is a 'cluttered' effect at times in the page or two of grammatical information at the beginning of each section, since Bergman has performed the admirable task of compressing information from regular textbooks.

The need to compress the grammatical information leads occasionally to slight inaccuracies; for example, in the explanation of Piel (Section 22), Bergman makes no mention of the fact that one often finds the *qiṭṭal* pattern for Piel perfect third person masculine singular (*pataḥ* in second syllable rather than *tsere*, *qiṭṭēl*), and in fact, two forms given by Bergman (*qiddēsh*, 'he sanctified' and *niḥēm*, 'he comforted') are simply not attested in the Old Testament, but rather *qiddash* and *niḥam*, (Section 22, p. 194, lines 8, 31). Note also *limmēd* 'he taught' in the word list on p. 198 (only *limmad* is attested in the Old Testament).

As stated, Section 1 introduces the Hebrew alphabet plus vowel signs, including a transliteration system. The efficacy of such an emphasis on transliteration, even beyond Section 1 (see, e.g. Section 3, transliteration of vowels), particularly in the exercises, is arguable, since correct transliteration adds yet another complexity to the beginner's load, although Bergman does point out in her preface that the transliteration exercises in Sections 1–7 'can easily be excluded'. It is, therefore, a pity that a promising introduction to Construct State in Section 10 is rather marred by the need for transliteration in the first two exercises of Section 10.

The prolonged treatment of syllables and stress may suit the cleverer student but will seem technical and tedious to the average beginner. Bergman seems well aware of this problem, for she inserts a 'letter' to the student (p. 31) in which she explains that the 'systematic sound changes constitute the framework of this book' and that 'what at first glance may appear to be a concentration on superfluous details will, in fact, prove to be a short cut to the grammar of the Hebrew language'. Bergman's approach is doubtless sound, but the average student will struggle and find some of the explanations and even exercises somewhat intricate, while the cleverer student may profit greatly. A good example of Bergman's approach (and one not overly intricate) is in the explanation of Qal Perfect (Section 13) where the exercises distinguish clearly between the attached pronouns that take the stress and those that do not, showing how the movement of the stress in the word affects the vowel pattern. This information can of course be found in other grammar books, but Bergman's contribution here is the emphasis placed on this aspect through the medium of clearly presented exercises.

Mention should be made of one more feature of Bergman's work, the use of simplified grammatical terms from time to time; for example, in Section 10, she introduces 'Nouns: free and bound forms', but adds in parenthesis 'called forms in the absolute and construct state'. In most cases, Bergman is careful to give the traditional terms as well (necessary if students want to cross-reference) but occasionally she does not, as in Section 14 (p. 108) where she discusses 'the construction *vav* + noun/pronoun + verb in the perfect' but does not make any reference to the traditional label of 'circumstantial clause'.

It is most welcome to find a Biblical Hebrew workbook of this academic calibre published in the UK, for there is a real problem finding suitable Biblical Hebrew textbook material which can be used effectively in the classroom or

lecture room and which must therefore embody a good variety of challenging exercises to encourage student participation. Bergman has made a truly remarkable effort in this direction, despite the few reservations expressed above.

FIONA BLUMFIELD

AMI AYALON:
Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948.
xii, 207 pp. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004. $21.95.

Reading, literacy and education are typically credited with effecting many of the dramatic changes associated with the transition from the traditional to the modern. Historians and social scientists of the Middle East have been quick to assign transformative powers to literacy but slow to examine what actually transpired as it came to play a larger role in the lives of the peoples of the region. In recent years scholars have begun to explore the processes associated with learning to read and reading, and the present study provides a fine example of the rich possibilities in store for the field as a whole.

Ami Ayalon, the author of important previous works on the Arab press and language in the Arab world, has turned his considerable analytical skills to the subject of reading and literacy in Palestine. Focusing on the period between the turn of the twentieth century and the 'earthquake' perpetrated on Palestinian society by the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, Ayalon addresses the crucial dynamic between literacy and historical change. The result is a volume both engaged and engaging which explains the importance of expanding literacy to the history of pre-1948 Palestine.

Ayalon is conscious in this endeavour of the imbalance of attention paid to the subject of reading and literacy in the West and the Middle East. Indeed, reading in the West has been one of the fastest growing and most exciting areas of cultural history in recent decades. In the introduction Ayalon offers a succinct and useful synopsis of this literature, aware both of the value it represents in comparative terms and the danger it can pose in imposing alien chronological and sociological expectations. Likewise, the author addresses the difficulties inherent in trying to recapture past reading, an activity infamous for the paucity of traces it leaves behind. The question of sources is especially acute in the case of Palestine, Ayalon notes, 'because of the 1948 destruction and its horrendous impact on the evidence' (p. 15). (This is about as close as the author comes to a personal comment on the devastation wrought by the creation of Israel on the society he so sensitively describes.)

The book has five main chapters. The first, 'Literacy and education', presents some necessary background concerning the educational system in first late Ottoman and then British Mandatory Palestine. A typology of school types and educational approaches both 'traditional' and 'modern' emphasizes the diversity of experience with and exposure to formal schooling in this period of educational change. Palestinians received widely differing education depending on whether they were Muslim or Christian, male or female, urban or rural, upper- or lower-class, etc. The second chapter, 'Texts: imported, produced, viewed', explores the processes by which the number of written and especially printed texts circulated in Palestine rose dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century. Here Ayalon examines the substantial participation of Palestinians in regional literary affairs, whether as writers or consumers of a variety of texts. While all forms of publication experienced a dramatic rise

in the first decades of the century due to the easing of state censorship and the need to meet a pent-up literary demand, the most notable surge was to be found in the periodical press, in large part because of the need for Palestinians to keep abreast of the increasingly tumultuous times. But the expansion of texts was not limited to books, newspapers, and journals; advertisements, street signs and increasingly printed proclamations, placards, and handbills, particularly ones of a political nature, were all part of the increasing role of texts in Palestine.

The third chapter, 'Texts accessed and afforded', delineates the various modes by which Palestinians came into contact with such texts. Old modes of textual delivery such as copying by hand and long-distance ordering increasingly gave way to newer networks involving dealers, publishers' agents, local presses and bookshops. For those who could afford it, buying books was becoming easier. Those who couldn't were increasingly able to take advantage of new institutions—libraries, clubs, reading rooms, YMCAs—that served to reduce the barriers to 'accessing' the new variety of texts. Meanwhile, older establishments such as cafés and community centres became venues for the oral dissemination of the printed word.

The last two chapters focus on the different modes of reading appropriate to the diversity of the interaction between Palestinians and their texts. 'Individual reading' (ch. 4) traces the evolution of reading from an elite phenomenon to one that was fast becoming a 'vital skill'. Here Ayalon follows the development of reading as it became more popular but yet also more private, as the practice of reading became more dependent on written and less beholden to oral texts, and as writing became increasingly visible on the urban landscape. Here, as often in the book, the author draws parallels and indicates deviations from the development of reading in the West, noting for example that reading in Palestine followed a similar but more condensed version of the post-Gutenberg experience in Western Europe. Chapter 5 explores the practice of collective reading. It argues that Palestine, under the influence of modern-style education and a greater number of texts in circulation, was quick to slip off the previously preponderant oral-aural understanding in favour of a more literate society. But the new texts were largely delivered via what he terms 'the old, familiar conduits', namely the oral conveying of written texts by town criers, storytellers, and those who read newspapers out loud in cafés, clubs and other social places. Ayalon places particular emphasis on 'vocal reading', in which the oral and the literate stood side by side, as being crucial to bridging the gap between those who could read written texts and those who would encounter them indirectly. But more than serving as a mere transitional mode, vocal reading provided the 'extra benefit of the collective experience', through the 'event effect'. People who could easily read a certain text at home would often go to listen to it being read out loud. The social dimension of reading must have been reinforced as the disaster facing Palestinian society became more and more apparent.

Ayalon concludes the book by returning to the question of whether Palestine experienced a reading revolution in the first half of the twentieth century. His answer is equivocal, doubtless unavoidably so. 'The growing importance of writing and the development of tools that enhanced its use redrew the cultural scene under new rules', producing an 'irreversible shift'. Education, print media, and the unprecedented, widespread use of text in the public domain were all part of the 'historic shift to reliance on writing', however uneven its progress among different sectors of the population. But as the 'earthquake' of 1948 interrupted this process, Ayalon argues, the revolution was never allowed to happen. The new literacy was, regardless of the problems associated with

measuring it, unmistakably on the rise and would have dramatic effects on all aspects of Palestinian society.

Ayalon's study is on the whole clear and cogent, but two aspects are perhaps open to question. One is the choice of 1900 as the starting point for the study. While 1948 marks an obvious watershed in the social and cultural life of Arab Palestine, the turn of the century is by contrast arbitrary and never explicitly justified, except by saying that a number of important changes, while in place before 1900, would only become transformative after the turn of the century. This raises a more serious question, namely, Ayalon's treatment of Ottoman Palestine. Clearly he has neither made use of the extensive records of the Ottoman archives, a situation never explained, nor referred to a number of recent studies on education in the late Ottoman period. This produces errors, such as confusing the *rushdi* and *i'dadi* school types (p. 21), and renders curious his depiction of the Ottoman era as being poorly documented. As it would be dubious in the extreme to conduct research on Palestine in the Mandate period without recourse to the British archives, so it should also be questionable to fail to consult the Ottoman records, or at least the work of those who have done so recently. Another, more general, issue worth raising is the rather unquestioning approach to the notion of 'progress' via education. Ayalon's book is shot through with a positivist approach to literacy as modernizing agent. At times he seems to fail to appreciate the fundamental difference in intent between the traditional, religiously based education of the *kuttab*, or Quran school, and the modern educational institution, which he refers to as providing 'better' training.

Nevertheless, these few flaws hardly detract from an ambitious and highly successful study on a subject as critical to the making of the modern Middle East as any other but one rarely studied in such impressive fashion.

BENJAMIN C. FORTNA

ELIZ SANASARIAN:
Religious Minorities in Iran.
(Cambridge Middle East Studies, 13.) xx, 228 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. £45.

Religious Minorities in Iran deserves much praise, as it not only fills a void in the academic literature on the subject, but also manages to treat this demanding topic with scholarly expertise and objectivity. Discussing the fate of Iran's religious minorities under the Islamic Republic is indeed an arduous task, given their diversity—Jews, Zoroastrians, Armenians, Assyro-Chaldeans, non-ethnic Iranian converts to Christianity, and Bahais—and the Iranian state's often contradictory policies with regard to them.

In the preface Eliz Sanasarian explains that her volume sets out to answer two questions: what has been the overall policy of the theocratic Islamic state toward its non-Muslim religious minorities? And how have these minorities dealt with state intrusion into their lives? The book is consequently structured to achieve this objective, drawing on both interviews conducted by the author and an exhaustive list of secondary sources.

The introduction provides an overview of Iranian politics and society and outlines the theoretical framework for the study. This theoretical framework is based on an analysis of the disaggregated parts or levels of the state that makes a distinction between state officials, state policies and institutions, and state ideology. According to the author, this analysis of levels of state would be insufficient in itself if it were not complemented by an examination of the

distinctions among minority groups and their responses to state policies. The author accomplishes this type of examination by investigating psychological and cultural dimensions of minority behaviour.

The introduction also includes a discussion of the treatment of religious minorities in Islam and the ideology of the Iranian régime as it pertains to minorities. In accordance with Islamic tenets, Jews, Armenians, Assyrians and Zoroastrians have been granted the status of recognized religious minority by the Islamic Republic. In contrast, Iranian converts to Christianity and Bahais, considered to be apostates from Islam, have been denied this status. The belief in Islam's superiority over other religions has been the overarching principle for all laws regulating the treatment of religious minorities; a book first published in 1966, *A Muslim Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, established the ideological baseline for the Iranian theocracy's policy on non-Muslim minorities.

The first chapter introduces the religious minorities of Iran, recounting the history of each community up to the 1979 Revolution and describing their social, political, economic and demographic characteristics. Emphasis is placed on similarities and differences among the groups, including the diverse roles they played in Iran's history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The second chapter begins the book's examination of the revolutionary period, covering in detail issues related to the religious minorities during the drafting of the Islamic Republic's constitution by an Assembly of Experts in August–November 1979. Repeatedly asserting their loyalty to Iran and their deep roots in the country, the four deputies (out of a total of 73) representing the religious minorities defended their communities vigorously. Even if they did not obtain all that they demanded, such as being referred to as a 'community' rather than a 'minority', they managed to expand the rights given the latter within the confines of the possible. That they were able to do so came about partly thanks to the protection they enjoyed from both the chair and vice-chair of the Assembly, Ayatollah Montazeri and Ayatollah Beheshti.

The role of Montazeri and Beheshti shows the importance of personalism in Iranian politics, which could play in favour of or against minorities. The study of four domains—religion, education, communal life and political interaction—in the next chapter similarly demonstrates how personalism, combined with the often concealed way in which political decisions are reached in Iran, made it very hard to determine who was at the origin of a particular measure affecting minorities and why this measure had been adopted. The disaggregated character of politics in Iran, referred to in the conceptual framework, was also at play. Consequently, local authorities had significant leeway in their dealings with religious minorities, resulting in more tolerant environments in some regions than in others. What becomes clear in this chapter, however, is that even though the Islamic Republic extended certain rights to religious minorities during its first decade of existence, it did not renounce the concept of the inferiority of these minorities. Consequently, it placed various restrictions, often humiliating in nature, on minorities to remind them of their inferior status, sometimes in violation of the rights granted to these same minorities by the constitution. A second feature emerging from this chapter is the rise of inter-minority discourse, with divisions and even factionalism within minority groups being expressed more openly than under the Shah's rule.

Discriminatory laws, occasional attacks and other forms of persecution against religious minorities are the topic of the fourth chapter. Bahais and non-ethnic Christians, not recognized as religious minorities, and to a lesser extent Jews, because of the regime's hostility to Israel, were particular targets of many fundamental human rights violations. Hundreds of Bahais were

executed, their property confiscated, and their houses of worship closed. Various members of the Jewish community were similarly executed, while Christian religious leaders were assassinated.

Minorities, operating within the rights and restrictions placed upon them, developed a set of responses that are the focus of the fifth chapter. The responses of all groups were marked by overall conformity and acceptance, yet also by defiance of state intrusion deemed dangerous for the survival of the groups. However, because each group maintained a strong sense of self-identification, in spite of the regime's wish to see them as a whole, minorities developed unique responses in matters affecting their own particular group. In spite of divisions within communities, they managed to maintain ethnic boundaries, knowing that their survival as separate groups depended on this.

Sanasarian should be commended for her discernment of the subtleties of the Islamic Republic's policies toward its minorities and for her ability to unravel these intricately complex policies. She sheds light not only on the treatment of minorities during the first decade of the Iranian theocracy, but also on that of the entire population. This volume is a must-read for anyone interested in learning how politics operates in Iran.

HOVANN H. SIMONIAN

GEORGE A. BOURNOUTIAN (ed. and trans.):
Armenians and Russia (1626–1796): A Documentary Record.
(Armenian Studies Series.) xiv, 578 pp. Costa Mesa, CA:
Mazda Publishers, 2001. $45.

Armenians and Russia (1626–1796): A Documentary Record will be of great help to scholars studying the history of Eastern Armenia, Georgia and other Caucasian lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the involvement of Russia in the region during that period. It complements one of Bournoutian's previous works, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia*, which covered the later period (1797–1889) of relations between Armenians and the Russian Empire.

The 440 documents that constitute this collection have been selected from among 2,000 held in various archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Erevan, Tbilisi, and Astrakhan. The documents have been masterfully translated from Armenian, Russian, Georgian, Persian, French, German and Latin by Bournoutian and then carefully annotated. Reflecting the increased involvement of Russia in Transcaucasia during the eighteenth century, particularly after Peter the Great's failed invasion of the region in the 1720s, the overwhelming majority of the documents—400 out of 440—cover that century. The documents have been presented in chronological order and are followed by an excellent and most informative commentary written around such themes as Armenian commerce and Russia, Israel Ori's project of liberation of Armenia, the Armenian squadron within the Russian army, the Armenian Church and Russia, the resistance of the Armenians of Ghapan and Karabagh first to Persian rule and then to the Ottoman invasion between 1722 and 1730, and the activities of the Armenian princes (the famous *meliks*) of Karabagh during the time of Catherine the Great. The study also includes an appendix providing lists of Russian tsars, Persian shahs, Ottoman sultans, Georgian kings, and Armenian church leaders, a glossary of terms, and biographical notes on the hundreds of individuals quoted in the documents, all three of which come as most useful tools to readers.

While Georgian kings began looking to the Christian power to their north as a potential ally against their threatening Muslim neighbours from the late sixteenth century, it is only in 1699 that Armenians first appealed to Russia to free their homeland. Armenians had originally sought the help of princes of western Europe, and it is on the advice of one of these, the Palatine Elector, that they petitioned the Russian Tsar. The Palatine Elector's advice was pertinently based on the geographical proximity of Russia to the Caucasus. The first Armenian petition to the tsars would be followed by many others throughout the eighteenth century. Indeed, the history of relations between the Armenians of Transcaucasia and the Russian Empire during that period is mostly one of Armenians hoping for a Russian invasion that would free Eastern Armenia from the oppression of the Persian shahs and local khans. These hopes would be repeatedly dashed as Russia either intervened in the wrong location, as with Peter's invasion of Gilan and Mazandaran, or did not intervene at all—even though in some cases Russia was the party that had initiated contact and had approached the Georgians and Armenians with promises of support.

Whatever the particular beginning and development of each episode, all had similar endings, with Armenians and Georgians abandoned to their own fate, at the mercy of Muslim neighbours retaliating against them for their co-operation with Russia. By the time Russia would finally cross the Caucasian barrier and annex the region, Eastern Armenia would be devastated, with large swathes of its territory emptied of its Armenian population, either completely deserted or partly repopulated with Turkic or Kurdish elements. That Armenians persisted in appealing to Russian support despite multiple abandonments is a testament to their desperate situation and perhaps to their political naivety, in their failure to understand that Russia, like other states, would first and foremost pursue its own interests rather than rush to the help of its Christian brethren.

It is often said that history repeats itself. Sections of this volume dealing with hostilities in Karabagh between the Armenian *meliks* and Turkic khans carry many parallels with the struggles in the region in 1918–20 and 1988–94. Indeed, in addition to serving the needs of historians of the period, this study will be of much help to all those interested in the modern-day conflict over Karabagh.

Armenians and Russia, 1626–1796 is an indispensable tool for all students of the past and present of Armenia and the entire Caucasus. It can only be regretted that a number of misspellings and grammatical errors managed to slip into the published text. In spite of these mistakes, however, Bournoutian should be commended for the publication of this volume, which is a considerable accomplishment in itself.

HOVANN H. SIMONIAN

ISTVÁN VÁSÁRY:
Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365.
xvi, 230 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. £48.

The Cumans, the Pechenegs, the Qipchaq Turks if not the same people they certainly shared the same homeland known variously as the *Dasht-i-Qipchaq*,

Cumania, *Pole Poloveckoe*, Valania, the Pontic steppes, or the Eurasian steppes. They were nomadic warriors whose impact and influence has often been overshadowed and obscured by their neighbours and the tumultuous events which periodically engulfed the whole Balkan region. If there is one complaint about this most welcome and very thorough study of these so often overlooked people it is that their possible, very tangible, link to the founding of the Ottoman Empire has not been explored or even acknowledged in any meaningful way.

Vásáry's study concentrates on the relationship between the nomadic tribes and the settled peoples of the Balkans and Bulgaria in particular. His is the first extensive examination of the early medieval period of this region. His study charts the formation of the second Bulgarian Empire from 1185 and follows the infiltration of the Cuman elite into the Balkan polities with the knowledge and approval of the ruling circles of the Qipchaq Khanate or *Ulus* of Jochi [Golden Horde].

Between 1185 and the 1330s the Cumans' decisive role saw the founding of three successive Bulgarian dynasties. Without the Cumans' unwavering aid it is doubtful whether the second Bulgarian Empire could have stood, though fierce arguments over the ethnic composition of the resulting state and the role of the Vlakhs and Bulgars in the re-establishment of the empire are ongoing. Bulgarians tend to play down the role of the Romanian Vlakhs while some Romanians would claim that the empire was the first Romanian state in history. Vásáry dismisses both stands as anachronistic while pointing out that both disgruntled groups lived harmoniously under the domination of the Byzantines against whom they jointly revolted in 1185. Both groups had long wanted to end the Byzantine oppression but it was not until the military might of the Cumans was added to the equation that an uprising became feasible. According to Vásáry the Bulgars furnished the revolt with an ideology, the transhuman pastoralist Vlakhs contributed energy and impetus while, decisively, the Cumans provided the arms and warriors.

Vásáry's monograph traces the Cumans' advance from their westernmost wanderings in the Balkans at the end of the twelfth century to the middle of the fourteenth century; the year 1185 was the turning point in Cuman and Balkan history. The Cumans played a crucial role in the history of this period though with the advent of the Mongols and the central role the Cumans or Qipchaqs assumed in the early Mongol Empire and in particular the Qipchaq Khanate [Golden Horde], their central place in the history books was assured. Vásáry concludes his history in the mid-fourteenth century for clearly stated reasons. He sees Berdibek Khan's death in 1359 and the subsequent anarchy that embroiled the Qipchaq Khanate (Golden Horde) as signalling the end of the Tatar period in the Balkans. These events contrast with the Ottoman advance into Eastern Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century and fall beyond the scope of his study and therefore form a historical boundary for his work.

Cumans and Tatars establishes that there was a strong Turkish presence in the Balkans long before the arrival of the Ottomans and that the various Romanian and Bulgarian dynasties owed much to the influence and involvement of Turkic Cumans and Tatars. One of Vásáry's stated aims is to dispel the 'rosy clouds of nostalgia that hang over the mediaeval golden age of the pre-Ottoman Balkans' (p. 167) through which nationalist historians are inclined to view the era. However, Vásáry, a former Hungarian ambassador to Turkey and currently a professor of Turkic and Central Asian studies at Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest himself betrays a passive sympathy

for Hungarian influence in the area which he certainly does not extend to Romania and Bulgaria.

Vásáry employs an impressive array of source material and is able to consult material written in obscure languages from problematic texts. He relies heavily on Byzantine Greek accounts for the main narratives simply because they are by far the most plentiful and easily accessible as well as often being 'complete'. The opening chapter contains short biographical sketches of five principal Byzantine historians, a useful and thoughtful addition. The problem besetting all historians of nomadic peoples, namely the lack of primary source material written by the tribal people themselves, is softened in the present work by the availability of material from Turkish, Arabic, Latin, Slavic, Hungarian and other medieval writers. The detailed consultation of primary source material allows for a strong sense of narrative, while Vásáry's linguistic knowledge of Turkish dialects and the relevant nomenclature strengthens his underlying arguments. His attention to detail enables the author to produce some readable and compelling narrative and vividly descriptive quotations with which to embellish this absorbing monograph.

It is unfortunate that the links with the Ottomans through the collapse of the Khanate of Nogai have not been explored in Vásáry's work. The Ottoman scholar, Colin Heywood threw light into the 'Black Hole' of the origins of the Ottoman Empire with his research into the conflicts within the Qipchaq Khanate (Golden Horde) at the end of the thirteenth century. Heywood suggested that the death of the Mongol prince, Nogai Khan, who had designs on the 'throne' of the Qipchaq Khanate, followed by the movements of considerable numbers of displaced people from the Pontic steppe and the lands west of the Black Sea might well have been connected with the sudden appearance of a small but militarily ambitious tribe in western Anatolia. Vásáry plots the events following, firstly, the appearance of Tuda-Mengü, the new ruler of the Qipchaq Khanate, in 1280, secondly, the enthronement of the puppet king George Terter I (1280–92) in Bulgaria and thirdly, the accession of the Byzantine king Andronicus II (1282–1328), and duly notes Nogai's role as kingmaker and as a prime 'mover and shaker' behind the scenes. He recognizes the establishment of an independent khanate by Nogai, legitimized by the khan's status as a Chinggisid prince and emphasized by the minting in Saqčï of copper and silver coins struck in Nogai and his son Čeke's names. Vásáry manages to pick through the details of Nogai's complex family ties and the internecine blood bath in the 1290s which saw the clan effaced not only from the courts of the Qipchaq Khanate but eventually also from those of Bulgaria. In the author's words 'The Balkanic lands, especially Bulgaria … was liberated from direct Tatar menace.' [sic.] (p. 96)

A *horror Tatarorum* stalks much of the research of this confused period of Pontic and west Anatolian history and Vásáry does not investigate the leads which Heywood has so enticingly sown into the historical web of the region. Instead he echoes the weary discredited myths of the Ottomans as *gāhzīs*, and Osman as the valiant Muslim warrior.

This failing aside however, Vásáry's work has much to commend it and it will doubtless become the standard textbook for the study of the eastern Balkans in the pre-Ottoman period. Though it will stoke controversy for its depiction of the crucial role of the Turks in the affairs of Bulgaria and Romania, it is convincing in its analysis and its evidence is compelling. It is unfortunate that better maps were not provided to illustrate the topography and physical geography. Such maps could have re-enforced the physical relationships between nomads and the settled communities. But taken as a whole

such failings are dwarfed by the book's achievements. Vásáry has produced an essential historical textbook, one unlikely to be superseded in the near future.

GEORGE LANE

SOUTH ASIA

ROBERT ELGOOD:
Hindu Arms and Ritual, Arms and Armour from India 1400–1865.
312 pp. 342 figures. Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2004. £55.

This splendidly produced, generously illustrated and somewhat eccentrically organized volume is a landmark publication. Readers will be grateful to the author for gathering together all possible information pertaining to a vast array of little studied, but splendidly decorated weapons from Vijayanagara and the successor states of south India now widely dispersed in Indian, European and American collections. They should also appreciate his attempt to locate these objects within a specifically defined cultural and religious context. While other scholars specializing in arms and armour have tended to focus on north India under the Mughals and Rajputs, Elgood concentrates on the Deccan and south India, a region that has been unduly neglected in spite of the large numbers of surviving weapons and the miscellany of historical sources, including accounts of the European travellers.

The astonishing technical virtuosity of chiselled steel implements from the late Vijayanagara period is immediately apparent from the elephant goad (ȧkuśa) illustrated on the cover of the book and the dagger (kaṭār) shown in Figure 1.3. Among the most artistic metallic objects ever produced in south India, they are surely to be ranked with the finest bronze figurines of the region. Yet the aesthetic assurance of these and other such examples of the south Indian metalworker places them far beyond the realm of mere artefacts of warfare. Indeed, as the author takes pains to demonstrate in the various chapters, goads, daggers, swords, spears and axes of this type were all charged with magical powers so as to safeguard those who used them. As a means of ensuring cosmic protection these weapons came to be beautifully fashioned and richly embellished with a whole host of auspicious motifs. These included lions, serpents, peacocks, parrots and fantastic beasts (yalis), which were often combined into intricate and imaginative compositions.

The core of the book is a detailed description of no fewer than 600 individual specimens of arms and armour, which the author groups according to type and function. Thus we find separate chapters on the goad, sword, dagger, axe and mace, several categories of which are further subdivided according to their royal or religious context. Elgood presents photographs with extended captions giving technical details of manufacture, use and decoration—data that has almost never been made available before. At the same time the author is concerned with underlying purpose and meaning. As a result, catalogue-like chapters focusing on specific groups of weapons, especially those from the Tanjore Armoury (mostly divided between the Government Museum in Chennai and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York), alternate with short essays. Here the author offers discussions on subjects as diverse as an overview of warfare in Vijayanagara times, the role of weapons in the rituals of south Indian courts, the sacrificial axes employed in the worship of Hindu

goddesses, and the recreational use of arms in exercises and exhibitions of prowess. Throughout, Elgood demonstrates an impressive command of current historical, ethnographical and archaeological literature, which he subjects to intense scrutiny in his search for clues as to the manufacture, use and significance of the various weapons. The result is a fascinating but dense list of facts that occasionally threatens to overspill his control of chronology and region. This is of little consequence considering the richness of the materials that he presents. Where else, for example, will readers learn that according to the *Brhat Samhita*, a sixth-century astronomical Sanskrit text, the shape and even the smell of a sword may have magical properties (p. 138), not unlike the red paste smeared onto the hilt of a royal dagger to indicate the presence of the goddess Durga (p. 75). The author repeatedly reminds us that the splendidly chiselled and perforated animals and birds that decorate sword and dagger hilts perform a similarly apotropaic function, effectively shielding those who wield such weapons from negative forces.

It is in his typological discussions that Elgood demonstrates his greatest strength. Indeed, his technical classifications, terminologies and datings are likely to remain a benchmark for years to come. Wherever possible, the author compares actual weapons with representations of identical implements in contemporary art. Photographic details of armed rulers and mounted warriors carved onto granite columns will help readers understand how such weapons were once clutched firmly by the hand, held in the crook of the elbow, or tucked into a belt or sash. Details of paintings on temple ceilings or in miniature paintings on paper serve a similar purpose. One fascinating source is a chapter in the *Nujūm al-'Ulūm*, a manuscript produced in Bijapur in 1570, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, in which both Deccan and south Indian swords and daggers are described and illustrated. The author offers a full translation of the accompanying texts.

While the chapters of the book under review here are occasionally marred by inaccurate spellings of place names, such as Rāmeśvarum instead of Rāmeśvaram (Figure 16.19) or Pratāpgap rather than Pratāpgad (p. 144), and deities (the Vardhamāna temple at Kāñchīpuram is actually dedicated to Viṣṇu under the name Varadarāja), the correct spellings of different weapons are scrupulously maintained throughout. The volume concludes with a 36-page glossary of technical terms, certainly the most exhaustive ever attempted for the subject, and a thorough, up to date bibliography.

GEORGE MICHELL

SIMONTI SEN:
Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives 1870–1910.
(New Perspectives in South Asian History, 9.) viii, 226 pp.
New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2005. Rs. 490.

It is a measure of the maturity with which Indian scholars can now look at the British colonial period that the narratives of Bengali travellers who were, by and large, fans of Britain and her empire no longer cause disgust, amusement or embarrassment. But in this sober, carefully researched and subtly argued study, Simonti Sen presents her chosen figures not merely as representatives of their age but as contributors to a gradual process of nationalist self-assertion.

In her conclusion she states that: 'In a way, the attempt at representing themselves before the empire and conversely representing the empire before their stay-at-home audience was a gesture of self-assertion that surreptitiously arrogated a monopolistic privilege of empire to itself'. In other words, Bengali *bhadralok*, who could independently travel, observe, show knowledge of European history, literature and culture exceeding that of most Europeans, were people whom the British could not quite make sense of. They were loyal servants of the Empire, they knew all the intricacies of British etiquette, they spoke beautiful English, but they belonged to a subject people. So how—even on board ship where informal interaction was possible—should they be spoken to? And how should Bengali travellers regard Sahibs who, freed from arrogance and hierarchy on the voyage or in their own country, could reveal both virtues and weaknesses so disturbingly at odds with their colonial role? Sen's chosen period excludes two of Bengal's most gifted foreign travellers—the poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, with his letters from Versailles in the 1860s, and the autobiographer and controversialist Nirad C. Chaudhuri, with his book *A Passage to England* (1959). But if one sees Dutt and Chaudhuri as but extreme and outrageous exponents of the more dignified and respectful self-assertion of the travellers in her book, then her argument, and her projection of edginess and confusion in Indo-British relations even at the high noon of Empire, become even stronger.

Sen's study is organized not round profiles of each traveller in turn but round themes with which they all had to grapple: 'The sea voyage', 'The city and the countryside', 'The "real" Englishman', 'Learning and the spirit of *vita activa*', 'The lady and her home', 'Poverty and the poor' and 'Touring the Continent'. The drawback of this approach is that, even by the end of the book, it is hard to get much impression of the travellers' separate personalities. There are brief biographical sketches in her introduction, but about a figure as remarkable as Trailokyanath Mukherjee, for example, whose books range from *Art-Manufactures of India* (1888) to highly original fantasy fiction in Bengali, one would like to learn more. And although to take for granted the lives and personalities of Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda ('since they scarcely need any introduction to either Eastern or Western readership') is understandable, her book might have been more fun—and less like the PhD thesis it initially was—if she had managed, as Tapan Raychaudhuri did so well with Vivekananda in *Europe Reconsidered* (1988), to describe them too, in full anecdotal technicolour.

As a contribution to historical understanding, however, Sen's book is served well by her thematic approach, and enriches our picture of Victorian Britain as well as nineteenth-century Bengal. Both the good side (charitable and educational ventures, female emancipation, companionate marriage) and the dark side (desperate urban poverty, drunkenness, prostitution) emerge with extra vividness through foreigners' eyes.

Will Sen one day write a longer and perhaps more relaxed account of the whole story of East–West encounter through the travels of Indians to Europe? She has a preliminary chapter on pre-colonial visitors, starting with Mirza Sheikh Itesammuddin (no mention, though, of Kaiser Haq's excellent new translation of his travelogue) and including, rather oddly, Yanagawa Masakiyo, a Japanese traveller to America in 1860, all of whom lacked the 'a priori cross-cultural understanding' of the later travellers. But her book gives us an enticing section of the river rather than a journey all the way from source to delta. With Tagore's *Yurop-pabāsīr patra* (1881), included in her period, we have him just starting his complex relationship with the West—and already,

as she shows, more subversive in his description of Victorian domestic life than her other, less maverick, travellers. His story alone needs to be completed, and with increasing numbers of Indians going to university in Britain as independence approached, there are many other stories too.

Sen ends poignantly with a note on 'The story that remains untold': that of travellers not from 'the Bengali educated elite' who went 'often as soldiers or crew of ships, of whom we only get snatches of references in novels and memoirs'. But even with them, work that has been done on Sylheti-Bengali migrants to Britain by Caroline Adams, Nurul Islam and others shows that real, individual, human experience can be reconstructed. It might, indeed, not take very long to join up separate researches to produce the complete grand narrative that Sen's book hints at but doesn't quite deliver.

WILLIAM RADICE

MAHENDRA LAWOTI:
Towards a Democratic Nepal: Inclusive Political Institutions for a Multicultural Society.
345 pp. New Delhi: Sage Publications/Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point. $64.95.

Mahendra Lawoti sets out in his book to recommend a model of democracy which he believes would be more appropriate for a country of Nepal's diversity than that introduced under the 1991 constitution. Arguing both from general principles and from the experience of other countries, he suggests a raft of measures, including 'horizontal accountability' with independent institutions keeping others in check; ethnically based federalism with both regional and (for dispersed groups) non-territorial units; proportional representation; entrenched protection of minority rights; and affirmative action in the form of reservations for the most disadvantaged groups.

Much of what the author advocates is well-founded. Lawoti is certainly right to condemn the 1990 constitution's proscription of ethnic or regionally based parties (a ban which has, in any case, been inconsistently applied). He also plausibly argues that Nepal's plural society would be better served by a more consensual form of democracy than the majoritarian one that was adopted in 1991 and he sees decentralization and proportional representation as key measures to achieve this. PR would certainly entail coalition government becoming the norm and Nepal's experience with such governments has not been a happy one. However, the greater legitimacy attaching to governments resting on a broader base would perhaps make extra-constitutional resistance to its decisions less likely and, as Lawoti points out, single-party governments in Nepal are in any case themselves already coalitions of different factions. My own caveat would be that in any PR system eventually adopted, the threshold vote necessary for a party to gain representation in the legislature should be quite high (say at 5 per cent) to discourage fragmentation.

There are, however, some problems both with Lawoti's analysis of Nepal's diversity, and with other recommendations. First, although acknowledging that 'the cultural identity and configuration of many groups are still in the process of forming and developing' (p. 247), he too often treats particular labels as if they were unproblematic. For example, in discussing ethnic activists' complaints that census figures for the proportion of Hindus (80.6 per cent in 2001) are inflated, he does not point out that, for many Nepalese, 'Hindu'

and 'Buddhist' are not mutually exclusive categories like 'Christian' and 'Muslim'. He also fails to critique the term 'indigenous', which Nepal's Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (formerly simply 'Federation of Nationalities') added to its official title in 2003. In much of central and eastern Nepal, Parbatiyas (the original speakers of Nepali) certainly moved over the last few centuries first as immigrants and then as conquerors into territory controlled by Tibeto-Burman groups. In the western hills, however, Nepali speakers have been present for at least a thousand years and, though they may in some cases have supplanted earlier Tibeto-Burman inhabitants, they can hardly be termed 'non-indigenous', especially as Tibeto-Burman groups themselves also originally migrated into Nepal. In the case of the Sherpas, the migration took place only 400 years ago.

Secondly, while members of Nepal's political, administrative and intellectual elite are predominantly males belonging to the Parbatiya and Newar high castes, simply being a high-caste hill man (CHHEM—'Caste hill Hindu elite males'—in the author's preferred terminology) does not guarantee high politico-economic status. The largest of the 'twice-born' Parbatiya castes are the Chetris, and Lawoti's own table of socio-economic indicators (p. 106) shows that 50% of them were below the poverty line in 1996, and thus worse off than Madeshis (members of north Indian plains castes) and Muslims, for whom the figures are 44% and 38% respectively.

Thirdly, the author's discussion of why some groups have been so much more successful than others is not fully adequate. Previous use of state power in their favour is certainly one reason, but there are many examples of minorities that have outperformed those around them without any such advantage. Nepal's Brahmans benefit from their superior status in the Hindu social hierarchy but also partly owe their success in present-day Nepal to group cultural traits such as the high value they place on formal study. 'Positive discrimination' in favour of other groups in recruitment for public service (a measure which the author enthusiastically backs) thus involves a degree of unfairness. Lawoti may be right when he also argues for reservations on grounds of expediency—essentially as a means of giving the elites of backward groups an incentive to work within the system—but the argument on grounds of simple justice fails.

Fourthly, in reacting against Nepal's earlier assimilationist policy, the author goes too far towards the multicultural end of the continuum. He argues that since all languages spoken in Nepal are 'Nepali', the national language should be renamed 'Khas-Nepali'. This is partly willful confusion between 'Nepali' as an adjective of nationality and as the name of a language and partly a refusal to admit that Nepali (in the ordinary linguistic sense) *should* be allowed a special status. As Lawoti himself acknowledges elsewhere, it is by far the most widely spoken language in the country and therefore the language which Nepalis speak *as Nepalis,* even though they may quite reasonably want to use another language for communication within their own ethnic group.

Finally, Lawoti perhaps overlooks one important point in his many references to India's experiences in dealing with ethnic diversity. He is right to praise India's record in accommodating diversity but he should also have pointed out that India has relied not only on her ability to adjust to ethnic demands but also on the military power at the disposal of the central government. Nepal, by contrast, has suffered both from political mismanagement and, in the crucial years after 1990, distrust between elected governments and the palace, which retained control of the army.

However, none of these caveats detract from the fact that Mahendra Lawoti has produced an extremely valuable contribution to the debate on Nepal's future, which certainly deserves a wide readership.

JOHN WHELPTON

CENTRAL AND INNER ASIA

WILLEM VAN SCHENDEL and ERIK J. ZÜRCHER (eds): *Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World: Nationalism, Ethnicity and Labour in the Twentieth Century*. viii, 235 pp. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001. £42.

A valuable addition to the literature on the relations between state and nation, *Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World* focuses on three main topics. The first is the creation of nations by states, well known in the literature on nations and nationalism. One of the most pervasive paradigms of this literature suggests that states create nations more often than nations create states. Van Schendel and Zürcher argue pertinently that South Asia, and even more so Central Asia and the Middle East, provide early twentieth-century examples that confirm this paradigm. In some cases, states set out to create nations where none existed before. In other cases, where nationalist movements existed prior to the foundation of the states, the nations that were crafted by state elites differed very much from what nationalists had originally envisaged.

The second topic is the fate of minority groups that do not fit into the mould of the nation modelled by the state and the relationship of such groups to the state. Groups differing from the nation because of ethnic, religious, linguistic or geographic specificity have two options in response to their exclusion by the state: they can decide either to assimilate to the nation, or to leave it, by secession or by other means. Groups discriminated against by the state because of their working-class status tend not to oppose the nation but typically attempt to redefine it and thus render it a negotiated entity. The third main topic is the use by states of military force rather than political means to suppress cultural diversity in the formation of nation.

The book consists of eight articles, an introduction by the editors and a conclusion by Feroz Ahmad and Jacob M. Landau. The articles are based on papers presented at a workshop 'Opting out of the nation: identity politics in Central, South and West Asia, 1920s–1990s', in Antalya, Turkey, in 1997. The first chapter, by Bert Fragner, studies Soviet nationality policies in Central Asia. The latter region constituted, in the 1920s, an authentic laboratory of nationalities in which states and nations were engineered with little or no concern for historic boundaries or ethnic realities. Fragner shows that the Soviet regime did not fight nationalism, but rather promoted it within the framework of the republics it had created. Leaders of these republics were able to build national subsystems, which allowed them to remain in power in the post-Soviet period.

The role of Soviet republican leadership and its use of nationalism to keep a tight grip on power is also studied by Süha Bölükbaşı in the case of Azerbaijan. In that republic, however, the transition to independence did not go as smoothly as in Central Asia. The upheavals caused by the conflict

with neighbouring Armenia over the region of Nagorno-Karabagh proved too much for the communist leadership, which temporarily lost power to pan-Turkist nationalists in 1992 before regaining it one year later. Azerbaijan is also the subject of the next chapter, by Touraj Atabaki, but it is another Azerbaijan that is analysed here. The Iranian province of Azerbaijan was actually the original area to carry that name—before it was imported to the north of the Arax River in 1918 to describe the region of eastern Transcaucasia inhabited by Turkish-speaking Muslims. In the conflict between pan-Turkism and Iranian nationalism, it is the latter that prevailed among Azeri Turks, who took pride in the leading role they played in the history of Iran.

Lack of space precludes discussion of the other chapters of this volume, by Tazeen Murshid on Bengali identity, Willem van Schendel on nationalist rhetoric and cultural pluralism in Bangladesh, Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek on the politics of centralization in Afghanistan, Asef Bayat on the dialectics of class and nation in Iran, and Erik Zürcher on the use of fundamentalism as an exclusionary device by state elites in Turkey. Their exclusion, however, does not detract from their value, as all are well-written and informative contributions of high scholarly standards. *Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World* is a worthwhile addition to the literature on interaction between state and nation, and should be useful to both area specialists and to students of nationalism.

HOVANN H. SIMONIAN

IAIN GARDNER and SAMUEL N. C. LIEU:
Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire.
xviii, 312 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
£19.95.

This book contains much more than its title promises. It is the first ever collection of Manichaean texts from the Roman Empire in English translation to be published in a single volume. Hitherto, students of Manichaeism have mainly resorted to A. Adam's *Texte zum Manichäismus* (Berlin, 1954, 2nd ed. 1969) and A. Böhlig and J. P. Asmussen's *Der Manichäismus* (Zurich and Munich, 1980, 2nd ed. 1996). Quite in the same fashion as these earlier publications, Gardner and Lieu's book includes both primary texts of the Manichaean church and secondary texts on the church, its history, teachings, etc. In fact, nearly half of the ninety-eight texts making up this source-book are derived from the anti-Manichaean writings in Latin, Greek and Syriac by Christian church fathers, most prominently those of St. Augustine (who was a Manichee for at least nine years and thus an important informant), and to a much lesser extent also from the *Fihrist* of Ibn Al-Nadim. Translations of Manichaean texts from outside the Roman Empire written in Middle Iranian languages such as Parthian, Middle Persian and Sogdian (all from the Turfan region) and in Chinese (the *Compendium of the Teachings of Mani, the Buddha of Light* from Dunhuang) have been included because of their importance as sources on the history of the mission in the Roman Empire and as parallel sources on the organization of the church and Mani's canon. The *Schwerpunkt* of the collection lies, of course, on the main texts in Coptic, the *Kephalaia* (translated by Gardner), the *Homilies* (translated mainly by the late Sarah Clackson to whose memory the book is dedicated) and the *Psalm-Book* (translated mainly by C.

Allberry), and on the Greek *Cologne Mani Codex* (translated by J. and S. Lieu). Excerpts from the Coptic fragments found in recent years at Ismant el-Kharab, the Roman period village of Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis, in Egypt (Gardner) and the Latin *Tebessa Codex* (M. Vermes) are also included. All texts are provided with useful introductory comments and concise annotation.

This source-book is without question highly significant. Its usefulness will be noted by both new students of this highly complex religion, by teachers of such students and by scholars at the forefront of the research into the texts, teachings, church, liturgy, ethics, history, etc., of the religion. The collection is fully representative of the surviving literature of the western Manichaean church and provides excellent coverage of the secondary sources. Several texts are published for the first time and others have been rarely cited in the past (certainly in English). The collection of texts concerning the scriptures of Mani (ch. 4) is a stimulating contribution to scholarship since it provides an overview that may, hopefully, bring more research attention to these and other scattered fragments of Mani's canon. The chapters on 'Worship and ethics' (6) and 'Community texts' (7) also provide valuable textual overviews of old and new material. The glossary of key figures and concepts is useful to new students, the list and concordance of texts appear to be accurate. Typographical and other errors in the work as a whole are few and minor, and the introduction, covering the life of Mani, the Manichaean system, worship and ethics, the texts from the Roman Empire and the history of research, is extremely useful. One can only hope that this admirable work will soon be followed by a new collection of English translations of Manichaean texts from Central Asia and China.

GUNNER MIKKELSEN

EAST ASIA

TSUEN-HSUIN TSIEN:
Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginning of Chinese Books and Inscriptions (Second Edition).
xxiv, 323 pp. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004. £52.

The original edition of this book (published in 1962) has earned Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien a high reputation and has become an essential reference tool for anyone interested in Chinese epigraphy. It has also provided an important insight into China's intellectual history. Forty years on, it is clear that many of Tsien's arguments have survived the test of the time: for example, the difference between *pian* and *juan* in the development of books, and the notion that there is usually a relationship between the content of the writing and the material on which it is written. These observations are not only fascinating to read today, but also serve as starting points for further scholarly investigation.

What is new in this second edition? The main structure of the book is largely unchanged. There is a new foreword by Li Xueqin (xv–xvii), 'Remarks' by the author (xviii–xx), and an afterword by Edward L. Shaughnessy (pp. 207–32). After the introductory chapter (1), the following chapters are arranged by material: bone and shell (2); metal and clay (3); stone and jade

(4); bamboo and wood (5); silk (6); paper (7); by the implements and tools used for writing (8); and finally the conclusion (9). There are indeed merits to the new edition. First, some phrases and wording have been changed, the Wade-Giles romanization has been transformed into *pinyin*; and a number of mistakes have been eliminated (including the discussion on 'quasi-paper', which recent research has proved wrong). Moreover, in each chapter, the author has tried to incorporate new discoveries made since the book was first published: for instance, in chapter 2, he introduces briefly the discoveries of Shang inscribed oracle bones at Xiaotun Nandi in 1973 (miswritten as 1971, p. 22) and at Huayuanzhuang in 1991, and the Western Zhou oracle bones found at Beijing Liulihe in 1996; and in chapter 5 the recent and important discoveries of bamboo documents at Jingmen Guodian, Hubei province and at Changsha Zoumalou, Hunan province are also mentioned. An appendix lists the major archaeological discoveries from 1899–2000. All these additions bring a freshness to the second edition, even to the reader who was already impressed with the first.

The 'freshness' of the book has been greatly enhanced by Shaughnessy's contribution. In his long afterword (25 pages), Shaughnessy discusses and expands on the new materials unearthed in recent years. For example, Tsien offered us eight lines of factual data about the inscribed oracle bones excavated at Xiaotun Nandi in 1973 (p. 22); and Shaughnessy has doubled the length of the discussion, also adding two long footnotes to introduce the controversy over the dating and periodization of the inscriptions (p. 211). The same treatment is applied to the Zhou bronze inscriptions and Chu bamboo documents. Shaughnessy seeks to highlight the most significant discoveries as well as the advances and shortcomings of the topics, and provides information on recent research publications.

The field of the study of early epigraphy has expanded very rapidly, both in terms of archaeological discovery and secondary research and, as Shaughnessy laments, it is impossible to cover all the discoveries or to synthesize all the details. None the less, this new edition of Tsien's book will undoubtedly be very useful for students and scholars who intend to embark on this exciting branch of Chinese studies. One should probably also mention here that for English readers, familiarization with the subject should include several other recent publications: Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (revised and enlarged edition, Cambridge and London, 2000, pp. 389–464), Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing* (trans. Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman, Berkeley, 2000), Edward L. Shaughnessy (ed.), *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts* (Berkeley, 1997), and W. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven, 1994). Keen researchers should also update their knowledge of the field by checking frequently the resources and new research available on the internet. The most important website is www.jianbo.org.

Finally, while congratulating UCP for the publication of the second edition of such fine scholarship, I must raise issue about the quality of the plates. Forty years on, one would expect that modern technology might improve book illustration. But, a comparison between the old and new editions soon demolishes this expectation. The plates in the new edition are no better, and in most cases are worse than the ones in the 1962 printing (pls. 3, 4, 7[new]/6[old], 9/8, 14/12, 16/14, 18/16, 20/18, 21B/19A). The newly added plates of the Chu bamboo tablets from Sguihudi and Baoshan (pl. 17) and the silk manuscripts from Mawangdui (pl. 21A) are also poor in quality. This is simply cutting

corners, and such a shortcoming is particularly acute in a monograph on epigraphy where clarity of image is essential.

WANG TAO

XIAO-BIN JI:
Politics and Conservatism in Northern Song China: The Career and Thought of Sima Guang (A.D. 1019–1086).
xv, 253 pp. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005. $35.

This is the first book in English on Sima Guang. It should stimulate further scholarship on this important figure in eleventh-century Chinese politics and historical writing. As Xiao-bin Ji suggests in his introduction, close examination of Sima Guang in his own right—not simply in relation to Wang Anshi's reform movement—is overdue in Western scholarship. The book moves beyond its focus on Sima Guang, though, to consider the broad political and social context in which he lived and operated. Ji has therefore constructed his narrative around the relationship between an individual and the state in Northern Song China. Pertinently, this relationship was central to many of the political debates in which Sima Guang participated, the same political debates that form the core of this book.

Ji's examination of the dynamic between individual and state interweaves biographical narrative with analysis of the ideological encounters in which Sima Guang engaged his contemporaries at the Northern Song imperial court. An examination of Sima Guang's biographical details provides a concrete context for his political career. It brings into focus consistencies between Sima Guang as a private individual and as a public, political figure. Ji is convincing, for example, in tracing the important influence of Sima Guang's father, Sima Chi, and his first major political patron, Pang Ji, on the early development of Sima Guang's political ideology. This is an area that seems to have been largely overlooked in previous Western studies of Sima Guang, which have tended to limit themselves to the last two decades of his career in their concern with Sima Guang solely as a political opponent of Wang Anshi. There is a danger, though, that Ji's account of the wider Northern Song political context sometimes moves too far from a close focus on Sima Guang's life and thought. Digressions on Emperor Yingzong's illnesses while in power, and chief councillor Han Qi's subsequent monopolization of power, for example, are important to Ji's contextualization of Sima Guang's career, but the length of these digressions can divert attention from Sima Guang's personal and political developments that otherwise form the focus of book. Tighter editing of this as well as of the frequent repetitions of content and phrasing, would have strengthened the clarity of the book's arguments.

Ji's study is more compelling in sections that closely analyse Sima Guang's political ideology. It is here that the link between Sima Guang's personal development and his political career becomes clear. It is in these sections, too, that Ji addresses the overarching theme of his book, 'politics and conservatism in Northern Song China', with interesting results. In his analysis of Sima Guang's political ideology, Ji revisits and expands upon the arguments of modern scholars Peter Bol and Ye Tan, both of whom he acknowledges in his introductory chapter and in footnotes throughout the book. Ji adduces evidence to support or qualify the arguments those scholars have proposed, and

so this book contributes well to an established, though underdeveloped, seam of scholarly debate on Sima Guang's political thinking. Particularly valuable in this respect is Ji's wide consideration of Sima Guang's political writings, which he uses to support his own arguments and to re-examine those of earlier scholars.

On Sima Guang's political ideology, Ji's study raises a number of important questions. Two will be dealt with here. The first is signalled by the title of this book: the nature of Sima Guang's political position, which Ji broadly categorizes as conservative. The value of Ji's study is that it attempts to move beyond 'general characterization[s] to provide a detailed interpretation of Sima Guang's particular kind of conservatism' (p. 2). This nuanced view of Sima Guang's political ideology is particularly rewarding in examining the final stage of his career. Ji is convincing in his claim that Sima Guang departed from his former, conservative approach to policy implementation during the final months of his life (although, as Ji is correct to qualify in his conclusion, this change did not extend to the inherent nature of Sima Guang's political ideology). The motivation behind this change in approach has to remain on the level of conjecture; Ji's speculation on Sima Guang's sense of his own mortality is an interesting one, but finds no firm support in Sima Guang's own writings. Ji is right, though, to point out the shades of Sima Guang's conservatism as he revoked many of Wang Anshi's reforms while acting first as vice chief councillor and then chief councillor.

The second question is the contribution of *Zi zhi tong jian* to the development of Sima Guang's political thought. This question emerges from a point of omission rather than inclusion: Ji has chosen not to employ *Zi zhi tong jian* as a source for the arguments in his book. He wrestles with the absence of this text from his study in the book's introductory chapter and, to be fair, sets careful parameters for his study that exclude *Zi zhi tong jian*: 'a re-examination [of the construction of *Zi zhi tong jian*] would require many years of patient scholarly investigation, and is clearly beyond the scope of the present study' (p. 9). (As Ji states in his introduction, though, he does use *Zi zhi tong jian* as a source for a general examination of Sima Guang's conservatism in the third chapter of his book. But his method here is to invoke the text in support of arguments that he forms from other evidence, rather than drawing conclusions from within the narrative of *Zi zhi tong jian*. As a result, this remains some way from representing a close examination of the text in its own right.) Peter Bol has claimed that '[an] argument about how Ssu-ma Kuang learned from history and what he learned, if it is to be persuasive, must take the *Comprehensive Mirror* [*Zi zhi tong jian*] into account' (Peter Bol, *'This Culture of Ours': Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992, p. 238). Bol's perceptive statement points out the (self-imposed) limitations of Ji's book. Sima Guang's use of *Zi zhi tong jian*'s text at imperial lectures, his claim that *Zi zhi tong jian* would 'focus on that about which an emperor or sovereign *ought* to know' (Li Tao, *Xu Zi zhi tong jian chang bian*, Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1985, 208.5050; italics my own), and his subtle but pervasive manipulation of *Zi zhi tong jian*'s narrative suggest the text's fundamental role in Sima Guang's presentation of his political ideology. In this context, *Zi zhi tong jian* can be seen as the most extended and intricate of all of Sima Guang's political memorials to the Northern Song emperors. It must be hoped, therefore, that close readings of this important text will, in the future, produce evidence to complement many of the interesting debates that Ji's study draws together and develops. If so, then this book will have served a particularly useful purpose.

MARK STRANGE

BENJAMIN A. ELMAN:
On Their Own Terms: Science in China 1550–1900.
xxxviii, 567 pp. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005. £39.95.

Elman's sweeping survey of the Chinese development of modern science, medicine and technology is a major synthesis of, and contribution to, our understanding of the Chinese view of 'natural studies' during the periods of Jesuit influence (from 1600 to 1800) and Protestant influence in the late Qing (*c*. 1840–1900). Elman deploys recent Western and East Asian scholarship to challenge what he sees as the 'muddled' understanding of Chinese attitudes to science before 1900. In so doing he aims to show that the Chinese developed modern science within a matrix of existing Chinese scholarship and in a manner which was ultimately 'on their own terms'.

Parts I and II challenge the assumption that the Chinese were not interested in European science during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Elman describes, for example, the late Ming calendar crisis, which gave the Jesuits the opportunity to show the power of their methods, demonstrating how the Chinese 'domesticated Western learning within native traditions of natural studies' whilst resisting the Jesuits' attempts to introduce the teachings of Christianity. The densely written narrative does not, however, make clear how and why the Jesuits failed to transmit the post-Copernican world-view to the Chinese, an episode to which Elman refers only in passing (p. 64).

In Parts III, IV and V Elman extends the scope of his previous work *From Philosophy to Philology* (Cambridge, MA, 1984) to describe how the Qing evidential studies movement's stress on the restoration of ancient learning prepared the way for the Protestant missionaries' introduction of the new sciences of post-Newtonian mathematics, physics and chemistry. The evidential scholars' emphasis on philology also allowed translators such as Li Shanlan and Xu Shou successfully to connect the discourse of traditional Chinese natural studies to that of modern Western science. Elman's theme of the ambivalent role of the missionary-translators is revisited with reference to the Jesuits' successors, the nineteenth-century Protestant science educators and evangelists. Discussion in the final chapters focuses on the construction of modern science in late Qing China, the influence of Japan, and the 'displacement' of traditional science and medicine in the twentieth century. An interesting and controversial aspect of these sections is Elman's challenge to what he calls the 'failure narratives', which look on the late Qing attempts at self-strengthening with contempt and which, Elman argues (not wholly convincingly), deserve to be seen in a more positive light.

Elman has relied heavily on secondary sources, rarely referring directly to the translations on which he bases some of his arguments; this has led him to make not only a few minor factual errors but also some more serious misjudgements and oversimplifications.

One of the more important of these is to imply without qualification that John Fryer was a 'missionary' (p. 295). Fryer was in fact only a missionary whilst in Beijing in the early 1860s: for nearly thirty years he worked as a translator for the Chinese Government at the Jiangnan Arsenal, where he could not have insinuated any Christian subtext into his scientific translations, one of the roles of his Chinese collaborators being to 'throw out anything […] savouring of the foreigner'. As the Jiangnan Arsenal translations were by far the most widely read, important and influential science translations of the late nineteenth century, to imply that they are examples of Protestant missionary

evangelism is seriously misleading, as reading the Arsenal texts themselves would have made clear.

A satisfactory account of the transmission of Western science via these translations also has to give proper space and weight to the confusions of nomenclature and intellectual blind alleys which are part of the process of development of any science, and which the translations, which were carried out over many decades, are bound to reflect. Elman's positivist accounts of Western science in these later sections either lack this essential background or are so oversimplified, condensed and chronologically confused (for example on the ether, p. 401) that the reader who is not already thoroughly familiar with the history of the relevant science will find it hard to appreciate the complexities of the process of translation.

Elman questions the religious motives of the foreign translators. Whilst some undoubtedly saw themselves as evangelists, their choice of texts often merely reflected the scope of the science with which they felt comfortable. With the exception of evolutionary biology, there is no convincing case of the choice of source-texts being influenced by religious purposes. Even where there is evidence of overt religious content this did not necessarily vitiate its status as science textbook, nor always excite the contempt of the literati. (Zeng Guofan's son Zeng Jize (1839–90) was known to have been an avid reader of Alexander Williamson's *Gewu tanyuan* (1875), which explores the whole of natural science in the light of natural theology.) Elman's contention that the missionary translators' 'silence' on Darwinian evolution (p. 346) bespeaks their dislike of the unsettling ideas is undeniable and well made, but after 1860 the use of natural theology to insinuate Christian ideas in translated Chinese science texts was much less widespread than he suggests.

Minor mistakes include: the date of first publication of *Bowu xinbian* (1854, not 1851) (p. 287); the confusion of Daniel Jerome Macgowan with his near-contemporary John Macgowan (p. 356), James Clerk Maxwell being named as James Maxwell (p. 401), Henry Wood named as Henry Woods (p. 402); and the statement that the latter's *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography* does not mention the ether (which term appears on page 63 of Wood's book).

On Their Own Terms will be an important work of reference for some time to come. However, another consequence of its methodology is that (especially in the later sections) only rarely are the Chinese allowed to speak for themselves. One would like to know how the Chinese readers of the books and journals the author mentions reacted to the new ideas, or how the Chinese translators viewed their tasks. The sometimes heavy going of the text would have been alleviated by quotations from contemporary letters, articles or prefaces. Elman's achievement (and the strength of his argument) would have been enhanced if he had allowed the contemporary witnesses of these complex processes to speak in their own voices and on their own terms.

DAVID WRIGHT

JAMES A. MILLWARD, RUTH W. DUNNELL, MARK C. ELLIOTT and PHILIPPE FORÊT (eds):
New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde.
xix, 249 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. £70.

This collection of essays is conceived around a combined physical and thematic locus: the Qing imperial resort at Chengde (Jehol, Rehe, the location

of the famous Bishushanzhuang) and what it expresses of the character of the Qing empire before about 1800. That site moves the centre of Qing political and cultural character away from Beijing and a monochromatic imperial edifice of 'Confucianism' and 'China'. It allows the authors, participants in a conference in 1992, to elaborate a miscellany of points connecting the 'Inner Asian' elements of Qing imperial culture and institutions to the geography, architecture, artistic treasures, and literary legacy of the Chengde site (one chapter is on the Mulan hunting grounds, to the north). It is an elegant concept and has produced some excellent, original essays for this book.

The site itself, and its literary representations in the Kangxi and Qianlong periods, has long been a staple of Qing studies. The novelty here is a short introduction placing Chengde as a locality and as a theme in the centre of what two of the editors, in their introduction, call 'new Qing history'—'a wide-ranging revision of the history of the Manchu empire in China and Inner Asia carried out since the 1990s'. Like much else in the book, this discussion is cursory, and readers will not find out what authors or books might be fundamental to the trend. The same must be said of the editors' reifications of other interpretive phrases, including 'Inner Asia' and, indeed, 'Manchu empire'; the reader is instructed to understand that there is something path-breaking about their use in the book's framing materials, but the discussion is not substantial enough to find much meaning in it. The book is best appreciated by setting aside the more airy pronouncements on historical revisionism—none of which are incredible in themselves but none of which are sufficiently developed to inform novices or challenge specialists—and instead concentrating on the specific contributions of some of the essays.

Considering that it contains nineteen chapters by seventeen authors the book is surprisingly short, and each essay is short as a consequence. In the case of the interpretive essays, the brevity produces only mild effects, while a few of the chapers provide revisitations of well-known subjects (the Torghuts, the stelae of Chengde) without major extension of our previous knowledge (if one may still resort to 'old' Qing history from the glory days of *Central Asiatic Journal* and *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*). In a few cases, however, standard subjects are given new detail and texture. Elizabeth Benard's study of the Qianlong emperor's well-known fascination with various sects of Buddhism brings new depth to an old topic. Similarly, Anne Chayet's dense twenty-page discussion of the architecture of Chengde is as significant as any previously published work on the complex (including that of Forêt). Among the essays based on specific research, and in some instances wholly on original documents, the results are gripping. Renqiu Yu's detailed study of imperial banquets, not in topic precedent-setting, is nevertheless so concrete that it is a feast in itself. Deborah Sommer's very short study of Attiret at Chengde is a welcome excavation of Yang Boda's studies of the very late 1970s and 1980s. Mark Elliott and Ning Chia's study of the hunting ground at Mulan is a valuable addition to a subject that previously has been limited to a very well-known essay in French by Hou Ching-lang and Michèle Pirazzoli.

The jewel of the book, however, to the great credit of all involved with it, is the last section, called 'Voices from Chengde'. In six very short selections, the authors provide translations from a stunning range of media, including the prefaces from both the Manchu and the Chinese editions *of Bishushanzhuang sanshiliu jing shi bingtu* (translated by Mark Elliott and Scott Lowe); a letter from Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot to a colleague in Beijing (Deborah Sommer); one of the Qianlong emperor's inscriptions commemorating the founding of a

Gelukpa temple (Peter Zarrow); excerpts from the Tibetan diary of a companion of the Third Dalai Lama during his visit of 1780 (Nima Dorjee Ragnubs); five brief poems by the Qianlong emperor on Chengde subjects (Lowe); and two folk tales, recorded from modern practitioners (Karen Gernant). These translations nicely complement content elsewhere in the collection, and in some cases add critical depth. They are otherwise too slight to illuminate general readers. But for specialists, they are very rich.

The book contains illustrations and maps, though (due to no fault of the editors or authors) they are not produced well enough to be of much scholarly use. Given the technical quality of much of the best material in the book, the editors might have been wiser to spend the pages and production budget on supplying Chinese characters, and perhaps even Manchu and Tibetan, where they would have been useful (especially in the translated poetry and epigraphy) instead of the images. But this is a minor point that in no way detracts from the substantial contributions in this volume.

PAMELA KYLE CROSSLEY

XU GUOQI:
China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization.
(The Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare.) xiv, 316 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. £50.

This is the first full-length study in English of China's role in the First World War since a monograph on China's diplomatic interactions with the powers during the war was published over thirty years ago (M. Chi, *China Diplomacy, 1914–1918,* Cambridge, MA, 1970). Part of a CUP series on the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare, Xu Guoqi's study aims to demonstrate that the First World War—far from being irrelevant to modern Chinese history as is often assumed—was a key turning point in shaping the Chinese worldview which, since the turn of the twentieth century, had been increasingly animated by a desire to join the world community as an equal member (what Xu refers to as 'internationalization'). For this reason, Xu argues, China at this time was not simply the hapless pawn of the powers, but rather actively and deliberately initiated a new diplomacy that would facilitate its full participation in the war and, it was hoped, its eventual acceptance as a player on the world stage. In order to substantiate his thesis, Xu begins (in chapters 1 and 2) by describing dramatic changes in the Chinese worldview from 1895 to 1914 and the emergence of an increasingly vociferous public opinion and newspaper press (referred to as a 'foreign policy public') interested in foreign affairs and China's role in the world. The analysis, however, is rather simplistic, exaggerated and muddled in places. Thus his assertion that after 1895 the 'closed-mindedness', isolationist and 'Middle Kingdom syndrome' characteristic of late Qing foreign policy gave way to a quest for China to become a nation state fully engaged with, and involved in, world affairs, overlooks the significance of foreign policy changes before 1895 (such as the Qing government's decision to open embassies and legations abroad in the 1870s and 1880s) and hardly touches on the complex and multifaceted nature of Chinese nationalism and its evolution during the last decade of the Qing. The 1911 Revolution is seen as the product of this growing internationalization since, in Xu's view,

it was motivated by 'adapted foreign ideologies and political theories' (such as republicanism and citizenship) and its goal was to 'bring China into the world' (p. 42). Furthermore, Xu insists (without explication), 'despite its many defects, the 1911 Revolution achieved astonishing successes and brought profound changes to China' (p. 47). Again, these rather bald statements hardly do justice to the complexity of the 1911 Revolution. It is not entirely clear, either, exactly what Xu means when he refers to nationalism during this period (pp. 56–7). After noting that for most Chinese before 1911 nationalism meant anti-imperialism and making China a full member of the world community, Xu then mentions that after 1912 Chinese nationalism became 'state nationalism' or 'statism', which is vaguely and unsatisfactorily defined as a wish to revitalize China and win it equal international status. This is followed by an assertion that Chinese nationalism after 1912 was political nationalism and finally, in an apparent contradiction of his earlier comment, Xu concludes that early Chinese nationalism went beyond statism to embrace internationalization. All this is rather confusing. The next three chapters discuss Chinese responses to the outbreak of the war, the abortive attempts to participate militarily in the war, the contribution of Chinese indentured labour to the war effort in France, and the diplomatic background to China's formal declaration of war on Germany and Austria in August 1917. Xu makes the worthwhile point that China finally entered the war on its own initiative and with its own agenda (rather than simply being pressured to do so by the allied powers anxious to legitimize the elimination of the German presence in China); however, it should be noted that discussion of the various diplomatic initiatives taken by the Chinese government at this time (including proposals in 1915 that China make a military contribution to the war) does not add anything substantially new to ground already covered by Chi's earlier study. Xu also devotes a chapter to how the war affected domestic politics, demonstrating that disputes over China's participation in the war exacerbated political factionalism and encouraged the growth of warlordism. However, discussion of the role played by a key player in this period, Duan Qirui, leader of the Anfu Clique of militarists and premier in 1917, is again rather simplistic and contradictory. At one point he describes Duan as an 'honest man not interested in making money or pursuing personal pleasure' and as a 'man of principle' who genuinely believed that China's participation in the war would be good for the country (p. 213), but then later notes that Duan aimed to use China's entry into the war (and the foreign loans it would bring) as an opportunity to expand his own military forces to be used against his domestic militarist rivals! A final chapter focuses on the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and how *Realpolitik* squashed Chinese hopes for the return of the German concession area in Shandong province (occupied by Japan in 1914) and the restoration of full national sovereignty with the dismantling of the nineteenth-century unequal treaties. Nevertheless, Xu concludes, China 'scored quite well' at Paris (p. 272) since it had partially succeeded in projecting a new image to the world (confirmed by its enthusiastic support for the proposed League of Nations) and inserted its own voice in discussions of the new world order, as well as highlighting the Shandong 'problem' by ultimately refusing to sign the Versailles Treaty on June 28, 1919. In clearly demonstrating China's active participation in the diplomacy of the First World War period as an illustration of China's desire to play a role in the world, Xu's study is commendable; ultimately, however, this is a rather unsatisfying book since it lacks analytical subtlety and depth (especially concerning the nature and impact of public discourse within China).

PAUL BAILEY

JANET M. THEISS:
Disgraceful Matters: The Politics of Chastity in Eighteenth-Century China.
xv, 281 pp. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005. £32.50.

The cult of female chastity has long been the subject of debate, although often in stereotypical or impressionistic terms, whereby little attention was devoted to explaining it and much to describing it or constructing it as a symbol of backwardness. Over the last two decades, however, a substantial body of scholarship (Holmgren, Elvin, Mann, Ng, T'ien, Carlitz, Sommer) has begun to look beyond descriptions of chastity as a tool of oppression, in order to investigate its sociocultural, legal and economic aspects.

Building on this body of scholarship, and on her own work on the subject, Theiss has produced an insightful study on eighteenth-century China's 'politics of chastity' as seen in the judicial treatment of 'disgraceful matters', namely issues—adultery, incest, assault, rape, homicide—that would threaten the virtue of women and their families and menace the social structure. Theiss's analysis is not, therefore, limited to chastity, but encompasses propriety, i.e. the building and maintenance of order, and the way in which the state attempted to extend its control into localities and subjects' lives. Being constructed by the state, managed by families, rearranged by people and judged by magistrates, seemingly private virtues or issues were made public, thus blurring the inner/outer division.

Disgraceful Matters is a work on culture and politics, not on women *per se*: although the (described) lives or deaths of non-elite females do provide the starting point, the result is not contributory history giving us 'her/story', but gender history that highlights the linkages between state policies, normative authorities, socio-political order and the construction of (virtuous) identities. Theiss shows how chastity came to be a tool for state-building and subject-moulding, while at times being used—with unpredicted outcomes—as a weapon for reaffirming personhood. By means of an analytical usage of gender we thus gain a deeper understanding of High Qing society and politics as they were defined by—and in turn contributed to shape—policies and discourses of virtue and loyalty. In particular, Theiss provides good examples of how orthodoxy and prescriptions were not immutable monoliths but the shifting result of a complex interplay of agendas, in a process that operated in both a top-down and a bottom-up direction.

Criminal cases, integrated with legal commentaries, edicts and literature are used in this work to illustrate the architecture, significance, usage, appropriation, experience and changes of a norm. Employing specific cases as examples, Theiss starts by looking at the function, historical evolution and construction of the chastity cult within statecraft, imperial expansion, and moral transformation discourse. While the state assumed the role of ultimate civilizer and arbiter of righteousness, bureaucratized female virtue was conceived as the regenerating foundation of a patriarchal social order based on loyalty, hierarchy and gender distinction: distrust for women's moral maturity co-existed with the idealization of the virtuous (i.e. loyal and chaste) female paradigm, which epitomized the model subject. An investigation of praxis follows, where we are shown: the incongruous ways in which 'patriarchy' enforced gender prescriptions; the conflicts between imperial wishes and local/

familial agencies as well as within families (i.e. between marital, patrilineal and natal bonds); the reality of sex-mixing, whereby inner and outer were mental rather than actual categories; and the way some women apparently articulated norms to fit their own manner of being virtuous, and linked chastity to femininity and personhood, which they could even reaffirm by suicide. Most interestingly, Theiss highlights the fissures in norms and entities—chastity, family, inner/outer division—whose character has too often been perceived as univocal. For instance, she demonstrates how chastity promotion, intended to be favourable to the family as an institution, in fact had detrimental outcomes, for the state often had to defend women against their families, while the emphasis on (female) individual responsibility in the preservation of virtue ended up threatening the patriarchy it had sought to reinforce.

While this study provides insightful views on the politics and policies of gender, family and the construction of ideals of femininity, one is left with the impression that more could have been said on the prescriptions for masculinity with regard to the chastity cult. Men appear as regulators, normative authorities or villains, but were these the only roles available to them? How did non-elite masculinities define themselves in relation to the moralizing task attributed to the chaste female paradigm? Did they become more or less important? In at least a few testimonies, men (guilty and innocent) emerge as timid, unable to handle a critical situation, while women—even when their role might require otherwise—perorate, act, decide. Was this a rhetorical construct either to diminish responsibility (if conceived by men) or show the disasters of gender reversal (if shaped by officials), or did the concept of masculinity somehow shift?

On the other hand, Theiss's use of testimonies as evidence about commoners' lives and *mentalité* might at times be questioned. Legal sources' meaning, rather than effective veracity, can undoubtedly reveal much about non-elite subjects, provided that one takes into account the edited or shaped nature of these texts, in terms of language, attitudes and facts. Case histories show very well how bureaucrats applied norms, or perceived/portrayed reality, thus constituting an excellent vantage point on the mentality and power mechanisms of the officials: yet their representations may sometimes be far from the truth. While Theiss seems to be well aware of the 'fictional' character and limitations of these discursively framed sources (see pp. 3–6), on some occasions she tends to take the words of the testimonies too literally, overlooking officials' (and commoners') prejudices, discursive strategies, or vested interests. For instance, she argues that the 'language of personal shame in the stock expressions used by women and their family members' in case testimonies to describe outrage for violations suggests an 'intimate connection between reputation […] and personal moral identity for women' and shows how most women internalized the ethic of shame (p. 160). Such attitudes most likely existed: certainly in the official construction of the female paradigm, and probably in some women's experiences as well, at least when they had to seek the help of the law to redress wrongs. None the less, the language of testimonies may not be the best demonstration of it. Precisely because of those 'stock expressions', quasi-theatrical props appearing recurrently in texts composed by officials, we are not listening to people's voices here, but to the way bureaucracy re-presented commoners' life, according to a model that happened to coincide with imperial prescriptions.

This notwithstanding, and in spite of some minor inexactitudes—for example, Chen Dongyuan's book was first published in 1928, not 1937, *Disgraceful Matters* is a valuable work, above all because it successfully bypasses

the conventional association of chastity with women, widows in particular, and brings the chastity cult *out* of female quarters.

VALENTINA BORETTI

JUNE YIP:
Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary.
ix, 356 pp. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. £17.95.

In the last ten years, there has been an explosion of scholarly interest in Taiwan, as its democratic political transformation has become consolidated, its relationship with mainland China has become openly difficult, and it has asserted its autonomy and identity. Just as the Taiwanese themselves have laid claim to the legitimacy of a specifically 'Taiwanese' cultural and social experience, so too has scholarly attention turned to elucidate precisely what that might mean. In its position across Asia's discursive boundaries, between China and Japan and Asia and the West, as well as the more conceptual boundaries of modernity and post-modernity, scholars have found Taiwan to be one of the richest and most complex sites of politics, culture and identity in Asia. Indeed, it is now possible to see sufficient coherence to this scholarship to talk about the emergence of a 'Taiwan studies'.

June Yip is a well-known figure in work on Taiwan through her writing on Taiwanese cinema. In Sheldon Lu's edited volume on Chinese-language cinema, she brought the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien into English-language film scholarship.

Her book *Envisioning Taiwan* develops those themes and arguments to take in not just cinema but also literature, drawing together nativist literature of the 1960s and 1970s with Taiwan New Cinema of the 1980s and 1990s into a detailed description of the elaboration of Taiwan's cultural identity. She concentrates on the writer Hwang Chun-ming and the film-maker Hou Hsiao-hsien, between them the best known literary and cinematic figures.

Yip weaves very detailed descriptions and analyses of their work with discussions of their position within cultural and social debates on Taiwan and theoretical exegeses of the construction of identity through cultural production. The vigorous and at times rancorous debates about the role of literature in Taiwan's changing society are canvassed in useful detail, as well as the conditions of film-making and the place of Taiwanese new cinema within the context of global 'third' cinema and art cinema. Yip describes cultural practitioners deeply embedded in the language and practice of the most current global film and cultural theory and able to translate that depth of understanding into their own films.

Yip is fully versed in the work of contemporary theorists, especially Bhakhtin and Thesome, and she deploys them appropriately and skilfully throughout to develop arguments about the tensions between the urban and the rural, and the social and cultural forces which have transformed the island over the last fifty years.

In some ways, the material Yip covers is not new. Nativist literature and Taiwanese New Cinema have both been subject to detailed scholarship through the 1990s. Nevertheless, Yip's book brings new insights and presents a comprehensive overview of the Taiwanese cultural scene which has been missing in the literature.

She emphasizes the tension between Taiwan's self-conscious elaboration of a national identity through a period in which the nation as a category has been challenged by post-modern forms of hybrid local, transnational and global identities. She characterizes the work of Hou Hsiao-hsien in particular as deliberately discontiguous and open to multiple readings by his audience.

This theoretical tension runs through the book. Yip convincingly describes a cultural sphere in which openness to the boundaries of identity is at the heart of Taiwan's identity debates, and shows how this is expressed in contemporary Taiwanese culture, especially in the Hou's films. For Yip, therefore, Taiwan represents a challenge to the notion of the coherence of a national imagining. Taiwan's cultural politics are too contested to allow a singular hegemonic discourse of Taiwan's national identity to prevail, and Taiwan's cultural practitioners have produced art which self-consciously reflects their awareness of the impossibility of closure on Taiwan's identity discourses.

In the self-reflexivity of Taiwan's cultural life, Yip suggests a transcendence of the dominant categories of nation and nationalism by the Taiwanese, and the development of something new, perhaps 'post-modern' about Taiwanese identity. Her argument is well-drawn, but one might also find in the self-consciousness of Taiwanese literature and cinema something akin to Bhabha's 'doubled narrative movement' which characterizes the self-consciousness of the post-colonial nation. Post-coloniality is an experience through which Taiwan could be understood and, if one were critical, one might deploy some of those arguments against Yip to recover the viability of the nation as a legitimate political and cultural category for the Taiwanese.

Nevertheless, *Envisioning Taiwan* is an important and valuable addition to Taiwan studies and should be warmly received by all those who research Taiwan and care about its future.

MARK HARRISON

THOMAS DAVID DUBOIS:
The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China.
xii, 275 pp. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. $55.

This fine book, based both on fieldwork and archival study, introduces the complex mosaic of local religious life—including temples, sectarians and shamans—in rural Cang county, south of Beijing. Focusing on the period from late imperial times through to the present day, it admirably documents not only the pre-Communist and post-reform periods, but also the Maoist era, showing both the interface and the stand-off between state power and local communities under different regimes. It describes a world in which peasant mobility was, until the late 1980s, limited to a radius of around 15 kilometres (pp. 24–5).

Such local, and diachronic, material from north China is most welcome, since it remains far more sparse than that for south China (see e.g. C.K. Wang (ed.), *Minsu quyi congshu* [Studies in Chinese ritual, theatre and folklore series] (Taipei: Shi Ho-cheng Folk Culture Foundation, 1997–); for English reviews, Daniel Overmyer with the assistance of Shin-Yi Chao (ed.), *Ethnography in China Today: A Critical Assessment of Achievements and Results* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Company, 2002); for Western-language bibliography

on Chinese popular religion, see http://web.missouri.edu/~religpc/bibliography_CPR.html).

Dubois' enquiring approach often overturns facile assumptions. The extraordinary opening account (p. 1) encapsulates our surprise at finding piety as strong in the late twentieth century as in pre-Communist times, but as ever Dubois' astute comments relate this to significant change.

Chapter 1 gives background on the history of the region, village structure and economy, the sphere of local culture, and diverse manifestations of religious life. Chapter 2 gives some fine analysis of the role of the village in the organization and propagation of religion, though Dubois does not attempt to collate it with Prasenjit Duara's four-fold classification of associations for the 1940s (*Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). More recent music-centred material by my colleague Zhang Zhentan and myself might also make for interesting comparison.

Chapter 3 is a most welcome addition to our scant knowledge of Han Chinese shamans, a ubiquitous and neglected phenomenon, here deriving their healing power from fox spirits (cf., for a village just further west, Fan Lizhu, 'The cult of the silkworm mother as a core a local community religion in a north China village: field study in Zhiwuying, Baoding, Hebei', in Daniel Overmyer (ed.), *Religion in China Today*, *China Quarterly* Special Issues (Cambridge, 2002); Stephen Jones, *Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China* (with CD) (Leiden: CHIME Foundation, 2004)). Dubois' shamans are known as *xiangtou*, 'incense heads', which in the Baoding area just to the west refers narrowly to the leader of an amateur ritual association (Jones 2004: 214–15). If this chapter at first seems somewhat at a tangent to the book's main theme, it enriches the whole discussion of individual and group devotion.

Chapter 4 discusses institutional religion before 1949 mainly in terms of monastic Buddhism. There is an intelligent analysis of the 'weakness' of Buddhism in north as opposed to south China, and of the conflicting assessments of numbers of 'monks'—Dubois' sources often regard any temple occupant or ritual specialist as a monk. Detailed as the study is, I am unclear as to why Dubois singles out Buddhist temples here, given the syncretic nature of popular religion (p. 101), and since my experience of rural religion in north China suggests that Daoist temples—and certainly lay Daoist activity—were at least as significant.

Chapters 5 to 7 explore sectarian activity in Cang county. Chapter 5 discusses the Li sect and ch. 6 the apocalyptic Way of Penetrating Unity (Yiguandao). Perhaps the most compelling material of all is in ch. 7 on the Teaching of the Most Supreme (Taishangmen) and Heaven and Earth sect (Tiandimen). What Dubois nicely calls 'flashes of millenarianism', and affinities with White Lotus teachings, are subtly discussed. Setting forth from work by local experts Li Shiyu and Pu Wenqi, Dubois makes cogent distinctions. On one hand, the Way of Penetrating Unity was perceived as 'heterodox'; Dubois portrays its explosive rise as fed by anxiety of war, and its precipitous decline in the 1950s as caused as much by the outbreak of peace as by draconian Communist suppression. On the other hand, more deeply-rooted groups like the Heaven and Earth sect have continued to manage to negotiate government power right down to today and remain 'integral to village life and identity' (p. 13), representing a 'relative orthodoxy in the village' (pp. 185, 188). While the early sectarian histories are ably done, yet more interesting for this reviewer is the material on post-1949 changes. The conclusion draws the themes together cogently, with a fine discussion of passive and active

religiosity, and an elaboration of C.K. Yang's old 'institutional/diffused' dichotomy.

Finally, may I make a plea for expressive culture, an indispensable aspect of religious practice in China and elsewhere. Such a plea may fall on deaf ears among this journal's readership, but it shouldn't! Historians and anthropologists alike tend to neglect expressive culture (Jones, *Plucking the Winds*, 363–5), despite their otherwise detailed ethnographies, so Dubois is in distinguished company here.

As he wisely points out (p. 5), one cannot generalize about regional culture, and the material here has some significant differences from that for the nearby Baoding region. Still, both (far more than in Shanxi or Shaanbei, for instance) have amateur ritual associations. If these sects really have no written scriptures (pp. 153, 165; cf. 207–9), then Cang county is exceptional, and thus we find little on *baojuan* or other ritual manuals. However, whether or not there are written texts, the sects do perform rituals, yet Dubois does not detail the actual performance of ritual (notably funerals)—again, a critical feature that is traditionally neglected by Chinese and Western scholars. The impoverishment of ritual practice since the 1930s is crucial, and details of ritual sequences would anchor the book still more firmly. While themes like donors' lists are broached, others such as ritual paintings beckon; one might also seek further data on ritual venues.

Only three photos (one on the back cover!) give any clue to music, which is so indispensable to ritual performance. Apart from the basic vocal liturgy and percussion of such ritual associations, the para-liturgical *sheng-guan* ensemble is a quintessential aspect of ritual in north China. As artefacts, *gongche* instrumental scores, not to mention instruments, are often as important as ritual manuals to such groups.

Anyway, these latter comments are unlikely to concern the readership of a book that is rich in both detail and concept, making a splendid addition to our understanding of religious life in north China.

STEPHEN JONES

KAREN J. LEONG:
The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism.
x, 236 pp. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005.

Discussion of the view of China taken in American culture, long confined to the pioneering work of Harold J. Isaacs, has lately seen the publication of a number of worthwhile monographs, such as those by Christopher Jespersen and Christina Klein. Now Karen J. Leong has added a further succinct and effective study bringing out effectively for the first time the important contribution that women's studies may make to this theme. The three women she treats were all active interpreters of China during the crucial period in which the United States emerged from isolation to play a global role in the Second World War. All three contributed to the creation of a mystique about China that has proved in some respects remarkably durable. Yet they were also totally dissimilar in their backgrounds. Pearl Buck was an American brought up in China speaking Chinese, a Nobel Prize winner for literature. Mayling Soong, Chinese born but American educated, was married to China's leader,

Chiang Kai-shek. Both of these women cast doubts on the other's credentials as interpreters of China, both united in disparaging the credentials of Anna May Wong, in their eyes perhaps a mere actress with no right to speak at all. Yet Leong's work points out that Anna May Wong had no choice open to her but to be a Chinese American at a time when such an identity was scarcely a popular one. Even so she managed to talk and write articulately about the problems of her image in Hollywood in some ways more positively and honestly than her supposed intellectual betters.

It is noteworthy, however, that Anna May Wong was at one point obliged to leave North America altogether and seek her fortunes in Europe. All three women in fact operated in a world that was not confined bilaterally to China and the United States, and it is interesting to see how their impact in Great Britain, though not as important, varied significantly from that portrayed by Leong. If memory serves (though I have not been able to document this), Anna May Wong was still celebrated in the 1950s, albeit with a degree of biographical inaccuracy, in a playground rhyme; 'Anna May Wong, born in Hong Kong…'. Pearl Buck's novels, too, continued to be reprinted and read during this same period in Britain even though (as Klein has shown) American Orientalism moved on, leaving her behind. Soong Mayling was apparently sooner forgotten. During the war, however, when she had a fairly prominent and positive image in Churchill's Britain, her writings were published with a preface by Charlotte Haldane (1894–1969), a left-wing figure rather different from those with whom she was associated on her trip to Roosevelt's America. It would be dangerous, therefore, to extrapolate the findings of Leong's work beyond the context that she has herself researched.

Occasionally, too, it is worth remembering that the specific focus of her study precludes extended treatment of some of the episodes touched upon. Thus for Pearl Buck's troubles with her missionary superiors over her perceived apostasy one would do well to read also the account in Lian Xi, *The Conversion of the Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907–1932* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 120–23, 220–24. Here Lian's volume offers a broader context to Buck's problems, and he has also read some archival sources not consulted by Leong. This is natural and understandable, and by no means invalidates the valuable contribution made by Leong's research, which would appear to be itself soundly based on considerable explorations of the existing archives most relevant to her interests. She has indeed shown that in the study of American Orientalism a perspective based on women's studies, though by no means the only conceivable one, has much to offer as a way of interpreting developments, and she has done so in a way that is both readable and instructive. No doubt further writing in the same vein in this area is both possible and indeed desirable.

T. H. BARRETT

HARUO SHIRANE:
Classical Japanese: A Grammar.
xxvi, 525 pp. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2005. $49.50, £32.

First, perhaps, a word about what this book is not. It is not a new treatment of the subject. Despite the odd reference to recent Japanese scholarly opinion on

the meaning of certain suffixes, this is essentially a presentation of what is often called 'school grammar' and as such it does its job fairly well. Whether we actually need another such aid to reading classical Japanese texts is another matter. The format is unusually large and unwieldy and the book itself is over 500 pages long, which may well militate against its use in the classroom. I somehow doubt that I will be recommending it over my own 40-page handout. One might suggest using it for reference.

But why, you may ask, would one actually need a new grammar? Well, classical Japanese grammar as taught in Japanese high schools is a curious amalgam of some categories worked out by such scholars as Fujitani Nariakira, Motoori Norinaga, Suzuki Akira and Tōjō Gimon in the mid-Tokugawa and others adopted from European grammars in the early Meiji period. It is, to be frank, a bit of a mess, and those of us who teach it usually do so through gritted teeth. It must be taught, of course, because the terminology is needed to understand dictionaries and other scholarly aids to reading, but it is always awkward if you know that some parts of the analysis you are presenting are wrong and others misconceived. It 'works', of course, but almost in spite of itself.

So if one makes the decision, as Shirane has done, to present an English-language version of the traditional Japanese analysis, how does one deal with the anomalies that are bound to occur? The answer is: with difficulty, especially if one ties oneself to a faithful translation of Japanese terms. Shirane tries his best, but to label the negative suffix *-zu* an 'auxiliary verb' (*jodōshi*) is to perpetuate a vicious circle, since *jodōshi* originated as a translation of 'auxiliary verb' (or its Dutch equivalent) into Japanese and is not really very helpful as a description. Matters begin to get worse when, quite naturally, he feels the need to gesture towards an anomaly without upsetting the whole applecart in the process. The learner is constantly faced with one analysis followed by quite a different analysis of the same pattern in sections marked either 'Advanced study and reference' or 'Historical note', and the clash between the traditional, skewed version and a more satisfying one is not well handled. Take, for example, the explanation of the suffix *-ri* in section 7.2.2. Here we read that *-ri* (described as an 'auxiliary verb') 'follows the *izenkei* of *yodan* verbs and the *mizenkei* of *sahen* verbs, and has a *rahen* conjugation'. There is a footnote at this point which reads: 'There is a debate about whether *ri* follows the *izenkei* or the *meireikei* of *yodan* verbs. Both forms look the same. This book assumes that *ri* follows the *izenkei* (the already realized, or perfective, form), since *ri* indicates that the action has already taken place'. I'm not sure what a beginner is meant to make of this and it is difficult to know where to start to criticize such a confusing explanation that runs headlong into a series of traps. Both forms might indeed have looked the same in Heian Japanese, but they were quite distinct in Nara Japanese. But leaving that quibble aside, is it not odd to have a suffix (or an auxiliary verb, if you wish) following an imperative form? There must be something wrong. It is only when we get to the 'Historical Note' two pages later that we find out that this traditional analysis is, quite simply, rubbish. A verb form such as *shireri*, traditionally analysed as being either the perfective or the imperative of the verb *shiru* 'know' plus the 'auxiliary verb' *ri*, is in fact no such thing: it is the continuative or conjunctive form of *shiru*, namely *shiri*, plus the verb *ari*, which has quite naturally elided to *shireri*. The *kana* syllabary had the effect of blinding Tokugawa-period scholars to the possibility of multiple elisions over time, leading them to segment agglutinative strings in the wrong place.

The decision to base this book firmly on the traditional analysis is symptomatic of a wider problem in the study of Japanese classical texts: there is a serious gulf between historical linguists and literary scholars (in Japan and abroad), which must at some stage be crossed. One more example. No one can go very far in a classical Japanese text without meeting a construction that goes by various names but which I shall call a 'circumnominal relative clause', sentences in which a relative clause appears to be in the wrong place, namely after, not before, its head noun. Historical linguists have been trying to deal with this interesting phenomenon of late, but traditional grammar has absolutely nothing to say about it and modern translations usually gloss over the difficulty in silence. As far as I can tell, Shirane does not mention this kind of relative, which is odd given that he claims to 'be comprehensive enough to address the most complex grammatical issues' (p. xix). This unwillingness to break ranks and try at least a partially new approach makes for a rather unsatisfactory experience. Literary scholars need to learn from historical linguists, since to ignore these little local difficulties is to lose a nuance in the text, and nuances are what literary language is all about.

R. BOWRING

STEPHEN DODD:
Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004. £25.95.

Some book titles tell the prospective reader all they might wish to know as to the central thesis to be pursued in what follows; others are more cryptic. In a sense, Dodd's title fulfils both functions. On the one hand, we are immediately alerted to the core focus of this book—a series of case studies of literary representations of the native place (the *furusato*) in twentieth-century Japan. At the same time, however, it is only gradually that the full significance of this approach—a significance that should ensure that this study is read far beyond the narrow confines of modern Japanese literary studies—becomes apparent. Much of the groundwork for this is completed in Dodd's introduction, in which, having acknowledged his vision of the notion of the *furusato* as an amorphous concept, less a reflection of an actual locality, more the product of a particular writer's needs in conjunction with specific, socio-historical conditions, he outlines his desire to determine how Japanese literary depictions of the *furusato* have developed since the Meiji era (1868–1912). Dodd views these as articulations of the 'sense of uprootedness and loss experienced by many writers during Japan's period of modernity' (p. 1), and thus as invaluable metaphors of 'what it meant to be Japanese' (p. 3) during an era of breathtaking transition. These authors thus have a major contribution to make to the debate about the emerging Japanese national identity in the early part of the century.

To assist in this attempt, Dodd opens his discussion with a useful contextualization of the authors here under consideration. Reflecting his desire to view the *furusato* in terms of an ideological process, he considers in detail the contribution of a series of literary figures to the formulation of the nationalist ideology that was taking place at the time—and, in so doing, he shows how the *furusato* emerged as a newly invigorated symbol of both desire and discontent. As he readily acknowledges, Dodd is by no means the first to

equate physical space with the sense of identity; indeed, his discussion of the contributions in this regard of such Meiji thinkers as Shiga Shigetaka and Yanagita Kunio is particularly useful. But his drawing on Hobsbawm's notion of the 'invented tradition' to define the *furusato*—in that it was characterized by 'the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant' (p. 22)—nevertheless moves the discussion in an interesting and challenging direction.

Not surprisingly, Dodd begins with a discussion of Kunikida Doppo, one of the generation of authors who, around the turn of the century, began to question the equation of city life with upward mobility that had so dominated earlier Meiji discourse. Building on Karatani Kōjin's depiction of Doppo as 'the discoverer of landscape' (albeit Dodd sees this rather as Doppo's attempt to clarify and build on a potential relationship with landscape that had lain dormant since the days of the haiku poet, Basho), Dodd portrays Doppo as an author led by the fact of his own uprootedness and consequent lack of a genuine *furusato* to seek out literary sites that could best articulate the contours of his inner doubts. In so doing, Dodd uses this section to raise two questions integral to this study: 'how to link a writer's personal hopes and aspirations and ideals with the social environment into which he is born, and how to identify such experiences and ideals in the physical landscapes produced in his literature' (p. 31). Of equal significance, however, is Dodd's important rejoinder that the sites Doppo chose to depict are not merely pre-existing empty arenas in which actions simply take place. 'Rather, the sites themselves constitute part of that transformative process by which each of three elements—spatiality (landscape, *furusato*), temporality (history), and social being (writer)—inform and reproduce each other' (p. 32).

For the next of Dodd's authors, Shimazaki Tōson, the notion of the *furusato* is linked to actual birthplace (in this case, the Magome district of Shinshū immortalized in *The Broken Commandment*). But for Tōson, too, any sense of belonging was disrupted when he was sent to Tokyo to study at the age of eight. Any discussion of his *furusato* literature must therefore take into consideration how his perceptions of native place were necessarily shaped by this move, and the extent to which his early childhood memories of *furusato* were idealized with the passage of time—and this is reflected in Dodd's chapter divisions. Again, the primary impulse here was 'less the reappropriation of an actual locality than the articulation of a deeply felt need to seek a site of plenitude and fulfillment to compensate for the loss he experienced in the city' (p. 112). But, as Dodd readily acknowledges, the resulting works are much more than one-dimensional, sentimental reproductions of the lost home. Instead, in keeping with his vision of nature as a 'site where the aesthetic, the spiritual, and the physical might come together' (p. 104), Tōson introduces a complexity of perspectives, a plurality of landscapes open to a variety of interpretations depending on the viewer. In Dodd's estimation, this is integral to Tōson's art: the author's recollections of his own native place were personal and thus outside the experience of most of his readers. But, in creating these landscapes, he succeeded in outlining 'a distinctly Japanese homeland available to a broader society in flux' (p. 136). It was this tone of authenticity that would be picked up by Dodd's other two authors, Satō Haruo and Shiga Naoya, as they sought to articulate the new ways of engagement between people and place that emerged in Taishō Japan.

To Dodd, Satō was an author whose 'distinctive contribution was to extend an understanding of the imaginary home into the realm of the fantastic'. In

so doing, he suggests, Satō succeeded in exploring 'new possibilities of being Japanese in the modern world' (p. 138). The landscape of belonging depicted by Satō suggests a national identity far more complex than that of the earlier generation of writers. At the same time, however, Satō is here presented as having eliminated the need for actual native place: instead, home is rendered authentic to the extent that it corresponds to the needs of an inner, spiritual world articulated through the language of fantasy. Dodd's conclusion here is original and challenging—but hampered, I would suggest, by his desire to compensate for the absence of much serious English-language discussion of this author and the consequent need to cover a range of material that does not always sit easily with the carefully-crafted overall thesis of this study. Here, for example, we find a wealth of background information concerning Satō's fascination with both Western literature and with other art forms—and more detailed discussion of three of Satō's other literary concerns: miniaturization, theatrical spectacle and electrical lighting. The discussion is both informative and necessary for those without access to the 36 volumes of the Satō *zenshū*. But I, for one, would have appreciated slightly less by way of generic discussion, and slightly more of an attempt to locate this material more securely within the overall framework of this study.

When it comes to Dodd's fourth author, we are reminded that he was known, quite literally, as 'the native place of literature' (*bungaku no kokyō*). Much has been made of Shiga's exceptional skill at tracing literary landscapes that convey authentic Japanese identity based on powerful *furusato* associations; but Dodd's portrayal of Shiga as an extreme example of a Taishō writer drawn to explore his own sense of authenticity over any engagement with society is neatly supported by his close textual analyses. Unlike the other authors here under discussion, Shiga's work has received extensive English-language commentary (unfortunately, Dodd was unable to benefit from Michael Bourdaghs' excellent new study of Tōson). But Dodd's consideration of how, especially in *A Dark Night's Passing*, the author generated the impression of a calm and unproblematic *furusato*—and how his personal approach inevitably overlapped with wider historical developments—certainly throws invaluable new light on an author all too readily pigeon-holed as simply refusing to acknowledge any reality beyond his own experience. To Dodd, it was this very invitation to his readers to ignore the broader picture—to enable them to step outside the times—that was the key to Shiga's paradoxical success in contributing to the debate as to what it meant to be Japanese as hostilities in East Asia intensified. Readers hitherto reliant on Sibley and Starrs will find this section a useful corrective.

As I suggested at the outset of this review, Dodd's book is likely to be of interest to a wide range of readers exploring a new take on Japan's emergence as modern nation state. This study provides a wealth of useful background information concerning the important literary issues of the day: *genbun itchi*, the status of the *shishōsetsu* in early twentieth-century Japanese letters, the relationship between romanticism and naturalism, etc. are all accorded the required space at the appropriate moment. Interspersed between these discussions, moreover, are both a series of considerations of more general trends to which these writers were responding and that will appeal to a more diverse readership (the discussion of the rise of the railway system during this period is of particular note in this regard) and various, more specialist, sections that ensure that this study retains its appeal to its core audience. That said, however—and for all Dodd's well-intentioned caveat that literary texts should never be equated too readily with socio-political developments and that none

of these writers was driven by a conscious desire to articulate an emerging new national identity—I was left wishing for slightly more specifics on these currents. As Dodd readily admits, these authors were, by virtue of their status as significant literary figures, sensitive to the ongoing national discourse, articulating a set of 'specific socio-historical conditions'; as a result, he continues, we need to be conscious of 'the lens of the general social and intellectual environment from which [these authors] emerged as Japanese subjects' (p. 182). But what was the nature of this environment? What were the 'specific socio-historical conditions' that form the backdrop to these texts? It goes without saying that an extensive treatment of such questions would be beyond the ambit of this, or any single, study. If nothing else, however, Dodd's bibliography would benefit from offering slightly more help in that direction.

This represents, however, not so much a significant criticism, but rather a small request for more. Dodd has done us an invaluable service in filling in a marked gap between the more prominent English-language studies of the Meiji and prewar literary scenes (although one of the few exceptions, Seiji Lippit's *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, is conspicuous by its absence) and his study is likely to be recommended reading on a whole gamut of courses in both the humanities and social sciences.

MARK WILLIAMS

ŌOKA SHŌHEI

A Wife in Musashino. (Translated with a Postscript by Dennis Washburn.)
(Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, 51.) viii, 161 pp. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2004. $28.95.

Ōoka Shōhei (1909–88) is one of Japan's most important, highly regarded and influential postwar writers. Widely recognized as such at home, substantial critical attention has, and continues to be given there to his greatly varied literary endeavours. In *Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself* (New York, 1995), Nobel Prize winning author Ōe Kenzaburō observes that Ōoka's stature in the postwar period is comparable to Natsume Sōseki's position in the early modern period in that both effectively served as conscience for their nation by boldly addressing the most pressing social, ethical and spiritual issues of their day.

Interest in and appreciation of Ōoka's literature in the West has lagged behind that in the East, because until quite recently only two of Ōoka's major works have been made available in English. And while Ivan Morris' translation of Ōoka's classic war novel *Fires on the Plain* appeared in 1957, just five years after its publication in Japan, the first English rendition of Ōoka's famous maiden work, 'Furyoki' ('Records of a POW', 1948), did not come out until 1967. And for the next twenty years or so, little substantial English-language work was done on Ōoka's other important writings.

It is thus a very welcome—and long overdue—development that from about the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Western scholars once again began to take a serious interest in Ōoka. And in light of the critical and historical context, it is not surprising that attention would initially be refocused onto his war literature. More recently, concern has expanded to include Ōoka's works on Japanese experience under American

occupation. Dennis Washburn has been at the forefront not only of renewed interest in Ōoka's literature in general, but also the critical shift toward his novels on the tragic postwar lives of Japanese women in particular.

The beginning of the 'new wave' of scholarship on Ōoka can be traced back to Wayne Lammers's translation of *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story* (New York, 1996), Ōoka's critically acclaimed collection of memoirs about his experience in an American-run POW camp in the Philippines. In 1997, Washburn's article on narrative perspective and ethical judgment in *Fires on the Plain* appeared in *The Journal of Japanese Studies*. And the following year, his translation of *Kaei*, Ōoka's moving account of the spiritual and physical breakdown of an ageing Ginza bar hostess was published under the title *The Shade of Blossoms* (Ann Arbor, 1998). Five years later, this reviewer came out with *The Burdens of Survival: Ōoka Shōhei's Writings on the Pacific War* (Honolulu, 2003). And now, Washburn's excellent new translation of *Musashino fujin* has been published by Michigan University's Center for Japanese Studies.

A Wife in Musashino, which first appeared in 1950 in monthly instalments in the literary journal *Gunzō*, helped secure Ōoka's position as a first-rate postwar writer. This best-selling novel, which was quickly made into film directed by Mizoguchi Kenji, treats immoral postwar relations amongst the spouses of two married couples, and Tsutomu, a traumatized young war veteran. With the exception of Michiko, the old-world wife of the work's title, all of the central characters succumb to extra-marital relationships. In the case of Michiko and her cousin Tsutomu, physical relations would entail incest as well as adultery. Ōoka's predominant concern in the work is with the ultimate fate of traditional values, roles and morality in the wake of defeat and in the crucible of American occupation and sweeping cultural and institutional change. Through an omniscient, highly self-conscious, distanced and at times ironic narrator, Ōoka progressively uncovers, interrogates and comments on the historical, social, legal, economic, psychological and interpersonal factors underlying modern tragedy.

Translation is a difficult, painstaking, often thankless labour of love. In addition to essential matters such as accuracy, nuance and tone, the translator must strive to make his or her own work read as literature. The product of Dennis Washburn's labours is impressive and commendable in all respects. With *A Wife in Musashino*, he has produced a faithful, smooth, rhythmic, well-paced, effective and affective translation that recreates much of the intelligence, sophistication, elegance, distinctive voice, style and feel of the original.

Ōoka's prose is precise, logical and seemingly transparent, but the more one struggles to find the right words in English, the more one realizes just how much goes unsaid, the extent to which powerfully ambivalent emotions are at work behind a facade of placid, orderly and controlled expression, the layers of existential and philosophical depth beneath the surface of apparently clear formulation. Perhaps consideration of an important case in point will serve to provide a sense of the formidable challenges involved. Disregarding the specific context (to avoid being a 'spoiler'), the original reads as follows: '*Unmei wa kōshite hito onoono no hitsuzen ni shitagatte, jinsei no geki o oru no o yamenai*'. Washburn judiciously renders this multivalent narrative statement as two sentences: 'Fate follows an inevitable path for each person. It never ceases to weave the drama of humanity' (p. 131). Translation is often closely intertwined with interpretation. In the book under review, the reader can be assured of Washburn's superior sensibilities and abilities in this regard. As with Ōoka's original, Washburn's carefully considered renditions of passages

such as this are not only masterly, but also leave room for reader involvement and interpretation.

In his informative and illuminating 'Translator's postscript', Washburn sketches an overall picture of the historical and artistic contexts in which the novel was composed, draws attention to pertinent aspects of the author's personal life, comments on major influences (Stendhal and Sōseki), and discusses Japanese critical opinion concerning Ōoka's literary method (e.g. cynicism vs. stoicism), style and language use. Readers will find Washburn's in-depth analysis of the novel in terms of the significance of historical, cultural, social and physical place/displacement to personal identity, interpersonal relationships and ethical consciousness to be especially helpful to their understanding and appreciation of the English translation.

A Wife in Musashino will be of great interest to students of modern Japanese literature, Japanese culture and society under American occupation, survivor psychology, ethics and women's studies. One can only hope that the 'boom' in Ōoka studies will continue, and that more of (and on) his literature—which is still highly relevant to contemporary times—will be made available in English in the months and years to come.

DAVID C. STAHL

JANE PORTAL:
Art Under Control in North Korea.
190 pp. London: Reaktion Books, 2005. £22.50.

Written by the Assistant Keeper in the British Museum with responsibility for Korea, and published in association with the British Museum press, this lavishly illustrated paperback very ably fills a gap in the market: there are many books on Korean art, but all to date have focused on South Korea, usually on museum pieces from a past age. Admittedly, it joins a rapidly growing body of material on North Korea, but apart from Portal's earlier volume, jointly edited with Beth McKillop, *North Korean Culture and Society* (London, 2004), most of this is concerned with politics or international relations (for example, J. E. Hoare and Susan Pares, *North Korea in the 21st Century* (Folkstone, 2005); Paul French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula* (London, 2005); Tim Beal, *North Korea: The Struggle Against American Power* (London, 2005); Michael Harrold, *Comrades and Strangers: Behind the Closed Doors of North Korea* (Chichester, 2004)).

When the British Museum set up its Korea Foundation Gallery ten years ago, they were keen to reflect new as well as old art. This led Portal to make two trips to Pyongyang, researching and buying examples of contemporary North Korean art, much of which has since been on display—to the occasional annoyance of South Koreans—in the corridor at the entrance to the gallery. A number of these purchases are illustrated in *Art Under Control*. Much of the more familiar monumental art, sculpture and architecture also comes in for scrutiny, from an Arch of Triumph that is larger than the Paris landmark on which it is based to the Juche Tower built in 1982 to mark the Great Leader Kim Il Sung's seventieth birthday (with eighteen levels on each of two sides and seventeen on each of the other two sides to give seventy, built from some 25,550 blocks of granite, one for each day of his life). There is the twenty-metre tall bronze statue of Kim, built for his sixtieth birthday in 1972, and covered in

gilding until criticism of Kim during China's cultural revolution led to recognition that it might be just a tad ostentatious. Portal lets us see and read about massive pieces of collective painting, one eighty-two metres in length (erroneously stated in the caption to illustration 98 to be 820 metres long – that really would be quite monumental).

I fear that Portal's book will not become required reading in North Korea itself. She starts, not with the obligatory quote from Kim Il Sung, now the Eternal President since he died back in 1994, or from Kim Jong Il, his son and heir, but with words from Bertolt Brecht. This sets the stage for a discussion of historical precedents of North Korean art for the state, found in both left-wing and right-wing totalitarian regimes from fascist Italy and Germany to the USSR and China. She is right to do this, since it is vital to understand the largely unreformed Stalinist North Korea in terms of where its ideology has come from; throughout the book, and reflecting her early background and training, Portal keeps referring to China, to Chinese ideology directed against Japan in the 1930s, to the artists and actors that China sent to bolster morale during the Korean War, and to the cult of Mao. North Korean ideology, notably *juche*, the chimerical ideology of self-reliance, would have it—false though it is—that the wise leadership of Kim Il Sung is responsible for all, and that the state has remained independent and non-aligned in all matters. Portal usefully couples her observation of influence from abroad to the observation that Kim was, in many ways, a Confucian ruler, re-imposing control in the fashion of a dynastic ruler of, say, fifteenth-century Korea. South Koreans, too, will not like Portal's insistence that the Three Kingdoms period in Korea runs from around 300 CE. She never explains this date, although it reflects the archaeological record, but Koreans universally and persistently claim, on the basis of a twelfth-century history text, that the Three Kingdoms go back to the first century BCE. She is similarly correct to downplay Korean resistance to colonialism, saying 'resistance was sporadic and sometimes rather extreme' (p. 41), and to note that many Koreans joined the colonialists, but to say so will not curry favour with Koreans.

Portal gives a chronological account, summarizing strategic, economic, and political matters, explaining the reasons for the Korean War and why, through the post-war reconstruction, the population became fiercely loyal to the leadership. She shows how history has been reinterpreted, notably in the 'discovery' and internment of the bones of Korea's mythical founder, Tan'gun, who is reputed to have died some 4,000 years ago, and the building of a grave for the founder of Koguryŏ, one of the Three Kingdoms, backdating this 300 years to effectively sideline earlier Chinese military expansionism. Even though it is interesting to know all this, or how the American Pueblo spy ship was 'recklessly attacked' and captured in 1968, or how Kim Il Sung's childhood school is now said to have been founded by his maternal grandfather rather than the American missionary Samuel Moffatt, Portal, arguably, spends too much time on history.

Portal's archaeological account is solid enough, although, particularly in respect to the excavations of Japanese colonialists, she surprisingly omits any reference to Pai Hyung Il's excellent research. The strongest and most convincing part of the book is chapter 6, 'The production and consumption of art'. Portal systematically delineates the systems, training, and organizations involved. She demonstrates that, because of an appeal for national form, more ink painters are celebrated than oil painters. She discusses the beneficial route to university training enjoyed by those who attend specialist schools, the organization of professional artists, and the requirement on everybody to spend each evening in ideological study. She describes the route 'Merit Artists' and

'People's Artists' must take, telling us there are about 200 of the former and 50–60 of the latter. She notes, curiously but accurately, that there is never any uncertainty in North Korea about what constitutes a masterpiece. She details aspects of urban planning, the creation of mosaics on the underground, and the massive monuments across Pyongyang that mark key birthdays of the leadership (although she neglects the Monument to the Party, illustrated on page 139, but not noted for its significance in promoting Kim Junior, Kim Jong Il). In summary, she states that the training and commitment of artists mean that a large number of art works are created of high technical quality, but that due to ideological constraints, these portray a strictly rationed, always centrally approved, range of subjects. We hear that Soviet socialist realism has become 'Juche realism', but that art, like the rest of the 'socialist paradise' north of the 38th parallel, exists in a veritable time warp that has, surely, an uncertain future.

KEITH HOWARD

SHEILA MIYOSHI JAGER:
Narratives of Nation Building in Korea: A Genealogy of Patriotism.
xv, 193 pp. Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2003. $69.50.

With *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea* anthropologist Sheila Jager has produced a sophisticated and well-written study on the relationship between history, gender and nationalism in Korea. Her stated goal is to show that 'the emergence of the nation as linked to the rise of the global economy of the modern capitalist world system transformed the ways in which Koreans perceived themselves as gendered beings' (p. 141). Gender, however, 'is not always or necessarily literally about gender itself. By conceptualizing gender in terms of the reciprocally constituted and historically variable categories of Man and Woman' (p. 1), Jager elucidates how gender systems are variably related to other modes of cultural, political, or aesthetic organization and experience. Her concise analysis succeeds well in revealing such relationships by exploring historical and literary texts, dissecting political propaganda, probing the glorification of the military hero, and viewing the construction of masculine monumentality.

The book is divided into three parts, 'Modern identities', 'Women' and 'Men'. It ends with an epilogue that recounts the historic summit meeting between Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il in June 2000.

In the two chapters that make up part 1 Jager sets the stage by analysing the rejection of Korea's pre-modern past by historian Sin Ch'ae-ho and writer Yi Kwang-su—two intellectuals who deeply, if not exclusively, shaped their contemporaries' views on where their country stood in its quest for modernity in competition with Japan and the West. Both Sin and Yi attempted to recover Korea's 'original identity' from the effeminate China-oriented culture of Chosŏn Korea—Sin by evoking the 'military hero', Yi by recapturing 'feeling.' In part 2, Jager continues to argue that the woman's body can stand as a metaphor of the 'national' body, and supports her thesis with an examination of the problematic of gender, nation and fiction writing. For this purpose she analyses Yi Kwang-su's *Mujŏng* (*Heartless*), published in 1917, and the *Tale of Ch'unhyang*. The woman suppressed under Confucianism becomes in the colonial discourse of Korean nationalists a metaphor for colonial suppression. Yet, on the other hand, Yi Kwang-su posits the 'new woman' who, as an

empowered woman, contrasts with the indecisive and incapable man. Jager puts her arguments perhaps on too narrow a literary basis, but her interpretation is absorbing. In the second chapter of part 2 she deals with nationalist historiography of the 1980s and lays open unexpected perspectives on the problem of 'self-reliance' in the face of overpowering American 'imperialism'. In part 3, finally, Jager dissects the policies with which Park Chung Hee attempted to revitalize the nation after the Korean War and put it on a course of modernization. To overcome a 'shameful' past, Park evoked heroic individuals like Admiral Yi Sun-sin to restore to the nation a sense of 'rich nation, strong army'. Through his Saemaŭl Undong (New Community Movement) he strove with martial discipline to transform the 'Confucian farmers' into patriotic village leaders. Finally, in 'Monumental histories', Jager leads the reader through the exhibition halls of the massive War Museum established in 1994 to recover and glorify the nation's ancient military virtues. Clearly, in the course of the twentieth century the heritage of an 'emasculated' pre-modern Chosŏn was turned upside down to make it into the source of a martial spirit that was to expedite the country's modernization. A number of interesting illustrations and photographs accompany the narrative.

Jager's work is well-written, provocative and absorbing. It approaches the problem of Korean nationalism from the angle of symbolic meaning—an angle that is rarely taken into consideration by historical and political science studies on twentieth-century Korea. The book is not an easy read, but is highly recommended to anyone studying the tortuous course of Korea's development into a modern nation.

MARTINA DEUCHLER

DAVID PRENDERGAST:
From Elder to Ancestor: Old Age, Death and Inheritance in Modern Korea.
(Global Oriental Monograph Series (Korea) Vol. 1.) xiv, 185 pp.
Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2005.

The author of this monograph has to be congratulated for a fine study that treats a topic rarely made the subject of in-depth scholarly inquiry. Initially submitted as a doctoral thesis at the University of Cambridge, the monograph traces changes and continuities in the treatment of the elderly and of death in present-day South Korean society. It is based on field work the author conducted in Puan County, North Chŏlla Province, between July 1999 and August 2000. The data are extracted from interviews with forty families, statistical materials, and participant observations. Puan as a county and town is still rural in character, yet has undergone many significant changes in recent years as a result of South Korea's rapid modernization. Old parents are left behind, while the young move to big cities (like nearby Chŏnju) in search of employment and a more modern lifestyle. The author sets out to answer the complex question of how these changing life circumstances affect the parent–child relationship, filial piety, care of the elderly, inheritance, and dealing with death. To set his data against a historical background, he summarizes previous research on family structure, the role of the eldest son, and inheritance patterns in the Chosŏn period. He does not, however, give sufficient consideration to the profound changes Korean society underwent during the colonial period, which

leads his narrative rather abruptly to the late twentieth century. Surveys carried out in the 1980s suggest that traditional patterns of child–parent relations still survived, in particular the expectation that the eldest son would have to look after ageing parents. Prendergast's research in the 1990s, however, makes clear that the social and economic conditions had, during that decade, changed to such an extent as to signal a real turning point in human relationships. Not only did the ageing of society continue to accelerate, but increased mobility and individualism caused social networks to break down so that the care of the elderly by the younger generation is no longer guaranteed. Under these new circumstances such care has become, as in other industrialized societies, a major social problem that challenges the state to come up with alternative strategies. Prendergast's narrative is packed with information and is in general readable. Perhaps a more detailed comparison of the situation in rural Puan, where interviewees seem to consider life still quite tolerable, with that in a big city like Chŏnju or even Seoul, would have been desirable. It is clear that the state will increasingly be called upon to take over services to the elderly which in earlier days were rendered by sons and daughters-in-law—a task for which the legislative groundwork has only just begun.

Chapters 6 and 7, on village funerals and recent transformations of mortuary practices, constitute the centrepiece of Prendergast's work. Even though the author reports that he found it difficult to collect sufficient data on these sensitive topics, these two chapters, illustrated by sixteen photographs (plates 2 and 12 are reversed), provide detailed ethnographic descriptions of funerals and burials not readily found elsewhere. Here, too, traditions are rapidly breaking down under the constraints of time and costs—nobody seems to be willing anymore to go through the complicated process of traditional funerary rites and to observe long periods of mourning. Commercialization, moreover, increasingly provides funeral paraphernalia which in earlier days were prepared at home, and professionals render services that used to be the tasks of kinsmen and knowledgeable neighbours. The final chapter deals with the changing legislation on inheritance that gives back to women some of the rights as heirs they lost under the influence of Neo-Confucianism in the seventeenth century.

Prendergast's interesting work is unfortunately marred by a number of inaccuracies. To mention only a few: the transcription of Korean terms is not consistent, e.g. *noin jong* on p. 27, but *noinjŏng* in the glossary; Sŏlnal on p. 85 should be Sŏllal, etc. Some compound terms of Chinese origin seem to have been misunderstood: *kyŏng-no hyo-chin* on p. 28 should be *kyŏng-no hyo-ch'in*, meaning 'respect the elderly and be filial to your parents', others are left unexplained, or are misleadingly explained: *ch'ulga oein*, for instance, means 'the [daughter] leaves her natal home and becomes a stranger'. It seems difficult to call this term 'a principle' (p. 78). Rather than 'good death' (p. 110), *hosang* means a propitious death of someone who died old and wealthy. How does a *myŏnŭri* (daughter-in-law) become the 'eldest brother-in-law's wife'? (p. 79). Few readers will grasp the meaning of 'the empty month of Yundal' (p. 115). Yundal is considered 'empty' because it is an intercalary month. The text, finally, should have been better edited; rough sentences abound and there are a fair number of typos. The Puan Administrative Map on p. 2 is too small to be user-friendly.

Despite these shortcomings, Prendergast's book is a valuable contribution to the ethnographic literature on Korea and should be read by all students interested in the rapid transformation of the social system in modern South Korea.

MARTINA DEUCHLER

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

ALAN M. STEVENS and A. ED. SCHMIDGALL-TELLINGS:
A Comprehensive Indonesian–English Dictionary.
xviii, 1103 pp. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press in association with the American Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, 2004. $65.

The first question that comes to mind when beginning to use a new dictionary is how does it improve on what already exists? For those working with the Indonesian language, comparisons will inevitably be made with the 1989 edition of the Echols and Shadily Indonesian–English dictionary. The inside front cover of this new dictionary informs the user that 'this major new dictionary is the most modern and inclusive Indonesian–English dictionary available'. Furthermore the back cover describes the dictionary as 'an essential reference for students, tourists, business people and scholars of Indonesian'. Thus it seems that the compilers have aimed at the broadest possible audience, though whether tourists will be packing a dictionary of over 1,000 pages and costing $65 along with their guidebook and suncream is surely unlikely. From the outset it should be recognized that this is a work that will be staying firmly put in library reference rooms and on the desks of scholars and students, it being simply too large and heavy to be easily transported from one location to another.

The authors have used an array of primary sources which, alongside newspapers, magazines and books, include, among others, government documents and ministerial decrees, street signs, graffiti, and testimonies given in immigration courts and civil and criminal trials in the United States. Entries are embellished with sample sentences, all drawn from primary sources. Most notably the authors have included a large number of technical terms, a reflection of the ever-increasing impact of technology on daily life in Indonesia. They have further included thousands of specialist terms from fields as diverse as the law, banking, mining, and the petroleum and steel industries.

By way of example, the entries under the root word *surat* (letter) amount to almost two pages; inclusion of such compound nouns as *surat saham* (share/stock certificate), and *surat warisan/wasiat* ((last) will (and testament)) mean than this dictionary is far more extensive than Echols and Shadily. In addition to the individual entry for *E-mail* (email), we also find under the main entry for *surat* the compound *surat elektronik* (elecronic letter/email) followed by its acronym *ratron.* However, the more common acronym *surel*, formed from the same *surat elektronik*, is not to be found. Annoyingly, the acronym *ratron* is not given its own separate entry, and it seems that this is the case with a number of acronyms. For example, under the *surat* entry we find the compound *Surat Izin Perumahan* (Housing Permit), and its acronym *SIP*. However, if we turn to the main entries for *SIP,* no mention of this particular meaning for the acronym is to be found. Acronyms are used extensively in modern Indonesian, and can be mystifying to student and scholar alike. It is stated in the introduction to the dictionary that acronyms are entered in the dictionary as normal Indonesian words, and it is a great pity that this proves not always to be the case.

Certainly the dictionary contains a huge array of loan words, and it is useful to look at an example in order to consider the difficulties faced in recording a rapidly changing language. The term cloning, the subject of a translation class with my students this year, is a case in point. The dictionary

lists the roots *klon* (clone) and *klona* (clone), followed by the verb *mengklon* (to clone), and the noun *pengklonan* (cloning). If we look up the word *kloning* we are directed to the main entry under *klon.* There is no mention of the verb *mengkloning* or the noun *pengkloningan.* While a Google search shows that *pengklonan* is five times more common than *pengkloningan*, the absent *mengkloning* had 50 per cent more entries than *mengklon*. It is clear that with the rapid technological changes the language is seeking to describe, it can take some time for a common usage to develop, and it will not be surprising if some of the terms incorporated into this dictionary finally take their place in the language in a slightly different form from that which the compilers have to date been able to anticipate.

In preparation for writing this review, the dictionary was used as the primary source in the teaching of a translation class based on contemporary Indonesian texts, providing clear evidence that the work has much to recommend it. Many more technical terms and Javanese loan words, too recent to have been included in Echols and Shadily, were to be found in the current volume. It is certainly a dictionary that I would recommend my students make use of in their university's reference library, and undoubtedly it is a dictionary that I will continue to use. However, while it takes its place alongside Echols and Shadily, it clearly does not replace it.

BEN MURTAGH

THIEN DO:
Vietnamese Supernaturalism: Views from the Southern Region.
xii, 300 pp. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. £70.

In *Vietnamese Supernaturalism*, Thien Do has penned an important contribution to the study of Vietnamese religion. Digging into the historical literature, mining the anthropological writings on religion, and carrying out careful ethnographic fieldwork, he has penned a theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich study of the Mekong delta religion. For anyone with the slightest interest in Vietnamese religion, this book is a must-read.

It is rather unfortunate that so little attention has been paid to Vietnamese religion: unfortunate, given that evidence of its enduring significance is obvious. Within Vietnam, most scholars (some constrained by communist historiography, some merely focused on the modern) have tended to ignore religious practice, marginalize it, or relegate it to the realm of superstition. Foreign scholars have often followed their lead. As a result, serious scholarship on religion in Vietnam has advanced little since French colonial rule ended. The situation has, thankfully, been changing since the mid-1990s. This book is one example of this trend.

Vietnamese Supernaturalism is a revised version of the author's PhD thesis. After a short introduction, the author focuses on four ways of approaching Mekong delta religion: through the study of a *đình* (village communal house); a *chùa* (temple, usually associated with Buddhism); mediumship/trance; and self-cultivation. Do admits that this choice of topics 'is fairly arbitrary' and at first glance it seems as if the author may be comparing the incommensurate. After all, can we really compare a place (like the village communal house) to a practice (like self-cultivation)? In fact, the author is concerned throughout the book with the general issue of the history and meaning of Vietnamese engagement with the supernatural.

One of the great values of this book is its rich historical and theoretical contextualization. In the chapter on the village communal house, for example, the author traces the history of this institution. Through such background information, it becomes clear that it is very risky to make broad generalizations about Vietnamese encounters with the supernatural, as practices and institutions have shifted over time. The author is successful at providing historical context without giving in to historical reductionism. Yet as important as this contextualization is the heart of the book, on contemporary practice. Here, Thien Do shows a deft ethnographic touch. The accounts of his fieldwork experiences, such as the descriptions of ceremonies at the village communal house, are nuanced and engaging.

In interpreting religious practice, the author successfully draws on Vietnamese and foreign scholars of religion (particularly Tạ Chí Đại Trường and Steven Sangren). From Sangren, for example, Thien Do takes an approach that examines how supernatural power is produced, reproduced, and transformed in dynamic fashion, an approach that avoids the ahistoricism of the Durkheimian inflected classics of Vietnamese anthropology.

There is much that I admire about this book. One indication of its value is that it constantly raises intriguing historical and theoretical questions. At the same time, at times I wished the author would have disciplined his impulses to go down so many intellectual by-ways. This book is quite digressive. Having read many of the scholars he cites in the anthropology of religion and in Vietnamese studies, I greatly enjoyed these asides. But what about other readers? Furthermore, will they lament the fact that the author cannot stick to a simple narrative thread or two? In the end, I would suggest that readers should persevere. The loose structure of this book, which may frustrate some, is an apt result of the encounter with the religious world of the Mekong delta, a world that is eclectic, diverse, and impossible to reduce to a simple narrative.

SHAWN MCHALE

KAREL STEENBRINK:
Catholics in Indonesia: A Documented History: Volume 1—A Modest Recovery 1808–1903.
528 pp. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003.

This is the first of a two-volume work documenting the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia. This is the first history of its kind to have been written in English and will no doubt prove to be an invaluable resource for those interested in the history of Catholic missionary activity in Indonesia. This volume deals with the period 1808–1903 when the Dutch East Indies Company ceased to have jurisdiction over Indonesia and Catholic clergy were given permission to serve local Catholic congregations and to engage in missionary work. It is as such a history situated in the context of Dutch colonial expansion, the gradual assimilation of disparate territories into a single political entity and the steady incorporation of Indonesians and Indonesia into a global capitalist economy.

The book consists of detailed accounts of efforts to establish and/or develop congregations among Dutch, Eurasian and indigenous populations, and although during the nineteenth century European and Eurasian Catholics were more numerous than indigenous Catholics, Steenbrink states that 'this study concentrates on the beginnings and the development of the indigenous

congregations' (p. xii). This choice of focus is of note given that Steenbrink's sources are on the whole the diaries, journal articles, letters, diocesan archives and histories compiled by missionaries and secular clergy, the fact that indigenous congregations were almost always set up by local people rather than priests and, finally, that the beliefs and practices of these congregations were consistently at odds with those of the clergy. Nevertheless, Steenbrink claims that he has 'tried, as much as possible given that most of my sources were written by the clergy, to write a history of the Catholics as people, instead of a constitutional history of the organisation' (p. xii). However, in the final chapter he suggests a quite different purpose for the work when he states that 'the major theme of this book is church growth, or the quantitative increase and qualitative change of a religious community' (p. 219).

The chapters are organized chronologically and by area, charting the vicissitudes of Catholic mission in Indonesia beginning in Java and moving on to Bangka, Borneo, Sumatra, Flores, Sumba, Timor, Kendari and Kai, Minahasa and the Moluccas before returning to Java. In chapters 1 and 12 Steenbrink situates this complex history with observations about, respectively, conversion by 'Indonesians' to so-called world religions before 1800 and the formation of what he calls 'complex religious identities'. Steenbrink says that he hopes the work will contribute towards a 'general understanding of conversion to world religions and to the formulation of a theory on the common development of religion in history' (p. 1) and suggests a number of guiding questions: is there a pattern in conversion to world religions? If there is such a pattern, will it help towards developing an understanding of the spread of Catholicism? Is there a general trend towards conversion to world religions? Is conversion to a specific religion a matter of individual choice or chance? In his overview of conversion by 'Indonesians' to 'Hinduism', 'Buddhism' and 'Islam', Steenbrink points out the importance of political and economic expansion to the spread and sedimentation of these religions in 'Indonesia' prior to the sixteenth century. Later Steenbrink acknowledges that the Catholic mission in Indonesia would not have been possible without the co-operation of the Dutch colonial government. As to the formation of complex religious identities, Steenbrink states that 'the major argument … will be that conversion as the departure from one religious system and community and the entrance into another (already existing one) is never absolute' (p. 220).

Over half of the book consists of a variety of documents including personal stories, official papers, descriptions, as well as Malay prayers and two Malay catechisms. These are not offered as proof for the position Steenbrink adopts with regard to this history but rather as a stimulus for further research. Most of the documents are in Dutch, but as well as those composed in Malay some are also in French and Latin. The presence of these documents means that this is not simply a book about the history of Catholicism in Indonesia—it is also a valuable resource for others interested in this area of research. Having provided a brief summary of the contents of the work, I shall now move on to offer some critical remarks about Steenbrink's approach to this material.

In different places in the text Steenbrink offers the reader different justifications for the work: firstly, that he is seeking to trace the beginnings and development of indigenous Catholic congregations; secondly, that he is writing a history of the Catholics as people; thirdly, that the book documents the growth and change of the Catholic population and fourthly, that the book will make a contribution to general theoretical considerations of conversion to world religions and the development of religions in history. However, when these four aims are juxtaposed with the sources Steenbrink has drawn from for this

work, it appears that these sources, though undoubtedly pertinent, cannot say much about indigenous congregations or issues of conversion precisely because they reflect a particular cultural-historical view, namely that of white, Euro-Catholic men. Moreover, Steenbrink has failed to situate indigenous congregants and converts in anything but a historical choice between religions. Greater attention to the wider shifts, contradictions and transformations taking place in Indonesia during the nineteenth century, and their impact on local cultural conceptions of power and belonging (for example) may have enriched this account. Further to this is the approach Steenbrink takes to the sources themselves. Why not treat these documents as belonging to a genre? Such a strategy would open these documents to literary analysis, an approach that may have proved rewarding. Despite these criticisms this work will be an invaluable resource for scholars interested in the history of Catholicism in Indonesia in particular, and the history of religions in South-East Asia more generally.

PAUL-FRANÇOIS TREMLETT

AFRICA

ABDOUMALIQ SIMONE:
For the City yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities.
x, 297 pp. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004. £16.95.

This book explores the author's observations on the 'improvisational' nature of urban life which he celebrates and attempts to explain. There are four substantive chapters—on 'informal' political processes in which development is embedded in Pikine (Senegal), 'invisible' political processes in Winterveld (South Africa), 'spectral' processes which haunt urban politics in Douala (Cameroon), and the role of the Sufi Zawiyyah (a lodge that accommodates travelling 'brothers') in trans-national Muslim networks—followed by chapters on urban history and urban management. A final chapter attempts to tie the book together.

The book reads like an essay on urban politics, indeed the key issues appear to arise out of problems experienced by community-based development projects in which the author was involved. This is a significant starting point because it reflects the perspective of an itinerant development/NGO worker who, because of his relative unfamiliarity with an urban locale, comes to see the obstacles that confound local initiatives as emanating from invisible and unobservable processes.

The first four chapters begin with intriguing observations, but the attempt to make sense of them is problematic. First, the issues the author seeks to explore are poorly defined; the reader is provided with a first-hand account which is not backed up by in-depth research or by other independent accounts. Furthermore, the case studies are not historically grounded; the reader is unable to judge whether there is a precedent for specific events or observations. Equally problematic is the author's use of published literature for, on the one hand he fails to use relevant city or country-specific research (e.g. ch. 2) while on the other he makes unwarranted generalizations between cases and across the continent. Furthermore, his analysis is theoretically and methodologically naïve (see, for instance, his use of the concept of networks).

Simone paints an image of urban life as one of fluidity and unpredictability, of individuals acting out a series of improvised roles to pursue situational advantage in social networks that stretch from urban neighbourhoods outwards to embrace the state, region and continent. He sees urban residents as creative improvisers in the face of poverty, clientelist politics and structural adjustment. While certainly a corrective to overly determinist analyses, it does not coincide with my own experience of urban Africa as an ethnographer/developer, nor does it mesh with well-researched accounts. The final chapters are based on a selective engagement with a vast literature on urban history and management and add little to existing knowledge.

It is possible that the convoluted sentences and opaque language used by Simone may obscure interesting insights into urban life, however his broad generalizations combined with inadequate attention to issues of class, gender, ethnicity, inequality, power, etc. have produced a text of limited value.

JOHN R. CAMPBELL

KAMARI MAXINE CLARKE:
Mapping Yorùbá Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities.
xxiv, 345 pp. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. £17.50.

No African religious culture has shown such a capacity for survival and diffusion in the Americas as that of the Yoruba. It now commands some millions of adherents, not just among black people of direct Yoruba descent, notably in Brazil and Cuba, but among white and mixed-race members of those societies. Migrants from Cuba first carried it—in the syncretized form known as *Santeria*—to the United States, where in recent decades it has attracted a number of African Americans (of whom hardly any are clearly of Yoruba descent) and even some white ones. Thus what in Africa was a cultic system that, like other 'traditional' religions, was virtually coterminous with its own ethno-linguistic community—subject only to religious influences passing between communities—has in America become detached from its ethnic origins. It has become a conversionary, even potentially a 'world' religion. At the same time, by a fine irony, the Yoruba back in Nigeria have overwhelmingly abandoned the *orisa* (deities) of their old religion for Christianity and Islam, and now particularly for Pentecostal churches of a strongly American idiom. The *orisa* now receive more worship in America than in Africa.

Kamari Clarke's book deals with a singular manifestation of trans-Atlantic *orisa* religion, as practised in Oyotunji ('Oyo revived'), a village of some 200 people in South Carolina. Founded in 1970 and ruled in Yoruba style by an *oba*, a light-skinned African American from Detroit, Oyotunji belongs to what Clarke terms the 'Yoruba-revivalist' tendency in New World *orisa*-religion. In contrast to the mainly white adherents of the '*orisa*-modernist' tendency, who seek to transcend the racial affiliation of *orisa* devotion, Oyotunji celebrates African racial ancestry and expresses it by re-creating what are taken to be its authentic Yoruba forms, purged from the Catholic elements present in *Santeria*. There is an elaborate annual cycle of festivals to the major *orisa*, notably one in honour of the ancestors which is also a redemptive commemoration of the victims of the slave trade. Through a form of divination called 'roots reading' that gives them a Yoruba ancestry, through the use of Yoruba names and speech, and through the conscious adoption of Yoruba models for the organization of village life—derived from visits to Nigeria, authorization

by Yoruba experts and even anthropology books—Oyotunji members have persuaded themselves that essentially they *are* Yoruba. A poignant account of the reception of a party from Oyotunji at Lagos airport describes how these claims were met with amused incredulity by Nigerians, to whom even the most Afrotropic African Americans are still *oyinbo* ('Europeans, whites').

A disappointing feature of the book is that the balance of detailed ethnography and of general theory is so disproportionate. I am puzzled that Clarke, who evidently got to know Oyoyunji well over several years, should have given us such an empirically thin account of it. There is simply a great deal that one wants to know that she does not tell us: what kind of people choose to join Oyotunji, the texture of daily social relations there, its internal politics, the substance of personal belief … . Even the *oba* remains a sketchy figure, though there is a brief biographical account from a secondary source. Discussion of Oyotunji's economic base is also tantalizingly brief, though it evidently depends on a much wider network of cultural demand, gaining an income from divination and cult initiation fees as well as the sale of 'African' artefacts—a mixture of theme-park and pilgrimage centre. On the other hand, Clarke devotes much space to the theoretical elaboration of such issues as the transnational politics of race and deterritorialized concepts of cultural identity. She discusses at length the development of black cultural nationalism in the United States up to the emergence of current patterns of 'heritage tourism', and gives an extended (though often inaccurate) account of the emergence of a 'new zone of Yoruba cultural production' in Nigeria, under the impact of mission activity and colonialism. I could not but feel that the contrast between the thinness of Clarke's account of Oyotunji itself, and the amplitude (though based on secondary materials) of her treatment of wider issues, suggests a distinct ambivalence towards the Oyotunji project, as if she were reluctant to give a full and frank assessment of it. In any event, I am told the *oba* has since died and that Oyotunji has shrunk to a shadow of its former self.

J. D. Y. PEEL

GENERAL

GWYN CAMPBELL (ed):
Abolition and its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia.
(Studies in Slave and Post-Slave Societies and Cultures.)
x, 225 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. £75.

This fine collection of essays is the third such volume from a linked series of stimulating conferences on slavery and forced labour in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia that Gwyn Campbell has organized. As a participant in several of the conferences (although not this one) I am reminded here that two important contributions of this project are the encompassing view that Campbell and the contributors take of these largely neglected vast world regions in slavery studies and their comparative framework. For students of comparative slavery and abolition, as for those of the Indian Ocean, this is an important addition to the literature.

Campbell's comprehensive introduction links the chapters in the collection under a series of major themes that provide a valuable structure for locating each contribution in the larger schema of the joint project. In particular, he

emphasizes the complexity of slavery and unfree labour across the two regions and 'the incomplete advance of abolitionist measures' (p. 20) caused by the intersection of political, economic, and environmental factors.

For the most part, the individual chapters in this collection speak directly to the twin themes of the volume: abolition and its aftermath. Nigel Worden draws upon his unrivalled knowledge of slavery in colonial South Africa and its connections to the Indian Ocean world to demonstrate convincingly the way in which emancipation and subsequent restrictions on the freed slave population led directly to a serious problem of debt bondage at the Cape. In a chapter that does not address frontally issues of abolition, Clare Anderson nevertheless provides a fascinating discussion of the role of Indian convict labourers in the Bel Ombre Rebellion on Mauritius in 1853. Based on her outstanding command of the Mauritian archives, her essay focuses on the convicts' experiences and the ways in which they formed a subaltern identity as a consequence of their forced migration to Mauritius. A third case study from the south-west Indian Ocean region is by Gwyn Campbell, who argues persuasively that in a number of instances enslaved Malagasy and even some enslaved Africans (*Masombika*) opposed emancipation in the late nineteenth century because it would have exposed them to the much harsher system of royal corvée labour, *fanompoana*, about which Campbell has written elsewhere.

The next five chapters focus on societies that were almost entirely Islamic. Omar Eno writes about the lingering stigma of slavery that marked both the indigenous Bantu-speakers/Jareer and, more recently, enslaved East African Bantu from what are now the interiors of northern Mozambique and eastern Tanzania who inhabited the riverine areas of the Benadir interior. Eno attributes the roots of this discrimination to pastoral Somali attitudes towards these non-Somali populations that inhabited the Benadir with them and the typically hesitant colonial approach to abolition by the Italian conquerors of southern Somalia that was hedged by their reluctance to offend or inflame the Muslim aristocrats of the Benadir. Behnaz Mirzai presents the first scholarly account in English of the way in which both British external and Persian internal factors combined to shape the important 1848 abolitionist *farmān* that marked an important signpost in the movement towards complete abolition of slavery in 1926 in Imperial Persia. Mirzai's research is based upon previously unexploited Persian sources that open up an entirely new comparative context for the study of slavery and abolition in an important Muslim society. Abdul Sheriff argues meticulously that the African slave trade to the Gulf averaged about 3,000 individuals per year and that by the early twentieth century nearly half of these were already manumitted through the several channels available within Islam. He focuses on the ways in which Africans were absorbed into local societies, demonstrating their greater presence in some areas than in others and noting that by *c*. 1900 the Gulf was 'a considerable cultural melting-pot' (p. 110) of which Africans were only one component. Drawing upon manumission records from the British Consulate at Jeddah between 1926 and 1937, Suzanne Miers presents a vivid, if very partial (as she acknowledges), account of why some enslaved Africans fled their bondage. Her paper gives important voice to these individuals and documents the persistence of slavery in Arabia into the twentieth century. Finally, through an analysis of various religious and legal texts, William Gervase Clarence-Smith takes a much larger view of how Islam as a religion grappled with the issue of abolition. His contribution helps to situate each of these chapters in a comparative Islamic context that raises fundamental questions regarding the problematic category of 'Islamic slavery'.

The following three chapters move on to South Asia and the Philippines. In a characteristically insightful essay that is noteworthy for both its empirical richness and its theoretical and methodological rigour, Indrani Chatterjee emphasizes the dilatory manner in which imperialism dealt with abolition in India and the way in which historians of abolition have been captured by the categories established by imperialism. She particularly stresses the significance of gender and age for understanding how abolition worked in imperial India. Keya Dasgupta writes movingly about the dreadful conditions of mostly migrant plantation labourers in the Brahmaputra Valley of north-east India, who represent another telling example of how forced labour did not end with the abolition of slavery. Michael Salman provides a valuable comparative chapter on 'what slavery meant' in the early-twentieth-century Philippines, where it animated a hot dispute between Filipino nationalists and American officials, that nicely complements Chaterjee's contribution theoretically. The collection concludes with an overview of the emancipation of slaves in the Indian Ocean by Martin Klein that similarly complements Campbell's introduction and makes still further comparative connections to what we know about emancipation globally.

The volume is generally well produced, as it should be at this price, with relatively few typos, most of them, however, unfortunately associated with the spelling of foreign names and terms, most frequently in Clarence-Smith's chapter. There is an incomplete sentence on p. 70 and the dates of Adrianampoinamerina are mistakenly a century later than indicated on p. 71.

EDWARD A. ALPERS

ROGER. D. WOODARD (ed.):
The Cambridge Encylopedia of the World's Ancient Languages.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. £75.

This nicely produced, impressive tome is a good example of the genre of encyclopedias, essentially intended to summarize the current state of knowledge of a particular field of study without attempting to offer much in the way of originality or new or radical theories. For each language in this volume there is a rather skeletal description of phonology, morphology and syntax. Two of the chapters provide discussions of 'theoretical' languages for which we have no direct evidence, namely 'Afro-Asiatic' and 'Indo-European', theoretical constructs derived from common elements in the comparative grammars of cognate languages. A final chapter attempts to draw some conclusions about reconstructing a proto-language by looking for common elements.

From a linguist's perspective, the *Encyclopedia* serves as a useful survey of the barest essentials of a large number of ancient languages, with examples of sentences cited in the standard form preferred by linguists. The original language is given in transliteration, followed by a grammatical analysis of translated elements of the sentence, followed by a translation. Examples cited in the *Encyclopedia* are often made up, rather than quoting from actual texts. The volume does not use footnotes, and citations refer the reader to a bibliography at the end of each chapter. According to the introduction (pp. 15 f.), each language is described according to the following categories: 1) historical and cultural contexts; 2) writing systems; 3) phonology; 4) morphology; 5) syntax; and 6) lexicon. It is a both an art and a challenge to be able to summarize so many aspects of an ancient language in a short article not exceeding 50 pages, and the obvious method to be used in this case is to rely mostly upon prior

in-depth studies of each language. There is not much scope within this format for authors to make original observations about any individual language.

It is the last chapter which is most likely to engage the interests of linguists. This chapter, by Don Ringe, on 'Reconstructed ancient languages', attempts to recover information about pre-historic languages of which no surviving record remains. This rather daunting task is based mostly upon Indo-European languages, but with the understanding that the methodology could apply to other language families as well. The methodology is not always very sophisticated. The author, for instance, assumes that since all languages were once spoken, one learns something about pre-historic society by collecting relevant vocabulary surviving in presumed later cognate languages. Hence the author concludes that speakers of proto-Indo-European wore clothes (rather than walked around naked) because of words referring to the wearing of clothes in Proto-Indo-European, a theoretically reconstructed language (see the chapter on 'Indo-European', pp. 534–50). Other general statements are more useful, such as the arguments in favour of the regularity of sound change among languages, and comparisons between the phonology of Indo-European and Luwian (see p. 1116). Similarly, large-scale comparisons of the phonology of many different languages have resulted in convincing reconstructions of phonemic systems of different language families. On the level of morphology, however, the reconstructions are less convincing, since Hittite has a much simpler verbal system than either Greek or Sanskrit, which remains difficult to explain. Ringe concludes that 'morphological systems, idiosyncratic by nature, seem to change in idiosyncratic ways' (p. 1121). The jury seems to be out on comparative syntax (p. 1123), and reconstructing the proto-lexicon runs into problems of the same roots appearing in more than one language family. The comparative method in reconstructing proto-language has achieved some important results, and more needs to be done in this area, but at the same time it is a long way off from the process of editing and translating ancient texts.

A linguist gets a quick assessment from this volume of key issues in the language, such as phonological patterns, whether the verbal systems use tense or aspect, whether the language is inflected, whether it is ergative, and the general word-order of a sentence. Languages in this volume are usually discussed in their classical forms, without much discussion of dialects or distinctions between earlier and later phases of a language. Some of the articles, at least, appear to be culled from discussions in grammar books and studies of grammar, rather than being based upon texts and attestations. The philologist reading the *Encyclopedia* will frequently wonder about the underlying evidence upon which the grammatical patterns are inferred. Nevertheless, the book makes good reading for anyone who enjoys languages.

M. J. GELLER

ROGER-POL DROIT:
The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha.
(Translated by David Streight and Pamela Vohnson.)
xii, 263 pp. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

This translation of a work originally published in France in 1997 is a very valuable addition to the growing number of books on the impact of Buddhism

in the West, though it is neither a history of scholarship nor of the spread of the Buddhist religion itself. Rather, it presents systematically the fate of a certain false idea (or, more strictly, successive ideas) of Buddhism in philosophical—mainly Franco-German—circles in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Up until the publication of some pioneering work by Henry Thomas Colebrook it was possible, in the prevailing state of ignorance concerning Buddhism, to believe almost anything about it, though most ventured to believe nothing too much. Thereafter a deliberate choice seems to have been made by several important members of the philosophical community to pick up on some outdated scholarship, apparently of early Jesuit provenance (though exactly whence would seem to remain a mystery), affirming that Buddhism was a desperately unsettling form of nihilism. The list of names involved in this misconception is impressive: Schopenhauer, Gobineau, Schlegel, Renan, Taine, Nietzsche—hardly a group of obscure nonentities. But after living with this imaginary nightmare for a while, a shift in the intellectual climate in the late nineteenth century attributable less to the advance of scholarship than to the emergence of more reassuring pro-Buddhist voices such as that of Sir Edwin Arnold at length consigned the era of misunderstanding to history.

And then what happened? The author, while too historical and scrupulous in his approach to invent any direct connections, is tempted to see this self-induced staring into the abyss as somehow foreshadowing the real horrors of the twentieth century. Doubtless the attribution of terrors already dimly perceived in the era of high imperialism to non-Europeans suited the temper of the times, and perhaps there is some evidence that Sir Edwin Arnold did not succeed completely in stopping this insidious lie in its tracks. For the middlebrow fiction of the late Victorian and early twentieth-century English-speaking world, the sub-Rider Haggard variety of Orientalizing trash, often shows a palpable horror of Buddhism, even if one somehow mingled with attraction. And even later pulp fiction typified by Sax Rohmer still finds it fitting to imagine human sacrifice taking place in front of Buddha images. So what might at first sight appear to be a study of little consequence in a less intellectual Anglo-Saxon environment should be read with due attention, and its many insights duly noted.

The attentive reader, moreover, will be rewarded at the end of this work by an unexpected treat—a chronological reordering of the information in Shinsho Hanayama's *Bibliography on Buddhism*, first issued by the Hokuseido Press in Tokyo in 1961 but now rather rare. Up to 1860 the listings of Western publications touching on Buddhism are 'nearly complete' as a reworking of their bibliographical source, though since Hanayama's work does not contain the crucial writings of Colebrook they are not given in this transcription either. Thereafter the main publications from 1860 to 1880 and those of major importance in the subsequent decade are also transcribed from the same compilation. In its journeys from Asia to Europe to North America one or two minor typographical errors have crept in to Hanayama's text—and why Hanayama is referred to as 'Father' Hanayama I cannot guess at all—so that consultation of the original, if not of the early literature itself, is advised. But even so this is an excellent research tool that deserves to be better known.

The book is still tinged with a somewhat Gallic appearance—a work edited by Graham Parkes is described as 'under the direction of' that scholar, and Clement of Alexandria appears as Clément in the text and Clément d'Alexandrie in the index, for example—but the translation reads well, and conveys the very real excitement of the author's explorations of an unjustly

neglected phase in the history of both European thought and of the reception of Asian thought in Europe. Seldom indeed does one find such intellectual stimulation and practical bibliographical utility collected together in a single volume, so the publishers can certainly congratulate themselves on having succeeded in an outstandingly worthwhile project.

T. H. BARRETT

SHORT NOTICES

JOHN MUKUM MBAKU:
Culture and Customs of Cameroon.
236 pp. Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2005.

This does not claim to be a work of primary research or scholarly originality. Appearing in a series sharing the title 'Cultures and Customs', John Mbaku's coverage follows, so we are informed by the series editor, a shared chapter template. After a useful chronology and introduction to the political and economic history of the country, follow chapters on: religion and worldview; literature and media; art, architecture, and housing; cuisine and traditional dress; gender roles, marriage, and family; social customs and lifestyle; and music and dance. An economist by profession, though the series template has not allowed him to give extensive expression to his speciality, Mbaku is relatively stronger on social and political issues, and better on the south and west of the country than he is on the north and east. Any author would struggle to cover the full range of cultural expression envisaged by the series, and some of these chapters consist of doggedly determined summaries of a few source materials. The book is not designed to argue any particular or original insight into the nature of contemporary Cameroonian society. As a synthesis, it seems to be directed to an American readership either studying Cameroon or perhaps intending to visit or work there. Appearing in hardback only, it is unlikely to attract many Cameroonian purchasers. Presumably it is a fault of the series and not the author that, despite being well produced, the book has only a single outline map of the country so that a reader who really did not know Cameroon previously would be unable to place most of the people and towns, administrative units and so forth mentioned in the text. Summarizing so much information on so diverse a country is no easy task and so, while it would be easy for specialists to pick holes here and there, a visitor to Cameroon armed with a decent map, the Bradt travel guide and this volume would be equipped with a respectable portable reference set.

RICHARD FARDON

DJUN KIL KIM:
The History of Korea.
(The Greenwood Histories of The Modern Nations.) xxii, 208 pp. Westport. CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2005.

History written by a professed amateur may at times fulfil the requirements of the general readership better than the more scholarly production of the

professional. This seems to be true for *The History of Korea*. The book is reader-friendly, concise and informative. As expected, as an introductory text it does not provide in-depth interpretations, is cursory in its treatment of difficult issues (for example, factionalism in late Chosŏn), and here and there repeats outdated views (for example, on *sarim*). Its strength, however, lies in its balanced coverage of pre-modern and modern Korea. It starts with mythical Tan'gun Chosŏn and ends with the presidency of Kim Dae Jung in the late 1990s. It also surveys the history of North Korea after 1945. Appended are a list of 'Notable people in the history of Korea', a 'Glossary of selected terms', a brief bibliographical essay (which could have been more substantial), and an index. The text is recommended for undergraduate students and the general reader.

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