

As noted in an earlier review, a most welcome feature of the new series is its inclusion of comprehensive indices of names, in this case personal names, geographic, ethnic and tribal names, divine names and the names of gates, palaces and temples. And as with the earlier volume the full score of each text is given in the accompanying CD-ROM. In addition to this the scores are maintained online with Oracc (the Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus) in a form which is fully searchable and the transliteration from which is also supplied automatically to the CDLI (Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative).

In conclusion Tadmor and Yamada have given us a work of outstanding value for which it is difficult to find words of adequate praise. This magnificent new volume will without question serve for scholars in all fields and for years ahead as the standard edition of the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V, two kings whose reigns together constitute a period which can be considered the lynchpin in the formation of the Assyrian empire. It can be hoped that in the fullness of time the gaps in our knowledge of Tiglath-Pileser's annals may be filled and that historical inscriptions of Shalmaneser will come to light: when they do, this work will provide the foundation and the framework for their eventual incorporation. Assyriologists, archaeologists and historians must unite in the deepest gratitude for this exceptional contribution. jmlll@cam.ac.uk

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ON MUSIC: AN ARABIC CRITICAL EDITION AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF EPISTLE 5. Edited and Translated by OWEN WRIGHT. pp. 388. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.
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First-rate primary scholarship in English that offers a window into the musical minds of learned medieval Arabs remains a relatively rare commodity. Owen Wright's new translation of and commentary on Epistle 5 of the tenth-century *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity) is a major contribution that, like many of Wright's other works, holds value for a wide variety of both general and specialised readers.

The third in a series of volumes that will eventually encompass the entire *Rasā'il*, Wright's contribution illuminates well a central theme of the whole work, namely, according to series general editor Nader el-Bizri, a worldview "oriented by an uncanny hermeneutic interpretation of the microcosm and macrocosm analogy: believing that the human being is a microcosmos and that the universe is a 'macroanthropos'". This hermeneutic transcends sectarian divisions and offers the pursuit of knowledge as "pure nourishment for the soul", while providing a platform for the discussion of music as an embodied activity, both in the construction and movement of the human body and in the design of instruments and sounds. This micro-embodiment also resonates with the musical macro-embodiment of the universe, a notion with which many western medieval thinkers were wont to agree.

Central also to the worldview revealed here is a clear understanding of music as, in Wright's direct translation from the Epistle itself, an "art which combines the physical and the spiritual". Physicality here consists of an emphasis on cosmological numerology while the musical product itself produces an "entirely spiritual" effect on the "the souls of those who listen to it".

It is clear that the Ikhwān are intimately familiar with Greek mathematical/musical concepts, but Wright is also adept at showing fundamental connections to specifically Arab ideas by making substantial reference not only to primary medieval Arab musical scholars such as al-Fārābī and al-Kindī, but also to some of the best secondary scholarship by Henry George Farmer, Eckhard Neubauer and Amnon Shiloah. In his characteristically modest style, Wright also acknowledges his debt to Shiloah for the latter's pioneering translation of Epistle 5, first in French (1965–67) and later from the French into English (1978); yet it is apparent throughout that Wright's work is no mere echo, and that the sensibilities he brings to the project as both a scholar and a fluid communicator are considerable.

This depth can be seen clearly, for example, in the care with which Wright handles the complexities of the term 'music' itself, as well as closely related terms, a common and persistent difficulty in Arab Muslim contexts. The challenge is encapsulated well in Wright's rendering of the first several lines of Chapter 16 of the Epistle (incidentally, a delightful collection of 'wise sayings' about music that will appeal to the general reader), in which the English word 'music' is used both for '*ghinā'*' ('song') and *mūsīqā'*; Wright earlier provides the very helpful explanation that the former "points to the practical" aspects of music making, while the latter refers "more to the theoretical and speculative", and further points out that the Epistle is in fact chiefly concerned with *mūsīqā'*, and very little with providing a practical guide for musical performance.

The book begins with roughly 70 pages of introductory material which is further delineated into discussions of text sources and translation issues, the cosmology that inhabits the Epistle, and concepts of musical instrument design and rhythm (with expected strong connections to poetry) stemming from the work. These last three topics are linked by an interrelated exploration of numbers, string lengths, universal elements (fire, air, water and earth), and bodily humours, with secondary commentary on planets and the sensual perceptions of taste, colour and scent. Throughout, an attention to proportion that one has come to expect from medieval thinkers remains at the forefront.

Wright devotes twice as much explanatory space to rhythm as to any other topic extant in the *rasā'il*, and while this is in keeping with an authentically Arab focus on the relationship between poetry and music, it is here that one perhaps wishes for a better balance since only the equivalent of about three of the 17 chapters in the Epistle itself is devoted directly to rhythm. Wright finds the nature of the rhythmic discussion in the *rasā'il* particularly intriguing, if not problematic, which no doubt further accounts for this ostensible imbalance. Still, one is left with an impression in the introductory notes that is not borne out clearly in the Epistle itself, where the discussion of proportion is more seamlessly integrated into the broader array of subjects noted above.

Wright's eminently readable and well-annotated English translation of the Epistle itself, along with a helpful bibliography and subject index, completes the first half of the book. The last 200 pages of the work consist of the rendering in Arabic from multiple manuscripts that served as the basis for the author's English translation. This is in some ways a rather bold choice, since it might lead some readers who lack the ability to decipher Arabic script to feel that they cannot take full advantage of the work even as it allows those able to do so a welcome further entrée into the details of the primary scholarship. All in all, however, the disadvantages to those who cannot read Arabic are kept to an absolute minimum throughout this volume, further demonstrating Wright's skill in crafting a significant contribution to the field of Arabic music studies that can enlighten and be enjoyed by many.
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