

are preserved at the Phoenix Ancient Art Gallery of Geneva. These prestigious Sasanian ritual vases belonged to a certain Pērōz-Gušnasp and they weighed 52 staters per pair, as can be inferred from their inscriptions. Gyselen does not state the chronology of the two *rhyta* (inscriptions can be more recent than objects), but she studies these precious pieces of luxurious art and she also provides us with a useful and detailed catalogue of the Sasanian silverware with inscriptions, in which she collects all of the data gathered over the years on this interesting topic (pictures, origin, shapes, measurements, inscriptions and bibliography). Sasanian silver vases, since they often had the precise indication of their weight in drachmas, were not only used as prestigious gifts for Persian aristocracy and neighbouring peoples but also had a high economic value and, if necessary, they could be converted into cash, thus addressing the lack of coins that characterized the Late Antique world (see A. Gariboldi, *La monetazione sasanide nelle Civiche raccolte numismatiche di Milano*, Milan, 2003, p. 25).

The weights reported on the vases do not always coincide exactly with the theoretical weight of the Sasanian drachma (4.2/4.3 g) and goldsmiths, during the production of such objects, may have used a rounded-up theoretical weight of the drachma, but as Gyselen writes: “l’existence de tels poids d’orfèvre reste à prouver” (p. 96). Numismatists are aware that the weight of real coins is very often different from the theoretical weight of the Sasanian drachma. However, this does not mean that there was not an ideal weight of reference from which artisans could deduct a percentage to take on manufacturing expenses and for their own profit. Some vases have a very low drachma value since they were weighted during the Islamic age and thus with a theoretical reference to the reformed Arab *dirham* (2.97 g).

The article “Arabic activities reflected in the documents of the “Pahlavi archive” (late seventh and early eighth centuries) (pp. 179–89) by D. Weber concludes the volume. Here the author discusses the Islamic influences on the documents of the so-called “Pahlavi archive”, hosted partly in Berlin but predominantly in Berkeley (CA). These documents date back to the period between 750 and 850 AD and come from the region of Qom in Western Iran. In fact there are rare traces of Islamic influence in such texts, but, for instance, the *bismillāh* formula, in Pahlavi version *pad nām ī yazd* (in the name of God), was recognized as the starting sentence of some letters and it replaces the older plural *yazdān* of Zoroastrian usage. The official Arab title of *amīr*, “commander”, is also attested in some documents. All of the information collected in the volume suggests that the Islamization of Iran was slow and gradual with different patterns in different regions.

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APTIN KHANBAGHI (ed.):

Cities as Built and Lived Environments: Scholarship from Muslim Contexts, 1875–2011.

(Muslim Civilizations Abstracts.) iv, 497 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press in association with The Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations, 2014. £75. ISBN 978 0 7486 9618 5. doi:10.1017/S0041977X15001172

This volume is the third in a series that provides brief abstracts of scholarship originating in Muslim majority countries, published in various languages, and their

translation into Arabic, English and Turkish. In this volume, the themes are cities and urbanism in the Islamic world, from North Africa to Indonesia. The scholarship included in the volume was originally published in Farsi, Turkish, Arabic, Russian, Urdu, Bahasa Indonesian and Bosnian. The works were published between 1875 and 2011. Abstracts within the volume appear in alphabetical order of the original title. The indices at the end of each section (English, Turkish and Arabic) are helpful finding aids as they list authors, figures and cities mentioned.

The selection of works to be summarized is harder to trace as the volume covers a very wide range of cities and regions: hence, the number of books on any region is forcibly limited. At the same time, the large-scale efforts of the editor, the scholars who completed the abstracts, and the translators who handled the transition between multiple languages, are to be praised. The work will be most useful for two main purposes: first, it provides scholars with abstracts of books that might be rare or difficult to find outside major research libraries, or outside the country of publication. Second, the volume can provide an overview of references in languages outside a scholar's specialization, in order to gain first insights into the existing literature. From both points of view, it might have been useful to translate the abstracts into Farsi, in addition to Arabic, English and Turkish. The volume cannot of course replace detailed research, but by presenting major works on a wide range of regions, it does provide a useful set of references.

Even though presenting a critical study is not necessarily the aim of the volume, a longer introduction would have been desirable. In its present form, the introduction points to various important issues – cities conquered by Muslim armies early on, such as Mada'in; the foundation of Baghdad by the 'Abbāsids; the importance of urban centres in the Middle East. However, the observations remain both too general for the specialist, and offer little detail for anyone unfamiliar with, yet interested in the question of cities in the Islamic world. It would have been especially useful to address the complex and problematic issue of "Islamic" cities, with its long and difficult historiography, and the attendant assumptions in the literature that need to be questioned. By including also present-day problems of urbanism and demographics, the introduction brings up a second set of issues that could have been discussed in more detail. It is understandable, however, that such detailed analysis of the existing literature is not the aim of the volume. Overall, the introduction serves mainly to mention a few important issues such as the global South, the Arab Spring, periodization of history within the Middle East, and colonial and national historiographies. In the discussion of specific locations – such as Istanbul, Karachi, and Jakarta – enough detail is provided to make the non-specialist curious, and the specialist regret that a longer discussion was not possible. Here, a selected bibliography of the most recent literature would have been useful, especially since the abstracts do not include works published outside predominantly Muslim countries. Important too are the sections on thematic issues such as social justice, urban planning, ethnic tensions and wars – questions that cannot be divorced from each other, or from the topic at large. The section on heritage and preservation, towards the end of the introduction, points to the importance of research that aims to conserve existing structures within ever-growing urban centres. This is one of the stronger parts of the introduction, as it offers useful references to recent scholarly and journalistic publications.

In the final section, the following passage is perhaps the clearest statement as to the goal of the volume: "The present volume has gathered together over two hundred abstracts of publications published in Muslim majority countries with a view to supporting such debates" (p. 11). As presented here, the volume offers access

to, in part, not widely read publications, and opens up points of view for discussion that might not be well represented otherwise.

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NELLY HANNA:

Ottoman Egypt and the Emergence of the Modern World 1500–1800.

vii, 185 pp. Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014. ISBN 978 977 416 664 8.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X15001184

Nelly Hanna nous a habitués à la parution, à intervalle régulier, de travaux toujours originaux. Dans ses recherches sur le monde urbain, elle s'est résolument tenue à l'écart de l'histoire du politique, pour s'intéresser avant tout aux gens ordinaires, à leur habitat, à leurs activités commerciales et artisanales, tout comme à leur culture.

Ce nouvel ouvrage n'est pas seulement une mise en perspective de thèmes abordés précédemment. C'est un projet beaucoup plus ambitieux qui vise à repenser l'histoire de l'Égypte durant les trois siècles déterminants qui ont précédé la pénétration européenne au XIX^e siècle. Cette période d'émergence du monde moderne a connu une expansion sans précédent du commerce et un développement considérable des routes maritimes. Cet essai, organisé autour de quatre chapitres, traite des conséquences de ces mutations majeures. Il identifie un certain nombre de phénomènes économiques, sociaux et culturels, qui ont affecté de manière indépendante mais similaire aussi bien l'Europe que d'autres régions du monde. Il propose des approches nouvelles comme alternatives aux paradigmes du déclin et de l'eurocentrisme. L'objectif est de parvenir à une meilleure compréhension des dynamiques propres à l'Égypte et à l'ensemble de l'Empire ottoman et de mettre en lumière leurs contributions aux transformations globales qui ont donné naissance au monde moderne.

Dans un premier chapitre consacré au local et au global dans l'Égypte de 1600 à 1800, N.H. récuse l'idée d'une émergence exclusivement occidentale du monde moderne. Elle considère au contraire qu'il s'agit d'un processus complexe dans lequel bien d'autres régions que l'Europe, ont apporté leur contribution. Cette remise en question d'une historiographie de la modernité euro centrée n'est pas nouvelle. Des travaux portant surtout sur l'Inde, la Chine et l'Asie Sud Est ont sérieusement mis à mal ce concept né au XIX^e siècle qui a longtemps été confondu avec occidentalisation. N.H. souligne que les recherches sur l'Égypte et l'Empire ottoman proposant des approches alternatives sont pour l'instant très rares. Elle invite les chercheurs à aborder l'histoire de ces régions, non pas comme celle d'un long déclin ayant précédé la domination coloniale, mais comme un moment répondant de dynamiques propres au sein d'un monde multi polaire non encore dominé par une Europe hégémonique.

Entre les Empires ottoman, safavide et moghol, on n'assistait pas seulement à des échanges croissants de marchandises, tout particulièrement de textiles. Idées et modes, artisans et techniques de production passaient aussi d'une région à l'autre. Mais ces aspects restent largement méconnus et nécessiteraient des recherches approfondies, tout comme les transferts de savoir-faire et d'artisans depuis l'Empire ottoman vers l'Europe. Ce sont là des phénomènes encore largement passés sous silence.