and divination in the first part (there is no mathematical astronomy) and towards maps in the second, with an admixture of monstrous animals and wondrous plants. When the manuscript was bought by the Bodleian (with the help of many different agencies), the work was thought to be unique, but now it has been shown to belong to a tradition, originating in a work written between 1020 and 1050 in Fatimid Egypt, and surviving in several manuscripts from the late twelfth to the mid eighteenth century. The facsimile is of the Bodleian manuscript alone (the oldest manuscript), but all the copies are considered in the establishment of the Arabic edition. This allows the whole work to be reconstructed, with some manuscripts filling lacunae in others (only two chapters in part 2 are entirely missing). Illustrations in the introduction show the differences between the various manuscript versions.

The sources of the work include Hippocrates, *On Airs, Waters and Places*, the Quran (the "raised up roof and the laid-down bed" of the heavens and earth), al-Farghani, early Arabic Hermetic astrological literature, legends of the Buddha from Indian sources, it betrays extensive use of al-Masʿudi and Ibn Hawqal, but also similarities with Ikhwan al-Safa'. But much of the material is unique to this work (or, at least, not identified elsewhere), such as the "obscure stars having faint lances in the ninth sphere which have immense favorable and malevolent influences" (part 1, chapter 7). One could perhaps add that the information in the sixth chapter of the first part, about comets (pp. 374–6), includes material which is also in Abu Maʿshar, *On the Great Conjunctions*, part 5, chapter 7 (pp. 307–23). The names of the planets in Ancient Greek, Byzantine Greek, Persian and Indian are also given in Pseudo-al-Majriti's *Ghayat al-Hakim*, III, iii, though the *Ghayat* does not solve the problems of the distortions of the unrecognizable names, except perhaps that of Saturn: Indian *b-sh-n-sh* could be a distortion of *a-sh-t-sh* in the *Ghayat*.

The text is lavishly supplied with notes, identifying sources and explaining the meaning. As if that is not enough, the authors promise "a full, comprehensive study of the contents of the treatise in the context of eleventh-century Fatimid society and learning" (p. 2). We look forward to seeing a second volume as magisterial as the first!

Charles Burnett
The Warburg Institute

MICHAEL EBSTEIN:

Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition.

(Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts.) xiii, 276 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2014. €114. ISBN 978 90 04 25536 4.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X14000640

This book is an important and welcome contribution to modern scholarship, written with a remarkable sense of clarity, an impressive erudition, and constant attention to basing the discussion on textual evidence itself. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the influence of Neoplatonic Ismailism stemming from the Orient has been far more significant to the development of Sunni philosophical mysticism in al-Andalus than ordinarily assumed. To achieve this aim, Ebstein concentrates his research on two great representatives of Andalusi mysticism, namely Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931), usually acknowledged as the first author with an original form of thought in the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X14000640 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Peninsula, and Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), who represents in various respects the pinnacle of Islamic mysticism in al-Andalus.

Ebstein's analysis is articulated around five closely interdependent topics, each making up one chapter of the book: 1) "The word of God and the divine will" (this chapter is a slightly modified version of an article published in the *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*); 2) "Letters" (on letter speculations); 3) "The Friends of God" (on the concept of *walāya*); 4) "The perfect man" (on man as a cosmic mediation); and 5) "Parallel worlds". What these notions have in common is to receive in Ismaili philosophy a theosophical treatment of its own, much indebted to Neoplatonism and which, as such, moves the authors that incorporate them in their system a long way from the standard productions of Sufism. As Ebstein argues (p. 3), this is a type of mysticism which "exhibits a unique blend of Neoplatonic mystical philosophy, cosmogonic-cosmological speculations, occult sciences such as the science of letters and astrology, and more – a blend that is typically lacking in the eastern Sufi works written prior to the rise of Ibn al-ʿArabī, but which is characteristic of Ismaili literature".

Ebstein's method is the same throughout. For each notion discussed, he begins by discussing its centrality to the Shii–Ismaili tradition of Neoplatonist philosophy as it emerged in the East, reaching its full development with authors such as Nasafī, Rāzī, Sijistānī and Kirmānī, and then proceeds with a comparison of this material with the texts of Ibn Masarra and Ibn ʿArabī that have come down to us. In each case, he is able to provide textual evidence that is so striking and so solid that one cannot but agree with his hypothesis and argumentation. Not surprisingly, the *Theology of Aristotle*, a ninth-century Arabic adaptation of Plotinus's *Enneads* known to us in two versions, plays a key role in the discussion. For instance, Ibn Masarra's *Khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf* and Ibn ʿArabī's *Futuḥāt* both integrate the notion of God's word and that of the Divine will into a Neoplatonic scheme which patently echoes what is affirmed in the longer version of the *Theology* (pp. 51–5). Yet what will be most apparent to any reader is that no other work is mentioned more frequently in this essay than the famous encyclopaedic corpus of writings known as *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, eventually supplemented with the *Risālā al-Jāmiʿa* which purports to be the summary of this corpus and whose exact relation with the *Rasāʾil* remains unclear. In fact, it would not be exaggerating to say that the *Rasāʾil* form the genuine common thread of all the chapters of the books (with perhaps the exception of letter speculation, where Ikhwānian influence is less prevalent).

In the conclusion of his essay, Ebstein observes: "'The Epistles of the Sincere Brethren' had a profound impact on the mythic–philosophical thought in medieval al-Andalus. Many themes which are found in the Epistles – the Divine creative world in its Neoplatonic context; the hierarchal view of human society and of the universe at large; the figure of the perfect man; the notion of parallel worlds; or the perception of man and the cosmos as Divine books – resurface in the writings of both Ibn Masarra and Ibn al-ʿArabī, and thus point to the close affinity between these various authors" (p. 235). In their annotated translation of Ibn Masarra's *Risālat al-iʿtibār*, Sarah Stroumsa and Sara Sviri have also pointed out parallels in both language and ideas with the *Rasāʾil* that "strongly suggest a common intellectual milieu which produced them both" (S. Stroumsa and S. Sviri, "The beginnings of mystical philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra and the *Epistle on Contemplation*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam,* 36, 2009, pp. 201–53, here p. 210). My own recent research on the early reception of the "corpus Ikhwānianum" in al-Andalus, and on the implication this problem has for the dating of redaction of the *Epistles* ("Magia en al-Andalus: *Rasāʾil Ijwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm y Gāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*Picatrix*)"', in *Al-Qantara*, 34/2, 2013, pp. 297–344)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X14000640 Published online by Cambridge University Press

has led me not only to corroborate these views in full but also to suggest that we can go a step further in the consideration of the *Rasā'il* as a model, and probably even a direct one, to Ibn Masarra. In my view, the *Risālat al-iʿtibār* derives from the *Rasā'il* most of its motifs – as for instance "the Ladder of Ascension", "the upside-down plants", "the Footstool and the Throne" or "the image of the world as a book" – and, what is more, the very first words of the treatise include a typically Ikhwānian formula that suggests that Ibn Masarra might have wished subtly to acknowledge his own debt to the Brethren in that place (G. de Callataÿ, "Philosophy and bāṭinism: Ibn Masarra's *Risālat al-iʿtibār* and the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*", forthcoming in *JSAI*). At the end of Ebstein's magisterial demonstration, one fundamental question remains: through which channels was this particular type of Eastern mystical philosophy transmitted to the western part of Islam, and how can we account for its presence in works of Sunni authors such as Ibn Masarra and Ibn ʻArabī?

Although not claiming to offer any final answer to this discussion, Ebstein puts forward some interesting elements at the beginning and at the end of his book. Among other possible explanations, his preference goes to the suggestion that "in the course of their political–religious struggle against the Fāṭimīs, the Andalusīs became exposed to Ismāʻīlī conceptions and perhaps even to Ismāʻīlī writings" (p. 5). This is certainly a possibility, but it has its limitations. At least in the case of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, a work which seems to have been largely ignored by the Fāṭimid *da*ʻ*wa*, I would be inclined to regard as much more decisive the journeys accomplished in the Orient by so many Andalusī mystics of the ninth and tenth centuries, including Ibn Masarra and some of his followers, as has begun to be documented in recent decades (M. Marín, "Abū Saʿīd ibn al-Aʿrābī et le développement du soufisme en al-Andalus", *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 63–4, 1992, pp. 28–38.

Godefroid de Callataÿ
University of Louvain

DOĞAN GÜRPINAR:

Ottoman Imperial Diplomacy: A Political, Social and Cultural History.
(Library of Ottoman Studies.) 288 pp. London and New York:
I.B. Tauris, 2013. £68. ISBN 978 17807 6112 1.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X14000652

Few would disagree that diplomatic history, on the whole, remains a profoundly conservative sub-field of the discipline. However, it has not been entirely unaffected by historiographical developments, with an increasing focus on practice, agency, finance, and other crucial elements aside from metanarratives of Eurocentric geopolitics. Ottoman diplomatic history has largely remained within the confines of the grand narrative, often told by those with no ability to deal with Ottoman sources. This is changing for both the early and late modern periods, however, and Gürpınar's study is a welcome contribution.

Gürpınar uses a range of printed and archival sources to construct his narrative in conjunction with a wide spectrum of scholarly literature, in particular using a number of methodological approaches from international relations and other social sciences. The aims of the study are clearly set out in the introduction, to wit: to examine the "mental structures" of the late Ottoman bureaucracy; to investigate the emergence of a "bureaucratic nationalism" and its links with Turkish

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X14000640 Published online by Cambridge University Press