and to the extended rituals of the *hajj*. Furthermore, it is the Kaʿba's pre-modern Muslim phase that is in question: the pre-Islamic and modern Kaʿbas are touched on only lightly. Nor are non-Muslim interpretations attended to. In his *De haeresibus* the Christian theologian John of Damascus, who died in the 740s, asserted that Abraham had intercourse with Hagar, mother of the Arabs' ancestor Ishmael, on the Kaʿba's Black Stone. Behind this scoptic remark, may there not lurk a more positive ethnogenetic aetiology?

With deep erudition, yet sensitively and elegantly, *The Kaʿba Orientations* effects a subtle reorientation of the reader away from the diachronic, material-historical account that might have been expected, towards a more inward, psychological viewpoint that turns inside out the physical Kaʿba's refusal of access to its interior to all but a select few (ch. 4). This is primarily a study of spirituality, or at least religious mentality, rather than architecture or art history. Its most poignant and arresting moment is perhaps its account of the mystics who have believed, and taught, that the Kaʿba circumambulated them. As early as the ninth century it was assumed in some quarters that if one did not "see the immaterial beauty of God" at the Kaʿba, one's *hajj* was invalidated (pp. 91–3).

Starting from his distant view of the Kaʿba as the *qibla* of worldwide Islam, then gradually drawing closer, O'Meara concludes by examining its covering or clothing, the *kiswa* whose undulation in the wind betrayed the motion of its guardian angels' wings. Then he penetrates its interior (chs 5–6). Here, thanks to his pre-modern literary sources, he conveys a more detailed physical sense of the building, though there has been little to see since the Prophet and Ali cleansed it of most of the images stored there in pre-Islamic times. What particularly strikes O'Meara is the strong binary the "concept-facilitating" Kaʿba conveys between outside and inside. For him it evokes, perhaps even inspires, the literal/*ẓāhir* v. symbolic/*bāṭin* tension of Quranic hermeneutics. One may also recall the Holy of Holies of the Jews' temple. At the focus of so much intense spiritual desire lies an apparent void that no human sense can compass. Perhaps, materially presented, this is Islam's profoundest theological message. "Place-holding the symbolic order of Islam, is the ultimate work of the Kaʿba" (p. 129). Whether that work is more, or less, accessible to Muslims than to others is a question to which this eloquent book by a non-Muslim offers a tentative, modest and implicit answer, while conceding that actually beholding the Kaʿba may trigger a quite unexpectedly intense emotional and spiritual response in the open-hearted pilgrim.

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DANIELLE ROSS:
Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia.
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In this excellent study, Danielle Ross explores the history of a "rural gentry" of Tatar pious ʿulama' and merchant families in the Volga-Kama area whose sons combined business and piety with diplomacy and other services for the empire, thereby

contributing to Russia's colonial expansion. The Russian pacification of the Bashkirs in the eighteenth century was accompanied by the transfer of Tatar settlers from the Volga to the South Urals, where they established villages and Islamic centres of learning. In the absence of a Tatar nobility, these communities were often led by ʿulama'. Under the protection of the Russian army, Tatars assumed the role of Muslim middlemen, and acted as cultural leaders over the indigenous Bashkirs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim populations. Tatar long-distance traders sponsored Tatar Islamic institutions also in West Siberia and Turkestan, selling among other things thousands of Qurans and Islamic primers printed in Kazan since the early 1800s. The extent to which Tatars were operating as Russia's vanguard in the Steppe is evident from the fact that the imperial Tatar Muftiate that Catherine the Great established in 1788 was located not in Kazan but in the new frontier town of Orenburg, close to the Kazakhs, whose aristocrats hired Tatar ʿulama' for educating their children. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Russian administration began to see Islam increasingly as a threat to the empire, and as a competitor to Russia's own civilizing mission. Accordingly, the space for Tatar middlemen was reduced. Bashkirs and Kazakhs gradually liberated themselves from Tatar Islamic tutelage, and by 1917 they came up with projects to establish their own national units in the envisaged new Russia, which materialized in the republics of the USSR. The book thus follows the expansion of a Tatar religious, educational and economic network that ended together with the empire that stimulated and protected it.

Danielle Ross, through an impressive array of Tatar and Russian printed and archival sources, analyses the history of communities, schools and the muftiate; Islamic thought as expressed in historical and theological writings by Tatar 'ulama'; Tatar settlement practice in unison with imperial policies; the resistance of the Bashkirs in several uprisings (partly under "warrior scholars"); the economic history of Russia's frontier region; the fluidity of imperial policies towards Islam; the emergence of Tatar Muslim modernism (Jadidism); and finally, political activism and national identities. The author strikes an excellent balance between micro history (zooming in on characteristic personalities and families) and macro analysis (changing attitudes, networks, political constellations and alliances).

With this perspective (pioneered by Allen Frank, in several monographs), Ross offers a counterpoint to studies that emphasize the importance of Tatar intellectual links to the Ottoman Empire, and the impact of European thought (in particular James H. Meyer, *Turks across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian–Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914,* Oxford University Press, 2014). Importantly, the present book is also a powerful contribution to the ongoing debunking of Jadidism. Until recently, most Tatar, Soviet/Russian, Turkish, Tatar and Western historians have argued that the 1880s saw the emergence of a brand new ("Jadid") and neatly identifiable movement of Tatar Muslim intellectuals who, under the banner of progress and enlightenment, attacked and replaced the stagnant "traditional" Islamic culture, by introducing Tatar/Muslim newspapers and by reforming the madrasa education system according to "modern" lines. As Danielle Ross demonstrates, change had been underway long before Ismail Gasprinskii's first "Muslim" newspaper and his educational reforms reached Kazan in the 1880s. Several major Tatar madrasas in the Volga-Kama region carried out their own reforms (including the introduction of female classes), and their hundreds of students had access to the Russian and Ottoman newspapers. There is limited archival documentation available about these schools, but Ross suggests that these madrasas produced more graduates than the labour market could absorb, and the ensuing frustration made these jobless graduates adopt Gasprinskii's Jadid

rhetoric of progress against the generation of their masters. The Jadids thus embodied the educational success of a system that the Jadids claimed was inept. At the same time the secular-minded Gasprinskii was not central to this discourse; rather, many leading Kazan Tatar Jadids developed what we today would call Salafi convictions. The depiction of Tatar Jadidism as a "secular" movement paving the way to nationalism and socialism is a Soviet invention.

I find most of the arguments here compelling (and inviting of further inquiry), and have been amazed by the power of this book. Of course, Ross is far from claiming that the Kazan Tatars hoped to establish a "Tatar Empire" or protectorate in Russia, as the book's title might suggest. Rather, the Tatars maintained highly flexible networks, with personal relations to influential Tsarist officers and orientalists being key. Indeed, Ross describes many of her Tatar protagonists in the Volga basin as members of a "Machkaran network", arguing they cherished a common identity going back to a few scholars and students who, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, worked at the small madrasa of a village called Maskara in what is today the Republic of Tatarstan. But this appellation is an innovation of the author: in the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century Tatar biographical sources I have never encountered the term "Machkaran" as an extended group name for people other than the few who actually hailed from tiny Maskara or worked there. There were many other centres of learning, and Tatar students and teachers were mobile and collected affiliations and work experience from many madrasas in the broader Tatar region, adding to earlier links. It seems that for the sake of her argument Ross puts little emphasis on the wide Naqshbandiyya Sufi links that created strong ties also beyond the Kazan Tatar family/patronage clusters. In fact, two of the three huge Tatar madrasas that Ross singles out as "reforming before Jadidism" were run by wealthy Tatar Sufi masters – Muhammad Dhakir al-Chistawi from Chistopol, and 'Ali Tuntari from Tuntar – who had established their reputations by joining Sufi and trade networks reaching as far as the North Caucasus, Central Asia and even India. To emphasize their "deep connection with the Machkaran network" (p. 164) is perhaps not reflecting the whole picture. Well-researched, clearly written, and quite provocative on several fronts, this book will change the state of the art on the role of the Tatars in imperial Russia.

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ARASH ZEINI:
Zoroastrian Scholasticism in Late Antiquity: The Pahlavi Version of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti.
(Edinburgh Studies in Ancient Persia.) xxvi, 396 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. £95. ISBN 978 1 4744 4288 6.
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The aim of the author in this new approach to the study of the extant Pahlavi versions of the ancient Zoroastrian liturgy in Avestan is twofold. The first is to provide an edition of the Pahlavi translation of the Avestan *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (YH); the second is to treat it as a work of scholastic exegesis with stratified layers of glosses and commentaries. Within this framework he treats the Pahlavi version of the *Yasna*