REVIEWS

The ancient world

SHLOMO ISRE'EL, ITAMAR SINGER and RAN ZADOK (ed.): *Past links: studies in the languages and cultures of the ancient Near East.* (Israel Oriental Studies XVIII.) 459 pp. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.

'This volume of Israel Oriental Studies is dedicated to Prof. Anson F. Rainey'—mit diesen Worten weisen die Herausgeber hin auf den Charakter der im vorliegenden Band veröffentlichten 21 Beiträge, thematisch zusammengefaßt unter 'Linguistics and Philology' sowie 'Geography, History, Culture'. Gewidmet sind die Studien einem Wissenschaftler, der mit zahlreichen Arbeiten zur Erschließung von Sprachen, Geschichte und Kulturen Vorderasiens im Altertum beigetragen hat. Einen Schwerpunkt stellte dabei das spätbronzezeitliche Syrien-Palästina dar. So nimmt es nicht wunder, daß auch ein beträchtlicher Teil der hier vereinten Studien Untersuchungen dazu darstellt. Aber auch andere Bereiche des alten Vorderen Orients finden Berücksichtigung. Da es aus Platzgründen wenig sinnvoll erscheint, die Beiträge einzeln mit Verfasser und Titel vorzustellen, seien sie hier inhaltlich nach Sachgruppen gegliedert, wobei nur teilweise näher auf den Inhalt eingegangen wird.

Begonnen werden soll mit zwei Arbeiten zum Biblisch-Hebräischen: A. Gianto befaßt sich mit 'Mood and modality in classical Hebrew' (im Spannungsfeld von Aspekt und Tempus), B. Podolsky trägt Überlegungen zur Etymologie bei (dazu eine Bemerkung: obwohl Beziehungen Vorderasiens zur indischen Welt inzwischen unbestreitbar sind, wäre es doch auffällig, wenn Entlehnungen aus Dravidasprachen sich ausgerechnet in dem ans Mittelmeer grenzenden Palästina manifestieren und nicht in den Regionen, die unmittelbar mit Indien in Verbindung standen—wie dem Golf-nahen Mesoptamien und Südarabien).

Mit den Amarna-Briefen, sowohl sprachlich als auch mit daraus zu ziehenden historischen Folgerungen, beschäftigen sich vier Beiträge: S. P. Smith zur Morphologie der YVQTVL-Verbalformen in den südpalästinensischen Amarna-Briefen des Šuwardata (EA 278–84, 366—mit Transliteration, Übersetzung und Photos) und Z. Covachi-Rainey mit Bemerkungen zur Grammatik der in Ägypten geschriebenen Liste von Geschenken des ägyptischen Pharaoh an den babylonischen König Burnaburiaš (EA 14, mit Transliteration und Übersetzung), ferner G. Galil zur Geschichte des Kleinkönigtums Aštaroth (im Gebiet von Basan) und M. Liverani mit einer Neuinterpretation von EA 101 (der Verfasser des Briefes—als solcher wird Rib-Adda postuliert—ermutigt zu einer ägyptischen Invasion, der ein leichter Sieg vorhergesagt wird, S. 390). Amarnabriefe bilden auch eine wesentliche Grundlage der Studie von R. S. Hess zum Vorkommen des Terminus Kanaan in der Spätbronzezeit. Danach ist das mit diesem Namen bezeichnete Gebiet südlich von Alalach und Ugarit zu lokalisieren, aus der Sicht der Nicht-Kanaanäer mit einem gemeinsamen kulturellen und religiösen Erbe (S. 370).

Eine Anzahl von Beiträgen hat Ugarit zum Gegenstand, wobei verschiedene Aspekte der Funde von hier zur Sprache kommen. W. Röllig behandelt die 1988 gefundene Alphabettafel, die nicht die übliche 'nordsemitische' Buchstabenfolge aufweist, sondern im wesentlichen der aus dem südlichen Arabien bekannten Anordnung der Zeichen folgt (mit Kopie und Umschrift). Im Ergebnis kommt er zu der Folgerung, daß bereits im 13. Jh. v.Chr. in Syrien drei verschiedene Traditionen existierten: 1. die aus Ugarit bekannte mit 27 Zeichen und 3 Zusatzzeichen, 2. die die Zeichenfolge mit *h*, *l*, *ḥ*, *m* beginnende 'südliche' Tradition, 3. das verkürzte 'nordsemitische' Alphabet mit 22 Zeichen. Dahinter steht offensichtlich eine Sprach-bzw. Dialektvielfalt (S. 87 f.). D. Sivan diskutiert die Verwendung von Suffix- und Präfixkonjugation im Ugaritischen und klassifiziert die Gebrauchsweisen innerhalb der als Tempus-, nicht Aspektsystem verstandenen Verbalbildung, während E. L. Greenstein neue Lesungen im Kirta(Keret)-Epos vorschlägt, basierend auf den Tontafeloriginalen (Photos schwieriger Stellen sind beigefügt). Einer bereits widerholt diskutierten historischen Frage haben sich M. Dietrich und O. Loretz zugewandt: dem Verhältnis von Amurru zur Ägäis und der Bedeutung von *Yaman* 'Jonien', mit dem Ergebnis, daß letzteres als Bezeichnung der ägäischen Inselwelt zu verstehen ist (mit neuer Interpretation von KTU 1.4 I41–3 und 1.3 VI4–16). In seinem Beitrag über Bücher in der spätbronzezeitlichen Levante vermittelt A. Millard einen Eindruck von der Literalität in der genannten Zeit und der entsprechenden Region (mit einem Ausblick auf den Pentateuch).

Zwei weitere syrische Fundstellen im Umfeld von Ugarit sind Alalaḫ und Emar. Hurritische Einflüsse auf die Sprache der Texte aus Schicht IV des erstgenannten Ortes analysiert I. Márquez-Rowe in seinem Beitrag. J. Ikeda gibt einen grammatischen Abriß der Urkunden des 'Opferschauers' (LÚ.ḪAL = *barû*) Zu-Ba'lu aus Emar und M. Yamada untersucht die Frage der Beziehungen dieser Familie zu den hethitischen Herrschern. Mit dem Problem der sprachlichen Beziehungen des in der ägyptischen Sinuhe-Erzählung als Namen eines Herrschers von Qedem bezeugten *Mkj* und dem bereits in den Texten von Ebla in Vorderasien bezeugten Namen *Meki*, *Megum*, *Mekum*/*Mekim* befaßt sich C. Kühne. Er kommt zu dem Ergebnis, daß der Name des ägyptischen Textes durchaus als Umschrift eines

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authentischen nordwestsemitischen Personennamens gelten kann. Auch der einzige ägyptologische Beitrag des Bandes verbleibt historisch em Bereich der Spätbronzezeit. Er ist vorderasiatischen Ortsnamen gewidmet: E. Edel bearbeitet und analysiert (mit Umschrift, Übersetzung, Kommentar sowie Umzeichnung)-Listen Ramses' II. im Luxortempel (J. Simons, *Handbook for the study of Egyptian topographical lists relating to western Asia*, XXII C–D, 1937).

Einen Übergang zu Südmesopotamien bildet M. Anbars Untersuchung von Mari-Briefen. Es geht um die Klärung der Chronologie in den Beziehungen zwischen Mari und Andarig während der Militärexpedition Ešnunnas in den Jahren Zimrilim 3' und 4'. Aus dem babylonischen Bereich im engeren Sinne kommen dann die verbleibenden drei Beiträge. Zweimal geht es um grammatische Fragen: K. E. Slanski setzt sich mit dem Gebrauch des koordinierenden *-ma* in der Grußbformel der altakkadischen Briefe auseinander, und T. Zadok geht es um den Gebrauch der subordinierenden Partikeln *inūmī/inu/inūma* 'als, wenn' in den altabylonischen Königsinschriften. R. Zadok schließlich informiert über die Ergebnisse seiner Untersuchungen zum neu- und spätbabylonischen Borsippa (8.–5. Jh. v.Chr.; mit Bearbeitung einiger Urkunden). Vor allem im British Museum konnte er eine große Zahl unpublizierter Texte dieser Herkunft bestimmen, die es ihm erlauben, Überreste von 23 Familienarchiven zu ermitteln.

Mit diesen durchweg lesenswerten und der Ehrung eines verdienstvollen Gelehrten angemessenen Beiträgen haben die Verfasser eine Anzahl von Problemen aufgegriffen und die Forschung mit einem besseren oder neuen Verständnis der untersuchten Themen bereichert. Es schließen sich vier, teilweise umfangreiche Rezensionen an: S. 397–420: E. L. Greenstein zu D. Sivan, *A grammar of the Ugaritic language*, Leiden and New York, 1997; S. 421–9: Shlomo Izre'el zu J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of North-West Semitic inscriptions*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1995; S. 431–53: A. F. Rainey zu J. E. Hoch, *Semitic words in Egyptian texts of the new kingdom and third intermediate period*, Princeton, 1994; S. 455–9: ders. zu K. van der Toorn *et al.* (ed.), *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible* [DDD], New York, 1995.

JOACHIM OELSNER

STEPHANIE DALLEY (ed.): *The legacy of Mesopotamia*. xviii, 227 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

The legacy of ancient Mesopotamia is a topic which has received very uneven treatment. The influence of Babylonian arts, crafts and sciences upon Greece has been the subject of much debate over the years, most recently by Walter Burkert, *The orientalizing revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1992) and Martin West, *The east face of Helicon* (Oxford, 1997), especially. The ways in which Mesopotamian intellectual life left its mark on the holy scriptures of Judaism and Christianity have been discussed continually since the birth of Assyriology 150 years ago, this topic being then—and for a long time afterwards—the very *raison d'être* of the new field of study. The result has been that most informed people now know that the twin founts of Western civilization, Hellas and the Bible, are both much indebted to the very ancient civilizations that preceded them in the east: Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria.

So much for the West. What about the East? The contrast is sharp. Mesopotamian influence on the civilizations that arose later in the Near East has been much less examined. In their concern for tracing the roots of their own culture, Assyriologists and other students of ancient Near Eastern intellectual traditions, for the most part working in Europe and America, have left neglected the more obviously fertile, but less familiar, area of enquiry: the question of continuity between the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, the later Near East and neighbouring regions to the east.

The legacy of Mesopotamia is a collaborative effort attempting to offer a study of the subject that is geographically balanced. Stephanie Dalley is joined by A. T. Reyes in chs iv and v, which consider Mesopotamian influence on the Greek world; David Pingree contributes ch. vi, on the astronomical legacy of Mespotamian civilization in India, Greece and elsewhere; and Alison Salvesen offers ch. vii, on Mesopotamian influence on Aramaic sources. A final chapter, 'Rediscovery and aftermath' by Henrietta McCall, provides a most informative and entertaining examination of the recovery of Assyrian and Babylonian civilization in recent centuries and the ways in which modern Western civilization responded to its ancient antecedent. The remainder of the book is Dalley's work. Two introductory chapters on 'Occasions and opportunities' consider the channels by which Mesopotamia could disseminate its high civilization to the surrounding world and the periods in which it did so. A third looks at Mesopotamian influence on Israel and the Bible. The most illuminating part of the book, however, is ch. viii, which concentrates on the legacy of ancient Mesopotamia to the Sasanian Persians and early Islam. Read together with Salvesen's chapter on Aramaic, it provides fascinating evidence for the survival in Mesopotamia of ancient cuneiform-based traditions into the post-cuneiform periods.

Dalley's and Salvesen's investigations into the legacy of ancient Mesopotamia in the East show that the old traditions were not cast aside abruptly. They bring to bear on this question evidence that deserves to be more widely known but is not, principally because scholarly study of the period in question falls, as it were, between several academic stools and requires mastery of disparate tools and topics: Talmud, the Syriac churches, Greek and Latin sources, Manichaeism, Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, the old languages of Iran and Central Asia, Sanskrit, etc. The requirement of such a multidisciplinary approach means that perhaps no collaborative effort involving only a small team of scholars can produce a comprehensive account of Mesopotamia's legacy. This reviewer was unsettled not only by that thought but also by striking failures in report, interpretation

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and understanding in the book. Among such are the following examples from the first two chapters:

(a) The claim that stories relating the Anatolian exploits of the kings of Akkade 'were found not in Mesopotamia but at the Hittite capital Hattusa' (p. 13) is refuted by the presence of fragments of the text we call 'King of Battle' at Aššur and Nineveh (as well as at Amarna; see now J. G. Westenholz, *Legends of the kings of Akkade* (Winona Lake, IN, 1997), pp. 102–39). In addition, two Old Babylonian tales of Sargon relate journeys to the far north-west; one of them was excavated as Tell Harmal, near Baghdad (ed. Westenholz, op. cit., pp. 59–93).

(b) Dalley describes on p. 35 a 'Babylonian festival of the New Year in which [the king] "took the hands" of Bel-Marduk, and heard the *Epic of Creation* (*Enūma Elish*) recited'. No such festival is yet known. When Marduk's personal priest recited *Enūma eliš* at the New Year festival, in the late afternoon of 4 Nissanu, it was probably to Marduk alone. Had the king's attendance been customary the extant ritual text would surely have told us so. It may even be that at this very moment the king was out of town, on his way to Borsippa to fetch Nabû (for the timing see George, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 53, 3/4, 1996, 381–2). The only other occasion when it is known that *Enūma eliš* was recited in a ritual context at Babylon was on 4 Kislīmu, during the palm festival of E-sangil. The king's presence is not mentioned in the surviving description (see G. Çağırgan and W. G. Lambert, 'The Late Babylonian *Kislīmu* ritual for Esagil', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 43–5, 1991–93, pp. 89–106).

(c) Ancient documents need to be evaluated carefully. The 'tablet dated 229 B.C. [that] describes the shrine of Marduk and enjoins its readers to secrecy' certainly cannot be taken to 'imply that the main religious institution there [in Babylon] still flourished' (p. 40). Nobody now would argue that the temple was not flourishing in the late third century B.C., it is true, but the document cited, commonly called the E-sangil tablet, is not itself evidence of third-century practice. It is a late manuscript of a traditional scholarly text that a scribal apprentice copied out at Uruk from a tablet originally from Borsippa. Judging by the metrology it uses, the text itself, which is now known also from a fragmentary exemplar from Babylon, probably dates to much earlier in the first millennium (A. R. George, *Babylonian topographical texts* (OLA 40; Leuven, 1992), pp. 109–19).

(d) The archaeological contexts of documents also need to be evaluated carefully. To write that at Uruk in the Seleucid and Parthian periods, 'the ancient city of Uruk maintained its religious and literary eminence. A large library was kept up-to-date with new copies of old literature', etc. (p. 41), might suggest to the reader that there was a single publicly funded institution there diligently collecting literature, somewhat after the fashion of modern public libraries (see also p. 42: 'at Uruk the library with its learned men continued to exist'; pp. 111f; 'a large library containing literary and religious texts on cuneiform tablets has been recovered from Uruk'). In fact, the literary tablets of Late Babylonian Uruk derive from several different sources. Two large groups can be distinguished archaeologically: (i) the Seleucid-period tablets from the temple of Anu excavated in 1959–60, which are the remains of a library belonging to Anu-bēlšunu, a member of the temple's staff (see J. van Dijk and W. R. Mayer, *Texte aus dem Rēš-Heiligtum in Uruk-Warka. Baghdader Mitteilungen*, Beiheft 2; Berlin, 1980); (ii) a substantial mass of Late Babylonian literary and scholarly fragments, excavated during the years 1969–72 in disturbed contexts in an area of private dwelling houses, that belonged originally to the private libraries of the scholars Anu-ikṣur, Iqīšâ and probably other learned individuals (see H. Hunger, *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*, 1 (Berlin, 1976), pp. 11–13). Similar tablets, mainly purchased by the Louvre in 1913, seem either to belong with excavated group (i) or to derive from the collection of another learned scholar, the exorcist Nidintu-Anu of the Ekur-zākir family (see G. J. P. McEwan, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 38, 5/6, 1981, col. 639, n3). The picture is not one of a single library maintained by the city authorities but of individual persons in possession of private libraries. These collections were amassed by families in the course of the training of successive generations as scribes and during their subsequent careers in the literate professions. This model is the norm for Mesopotamian libraries, to which the only certain exception is the famous collection of the Neo-Assyrian court at Nineveh, the 'libraries of Aššurbanipal'.

(e) 'The New Year festival, celebrated there [in Uruk] in the month of Teshrit' (p. 41) is a statement that in its context suggests a cultic calendar contrasting with the situation at Babylon. However, the discussion is not informed by full knowledge. Though the fact is often overlooked, it has been known for many decades that New Year festivals took place twice a year at Uruk, Babylon, and elsewhere in Babylonia (see F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris, 1921), p. 87). The two traditional dates for the New Year arise from a combination of the Sumerian calendar of Nippur, in which the first month (Nisan) falls at the spring equinox, and a Semitic calender in which the first month (Tašrītu) falls at the autumn equinox. The Gilgameš epic provides an aetiology for this strange state of affairs (SB II 268–9, III 31–2), which is, however, sufficiently entrenched to be carried over into later cultures (e.g., the Jewish calendar).

(f) The remarks on libraries made above at (c) also apply to Dalley's statement that 'Susa also maintained a cuneiform library' in the Seleucid period. There may well have been libraries of Babylonian cuneiform tablets in Elam at this time but the 'firm' evidence she adduces is compromised by a telling anachronism, that the Rēš temple existed in the reign of Nabopolassar, and is suspected as fraudulent invention on that account (see A. Falkenstein, *Topographie von Uruk*, 1 (Leipzig, 1941), p. 9; George, *Iraq*, 57, 1995, p. 195, n102).

(g) On p. 49 Dalley discusses the famous relief at Palmyra that depicts a warrior god, usually identified as Bēl, triumphing over the

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sea, a victory that is symbolized at Babylon by the god Marduk's procession to and from the *akītu* temple at the New Year. Dalley notes the presence around the Palmyrene sculpture of 'Victories, who hold palm-fronds', and states in this connection, as Babylonian evidence for something similar, that 'a palm frond was presented to Bel in Babylon according to a late version of the *akītu*-festival ritual'. However, the ritual in question is for the month Kislīmu and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Babylonian *akītu*-celebrations of Nisannu and Tašrītu. Early Kislīmu, the time of the date harvest, is marked by palm festivals in the temples of Babylon, as we know from this and other texts (see Çağırgan and Lambert, op. cit.). The fact that the 'Victories' (if that is what they are) hold palm-fronds at Palmyra is unrelated to the calendar, however, and derives instead from the use of palm-fronds and other foliage to welcome royal victors in triumphal processions. Evidence for this needs assembling, but one thinks at once of Simon Maccabeus, and later Christ, entering Jerusalem amid palm branches cut for the purpose (I Maccabees 13, 51; John 12, 13; cf. Matthew 21, 8; Mark 11, 8). A south Mesopotamian example of the custom comes in a passage of the Nabonidus chronicle, sometimes misunderstood, when Cyrus entered Babylon and *ḫa-re-né-e ina pāni*(igi)-*šú išteṭṭû* (bàra)^{meš} (iii 19'), '(people) strewed *ḫarenê* before him', where *ḫ* is surely the LB plural of *ḫarû*, 'palm-shoot' (similarly *CAD*, Š/2, 343, reviving the hunch of Sidney Smith). Incidentally, a recent article argues that the Palmyrene relief depicts the triumph of Nabû, usurping the place of his father Marduk (L. Dirven, 'The exaltation of Nabû. A revision of the relief depicting the battle against Tiamat from the temple of Bel in Palmyra', *Die Welt des Orients*, 28, 1997, pp. 96–116).

Several recent inquiries into individual aspects of the afterlife of Mesopotamian civilization in the Near East and beyond can be added to those cited by Dalley, Pingree and Salvesen to increment the evidence for Babylonian influence on the later civilizations of the lands to the east. For Archaemenid Persia generally there is G. Gnoli, 'Babylonian influences on Iran', *Encyclopaedia iranica*, III/3 (London, 1988), pp. 334–6. For influence on early Jewry in Babylonia see M. J. Geller, 'The influence of ancient Mesopotamia on Hellenistic Judaism', in Jack M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East*, I (New York, 1995), pp. 43–54; idem, 'Akkadian medicine in the Babylonian Talmud', in D. Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), *A traditional quest: essays in honour of Louis Jacobs* (Sheffield, 1991); idem, 'The survival of Babylonian Wissenschaft in later tradition', in S. Aro and R. M. Whiting (ed.), *Melammu symposia* I (Helsinki, 2000), pp. 1–6; J. C. Greenfield and M. Sokoloff, 'Astrological and related omen texts in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 48, 1989, pp. 201–14. A mine of information about Babylonia of this time is the compendium of A. Oppenheimer, *Babylonia judaica in the Talmudic period* (Wiesbaden, 1983). For the continuity into Gnostic traditions see C. Müller-Kessler and K. Kessler, 'Spätbabylonische Gottheiten in spätantiken mandäischen Texten', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 89, 1999, pp. 65–87.

On the survival of Babylonian omens in a Christian Sogdian menology, as well as the presence in early medieval Central Asia of Babylonian month-names, see N. Sims-Williams, 'From Babylon to China: astrological and epistolary formulae across two millennia', in *La Persia e l'Asia centrale da Alessandro al X secolo* (Atti dei convegni Lincei, 127, Rome, 1996), pp. 77–84. The death of Babylonian cuneiform and the fate of the scholarship that went with it has been re-examined in another article by M. J. Geller, who tries to make a case, based on the palaeography of Greek transcriptions of Babylonian texts surviving on clay, for the survival of the traditional Babylonian scribal literature as late as the third century A.D. ('The last wedge', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 87, 1997, pp. 43–95).

I like what this book tries to do. The influence of ancient Mesopotamia on the later East, especially, is a fascinating topic. Sustained inquiry will eventually place the study of ancient Mesopotamia as much in an Eastern context as in a Western one. By investigating the former as well as the latter, Dalley and her collaborators are moving in the right direction.

A. R. GEORGE

JOHN CURTIS (ed.): *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Rejection and revival c. 238 B.C.–A.D.* 624. Proceedings of a seminar in memory of Vladimir G. Lukonin. viii, 96 pp., 41 coloured plates. London: The British Museum Press, 2000. £20.

As explained in the editor's preface (pp. 7–10), the present volume collects a series of papers delivered at a seminar held at the British Museum on 14 July 1997, in memory of the late Russian scholar Vladimir G. Lukonin. That fourth meeting was preceded by three seminars dedicated to the relation between Mesopotamia and Iran from the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. until the end of the Achaemenid period. The apparent omission of the Hellenistic period in this series has been covered, but only in part, in a short but very concentrated introduction by John Curtis (pp. 11–16), where he underlines the impact of Greek culture on the Irano-Mesopotamian areas, stressing the still existing problems in the comprehension of the cultural and archaeological situation in northern Iraq. To this otherwise wide-ranging introduction, I would like to add at least the recent and important contributions concerning the status of the Greek epigraphic sources in Iran brilliantly resumed by Ph. Huyse, 'Die Begegnung zwischen Hellenen und Iraniern, Griechische epigraphische Zeugnisse von Griechenland bis Pakistan' (in *Iran and Turfan. Beiträge Berliner Wissenschaftler, Werner Sundermann zu 60. Geburtstag gewidmet*, herausgegeben von Chr. Reck und P. Zieme, Wiesbaden 1995, pp. 99–126) and the work of J.

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Wiesehöfer, *Die 'dunklen Jahrhunderte' der Persis* (Zetemata, Heft 90. München, 1994) on the Fratarakās, which have been only briefly mentioned in the volume here under review.

The book contains six articles dedicated to different but related subjects mainly pertaining to the history, archaeology and art of the Parthian and Sasanian periods. In the first chapter, Richard Nelson Frye ('Parthian and Sasanian history of Iran', pp. 17–22) offers a comprehensive overview of the political significance of the two Iranian dynasties, stressing the basic differences between the 'feudal' organization of the Parthian state (which in the end resulted in the strategic superiority of the Roman Empire) and the Sasanian centralist tendency. In his discussion on the name of the eponymous founder of the Sasanian dynasty, the peculiar statement (at p. 19), 'the Parthian language does not distinguish between long and short vowels', has surely to be understood as referring to the orthography of the early Parthian documents form Nisa (in particular with respect to the absence of *matres lectionis* for internal -*ā*-; e.g., D. N. MacKenzie, 'Some names from Nisa', *Peredneaziatskij Sbornik*, 4, 1986, pp. 105–15) and not to the real phonetic status of this Iranian language. With regard to the problem of the Sasanian intolerance in religious matters (p. 21), as described by the author, I think that the situation was more *nuancée*, and that tolerance and intolerance were politically determined and oriented, notwithstanding the fact that we can plainly admit that the Sasanians had a real political interest in religious affairs and in that tendency their behaviour resulted in being extremely more active (as well as contradictory, reflecting different political orientations) than the Parthians.

The second article by Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis ('Parthian culture and costume', pp. 23–34) is an interesting introduction into the difficult but intriguing reconstruction of the Parthian's process of integration—from an originally nomadic life into a sedentary community and into their original adaptation of Greek and Achaemenid patterns. On the other hand, we cannot avoid taking into consideration in any discussion about Parthian coins and their legends, which the author briefly discusses in the article, the important evidence emerging from the rich treasury (more than 2,000 coins) of the river Atrek belonging to the first two Arsacids, where we find legends in Greek but also (apparently) in Aramaic as in contemporary Persia (see J. Wolski, 'L'Empire des Arsacides', *Acta Iranica* 32, 1993, pp. 69–70). In addition, on the discussion of the title 'King of Kings', the value of probably the oldest known Parthian inscriptions in Xung-i Naurūzī has to be considered, where we find, for instance, *mtrdt MLKYN MLK* (on which see R. Schmitt, in 'Parthische Sprach und Nebenüberlieferungen aus arsakidischer Zeit', in *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse. The Arsacid Empire: sources and documentation. Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27–30 Juni 1996)*, herausgegeben von J. Wiesehöfer (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 163–204, in particular p. 168).

In the third article ('The rock reliefs of Sasanian Iran', pp. 35–45) Georgina Herrmann presents the difficult and fascinating subject of the Sasanian reliefs; she underlines the evidently political significance of Ardašīr's visual language used on his coins and in his reliefs (this king in fact changed his own iconography step by step with the progress of his ascent to the highest power (pp. 36–9)). The symbolic force of the Sasanian reliefs is apparently confirmed, for example, in the artistic representation of Šābuhr's triumph over the Romans, where in some cases three different events and campaigns were simultaneously evoked by means of the contemporary presence of Gordian III, Philipp the Arab and Valerian (see pp. 39–40). The author also notes that the presence of different registers with knights behind the Sasanian king representing the force of the empire and rows of tributaries bringing gifts evokes a language which is that of the Assyrian Empire. Furthermore, the article proposes some reflections on real access to these manifestations of the art of power. In some cases it is clear, she suggests, that the message can be read from a distance, like in Naqš-i Rustam; in other cases, it is possible that the access was restricted, as it happened in many societies. She underlines, however, some—perhaps unconscious—differences between Ardašīr's and Šābuhr's reliefs. While Ardašīr seems 'to reflect his desire to legitimise his seizure of the power', his son links his own primary message to the *grandeur* of his victories over the Romans (p. 41). Starting with a discussion on the importance of the 'private' reliefs and inscriptions belonging to the high Mazdean priest 'Kirder' (this is the form of the name by which he is quoted in the article), Herrmann comes to the general problem of other non-official reliefs, which should be connected with the increasing power gained by some noble families (p. 42), that of the iconography of king Narsēh and, in particular, the problem of the significant absence of reliefs which can surely be attributed to the long reign of Šābuhr II. With regard to this open subject, she suggests that Šābuhr II imposed a deliberate control on the fulfilment of the rock reliefs of his time; their absence during his kingdom could actually reflect, as it is suggested on p. 43, both 'the decline in the importance of Fars and the increasing popularity of stucco decoration'. This contribution is then dedicated to the clear importance of the stucco in Sasanian art, with a brief discussion also on the presence/absence of colours on the Sasanian reliefs (p. 44); the article concludes with some reflections on the final results of the Sasanian reliefs, in particular those of Taq-i Bustan, which probably belong to Xusraw II. With regard to this artistic document the author writes that 'the Taq-i Bustan *ivan* can be seen as a Sasanian version of the standard Assyrian or Mesopotamian view of monarchy', thus suggesting a quite possible continuity in ichonographic themes and forms of the ideology of power from early to late antiquity.

Prudence O. Harper ('Sasanian silver vessels: the formation and study of early museum collections', pp. 46–56) offers a suggestive and detailed description of the long process of formation which determined many (originally) private and public collections of Sasanian vessels. I simply want to note that on p. 48, the author refers to a Middle Persian form transcribed as *bitiaxs* [*sic*], which should be *bidaxš*

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'viceroy' (see now Ph. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Kaʿaba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ)*, Part III, Pahlavi Inscriptions. Vol. I. Royal Inscriptions, with their Parthian and Greek Versions. Texts I. Band II. (London, 1999), pp. 132–3).

St. John Christopher ('Mesopotamia in the Sasanian period: settlement patterns, arts and crafts', pp. 57–66) strongly emphasizes in his article the importance which should be given to the study of everyday crafts and not only to that of fine arts. In particular, he tries to show the importance of the local consumer demand which should have been developed in the highly urbanized area of late Parthian and Sasanian Mesopotamia. Very interesting are the reflections proposed by the author on the cultural continuity between the Parthian and Sasanian periods, for instance in pottery production; and on the detailed remarks about the apparently very scarce presence of foreign manufacture attested by the archaeological sources in the area of the Romano-Sasanian border, the author expressly notes that 'there is surprisingly little evidence for Sasanian material from the Roman Empire or India' (p. 66). The article also offers a very insightful discussion of the deeply significant foundation of the Sasanian city of Weh-Ardašīr, which the author rightly considers to be 'deliberately sited next to the old Hellenistic city of Seleucia on the Tigris and opposite to the Partho-Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon'. Curiously the name of the town, here spelt as Veh Ardashir (p. 61), is wrongfully translated as 'The city of Ardashir'. The same translation occurs unfortunately also with Veh Antioch Khusro, which is in fact translated as 'Khusro's City of Antioch' (ibid.) which cannot possibly be correct according to Middle Persian syntax. Notwithstanding M.-P. *weh* was frequently misunderstood in Hebrew and Syriac sources and directly associated with Hebrew and Aramaic *bē* 'house' or Syriac *bēth*, as already remarked by Th. Nöldeke ('Zum Mittelpersischen', *WZKM*, 16, 1902, pp. 1–12, in particular on p. 7, n3; cf. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), p. 387, n3; W. Eilers, *Geographische Namengebung in und um Iran. Ein Überblick in Beispielen* (München, 1982), p. 21), it is well known that it was not the Middle Persian word for 'city' (this actually was *šahr* or *šahrestān*); in fact M.-P. *weh* < OIr. **vahyah-* (comparative of **vahu-* 'good'; cf. Av. *vohu-* and the comp. *vahiiah-*) signifies 'better, good' and then the name of *Weh-Ardašīr* has to be interpreted as 'Better' or 'Good (is the city of) Ardašīr'; in its turn *Weh Andiyōk Xusraw* (cf. also *Weh-Andiyōk-Šābuhr* in ŠKZ, par. 46, M-P. *why'-ntywkšhypwhr*, Part. *whyndywkšhpwhry*, Gr. *Γουεαντιοχσαβωρ*, 'das bessere Antiochien von Šābuhr'; see Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Kaʿaba-i Zardušt*, Bd. I, p. 58; Bd. II, pp. 156–7) has to be interpreted as 'The better Antiochia of Šābuhr'. Arab historians on the other hand interpreted names of cities like *Weh-Andiyōk-Šābuhr* as 'Better than Antiochia Xusraw (did it)' (see also J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenacʿi* (Berlin, 1901), p. 145; W. Eilers, *Der Name Demawend* (Hildesheim, 1988), pp. 212–13).

In the final contribution ('Sasanian art beyond the Persian world', pp. 67–75) Guitty Azarpay focuses his attention on the influence played by the Sasanian art motifs on the extra-Iranian world, entering with suggestive arguments the deep level of the ideological and religious patterns openly shown by the language of Sasanian artistic expressions. The author actually stresses the strong admiration for Sasanian art diffused along the Silk Road and particularly in China, where we can find some imitations of motifs and designs. On the other side of the world, Byzantine art, for instance, in San Vitale and St Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, present us with a number of Sasanian formal elements. Azarpay suggests however that the religious background of the Zoroastrian tradition, with its special emphasis on the cosmic order and with its taste for the sublime representation of natural and animal perfection, expressed as prototypical forms of the Mazdean creation, corresponds directly with the thematic content of Sasanian art, where many decorative motifs (fantastic horses, plants, royal hunts, etc.) result in being readable 'as visual metaphors' of a theological conception.

A remarkable number of very high quality photographs close the book. However, it is a pity that the bibliography (p. 76), appears a bit out of date with respect to the publication of the book (2000). It presents some evident omissions. In particular I have to note that no reference is given by any author to the significant works of Józef Wolski (see especially the already quoted 'L'Empire des Arsacides'), nor, for instance, to the very important book of Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1993) which strictly pertains to the history of the Roman-Parthian and Roman-Sasanian borders with a number of important pages on the political situation of Mesopotamia at the beginning of late antiquity, nor for instance to the collection of articles cited earlier edited by J. Wiesehöfer (*Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse*), which, notwithstanding the date of the seminar (14 July 1997) could have at least been mentioned.

ANTONIO PANAINO

LEE I. LEVINE: *The ancient synagogue, the first thousand years.* xvi, 748 pp. 98 fig. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1999. £45.

This is a formidable survey of a formidable subject. Since the 1920s the number of known ancient synagogues—discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as in Israel itself and in Jordan—has risen from a tiny handful to a total of at least 120. With the increase in facts on the ground, many of the old suppositions have fallen by the wayside. Synagogues *did* exist before the destruction of the second Temple in 70 A.D., both in Israel and in the Diaspora. The earliest evidence of a *proseuchē* (Jewish prayer house) comes from an inscription in Egypt dated to the third century B.C.

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Synagogues *did* contain extensive artistic embellishment, in wall paintings as well as floor mosaics, containing human and animal representations and even figures of the sun god, in spite of the second commandment against making images. Synagogues did *not* always face towards Jerusalem and there is *no* evidence for the segregation of women.

The increase in evidence is not confined to building remains but relates also to inscriptions and information gleaned from funerary monuments and catacombs, thus enlarging the number of recorded synagogues to over 300. Such an explosion of evidence has led inexorably to an explosion of scholarly literature on the subject, and this is where Lee Levine's work is so valuable. He has produced a synthesis of scholarship over the last 80 years (including his own substantial contribution) and combined it with a full review of Hellenistic literature and rabbinic sources. He also draws on early Christian texts and polemics against the synagogue, revealing its actual and perceived functions. The earliest synagogues, those in Egypt, are known from inscriptions, but physical remains are lacking. However, it is clear that the institution of *ἀρχισυνάγωγος* (head of synagogue) already existed and that Ptolemy III (*c.* 235 B.C.) approved of the foundation. The earliest known extant structure is on the Greek island of Delos, where a set of rooms is identified as a synagogue by two inscriptions, a ritual lamp, and a 'seat of Moses' found *in situ*. The complex is securely dated to the early first century B.C.—earlier than the first phase of the more famous synagogue of Ostia, the port of Rome, which is from the fourth century A.D. but is founded on a structure dated some 400 years earlier. These early locations have come as a surprise as, from literary sources, one would have expected to find synagogue remains in Rome, Alexandria and even in Babylonia; alas, none have been found in these famous places.

Levine makes a careful survey of all aspects of the ancient synagogue and covers the essentials of the second-Temple, late Roman and Byzantine periods in Israel and the Diaspora. In a second section he discusses the building, the community, its leadership (lay and rabbinic), women, priests, liturgy and iconography (art). In all cases Levine is scrupulous to bring together all the known sources and scholarly opinions. His approach is so balanced that he is often forced to say that clear answers are not forthcoming, which is much to be preferred to facile conclusions that have been drawn in the past on inadequate evidence. However, to be told again and again that the synagogue is the result of local influences, that there is no clear line of development, no reasonable grouping into types (as formerly thought in relation to the Galilean type, the southern broadhouse type and others), that there is no correlation between artistic expression and liturgical ritual and so on, while demonstrating careful scholarship, does leave the reader wishing for one or two provocative ideas. And indeed Levine does produce one, at the beginning of the book, when he discusses the origin of the synagogue.

However much we may know about the synagogue we know little of its origin. As it existed before the disappearance of the Temple, it is considered to have been based on a kind of extra-Jerusalem housing for those Jews (the *ma'amadot*) who stood in their local towns while their representatives (and priests) were up doing their bi-annual duties at the Temple. That is based on the idea that the synagogue is a place of worship in one form or another. But Levine has come up with a radical alternative (also adumbrated by S. Hoenig in 1979). Pointing to the fact that the word synagogue and indeed its Hebrew equivalent the *bet-kneset*, really means a place of congregating, he sees its origin in the community gatherings that took place in the earliest times at the gate of the city or village. This would explain why the synagogue has always been a social institution as much as a religious one, and that it may have started as a community building to deal with town meetings, education and the administration of justice (the 'elders at the gate').

Levine brings extensive evidence in support of this idea, from the Iron Age gate at Tel Dan to the second Temple period synagogue at Gamla, which was built next to the town gate, rather than in a central location. However, he does not explain how the Gamla synagogue—one of the three earliest in Israel—springs up 'fully fashioned' apparently without antecedents, and complete with Torah store, peripheral benches, and a peristyle of internal columns, the corner ones being heart-shaped. As such, it became a model for many later synagogues in the Galilee and the Golan, all with internal rows of columns, heart-shaped at the corners. Surprisingly, Levine, who has a particular section on columns, has nothing to say about these double-sided corner ones, which are such a marker of the Galilean synagogue and hardly appear elsewhere in Roman and Greek architecture (excepting the Bouleuterion courtyard in Miletus).

Levine provides a very full and useful section on synagogue art, a topic which has become controversial since the discovery of elaborate floor mosaics in Israel, representational wall paintings at Dura-Europus and the lion and eagle statues at Sardis. Again he is careful not to commit himself to any particular theory to explain these visual representations, but he does describe the seemingly liberal attitude that arose (even among some rabbis) in the second and third centuries, to be replaced by aniconic fervour after the Byzantine period. He pays particular attention to the zodiac representations in Israel and includes a section on the floor mosaics at Sepphoris, only recently discovered (1998), but he is reluctant to admit a direct relationship between these signs of the stars circling around the chariot of the sun (Helios) and the references to the power of the *mazalot* (constellations) in many rabbinic and prayer (*piyyut*) passages.

All in all this is a splendid book, beautifully printed and presented at a reasonable price (by today's standards) which may be why the illustrations are in black and white only, some of them rather small and difficult to see clearly.

STEPHEN GABRIEL ROSENBERG

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ARYEH COHEN: *Rereading Talmud: gender, law and the poetics of sugyot*. (Brown Judaic Studies, 318.) 242 pp. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998.

Aryeh Cohen's *Rereading Talmud: gender, law and the poetics of sugyot* offers a talmudist's view of the impact of literary theory on the study of talmudic narrative, concluding with a call for a new form of literary analysis dubbed by the author 'sugyaetics'. Such a project requires the author to bridge two areas of scholarship: modern literary theory and rabbinics. There have been prior attempts, notable more for their engagement with high theory than their facility with the intricacies of talmudic argumentation. Cohen, however, is clearly an expert talmudist (if at times less than an expert at literary theory), and this book is the best sustained attempt to date at sorting the accumulated scholarship into schools of thought and articulating the stakes in its varying methodologies.

In ch. i, Cohen announces his intention to extend the insights of Abraham Weiss, whose work had 'opened the door for discussion of the Talmud as literature', while 'critiquing the literary and historicist presuppositions of... early analyses and developing a methodology for interpretation of the Bavli which accounts for contemporary theoretical understandings of text and textuality' (pp. 2–3). The next three chapters review the secondary literature, dividing it into three theoretical schools: redaction history, literary formalism, and cultural production. Chapter ii examines the work of Abraham Weiss, David Halvini and Shamma Friedman as attempts to 'write a history of the redaction of the Talmud' (p. 7). Chapter iii draws widely from the works of Jacob Neusner, summarizing and critiquing his formalist approach to the literary analysis of the Talmud. Chapter iv, the final (and longest) review chapter, compares the work of Jonah Fraenkel to that of Daniel Boyarin. Fraenkel's interest in literary taxonomies is caricatured as tending to read sugyot as hermetic units, independent of context. In contrast, Boyarin's work is justly criticized for its tendency to move too hastily 'from the local to the widest cultural intertext' (p. 72) without articulating the connections between prooftext and grand theory. Cohen declares Boyarin's work to be sound in theory but flawed in application, yet his exposition of the methodology of cultural poetics is itself unsound. A particular source of confusion seems to be the Foucauldian term 'discursive formations', which Cohen appears to understand as referring to collections of quoted texts. I note that no work of Foucault appears in the bibliography. Chapter v lays out the program for 'sugyaetics', combining elements of the narratology of Gérard Genette with the stylistic analysis of Michael Riffaterre: 1) reading against the grain; 2) structural analysis; 3) 'intertextual analysis which situates the sugya within its literary and cultural universe' (p. 131); and 4) tracing the generation of halakhic traditions by talmudic narratives. The concluding chapters, extended sugyaetic readings of sugyot from Bavli Gittin (34b–35b, 12a–13a), are by far the most interesting parts of the book. Chapter vi analyses a discussion of conditions under which a widow may claim her ketubah from the orphans of her late husband, discovering within the convolutions of the rabbinic arguments meditations of the dangers of female autonomy, the fragility of law, and the meaning of exile. Chapter vii considers a sugya concerned with a man's obligations to support his wife and/or slave, teasing apart the ethically problematic intersections of these two categories of persons in rabbinic law. In these readings, Cohen proves himself a sensitive reader with deep competence in rabbinics.

From this brief summary, discerning readers will have deduced the major flaw of this book: it is an excellent dissertation but not yet a fully realized monograph. The introduction and literature review take up the first 130 pages, leaving less than 90 pages for the author's original contribution. The prose is often awkward and unclear, and the footnotes tendentious and preoccupied with matters peripheral to the main argument. Problems of diction, pronoun agreement, word choice, appropriateness of prepositions, spelling, and punctuation are so frequent that it would be cruel to enumerate them. All of this is to be expected in a dissertation, but it is distracting in a monograph. The press is to be commended for publishing many lengthy quotes in Hebrew type, rather than in transliteration; but these, too, are replete with typographical errors. I hope that the future will bring us a fully developed version of this fascinating study.

WILLIS JOHNSON

The Near and Middle East

KARIN ÅDAHL and MICHAEL AHLUND (ed.): *Islamic art collections. An international survey*. xiv, 184 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000. £45.

This is an excellent project and it has been carried out with exemplary care and accuracy. All Islamic art historians will be in the debt of Ådahl and Ahlund for their self-effacing and public-spirited work. In particular, those specialists—such as postgraduates writing their theses—who are constructing *corpora* of any given type of material in museum collections will now have a wonderfully time-saving instrument at their disposal.

This survey, the first of its kind—though similar work has been done for Middle Eastern libraries—gives chapter and verse for the holdings of most of the major public collections of Islamic art in the Western world, and some of those in the Islamic world too. The usefulness of these details is self-evident. They

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cover the address of the collection, including telephone and fax numbers; its premises and its staff; the character and content of each collection, with numerical estimates of the items under each category (ceramics, glass, metalware, wood, ivory, carpets and textiles); and, finally, its documentation in the form of printed catalogues, handwritten catalogues, registration, computerized records and other publications. There is also information where appropriate about the photographic collection and services (negatives, slides, and facilities for ordering such material).

This enormous and long-term project, begun in 1989 and carried out under the auspices of UNESCO with a quartet of editorial assistants (Sofia Cherif, Ann-Charlotte Nordfeldt, Anta Thorsen and Guna Zelmene) and with special help for the American collections provided by Barbara Schmitz and Sunil Sharma, was based on the responses received to a detailed questionnaire circulated, as the editors note, 'to museums, libraries and other institutions all over the world'. Clearly, then, the survey can only be as comprehensive as the completed questionnaires which the editors received, and some institutions are 'not included because it has not been possible to obtain a reply to the questionnaire in spite of numerous efforts'. One can imagine the kind of story that lurks behind that laconic statement. In other cases the editors had to make 'a summary presentation' on the basis of inadequate information. But half a loaf is better than no bread, and they were certainly right to list such institutions. This, then, is a first attempt at plugging a major information gap in the field of Islamic art. The depth and range of the headings for Sweden, Britain and the United States shows up with uncomfortable clarity the poverty of the information available for the collections of Islamic art in many other countries, notably those of the Islamic world. A special case in the West is Italy; the recently published catalogue *Eredità dell'Islam. Arte islamica in Italia*, ed. Giovanni Curatola (Milan, 1993), lists among the lenders to the exhibition some 40 museums plus another score of libraries and cathedral or church treasuries. Only two of these feature in the current survey; yet the exhibition, like F. Gabrieli's sumptuous book on the Arabs in Italy, shows the wealth of Islamic material in Italian public collections.

The editors intend that this survey should be updated for future editions 'and also that a data-base should be developed where more extensive information may be included'. With that end in mind, it is worth drawing attention to museums and other collections not listed in this survey (though many of these may well have received the original questionnaire). Italy, as noted above, is a special case which would require special attention in any future publication. In other countries these institutions include: *Austria*: Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck; *Egypt*: National Library, Cairo; *France*: Musée Jaquemart-André, Paris; Musée Historique Lorrain, Nancy; Musée de l'Armée, Paris; *Germany*: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel; Kungstgewerbemuseum, Cologne; *Iran*: Gulistan Library and Museum, Tehran; Reza-yi 'Abbasi Museum, Tehran; Muzeh-yi Melli, Tehran; Shrine of Imam Reza Museum, Mashhad; Pars Museum, Shiraz; *Spain*: Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid; Archaeological Museum, Province of Granada; Federico Marés Museum, Barcelona; Museo Nacional de Arte Hispano-Musulman, Alhambra, Granada; Archaeological Museum, Huelva; Cathedral Treasury, Toledo; Archaeological Museum, the Alcazaba, Malaga; Archaeological Museum, Province of Toledo; *Syria*: Aleppo Museum; Ma'arrat al-Nu'man Museum; Palmyra Museum; Hama Museum; *Turkey*: Adiyaman Museum; Afyonkarahisar Museum; Ankara, Ethnographical Museum; Bursa, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum; Istanbul, Military Museum; Istanbul, Çinili Köşk Museum; Istanbul, Vakiflar Museum; Istanbul University Library; Konya Museum; Konya, Ereğli Museum; Milet Museum; Nevşehir Museum; Niğde Museum; *Tunisia*: National Library, Tunis; Monastir Museum; *United Kingdom*: Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; Royal Asiatic Society, London; The Tower of London Armoury, London; *U.S.A.*: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York; Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, Rhode Island. Thus, with a future second edition in mind, there is plenty of scope to renew the attack on institutions chary of yielding up information on their holdings. In the meantime, all credit to Ådahl and Ahlund for blazing the trail so effectively.

ROBERT HILLENBRAND

A. D. H. BIVAR, with contributions by GÉZA FEHÉRVÁRI, PATRICIA BAKER, ELIZABETH and NIGEL ERRINGTON: *Excavations at Ghubayrā, Iran.* xviii, 508 pp., including 87 diagrams and 144 b/w illus. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000. £95.

This final report on the four-year campaign of excavations at Ghubayrā, near Kirman in south-eastern Iran, is a well-considered work of mature reflection, and in that sense alone is what one would ideally expect of all final reports of excavations. It is a major bonus that it is also very well and clearly written. This is particularly true of the introduction, which deals with the history and local context of the site; an impressive piece of historical geography and topography. Throughout most of the text the writing is as lively and buoyant as the somewhat dry subject-matter allows. The text is constantly animated by the introduction of puzzles which are frequently solved convincingly and with elegance. Bivar is absolutely on top of his material and shows, but does not show off, a remarkable range of erudition from Neolithic to modern times. Local customs, topography, the implications of the traces left by nomads, numismatics, local linguistic usages, pottery sequences, details of medieval history—all is grist to his mill. He is indeed the principal author of the book, with separate sections on copper and brass coins, bronze weights, metal finds, beads, and objects in stone, ivory and

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bone to his credit. The other authors include the co-director of the excavations, Géza Fehérvári, who was responsible for the lengthy catalogue of pottery finds and for the wooden objects (including a lacquer fragment); Patricia Baker, who catalogued the glass finds; Linda Woolley, who produced the entries on textiles; and Emily Glover and John Taylor, who catalogued the molluscan shells. The drawings are the work of Warwick Ball, Len Breen, Elizabeth Errington (who also computerized the register of finds), Brian McKibbin, the late Antony McNicoll, Garry Martin and Mehrdad Shokoohy; the latter also played an editorial role. The invaluable concordance of references was compiled by Nigel Errington. Thanks to all these contributors, the technical level—of illustrations, layout, catalogue entries—is consistently high. This reviewer's basic response to the book, then, is very enthusiastic.

The report has intrinsic value as a detailed account of one of the very few scientific excavations of a medieval Iranian site—comparable only with the French excavations at Susa, the American excavations at Nishapur and the British excavations at Siraf (the researches of Chahriyar Adle and his colleagues at Bastam, Zuzan and Farumad, dealing as they do principally with standing monuments, fall into a separate category). Moreover, whereas all those excavations deal principally with material between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the Ghubayrā material is for the most part of fourteenth-century date. It is also very much a provincial site, without the immemorial history of Susa or the well-nigh metropolitan status of Nishapur and Siraf. Thus the mass of evidence which the site has yielded is of two-fold value. Moreover, the Ghubayrā dig is the only one so far published which investigates in detail a site in the south-eastern part of the country, an area which has also been relatively neglected in surface and architectural surveys. It therefore fills some significant gaps in the record.

The ceramic sequence at Ghubayrā is hearteningly copious—from Samanid slip-wares to the full panoply of Saljuq pottery (sgraffiato, monochrome, white wares, *mina'i* and lustre) and extending to Mongol wares, notably the underglaze-painted varieties and those of 'Sultanabad' type. These last two types have now been scientifically proven to be of fourteenth-century date, thanks to the Ghubayrā excavations. Tiles in cobalt, turquoise and lustre were also found, as were numerous unglazed fired bricks stamped with arabesque or epigraphic designs (the latter are of some rarity in the twelfth-century period, though parallels at Fahraj are noted in the report). Chinese imports, including celadon and Sung wares, were also found.

Metalwork finds, though much smaller in number, were also very varied. They included much military gear—chain mail, swords, spear-heads and arrow-heads—as well as many objects of domestic use, such as scissors, spoons, bowls, pins, spades, bells, strainers, rings, mirrors, lamp casings, oil lamps and bronze weights. Some of this material was probably produced in the numerous metal-workers' furnaces which were found on the site.

Other small finds were no less varied and also very numerous. Special attention should be paid to the glass finds—facetted cups, jars, scent bottles and perfume flasks—quite a lot of them datable to the fourteenth century, a period for which the evidence is otherwise sparse in Iranian glass studies. It is in the interpretation of miscellaneous finds that the ingenuity and learning of Bivar in particular find expression—for example, in the identification of leather buckets, palm-leaf ropes, bone and ivory buttons, a chessman, beads galore, a Sasanian onyx sealstone, a ceremonial Neolithic adze-head (part of a local hitherto unknown Neolithic culture, and hence of signal importance), a medieval wine-press (in a concealed location, which suggests bootlegging), a cannon- or ballista-ball, which gives rise to a fascinating excursus on the possibility of a Timurid use of gunpowder, a millstone used as a missile (again with an interesting military and economic commentary) and numerous coins. A hoard of 14 Sasanian silver *drachmae* is dealt with authoritatively by Susan Tyler-Smith.

A particular characteristic of the site was its absolutely unexpected proliferation of underground chambers, shafts and *qanats*, forming in all a complex underground network. Much of this underground architecture (for which there are other parallels in the region) is attributed under reserve to the second to third millennium B.C. and thus to the Elamite or proto-Elamite period, and seems to have served as concealed burial chambers. The activities of Buyid and Samanid treasure-seekers are carefully documented. In the later pre-Islamic period these tunnels were reused as Zoroastrian *ustudans* or ossuaries, as proved by an unglazed jar bearing a sixth-century Pahlavi inscription, one of the major finds of the whole excavation.

The site also yielded some significant remains of standing architecture—for example, a Saljuq platform in the citadel with a 'Balkhi' vault of the kind more commonly encountered in Khurasan at that period, and a probable Saljuq mosque. More important, however, are the remains of two major shrines in which mud-brick was used; these are dealt with in detail and in competent fashion by Fehérvári. They provide useful evidence for the spread into south-eastern Iran of architectural forms, structural devices and decorative techniques better known in the central and northern areas of Iran. They also include some novelties and rare features. One of these is the use of bricks articulated before firing by three parallel finger-streaks. Another is the choice of a hexagonal plan (instead of the usual octagon) for the so-called Imamzada, whose foundation is persuasively attributed to the Ghaznavid period. This form deserves some comment. Such a plan is otherwise attested only once in medieval religious architecture in Iran (Haidariyya, Imamzada Kamal al-Din) and only very rarely in other contexts (e.g., the Burj-i Avad near Kaj; a two-storey building of uncertain date and purpose near 'Alla, *c.* 12 km south of Simnan, and the vestibule of the now destroyed fourteenth-century caravansarai of Sin). The other shrine, known as the Chahardarru, also reveals two building campaigns, the earlier being a circular tomb tower of twelfth-century date—another importation of northern forms into southern Iran.

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An elegant conclusion sums up the variegated value of the site as a mirror of fourteenth-century life and ends by posing a conundrum: was the rabbit warren of underground chambers an acropolis or a necropolis? The evidence is laid before the reader, who is left to make the decision.

All in all, then, this is a model final report of a fascinating and generally very successful excavation. It is worth repeating that it is extremely well written and well laid out—in short, user-friendly. Spot checks proved the worth of the index. The bibliographies are helpfully sub-divided—a general one, another for the excavations themselves, and further ones for numismatics and glass. It is encouraging to note that SOAS, which had long been committed to this particular excavation, having helped to fund it in the first place and receiving into its collections many of the finds, has taken that commitment to its logical conclusion by publishing the report in full detail and in handsome fashion.

ROBERT HILLENBRAND

MOLLY GREENE: *Christians and Muslims in the early modern Mediterranean.* 228 pp. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. $32.50, £20.50.

The aim of this valuable book was, in its author's own words, to move beyond the 'hostile "Christian" versus "Muslim" divide' in the Mediterranean. Crete has been well chosen as the test-ground of such a study with its almost 500 years of Venetian-Greek Orthodox coexistence and the 267 years of Ottoman presence which initiated a conversion process that led to the existence of one of the largest Muslim communities in the Greek world.

Greene's book does not deal with the fate of the Turcocretians, as they are known, and their flight from Crete from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. This was the subject of numerous books written by Greek and Turkish scholars dealing mainly with population numbers and a customized notion of justice/injustice as they perceived it. Rather, this book concludes with the first revolt against the Ottomans, the Russian-instigated Daskalogiannis revolt in 1770. The revolt is presented by the author as an example of the beginning of a new era—an era of peasant enmity towards urban life coupled with nationalism resulting ultimately in the destruction of Ottoman Candia.

Greene is aware of Greek nationalistic historiography which has viewed the Ottomans as a menace to the local population and regarded the existence of converts with grave embarrassment. She criticizes the treatment in Greek historiography of the Eastern Mediterranean as a 'Greek Lake'. This historiography concentrates on small Aegean islands and ignores larger islands like Crete where the Muslim presence was important (p. 6). Historians of Greek seafaring during the Ottoman rule concentrated mainly on the eighteenth century and chose to ignore the important earlier role played by Muslims in shipping and commerce (pp. 153–4). Greene's achievement is admirable. She embarks upon an effort to reconstruct a very complex society wherein the notions of religion and identity are very blurred. She demonstrates that in seventeenth-century Crete, a Greek Orthodox by birth could play the role of a Venetian spy and be an Ottoman Pasha without any clash stemming from these different functions (p. 202).

In the introduction, the author discusses the two divergent portraits of the Mediterranean produced by Henry Pirenne and Fernand Braudel. The book consists of six chapters and a conclusion. The starting point is the final Ottoman conquest of Crete in 1669. The conquest came a century after 'the age of Ottoman expansion had come to an end at a time when the classical institutions of conquest had fallen into disuse' (p. 7). Chapter i discusses the new provincial order and the new urban elites of peasant origin who came to replace the Venetian urban elites. The land system introduced by the Ottomans and the role of the Köprülü family in the exploitation of land is emphasized. Crete became a 'janissaries' island' wherein a tax-farming system is applied and controlled by newly converted local janissaries (pp. 35–44). Greene admits that explaining conversion is a difficult task and the conversion rate in Crete is a particular puzzle 'when we consider the fact that the Ottomans did not offer as many financial inducements to convert as they had in earlier centuries' (p. 40). She explores the idea that a weakened Orthodox Church—due to Venetian oppression—and prolonged warfare of almost 25 years might have contributed to rapid conversion. However she rightly points to the interesting connection between conversion and a military career (pp. 42–4).

The rivalry with Venice only came to a conclusion in 1715. Chapter ii relates the difficulties the Ottomans experienced in maintaining control on the island. The decline in cultivation and the cost of defending and provisioning the island continued unabated during the early Ottoman period. After 1670 France, a strong naval power determined to uproot the Venetians from the Mediterranean, came to aid Ottoman efforts to bring Crete closer to the capital.

In ch. iii the author traces the fortunes of local, urban society while discussing the character of Ottoman Candia. The dwellers of Ottoman Candia are Muslim and of recent peasant origin. The only similarity between Ottoman and Venetian Candia was that, both Christians and Muslims, Latins and Orthodox used Greek as a common language. The author provides us with a number of court cases from the *kadi* court of Candia, illustrating intercommunal relations characterized by mixed marriages, Muslims participating in Christian rituals and acting occasionally as best men or godfathers (pp. 105–6).

In the next two chapters the author treats the topic of commercial history. In ch. iv she outlines the transition from a flourishing wine economy in the sixteenth century to the profitable export of another single commodity, olive oil. The author reviews the accepted opinion

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that Ottoman rule was a period of decline and she unravels an equally profitable local economy where regional trade was predominant. Chapter v discusses the microcosm of the merchants of Candia. After centuries of exclusion imposed by Venice the local merchants started to flourish. The author disagrees with the view that this was a result of the temporary absence of France due to the Seven-Year's War. She also criticizes historians of modern Greece who chose to ignore the Cretan maritime tradition because of its ethnic complexity.

In the final chapter the author discusses the death of the *ancien régime*. Despite the presence of the Venetians and their spies for some time, one of the examples of change was the ultimate connection of the Orthodox Church of Crete to the Patriarchate after 1720. Ironically, this worked against the Ottoman presence on the island as Crete came firmly under the Greek Orthodox world and, subsequently, under Greek nationalism. Eventually the Muslim and Christian communities in Crete, although united by language and origin, became polarized along religious lines.

In this pioneering work, the author has used both Venetian and Ottoman sources. Although ultimately some of the arguments may, in time, be modified, the book will not cease to be an important tool for students of the history of the Mediterranean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

EUGENIA KERMELI

ANNE ELIZABETH REDGATE: *The Armenians.* (The Peoples of Europe.) xx, 331 pp. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. £40, £15.99 (paper); $59.95, $27.95 (paper).

To provide a comprehensive account of 3,000 years of history in a single volume is not an easy task, which makes this successful opus on the Armenians by Anne Elizabeth Redgate all the more laudable. The clear and scholarly style, thoroughness of analysis, and mastery of Western-language sources are some of the key ingredients of this brilliant accomplishment. At no point does the narrative lose coherence, despite the scope of the study. Thanks to Redgate, a wide audience will be acquainted with the ground-breaking research of such scholars as Diakonoff, Garsoïan, Toumanoff, and Hewsen, a privilege heretofore reserved for a narrow circle of experts in Armenian, Byzantine, and Caucasus studies.

Despite the overall excellence of the study, one might point to several shortcomings. The book would have been even richer had the author gone beyond the use of Western sources to utilize Armenian and other non-Western materials. Moreover, the author places most of her emphasis on the first two millennia of Armenian history, devoting only a 25-page chapter to the 900 years from the Turkish invasion and the battle of Manazkert in 1071 A.D. to the present time. Finally, this work offers primarily a history of Armenian secular and religious elites, rather than a history of the Armenian people.

A few minor mistakes may be noted, which are unavoidable in such an ambitious undertaking. Even though the author discusses the Pontic Chaldaeans—possible descendants of the Urarteans—in two instances (pp. 51 and 57), she then seems to forget the existence of this northern Chaldaea one page later, when she says that the Chaldaean mercenaries of the satrap of Armenia Orontes could not have been related to the Armenians, since the Chaldaeans were a people of Babylonia (p. 58). The Seleucid king who recovered Syria from Tigranes the Great was Antiochos XIII, not III (p. 71). During the anti-Arab rebellion of 774–75, the insurgents laid siege to Theodosiopolis (Erzurum), but did not manage to take it (p. 172). The Seljuk Sultanate of Rum did not disintegrate in the twelfth century, but in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century, following the Mongol invasions (p. 258). Armenian authors contemporary to Shah ʿAbbās's 1604 deportation of hundreds of thousands of Armenians to Persia did not view this event as one of the 'best opportunities' (p. 264) made available to their compatriots, but as a great tragedy. Another small problem is that often only the modern Turkish or Armenian names of Urartean sites are given, without the original Urartean appellations.

These occasional mistakes, however, do not deflect from the superior quality of the volume. Anne Elizabeth Redgate's achievement is truly impressive, and *The Armenians* is likely to become a valuable reference tool. If one can only afford to buy a single book on early Armenian history, then this is the one.

HOVANN H. SIMONIAN

VAHE BALADOUNI and MARGARET MAKEPEACE (ed.): *Armenian merchants of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: English East India Company sources.* xxxvii, 294 pp. Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1998. $22.

The observation of the Court of Directors of the English East India Company in 1699 about the Armenians that 'most certainly they are the most ancient merchants of the world' was perhaps no exaggeration as is now being revealed from the researches of several scholars on the Armenians and their trade. Indeed, from the earliest times to the end of the pre-modern era, the Armenian merchant communities engaged themselves in international/inter-continental trade in the Eurasian continuum. They ventured out of the homeland to different parts of Asia and Europe, and settled themselves not only in important cities, ports and trade marts but also in remote production centres far away from their own country. And thus they created the infrastructure for an efficient and successful long-distance trade and a commercial network with strong links with their main centre at New Julfa. This 'trading diaspora' of the Armenians was a unique feature of the trading world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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The volume under review is a collection of documents from a variety of original sources preserved in the archives of the English East India Company. It contains a selection of extracts from 270 documents, their length varying from a short one-line memorandum (doc. no 33) to an eight-page letter (doc. no 222). These documents, chosen as they are from the English Company records, necessarily reveal an interesting story of the complex and long-standing trade relationship between the English Company and the Armenian trading community for over a hundred years between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Though the nature of this relationship was known earlier, it has until now remained almost undocumented. By providing such documentation for the first time, the editors of the volume have rendered yeoman's service to trade historians, particularly of Armenian trade. Also valuable in this volume is the excellent introduction by the co-editor Vahe Baladouni whose objective is to put the work 'in its proper perspective, provide an historical background and a summary of historiographic sources and literature' (p. xv). At the same time, he puts forward a hypothesis in an attempt to answer the big question—what was the secret to the phenomenal success of the Armenians—to which we shall revert later.

The documents in the volume, though relating mostly to the relationship between the English Company and the Armenians, bear out some of the theories which have been propounded for some time. They demonstrate that the Armenian traders were conspicuous by their presence all over the known world—from the Levant to the Philippines—in the pre-modern era. What was unique about them was their willingness to deal in any commodity that offered the prospect of a profit. It was they who introduced to the trading world of Asia and Europe such special services as the 'ability to measure the risks of overland trade and a readiness to vary the size of commercial transactions'. In addition to overland trade, they were also engaged in maritime trade which extended from the coast of East Africa to the China Seas.

The emergence of Armenian trading networks and the diaspora in the seventeenth century was helped to some extent by the historical developments of the preceding century when the old Armenia fell victim to Perso-Ottoman rivalry. In the early seventeenth century, the Persian emperor, Shah 'Abbās I, forcibly moved the professional Armenian merchants and artisans and settled them in the new township of New Julfa in the suburb of Isfahan. The emperor's main objective was to utilize the services and expertise of the Armenian entrepreneurs in transforming his newly-founded capital city of Isfahan into a major trade centre. They did not disappoint him. As they had the necessary capital and commercial network in Asia and Europe, the Armenians were able to develop 'Persia's foreign trade in raw silk, create new markets and products and expand the scope of trade routes'. They ceaselessly contributed to Persia's economic prosperity under the succeeding Shahs until the invasion of Persia by the Afghans in 1722—which dealt a severe blow to the Armenians of New Julfa and after which many of the prominent Armenian merchants migrated to other countries.

The documents also bring to light how the attempts by the English and the Dutch to divert the Levant trade—which was dominated by the Armenians—to the Persian Gulf and thus into European hands, failed miserably. After this, in 1688, the English Company entered into a contract in London with the prominent Armenian merchant, Khwaja Phanous Kalantar, for cooperation in trade (doc. no 112), but this did not work out because of the reluctance of the Armenian merchant community as a whole. About six years later, the Company tried something different—it formed a 'close trading partnership' with five of the most prominent Armenian merchants of New Julfa (doc. no 166), but still the Company failed to wrest the silk and cloth trades from the powerful Armenian merchants of New Julfa (doc. no 245).

The present volume will help historians in setting European activities in the Asian context and in using European documentation as a primary source for Asian history, especially where indigenous sources are hard to come by. The documents in this collection will also reiterate the recent assertions (e.g. S. Chaudhury and M. Morineau (ed.), *Merchants, companies and trade: Europe and Asia in the pre-modern era* (Cambridge, 1998) that, contrary to Niels Steensgaard's hypothesis (*The Asian trade revolution of the seventeenth century* (Chicago, 1974)), the traditional overland trade never lost its importance even after the emergence of the oceanic trade under the auspices of the Dutch and the English Companies. In fact it continued to thrive in the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century. Again, as Baladouni points out in his introduction, though J. C. van Leur (*Indonesian trade and society* (The Hague, 1955)) was the first historian to challenge the Eurocentric view that the Indian Ocean trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was dominated completely by the Europeans, his thesis that the Asian trade was the sum total of pedling trade, later reinforced by Steensgaard, can hardly be accepted now. Among the Armenian merchants, as among the Indians, there were small pedlars along with the wealthy and powerful merchants whose varied and extensive business operations can be easily compared with those of the Medicis, Fuggers or Tripps of Europe (cf. K. N. Chaudhuri, *The trading world of Asia* (Cambridge, 1978), also Chaudhury and Morineau (ed.), idem.).

As to the crucial question of the reasons for the fabulous success of the Armenian merchants vis-à-vis even the advanced organizational form of the European joint stock companies—a question which was raised earlier by Fernand Braudel and Philip D. Curtin—Baladouni's hypothesis that it was primarily due to 'organizational form or arrangements' (p. xxxiv) seems to be quite tenable. As he rightly points out, the widely spread but highly interrelated Armenian enterprises operated under the 'ethos of trust' which served as a human capital, accrued to the community as a result of their 'collective socio-political experiences over many generations'. The structuring of their business enterprises, based as it was on

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family kinship and trusted fellow-countrymen, gave the Armenian merchants two significant advantages—organizational cost savings and organizational innovations. Indeed, the ability of the Armenians to thrive on a low profit margin, their readiness to deal in any commodity and move into even remote producing centres when there was the prospect of a profit, and their ability to adapt themselves to the language and culture of their trading country without losing their own identity were some of the important factors behind their phenomenal success in international trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This work, undoubtedly, will be an invaluable source book not only for historians of Armenian trade but also for scholars working on inter-Asian trade.

SUSHIL CHAUDHURY

AHMAD NAZMI: *Commercial relations between Arabs and Slavs (9th–11th centuries).* 298 pp. 8 maps. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 1998.

Ahmad Nazmi has taught Arabic language, history and geographical literature in the Oriental Institute of Warsaw University since 1982. This book is 'a continuation of my studies begun by a Ph.D. thesis prepared in the Oriental Institute of the University of Warsaw under the supervision of Professor Janusz Danecki' (p. 13). It builds extensively on his article, 'Some aspects of military relations between the Arab and the Slavs (Aṣ-Ṣaqāliba) during the Umayyad Dynasty 40 A.H./661 to 138 A.H./750 A.D.', *Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne*, 3, 1995. Because of the age in question, and, also a similarity of approach and style, this publication calls to mind the series of books by the late M. A. Shaban. Here, the author concentrates yet further on trade and commerce and on the entire geographical canvas upon which Islamized peoples traded with, fought, conquered, enslaved and mixed with sundry populations of Eastern and Northern Europe—peoples who are referred to frequently in *The Cambridge history of Inner Asia*, edited by Denis Sinor (Cambridge, 1990). Both Shaban and Sinor appear in the bibliography here. This merits special praise since it includes a number of little-known articles and books, published in Arabic in the Middle East, together with others from Moscow and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The general style and presentation also calls to mind the Arab Background Series, edited by N. Ziadeh, formerly published by Longman (Harlow) and Librairie du Liban (Beirut).

After an introductory section on Arabic geographical sources, together with the record of travellers (one of the latest being Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī whose works have received a particular attention in Poland), the first major section is concerned with commerce. Arab-Khazar 'conflict' is discussed in some detail. The following section is a thorough examination of 'Arabic [*sic*] knowledge of the Slavs (*al-Ṣaqāliba*)'. This chapter is, in itself, a very useful analysis and survey. Chapter iii is, in many respects, the core of the book. It examines the traders who were engaged in this commerce on an ethnic and national basis, with a detailed assessment of the relative importance of Jews, Radanites, Khazars, Rūs, Bulghārs and Muslims from Central Asia, a number of whom settled in Central and Eastern Europe. The final sections of the book, including part of the annexes, examines the commerce itself, bought, sold and exchanged; slaves, fur, amber, swords, fruits, fish and clothing. To these may be added the archaeological evidence from Islamic coinage found in the Baltic regions and the information which can be gleaned from an exact mapping of the routes in Eurasia which were regularly used. There is a comprehensive index. Footnotes are entered at the foot of each page of text. The publication is printed with great accuracy.

Some time has elapsed since the subjects which are treated in this book have been examined by Arabists and Islamists. The publications of Bosworth, Dunlop, Lewicki and Minorky, in the main, appeared in the 1930s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s although, in Russia and Poland, a stream of publications has never ceased to flow.

This book will certainly interest Arabists, historians, geographers and Islamists, in general, and should be of particular value to students. The book will also be of help to archaeologists whose special field is Oriental coinage in the Baltic region. It will also interest historians of Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, particularly the origin and rise of the Russian state. A contribution is also made to the history of the relationship between Norsemen and Arabs, Bulgars and Arabs, Magyars and Arabs and the early contacts between Islam and Christianity prior to the Crusades and the Ottoman conquests. A gap is filled on library shelves. It is curious that a publisher of books, in English, in Warsaw, should be instrumental in filling the gap in our sources.

H. T. NORRIS

DENISE AIGLE (éd.): *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* ('Bibliothèque Iranienne', 45.) 354 pp + 4 pp. in Persian. Teheran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997.

In the summer of 1992, this reviewer had the pleasure and honour to participate in the conference of the International Association for Mongolian Studies, held in Ulaan Baatar. At that time, an eminent historian of modern Mongolia (who will remain unnamed), upon discovering that I was interested in the Ilkhanate, wondered if there was anything left to do with regard to that corner of the Mongol empire. To say the least, I was surprised by this comment, since so many subjects related to the political, military, social, economic, religious and cultural history of the period had yet to be broached, let alone dealt with adequately. If I had any doubt, however, the flurry of scholarly activity in the 1990s on the

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Ilkhanate, let alone on the Mongol Empire as a whole, as seen in the multitude of articles, collected volumes and monographs which have since appeared, clearly belies the assumption behind this colleague's questions (on these publications, see the recent article by Peter Jackson, 'The state of research: the Mongol Empire, 1986–1999', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26/2, 2000, 189–210).

One particularly important recent contribution to the study of the Ilkhanate and the period immediately preceding (i.e., the initial Mongol conquests starting in 1219) is the volume under review here, ably edited by Denise Aigle. It is based on the papers given at a conference held near Paris in October 1992, organized by the late and much lamented Jean Aubin (who does not have an article here, but whose many significant contributions to the study of Iran in this period are frequently cited throughout the book). Like many conference volumes, this too took several years until it saw the light of day, but it was well worth waiting for. The articles, albeit covering a wide chronological, geographical and topical range, are uniformly of high quality, and I found them all extremely interesting and informative. Since it seems that the volume, mostly in French (nine articles out of a total of 15; two are in German and four are in English) and published in Tehran, may not receive the attention (and distribution) it deserves in English-speaking countries, it is appropriate to summarize even briefly the papers in the order in which they appear.

The first part of the book is on the situation in Iran on the eve of the initial Mongol invasion (and the experience of that onslaught). Chahyar Adle describes the political situation in the nowadays obscure Zuzan in southern Khurasan, particularly the rise and fall of the local strongman, al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam Abū Bakr b. ʿAlī, who rose to power under the patronage of the Khwārazm-Shāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad. His career illustrates the fluid and volatile nature of politics on the eve of Chinggis Khan's campaign to Transoxania and north-eastern Iran, and why—at least to some degree—he and those who followed him were unable to oppose effectively the Mongols. This theme is continued by Jürgen Paul, who cogently suggests that the upheavals of this conquest provide an opportunity to examine the complements of society in the realm of the Khwārazm-Shāh. His conclusion is that the leaders of the military class, as well as the local, civilian notables (including the '*ulamā*'), already weakened by actions of Khwārazm-Shāh, were incapable and unwilling to offer serious and extended opposition to the Mongols. The only social group which demonstrated a sustained willingness to fight the Mongols were the 'common people' (certainly a rather amorphous term). But these, however, although motivated by a mixture of commitment to Islam and local patriotism, were incapable of providing the leadership to a prolonged and effective opposition to the Mongol military machine. The result was the eventual Mongol victory, accompanied by additional slaughter and destruction brought on by the ultimately futile opposition of the local population.

The next section deals with the Mongols in Iran and their relations with the West. Jean Richard, the doyen of scholars in this field, provides a splendid overview of the efforts of the Ilkhanids (and those viceroys who preceded them) to effect some type of common cause with various European rulers, not least the popes. He finds a great deal of continuity in this policy: basically the eschewing of supercilious rhetoric calling for complete submission to the Mongols in favour of a summons for a cooperative venture against the Muslims. Richard also points out the important role of the oriental Christians in helping to formulate this policy and also their position as emissaries to the West. I might suggest that the weaning of the Mongols from their imperial ideals, even publicly vis-à-vis the Franks, was a more gradual and probably a more painful process than portrayed here. In addition, I must take exception to Richard's assertion that it was due to Abagha's preoccupations elsewhere that the joint campaign of 1271 failed. In a forthcoming article, I suggest rather that Abagha lived up to his side of the bargain (albeit with some hesitation), and that it was Edward I of England's dithering which led to the aborting of the campaign. Jacques Paviot addresses the matter of the Italian merchants in the Ilkhanate, showing the prominent role of the Genoese in Iran, no less significant than that of the Venetians, and how the former saw their activities in that country as a stepping stone to further commercial ventures in Asia. These are extremely interesting conclusions, but I feel that some consideration of the larger picture is lacking. It would have been fascinating to see how the extensive operations of the Genoese in Mongol Iran influenced, if at all, their relations with the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt, the Ilkhanids' main enemies. After all, the Genoese were also the main suppliers of young mamlūks to the Sultans. Did anyone see the apparent paradox of their situation?

The third section of the book is devoted to political history, although only Charles Melville's article, on the revolt of a group of senior Mongol officers in 1319, properly belongs in this category. Here the author, as in many of his other studies, builds a detailed but clear narrative based on a superb handling of both Persian and Arabic sources, the latter emanating from the Mamluk Sultanate. Melville shows that this conspiracy, directed against Chupan, the strongman of the regime, was apparently originally abetted by the young Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd, chafing under the former's tutelage. The Ilkhan, however, soon switched horses, and by supporting Chupan, swayed the conflict against the 'rebellious' amirs. The importance of this study is that it shows how early in Abū Saʿīd's reign the ties between much of the Mongol nobility and the ruling family were weakening, a tendency which was to express itself with such force in 1335 with the Ilkhan's death and to lead to the disintegration of the Ilkhanate (on this see Melville's new study: *The fall of Amir Chupan and the decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37* (Bloomington, 1999)).

Bert G. Fragner's article is not so much political history as an attempt to provide an interpretation of the Ilkhanate within the 'dimensions of the *très, très longue durée*'. He

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hopes to show that Iranian history in general, and in the Mongol period in particular, should be seen more in the context of Central Asian history rather than that of the Mediterranean Middle East or even the Islamic world. This statement, I think, might have been surprising to the majority of medieval Muslim Persian speakers who prayed every day toward Mecca. In spite of this reservation, it seems to me that the author does indeed show the unique contribution of the Mongol period to the shaping of the subsequent history of Iran and its environs, such as in demographic, political and military structures. Fragner, following Dorothea Krawulsky's studies, asserts that it was in the period of the Ilkhanate that the concept of 'Iran' as a distinct entity reemerges. I have no doubt that this is correct, although I must admit that the implicit (and in Krawulsky's case, explicit) corollary that this newly-found idea of Iran was somehow connected to the Mongols themselves, and not just their Persian-speaking couriers, has yet to be demonstrated.

The idea of seeking a connection to the pre-Islamic past of Iran is discussed in depth by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, the first paper on the section dealing with 'Wazirate and cultural politics'. Here the author, usefully summarizing his previous studies, *inter alia* shows how the Juwaynī brothers, particularly the historian and governor of Baghdad, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Aṭā Malik, were conversant with and influenced by the *Shāhnāme*. It is demonstrated how the last mentioned personally wove citations and motifs from the epic both into his *Taʾrīkh-i jahāngushā* and the palace erected a Takht-i Sulaymān in Azerbaijan. In these the Mongol Khans are portrayed as Afrāsiyāb (ruler of Turan), here seen in a somewhat positive light, but at the same time at least one, Tegüder Ahmad (1282–84)—during whose reign the palace was built—was also seen as the second Kaykhusraw (shāh of Iran), who vanquished the second Afrāsiyāb himself with his conversion. There is no doubt that such pre-Islamic heritage of Iran as mediated by Firdawsī greatly influenced the Persian-speaking intelligentsia, and they in turn used the images derived from this heritage to describe their Mongol masters. Whether the Mongols themselves were party to such fantasies remains to my mind an open question. I was also not convinced by Melikian-Chirvani's efforts to find an all pervasive Sufi influence in the political and bureaucratic elite of Iran, although Sufism certainly did find a chord in the writings—mostly poetry—cited in the article. Yet even if the Mongols themselves were only passive participants in this dual (and related, according to the author) endeavour to portray them in both an ancient Iranian and Sufi mould, it appears to me that over time they may well have internalized some of these images.

The complex relationship of Ghazan (1295–1304) with his wazir Rashīd al-Dīn (also his official historian), is examined by David Morgan. Here we learn the strengths and weaknesses of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawarīkh*, without a doubt the most important source for the history of the Mongol empire and not only in Iran. Its limitations, however, are clearly delineated here. This article certainly has whetted my appetite for the longer study on Rashīd al-Dīn which Morgan has been working on. Another, and virtually unexplored, aspect of Rashīd al-Dīn's public personality is presented by Birgitt Hoffmann, who describes in detail his extensive *waqf* projects, particularly the complex one at Tabriz called Rabʿ-i Rashīdī. This analysis, which includes a careful description of the actual economic workings of the endowment, is supplemented by a description of how the wazir achieved his great wealth, the basis of the *waqf*. Throughout, the establishment of the endowment is well situated within the larger context of Rashīd al-Dīn's career.

The fifth part of the book deals with religious matters. The articles by Monika Gronke and Denise Aigle deal with Sufi personalities and show the extent that hagiographic literature can be exploited for the study of the religious and social history of the Ilkhanate. Gronke's study, while on popular religion in Iran, actually deals mainly with Azerbaijan, and is based on a close reading of *Ṣafwat al-ṣafā* by Tawakkulī b. al-Bazzāz. This study certainly demonstrates the important role of Sufis in northwest Iran, emphasizing—not surprisingly—that of Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, the eponymous founder of the Ṣafawid dynasty. She paints a convincing picture of tremendous Sufi influence at this time, although I believe that her source should be examined with some reservation: a hagiographic composition would certainly portray the power and influence of the Sufis at the expense of other religious elements. It is extremely helpful to have the clear distinction which she draws between 'moderate' and Sharīʿa-observant Sufis such as Ṣafī al-Dīn and his teacher al-Shaykh al-Zāhid, and more antinomian characters from the Qalandariyya and their ilk.

Another hagiographic work, by a certain Maḥmūd b. ʿUthmān describing a shaykh in Fārs, Amīn al-Dīn Balyānī, is accorded virtually unlimited credibility by Denise Aigle. Another methodological problem is seeing this work as a source for what the common people think. For example, on pp. 241–2, two anecdotes are given which show them seeing Amīn al-Dīn in a dream or thoughts. Two questions arise: 1) does this reflect the Maḥmūd b. ʿUthmān's attitude or that of his subjects?; and 2) do two examples provide a representative view of the common folk? This being said, here too we cannot deny the tremendous influence of this shaykh through the whole swath of society, from the most humble people to representatives of the local rulers and even the Mongols themselves.

Jean Calmand's article, on Imāmī Shīʿism under the Ilkhans, begins with an extremely useful survey of the story of the conversion of the Mongol rulers to Islam. In the second part of the article he takes up the subject at hand, and shows the more substantial impact of Shīʿīs on the ruling circles of the Ilkhanate than has been previously appreciated. I found particularly interesting his discussion on Ibn al-Aqlimī, the Shīʿī wazir of the last ʿAbbāsid Caliph, who early on submitted to Hülegü and hastened his employer's end. The author, however, does not mention the possibility that subsequently deliberate Mamluk disinformation may have

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contributed to Ibn al-Aqlimī's demise. He concludes his informative article with the intriguing suggestion that the religious changes in Iran under the Ṣafawids may have had their antecedents during the Ilkhanid period.

The final section of the book is devoted to manuscripts and archival documents. The first two papers examine two sets of illustrations from Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. The first, by Karin Rührdanz, studies the collection of various paintings denuded of text in the Diez'chen Klebebände (albums containing miniature paintings of various provenance) in the Staatbibliothek in Berlin. Using MS Paris Supplément persan 1113 as a basis for comparison, she is able to identify a number of these hitherto unclear illustrations, albeit some with more certainty than others. On the whole, these paintings appear to date from the early fourteenth century, perhaps even from the time and under the tutelage of Rashīd al-Dīn himself.

The second manuscript is the above mentioned Supplément persan 1113 from the Bibliothèque Nationale, ably analysed by Francis Richard, who has convincingly attributed it to Timurid Herat in the early fifteenth century. The present reviewer has no pretensions in the field of art history, but he greatly appreciates the cogent efforts made to find the provenance of these illustrations: historians in other fields of Ilkhanid history perhaps will be better positioned to mine these paintings for information, now knowing their dates and origins.

The final article of the volume, by Gottfried Herrmann, is an extremely useful discussion of the nature of documents issued in Persian by both amirs and wazirs during the Ilkhanid period. The discussion is not so much on the contents but rather the form of the documents, and will be valuable for scholars interested not only in late medieval Persian paleography, but also the diplomatic and the larger administrative culture of the period. Herrmann's analysis of seals, particularly that of the *al tamgha* (red seal) on the documents is especially interesting. This was certainly a fitting article to seal, if one is permitted to say so, the volume.

Without hesitation I can conclude that I learned a great deal from every article, all of them of high quality. I say this, although here and there I had my disagreements or reservations with certain conclusions or statements. The editor, along with the organizers of the original conference, are to be commended for bringing together these scholars, representing different traditions of Islamic studies in general, and research on the Ilkhanate in particular. This collection has gone a long way to making scholars more cognizant of developments in the study of Iran in the Mongol period, and will certainly encourage further work in the field. It is a must for anyone with an interest in the subject.

REUVEN AMITAI

ABBAS AMANAT: *Pivot of the universe, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian monarchy 1831–1896*. xxiv, 536 pp. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997. £25.

The subject of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and the Iranian monarchy invites profound and important questions on the nature of that monarchy, its theory of kingship, its sources of authority, its relation with religion, its basis of legitimacy, its connection to power and the military, its accountability, its finances and role in the economy, and finally its response to modernity. In the introduction to this work, Amanat explains that his real focus is the period 1848–71, and that he addresses the fundamental question: how did the monarchy, the pivot of an ancient political order, adjust to the challenge of modernity? The book is further concerned with Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's life, career, upbringing and personality, and his transformation from an insecure prince to a confident ruler, whilst preserving a balance between tradition and modernity. Using a variety of sources on the Persian theory of kingship, Amanat argues that the monarch was expected to preserve the 'cycle of equity' between the ruler, the government agents and the subjects. He further draws attention to four influences on the Iranian concept of monarchy in the nineteenth century: the pre-Islamic tradition of kingship; the Islamic Shiite understanding of monarchy in relation to authority; the nomadic respect for power; and modern, Western notions of government.

The best, most successful and original element of the book is Amanat's exploration of Nāṣir al-Dīn's policies in the light of the 'cycle of equity'. He recounts how the Shah maintained his supremacy not so much by military force and administrative surveillance as by grandiosity, symbolic punishment and reward, and political manoeuvring, statecraft in which he was trained as a youth through reading 'mirrors for princes'. Amanat argues that the number of disgraced ministers demonstrates his determination to follow the advice of such treatises to check ministers. He concludes that the Shah's successful use of traditional statecraft, combined with selective use of modern technology and reform, enabled the state to withstand internal and external pressures until the last years of his reign, when the royal charisma became tarnished through corruption and disarray.

The subject of great power rivalry takes up a major, indeed perhaps disproportionate, part of the work relative to the stated central argument, Amanat observing that the concern for prestige, and the petty friction of Britain and Russia, led to direct meddling in government, facilitated by internal weakness, corruption, disloyalty and discontent. Much prominence is given to the role of Sheil in the fall of Amīr Kabīr, which is however analysed with a less than complete understanding of the responsibilities and priorities of a diplomat. If any one factor brought down Amīr Kabīr, it was that Muḥammad Shāh spent 60,000 tomans a year on his court, whereas Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh was permitted only 15,000. Sheil was not significant.

Probably the largest section of the text is given over to the theme of the Shah's 'life,

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career and personality'. Although there are some interesting points—for example, that the Shah was static in his concept of government and unimaginative even about possible bureaucratic changes which would have lightened his workload—observations such as 'His premier put his oval Lion and Sun seal on the Treaty with trembling fingers', are more to the taste of some readers than of others.

With regard to the Islamic Shiite understanding of the relation of monarchy to authority, Amanat draws attention to the Shah's need to maintain a balance between clerical and royal interests, but dismisses without discussion the delicate and complex questions of legitimacy, and how far the Shah's government was expected to conform to the sharia.

The epilogue contains the most illuminating observations and briefly takes the study up to 1896. Amanat points out that the Shah maintained an image of economic omnipotence in the coinage struck in his name; however, a weakness of the book is the failure to address consistently the question of finance. Qajar government was characterized above all else by a struggle over scarce resources, yet Amanat overlooks its significance. Thus the failure to develop cotton mills is ascribed to the Shah's 'technophobia' rather than the lack of means to develop them. His neglect of modern education is apparently ascribed to his fear of offending the clergy, but the fact that he had not the means and therefore power to control the trouble it would cause, never mind the cost of establishing a modern education system, especially given that government revenue was only about two million pounds per year, is ignored. Among other more stimulating points raised in the epilogue are the observations that the Shah had become more astute at playing off the great powers by 1871, that fear of territorial loss was a formidable barrier to modernization, and that, at a time when the monarchy appeared to be increasingly weak, the Shah saw the symbolic value of historical legitimacy as conducive to his survival. The book is based on a truly impressive array of sources.

VANESSA MARTIN

ETHEM ELDEM, DANIEL GOFFMAN and BRUCE MASTERS: *The Ottoman city between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul*. (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization.) xvi, 244 pp. 3 maps, 6 illus. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999. £35.00, $59.95.

Ottoman cities have suffered various modes of disdain—from Weberians, who see them as pale shadows of a normative European model of a city; from Islamic urban historians, who refuse to recognize their Ottoman-ness; and from the world systems school, which has emphasized economic determinants at the expense of other aspects of city life. Masters, Goffman and Eldem have written extensively on their chosen cities of Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul. These cities shared the characteristics of being Islamic, Ottoman and Mediterranean and all sheltered foreign commercial communities, but their very different individual histories meant that these common features were played out in very different ways.

The Ottoman conquest of Syria in 1516 posed a new challenge for a state which had previously annexed Christian territories or those of rival Turkish dynasties. Aleppine traditions were of a different kind. This Arab city had long been a commercial centre but during the sixteenth century became the silk emporium of the eastern Mediterranean and a magnet for European merchants.

Early in the seventeenth century the silk trade suffered the twin blows of the anti-Ottoman revolt of the Kurdish chief ʿAli Çānpulātoğlu and Shah ʿAbbās's attempt to divert the silk trade to the Persian Gulf. But these proved to be temporary setbacks to the thriving merchant community which by now also included Armenians, North Africans, Bukharans and Indians in addition to the local Armenians, Suryānīs and Greek Orthodox who migrated to the safety of Aleppo from the insecurity of the countryside.

The eighteenth century saw indigenous Muslims become more visible in the public life of the city and accumulate great wealth as they acquired tax farms which the central government sold off across the empire to keep it afloat. But economic prominence did not translate into political power, which accrued to their Christian fellows. The presence of European Catholic merchants in Aleppo brought missionaries in their wake and the story of the ensuing struggle for souls makes fascinating reading. Aware that they would not always be protected by the Europeans, prominent Arab Catholic families allied themselves with notable Muslim families by acting as intermediaries and business partners.

The violence of the Ottoman early nineteenth century expressed itself in Aleppo in janissary insurrection, earthquake and the trauma of Egyptian occupation. The erosion of Muslim superiority implied in the Tanzimat fostered resentment which brought brief intercommunal strife, but once this was in the past, many Christians left for Europe and Aleppo's Muslim notables prospered. Unlike other cities of the region, Aleppo's population remained more or less loyal Ottomans until the 1914–18 war.

By contrast with Aleppo, Izmir's past had no resonance for the Ottomans. The government's relationship with the village consisted of ensuring its role as one of the harbours through which passed foodstuffs to feed the capital: the flourishing port-city of Izmir was the creation of local authorities—European merchants and Ottoman minorities who sought commercial advantage in this unsupervised environment. By the mid-seventeenth century, the government took notice and sought to regulate Izmir's trade and divert the lucrative profits being made in Izmir into the treasury. Köprülü Meḥmed Pasha constructed a fort where ships could easily be apprehended to pay customs dues and, in the 1670s, Fazıl Aḥmed Pasha undertook a programme to provide the

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city with the commercial buildings essential to its prosperity.

Goffman charts the history of a city shaped by many forces—vicissitudes in world trade, European politics and trading patterns, Ottoman local and central politics, communal co-operation and rivalry and natural disaster. He brings the story up to the end of the empire, noting local echoes of empire-wide phenomena, the successive waves of loosening of central control and recentralization, and the transformations which the nineteenth century forced on the old order. He sees the conflagration of 1922 as a metaphor for the life and death struggle played out in Izmir as the empire collapsed.

Istanbul, the financial and commercial hub of the empire, was in many ways unique. The city was a voracious consumer whose economic activity was boosted by the demands of the military-administrative complex for goods and services, most significantly, luxury goods for the state elite. The Ottoman environment was unfamiliar to foreign merchants and Eldem shows how they attempted to systematize the experience of dealing with the 'natives' in the hope of furthering their control over the alien world in which they operated.

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a development of crucial importance for the future history of the empire at large. The incipient non-Ottoman bourgeoisie received no political backing for their economic endeavours and were increasingly excluded from access to power. They sought the patronage of European diplomats and merchants or left the sultan's domains to conduct their business elsewhere. The sympathy they found outside the structures of the Ottoman state prepared the ground for the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century Istanbul, and the empire it governed, was cut adrift from its cultural moorings as old certainties were called into question. The city felt these conflicts acutely, displaying both the most modern and western of faces alongside the most conservative.

Eldem effectively employs two passages of imagined biography. Following a French dragoman about his business, he exposes the commercial and cultural relations which pulsed beneath the façade of the written sources. The story of the execution of Yakub Houvanessian, one of the leading Armenian brokers who managed the financial markets of the empire from the eighteenth century, reveals the fragility of life close to the maelstrom of power around the sultan. These passages add colour to the panorama but the scrupulous reader might be entitled to expect use of primary Ottoman source material which is unaccountably lacking in Eldem's essay. To write a history of the capital city of the Ottoman Empire without it is surely cavalier. His almost exclusive reliance on French sources is also worrying.

Is there such a thing as an Ottoman city? These essays convincingly reveal that any attempt to define the norm can only deprive the cities of the Ottoman Empire of their rich individual histories. They are also a pleasure to read.

CAROLINE FINKEL

SURAIYA FAROQHI: *Approaching Ottoman history: an introduction to the sources.* x, 262 pp. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999. £35, £14.95 (paper).

Embarking on a career as an Ottoman historian takes a peculiar sort of courage for source material is voluminous, research libraries and archives frequently difficult to access, and outmoded paradigms often resistant to revision. In this much needed vademecum, Suraiya Faroqhi (S. F.) shares the wisdom of a life of prolific research with the novice seeking to gain an understanding of the history of the Ottoman Empire. The title conceals lacunae in the content of the guide. It amply reflects the scholarly inclinations of its author—the social and economic history of the middle centuries of the Ottoman Empire. Thus it neither covers comprehensively the Ottoman years in time nor topic: it could hardly be otherwise, as she freely concedes.

The introductory chapter touches on some of the paradigms which have framed our view of Ottoman history: the Orientalist, the Asiatic mode of production, world systems theory and, most resilient of all, nationalist historiography in its Turkish and successor state variants. S. F. gently points out the biases inherent in these approaches and, throughout the book, emphasizes what lies behind the various assumptions historians have adopted under the guise of impartiality as they engage with their sources. 'Entering the Field' offers practical advice on the skills required to undertake research in Ottoman history and on how to design a research programme. In 'Locating Ottoman Sources', S. F. discusses the resources available in selected libraries and archives in Turkey. The fourth chapter treats a specific topic: rural life, a choice made, it seems, for no apparent reason than that it has preoccupied the author for much of her career: fashionable in the 1980s and 90s, such an emphasis now seems a little quaint.

Chapter v is a fascinating analysis of the accounts of travellers in the Ottoman lands. This seemingly unproblematic and accessible genre is too often mined uncritically by modern writers; here a contextual approach is taken, as S. F. considers the motivations and biases of various categories of travellers, and the conventions within which they wrote, as they sought to fulfill the expectations of their readers. Following this is an exploration of Ottoman historical writing viewed with similar concerns in mind. General histories of the empire are treated next, in order to show how the Ottoman world has been perceived over time. Such works have been written by non-specialists as well as specialists, each with their own preconceptions. The concluding chapter considers the future of the profession, suggesting research avenues that might profitably be explored further, such as comparative history, the neglected eighteenth century, as yet little-utilized sources, and so on. In addition to a general bibliography, each chapter concludes with a

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list of relevant works, to which S. F. usefully adds her comments.

It is no easy matter for the mature Ottoman historian to assess the merits of this volume. Will the student or, indeed, the non-specialist, find the personal style engaging or will the serendipity of the presentation leave him/her confused? Since this guide is the result of years spent teaching, one must assume that S. F. has the pulse of her audience. The reader may disagree with her analysis of the many, many works which she discusses but will surely be beguiled by the gentle tone of her advice: for the most part she withholds criticism to the point of being elliptical. However, the most striking omission in this welcome introduction to the sources for Ottoman history is any sense of the myriad problems and frustrations the researcher will encounter in getting past officialdom to gain access to many of the collections whose riches S. F. so invitingly lays before us. Novice, be warned!

CAROLINE FINKEL

HALIL SAHILLIOĞLU: *Studies on Ottoman economic and social history.* (Ottoman History and Civilisation Series, 3.) iv, 221 pp. Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1999.

This book, a collection of eight articles published originally between 1969 and 1992 and covering the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, begins with 'Sıvış year crises in the Ottoman empire' (pp. 1–25), the French translation of which is also, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, published here as the last article in the book. Sıvış (or 'skip') years arose as a result of the discrepancies between the lunar and the solar calendars, both of which systems were used together in the Ottoman fiscal year. Sahillioğlu outlines the crises during sıvış years 852/1448, 886/1481, 919/1513, 953/1546, 986/1578, 1021/1612, 1054/1644, 1088/1677 and 1121/1710 and argues that analyses of such years 'not only provide the key to explaining and interpreting many events in Ottoman history, but also provide a tool of analysis for the history of other Islamic societies which had a two-calendar fiscal system' (p. 8).

The second article considers the effects on Ottoman monetary history of the international movements of money and precious metals from 1300–1750 (pp. 27–64), while the third, 'The income and expenditures of the Ottoman treasury between 1683 and 1740' (pp. 65–82), investigates the differences between the figures in the treasury *ruznameçe*s and the totals derived from the budgets, and looks at income accumulation and depletion in the treasury.

In the fourth article, 'The introduction of machinery in the Ottoman mint' (pp. 83–103), Sahillioğlu considers minting techniques, the impact of American silver, the beginnings of currency reform and the use of the mint in an attempt to stabilize the economy under Meḥmed IV, as well as the adoption of mechanical processes of minting.

One of the longest and most detailed contributions in the collection is the fifth article on 'The slave in the social and economic life of Bursa' (pp. 125–73). In this very comprehensive article, Sahillioğlu, basing his research on the Bursa qāḍī registers and inheritance settlements, analyses the Bursa slave market; he discusses the functioning of the market, the sources of slaves sold and their distribution, and assesses the average annual slave sale figures. He also considers slave prices, comparing them with real estate values, the position of freedmen in economic life, as well as the *muqāṭa'a* of the tax levied on slaves sold to non-Muslims. Many of the findings of his research are detailed in the 12 tables printed at the end of the article, where Sahillioğlu also gives an example of a transference of testimony together with an English translation.

In the sixth article (pp. 175–88) Sahillioğlu publishes a report of 1295/1878 by the Grand Vizir Kāmil Paşa on a project to establish a *vilāyet* centred on Amman in order to ensure the safety of the Damascus-Medina road. The seventh article (pp. 189–91) is an extremely short 'summary translation' concerning Ottoman book legacies. Oddly, Bursa is referred to throughout this piece as 'Brusa', while terms are given in their Arabic renditions rather than in the Ottoman one. The final article in this collection is the French version of the first article.

This publication unfortunately suffers from many editing errors such as 'treasury various *defters*', 'the first day of the ear' (p. 25), 'How-ever' (p. 29), 'darns les Balkans' (p. 30, n11), 'futhr' (p. 45), 'Treasory' (p. 53), 'Annuel sums of income and expedditure items' (p. 68), '*Prençik oglanı*' (p. 139, n46), 'Chelabi' and 'Chelebi' (both on p. 190) and 'i 6th century' (p. 191). Such errors are particularly evident in the third article: 'At the head of eacn columns', 'registeres' (p. 65), 'Sinte the Erkam registers did not rontain explanations, a single many contain figures ...' (pp. 65–6), 'accoundt', 'meetidgs' (p. 66), 'Imd.d-i' (for Imdad-i), 'fro', 'eypended' (p. 67), 'th-' (for the) (p. 72), 'In s' (which presumably should be 'this') (p. 73), 'exseeds', 'ode' (for 'one') (p. 74), 'yeart' (for 'year'), 'weignt', 'platted an' (for 'plotted on') (p. 75), 'Söleyman II' (who appears four words later as Süleyman), 'semelting', 'abtain' (for 'obtain'), 'simultenеous' (p. 76), 'a resulté' (for 'a result') (p. 77), 'althouht', 'indicaded' and 'significantly affect the curve as a whale' (p. 78).

There is also an odd use of italics, such as 'under the name *of tefavüt-i şemsiyye*' (p. 1), 'revenue in *Nevruz*' (p. 2), 'The Ottomans called this *a sıvış* (skip) year' (p. 5), '*as müşir*' and '*as vali*' (p. 175). The figures 4a and 4b (pp. 23–24) appear without any headings. The second article has figure II, but no figure I, while in the third article there is table I but tableau I (Continued) (pp. 68–9), and reference is made on p. 75 to graphs 1 and 2, but to graph No. 5, and, on p. 78, to graph III. Graphs I and IV appear on pp. 80–1, while on p. 82 there is a graph without a number or title. Graphs II and III therefore appear to be missing. The printing of the graphs is very

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indistinct, making them difficult to decipher in places.

There is also inconsistency in format which mars the text as a whole. The footnotes for the fourth article all appear in italics, while the footnotes elsewhere do not. The third article is printed in a different typeface and format from the rest of the text.

According to the introduction to this volume, 'although the studies in this book were published on different occasions, we have deemed it useful to collect them on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the Ottoman State and to present them to the researchers concerned with Ottoman history' (p. iv). This increasingly popular practice of bringing together in one volume articles which have been published often over a considerable time-span and in a variety of different journals, can indeed be most helpful to scholars. The value of the articles here is without question and the publication, despite its editorial defects, will no doubt be most useful for Ottoman historians.

KATE FLEET

SAIME GÖKSU and EDWARD TIMMS: *Romantic Communist: the life and work of Nazım Hikmet.* xxiv, 367 pp. London: Hurst & Co., 1999.

Nazım Hikmet is internationally the most well-known modern Turkish literary figure, but also for complex reasons the most controversial in Turkey itself. The controversy derives from his political commitment to Soviet Communism, which was inseparable from his personality and his literary achievement, and which resulted in his fleeing Turkey in 1951 after long years in jail and seeking refuge in the USSR, where he remained until his death in Moscow in 1963.

Saime Göksu and Edward Timms's extremely thorough biography traces Nazım Hikmet's life and his literary development, which it sets clearly in the context of the turbulent political developments of the two new political entities which came into being as Nazım reached adulthood: the Turkish Republic and the USSR.

Nazım's teenage years coincided with tumultuous events in Turkey. The occupation of Izmir by Greek troops and the entry of British and French troops into Istanbul shook even the broad-minded, cosmopolitan Turks of Kadımköy, which was Nazım's real home and where the family had returned in 1907. It was during the occupation that Nazım started to emerge as a poet on the Istanbul literary scene, and he produced his first play *Ocakbaşı.*

In November 1920 Nazım and a group of young writers joined the nationalists in Ankara who were organizing political and military resistance from central Anatolia. It was at a stop en route at the Black Sea port of Inebolu that Nazım and his companions first came across the ideas of Marx and Lenin and the concepts of class struggle and proletarian revolution, when they fell in with a group of Turkish students who had been deported from Germany for involvement in the Spartacus movement in Berlin. From Inebolu, Nazım had to walk to Ankara—a formidable epic journey. For the first time in his adult life the young gentleman poet came across impoverished Anatolian peasants. As the authors observe: 'this first-hand experience, enhanced by the critical awareness they had gained through the Spartacus group, marked a decisive stage in their political education' (p. 19).

Nazım went to the Soviet Union twice during the twenties (staying between autumn 1921 and December 1924, and autumn 1925 and July 1928), where he came under the influence of such writers as Mayakovsky, but he also became passionately involved in the theatre. Göksu and Timms quote him as observing in later life that 'the influence of the Soviet theatre on my lyric poetry is greater than the influence of Soviet poetry' (p. 51). The theatre took up a great deal of his time in the Soviet Union. It is nevertheless as a poet that Nazım is primarily admired in Turkey today: 'When I returned to Moscow,' he recalled in 1962, 'I wrote many plays ... It was good that most of them were not staged. All my life I was influenced by the theatre, but I remained a third-rate playwright' (p. 297).

A chronological table setting out in particular his two visits to the USSR in the twenties and the various periods in and out of jail together with the major political developments in Turkey and the USSR would have assisted the reader who may be less familiar with the period. It would also have demonstrated more clearly the extent to which Nazım was away from the Turkish mainstream for significant periods. He spent a considerable amount of his life either abroad or in jail. Between autumn 1921, when he first sailed to the Soviet Union, and 1951, when he finally fled back there, he spent only about nine years at liberty in Turkey. Jail, arguably, was as strong an influence on his writing as his Marxism. He wrote prolifically during his periods in prison, and some of his most enduring poems, which are also some of the best in Turkish literature, are the product of those years.

The tragedy of Nazım's life was that of an idealistic poet whose thinking was well-tuned to that of his countrymen in the war years and in the early years of the Turkish Republic, but whose idealism and enthusiasm led him increasingly into conflict with a political establishment moving progressively to the right. As such, he has come to be seen as a political symbol.

Nazım was a charismatic figure, with a striking appearance. He became a popular figure, and by the late twenties was reciting his poems in the major Istanbul literary circles, but his popularity provoked considerable antagonism from some of the established writers of the era. He responded to their antagonism by launching a sustained attack against the literary establishment in the pages of the monthly magazine *Resimli Ay*, which he joined in 1929. Nazım's personality was not that of a man who would sit down and assess calmly how to respond effectively to attack: he would retaliate, throwing himself wholeheartedly into the fray. He launched a series of polemical articles against established writers, asking indignantly, 'Aren't there any workers or peasants in this country? These men are not interested

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in them … We have to demolish these idols' (p. 87). 'Demolishing the idols' became the general title for the series, which attacked the credentials of, amongst others, the respected poet Mehmet Emin, who was celebrating his sixtieth birthday. Göksu and Timms bring Nazım to life in the book—but in their enthusiasm for their subject they are perhaps, like him, less than fair to some of the idols the young Nazım was so intent on demolishing. Mehmet Emin was not a great poet, certainly not in the league of Nazım, but through his *Türkçe/Şiirler* published in 1898 he had been working towards establishing as the dominant literary language a simple Turkish which ordinary people used and could understand. Emin, whose father was a fisherman and mother a peasant girl, had in fact written about Anatolian peasants and the indifference of the Istanbul administration to the poverty and hunger they suffered (*Anadolu*, November 1912). Later in 1935 his attack on Namık Kemal (1840–88) in order to settle scores with Peyami Sefa, one of Nazım's contemporaries, was particulary unedifying, especially as one has to consider what the course of Turkish literature might have been without the likes of Namık Kemal. This trait of Nazım to debunk what had gone before was manifest during his first visit to the USSR, as described by the authors, when he praised the Meyerhold Theatre and then suggested that the Bolshoi Theatre 'would be more useful if converted into a grain silo' (p. 50). His attacks on other writers in 1930s Turkey did not do him any favours in a country where Marxism was now suspect in official eyes, and where informers and ill-educated minor officials were plentiful.

Göksu and Timms correctly describe Nazım as the first writer to introduce into Turkish poetry the language of modern politics, reinforced by a new poetic style which disrupted the melodious rhythms of Ottoman diction with the rugged irregularity of its lines. His use of onomatopoeia and the patterns of vowel harmony unique to Turkish gave intense vocalic power to his poetry. The book is especially valuable in illustrating these points for a readership for whom Turkish may not be accessible. It provides those who have heard of Nazım Hikmet principally in a political context with an opportunity to appreciate his literary achievement which outshone his more controversial political judgement.

BENGISU RONA

BEVERLEY MILTON-EDWARDS: *Contemporary politics in the Middle East.* 256 pp. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

This is a book intended primarily as a textbook for university students coming to the subject of Middle Eastern politics for the first time. Consequently, its author has the difficult task of introducing a subject the very definition of which is a matter of contention. Furthermore, like all writers of textbooks about complex subjects, she has to face the perils of reductionism, whilst avoiding the equally distracting dangers of particularism. This is sharpened by her understandable determination to stay clear of the kind of essentializing generalization about this imaginary realm 'the Middle East' which has underpinned much of Orientalist reasoning.

Her strategy is a sensible one which has much to commend it. Devoting little space to the rather dreary question of 'What is the Middle East?' she proceeds instead to examine a number of major themes in Middle Eastern politics. These constitute her framework of analysis but, as she points out, they could also plausibly be used to examine much of the postcolonial world. Thus there are chapters on colonial rule, nationalism, political economy, war and peace, political Islam, democratization, women and, finally, ethnicity and minorities. In each chapter, after a discussion of the issues raised and the various works that have focused on this particular aspect, she gives two 'case studies', intended to illustrate these themes in the context of specific states.

The themes are lucidly presented and Milton-Edwards writes clearly and well. However, she seems to be unnecessarily cautious in advancing her own hypotheses or judgements on the issues at stake. Possibly over-conscious of her intended audience and wary of confusing it with argument and counter-argument, the chapters have a largely expository feel. Other people's theses are sketched out, or the contents of particular works summarized, but in much of this there is a notable absence of the author's voice. Indeed, sometimes this feature becomes so marked that the text reads rather like an annotated bibliography—superfluous since useful sections of further reading are attached to the end of each chapter. This is a matter for regret since the author could have been much bolder in setting forth her own opinions and advancing her own hypotheses. Not only would she have had much of interest to say, but students would probably feel more engaged with the text if they felt that they were having to respond to a well-constructed argument. Exposition can be valuable, but it is no substitute for reasoned critique.

Authors of ambitious and wide-ranging works of this kind can be vulnerable on two other fronts. In the first place, the selection of material and, in particular, the case studies can be criticized. In this book, there did not seem to be a very convincing rationale for omitting Turkey and Sudan from consideration, especially since their politics exhibit much that can illuminate the themes at the heart of this book. Equally, the heavy concentration on Egypt and the Palestinians by way of example needs to be more explicitly defended. There is also the danger that in covering so much ground a number of factual inaccuracies may creep into the text. This book is no exception. It would be invidious to list them all here, but it is to be hoped that they will be corrected in subsequent editions.

Nevertheless, this book is a useful introduction, particularly for students unacquainted with those authors whose writings and arguments have to some degree defined the subject. It is when they engage with this body of literature that they should be in a position to

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advance their own critiques and to form their own judgements. In this respect, Milton-Edwards's book will have provided a valuable service in demonstrating that in many respects 'politics in the Middle East' is comparable to politics anywhere. It is therefore, in theory, no less amenable than any other region to the tools of critical political analysis.

CHARLES TRIPP

ANN MOSELY LESCH: *The Sudan: contested national identities*. (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies.) xiii, 299 pp. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press and Oxford: James Curry, 1998. £40, £14.95 (paper).

The protracted Sudanese civil war (*c.* 1955–72, and from 1983 to the present) has, since the end of the Cold War, largely disappeared from the agenda of Western governments and news media. This is not because the issues are unintelligible or hopelessly complex, but because the Sudan's geopolitical status has receded to relative insignificance. General accounts of the war available to interested outsiders (and indeed to Sudanese) have been few, and these have tended to focus on national politics and North-South negotiations. Despite a title promising perhaps a more profound analysis of the mechanisms of Afro-Arab synthesis, *The Sudan: contested national identities* is another contribution to this genre.

The book is essentially a political-science gloss of the Sudan's modern history. As such it is marred by jargon and a journalistic tone, and lacks depth. Its first and final chapters resemble the mandatory 'review of the literature' in American Ph.D. dissertations, with approving references to the commonplaces of political theorists; thus, for example, 'Anthony D. Smith argues that "nations [must] be founded upon ethnic cores, if they are to endure"' (p. 5). Chapter ii, 'Historical legacies', which provides an abbreviated survey of the Sudan before independence, has factual errors. The method of journalistic survey continues in chapters on the Nimayri regime and (ch. iv) 'the transition to democracy'. Ensuing chapters on shorter periods give greater detail on the political developments of the period since 1989, when the regime of the National Islamic Front began. An appendix lists the composition of Sudanese governments since 1985, and a glossary, copious notes, and a bibliography complete the study.

The political developments that form the background and context of the civil war certainly deserve a detailed explanation and, especially, require the judicious application of expertise in order to determine their relative importance. High-sounding 'initiatives' and international conferences—'The Frankfurt Accord', 'The Nairobi Declaration', 'Abuja I', 'Abuja II', and so forth—may be lasting landmarks or (as so often has proved to be the case) play-acting. While the author conscientiously surveys all this in chronological order, it has been understandably difficult to separate the fleeting from the significant.

The book is somewhat disappointing in its tone, style, and occasional errors. Bloodlessly analytical, it yet (or therefore) fails to plumb the emotional content of what is, after all, its principal subject: the competing ideologies and self-identities of the Sudanese Afro-Arab ruling elite and its Southern Sudanese opponents. The author's exposition depends too often on others in order to keep moving ('the historian Robert O. Collins concludes …' (p. 31), 'Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban argues …' (p. 55); 'The social psychologist T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone observes …' (p. 211); 'As Nelson Kafsir remarks …' (p. 211); etc.). And it gives the reader pause that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is rendered throughout as the 'Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement' (and the name of its Army similarly). Has the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington really changed its name (p. ix)?

The great problem faced by studies of this sort—that the events described are still unfolding, and that sources for their study are few and poor—perhaps dooms them as ephemeral. Nonetheless, it is of some value for the general reader to have at least a framework of political developments over the long course of the civil war. This book provides one.

M. W. DALY

ZIBA MIR-HOSSEINI: *Islam and gender: the religious debate in contemporary Iran.* 305 pp. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

This book is an excellent anthropological study. It is very well researched and very well written. In discussing the topic of gender and Islam in Iran, Mir-Hosseini uses her powerful analytical skills to identify three different but interrelated phenomena: a) the political ideology and rhetoric of the clergy, b) the social experiences of men and women and c) the interpretation and reinterpretation of the sacred texts. Her core analysis tackles the contradiction between the political ideology of the clergy and the lived realities of women and men. She is critical of the dominant methodology in the field of gender and Islam which concentrates only on the varied interpretation and reinterpretation of the sacred texts. She suggests that the interpretation and reinterpretation of the sharia must take into account the experiences of individuals and communities—for example, access to resources and various forms of constraints which have great impact on gender roles and relations.

Mir-Hosseini argues that Iran was profoundly transformed by the 1979 revolution. The establishment of the Islamic state meant that the sharia became a significant part of the apparatus of this modern nation-state. Therefore, the custodians of the sharia are no longer part of an oppositional discourse in Iranian politics. However, 21 years later, the children of the revolution who constitute half of the population challenge the role of religious clerics in politics. As the guardian of the

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sharia—the official ideology of the state and society—the clergy had to respond to this challenge, by interpreting and reinterpreting the sharia.

In Mir-Hosseini's thorough research which took place in the mid-1990s at the seminaries in Qom, the centre of religious knowledge and power, she finds that the custodians of the sharia are not a homogeneous group. She identifies at least three competing tendencies, each of them with a particular political agenda and rhetoric, claiming legitimacy in Islam. The rivalry between them has made monopoly of political power impossible in Iran. More importantly, they have to deal with the contradiction of promoting the ideology of high status of women in Islam while at the same time retaining the patriarchal mandate of sharia legal rules.

It is interesting that the author finds the views of some clerics like Saidzadeh more radical on gender issues than modernist Islamic intellectuals like Soroush, whose view on gender issues is based on traditional interpretation of the sharia. Mir-Hosseini finds that for many male religious intellectuals gender inequality is not an issue because it is part of a larger problem which will go away when their vision of Islam is realized. But there is a significant number of ulama who are debating gender inequalities and trying to modify the old rules in women's favour.

She therefore concludes that the debate within the clerical establishment is a powerful engine for social change, and sees the alternative to the present situation coming from new interpretations of Islamic belief and practice. She sees the dynamic nature of sharia interpretation and debate among religious scholars in Iran shaping indigenous feminism and an indigenous form of feminist consciousness and the involvement of women in the process of change.

Women's issues are thus debated within an Islamic framework and the clergy have to meet the challenges of the contemporary world. She argues that *fegh* is the domain of male scholars who fix the terms of women's rights in religion, but *fegh* is reactive in the sense that it responds to social and political realities, such as the extensive participation of women in the revolution and, since then, in political and economic processes. The society has become gender-aware and indeed the whole political process has become gendered, the evidence of which is the presidential election of 1997 and the parliamentary elections in 1996 and 2000.

Mir-Hosseini writes as a Muslim woman who needs to make sense of her faith and culture. She believes in Islam as a religion which is a private matter, not forced on individuals. She is critical of the process of Islamization in the 1980s which took away from women the limited reforms which they had gained in previous decades in terms of sharia family law. More importantly, she argues that we need to move away from concentrating on the oppressive nature of Islam and instead look at the ways in which women manipulate the embedded contradictions in sharia law as an arena to renegotiate patriarchal laws and regulations to their advantage. In my view, this is the most important part of her argument, but it seems rather marginalized in her book.

Mir-Hosseini's earlier work (*Marriage on trial: a study of Islamic family law. Iran and Morocco compared* (London, 1992)) which was the basis of the documentary film, *Divorce, Iranian style*, made by the author with Kim Longinotto, made this issue explicit. That is that the sharia rules are oppressive to women but women manipulate these inherent contradictions and use the court and the law as a space to renegotiate the terms of their marriages—in many cases succeeding in turning the most patriarchal elements of sharia law to their advantage in order to achieve their personal or marital aims.

This issue is particularly important because, as I have discussed elsewhere (under my pen name, M. Poya, *Women, work and Islamism: ideology and resistance in Iran* (reviewed in *BSOAS* 63/3, 433–4)) it is the struggle of women for change both inside and outside of Iran in their varied ways, including in Ziba Mir-Hosseini's writings, which has been a powerful engine for social change, rather than the debate within the clerical establishment. In my view, the alternative to the present situation comes from the co-operation between secular feminists and Muslim feminists in Iran, which has forced new interpretations of Islamic belief and practice. It is the dynamic nature of Iranian feminism and indigenous forms of feminist consciousness and women's involvement in the process of change, which has made the sharia an area to be debated and reinterpreted by religious scholars in Iran. Despite my disagreement with Mir-Hosseini on this important issue, this is an important book which should be read by all scholars and activitists on gender issues and Islam. I hope that our disagreements and debates contribute towards the social changes which are happening in Iran and that they will have an impact on similar debates in other Muslim societies.

ELAHEH ROSTAMI POVEY

ELIZABETH SIRRIYEH: *Sufis and anti-Sufis: the defence, rethinking and rejection of Sufism in the modern world.* (Curzon Sufi Series.) xiii, 188 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998. £14.99.

IAN RICHARD NETTON: *Ṣūfī ritual: the parallel universe.* (Curzon Sufi Series.) xi, 219 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000. £30.00, £14.99 (paper).

At least apparently so much more compatible than many other manifestations of Islam with the softer ideals of the New Age, Sufism has never been more popular in the English-speaking world than it has become in recent years. One index of this popularity is the ever-growing number of publications on Sufi topics, ranging in tone from the scholarly to the bizarre. Within this rapidly expanding field, the Curzon Sufi Series has successfully established

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a significant presence for itself under the editorship of Ian Netton through the ten titles which have now been published in the series since the appearance of the first volume in 1995.

Designed to include both synthetic treatments and more specialist works of original research, the series has as its stated aim the provision of short introductions characterized by sound scholarship and readability which are meant to be accessible to general readers and students as well as scholars. Particularly important in a field so prone at its fringes to the accommodation of intellectual shoddiness, this admirable purpose has been well sustained by most of the volumes so far published. After some initial uncertainties, a clear series format has been firmly established with excellent standards of consistency in such matters as transliteration and bibliographic citation, and appropriate credit should be given to Netton both for this and for the high standards of scholarship and readability which have generally been achieved.

The emphasis of most of the earlier volumes has been on classic figures of the medieval period, with the best titles achieving a fine combination of original scholarship, drawing on original Arabic and Persian sources often presented for the first time in English, with a sensitive awareness of current methodological and other issues in the study of religions. Such a combination has been most notably achieved in Carl Ernst's outstanding short study, *Rūzbihān Baqlī: mysticism and the rhetoric of sainthood in Persian Sufism* (1996).

The two most recent additions to the series which are under review here are both works of synthesis, which in each case succeed through the critical assemblage of a wide range of material drawn from primary and secondary sources in fulfilling the reasonable expectation that they should allow readers both to enhance their knowledge and to develop fresh general understandings. Both should consequently command a place on reading lists for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

These two books engage in different ways with the problems of understanding created by the critical attitudes towards Sufism which have developed across much modernist Islamic thought. This is a theme of major importance, but one which for obvious reasons tends to be skated over in most available accounts of Sufism. Drawing upon a geographically wide range of data, Elizabeth Sirriyeh's very clearly written book examines the development of these attitudes and of the modern Sufi counter-arguments thereto in Africa and South Asia as well as in the Middle East. The chronological arrangement of the chapters gives a clear picture of the various phases of the modern Islamic critique of Sufism from the end of the pre-colonial epoch through the period of Western colonization and the redefinitions of Sufism variously proposed by Islamic nationalists, ending with a survey of some more recent developments.

If the weight of the book lies in the central chapters dealing with the thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that must be reckoned a fair reflection of their relative importance and enduring intellectual significance. Good comparative accounts will be found in these chapters of the varied views of Sufism developed by such crucial figures as al-Afghānī (and his traditionalist counterpart al-Ṣayyādī), ʿAbduh, Gökalp and Iqbāl, with suggestive bibliographies provided for those wishing to pursue the many interesting points which the nature of the volume does not allow to be developed at length. The comparative presentation itself provokes new ideas, in Sirriyeh's explicit suggestion of the influence of al-Ghazālī's classic account of his own turning to Sufism in *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* on the shaping of their lives in the autobiographical sketches separately produced by al-Afghānī, ʿAbduh and Gökalp. It also suggests others, like the development of a Western-style personalized Sufism in an Islamic environment in which the *ṭarīqas* can no longer command middle class allegiance, a theme for which she only cites Maḥfūẓ (p. 151), but for which parallels might readily be found in e.g. modern Urdu literature.

Expressly inspired by the phenomenological approach of Schimmel's *Deciphering the signs of God* (1994), Netton's book on Sufi ritual is characterized by a sophisticated awareness of the problems created for contemporary non-Muslim understandings of Sufism by the diverse attitudes of contemporary Sufis and anti-Sufis in the diaspora as well as in the modern *dār al-islām* itself. Hitherto, the standard account of the subject to which most students are referred has been found in the relevant chapters of Trimingham's *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (1971), whose encyclopaedic gathering of miscellaneous data is often more confusing than helpful and whose assumptions, however unspoken, of an Orientalist omniscience now seen at best dated.

Although sometimes seeming excessively anxious to avoid offence in its several disclaimers of suggesting very direct parallels between Christian and Islamic terminology, Netton's approach is both more sensitive and more sophisticated in its use of a variety of modern disciplinary approaches. Justifiably understanding Sufi ritual as a much broader phenomenon than the performance of *dhikr* or *samāʿ*, Netton's book is also more focused in its concentration upon the rituals of two orders only, the Niʿmatullāhī and the Naqshbandī. The clear accounts provided in the first part of each readily and valuably permit instructive comparisons to be drawn between these two markedly different sets of ritual. The second part of the book uses a fourfold approach to the 'unveiling of the sacred', through theology, phenomenology, anthropology and semiotics, with reference first to the five pillars of Islam, then to Sufi ritual, which is conceived as a parallel universe to the *arkān*. A brief conclusion examines the relationship of ritual to the modern experience of alienation. Here, as elsewhere in the book, the explicit attention to the situation of British Muslims is a testimony to Netton's willingness to address more than merely academic concerns and ought to command a correspondingly wider readership for his own contribution to the important series he so successfully edits.

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

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PAUL E. LOSENSKY: *Welcoming Fighānī: imitation and poetic individuality in the Safavid-Mughal* ghazal. xii, 393 pp., 2 pl. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998.

Western students of the great literatures of Asia usually begin their painfully halting readings of the classics only in their early adult years. As a result of this attenuated entrée, one of the most difficult aspects of those literatures for Western readers to grasp is the immense part played in their later evolution by ever more complex webs of intertextual connections and cross-references. To convey something of this complexity for a major poetic genre of the Islamicate literatures was one of our main purposes in the compilation of *Qasida poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: Brill, 1996, reviewed in *BSOAS*, 60/2, 1997), although the synthetic picture assembled in the editorial presentations in those volumes had necessarily to be drawn at a macro level.

The great merit of Losensky's fine study of Bābā Fighānī (d. 1519) is to show in illuminating detail the real workings of the process of creative *imitatio* in the Persian *ghazal* in relation to one remarkably interesting poet of the Timurid era. A series of different approaches to its subject is adopted, each well informed by critical perspectives which take suitable account of contemporary writing about Western literatures. These point the way to understandings of the conscious evolution of the *ghazal* through time in the hands of successive generations of master poets. This is done in a manner which has eluded most attempts to grapple with the slippery essence of that highly stylized lyric genre which, for centuries, dominated both Persian poetry and the poetry of the numerous parallel literatures like Ottoman Turkish and Urdu which evolved alongside it.

After a helpful introductory overview, the first chapter examines the *tadhkira*-writers' notices of Fighānī. This is done partly with an eye to gleaning such biographical information as may be reasonably securely established from them. More consciously, however, it shows how they are themselves a reflection of the changing literary fashion which saw Fighānī's reputation soar during the Safavid-Mughal era as a key precursor of the so-called Indian style (*sabk-i hindī*)—whose loose definition is usefully called into question by Losensky, drawing attention to the use by contemporary writers of such alternative expressions as the 'fresh style' (*ṭarz-i tāza*)—before it plummeted as a consequence of the Iranian neo-classicism of the *bāzgasht* which continues to dominate the conventional Western understanding of Persian literary history.

Confusions in the overlap between literary biography and critical understanding are then pursued in a chapter dealing with three modern lives of Fighānī written in Pakistan and Iran which look chiefly to his poetry for their evidence. Their respective portraits of the poet as a romantic lover, as a reformist activist, and as a figure whose palpably contradictory tensions were only to find final resolution through mystical salvation are shown to owe more to modern concerns than the realities of the fifteenth century or the literary conventions which mask the poet and which are so strong in the case of a highly formalized genre like the *ghazal*.

Losensky argues that the biographers' familiar reliance on picking and mixing individual verses (whose formal self-containment makes them so easily detachable for the purpose) is a fundamentally flawed strategy, and that poetic individuality in this tradition is conversely to be properly established at the level of the complete poem. In the third chapter which sets out the heart of his case, he looks at the understandings of poetic *imitatio* developed by Arabic and Persian critics. From their varied terminology including such terms as *jawāb*, *naẓīra*, etc., he prefers *istiqbāl* with its suggestion of going out to meet and engage with other poets (hence the 'Welcoming' of the book's title) in a process of dynamic interchange, rather than the one-way processes between originals and epigonoi implied in the English critical notions of passive imitation and active influence. The chapter ends with a convincing preliminary demonstration of the operation of *imitatio*, signalled by the retention of the original scheme of metre and rhyme, in Fighānī's reworking of four poems by Amīr Khusrau, and of the ways in which these poems help establish a darker and less integrated poetic persona which rather sharply differentiates Fighānī from the sun-like master-poet of the Delhi Sultanate.

The fourth chapter then looks at the broader context of Persian poetry in the Timurid-Turkmen period, whose formative importance for so many later developments is rightly underlined. The social extension of poetry to include such lower-class practitioners as Fighānī himself, the son of a cutler, is examined in relation to the shift in genre primacy from the courtly *qaṣīda* and *mathnawī* to the more broadly appealing *ghazal*, and to the systematization of the past and the accompanying formation of the classical Persian literary canon, as notably illustrated in Jāmī's all-embracing oeuvre. The love of formal play also associated with the art of the period is well brought out in the discussions first of the popularity of riddles (*mu'ammā*), then of the amazingly sustained multiple poetic games developed in a *qaṣīda-yi maṣnū'* by Fighānī's contemporary Ahlī, illustrated in the reproduction on the book's cover in the colours which act as a key to the different readings contained within its elaborately patterned text.

The chapter ends with an examination of the responses to two Khusrau poems by Jāmī and by Fighānī, which are respectively characterized by strategies of consolidation and of innovation. This helps establish a context for extended examinations of different clusters of *imitatio* around Fighānī in the Safavid-Mughal period, when he became such an immensely admired figure for the practitioners of the baroque 'fresh style'. While underlining the importance of such strategies as *maḍmūn-pardāzī* and *īhām*, Losensky wisely refrains from a listing of the characteristics of the new style, preferring instead to work through example. An instructive discussion of the key

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issue of understandings of the tension between originality and tradition in the poetry of Ṣā'ib, the seventeenth century's greatest *ghazal*-poet, includes a look at two of his responses to Fighānī. This leads to a critical comparison of the responses of five different poets to another Fighānī *ghazal*, which admirably demonstrates the potential of Losensky's approach in its contrastive characterization of the great Indian-style masters 'Urfī, Naẓīri and Ṣā'ib (whose poem's simultaneous response to all his predecessors at once shows just how keen an issue the anxiety of influence must have been for *ghazal*-poets of the period).

The final chapter makes productive use of the same technique to yield further understandings of Fighānī's importance for the Safavid-Mughal *ghazal* by looking at three of his poems (the first itself another *imitatio* of Khusrau, the others formally original creations) and the responses thereto by Naẓīrī, Shāpūr and Ṣā'ib, which help establish the critical discrimination of their evaluations of him, not least their evidently poor regard for the occasional handling of mystical themes by this very worldly poet.

In short this is a rich and suggestive study which ought to find its way on to many comparative literature lists as well as being required reading for all specialists in both Persian and the Persianate literatures. Its appeal will be enhanced by the readable style both of the main text and of the numerous translations from Persian. Three appendixes provide Persian texts of unpublished biographical notices of Fighānī, a *ghazal* by *ghazal* table of models used by Fighānī and the imitations his *dīwān* generated, and Persian texts of all verses and poems cited in translation. The book ends with an excellent bibliography, a good general index of names and literary terms, and helpful indexes of first lines in both English and Persian of the 44 complete *ghazals*, including 14 by Fighānī, around which the book's overlapping discussions of this intricate genre has been so attractively woven.

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

MOHAMMED ZIAD KEBBE: *A transformational grammar of modern literary Arabic.* (Library of Arabic Linguistics, 14.) London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000.

The Library of Arabic Linguistics monograph series, edited by three internationally acclaimed Arabists, Muhammad Hasan Bakalla (King Saud University, Riyadh), Bruce Ingham (SOAS, University of London), and Clive Holes (University of Oxford), has over a period of many years consistently yielded a rich crop of Arabic dialectological research by distinguished linguists from around the world. It is incumbent upon me right at the outset to inform the potential reader of the book under review that it suffers from one major flaw. It is written in an outdated theoretical framework, viz., the antiquated model presented in Noam Chomsky's classic, *Aspects of the theory of syntax* (Cambridge, MA, 1965). However, transformational-generative grammar (TG) has changed drastically over the past 35 years, which is quite correctly noted by Bruce Ingham in his Editor's Note (p. vii). As illustrative of my assertion, it is strange indeed to read in a volume published in 2000 anachronistic statements, such as 'transformational rules … fall into two categories: obligatory and optional' (p. 5). This basic kind of information, as is well known, has long been available in a plethora of linguistics textbooks. It is equally baffling, moreover, why the author has chosen to quote a long statement from Chomsky's first major work—not given, incidentally, in the bibliography, *Syntactic structures* (The Hague, 1957)—about redundancy in language (p. 48). More specifically, a perusal of Kebbe's bibliography (pp. 139–41) convinces this reviewer that this work was prepared no later than 1977, since that is the last date for any reference utilized (an article by Chomsky). In my opinion, the tome should have been totally revised and thoroughly updated before publication. As it stands, the book will probably interest the historian of linguistics more than the present-day syntactician, who may be unfamiliar with the details of this dinosaurian approach to syntax.

Let me begin with a brief commentary on the aforementioned bibliography. First of all, in addition to its antediluvian nature (already mentioned), it is unfortunately further marred by its many factual and typographical errors. Typical of the former is mention of Great Britain's 'Philological Society' as 'Philosophical Society' (p. 141), and of the latter, C. M. Scharmm is erroneous for the University of Michigan linguist G. M. Schramm (ibid.). Secondly, these references are nostalgic but not very *au courant*, and any linguist trained in the '*Aspects*' model will recall his or her graduate school days, when many of the quoted linguists, e.g., Jacobs and Rosenbaum (p. 140), were almost household names (R. Jacobs and P. Rosenbaum, *English transformational grammar*, Waltham, MA, 1968). Needless to say, the current syntactic paradigms, minimalism and optimality theory, no longer make reference to these primordial TG references nor to other works mentioned by the author, e.g., J. Grinder and S. Elgin, *Guide to transformational grammar* (ibid.) (New York, 1973). Bolstering my argument, one recent TG text by Andrew Radford *Syntax: a minimalist introduction* (Cambridge, 1997) contains no reference to any of these four aforementioned authors.

Let us now turn to a discussion of one of the tome's major topics: negation (the subject matter of an entire chapter, pp. 76–100), more specifically to the analysis of *laysa* 'not to be' (pp. 78–82). Kebbe considers it to be a negative morpheme rather than a verb mainly because of its anomalous morphology (1st person sg. is *lastu*, e.g.), plus the fact that it governs the accusative case (awkwardly called 'idiosyncratic behaviour' (p. 79)). I disagree with this point of view in favour of the more traditional analysis which, of course, sees little difficulty in its accusative governance (going along with the accusative nature found in the governance of the verb *kāna* 'be' or, for that matter, the transitive verb in general). From the

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comparative Semitic perspective, *laysa* derives from the negative *la-* + **ys* 'there is' (= Hebrew *yeš*), affirming the traditional grammarians' perspective that it derives from **laiisa* (as is discussed but rejected by the author (p. 133, n 7), although one may not agree exactly with his reconstructed form). Cf. the Akkadian cognate *išu* 'have' and its negative *laašu* or *laššu* (see L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in veteris testamenti libros* (Leiden, 1958), p. 408).

The reader will surely notice that the monograph's English is also awkward in places; e.g., one section is called 'Phonological and morphological hints' (p. 6). Doubtless, the author means 'notes'.

Finally, a word on the Arabic transcription. As is the case with the bibliography, there are many factual and typographical errors. As an example of the former, the *hamzat al-waṣl* is erroneously written in non-initial position: *lʔijtimaaʕ* 'the meaning' (p. 4 and *passim*) for the correct *lijtimaaʕ*, and the second vowel is erroneous in *aṣṣudqu* 'the truth' (11 times on pp. 64–5) for the correct *aṣṣidqu* (only the form with /i/ is given in Hans Wehr's *A dictionary of modern written Arabic*, ed. J Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 509) and Munir Ba'albaki's *Al-Mawrid* (Beirut, 1972, p. 995), and of the latter, ijtimāʿ is written with the wrong vowel (*lʔajtimaaʕ*) (p. 68). Occasionally, an error may be attributed to either class; e.g., *ʕaduwun* for the correct *ʕaduwwun* 'enemy' (p. 81), or *ʔawrubbii* for the correct *ʔurubbii* 'European' (m. sg.) (p. 100).

ALAN S. KAYE

JAMES DICKINS and JANET C. E. WATSON: *Standard Arabic: an advanced course.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xxix, 592 pp. 1999.

The work under review is an excellent textbook for advanced learners of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). If one masters the vocabulary and phraseology contained in it, one will undoubtedly have a solid command of the language. Dickins and Watson, both of the University of Durham, are seasoned specialists in Sudanese and Yemeni Arabic linguistics respectively, and they have produced a well-designed 20-chapter extravaganza of extraordinarily interesting subject matter on the Arab Middle East. Since the purpose of the text is to teach MSA, I will not devote much space to its factual content presented in English. As far as I can tell, most of the information about the history and culture of the Arab world is accurate and up-to-date—however, note that Egypt's population is much more than 53 millions given (p. 30)—and the authors have selected appropriate material for student use: e.g., the ancient Middle East, the rise of Islam, Muslim Spain, Islamic fundamentalism, Arabic literature, and the various ethnic groups in today's Middle East.

As a linguist, I naturally gravitated to the chapter on the language. Although there are difficulties with a few statements in ch. v, 'Arabic language' (pp. 116–40), I shall nevertheless use it as the model for the remaining 19 chapters, so that the reader may savour the flavour of the pedagogical methodology exhibited throughout the book. Most linguists will not agree with the authors that Maltese (synchronically) is 'basically a dialect of Arabic' (p. 116). Although this is true historically, Maltese is best regarded today as a Semitic language in its own right, which has an extensive literature written in Latin script, which would be unique for an Arabic dialect. More importantly, it does not share diglossia with MSA—a fact which makes it very different from the Arabic dialects of Egypt, Syria, Morocco, or Iraq, not to mention other environs. In another domain, the authors assert that 'it is strongly suspected that the Afro-Asiatic language family is ultimately related to the Indo-European language family ...' (ibid.). The evidence for a unity of these two phyla is flimsy indeed, which explains why this hypothesis of genetic unity is not accepted by most mainstream historical linguists, including the present reviewer.

Let us now turn to the details of ch. v from the point of view of successful language instruction. After the basic background information on the language (in English, pp. 116–18), there is a suggestion for further reading: Clive Holes's *Modern Arabic* (London, 1995)—an excellent choice—some key vocabulary (e.g., *laḥn* 'grammatical mistake'), and a written Arabic text authored by Taha Husein (pp. 119–20). Two exercises follow: questions to be answered in English and MSA. I understand the logic of the latter, but not the former (p. 120). One proposal I have for improvement of the volume's second edition is to have all the exercises require students to make use of MSA at all times. Additional texts are then offered with similar type homework assignments and translations into what is called 'idiomatic English' (p. 121 and *passim*). To my taste, too much emphasis is placed on translation (p. 125 has two such pieces), and students are asked in Section 10 to translate a text from Richard Hudson's *Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge, 1980) into 'idiomatic Arabic' (p. 138). (As opposed to 'unidiomatic Arabic/English'?) Much more useful, in my opinion, than the translation exercises *per se* are the précis pieces students are asked to produce in MSA (Section 11, for example, asks students to produce a précis, e.g., of a text by the Lebanese writer, Mikhail Nuʿayma (pp. 138–9)).

The strength of this chapter (which may be taken as representative of all 20) is Section 7 which explicates 'grammar/stylistics'. Here the authors have excelled with many fine illiustrations of actual usages, further including examples from classical Arabic taken from William Wright's classic *A grammar of the Arabic language* (Cambridge, 1859), e.g., discussing the *tamyīz* construction 'accusative of specification' (p. 127). In discussing Section 7, the authors note that 'grammar/stylistic explanation occupies a subordinate position in the Course' (p. 4), whereas, in my opinion, its place is really quite pivotal. There are very few infelicities in the grammatical commentaries; e.g., the pronouncement that most countries are feminine in gender, including *al-yaman* 'Yemen' (p. 17), yet three lines later, it is

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revealed that *al-yaman* can be either masculine or feminine (which is, in fact, correct).

A word on the pleasing layout and fonts may be appropriate. Most of the MSA is, I am delighted to report, in unvocalized Arabic script. This mirrors the normal state of the 'real Arabic' (a convenient designation of the authors (p. 4)) of the modern Arab world. Short vowels are occasionally marked in some vocabulary items and textual material (informing the reader, e.g., to read passive rather than active). As is inevitable, there is that rare typographical error as well (read, e.g., *fa-lam yuwaffiq*, not *yuwaffaq* 'but he did not succeed' (p. 574)).

Finally, let me comment on the accompanying cassette tapes and instructor's manual. The tapes are very well recorded and useful for mastering the material. My advice to students is to listen and practise imitating as often as possible. The manual for instructors is well conceived and well executed, and offers the correct answers to the exercises and the translations offered.

ALAN S. KAYE

JONATHAN OWENS (ed.): *Arabic as a minority language.* (Contributions to the Sociology of Language, 83.) xi, 458 pp. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000.

The work under review consists of a dozen essays, many of which were originally presented at a colloquium of the same title held at the University of Bayreuth in October 1996, the editor's home institution. It is impossible in a short critique to take up all of these fine essays (yet alone in detail), three of which (covering an unbelievably impressive 165 pages) have been authored or co-authored by Owens (hereafter O.) himself. Rather, I will concentrate my remarks on several of the more controversial issues presented.

First of all, let me remark that O.'s tome is a significant contribution to comparative Arabic dialectology, and we can only express our sincere hope to see this somewhat neglected field of peripheral dialectological research develop even further in the future. The volume is different from most reference works previously published in this area, its focus being on the Arabic dialects spoken on the fringes of the Arab world, including Uzbekistan, Tadjikestan (misspelled (p. 6), and in the index as well (p. 452)), Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Israel, Cyprus, Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Mali. It also contains useful information on the following extinct and migrant varieties of the language: the former type, representing the dialects of Daghestan (extinct about 1950 (?)), Sicily, Spain, and Zanzibar, followed by the latter, those spoken in Europe, North and South America, and Australia (p. 7). The book's title and table of contents reminded me, almost instantaneously, of a much older work, particularly for the information included on Turkey (see the informative essay by Werner Arnold on the Arabic dialects of the Turkish province of Hatay (and also the Aramaic dialects in the Syrian mountains of Qalamûn), 347–70), viz., Harry A. Franck's classic, *The fringe of the Moslem world* (New York and London, 1928), although the latter book, which is not about linguistics, is very different in purpose, scope, and content.

O.'s meaty introduction addresses the intricate nature of minority languages in general and those of the Arab world in particular (pp. 1–43). He quite rightly notes that in the southern Sudan and Chad, e.g., Arabic is definitely a minority language. According to the statistics given for Chad, a mere 8% of the population of six million speak Arabic as a mother tongue; however, it is important to note that it also serves as a *lingua franca* (called 'inter-ethnic koine' by O.) throughout most of the country (p. 9). (I have explained all of this in detail in my *Chadian and Sudanese Arabic in the light of comparative Arabic dialectology*, Paris and The Hague, 1976.) The editor happily included a utilitarian map of all known Arabic ethnic minorities so that one can truly appreciate the prodigious distance between Mali in the West to Uzbekistan in the East (reminiscent, to be sure, of the geographical spread of the journeys of the master Arab traveller, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa).

Let me now take up the matter of the four shared isoglosses in the two geographically most distant dialects, which O. claims indicate the direct common origin of Afghan and Nigerian Arabic (pp. 9–10). I shall mention the most intriguing isogloss first, the *tanwīn*, *-in* in the former and *-an* in the latter. The vestiges of *tanwīn* have been carefully researched by Joshua Blau in his appendix III, 'Vestiges of Tanwîn in Judaeo-Arabic and Bedouin dialects', in his classic *The emergence and linguistic background of Judaeo-Arabic* (Oxford, 1965, pp. 167–212). Therein he presents a plethora of minute details to support the viewpoint that the *tanwīn* materializes via parallel development rather than through genetic inheritance. Specifically, he maintains:

> the astonishing resemblance of usages in modern Bedouin dialects to Judaeo-Arabic may claim interest even from the point of view of general linguistics … Though Judaeo-Arabic arose from urban dialects as far back as the first Islamic centuries, modern Bedouin dialects many hundreds of years afterwards were affected by almost the same changes as regards the retention of *tanwîn* … (1965, p. 187).

Blau then summarizes the general theoretical stance taken by the last sentence in the appendix: 'And the remarkable fact is not that such differences exist but the surprising extent of parallel features, showing to what degree linguistic development may repeat itself' (ibid., p. 212).

Another isogloss treated is a phonological one, i.e., /θ/ > /s/, as in Afghan Arabic *saloos* 'three' and Nigerian Arabic /*salaasa*/. The only problem with this parallel is that this word in most Nigerian Arabic varieties with which I came in contact in the field was *talaata* (see Alan S. Kaye, *A dictionary of Nigerian Arabic*, Malibu, CA, 1982, p. 80). None of the four features proposed, in my view, amounts to concrete evidence for a common ancestral

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dialect (the other two are: *-ki* '2nd f. sg. pronominal suffix', and doubled verbs with final *-a*, as in classical Arabic). Much more likely are other factors, such as parallel development, already discussed, or general considerations which result from dialects in contact. Besides, Afghan and Nigerian dialects are radically different in so many other regards for one to posit a Proto-Afghan-Nigerian dialect.

Let me now turn to the topic of 'abnormal' (O.'s word, and I quite agree with this terminology) Arabic dialects: Arabic pidgins and creoles (p. 36, n42). Quoting Kaye and Rosenhouse ('Arabic dialects and Maltese', in Robert Hetzron (ed.), *The Semitic languages*, London, 1997, p. 263), O. states: 'Mysteriously, Kaye and Rosenhouse …, without qualification, consider Nubi and Juba Arabic to be dialects of Arabic' (p. 36). Nubi is perhaps better known as Ki-Nubi, the Arabic creole of Kenya and Uganda, and Juba Arabic is the general name for a continuum of Arabic pidgins and creoles spoken not only in and around the city of Juba (on the Nile), but also in Equatoria Province, southern Sudan, in general. Since about 90% of the vocabulary of both can be derived from basilectic Sudanese colloquial ('normal') Arabic dialects, it seems reasonable to conclude that these varieties began as Arabic dialects and remain such, at least diachronically speaking. Let me offer a significant parallel. Assuming that African-American Vernacular English (the current designation for Black English) is a creole (which is the opinion of many specialists), it is nevertheless considered to be English by all linguists. Some, however, still follow the model originally presented by Hugo Schuchardt (in his *Slavo-deutsches und Slavo-italienisches*, Graz, 1884) that *Mischsprachen* do not fit into the *Stammbaumtheorie*, and are thus 'children out of wedlock', so to speak—a perspective I do not consider to be correct. It is true that Ki-Nubi and Juba Arabic are not mutually intelligible with, say, Lebanese or Iraqi Arabic, but neither are the latter with many Moroccan and Algerian Arabic dialects; yet Moroccan and Iraqi would still be considered to be related dialects, whereas I would think a better case can be made for their being categorized as different languages (along the lines of, say, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese—definitely two separate languages by any reasonable taxonomic criteria).

Let me now single out the first three essays which are very historical in orientation, and inform the reader that non-specialists as well as specialists may certainly profit from the insights of these authors. Ignacio Ferrando writes on '[t]he Arabic language among the Mozarebs of Toledo during the 12th and 13th centuries' (pp. 45–63). One of the highlights of this presentation is that there are solid examples of Romance linguistic interference, i.e., substratum and adstratum; e.g., *bīr* 'well (for water)' is masculine rather than feminine, as it is in Arabic (pp. 52–4).

Paul Wexler's 'Arabic as a tool for expressing Jewish and Romani ethnic identity (a prolegomenon to a typology of Arabic in non-Arabic speaking communities)' (pp. 65–87) contains some marvellous examples of Arabic loanwords in which the meanings have been altered from their etymological equivalents in Arabic; e.g., Malay *dharurat*, Bahasa Indonesia *darurat* 'emergency' < *ḍarūra* 'need, obligation' (p. 68). This is, in many ways, reminiscent of a colloquial Arabic word developing out of the meaning of a classical or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) sememe; e.g., *takhrīm* 'take a shortcut' in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic < 'make a hole'. I also endorse the author's use of the term 'Islamic' language (= 'non-Arabic languages spoken by Muslims' (p. 65, and pp. 80–1, n1)) paralleling the well-known designation 'Jewish' language.

Anna Zelkina's 'The Arabic linguistic and cultural traditions in Daghestan: an historical overview' (pp. 89–111) reports of a Daghestani Arabic dialect spoken as late as the 1930s in and around Darvag (p. 100), named after an Arab fortress built in the eighth century, A.D. (p. 108, n39). Unfortunately, this has a typographical error which, in all probability, should read that the information presented is 'according to Yaʿqūbī'.

On a positive note let me conclude that a number of authors have broken new ground in dealing with the ever-vexing problem of loanwords (especially O. in 'Loanwords in Nigerian Arabic' (pp. 259–346), and Fadila Brahimi, 'Loanwords in Algerian Berber' (pp. 371–82)). Although I agree with O. (p. 305) that Nigerian Arabic *tištaqil* 'you work' derives from MSA, *tashtaghil*, I believe that *baẓunn* 'I think' cannot derive from MSA *ʔazunnu* (correct from *ʔaọunnnu* [sic] (ibid.)). Rather, it must derive from the pausal form without final vowel (and the *b*-imperfect is not MSA, as is well known).

ALAN S. KAYE

South Asia

EIVIND KAHRS: *Indian semantic analysis: the 'nirvacana' tradition.* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 55.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

This work will be of interest to those working on (a) Indian grammar and 'etymology'; (b) Indian philosophy and religion; and (c) linguistic and semantic theory—especially to someone working in all three areas.

The subject matter of the book is divided over a preface and six chapters. Chapters ii–v are significant studies in their own right on topics which are not normally investigated in direct connection with each other.

Chapter ii ('Nirvacanaśāstra', 42 pp.) deals with basic notions and principles in Indian semantic analysis (*nirvacana*), and with its

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textual sources: Yāska's Nirukta (*c.* third century B.C.) and its commentaries.

Chapter iii ('Praxis: Śaiva Kashmir', 43 pp.) deals with the interpretations of the name of the Tantric deity Bhairava in Kashmir Śaiva works such as Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* (*c.* 1000 A.D.). As such, it provides a case study of the '*nirvacana* tradition' in action.

In ch. iv ('The universe of Yāska', 77 pp.) the author investigates 'thought patterns representing implicit models that make up the universe of Yāska' (p. 97) by means of a study of 'five clearly distinguishable ways of analysing words' (p. 98). In the hypothetical case of an explanation of the word *megha* 'cloud', Yāska could express its relation with the verbal root *mih* 'make water' in five distinct ways, including the following: *megho mehanāt* with a verbal noun in the ablative; *megho mehateḥ* with an inflected 3rd singular of *mih* in either genitive or ablative; and *meghomehatīti sataḥ*, an elaborate form containing a ptc. of *as* 'to be, exist'. In the case of the second analysis, the question arises as to whether *mehateḥ* should be understood as genitive or ablative. Occasional adjectives in this formula show a few clear genitive cases but also some ablative cases. The last and most elaborate formula is regarded as containing 'a substitutional genitive or what the grammarians call *sthānaṣaṣṭhī*' (p. 173); it is 'superior to any of the others' (ibid.); on its basis, we are able 'to read more into' the simpler formulations such as that with *-teḥ* (p. 174). Hence, all *nirvacana*s would be understandable according to a substitutional model. (With this, the few incontrovertible ablativical formulas remain unaccounted for.)

Chapter v ('Substitution', 93 pp.) is an inquiry into the meaning of the term *sthāna* as it occurs in the discipline of grammar (*vyākaraṇa*). The genitive case marks the specific relation of 'being in the place (*sthāna*) of' (cf. Aṣṭādhyāyī 1.1.49 *ṣaṣṭhī sthāneyogā*), but what does *sthāna* precisely mean and imply? Pāṇinīyas usually take it as amounting to *apakarṣa* 'drawing away', *nivṛtti* 'cancellation' or *prasaṅga* 'possible appearance'. The alternative *artha* 'meaning' is seriously considered by Bhartṛhari (fifth century A.D.), Kaiyaṭa (eleventh century) and Nāgeśa (seventeenth to eighteenth century). One element occurring 'in *sthāna* of' another would here amount to one element occurring 'in the meaning of' another. Though this option is apparently preferred by the author, the *artha* interpretation appears rather as a somewhat far-fetched detour accepted for exegetic motives: in grammar it is basically linguistic forms that are replaced by other linguistic forms which take the morphological or syntactic 'space' of the former; aspects of meaning may be involved as conditions in the replacement.

For considerations, methods and goals regarding the author's wider argument in this book, the preface and chs i ('An outline of strategies', 12 pp.) and vi ('Epilogue', 12 pp.) become crucial. The author states that his wider task is 'the study of another culture' (p. 1), viz. the Indian tradition, mainly on the basis of the available texts. Referring to Quine, the author argues that 'there cannot be determinate meanings'. Hence, we have to turn from the question '*what* something means' to '*how* do we figure out what something or someone means or believes, etc.' (p. 6). In this way, the author arrives at the narrower task he sets for himself: the study of the means of interpretation in the Indian tradition, especially one of these means, viz., 'the device of *nirvacana* analysis' (p. 8).

The final argument as presented in ch. vi ('Epilogue') amounts to the following: (a) Yāska's Nirukta basically uses the genitive to mark the relation between a term and its explanatory expression (cf. ch. iv); (b) in view of the close relation between Nirukta and grammar, this genitive may be understood in accordance with the methodologically well-developed procedure of substitution implied in the grammarian's *sthānaṣaṣṭhī* (cf. ch. v); (c) in the substitutional model arrived at, once we identify *sthāna* 'place' as *artha* 'meaning', the term and its explanatory expression are 'simply alternative placeholders in semantic space', while '*artha* "meaning" is the necessary condition' for the relation between them (p. 269).

The substitutional model underlying *nirvacana*: a) explains how the Nirukta can offer alternative explanations of a single term instead of offering a single preferred explanation; b) suits the thesis of the eternality of language and the Veda: one 'placeholder in semantic space' does not cease to exist if an alternative one is invoked; c) allows one to ascribe new meanings to old terms in a tradition of knowledge and beliefs (as in Kashmir Śaivism); the tradition can hence continue while undergoing change.

One final question (unfortunately not asked by the author himself): does the model arrived at by analysing Yāska's formulas in the light of the grammarians' discussions on *sthānaṣaṣṭhī* suit Yāska's own explicit statements regarding the aims and methods of *nirvacana*? In a fundamental discussion on the discipline, Yāska says (Nirukta 1.12): *nāmāny ākhyātajānīti śākaṭāyana nairuktasamayaś ca*—'nouns are born/derived from verbs: this is what Śākaṭāyana says and it is the view of the "etymologists"'. (The author's translation of this sentence on p. 35 is far-fetched and unconvincing.) And consider Nirukta 2.2: *bhāṣikebhyo dhātubhyo naigamāḥ kṛto bhāṣyante*—'Vedic primary forms are said to be from roots belonging to the colloquial language (*bhāṣā*)'.

The case for a derivational rather than a substitutional model underlying the practice of *nirvacana* in the Nirukta is clearly still strong, since the direct statements in the text should carry more weight than conclusions arrived at through a long detour involving several uncertain steps, including that of a neighbouring discipline and its later representatives. The derivational model is equally suitable to the view of an eternal language (both the roots and their derivatives may be considered eternal elements in the language); it can also accommodate the validity of various explanations for one term and is hence able to give traditions their required flexibility. Various formulas could be accounted for in a derivational model by assuming ellipses of words which Yāska uses in similar contexts: *megho mehater* (abl./gen.) [viz., *kṛt (kṛdantaḥ)/vikāraḥ* …]; *megho mehatīti sataḥ* [viz., *nāmadheyam*].

However, even if the Nirukta itself suggests,

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in the opinion of the reviewer, a derivational rather than a substitutional model (as is clear from the quotations above), the author's investigations are valuable from a theoretical perspective, and they may be more directly applicable in later phases of the *nirvacana* tradition when the influence of Pāṇini's grammar had become paramount in Indian philosophy and religion.

The author's erudition with regard to the diverse subjects he investigates is to be admired. However, a serious mistake appears on p. 21: Kumārila's Ślokavārttika is definitely a commentary, viz. on Jaimini's Mīmāṁsā-Sūtra and Śabara's Bhāṣya (*tarkapāda* section).

J. E. M. HOUBEN

MORIICHI YAMAZAKI and YUMI OUSAKA (comp.): *A pāda index and reverse pāda index to early Pāli canonical texts*: Suttanipāta, Dhammapada, Theragāthā *and* Therīgāthā. 571 pp. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2000.

Following W. Stede and W. B. Bollée's similar indexes of the same four compendia of Pali poetry (Bollée's include references to parallels from the Jain canon: Reinbek, 1980, 1983), and M. Yamazaki and Y. Ousaka's own corresponding compendium for early Jain canonical works (Tokyo, 1995), Yamazaki and Ousaka have now produced an integrated version of the four indexes which they published separately during 1995–98, for Dhammapada (PTS) and for Suttanipāta, Theragāthā and Therīgāthā (*Philologica Asiatica*, Tokyo). Like Bollée's integrated reverse index, it includes amended and emended readings, mainly on grounds of prosody, notably those of Alsdorf and Norman.

For the purpose, computerized versions of the texts, prepared by K. R. Norman, were made available by courtesy of the Pali Text Society. The exercise is seen by the compilers as 'making considerable advances in the compilation of indexes' by using a personal computer (Preface, p. 9). It is difficult to share their opinion: both the programming of the computer and the editing in of alternative readings called for rather more attention to detail than they have received.

A failure to cater in the programming for the rare sequence -*ṃ*+cerebral stop has been noted: the mistake is attributed to 'automatic compilation' (Preface, p. 12). The attempt to programme the reverse pāda index rationally, i.e. in conformity with the normal pāda index, was abandoned as unworkable (ibid.). In the reverse index, *saṃkami* precedes *apakkami* and *c' amhi* comes long after *aniccamhi*. Not surprisingly, there is no provision for a rational placing of those pādas that have been deemed (p. 571) to end in *dhanañ c* (extracted from Th 188 … *cā 'ti*) and in *tāto idh'* (from Thī 430). A correct scansion for the latter (an Āryā which is thus being scanned as *atha maṃ bhaṇati tāto* "*idh'*≠*eva*, *puttaka*, …") was available in Bollée (*tāto*≠"*idh' eva*), but this has been entered separately as an amendment. Here Alsdorf, etc., postulate **bhaṇatī tāto*, but **bhaṇāti tāto* (Pischel, *GrPk*., §514) seems an attractive possibility: the same speaker uses a Prakrit plural *bhātuno*.

Between *dhanañ c* and *tāto idh'* there occurs a ragbag of -*ñ*, -*n*, and -*m* endings. Some are due to 'automatic compilation', but others are plainly the result of human error. Dhp 132c is read as *sukhakāmāni bhūtān*, and the pendant 132d is read as *yo daṇḍena* …, not as -*i yo daṇḍena* …); and Norman has not in fact recommended either the final *mam* (for Th 248d *mama*) or *'ham* (for Thī 441b *'haṃ*) that are explicitly attributed to him.

There is no mention or explanation of the decision to ignore the designation of shortened syllables that the prosodic emendations crucially involve, so that *eka*- and *mayha* are printed instead of Alsdorf's *ĕka*-, *mayhă*. On the other hand, his lengthened *bhaṇatî* is misrepresented as *bhaṇatī*. Beside Thī 408c *taṃ ekavārakaṃ pi disvā* (pp. 59, 340), an emended Āryā opening *ekavārakaṃ pi disvā* is ascribed to Alsdorf and Norman (pp. 95, 340). It is, however, of the essence that Alsdorf's reading is an improbable *ĕkavār*°, and Norman rightly rejects this in his translation and notes in favour of *ēkavar*° (although it is the Alsdorf reading that he registers in his introduction, *EV*, II, 1971, §72d).

This excrescent *taṃ* at the start of 408c is likely to be the key to the missing final syllable in 408b *bhaginiyo bhātuno parijano* (pp. 166, 467), for which the dubiously attested Alsdorf reading … *parijano vā* (pp. 166, 335) is hardly appropriate, especially in view of the *ekavarakaṃ pi* that follows. An accusative reading *bhātuno parijan[aṃ ca]* would seem preferable to that which aligns these masculines with nominative *yā* … *bhagin[ī]yo*. This would readily have produced a Sinhalese misreading **parijataṃ ca*, yielding both the *parija⟨no⟩*‖ *taṃ ekavār*° reading of the text (with suppression of the now misplaced *ca*) and the Pischel reading of the commentary *parija⟨no⟩ tā*‖ *ekavar*° (supplying a correlative for *yā*). The alternatives attest efforts to retain Āryā rhythms: the absurdly conflated *taṃ ekavarakaṃ pi disvā* of the commentary as edited may be quite modern.

Norman is credited with devising yet a third reading *bhaginiyo* … *vā*, i.e. a pointless conflation of Pischel's *bhaginiyo* with Alsdorf's *bhaginîyo* … *vā*. Similarly for Thī 512b (pp. 50, 259), Norman accepts Alsdorf's reading, but he has been quoted as offering an equally unmetrical conflation of Pischel's *padam asokaṃ* with Alsdorf's *padaṃ asokaṃ ca*. He is said to read Thī 111a (prior Vait.) as *puññaṃ vata pasaviṃ bahuṃ*: in fact, he rightly and necessarily reads *vata passavī*. Sn 635a *yassālaya na vijjanti* is adopted (pp. 190, 369), separately from Dhp 411a *yassālayā* …, although Norman has noted that the former can only be a misprint.

The use made of Bollée is equally unhelpful. It is pointless to duplicate (i.e., quadruplicate over the two indexes) the Sn occurrences of the posterior Aup. pāda *urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ* with Bollée's reading *jiṇṇaṃ iva*: Norman's observation that the requisite prosodic length results from *t(v)acaṃ* is preferable in any case. Many duplications, presented as embodying the results of critical study (p. 11), merely reflect Bollée's preference for hyphens.

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Where Bollée does offer an actual emendation ('read *ev' abhi°*' for Sn 1118a), or reports one of Stede's (his excellent **vimuttisukhe … Giribbaje* for Th 545cd), it is overlooked (pp. 62, 566; 210, 453), as is Norman's reiteration of the former proposal.

The prose 'pādas' of Sn 457ff. and 1043–5 are included (but with no reference to Norman's tentative restoration of a Triṣṭubh hemistich, which might seem to justify the procedure). For good measure, the corresponding Anuṣṭubh hemistich of 1046 has been entered both as one and as two pādas. (Sn 457–8 seems to be misunderstood by both commentator and translators: the verses present themselves and make sense as a continuation of the Buddha's speech, and they make very little sense as a dialogue; nor is it necessary to follow the commentator in translating *tassa* in 459a as *mayhaṃ*.)

It can hardly be doubted that the Computer Centre of the University of Tübingen (for one) could have provided for this exercise a consistent indexing programme, based on Bollée's card-index procedures, just as it did for the normal, reverse, and context indexing of every word in *Brahmapurāṇa*. As Norman has recognized in his index of alternative readings for Thī (1971, 197–9), a distinction has to be made between substantial alternative readings and mere orthographic and prosodic variants. The compilers have preferred instead to demonstrate with how little effort indexes can be put together using a personal computer. The result is no doubt largely serviceable, but for accuracy and certainty of retrieval, one would be wise to abide by Stede and Bollée.

J. C. WRIGHT

LESLIE GREY: *A concordance of Buddhist birth stories.* Third edition. xiii, 622 pp. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2000. £50.

Of making concordances to Buddhist birth stories there is probably no end, especially once one has moved beyond the accustomed readership of the Pali Text Society to address all those interested in the several oceans worth of stories found in Asian folk literature, or yet further in folk stories worldwide. So the year 2000 would seem as good a point as any for Leslie Grey to announce that we may expect no further editions of his own work, and quite an understandable one in view of his having lived through all but 16 years of the preceding century. All students of folklore will doubtless wish him many happy years of retirement from his post-retirement labours.

His third edition modestly reprints (p. vii) no more than the 'introduction' to his second edition, without giving any further data on how far he has now expanded his enterprise beyond the first edition. But the more than 50 extra pages, including a new concordance to birth stories in Malalasekera's *Dictionary of Pāli proper names*, and the helpful redeployment of the list of 'Abbreviations' (pp. x–xiii) to the front of the book, show that the author has expended considerable further thought on his creation as well as expanded his references, while the use of a lighter weight paper has actually reduced the third edition in size once more to something resembling his first effort.

A gain in utility, of course, does not mean that this volume has come all that much closer to the state of perfection we all hope to see in works of reference but scarcely ever find. Some old errors plainly remain uncorrected, while others have been introduced into materials formerly free from mistakes, to say nothing of lapses in the materials now added. A glance at a sample page (p. 602, in the 'Bibliography') reveals that the publisher 'Rutledge' still mars the entry on D. T. Suzuki, while J. Takakusu's personal name suffers twice a truncation unprecedented in the second edition; this truncation itself attracts a new entry on p. 589. There is a second entry under the name Kazuko Tanabe, but it bears neither volume number nor date; it should read *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 39/2, 1991.

As it happens, Tanabe has published rather extensively on Buddhist birth stories, and continues to do so, most recently in connection with the unique elements in the Thai collection of 50 stories equivalent to that published from Burma by P. S. Jaini through the Pali Text Society in 1981 and 1983. Since, moreover, neither Hiroko Ikeda's type index to Japanese literature nor Ting Nai-t'ung's Chinese equivalent (published by the Finnish Academy of Sciences in 1971 and 1978 respectively) have been consulted in the course of Grey's labours, there would seem to be plenty of room for some enterprising scholar in East Asia to supplement the volume under review with a much fuller consideration of East Asian sources, primary and secondary—and, in order for us all to benefit to the full, may they have as long and as productive a career as Leslie Grey himself.

T. H. BARRETT

JINADASA LIYANARATNE: *Buddhism and traditional medicine in Sri Lanka.* (Kelaniya University Anniversary Series, 1.) xix, 360 pp. Dalugama, Kelaniya: Kelaniya University, 1999.

A comprehensive study of the history and development of traditional medicine in Sri Lanka has long been a desideratum because of the historic connection between medicine and Buddhism. When the form of early Buddhism known as Theravāda travelled from India to Sri Lanka, medicine, as part of the Buddhist monastic tradition, was transported with it. It found fertile ground and flourished in the Buddhist communities on the island. The Buddhist scriptures preserved as palm-leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka are largely untapped sources which can give an understanding not only of the relationship between medicine and early Buddhism but also of the influences on Sri Lankan medicine from both South Indian Siddha medicine and indigenous medicine.

Buddhism and traditional medicine in Sri Lanka sheds much light on these topics and demonstrates that Buddhism has played a

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crucial role in the development of medicine first in India and then in Sri Lanka. The book begins with an introduction, explaining its purpose and organization. This is followed by 15 independent articles published in a variety of places from 1987 to 1996. Most of the original articles have been revised with updated information and four entirely new contributions have been written for the volume.

For some reason, only the following articles, originally published in the *Journal of the European Āyurvedic Society*, have not been revised: 'Sri Lankan medical manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford', 'Ravigupta's *Siddhasāra*: new light from the Sinhala version', 'The *Abhinava Mādhavanidāna* of Rājaguru Kavicandra', and 'Plant names and phytomorphological terminology in Āyurveda science'. The revised articles include: 'Buddhism and traditional medicine in Sri Lanka', 'Indian medicine in Sri Lanka', 'A Pāli canonical passage of importance for the history of Indian medicine', 'Sri Lankan medical manuscripts—an untapped source of Ayurvedic research', 'Sri Lankan medical manuscripts in Paris', 'South Asian flora as reflected in the twelfth-century Pāli lexicon *Abhidhānappadīpikā*', and 'Bloodletting: a traditional therapy used in Sri Lanka'. The new contributions are the following: 'Historical relations between South India and Sri Lanka in the fields of health and medicine', 'Nosology in Āyurveda: data from a Pāli canonical text', 'Remedies for snakebite: a Bodleian Library manuscript', and 'Plant names in the *Vesaturudā-sanne*, Sinhala commentary to the Pāli Vessantara Jātaka'.

As with most collections of essays, continuity is a major problem. Superimposing an artificial structure for the articles is an attempt at cohesion. The articles are organized around the following topics: introductory/historical, sources, texts, plants, and therapeutics. Unfortunately, the structure is hidden and an overall unity is wanting, as each article remains an individual contribution.

Each essay printed in this volume makes an important contribution to the history of medicine in Sri Lanka often by bringing to light previously unknown information gleaned from original manuscripts. The longest, 'South Asian flora as reflected in the twelfth-century Pāli lexicon *Abhidhānappadīpikā*', was originally published in the *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* (1994, pp. 43–161). It is especially significant because it contains a very useful alphabetical list of Pāli plant names. Such detailed studies of technical terminology are essential for the ongoing work of Pāli studies and lexicography.

The volume lacks an index which would have provided an essential word list for the subject-matter and a means to (re-)enter the various topics treated in the individual articles. The book must be viewed as a collection of articles written by Jinadasa Liyanaratne over a 12-year period. If the author had wanted to produce a coherent history of traditional medicine in Sri Lanka, he would have had to write another book.

KENNETH G. ZYSK

DAUD ALI (ed.): *Invoking the past: the uses of history in South Asia.* xii, 399 pp. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. £16.99.

With the growing power of the Hindu Right in India, and its constant claims to create a polity based on the ancient Hindu culture, contemporary social and historical research cannot ignore the critical uses to which the past has been put, where history writing itself has become an intensely contested terrain. *Invoking the past* undertakes the task of examining the ways in which the past has been represented in South Asia, crucially tied to contests over ideology and power on the one hand and to the formation of social identities on the other. In the process, the collection scrutinizes history itself as a discipline. In his introduction, Daud Ali outlines the broad thematic areas that form the recurring concerns of the essays in this volume. He effectively argues that the past is not a given entity, but can have different meanings spatially, through different social locations, across time, and for various classes. While this recognition of varied readings of the past and uses to which history writing has been put is a leitmotif running through the book, it is extraordinarily diverse in terms of temporal and geographical location. In fact, the wide time span covered in the book is a useful corrective, as it does not assume that the discursive production of the past is a result of colonialism or nationalism alone; rather the book undertakes an impressive array of studies of pre-colonial South Asia.

The first of the three sections explores the implications of the linguistic classification of India in the nineteenth century. It begins with Romilla Thapar's competent essay on theories of Aryan race, highlighting the Dalit and Hindutva versions of it, which in the process attempt to grapple with issues of their own identities. The next essay by Thomas Trautmann ambitiously and effectively brings out the differences between Sanskrit and 'Dravidian' languages, dismantling a view of linguistic identity of the past, particularly upheld by some Orientalists, according to which all languages of north and south derived from Sanskrit. Dilip Menon picks up two texts of E. M. S. Nambudiripad in the twentieth century, and through them attempts to show how, being a Marxist, he negotiated his Nambudiri identity at a time when Brahmins were under considerable attack in South India.

Section 2 brings to light how history and the uses of the past are context bound. Many historians previously have highlighted Hindu nationalist agendas for the Indian past, with explicit notions of an ancient golden age and medieval Muslim darkness. The papers here study a variety of texts written in the nineteenth century, like history textbooks, 'Hindu' science manuals, popular medical treatises, travelogues, etc. These writings were not only responses of the Indian elite to anxieties of colonialism or engagements with the West, but also reflections of the nuances and social layers of an internally embedded critique of the past. They further reveal that nationalist historiography was as

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much engaged with questions of power as was colonial historiography.

Avril Powell discusses the writing of history textbooks, where both Hindus and Muslims aimed to fulfil the interests of their own respective communities. In another essay, Peter van der Veer argues that there appears to be very little difference between Indian and Hindu nationalism. Two essays deal with science and medicine, taking on board both the 'high' and 'popular' versions of it. David Arnold writes of the Hindu elites' engagement with science, while Kavita Sivaramakrishnan analyses Mohan Singh Vaid and his concern with promoting ayurvedic medicine, combined with moral advice, among the masses. While an ancient golden past was ascribed by both, it had different, even contradictory perspectives. In the first case, there seemed an overwhelming concern with the ancient ancestry of Hindu science, combined with Hindu nationalism. In the second case, the past was used to give sustenance to a public campaign, mainly addressed to a regionally specific audience. The next essay by Kumkum Chatterjee discusses travel accounts, and how the emergence of nationalist historiography transformed the experience of space and time through the medium of travel. Taken together, the essays in this section help to indicate the precursors to the more aggressive politicized Hinduism in the twentieth century, as well as the limits of the communalization of history in nineteenth-century India.

It is the final section of the book which really breaks new ground, as less has been said about the pre-colonial means of apprehending the past. It begins with a probe into the Mughal imperial desire to authorize the writing of historical accounts. Sudipto Sen suggests that a conception of temporality was at work in the historical writings of Mughal India, which simultaneously reflected the relationship of historicity to ideas of empire during the late medieval period. Michael Aktor explores the notion of time to be derived from reading the *dharmaśāstra*. Specifically, he addresses how *smṛti* records present the ideology of *varṇa-saṁkara* (mixed caste) in the light of a past. Sanjay Subramaniam's fine essay explores the multiple meanings in any particular history, and through a close examination of two eighteenth-century historical narratives in South India, shows that indigenous historical writing very much existed in early modern South Asia. Jonathan S. Walter's essay is the only one that breaks the monopoly of India in this volume, and perhaps provides some justification for the use of the term 'South Asia' in the title of the book. Last but not least, William Pinch's delightful contribution takes on the fluctuating hagiography of Nabhadas of Galta in the sixteenth century, thereby examining the historiography of the *Bhaktamālā*, 'the garland of the faithful', since its inception as a poetic inventory of Vaishnava devotees.

The range of essays drawn from various regions and times offer a rich harvest for one volume. However, while the large area covered is the strength of the book, in some senses it is also its limitation, as most of the essays are inconsistent, making it all the more difficult to reach wider conclusions. Further, the focus of almost all the essays is largely on textual accounts and traditions. Perhaps a study of oral narratives, songs, proverbs and practices would have offered a different facet of looking at the past. Nonetheless, the book offers a rich and many-layered interpretation of the uses to which the past has been put, enriching our understanding of history. It effectively reveals why and how the past is invoked in order to grapple and delineate with both the self and the community, and how it always remains a contested terrain, deployed to fulfil a variety of complementary and contradictory agendas.

CHARU GUPTA

INDU BANGA (ed.): *Five Punjabi centuries: polity, economy, society and culture, c. 1500–1900, essays for J. S. Grewal.* 629 pp., pl. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997.

J. S. GREWAL: *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (revised edition). (The New Cambridge History of India, vol. II, part 3.) xxv, 277 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. £32.50, $52.95.

J. S. GREWAL: *Contesting interpretations of the Sikh tradition.* 315 pp. New Delhi: Manohar, 1993. Rs 500.

History has been the unquestioned central discipline of Sikh studies in the later decades of the twentieth century, and for most of this period Sikh historical studies have been dominated by two scholars who both received their doctoral training in the SOAS History Department. One of these is W. H. McLeod, whose thesis was supervised by the late A. L. Basham. In its published form as *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh religion* (Oxford, 1968), its questioning of the historical basis of the received accounts of Sikh origins rapidly achieved a lasting notoriety amongst many Sikh circles for its author which has continued to govern the reception of many of his later works (see *BSOAS* 54, 1991, 184–6).

The other dominant figure in the field is that of McLeod's senior contemporary J. S. Grewal. His SOAS supervisor was Peter Hardy, under whom he completed a Ph.D. in 1963 which was later published as *Muslim rule in India: the assessments of British historians* (Oxford, 1970). It was, however, as an historian of the Panjab and of the Sikhs in such books as *Guru Gobind Singh: a biographical study* (with S. S. Bal, Chandigarh, 1967) and *Guru Nanak in history* (Chandigarh, 1969) and numerous other works including important editions of Persian and other historical sources that Grewal was to establish a formidable reputation leading to a distinguished career, for many years as Professor of History at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (which included a term of office as Vice-Chancellor), and in numerous other very active capacities since his superannuation.

The substantial Festschrift *Five Punjabi centuries*, containing 30 papers arranged under

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the four headings of the subtitle and edited by Grewal's most distinguished pupil Indu Banga, opens with her chapter on 'J. S. Grewal: the historian'. Along with the accompanying bibliography of his works, this reveals the scope, variety and quality of his scholarly oeuvre, as well as recording for our enjoyment numerous illuminating details, e.g., like Hardy's remark that 'Grewal goes through Persian like butter', or the comment by Mrs Hardy when she saw her husband was late and knowing how their supervisions used to run over time that it 'must have been Grewal'. The pleasure of Banga's graceful tribute is enhanced by several teasing acknowledgements in her notes to a typescript 'J. S. Grewal, historian' by W. H. McLeod, whose controversial reputation apparently prevented the publication of a paper bearing his name in a volume whose contributors include such distinguished names from India, Pakistan and the United States: Muzaffar Alam, B. N. Goswamy, Imran Ali, Gerald Barrier, and the late Attar Singh and Kenneth Jones.

A scholarly reputation capable of drawing such a list of willing contributors made Grewal the obvious choice to contribute the volume on *The Sikhs of the Punjab* for the new Cambridge History of India which was very well received when first published in hardback in 1990. If any reminder was needed of the extraordinarily difficult circumstances in which Grewal, like other senior Sikh academics, had to operate in the crisis-ridden years of the 1980s it was provided in the sombre final sentence—'The stalemate continues'—with which that version concluded. It has now been replaced by the 1998 paperback which, besides updating the chronological table and the bibliography, takes the Panjab story down to 1997, when Grewal felt able to conclude that 'the future of the Sikhs of the Punjab is closely linked up with the nature and functioning of the Indian federation in the future'.

Not the least of Grewal's many achievements has been his ability to hold the scholarly middle ground in Sikh studies at a time when polarized positions have often been too hastily adopted and too reluctantly abandoned. All those who have been attending the international conferences and workshops on Sikh studies which have been held over the last 20 years will readily recall occasions when heated confrontations were cooled by his statesmanlike interventions. Readers now have the benefit of, as it were, a full recording of the familiar tones of his magisterially reasoned voice in *Contesting interpretations of the Sikh tradition*. After an extended account in the first part of the book of the understandings of Sikhism developed by Western and Sikh scholars in the colonial period, Grewal provides a masterfully balanced overview of the developments in Sikh studies in recent decades which have revolved around understandings and misunderstandings of the work of McLeod, of his pupils Pashaura Singh and Harjot Oberoi, and of other like-minded scholars. Much may be learnt both from Grewal's reasoned defence of the necessary role of rational knowledge in the field, and from his temperate survey of position adopted by McLeod's fiercest critics, led by Daljeet Singh, Gurdev Singh and Jagjit Singh, and the book will certainly be required reading for anyone seriously concerned with or for Sikh studies.

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

JOHN DREW: *India and the romantic imagination* (Oxford India Paperbacks.) xvi, 305 pp. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998. Rs 360.

At the beginning of ch. vi of *India and the romantic imagination*, reissued in the Oxford India Paperbacks series, John Drew quotes Abbe Dubois in *Hindu manners, customs and ceremonies*: 'Were Hindu literature better known to us, it is possible that we should find that we have borrowed from it the romantic style of our days, which some find so beautiful and others so silly' (p. 183). Dubois's comment provides an explanatory rationale for Drew's own attempts to trace the European literary tendency to idealize India. In this book, he offers what he describes as a history of 'the metaphorical or metaphysical passage to India begun by the Greeks', and the image of literal and figural passages to and from India provides a structuring motif as the book progresses.

Drew is concerned with East-West links and influences, especially as they manifest themselves in romantic writing. He begins by tracing the philosophical relationship between notions of transcendence and enlightenment found in Plotinus and in the Upanishads, as it appears in E. M. Forster's early short story 'The road from Colonus'. From there we move to *A passage to India*, which Drew sees as belonging within the broad romantic tradition he describes. In reading Forster's most famous novel, he argues for the idiosyncratic and controversial figure of Professor Godbole, Forster's spokesman, as an 'ideal sage' whose brand of Advaita Hinduism merges with Plotinus's idea of the inseparable interdependence of good and evil. (In fact, this rejection of Christianity's fundamental dualism—a shaping feature of the Western intellectual tradition—is central to the claims made throughout the book for what Drew describes as the 'Neo-Platonic Orientalism' characteristic of the romantics. It recurs in the later interpretation of the resolution of Shelley's *Prometheus unbound*, where warring antinomies are reconciled in an idyll claimed to be reminiscent of pre-Vedic society in India.) Characters in *A pasage to India* are likewise read in terms of this Neoplatonist scheme. They are seen to expose the falsity of looking outward to the material world and the need to follow the valorized figures, Professor Godbole and Mrs Moore, by turning inward to the life of the spirit.

Drew argues that Asian mysticism can be approached through Platonism to offer a way of understanding romantic conceptions of the imagination. A line is described linking Hindu, Greek and Roman myths with the ideas of Pythagoras and Apollonius, the legends of Alexander the Great, the writings of William Jones—the father of Orientalism—and the work of the 'High Romantics' Coleridge and Shelley. Quoting Apuleius, Drew summarizes

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what Pythagoras is supposed to have learned from the Brahmins:

> What are the rules and principles of the understanding; what the functions of the body; how many are the faculties of the soul, how many the mutations of life; what torments and rewards devolve upon the souls of the dead according to their respective deserts … (p. 136).

From at least the time of Alexander the Great, the Western notion of a 'mystic East' was sustained by stories of Indian asceticism. Indeed, Hindu and Buddhist spirituality impressed its paradigms on Christianity to such an extent that there is a close correlation between Indian asceticism and the idea of paradise in medieval Europe—so much so that maps sometimes located paradise in or near India. Indeed, European interest in this cosmology—and, hence, mystical geography—continued via the work of men such as William Jones until the time of Macaulay, when such views were superseded by the more chilly utilitarian requirements of imperial nationalism.

Rounding off his comprehensively researched thesis by examining two emblematic romantic texts—Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and Shelley's *Prometheus unbound*—Drew shows how both construct a magical oriental landscape apparently suggested by descriptions of Kashmir. He also suggests a shared knowledge of earlier accounts, such as those of Jones, Marco Polo, Purchas's *Pilgrimes* and Bernier's *Voyages*. However, such claims for influence are sometimes based on optimistic assertion rather than documentary proof. The search for influences is, as Drew admits, always likely to be speculative: evidence for Indian influence on Pythagoras, for example, remains inconclusive. In the Coleridge chapter this results in a shift of focus from the circumstances of the writing to a more subjective 'reading into' *Kubla Khan* of Indian features. The book sometimes substitutes the merely tentative for the historical and biographical, as when we are told, 'Coleridge *may* have been aware of the existence' of the goddess Sarasvati' (my emphasis). To be fair, Drew points out that 'influence' is less significant than his central idea that romantic imaginative literature is a manifestation of the same quest for the 'visionary state' as is found in religion.

Yet this rather uncertain attempt to reconcile biographical, philosophical and mystical interpretations resurfaces once more in the 'Afterword', where it is applied to a short story by the Welsh writer Alun Lewis who was killed in the Second World War. Lewis's 'The earth is a syllable' takes its title and themes from the Upanishads' concern with the stages of enlightenment a man may undergo in the moments before death. The story tells of a dying soldier's experience of these stages whereby the personal becomes the impersonal or universal self. Drew then reads Lewis's poignant last letters home in the light of this philosophy, advancing the giddy argument that he foresaw his own death and transcribes it in the story.

In this era of post-structuralism and clinical materialism in approaches to literature it is refreshing to come across a critic who still believes that literature can and should concern itself with the transcendent. However, Drew's use of the metaphysical sometimes slides rather too easily between the literal and metaphorical poles. Things become rather spooky when it is suggested that,

> There is another, conceptually more difficult, way of speaking of … [Lewis's] prescience, and that is to say that in the last moments of his life Lewis achieved such enlightenment that he was able to go back through time to write his story (p. 293).

At the end of his densely argued and culturally ambidextrous, if sometimes quixotic study, Drew may feel that he has accrued enough non-dualist capital to abandon altogether the discourses of conventional academic analysis in favour of what he calls earlier, quoting Coleridge, 'abstruser musings'. The hardy reader who has stayed with him thus far, being alternately exhilarated by the undoubted erudition and frustrated by the telescopic sentences in which it is sometimes conveyed, might beg to differ.

Idiosyncrasies aside, Drew has given us a cogent account of how India's cultural traditions have offered a correlative to the power and distinctive qualities of the imagination in romantic writing. Likewise, even if his methodologically apolitical book does not really 'go some way … to meeting Edward Said's demand for a more "libertarian" approach to the subject of Orientalism', as he claims on p. xii, it nevertheless extends our understanding of the powerful philosophical crosscurrents which have shaped the East-West encounter.

PETER MOREY

RUMINA SETHI: *Myths of the nation: national identity and literary representation.* viii, 221 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. £40.00.

The role of imaginative literature in the rise and growth of Indian nationalism is a subject that has not been served well by any full-length monographs over the years. This has been due, on the one hand, to a liberal humanist orthodoxy within Indian literary studies that has policed a rigorous separation of literature from politics and, on the other, to a general lack of quality and/or critical engagement, which has produced many general surveys of novels that have 'expressed' or 'reflected' Indian national sentiment, but little by way of comment, analysis or explication. Indeed, the only high-quality full-length study of the contribution of literature to Indian nationalism has been written by a political scientist, and not a literary critic—Sudipta Kaviraj, in his magnificent study of Bankim's writings in *The unhappy consciousness*. On this score, Rumina Sethi's book marks a welcome break from this rather dispiriting tradition. Moreover, it has the advantage of being one of the few books to have tackled in critical detail that seminal book within the Indian-English fictional discourse, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*.

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This is both the book's strength and its ultimate weakness. Despite the grand pretensions of the subtitle, Sethi concentrates almost entirely on this one novel and, whilst this provides ample scope for commentary on one of the most important Indian novels written in English, it nevertheless restricts her when it comes to relating the literary to the political, as her title promises. Such singular attention to one text is not, in itself, a methodological problem. However, without proper historical contextualization, this can compromise attempts to link elements within the text to the events, ideas and developments that constituted its historical and political context. Often, points are made which demand an explication that would have been best provided by a look at the history of Indian nationalism and its ideological development up to that point in the 1930s, when Rao completed his masterpiece. Unfortunately, these are very rarely followed up so that one is left unsure as to how any particular ideological problematic that Sethi claims is addressed by the novel actually came about. Conversely, without such background information, linkages between the text and its political context can often strike one as overstretched, if not tenuous.

One may take, for example, the point that Sethi makes in the introduction 'Narratives of nationalism' that '[t]he rhetoric of nationalism in India has always built on Hindu iconography since Hindus are in the majority' (p. 28). This both simplifies and obscures a complex ideological history in which Hindu iconography was kept in precarious balance with other, more secular and inclusive, visions of Indian identity. Without an awareness of this history, Sethi actually loses a potentially significant dimension to her otherwise very valid argument that, in *Kanthapura*, Gandhian ideology co-exists with a chauvinistic Brahminism. Gandhi's ideological reconceptualization of Indian identity was itself a response to the ideological problems of the earlier 'composite' idea, and was complicitous with it. Inevitably, therefore, there were latent tendencies within Gandhism which, when articulated by a South Indian Brahmin such as Rao, made it especially prone to rearticulation in such Hindu nationalistic terms. Whilst the literary-critical aspects of the book are strong (though one may argue over several points of interpretation), lack of proper historical contextualization ultimately leaves one slightly disappointed, partly because the book sets up expectations which are not satisfied.

As a whole, in fact, the book is uneven. Arranged in three parts, the first two parts are generally good: the chapters on Rao's 'nativization' of English for ideological purposes, and those on its representations of peasants and women are, for the most part, perceptive and full of insight, and these are worthy additions to the critical corpus on *Kanthapura*. By contrast, the final part, which does not address *Kanthapura* but rather Rao's later novels, left this reader a little confused as to its function and purpose. The idea seems to be to make connections between the formulation of nationalist ideologies and current political problematics. However, making the work of one single writer representative of the ideological history of this period presents significant methodological problems given that there was a hiatus of two and half decades between *Kanthapura* and Rao's next novel; that India had achieved independence; and that the politics of independent India has changed dramatically in the 50 years since (from Congress-sponsored state socialism, through the Indira Gandhi years, then the collapse of Congress, and now the rise of the BJP on the one hand, and the Dalits on the other). A primary focus on this wider history may well have provided some insights into Rao's later work, but the opposite approach does nothing to significantly illuminate India's troubled post-colonial political history. Rather, it exaggerates the problems raised above concerning the relation between Sethi's readings of the novels and the wider ideological problems she wishes to address.

Myths of the nation, then, represents something of a missed opportunity. Whilst it is undoubtedly an important contribution to the literary critical discourse on Indian writing in English, and should be read for its detailed analysis of one of Indian-English fiction's greatest novels, it nevertheless fails to deliver on its stated intention of using literature to provide 'evidence germane to the understanding of history' (p. 36). In this regard, it is slightly one-dimensional.

ANSHUMAN MONDAL

HARIVANSH RAI BACHCHAN: *In the afternoon of time: an autobiography.* Edited and translated from the Hindi by Rupert Snell. 498 pp. Delhi: Viking, 1998. Rs 595.

The four volumes of autobiographical prose by the well-known Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan (b. 1907), have been deftly cast into one by Rupert Snell. The narrative sets in at the turn of the twentieth century. It is located in Allahabad, which was fast becoming the centre of nationalist as well as of literary activity in the Hindi-speaking belt. Harivansh Rai belonged to the generation of poets who followed immediately upon the famous Chhayavadi poets who had first introduced a new subjectivity into Hindi lyrics but who had, to all appearances, remained well within the bounds of social conventions. Harivansh Rai spoke for the newly awakened, rebellious youth of the 1930s. His popularity can be judged from the following incident. The newly famous young poet finds himself rudely awakened from troubled sleep on board his train home. He is rushing back after an evening poetry-reading session in a packed university hall.

> Railway staff were walking between the station and the train with lanterns, others were standing around the body in the first glow of morning light. I saw to my horror that it was my friend from Bareilly. His head and one hand had been cut off and his face was smeared with blood: but there was no mistaking the coat that wrapped the torso that was lying there (pp. 182–3).

It was the youth who had followed his reading with such intense concentration that

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the poet felt that he was reading to him alone. If he had not set off a wave of suicides, as had the young Goethe when his Werther allowed disappointment in love to carry him to a godless death, Bachchan seemed to have touched a similar nerve among his contemporaries in the 1930s. His slim volume of poetry, *Madhúsālā* or *The Tavern* (1935), originally comprising 75 verses modelled on Fitzgerald's 'Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam', which he had translated into Hindi just a year before, had set a trend which was to last until well into the 1970s. The poems defied the social conventions of the day; they questioned the ritual and the authority of temple and mosque; they scorned the power of the wealthy and they rose above caste and religious difference: 'O Muslim, Hindu—faiths are two, /But one the brimming cup you share; /And one the drinking house, and one/ The wine which flows so freely there' (p. 163). They claimed an almost primordial socialism for those who frequented the Tavern; they were suffused with dimly nationalist tones, while transcending all these elements in the joy of a wine which was distilled out of pure poetry and melancholy. They spoke directly to the youth of the day, with all the heady hedonism, all the delight in defiance of Fitzgerald's verse, with none of his sombreness: 'For in the marketplace one dusk of day/I watch'd the potter thumping his wet clay/And with its all obliterated tongue/ It murmur'd—"gently, brother, gently, pray!"'

Bachchan used a simple, lilting, lightly sanskritized Hindi, with just a hint of Persian. His language could not have come into being without the efforts of the great Chhayavadi poets before him, yet its diction was the creation of a new defiance and iconoclasm. His light and swift verse caught the spirit of an age when the generally more sober long-term tactics of resistance employed by Gandhi were being overlaid and offset by a wave of terrorism which created new spaces for youth in as yet unexplored ways. Ajneya, Jainendra and Yashpal, to name the most prominent of the Hindi writers of the day, would investigate the erotic tensions and romantic relationships which came into being alongside and within these underground activities. Bachchan's poems caught and reflected the strong impulse to hurl headlong into the new. Little wonder that the first volume of his reminiscences, written almost three decades later, between 1963 and 1969, excited a storm of interest and underwent four reprints in two years.

The poems emerge from the intense experience of the series of triangular relationships within which the poet seemed to function best. Bachchan conveys their complexity directly and yet with admirable restraint. The (homo)eroticism of the childhood friendship with Karkal, the beautiful and sensitive Brahmin youth who lived near him—intensely and vividly sketched in the brief space allotted to the relationship—was extended to include Champa, Karkal's vivacious young bride. Karkal died an early death, leaving behind a young widow, soon to be with child by the friend who seldom left her side. The matter was taken care of but Champa retreated from the public eye as she also did from the poet. She died almost immediately, leaving behind desolation and despair. After some time Bachchan was married to Shyama who could only be intermittently present in his life. She suffered from intestinal tuberculosis and was forced to retire at regular intervals to her paternal home. It was the friendship with Srikrishna, who resembled Karkal and encouraged his poetry, and a young woman called Rani, who was living underground and who seemed to move with a sexual freedom remarkable for the times, that finally made for a relationship which fostered creativity. It was in their midst that he wrote his poetry and recited it. Poetical connections were in fact closely intertwined with his most important relationships. When his own Shyama died, Bachchan was at pains to point out that she had long nurtured a special relationship with his friend Muktaji: 'She had a love affair with him in the Chhayavadi manner, one that I knew all about and understood'.

What is remarkable about these relationships is that they emerge from an environment, which was more rural than urban, in the neighbourhood of Allahabad, itself only a middle-sized town. The leisurely pace of the narrative, beginning with local lore about the origin of the Kayasth clan into which the poet was born and the colourful personalities who lived on in family memory, settles down to yet another register of almost ethnographical precision in order to describe in wonderful detail the houses and families in the lanes of the mohalla. When a particular house changes hands, with a Muslim family making way for the new Hindu owners, the inscription on the doorway meant to scare off the ghosts who also live in the house also changes from a Koranic verse to one from a popular Hindu scripture. It is almost as if the ghosts change religious affiliations with the change of ownership. And thus in a myriad of largely unconflicted ways, the Hindu and the Muslim are layered over one another. The narrative picks up speed later when the larger world of Allahabad, the seat of the Nehru family and increasingly the site of nationalist politics, begins to enter the life of the poet. The city has become the centre of the Hindi literary world and the university has a sizeable English as well as a Hindi department.

The second volume of the autobiography still bears traces of this life and this urgency, but, not surprisingly, the prose does tend to become more staid. The poet wanders in and out of a series of jobs before finally settling down to life with Teji, a young and dynamic woman from the Panjab, who proceeds to run his life to sure social and professional success. In the years immediately after independence, she bears him two sons, and he goes to Cambridge to get his Ph.D. in English literature.

The third volume describes his visit to England, recording the details of this fresh cultural encounter, while the fourth volume is possibly the least vital being a documentation of events and institutions, very near the seat of power in the heart of bureaucratic Delhi. It circles around life with the Nehrus and those who surround them. In the mid-seventies Indira Gandhi and her son unleash a state of emergency on an unwilling nation. Ironically, these

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are also the years of the greatest popularity of the poet's son Amitabh in the Bombay film.

Rupert Snell has judiciously abridged the last volumes, so that the first volume has indeed the greatest share—nearly half the distribution of pages between the four. Harivansh Rai Bachchan has been fortunate in finding so sensitive, discerning and creative a translator, alive to the nuance of word and wordplay in both Hindi and English. The volume will not only enrich the small library of Hindi literary works in translation. Hopefully, it will also lead those who can read Hindi to the early poetry of Bachchan and the first volumes of his autobiography in their original language.

VASUDHA DALMIA

BRIAN A. HATCHER: *Eclecticism and modern Hindu discourse.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. £32.50.

This book, the author tells us, was originally planned as a 'timely and provocative essay' on eclecticism in the history of religions. It might have done better to stay that way; as it is, it is a rambling set of reflections on religion, literature, architecture and other matters, held together by a metaphor which represents a system of thought as a home which a person constructs or adapts. It is a great disappointment after the author's solidly researched *Idioms of improvement: Vidyasagar and cultural encounters in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1996).

The book claims to apply postmodern critical theory to nineteenth-century and twentieth-century South Asia. It takes as one of its starting points Agehananda Bharati's 'The Hindu renaissance and its apologetic patterns' (*Journal of Asian Studies* 39, 1970, 267–87), together with Paul Hacker's far more scholarly investigations of the discontinuity between modern Hindu discourse and the Sanskrit tradition. Against these is placed Salman Rushdie's rejection of the demand for authenticity. An argument begins to emerge in the last few pages, where it is proposed that discourse should be judged pragmatically—not on how authentic it is, but on how far it helps people to feel at home (using the recurrent metaphor), and encourages them to behave well towards each other. But most of the time there is little attempt to lead the reader through an argument; instead, the author introduces arbitrary references with 'One is reminded of …'; and observes belatedly on p. 140, 'But I digress'.

Chapter v contains an important piece of work on the Brahmo thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century and their reliance on experience or *anubhava* as a criterion of truth. There is also an amusing account of the Parliament of Religions, marred by a novelistic treatment of Vivekananda. Elsewhere, we find a comparison between Calcutta and Alexandria as eclectic cities, an observation that Vivekananda follows John Stuart Mill in finding truth, not error, in the positions of others, and a well-founded remark that Vivekananda in Chicago 'had to be an authentic Hindu, even if it meant making it up as he went along'. But these interesting points are not developed.

What argument there is, is vitiated at several points by a pre-modern assumption that words have fixed meanings. Thus, eclecticism itself is taken to be an entity whose nature must be investigated, together with the related concepts of syncretism and synthesis, by examining its occurrence in Hellenistic Alexandria, in eighteenth-century France, in nineteenth-century Bengal and elsewhere. Similarly, in one of the digressions which follow the author's interest in architecture, all the forms of house which in different times and places have been called 'bungalow' are lumped together as 'the bungalow', and its nature investigated. Part of this investigation rests on an assumption that because the word *veranda* is of Portuguese origin, the thing did not exist in India before 1498. The author's interest in words does not save him from howlers such as 'epigram' for 'epigraph', *praeparatio evangelicum*, and *gloriaram*.

DERMOT KILLINGLEY

Central Asia

DOUGLAS Q. ADAMS: *A dictionary of Tocharian B.* (Leiden Studies in Indo-European 10.) xxxiv, 830 pp. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi. Hfl. 350, US$190.

This is a book that deserves an enthusiastic welcome. The absence of a proper Tocharian dictionary has long been a cause for lamentation; for Tocharian B, only incomplete coverage is afforded by Sieg and Siegling's glossary to the *Udānālaṅkāra* texts (1949) and the glossary by Thomas in volume II of the *Tocharisches Elementarbuch* (1964). This new *Dictionary*, which aims to be exhaustive in its coverage, will certainly be of enormous assistance. Its thoroughness extends beyond the mere collection of words to embrace all relevant details. The entries provide morphological information, including all attested inflectional forms, and where appropriate they contain as sub-lemmata any regularly derived adjectives or abstracts and compounds in which the lemma is the first member. The entries are given English glosses, which are supported by a range of helpful examples from the texts (all translated); there is even, at the end, a reverse English-Tocharian B index compiled on the basis of the glosses.

In addition to all this, the *Dictionary* is also an etymological dictionary. Building on the history of the discussion of individual items provided by A. J. Van Windekens, *Le tokharien confronté avec les autres langues indo-européenes*, vol. I (1976), Adams gives an outline of

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what he regards as their most probable origin, with some reference to dissenting voices, so that the entries all contain substantial and frequently discursive sections on etymology. This *Dictionary* now stands as the most up-to-date source for Tocharian etymologies and effectively compensates for the incompleteness of the posthumous work of Jörundur Hilmarsson, *Materials for a Tocharian historical and etymological dictionary* (1996).

It will be evident that this is an immensely ambitious enterprise, and on the whole it has been brought off with great success. The author explains in the introduction that there was a long period of gestation for the book and warns that some oddities and inconsistencies may result: there are indeed a few, as for instance the treatment of **wināññ-**, glossed as a transitive verb 'enjoy' in the passage 11b4 that is also cited (with the same translation) under the lemma **laks** 'fish' but under **yolme** 'pond, pool' with the correct gloss as intransitive 'find pleasure'. The history of the book is perhaps also apparent in the rather fitful citation of the more recent bibliography (some items as late as 1998 are included): for example, just one paper is cited from *TIES* 7 (1997), when there are several others in the same volume that contain relevant etymological discussion (e.g. Hackstein on *postäm*, *snai*, Katz on *trai*). There are also omissions of earlier items (the author warns the reader that this may be likely), for instance Winter's account of *ñakte* 'god' in *JIES* 15 (1987). These omissions are understandable in a work that has been 17 years on the stocks, but the result is nonetheless that the etymological discussions are often incompletely referenced, and the opportunity to provide a comprehensive survey has been missed.

Given that there are still so many uncertainties in the historical phonology and morphology of Tocharian, any etymological dictionary is bound to be more than usually personal, and not all of Adams's conclusions carry conviction: the proto-form *$h_1$ep-o-wen* given for *yapoy* 'land, country' looks decidedly odd in morphological terms; *laks* 'fish' is taken to continue a zero-grade form *$l_e$ksi-*, which is a dubious start-point in itself but also requires an assumption that there was no palatalization here before **i*. Another contentious phonological point that is relevant to several etymologies is the treatment of IE **ā* (or *eh_2): Adams believes that this can give Tocharian B *ā*, and therefore posits a full-grade preform for *pāsk-* 'guard', and the alternative view (and the more plausible one, in my opinion) that **ā* gave *o* and that this verb has therefore to be reconstructed with a zero-grade root is not considered. One can see that a proper engagement with all the thorny issues of historical phonology would have been out of the question, but some acknowledgement that on many points there is no consensus might have been included, and ideally also a reference to D. Ringe's. *On the chronology of sound changes in Tocharian*, vol. I (1996), which offers an alternative account in many instances.

As Adams says, 'any etymological dictionary of Tocharian B must still rate as "preliminary"', and inevitably this is the part of the book that is bravest and that will soonest need replacement, but it is immensely helpful to have within a single volume a discussion of the whole Tocharian B vocabulary, and much future work will no doubt take the form of reaction to it. The synchronic part will in due course need to be enlarged as new words and forms emerge from hitherto unpublished texts, and new contexts may allow refinements of meaning for some of the more scantily attested items, but as it now stands the *Dictionary* provides invaluable assistance both as an aid to reading the texts and as a compendium of forms for philological study. All in all, a solid achievement that should earn the author our congratulations and gratitude.

J. H. W. PENNEY

WIM VAN SPENGEN: *Tibetan border worlds: a geo-historical analysis of trade and traders*. ix, 307 pp. London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000. £45, $76.

The Nyishang (or Manangi) are a predominantly Tibetan ethnic and cultural group inhabiting central-western Nepal. An endogamous entity now consisting of some 2–4,000 people, they generally identify themselves today as Gurungs, or as Ghales, and are followers of the Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism. Their territory is known to have been part of Se-rib in the twelfth century A.D., and later became a tributary of the principality of Lo (Mustang). The Nyishangba established themselves as a significant trading group towards the end of the eighteenth century and were granted certain commercial privileges by the Shah dynasty which drew them firmly within the Nepalese state system. Indeed, their population is now in decline in their ancestral territory, with many wealthy Nyishangba preferring to reside in Pokhara or Katmandu.

Tibetan border worlds is a wide-ranging geohistorical examination of the Nyishangba community, with a particular focus on their involvement in long-distance trade. The author locates the activities of the Nyishangba within the wider regional *espace-mouvement* following a thorough examination of the greater Tibetan economic zone. Through the use of a wide array of older European sources it avoids the tendency—all-to-common in studies of Himalayan communities—to narrowness of focus, with its great strength and wider appeal deriving from its regional, historical and cultural contextualization of the subject group.

Studies of Himalayan communities tend to lack, or to avoid unifying approaches and theories. This work, however, is informed by theoretical structures drawn from the Annaliste school as exemplified by Braudel, albeit with a cultural rather than a primarily materialist concern. In seeking to historicize regional geography by incorporating the experiences of particular social groups, the author draws on both fieldwork and a wide range of literature in order to 'establish whether larger geohistorical processes of structural change may be conteptualized in such a way as to link structuration at the level of the localized social

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group to the dynamics of the wider regional setting.' Such multi-level analysis emphasizes human agency, with the author concluding that 'the lived historical experience of culturally disparate groups ultimately decided on the form of a particular regional life-style.' That the structures of a particular geohistory unfold in a dynamic rather than static process is exemplified by the Nyishangba experience, one shown here to be distinct from that of neighbouring groups.

Mobility has historically been a feature of Himalayan communities, with local, trans-regional, and long-distance trade (often as an accompaniment to pilgrimage), being characteristic of the region. The primary economic forces within Tibet itself were the monasteries, who played an active and vital role in the protection and promotion of trade. They were closely involved in the transit of major items such as tea, salt, and rice, in addition to luxury items such as herbs and precious stones, which were also favoured by smaller traders and pilgrims due to their ease of transit. As the system of seasonal trade fairs gave way to the rise of market towns at the beginning of the twentieth century and the growing impact of the British-Indian economic zone was felt in Tibet, merchants in the peripheral regions, both in the east and along the southern frontier, began to exploit the new economic opportunities, creating new trading links and structures outside the existing patterns. The ethno-history of this Tibetan trading world is examined here at length. As economic studies of Tibet are a lacuna in the field, van Spengen's groundwork here will form a sound basis for further examination of the subject through Tibetan sources.

Having discussed this wider cultural and economic zone of trade, the focus turns to the Nyishangba in the second half of the work. Although long-distance trade missions developed slowly among the Nyishangba, by the 1920s many of the traders were detached from home origin markets and were trading across regions. Calcutta was an early focal point, but opportunities were then found further east. Nyishangba traders expanded into Burma in the 1930s and by the 1950s and 60s their networks had spread into Malaysia and Singapore. The range of goods traded became highly diversified, while wealthy traders branched out into money lending and otherwise embraced a wide range of commercial activities. Not least, it appears, they even engaged in a variety of smuggling activities, with Nyishangba traders present in Thailand's Golden Triangle in the 1960s. In general, however, their activities displayed a sophisticated pattern of relationships with the Nepalese and other states.

The mixed agricultural economy of the Manang region has meant that long-distance trading has been an activity carried out primarily in the fallow season. But with trade having brought considerable wealth to a number of individuals in the community, agriculture has fallen into decline, and today the nascent tourist trade offers fresh opportunities to the Nyishangba. With social status now measured by material wealth and many of the wealthy moving to Kathmandu, the character of the region has been radically altered.

While based on fieldwork from the early 1980s and thus lacking a contemporary component, this work is a model geohistorical study of a specific community, with its wide perspective and theoretical models making it of interest to all who are concerned with the Tibetan and Himalayan region.

A. C. MCKAY

URADYN E. BULAG: *Nationalism and hybridity in Mongolia.* (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology.) xvi, 302 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. £40.

This anthropological study of contemporary nationalism in Mongolia is undertaken in the context of three main Mongolian populations in different nation-states: the Buryat Mongols in Russia, the Khalkha (Halh) Mongols in Mongolia and the Inner Mongols in China. There can be no doubt that this is an important book. It has also caused controversy among Mongols.

Underlying the narrative is the methodological problem of an *erliiz* ('hybrid') anthropologist (Bulag) studying a community from which he felt excluded. Bulag explores ethnicity, nationalism and ethno-politics in twentieth-century Mongolia. This is followed by his interpretation of the problems of biological reproduction and what he perceives as a Mongolian crisis of confidence at that time. The discourse of race in Mongolia is investigated. Finally, Bulag reveals the intense negotiations about national symbols that took place between democrats and ex-Communists during the establishment of the nation-state after the fall of the Communist regime and that were publicly satirized in a series of cartoons in the newly liberated press.

Influenced by recent debates on reflexivity and the politics of writing, Bulag recognizes his own subjectivity, admitting that this is a partial and consciously situated work. Bulag is from Inner Mongolia and therefore Caroline Humphrey's description of him as an indigenous anthropologist (p. vii) is a little misleading. Although Mongolian, he is not indigenous to Mongolia and therein lies the rub. Educated in Chinese at the University in Huhhot, capital of Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region in China, he was then sent back to his homeland, the semi-desert, semi-pasturelands of Ordos. When I worked with him in 1987, I was struck by the passion with which he defended his 'Mongolness', and his desire both to go to Mongolia and to help Mongols. As a result, I encouraged his application to the University of Cambridge; this book is a product of the difficult time he had as a Cambridge student doing fieldwork in Mongolia.

Throughout the book, the richness and passion of his language stirs the reader. Fascinating details emerge. For instance, the attitudes of Inner Mongols are revealed: feelings

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they have had of diasporism in their own homeland since it was swamped by Han Chinese migrants; the usefulness of an independent Mongolia in challenging the hegemonic notion of Chinese cultural supremacy; and their idealization of Mongolia (pp. 3–4). This is countered by Bulag's perception that the Khalkha Mongols in Mongolia do not accept Inner Mongols as truly 'Mongol' but instead view them as 'Other'. There are absorbing sections on the symbolism of food and animals in relation to ethnicity and on gender.

As one might expect, my own experiences and perceptions of Mongolia during the early 1990s do not always tally with those of Bulag. Although anti-Chinese sentiments were rife, I was impressed that many Mongols from Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Beijing and Buryatia were being invited to attend conferences or musical events in Mongolia. Bulag's suggestion that 'Mongolia is a country defined on the basis of nationality, rather than culture' (p. 36) is an uneasy opposition not least because of his restricted definition of 'culture' (i.e., a literary language, a common pastoral mode of production and Buddhism). 'Culture' in a broader sense (e.g., performances of music, dance, myths and ritual, historical memories, group and territorial associations) certainly formed part of the nationalist debate in the period in question, and even during the socialist era (1924–92) the construction of nationalism from the centre was intertwined with a cultural offensive.

Twelve years of work on broader aspects of Mongolian culture and ethnicity among different ethnic groups in Mongolia (e.g., Baits, Buryats, Darhats, Darigangas, Dörbets, Hotogoids, Khalkhas, Mingats, Öölds, Torguts, Uzemchins, Zahchins) also causes me to take issue with Bulag's assertions that (a) the *creation of ethnic consciousness* was inherent to the socialist nation-building process (p. 29) and (b) prior to the socialist era, the Mongols had a *unified culture* (p. 41, my italics). A particular type of ethnic consciousness was indeed inherent to the socialist nation-building process (i.e., one in which all the groups would merge into one group—based on Khalkha culture—to form a single unified socialist nation), but can this be argued to be the creation of ethnic consciousness *per se*? Bulag himself concedes that there was ethnic awareness at the core of the first Mongol state, established by Chinggis Khan in 1206 (p. 44), and that 'tribalism' pre-dated the socialist era (p. 61). My own work, *Music, dance and oral narrative: performing diverse identities* (Seattle, 2001), illustrates how differences between these 'tribes' (ethnic groups) were perpetuated during the socialist era through repertories of performance.

According to Bulag, Buddhism was part of this single unified culture, a form of pan-Mongolism. Yet Buddhism as a religious complex co-existed with two others, that is, shamanism and folk religion. These mosaics of discourses were all syncretic and overlapped. The Buddhist complex comprised different orders (Nyingmapa, Kargyudpa, Saskayapa and Gelugpa) within which individual monasteries followed the traditions of their leader and lineage or sublineage. Monasteries also housed particular 'tribal' groups or subgroups (e.g. Tögsbuyant and Chandman' monasteries in West Mongolia housed Dalainhan and Ongiinhan Dörbets respectively), and incorporated practitioners ('yellow shamans') who worshipped both Buddhist and shamanist deities. There were also cultural differences between confederations (e.g. Eastern and Western Mongols who have fought each other periodically since the thirteenth century) as well as between tribes. Bulag's political advocacy for a Greater Mongolia is admirable but it does not need to be supported by the theory of a single unified culture.

Bulag is right to problematize the equation of Khalkha (Halh) with Mongol and argues convincingly about its limiting effect on a Greater Mongolia sentiment. But his claim that Khalkha-centric nationalism frightens people with the spectre of the imminent swallowing up of Mongolia by China, an anxiety which he says is cultivated by the ex-Communists to maintain their leading position, fails to admit that this may be a very real danger. He calls Mongolia's fear of China 'paranoid' (p. 5) and refers to contemporary 'hysterical anti-Chinese discourse' (p. 106) as well as 'hysterically hostile relations with China in the early 1980s (p. 161). Given the Chinese Republic's claim in 1919 to sovereignty of Mongolia and subsequent reiteration of those claims in its newspapers, and China's actions in Inner Mongolia and Tibet, it seems entirely reasonable that, having emerged from a Soviet-dominated past, Mongolia would fear a Chinese-dominated future.

Bulag makes effective use of anthropological theories that range from centre-periphery models to the structural tripartite model of Victor Turner's ritual process. In some sections, though, the size of the fieldwork sample on which his arguments are built is unclear. Expressions such as 'In popular talk', 'Some Mongol women told me …' (p. 154) or 'the Buryat women I knew said …' are disconcerting when followed by remarks that compare Mongol with Russian men, Mongol with Chinese men, or Khalkha with Buryat men (to the detriment of one of each pair). Similarly, when discussing biological reproduction, Bulag re-presents percentages of data in relation to mental retardation that have no quantifiable statistical base (p. 107).

The book has caused controversy because of the use of sensitive data and comments made about race and ethnicity (for instance, in relation to Mongols pp. 150, 213; Oirat Mongols p. 93; Kazakhs p. 103; Buryats pp. 137, 155; and Khalkhas pp. 155, 163, 169). Bulag shoots from the hip and is equally bold whether offering critiques of Cambridge academics (e.g. Ernest Gellner) or Khalkha historians (pp. 74–5). It is a brave and remarkable book, has already aroused fierce debate, and will become obligatory reading for anyone interested in Mongolia and Mongols.

CAROLE PEGG

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East Asia

MICHAEL LOEWE and EDWARD L. SHAUGHNESSY (ed.): *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.* xxxii, 1148 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. $130.00.

This volume is worth every penny of its substantial price, a sum that might discourage penurious graduate students or non-specialists. It complements the multi-volume *Cambridge history of China* (*CHC*), which has appeared serially since the 1970s, a set that begins with the first empires of Qin and Han (*c*. 221 B.C.) and concludes with the People's Republic. This new effort redresses a decision made during the 1960s in the planning of the *CHC* to omit earlier periods, a portion of the past that has profited enormously from vigorous archaeology in China since 1949 and equally important world-wide scholarship. The Cambridge formula of multi-author volumes comprised of overviews crafted by specialist scholars performs well here, but the decision to balance exposition of the historical (literary) and material records is in fact a departure from the text-based treatments of the *CHC*. With three introductions, 14 chapters, and an impressive bibliography, *The Cambridge history of ancient China* cannot be adequately evaluated in a short format. The remarks below outline its scope and main strengths.

In their introductory sections, editors Loewe and Shaughnessy lay out their plan (p. 14) to balance historical and material evidence for each of the four major periods covered: Shang, Western Zhou, the Spring and Autumn period, and the Warring States period. The bulk of the volume (chs. iii–xii, pp. 124–884) thus follows an historian's parsing of the chronology of ancient China to the eve of unification. This main text is sandwiched by: (1) a surprisingly brief account of prehistory by Kwang-chih Chang; (2) a succinct, stimulating consideration of 'Language and writing' by William G. Boltz; (3) an overview of 'The northern frontier in pre-imperial China' by Nicola Di Cosmo; and (4) a conclusion entitled 'The heritage left to the empires', by Michael Loewe. Chang's assignment was the most daunting, and no other scholar is better equipped to take it on. The meat of Chang's treatment is a rapid survey of major regional cultures from 5000–2500 B.C. and 'interaction spheres' leading to complex societies, both ingredients of his *Archaeology of ancient China*, 4th edition (New Haven, 1986). Boltz's chapter also parallels another of his works, *The origin and early development of the Chinese writing system* (New Haven, 1994). Di Cosmo's chapter, derived from an unpublished dissertation, is actually a 'broad narrative' concerning the genesis of the Xiongnu steppe empire (p. 887) that parallels the chronology of the main text. Loewe's conclusion serves as a 'bridge' to volume one of the *CHC*.

Two chapters each assess the first three historical periods of the text. In 'Shang archaeology', Robert Bagley reviews 'the Early Bronze Age' (the second millennium B.C.), first by explicitly challenging the terms and practices of Chinese archaeologists and historians, and then by organizing his own treatment exclusively around the development of the bronze industry on the premise that 'bronze in China supplies an unambiguous index of social complexity' (p. 137) and 'the best available corrective to the textual bias of Chinese archaeology' (p. 139). David N. Keightley's 'The Shang: China's first historical dynasty', while more succinct and limited to the 'late Shang' historical period (*c*. 1200–1050 B.C.), is full of fresh insights and hypotheses and probably the most convenient exposition of his thinking on these topics now in print. The ostensible dichotomy of historical and material evidence does not really obtain in Keightley's treatment, to the reader's benefit and by contrast with Bagley's agnosticism on historical questions.

Edward L. Shaughnessy and Jessica Rawson each assess the Western Zhou period. Going back and forth between their two chapters (and Bagley's) introduces the reader to explicit debate on several topics. For example, Shaughnessy's 'Western Zhou history', devotes four pages (pp. 303–7) to discussing and mapping Zhou origins, evidence Bagley dismisses as 'ambiguous and contradictory' (p. 228). All three authors review 'pre-conquest' archaeological evidence (Bagley, pp. 226–9; Shaughnessy, pp. 299–307; and Rawson, pp. 375–85), but as the putative 'historian' Shaughnessy attempts to understand the received record and new inscriptions in tandem with material traces. Bagley and Rawson, as the 'art historians', are free to avoid textual issues as outside their purview. Rawson's 'Western Zhou archaeology', in fact, employs a conventional 'early-middle-late' schema devised for bronze vessels as its organizing principle, a treatment familiar from her *Western Zhou ritual bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collections* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

The third period covered by two authors from different disciplines offers other contrasts. Cho-yun Hsu's 'The Spring and Autumn Period', recycles material first published in his path-breaking *Ancient China in transition: an analysis of social mobility* (Stanford, 1965) in 41 pages! (Readers might find the paperback edition of Hsu's earlier work a more satisfying read.) On the other hand, Lothar van Falkenhausen's 'The waning of the Bronze Age: material culture and social developments', is one of the most stimulating, creative, and authoritative chapters in the volume, offering not only a review of rich archaeological veins, but also his own research and insights. Here employing an archaeologist to address the history of ancient China truly bears fruit. Falkenhausen's chapter is organized for convenience by regions, but every section deserves attention for its careful thought and rewarding analyses. Unlike Bagley, Falkenhausen can be critical of his Chinese archaeological peers without casting aspersions. And unlike both Bagley and Rawson, here the bronze vessel is not made the epitome of early Chinese civilization.

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Four chapters address the Warring States period (*c.* 481–221 B.C.), the shortest time span, but the richest one for textual resources. Mark Edward Lewis surveys 'Warring States political history'; Wu Hung considers 'The art and architecture of the Warring States period'; in 'The classical philosophical writings', David Shepherd Nivison treats the 'great names' of classical Chinese philosophy; and in 'Warring States natural philosophy and occult thought', Donald Harper introduces newly-recovered texts. Lewis's chapter complements his *Sanctioned violence in early China* (Albany, 1990), and can be read profitably with it. Wu divides 'art and architecture' into two parts, that for the living and that for the dead, an approach which, however, does not take the author or reader to any interesting new ground. Nivison's chapter stands apart from the rest of this volume in both its voice and exposition; here the reader is being taught as in a seminar. Harper's chapter is another significant contribution, introducing major sources for a rich intellectual milieu only dimly perceived from received texts.

Henceforth readers with a need to know about ancient China, especially the first millennium B.C., should begin by consulting *The Cambridge history of ancient China*.

ROBERT L. THORP

ANTONINO FORTE: *A jewel in Indra's net*. (Italian School of East Asian Studies Occasional Papers Series, 8.) viii, 105 pp., 4 plates. Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2000.

Though the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, which had such an influence on European scholarship on East Asia during the first half of the twentieth century, still exists and maintains a number of very useful outposts in the area, for a young scholar to find today the kind of atmosphere that once nurtured researchers of the calibre of Pelliot and Maspero, the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto would probably be the best place to go. There its director Antonino Forte and his hardworking staff have created what its latest publication describes in early 2000 as 'a harmonious community' (p. viii) composed of researchers from a number of nations, at that point including, thankfully, one Briton (James Benn). No wonder that the director should further cement his enviable ties with the Japanese academic community by publishing a study of one of the most intriguing echoes of his own period of specialization (late seventh-century China) preserved in Japan, in the famous Tenri University Library.

This is a letter from the Chinese Buddhist master Fazang to a Korean senior colleague from his student days, Ŭisang, which Japanese scholars have taken to be in the very hand of the master himself. The letter, however, involves a number of historical problems, which draw forth from the author a dazzling display of his unrivalled grasp of the Buddhist history of Fazang's times, as he weighs the impact of these problems on the meaning and authenticity of the letter. As an added bonus, an early published copy of this work was sent to the outstanding young Japanese scholar Seishi Karashima who, for example, was able to identify one puzzling expression as a particular usage of that age, so that copies distributed since that time include a loose sheet giving Karashima's comments also on this research. Throughout his study Antonino Forte demonstrates an exemplary caution, and despite his success in exploring the possible historical background of the letter, he never on that account leaps to the conclusion that the manuscript is indeed the very object that Fazang sent to his old friend. This would seem to me eminently sensible, for though to judge from his summary of Kanda Kiichirō's research, Japanese scholars all seem quite happy to accept without question accounts of the historical transmission of the document prior to its arrival in the Tenri collection, their optimism is evidently not universally shared.

In 1987 the Qilu shushe of Jinan published a slim volume edited by Li Tianma 李天馬 combining two studies entitled *Zhangshi fatie bianwei* and *Yushi shulu bianwei*. The latter is in fact no more than a republication with Li's comments of the ninth chapter (concerning forgeries) of the well-known *Shuhua shulu jieti* of Yu Shaosong (1883–1949), first published in 1932. The former, much larger, work, however, is a comprehensive catalogue of forged calligraphy exemplars initially compiled by Li's teacher, Zhang Boying. Zhang (p. 84) lists two copies of Fazang's letter in Qing collections, neither of which he deems authentic. Li comments that the second, in the collection of the well-known Canton Hong merchant Pan Zhengwei (1791–1850), who rated it the best thing he had, appears to have existed, somewhat disturbingly, in two slightly different forms. For good measure he adds that the item published in facsimile in Japan (presumably the reproduction of the Tenri copy mentioned on p. vii of the work under review) reflects a distinctly inferior product—this, though Pan's prize possession (or one version of it), is supposedly the very same object now in Japan, according to Kanda as quoted here on p. 71.

Now some of this may reflect no more than the regular currency of envy and disparagement common to collectors (not excluding the great museums of today), but in the light of this information there is obviously room for further research by experts on calligraphy. This occasional paper would appear to make an undeniable case for the early existence of a letter from Fazang to Korea, and it would not be surprising if such a work became the basis of much calligraphic imitation there. If, as seems quite possible, none of the surviving manuscripts is actually the original, this might help explain the one or two remaining historical problems identified here, such as the dynastic name Tang, where one would be more likely to find reference to the Zhou, the personal dynasty under which Fazang's patron, the Empress Wu, ruled. For some subsequent copyist could quite readily have deleted an obvious reference to a female ruler held in great odium by conven-

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tional opinion in later ages. In that case, the research incorporated into this study would assume yet greater value for its meticulous documentary approach to the composition of the letter as a transmitted historical source, rich in all kinds of useful background information, such as the dating of Fazang's writings, or at least those he dispatched to Korea, according to an attached list that went with the letter.

Indeed, at the level of research which this paper addresses, it is very difficult to find fault with it at all, and even at the level of typographical error there is very little to complain about. One hardly wishes to mention the fact that on p. 83 the end of one bibliographical entry remains in Italian, for this only serves to remind us how much effort has been expended in rendering work first published in an early version in Italian into a language which, for better or worse, has become more accessible to the international scholarly community. That a nationally funded establishment should take so seriously its international role surely deserves our applause—and, if possible, our support, especially considering that much greater British involvement in East Asia over two centuries has never resulted in even the shadow of a similar institution.

T. H. BARRETT

TAK-WING NGO (ed.): *Hong Kong's history*. (Asia's Transformation Series.) xii, 205 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. £17.95.

This is essentially a collection of nine revisionist essays on different aspects of Hong Kong's history from its foundation in the 1840s to the end of British rule. The only common theme is the revisionist efforts to challenge what the authors in this volume call the dominant historical narratives of Hong Kong's history as a Crown Colony.

While revisionist challenges of the established views are always welcome, and this volume includes a couple of fine essays based on solid research and thoughtful analysis, its objective to provide an alternative historical narrative remains unfulfilled.

With a few notable exceptions, the revisionist views presented in this volume, including the introductory chapter which tries to provide an overarching interpretive view, are unconvincing. The dominant historical narratives are supposed to be guilty above all of two failings. Firstly, they failed to see the complexity of British colonial rule which, according to Tak-wing Ngo, 'reached down to the very bottom level of the rural community in restructuring its social relations' (p. 4). Secondly, they failed to recognize that the colonial state in fact had 'played a negative role in discouraging industrialization before the Second World War, as well as blocking the opportunity for industrial upgrading in the 1960s' (p. 8).

The cases made in this book are unconvincing because, to begin with, the majority of the contributors do not understand the real nature of the British colonial government in Hong Kong. In spite of the valiant efforts of Hui Po-keung, Stephen Chiu and Ho-fung Hung, their basic arguments fail as they have not looked at the real resources at the disposal and distribution of the colonial government. Although the British takeover of the new Territories did, for example, have an impact on rural life and rural elite alignment, the colonial government never had the resources nor the will to reach down and restructure social relationships in the New Territories. The contributors would perhaps have avoided making some of their wild claims if they had checked the colonial records more carefully. The entire establishment of the Cadet service before the war numbered only 35, which meant that after taking into account the long language training and leave periods the government usually had only about 26 administrators to run the secretariat, the departments and the district offices in the New Territories at any one point before 1941. The number of Cadets available is smaller the further one goes back into history. The Cadets (known as Administrative Officers since the 1950s) would have to be superhumans to have the reach and influence for which they were given credit, particularly since most were in offices that catered for the expatriate rather than the Chinese population. The accusation that the Hong Kong government had an anti-industry policy also reflected a lack of understanding of the colonial regime. Ngo, Alex Choi and Kim-ming Lee are certainly right in stressing that the government did not help industries. But that is a far cry from having an anti-industry policy. Where the contributors to this volume appear to have misguided themselves is to look at Hong Kong's history with the perspective and bias of the 1990s. According to this view, the government was supposed to be anti-industry because it did not do much—if anything—of significance to help industries that were mostly founded by ethnic Chinese in contrast to expatriate British residents, who were mainly businessmen with access to the government. An additional unspoken but clear assumption is that Hong Kong's industries would have benefited greatly from positive government help and perhaps direction. This is a curious assumption. Colonial civil servants would not have made better directors of industries. The strength of Hong Kong's industrialists rests, as this volume rightly recognizes, in their acumen, flexibility, risk-taking drive, and industriousness. Could financial aid—which would have to be woefully little prior to the economic take-off in the 1970s—and directions for upgrading industries from civil servants (who knew little about industry) have promoted greater or better (if there is such a thing) industrial development than that of the entrepreneurial local industrialists? This volume is right in highlighting the responsibility of the local people for many of Hong Kong's achievements, but it is misguided in seeing this and the colonial government's own (and different) contributions in an almost zero-sum game perspective.

The editor's claim that this work is based on new material is bewildering. There is very little documentation in this volume that is truly new. Most of the archives and other materials

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have been available for a long time. The fact that few new sources have been used does not necessarily diminish a revisionist history. It can be based on reinterpreting long available sources. The real test is whether a revisionist account provides a more insightful and judicious assessment.

On the whole, this test has not been passed. There are indeed other recent works which have not been used at all. This is particularly obvious in the chapters by Ngo, Choi and Lee where they refer to developments in the 1940s and 1950s.

Two chapters in this volume stand out from the rest. Christopher Munn's contribution on the arbitrary nature of criminal justice in the nineteenth century is solidly based. It would have benefited from taking more into account the comparison of the quality of justice in Hong Kong with the rest of China in the same period. Nevertheless, it is a substantial piece of work that deserves to be read carefully. Tai-Lok Lui and Stephen Chiu's chapter on social movements and public discourse on politics from the 1960s to the 1990s is thoughtful and interesting. In addition, John Carroll's account of British reliance on local collaborators is well written, though those familiar with British imperial history and the development of the local elite in early Hong Kong will find little new in it.

With some serious faults in its perspective and in historiography in a few chapters this is not a volume I can recommend for a general readership. However, I would encourage specialists on the history of Hong Kong to read it for its revisionist arguments. This courageous attempt by a generation of younger scholars to challenge established views deserves encouragement.

STEVE TSANG

YINGJIN ZHANG (ed.): *China in a polycentric world. Essays in Chinese comparative literature.* 307 pp. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. £19.95.

Originating from a conference in 1994, this collection of essays is dominated by American and Chinese perspectives more than by European or comparatist points of view. With 11 contributions from mainland China, Taiwan and the United States, the essays are divided into three subsections, on 'Discipline, discourse, canon', 'Gender, sexuality, body', and 'Science, modernity, aesthetics'. An introduction serves as a prolegomenon to the relationship between the study of Chinese and that of comparative literature, whilst the last essay, by Eugene Chen Eoyang, may be said to contain elements of an epithalamium for the prosperity of this partnership.

One sentence in the introduction: 'the hostility of hard-core sinologists in their dealings with comparative literature', (p. 2) may stand as representative for one main undercurrent in this volume—almost hostility to old-fashioned philology. Although the collection is rather sparing in its mention of Europe, somehow this reader got the feeling that most of the hard-core sinologues were to be found there. It is almost as if Eurocentric stands for something negative while American and Chinese stand for positive concepts. The neutral concept is Western, as seen here in a quote from a pioneer Taiwanese work on comparative studies: 'the Chinese school of comparative literature is a type of study which has recourse to Western literary theory and methodology in such a way as to contest and modify them and apply them to Chinese literature' (p. 3). What the contributors want us to believe is that a new type of Chinese studies is emerging where the occasional application of Western theory to a Chinese text depends upon whether the theory is useful for that text.

The first section contains two essays that are one long continuous argument for comparative studies in literature that include the East-West perspective. According to the contributors, any theory and any literature can fit together as long as some basic, fundamental questions are asked. The dichotomy that previously existed between the old-fashioned sinologue and the modern comparatist is postulated as a yawning gap. But is it really true that for the sinologue 'Western theory poses the threat of creating a hypothesis inadequately grounded in the reality of the Chinese text as they have construed it, a hypothesis that then has the potential for spreading a theoretical "virus" across all of Chinese literary studies'? (p. 38) I can readily accept that Western theory sometimes demanded background information for the evaluation of a Chinese text (such as in reader-response theory) that was lacking in the early days of comparative studies. However, this demand was felt as a straightjacket also by some sinologues. This first section apparently takes Edward Said's argument about the Westerner reinventing the Orient to suit himself to an extreme not even argued by Said. If the sinologue had a hidden agenda, at least these contributors also have one. Their open agenda may well be the progress of comparative studies, but their hidden agenda is perhaps to nail the word ideology to the sinologue's coffin?

This first theoretical section is written wholly by men. The second section, on 'Gender, sexuality, body' is written wholly by women—is there a hidden agenda here too? The first two essays here are traditional pieces of literary criticism where any comparative perspective must be in the application of Western theory to Chinese topics. If the intention is to demonstrate that literary theory is universal, then they succeed. The last essay discusses the portrayal of a Chinese woman in an American television series—not having seen or heard of that series I have to fall back on a Eurocentric 'no comment'.

The last section contains five papers that continue to apply Western literary criticism to Chinese, or indeed universal topics. The first two, on travelogue and on science fiction, discuss areas that became popular with modern scholars when they finally decided to get behind the well researched May Fourth period in order to look at its Qing precursors. With the publication or reissue of texts by Chinese observers in the West after China 'opened up' around 1870, and with growing interest in the lower forms of fiction that mushroomed in Shanghai at about the same time, the ground has been laid for studies on the antecedents to the May Fourth period. David

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Der-wei Wang's *Fin-de-siècle splendor*, published not so long ago, gave a well-researched panorama of the great variety of fictional works that appeared before the end of the Qing. The two essays here almost form a continuation of his book. The third paper on modern Chinese poetry is an exercise in comparison, drawing not only on Chinese and Western literary theory but also comparing Western and Eastern poets in a way that demonstrates solidly that this is a universal world where the differences within one 'culture' may be as large as those between 'cultures'.

This collection starts off with the premise that without a universal outlook comparison is a utopian dream, and it concludes in a charming way with a paper that states that the centre is everywhere, and that one must work through a nationalist stage, and be thoroughly familiar with one's own culture before one can get to the universal stage. If I remember correctly, Hu Shi said the same some 80 years ago—and it still seems reasonable. My main problem with this collection is that I did not quite grasp why European sinologues should be the ones to take the blame for a situation that I believe says more about these contributors' minds than about European sinology. Perhaps it was to have a starting point, or to use Chen's words, (p. 232) '... to detect distortion by the use of another inevitable distortion'.

ELISABETH EIDE

VIRGINIA YIP and STEPHEN MATTHEWS: *Basic Cantonese*. xii, 171 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. £12.99.

In 1994 Matthews and Yip published their *Cantonese: a comprehensive grammar*, a pioneering reference work of real insight and exemplary clarity which this reviewer believes to be the most important publication in the study of Cantonese for decades.

Basic Cantonese claims not to be for reference purposes but to be 'more pedagogical in orientation. It highlights the key building blocks of sentence structure, leaving details of grammar and usage for the more advanced learner. It also provides practice for the grammar points of each unit in the form of communicatively oriented exercises' (p. ix). Routledge has issued at the same time *Intermediate Cantonese*, to which this book, we are told, is a prelude, so that it appears that the authors expect beginners to use it as their introduction to the language, an elementary grammar textbook of a new kind which 'can be used on its own for self-paced learning' (p. ix). It is doomed to fail if so. There is little attempt to make the presentation of material cumulative or graded, and some of the exercises are idiosyncratic to the point of being perverse. The unaided self-learner will be discouraged at even the first set of exercises (1.3, for example, asks for a list of names in obsolete romanization systems to be converted to the Yale system used in the book—but the poor learner can have no means of knowing whether Tai in the place name Tai O should become *Tai*, *Dai*, *Taai* or *Daai*) and by Unit 5 even more impossible tasks are set, such as translating in exercise 5.3 'This watch is mine' without any prior introduction to the demonstratives or to the need for classifiers when using them, or to the vocabulary item 'watch'. The learner cannot match given items with their appropriate classifiers when neither items nor classifiers have occurred before (8.3, p. 41), and there can be no merit in an exercise which asks the learner to 'translate as much of the sentence as you can into Cantonese' (12.1, p. 63). The book could not be used for self-teaching, and it would be something of a trackless jungle even with a teacher.

This amounts to little more than a heavily truncated version of the original grammar book, a reference book for revision purposes for a learner who has achieved a basic competence in the language and wants to have a little more practice and some restatement of grammar rules already introduced, or perhaps a reference book for an insecure teacher of elementary Cantonese who needs a reminder of how to explain some of the features of the language. Even at this level *Basic Cantonese* is disappointing, avoiding some difficult constructions, skimping on explanation, poorly indexed, and without a vocabulary list or character glossary. It is insufficient to say (p. 33) that *haih* (the verb 'to be') 'serves to indicate agreement and as an answer to certain types of question', but then neither at this point nor in Units 23 and 24 which deal with questions stating which types of questions. When in Unit 8 the demonstratives are finally introduced, no attempt is made to include 'each', 'which?', and 'the whole' which fall snugly into the same class. Nor in the same unit is the very important function of the classifiers in showing number mentioned. The fixed adverb *dou* is not mentioned anywhere, yet it must be one of the most frequently occurring words in Cantonese and one which beginners find difficult to comprehend. Unit 11 on fundamental adverbs of time, frequency and duration is particularly poorly handled and confusing, and Unit 21 on passives omits the very common quasi-passive construction **X haih Y verb ge** as in *bun syu haih keuih se ge* 'the book was written by him'.

Of course authors of such quality cannot avoid displaying their insights and their knack of producing jargon-free exposition and almost unfailingly apposite translation of colloquialisms. As in the earlier book, they illustrate with clear, unforced examples which carry the stamp of authenticity, and they are generally unafraid to depart from the conventions of Mandarin grammars or to use examples which might be seen by some to be 'poor grammar' but which are indeed part of the genuine language as spoken. With those patterns which are included in *Basic Cantonese* there is little to disagree, but whether there is general usefulness in the book must be in doubt.

HUGH D. R. BAKER

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South-East Asia

VLADIMIR I. BRAGINSKY and ELENA M. DIAKONOVA (ed.): *Images of Nusantara in Russian literature*. xii, 516 pp., 10 maps. Leiden: KITVL Press, 1999. NLG 90, Euro 40.90.

With its literary reference—through indirect citation of Juvenal—to a world lying *ultra Auroram et Gangem*, the Borgesian epigraph to its first chapter is a beautifully selected indicator of the patterns of often remote cultural connections which are to be evoked during the generous course of this book's wide-ranging scholarly survey of images in Russian literature of the Malay-Indonesian world of Nusantara. Having at its centre an anthology of texts ranging from the eleventh century to modern times, the evident enthusiasm of the editors for their theme has wrapped this core in a wonderful wealth of introductory and ancillary materials of that curious and informative kind which is now too often excluded from the narrower focus generally imposed by these pressured times.

In this joint undertaking, Diakonova has dealt with Nusantara in the Russian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with Braginsky providing the remainder. His is the larger and more varied editorial contribution, although this relates to a much smaller number of anthologized texts. Consisting of passages in Old Russian adaptations of Byzantine sources, in the unique early travelogue by Afanasy Nikitin, and in some seventeenth-century compilations, these are of little purely literary interest, but they furnish Braginsky with the basis for his extended discussion in two introductory chapters. Here he deals with the twin themes of a trans-Indian realm of the 'unrecognized Nusantara'—whose South-East Asian location is established with reference to early medieval cartography—peopled by the righteous Rahmans (this word is omitted from the otherwise very serviceable index) existing in the hardly changing world of myth, and the gradually emerging awareness of an actual Nusantara, which came largely as the result of the translation and adaptation into Russian of early modern Western geographical accounts.

Similarly complex cultural cross-overs are explored in the introductory chapter contributed by Diakonova, as in her discussion of *Anchar*, Pushkin's poem on the upas tree, for which modern scholarship suggests an English source in George Colman's play *The law of Java*. While more economical than Braginsky's, her chapter relates to a much fuller and richly varied selection of texts in the anthology, which includes such prose items as Turgenev's *Song of triumphant love*, a bizarrely unsuccessful Gothic tale, but the volume is richer in poetic examples, for which facing Russian originals are helpfully provided. Predictably enough, none of the poems are as good as Pushkin's, but all comparative literature specialists will learn much from their collective illustration of the changing pictures of this part of Asia in Russian poetic Orientalism through the nineteenth century and past some striking pieces from such writers as Balmont or Elsner, eventually to reach the critical nadir of the Soviet period with Gorodetsky's tasteless *Kofe* and the awful tribute to Pushkin in Tikhonov's *Anchar*.

The first of several appendices reverts to the opening theme of the 'unrecognized Nusantara' with the citation of two early parallels in Georgian and Armenian to the Old Russian sources, while the second contains Old Believer materials on the legend of Belovodiye in which the mythic Nusantara found its last embodiment. The reverse topic of Russia and the Russians in traditional Malay literature is then presented in the lengthy third appendix, which describes in turn an unpublished *hikayat* in the Cambridge University library on the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8; the contrasting pictures of the visit paid to Java in 1890 by Nicholas II when Crown Prince in the travel diary of his aide, the well-born poetaster Prince E. E. Ukhtomsky, and in a contemporary Malay poem; and a *syair* on the Russo-Japanese war.

Although the editors include before the anthology a brief joint conclusion devoted to the necessary task of drawing together some of the numerous themes they and their texts suggest, this is a book whose real fascination lies in its heterogeneous assemblage of often very curious items from very unusual sources. The rich bibliography contains many such delights—for instance, the reference for the Belovodiye materials in Appendix II to a pair of articles in the *Permskiye Gubernskiye Vedomosti* of 1899. Such pleasant acts of rescue from the attics of distant archives will repeatedly remind Borges aficionados of his *Inventario*: ¿Qué podemos buscar en el altillo/sino lo que amontona el desorden?, … Hay un ejemplar enmohecido del *Libro de los Mártires* de Foxe, en intrincada letra gótica …

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

VICTOR T. KING (ed.): *Environmental challenges in Southeast Asia*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998.

Because of its extraordinary ecological complexity and associated cultural diversity, South-East Asia is one of the most interesting and important regions in which to examine environmental change. In recent decades the dramatic rates of change which have accompanied the rise and crash of the region's economies have had profound impacts on its environment and produced challenges of global import.

Environmental challenges in Southeast Asia begins with several critical studies of colonial constructions of the environment and indigenous resource practices (Bryant and Colombijn). It ends with a deconstruction of North/South rhetorics on the environment from a South-East Asian perspective (Zawawi). While the contemporary political dynamic of competing global resource interests remains a backdrop

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to the collection, its great strength lies in the rich, historically informed and close to the ground detail of the case studies presented. These span some of the most significant and controversial issues faced by the region at the end of the twentieth century: deforestation, the depletion of fisheries, population pressure, land use, globalization and the place of colonial and post-colonial developmentalist ideologies in the process of environmental change.

Undoubtedly, its most distinctive contribution to the burgeoning literature on the environment in South-East Asia is the temporal depth this collection of studies brings to the understanding of the contemporary situation. Many of the environmental challenges faced by the region in the present can be traced to perspectives and structural arrangements established in the colonial period. Several studies show how colonial attitudes, for example towards the place of women and indigenous cultivation methods (Colombijn), become the model for contemporary bureaucrats' misplaced developmentalist assumptions—although an implicit 'State' bias towards intensified production and gender hierarchy has arguably as important an explanatory role as colonial tutelage. Attitudes towards productivity as the primary measure of proper resource use, towards the 'backwardness' of indigenous resource management (in particular, shifting cultivation), and the sectoral focus within state bureaucracy, are reproduced in contemporary policy. Moreover, the externalization of social costs to local people by political and economic elites who profit from extraction policies has been one of the key features of state-sponsored natural resource extraction under both colonial and post-colonial regimes of governance.

All these topics are approached with an appreciation of complexity and detail that belies neat or simplistic correlations. The studies of disease, environmental change and population expansion and movement in Borneo (Knapen and Parnwell/King) produce a multi-directional picture of the ways in which these factors interact. Predictably, resource depletion and migration are patterns whose feedback effects are mutually reinforcing. But this picture is qualified too by socio-cultural and other contextual or locational factors that significantly complicate outcomes. Changing land uses resulting from in-migration, competing resource extraction interests and local responses to commercial opportunities are issues explored by Heersink, Psota, van den Top, Moonen, and Sutton/McMorrow. These studies give a similarly mixed picture of cause and effect, long and short-term sustainability, large and small-scale impacts, resource depletion and resourceful local adaptation. Heersink for example, points to the prosperous economies developed by the Bugis cultural group in Southern Sulawesi whose mixed economies involving migration and market niche adaptation enable them to thrive despite their marginal ecological base.

Finally, the mostly unsustainable use of fisheries (Backhaus, Masae/McGregor), forests (van den Top) and tourism resources (Backhaus, Hitchcock/Jay; Persoon/van Beek) are addressed as part of a complex dynamic in which 'traditional' practices and 'modern' forces have anything but straightforward implications. While on the whole these studies reinforce generalizations about the critical effects of increasing scale on land and resource depletion, the eco-tourism study shows that in some areas of environmental management, small is not necessarily beautiful.

The one criticism to be made of this collection is its unbalanced regional and thematic coverage, which makes the generality of the book's title misleading. The case studies are primarily focused on Indonesia and Malaysian Borneo with fewer representing Thailand and the Philippines, and none on Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam or Singapore. There is no study either considering the impact of the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the region in the last few decades. These gaps warrant at least a second volume. As the fate of this region is so bound up with its environmental future, it is to be hoped the editors and publishers take up that challenge.

CAROL WARREN

AFRICA

JOHN WILLIAM JOHNSON, THOMAS A. HALE and STEPHEN BELCHER (ed.): *Oral epics from Africa: vibrant voices from a vast continent*. xxii, 331 pp. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997. $14.95.

This is the third volume in the African Epic Series published by Indiana University Press and presents extracts from both published and unpublished translated epic texts. The majority of texts (19) are from West Africa, the region of the continent best known for the epic form. In addition, two are included from Egypt and four from Central Africa. The body of texts is preceded by a brief introductory section which brings the reader's attention to general issues relating to the epic genre and the study of examples from Africa. Thanks largely to the work of the editors and contributors to this book, the existence of the epic genre in Africa is no longer in any doubt and, indeed, the continent provides a rich source of material which contributes to the comparative study of epic around the world. Sources of texts are also discussed—an important matter when dealing with such oral forms as these—and the wish to credit the original artists is clearly expressed. Mention is also made in the introduction to regional similarities, women and epic,

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definitions of epic, epic and history, terminology and the presentation of the texts.

Moving on to the epics themselves, a title is given for each, followed by the name of the original narrator, which is set out prominently. There are then details of the 'processing' of the performance (transcriber, dates, translator, etc.), followed by background information of relevance to each particular example. Details differ for each text but, in general, they include historical background, performance context and some history of the performer or the performer's society. The texts also vary in the way they are presented, reflecting the differences in actual performance styles. It is a challenge to present texts such as these in a manner accessible to a general readership without losing something of the original flavour of the work. This task is aided in some of the examples by what the editors term 'transitional paragraphs', which clarify points in the narrative skipped over in the extracts for reasons of space. Some minimal annotation is provided where the editors feel it necessary. And while it still leaves many references to geographical locations and characters in the extracts unexplained, this does not detract too much from the reading. The exciting stories and interesting episodes in which the characters find themselves generally provide enough momentum for the reader to follow the plot without knowing all the precise details. The brief annotation is a reflection of the editors' aim for the book to be an introductory text to the genre of epic in Africa. As they say: '[W]e would like readers to consider this book as an opening statement in a continuing and expanding dialogue about the oral epic in Africa' (p. x).

I feel that the book succeeds in this aim. As well as being accessible to the general reader, it can also be used as a teaching text in any courses in which oral literature features; this, in turn, may inspire students to look in more detail at one of the epic traditions presented. Indeed, those wishing to further their knowledge will be helped by the clearly set out bibliography. Dividing general references and regional specific references, it then further categorizes them into primary and secondary references.

This is an important book which will be of value to all who are involved in the field of African literature and comparative literature more widely. It thankfully stays clear of any theoretical debate, either within the field of oral literature studies or within literary theory more widely. Since the pioneering work of Parry and Lord, the field of epic poetry has been central to the discussion on the nature of oral poetry and the reader will no doubt look into such matters if their interest is kindled by this book. Also, when considering African literature within the broader discourse of postcolonialism, consideration of these epic traditions will be of interest in terms of the different angle they can bring to such a debate, and this book will provide an excellent introduction. It is to be hoped that this volume may stimulate more scholars from around the world to look further at the epic traditions in these languages and thus to contribute to the increasing work on literature in indigenous African languages.

Oral epics from Africa is essential reading for anyone interested in epic as a genre or for anyone wanting to look in further depth at African epic traditions. Furthermore, aside from its academic role, it presents epics to the general reading public which are wonderful, exciting and moving and, as such, it is also a very good read.

MARTIN ORWIN

GÁBOR TAKÁCS: *Etymological dictionary of Egyptian. Volume One: a phonological introduction.* Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten, 48). xx, 476 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999. £109. $141.50.

Though etymological studies of ancient Egyptian have a long history, for much of the second half of the twentieth century, with a handful of notable exceptions, linguists in the field of Egyptology have shown little interest in the relationship of the language to the rest of Afroasiatic. This circumstance is all the more surprising as it is precisely during this period that Afroasiatic comparative linguistics has witnessed exceptional growth. The present dictionary is therefore especially timely and indeed long overdue. The author, who is currently Humboldt research fellow at the University of Frankfurt, has made full and exhaustive use of the vast array of etymological and comparative linguistic scholarship in all branches of Afroasiatic, which promises to provide an exemplary etymological dictionary that will be of service not just to students of ancient Egyptian, but also to scholars of Semitic, Cushitic, Berber, Omotic and Chadic languages. This volume is the introduction to the dictionary; we are not told how many volumes are expected, but given the in-depth etymological discussions to be found here, occasionally as few as two or three to a page, we could easily expect several volumes. As the introduction to the dictionary, the first volume is intended to provide the key to the rest, laying out not only the Afroasiatic background to ancient Egyptian, but also providing a critical and well-argued approach to questions concerning the interpretation of the consonant system. It is of course essential that the reading of the Egyptian script should accurately reflect the actual phonological reality at the various periods of the language's history, if reasoned etymologies are to be proposed. This discussion is necessary because of the radical reinterpretation of some of the consonants suggested by Rössler in the 1970s and taken up by several of the more prominent comparative and descriptive linguists of Egyptian since. Takács devotes his seventh chapter to persuasively refuting this 'neue Komparatistik' or Rösslerian re-evaluation, based essentially on the viability of his, or the traditional etymologies as against the 'new' ones. He clearly sides himself with the traditional school in the reading of the consonant phonemes, though the reader should be aware that a modified

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Rösslerian system (Antonio Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian. A linguistic introduction*, Cambridge, 1995) does have some support from the evidence of Coptic. Etymologies are by their very nature open to dispute, all the more when ranging across such an extensive phylum as Afroasiatic, but this reader, at least, is prepared to find Takác's arguments for the most part convincing. The largest section of the book, around some 230 pages, is devoted to demonstrating the regular consonant correspondences between ancient Egyptian and the rest of Afroasiatic. Each consonant of the Egyptian system is taken one-by-one in the traditional Egyptological sequence and copious etymological sets are provided to support the correspondences first with Semitic and then with the other members of Afroasiatic where evidence can be found. The sub-heading of each consonant section is framed as EG(YPTIAN) x = SEM(ITIC) y = A(FRO)A(SIATIC) z. The preeminence of Semitic has a long tradition in this kind of exercise, but is not meant here, as it may once have been in older studies, to suggest a special relationship between ancient Egyptian and Semitic. Indeed, the results of Takács's research into the lexicon would seem to suggest a closer relationship between Chadic and ancient Egyptian. Comparative lexical data is provided in the sequence Semitic-Berber-Cushitic-Omotic-Chadic, and citations both of actual forms and reconstructions are fully documented within the etymological discussion. Frequently the reader is also provided with a footnote of ancillary literature and alternative etymologies, running sometimes to two or even three *nota bene*. The findings of this chapter are then summarized in a series of tables of regular sound correspondences, which the author stresses are not comprehensive but tentative and of a preliminary character. The thoroughness of the preceding discussions, however, tends to suggest that the majority of these will be found to be quite sound and probably only minor modifications and refinements will be needed as comparative Afroasiatic linguistics develops in the future. Two smaller chapters follow describing some 'occasional, seemingly irregular' correspondences and 'incompatability, assimilation and dissimilation' as phonological processes that need to be taken into account. The final chapter is devoted to a discovery made by the Russian scholar, Anna Belova, that initial *w* and *j* sometimes reflect earlier medial vowels *u* and *i*, respectively, and are thus not part of the original (Afroasiatic) root structure. Takács speaks of 'the law of Belova', though it seems somewhat premature to speak here of a 'law' as the regularity of supposed $*C_1uC_2 >$ Egyptian $w\text{-}C_1\text{-}C_2$, etc., is debatable.

This is an important book with relevance to Afroasiastic linguistics as a whole. It is executed with exemplary scholarship and rigour, sometimes even with tempered passion when variant etymologies are dismissed as 'unconvincing', 'dubious' or even 'unacceptable'. The reader must admire Takács's encyclopedic knowledge of the etymological literature not only of ancient Egyptian, but also of the other five branches of the phylum, and await eagerly the appearance of the remaining volumes of the *Dictionary* proper.

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