

BOOK REVIEWS

HAMID DABASHI, *Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of 'Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani* (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1999). Pp. 693. \$100.00.

REVIEWED BY ALI ASGHAR SEYED-GOHRAB, Department of Persian Studies (TCIMO), University of Leiden, The Netherlands

Not much has hitherto been written about 'Ayn al-Quzat al-Hamadani (1098–1131)—about his life, writings, social and political environment, incarceration in Baghdad, and tragic execution. Hamid Dabashi's book is, therefore, at first sight a desired contribution in the field of medieval studies. The author presents a portrait of 'Ayn al-Quzat as a "Persian individual" who belongs neither specifically to Sufi tradition nor to any other categorical appellations; rather, he is a free thinker who challenges Islamic sacred tenets about prophethood, sainthood, the nature of God, and so on. This gives a new picture of 'Ayn al-Quzat. The book is divided into eleven chapters, excluding the Introduction and Conclusion. Chapters 1–4 describe 'Ayn al-Quzat's life (his social, political, literary, and educational background); in Chapters 5–9, Dabashi gives a close reading of 'Ayn al-Quzat's oeuvre; and Chapters 10–11 are devoted to 'Ayn al-Quzat's death and his portrayal in hagiographies. Although Dabashi's approach is interesting, I have mixed feelings about the book, which I shall address shortly.

In the Introduction, the author promises to outline a new method of reading 'Ayn al-Quzat's works, a method that is "drastically different from the dominant Orientalist tradition" (p. 1). However, instead of systematically introducing his method, which requires a new language to read texts closely, Dabashi negatively describes his book as an "Anti-Orientalist project" (p. 32) and launches a relentless attack on Orientalists, academic Sufis, philologists, Christian priest-scholars (p. 52, n. 22), and militant Muslims. His method remains hazy, as it is densely wrapped in long-winded and purely rhetorical discussions of "positivist Orientalist tradition," which in my opinion have little to do with 'Ayn al-Quzat. The author wishes to challenge and subvert the rhetoric of "specialization" that he later formulates: "the false premise and the outdated rhetoric of 'specialization' is an Orientalist device perhaps best suited for an endemic colonialist project that could afford positivist and philological expertise but deadly for academic intellectuals who actually care for the consequences of their work" (p. 7). Here Dabashi rejects generic appellations such as "Islamic," "Islamic mysticism," "Persian Sufism," and the like, for which he has "absolutely no use and patience" (p. 6). Instead of outlining various scholars' views on specific aspects of 'Ayn al-Quzat in his first chapter, Dabashi categorically dismisses previous important Western books and articles, typifying them as the works of "Orientalists" and "neo-Orientalists." I do not really see why Dabashi considers A. J. Arberry's research (as well as the research of H. Ritter, F. Meier, and G. Böwering) as "Orientalist constructs" for calling 'Ayn al-Quzat a "mystic" or "martyr." Dabashi's argument would probably have been convincing if he had presented the reasons that they use terms such as "mystic" and "martyr." In his unwarranted assault, Dabashi does not even spare academics when he states: "I am not an Orientalist. My anxieties, as I begin to write this book, are of an entirely different sort. Writing on, about, and around 'Ayn al-Quzat is not a project that a 'Research Institute' (What

a nightmare!) in Washington, DC, private or governmental, has commissioned me to do, nor is it a Ph.D. dissertation, an entry for encyclopaedia, or any other such form of neo-Orientalist enterprise" (p. 3). This nonsensical attack continues to the end, and escalates in such conclusions as: "It is a matter of astonishing success how thoroughly the counter-narrativity of 'Ayn al-Quzat's subversive imagination has been pacified, neutralized, and assimilated into a bland, lifeless, and jaundiced 'History of Persian Sufism,' an extraordinarily boring chapter in 'The Mystical Dimension of Islam'" (p. 596).

Readers interested in Sufism will be disappointed by this book. As Dabashi argues, Sufism is concocted by "a bizarre combination of mystically minded crypto-converts and politically bankrupt Muslim apologists" (p. 10). In several places, Dabashi attacks hagiographers (pp. xix, 42, 87) who have included 'Ayn al-Quzat in their works. Even when Dabashi treats the *Apologia*, in which 'Ayn al-Quzat defends himself and other Sufis, he states: "notice that he ['Ayn al-Quzat] has used 'certain technical terms of the Sufis,' which puts his individual choice outside the 'Sufi' discourse proper" (p. 473, n. 21).

It is not clear what "Sufi discourse proper" means during 'Ayn al-Quzat's time. Was a parallel discourse available? Dabashi's aversion toward Sufism results in the misrepresentation of essential features of 'Ayn al-Quzat's life and writings. For instance, although at one point Dabashi claims that "the association of 'Ayn al-Quzat with . . . Shaykh Ahmad al-Ghazali ultimately serves the essentializing force of Persian mysticism, which, through the active agency of committed and practicing Sufis, is relentlessly at work in de-historicizing and mystifying diverse intellectual forces into a consistent and persistent 'history' for 'Sufism'" (p. 86), in the remainder of the book, Dabashi contradicts himself by admitting to Ghazali's impact. Dabashi neither explains why 'Ayn al-Quzat does not belong to the Sufi tradition, nor does he expound on the letters he wrote to his Sufi disciples. Although Dabashi admits that "[f]rom various letters of 'Ayn al-Quzat it is quite evident that he participated in Sufi gatherings and sang and danced with them" (p. 97), he keeps emphasizing that he was not a Sufi but, rather, a "radical *anti-metaphysician*" (p. 267, n. 15).

Another problem with this book as a whole is Dabashi's disturbing style, the more so because at the very beginning, the author promises to tell the story of 'Ayn al-Quzat "in a language that matters [to him] first and foremost" (p. 2). Yet the author suffocates 'Ayn al-Quzat's own flowing style. For instance, in Chapter 3, where Dabashi deals with 'Ayn al-Quzat's writings, he uses A. J. Arberry's translation of the *Apologia*, but he subverts it by inserting his own lengthy comments in the middle of a citation: "His heart ['Ayn al-Quzat thus refers to his own heart in this highly provocative, rhetorically self-effacing but effectively stylized authority-engendering way], consumed by the fires of separation" (p. 161).

The lavish and mystifying use of prefixes and suffixes such as meta-, counter-, re-, de-, auto-, self-, -ify, -ation, -ity, -ness, and so on perhaps enriches the English language, but it does not enhance the readability of Dabashi's text. Examples of the terminology employed include: metalogical, counter-re-define, counter-re-compose, re-historicization, isness, theo-onto-political, Sufification, authority-authoring language, self-con-de-struction, Qur'anified, auto-narrativity, "Individuals, individuals, i-n-d-i-v-i-d-u-a-l-s," and incontinentality. In contrast, generic appellations are often put in quotation marks. Further, the book could have greatly benefited from a more thorough editing, eliminating the many repetitions in both the author's discussion and in long citations (one long citation is given on p. 67 and then repeated on pp. 145, 161, 454). At least one-third of the book could easily have been left out without having any effect on its central thesis.

To conclude, despite interesting close readings of 'Ayn al-Quzat's texts (especially his letters), I cannot help wondering what kind of reader Dabashi had in mind when working on this book. I am, however, certain that Dabashi's provocative enterprise will invite specialists of Persian Studies to challenge the ideas formulated in the book.

GERALD T. ELMORE, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-ʿArabi's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999). Pp. 775. \$229.50

REVIEWED BY OMID SAFI, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y.

Gerald T. Elmore's *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-ʿArabi's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* marks another significant milestone in the ever-expanding realm of Sufi studies focused on the Andalusian master. Aside from the previous works of William Chittick, Michel Chodkiewicz, Claude Addas, Henry Corbin, James W. Morris, and so on, the past few years have seen the publication of some important translations of primary materials from Ibn al-ʿArabi. The most successful example of this, perhaps, is *The Meccan Illuminations*, a partial thematic translation of the *Futuhat al-Makkiya*. Elmore's task is significant because it represents the translation of a single text, the *Kitab ʿAnqaʾ Mughrib*. While obviously not on the same level of significance as either the *Futuhat* or the *Fusus al-hikam*, the current text is a minor classic of Ibn al-ʿArabi's that does shed some additional light on the great Sufi master's views on the nature of sainthood, particularly as articulated through the concepts of the seal of saints (also called the *Mahdi* in this text). Other sections of the book deal with the emergence of the world from the macrocosmic *ḥaqīqa al-muhammadiya* (The Muhammadan Reality). A subsequent section deals with ten microcosmic "jewels" or pearls.

Ibn al-ʿArabi composed this text early in his career, circa 1199–1200. Being one of the earlier writings of Ibn al-ʿArabi, it is useful in tracing the evolution of Shaykh al-Akbar's thought on the concept of sainthood from this early period to the composition of the *Futuhat*. For example, in this text (p. 279), Ibn al-ʿArabi merely states that God has revealed to him the identity of the Muhammadan seal of sainthood, but does not reveal the name of this *khatam*. It is later in Shaykh al-Akbar's career, during the composition of the *Diwan* and the *Futuhat*, that he comes to acknowledge the seal as none other than himself.

Elmore's translation is a carefully researched work that grew out of a dissertation project at Yale, under the meticulous supervision of Gerhard Böwering in 1995. The scholarly apparatus is on full display here: ample footnotes, careful manuscript research, etc. The work features an extensive introduction (itself 226 pages!), translation, appendixes, a helpful glossary of technical terms, and an impressive bibliography. The "dissertationese" language is present here, with all of its strengths and its few weaknesses. At times there may be too many footnotes, which can distract even the seasoned reader.

Occasionally, Elmore makes claims that are hard to substantiate on anything other than his own authority. On what basis is Ibn Taymiya considered the *mujaddid* of a century (p. 9)? Some of the remarks strike one as anachronistic, such as the description of Ibn al-ʿArabi as having lived in "Western Europe in the midst of the golden age of medieval Christian humanism" (p. 11). Would it not be more fruitful to locate Ibn al-ʿArabi in a Maghribi context? Can one speak of "Western Europe" in the 1200s? Would Ibn al-ʿArabi himself have been conscious of having left "the continent of Europe," as Elmore points out (p. 68)? Rather, is it not fair to locate the crystallization of a distinctly "European" identity in a later period? Further, on what ground does Elmore deem the Eastern part of the Islamic world to be "more sophisticated" (p. 41), or the Maghrib "less doctrinally permissive" (p. 56)? These great generalizations should be either removed or carefully qualified.

It also seems hard to concur with Elmore that "the Shaykh al-Akbar has been more appreciated (and, therefore, presumably, better understood) in recent times by Indians, Iranians, Turks and Franks than by Arabs" (p. 38, n. 133). One only has to mention the significant contributions of Osman Yahya and Suʿad al-Hakim here, among others.

Also, some of the terms seem to have contemporary connotations that Elmore does not engage. The assessment of the “great majority of Muslims” today (as specifically distinct from Jews and Christians) as “fundamentalist” (p. 9, n. 28) is handled in a cursory and unsatisfactory fashion. Referring to Sufis of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s age as “Latter-day saints” (capitalized on p. 5, not capitalized on p. 89) surely is a baffling reference, given the Mormon connotations of that term. And at least for this reader, the translation of the term *umm al-kitab* as “Matrix of the Book” brought to mind more Keanu Reeves than the Holy Qur’an.

To this particular reader, the most problematic tendency in the footnotes is that of finding corresponding biblical passages for many of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s images. Time and again, Elmore goes to great lengths—and not entirely persuasive ones—to demonstrate links between some of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s imagery and biblical ideas dealing with Jesus’s crucifixion, Mary, etc. (For one such stretch of “correspondences,” see p. 87, n. 68; p. 88, n. 72; p. 89, n. 80; p. 90, n. 82; p. 90, n. 84). The cumulative weight of these attempted correspondences left this reviewer with an uneasy feeling of perhaps an ideological agenda to make an unwarranted connection. Previous scholarship on Ibn al-‘Arabi has too fully entrenched Shaykh al-Akbar in an Islamic (and more specifically Qur’anic) context for us to need to revisit that debate. One cannot help but think that such emphasis tells us more about the translator than it does about Shaykh al-Akbar.

In spite of these criticisms, the translation overall is of very good quality, and technical terms have been dealt with quite adequately. This service should not be underestimated, particularly in translating a work as complex as one from Ibn al-‘Arabi. In terms of the scholarly apparatus, Elmore’s translation is vastly superior to many “translations” of Ibn al-‘Arabi that are in fact secondhand translations from Turkish. However, at times reading through this text one does miss the simplicity of a translation such as Austin’s *Bezels of Wisdom*, or the poetic quality of Michael Sells’s recent translations of poems from Ibn al-‘Arabi.

Elmore is to be commended for having undertaken such a massive project. In today’s academic world, rigorous translations all too often go underappreciated. A close look at Elmore’s rigorous footnotes is more than enough evidence for careful scholarship that is required in producing such a translation. The field of Ibn al-‘Arabi studies can now boast another competent scholar.

The overall work is too long, and like all Brill publications, it is too expensive (an eye-popping \$229.50, according to Amazon) ever to be used in toto in a classroom setting. As with other Brill books, it seems destined for the not-entirely-unglamorous career of books that are ordered by research libraries and photocopied by graduate students of Islamic studies.

CARL W. ERNST, *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism*
Richmond, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1996, Pp. 207. \$25.00.

REVIEWED BY ALI ASGHAR SEYED-GOHRAB, Department of Persian Studies (TCIMO), University of Leiden, The Netherlands

The book under review is a monograph on one of the most outstanding figures in the tradition of Islamic mysticism. Ruzbihan Baqli (1128–1209) is celebrated for numerous works he wrote in both Persian and Arabic, treating a range of subjects, from Qur’anic exegesis to prophetic traditions, Islamic law, theology, jurisprudence, language and grammar, Sufism, and biography. Ruzbihan is most renowned, however, for his extensive mystical writings, especially his *‘Abhar al-‘ashiqin* (The Jasmine of Lovers), in which he meticulously outlines theories of mystical love, and his *Sharh-i Shathiyyat*, (Commentary on Ecstatic Saying), in which he offers a commentary on the ecstatic locutions of mystics, particularly Husayn Mansur Hallaj (executed 922). Ruzbihan belongs to the group of *malāmātī* (self-blame) mystics who, as described in this book,

maintained “perfect obedience to the law in private and outrageous behavior designed to incur censure in public” (p. 10).

Outside Iran, Ruzbihan’s writings had wide circulation among mystics in India, Central Asia, Ottoman Turkey, and Africa. In the West, he was introduced in 1913 by Louis Massignon, who emphasized Ruzbihan’s importance for the interpretation of Hallaj’s writings. Since then, several studies and critical text editions of Ruzbihan’s writings have appeared, but little attention has been paid to his important Arabic works, including the *Kashf al-asrar* (The Unveiling of Secrets), in which Ruzbihan depicts in diary form his itinerary to visit the divine. Writing on Ruzbihan’s life and mystical experiences, Ernst focuses in particular on this book, showing how the mystical world is revealed to Ruzbihan and how he encounters God, angels, prophets, and holy men. As rightly observed by Ernst, *The Unveiling* cannot, however, be termed an autobiography in the modern sense of the word; rather, it is a “combination of a retrospective memoir and an ongoing visionary diary” (p. 81). Although Ruzbihan makes some references, for instance, to the death of his wife and to his sick child, the emphasis is always on the mystical experience. Life events are secondary to his encounter with the divine.

The book is written in an attractive style and is neatly organized into a Preface and four chapters, followed by two appendixes. In the Preface, the author presents a comprehensive overview of studies on Ruzbihan published outside Iran. Afterward, he describes the design of the book and establishes the importance of *The Unveiling*. Chapter 1 is divided into two sections, the first succinctly describing Ruzbihan’s life, education, and mysticism; the second part is entirely devoted to studying the Ruzbihaniyya Order, the reasons for its rise in the 13th century, and its decline during the Safavid era. The second chapter is the longest one and is subdivided into seven sections. In the first section, Ernst describes the structure and contents of *The Unveiling of Secrets*. The term “unveiling” in Ruzbihan’s philosophy is “a form of transcendental vision that ‘sees’ the qualities of God: Unveiling is clarifying the veiled to the understanding, as though one sees with the eye” (p. 18). Ernst then describes the childhood unveilings experienced by Ruzbihan and proceeds to a discussion of the mystical universe of Ruzbihan, offering lucid comments and astute observations about his theology, cosmology, and psychology, followed by analyses of various metaphors, including the metaphor of veils and clothes. The latter is a favored metaphor occurring repeatedly in Ruzbihan’s other writings to describe the incidental mystical experience. Other subjects discussed in this chapter concern the literary aspects of *The Unveiling*, the relationship between prophethood and sainthood, *shathīyyāt*, “ecstatic speech,” and the Prophet’s ascension as a model for the highest spiritual development.

Ernst offers translations of *The Unveiling* to demonstrate Ruzbihan’s metaphoric and at times abstract style. To characterize Ruzbihan’s style, Ernst cites Muhammad Muin, the Persian authority on Ruzbihan, who states: “His speech is like a rose that flutters apart once grasped in the hand, or like an alchemical substance that turns into vapor when barely heated” (p. xi). Ernst is indeed successful in his translation, as the following random excerpt shows: “I saw one night a great ocean, and the sea was of red wine. I saw the Prophet sitting cross-legged in the midst of the deep ocean, drunk, and in his hand a cup of wine from that ocean, which he drank. When he saw me, he ladled out a cup of wine and gave it to me to drink. After that something was revealed to me, and I knew he was above all the rest of creation, since they die thirsty and he is drunk in the midst of the ocean of beauty” (p. 61).

In Chapter 3, Ernst discusses the process of institutionalization of the Ruzbihaniyya Order referring to the two Persian hagiographies written by great-grandsons of Ruzbihan, Sharaf al-Din Ibrahim’s *Tuhfat ahl al-‘irfān* (The Gift of the People of Gnosis) (1300), and Shams al-Din ‘Abd al-Tayf’s *Rūh al-jinān* (The Spirit of the Gardens) (1305), offering extra information about the “authority of Ruzbihan and the importance of his tomb as a focus of pilgrimage” (p. 113). In addition to miraculous stories used to glorify Ruzbihan as a saint, these biographies

are significant because they include some of Ruzbihan's "works otherwise not available" (p. 115).

Ernst adds two appendixes. Appendix A is a bibliographical list of Ruzbihan's oeuvre, a total of forty-five titles; "of these, eighteen no longer survive, leaving twenty-seven texts wholly or partially preserved in manuscripts" (p. 151). This appendix is very useful as it imparts information about sources, including translations; various critical text editions; and manuscripts. Appendix B is a tabular comparison of Ruzbihan's Arabic and Persian commentaries on the vision of Abu Yazid al-Bistami's ascension.

In conclusion, Ernst's book is a carefully argued contribution to the field of Islamic spirituality. The book is beneficial and readable for students and scholars following the subjects of Persian and Arabic literature, mysticism, and Islamic hagiography. Like Ernst's other works, whether translations (such as *The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master* [Chapel Hill, N.C.: Parvardigar Press, 1997]), or scholarly studies (such as *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985]), this book will be appreciated by a wide range of readers interested in mysticism.

TAMARA SONN, *Interpreting Islam: Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Pp. 224.

REVIEWED BY SHUKRI B. ABED, Language Department, Middle East Institute, University of Maryland, College Park

Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the colonization of most of the Arab world by Western powers during the first part of the 20th century, Arab intellectuals have been searching for answers to the many political and social questions—indeed, dilemmas—the Arab world has been facing. The appearance of communism at the beginning of the last century, embodying both an agenda for social justice and a Marxist methodology for historical analysis, appealed to many of them as a possible answer to these questions. Since then, many attempts have been made to show that there is compatibility between Islam and Marxist socialism—or, at least, that there is no incompatibility. The book under consideration, *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyyah fi-l-islam* (The History of Intellectual Movements in Islam), is one of these attempts. Its author is considered by Professor Tamara Sonn, the translator of this book from the original Arabic, to be the *first* Arab to adopt the Marxist methodology in analyzing Islamic history. "Bandali Jawzi's work is . . . historically significant as the first full-scale Marxist analysis of the nature and development of Islamic thought" (p. 16).

Sonn's book comprises an English translation of and a commentary on a book written in 1928 by Bandali Jawzi, a Christian born in Jerusalem. Sonn's book is divided into three major parts: an introduction to and a commentary on Jawzi's book (pp. 3–66), an English translation of the original Arabic work (pp. 71–175), and notes (pp. 177–201). In the Introduction, Sonn presents Jawzi's biographical sketch and describes his works and their significance to modern Islamic intellectual history.

Jawzi lived and wrote during a period in which "European domination began to dawn on Arab society" (p. 5). This coincided with the rise of communism in Russia, and Jawzi, who studied and lived in Russia from 1891 until his death in 1942, witnessed the social and political changes occurring there and in the region. His pioneering attempt to interpret Islamic history through the Marxist concept of history suggests that he was inspired by the ideals of the socialist elements of the communist revolution.

Although on various occasions Jawzi states that we cannot claim that the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was "a communist or socialist, [nor can we say] that his call was

aimed at socialist goals" (p. 83 E/35 A),¹ the socialist elements in his message "had a powerful effect on his call" (p. 83 E/35 A). Nor did the Arab Profit "intend by his words and deeds in Mecca and Medina to uproot the causes of social evil and kill all its roots, as socialist groups today try to do" (p. 87 E/44 A). Or, as Jawzi puts it elsewhere in his book, "The prophet was neither a socialist nor a communist in the modern sense of these two words, nor in any other sense. The reasons for this are complex, but turn for the most part on the lack of the necessary conditions in that milieu and at that time, and on the personality of that Arab reformer" (p. 88 E/48 A).

According to Jawzi, therefore, the seeds of socialism exist in Islam, but only under certain necessary economic (*iqtiṣādiyyah*) and moral (*adabīyyah*) conditions can these socialist elements be applied (p. 93 E/56 A). Indeed, socialism and communism, according to Jawzi, did appear in Islam once the requisite economic, social, and ideological conditions were present. Two centuries² after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, a socialist agenda was adopted by the Ismaʿilis and their brothers the Qaramitis, to whom Jawzi refers as the "communists of Islam" (p. 84 E/38 A), as well as other groups, such as the Babakis (covered in Chapters 4, 5, and 3 of Jawzi's *History*, respectively).

The fact that Jawzi sees Islam as a potentially socialist system is a major theme of his *History*, and Sonn does an excellent job of tracing the Marxist thought that influenced Jawzi's writing, in particular that of the Muslim Marxist Sultan Galiev, a contemporary of Jawzi. Equally important is Sonn's analysis of Jawzi's views on what has come to be called "Orientalism." Citing the contemporary Palestinian-American intellectual Edward Said's famous work *Orientalism* (1978), Sonn aptly concludes that Jawzi's *History* anticipates Said's analysis and that remarks in his introductory chapter on the work of some European scholars on the Middle East "presents a brief glimpse of the kind of exhaustive analysis Said published exactly fifty years later" (p. 11). Writing almost in a Saidian vein, Jawzi's characterization of the Orientalist works indicates clearly his dissatisfaction with the approach that many Western scholars have taken toward the Eastern Islamic culture. He accuses some of misinterpreting the history of the Eastern nations, concluding that Oriental people such as the Muslims "are subject to the same laws and factors to which the life and history of Western nations are subject" (p. 74 E/15 A). The fact that Jawzi chose to address this issue in the opening chapter of his book signifies the importance he attached to the study of history and the need for a new method, different from the Western methods applied hitherto, to help bring about true understanding of the forces and factors behind the evolution of Muslim societies.

Another important aspect of Sonn's analysis of Jawzi's thought is related to the tradition of *ijtihād* in the Islamic culture and the place of Jawzi's work in that tradition. A major portion of her analysis is devoted to explaining the meaning of *ijtihād* (roughly, exerting efforts to reinterpret the Islamic sources) and related concepts in the Islamic tradition (*taqlīd*,³ *tajdīd*,⁴ *qiyās*,⁵ etc.), as well as the history of these concepts from the dawn of Islam until today. This very illuminating discussion shows that "[Jawzi's] work offers an excellent example of the *ijtihād*ist hermeneutics" (p. 66). Thanks to the efforts of some of his contemporaries, such as Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Iqbal, who sought to reinvigorate *ijtihād* for a critical reassessment of Islamic history and culture, the door was open for Jawzi to apply Marxist tools in his analysis of Islamic history as a true *mujtahid*,⁶ or Islamic scholar, would do. He went to the source, the Holy Qur'an, and interpreted many of its statements through a Marxist prism, which views class struggle as the source of all social and political changes. By doing this, Jawzi was adhering to the true meaning of *ijtihād*. Jawzi's era, in Sonn's view, "was charged with intellectual energy and demands for critical reassessment of the Islamic heritage, and that critical reassessment is just what Jawzi produced" (pp. 37–38). Sonn is here referring to the many references Jawzi makes to the Qur'an as the basis for his new analysis of what *really* happened in the early days of Islamic history. This new reading sees the evolution of Islamic

history through economic factors and class struggle rather than merely through spirituality. Jawzi states in his chapter, "The Economic Foundations of Islam": "[f]or it has been well established that Islam . . . is not only a religious thought but a social and economic matter as well—or more precisely, more so than it is religious thought" (p. 75 E/17 A).

To sum up, although the careful reader can find several "soft spots" both in the translation and in the commentary, Sonn's book constitutes a significant contribution to the study of Islamic intellectual history in general and Arab Marxist analysis in particular. Sonn introduces the English reader to a significant study of an important aspect of Islamic intellectual history in the modern era written by a scholar who hitherto has not been well known, even among specialists in Islamic studies. Sonn should be commended for this eye-opening work.

NOTES

¹The double pagination indicates the page in Sonn's English translation (E) and the corresponding page in the original Arabic (A), taken from Bandali Jawzi, *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyyah fi-l-islam* (The History of Intellectual Movements in Islam) (Beirut: Dar al-rawa'i, 1959).

²A translation of the Arabic term '*asrayn* (the dual form of '*asr*'), which Sonn translated as "later" (p. 84). Although this term has a general reference of "era" or "period," the context indicates a specific meaning of two—or, alternatively, a couple—of centuries.

³(Legal) precedent in Islamic sources, as on p. 29, rather than "traditionalism," as on p. 34.

⁴Renewal in interpreting Islamic sources.

⁵"Analogical reasoning," as on p. 28, rather than "syllogistic reasoning" as on p. 27. The latter is used in logical theory, not in Islamic legal theory.

⁶*Mujtahid*, the active participle of the verb *ijtahada*, meaning the person who does the act of *ijtihad*—that is, a scholar.

MOHAMMED 'ABED AL-JABRI, *Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique*, trans. Aziz Abbassi (Austin: University of Texas Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1999). Pp. 130.

REVIEWED BY TAMARA SONN, Department of Religion, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

Aziz Abbassi has rendered a useful service to scholars of contemporary Arab thought in providing the first English translation of the Moroccan philosopher Mohammed 'Abed al-Jabri's writings. Al-Jabri is one of the leading voices in the discourse of cultural authenticity in the Arab world. Among his best-known works are *Nahnu wa'l-Turath* (We and Our Heritage, 1980), *al-Khitab al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir: Dirasah Tahliliyyah Naqdiyyah* (Contemporary Arab Discourse: A Critical and Analytical Study, 1982), and *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (Critique of Arab Reason, 1984–90). The present collection, translated from a French translation (from the original Arabic) published in 1994, includes selections from *Nahnu wa'l-Turath*, as well as al-Jabri's reflections on patterns of reasoning in Arab philosophy. The choice of texts was made with the advice of al-Jabri.

The quest for authenticity, which spans both philosophical and religious discourse in the contemporary Arab-Islamic world, is ultimately a quest for unique identity, engendered by fears of cultural submersion or even annihilation in the context of Euro-American dominance. This is clear from al-Jabri's critique of contemporary Arab thought, presented in his Introduction to this volume. Arab discourse on modernity is, he claims, imitative of European modernity. As a result, it is bound to be unproductive, given the historical differences between the two cultures. Describing modernity as "an internal dynamic of change," al-Jabri says that a truly "Arab modernity" must be "conditioned by the circumstances within which it manifests itself" (pp. 2–3). Al-Jabri is equally critical of those who seek cultural authenticity in the past,

whether ideological or institutional. He identifies those who take this approach as “fundamentalists” (p. 9). For them, “the spiritual factor [is] the sole engine of history” (p. 11). Marxists are likewise criticized by al-Jabri for failing to engage critically with their own culture. All these efforts fail due to defective reason. Their thought proceeds inductively, deriving “analogically the unknown on the basis of the known” (*qiyas al-gha’ib ‘ala al-shahid*, p. 17). This kind of reasoning may be and has been effective in some contexts. Al-Jabri claims, “In the Arab–Islamic context, it stands out as the scientific method par excellence” (p. 18). But it is appropriate only under certain circumstances, and the current problematic is not among them. That reasoning today amounts to an effort to project a future based on the past, which al-Jabri equates with “the absence of historical perspective” and “the absence of objectivity” from Arab thinking (p. 21). This is the crux of al-Jabri’s critique of Arab reason.

Al-Jabri does not reject tradition as such. But rather than looking to ideas or institutions of the past, he focuses on ways of reasoning. The goal of objectivity in analysis of the current problematic can be met, he claims, only by first disjoining the subject and object of analysis. The current reader of history must recognize that the past had its own unique context that, he implies, cannot be replicated today. Continuity between past and present must be derived “intuitively,” by “crossing the limits of speech and of logic” (p. 30). Readers must “decipher the signs within the text” (p. 30), identifying the implications of historical texts for current circumstances (those things al-Jabri claims “our philosophers” knew but refrained from revealing to those who were not reading for them).

In philosophical discourse, these implications are to be found not in the cognitive content of the text, but “in the ideological function that each philosopher assigns to this knowledge. It is there that we can find a meaning and a history to Islamic philosophy” (p. 42). Al-Jabri says that careful analysis shows “Arab–Islamic philosophy . . . to be a militant ideological discourse that is committed to the service of science, progress and a dynamic conception of society” (p. 48). He traces this role for philosophy specifically to two conflicts in Islamic history. In addition to the struggle against obscurantism among reactionary religious scholars such as al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya, the philosophers had a role to play in the Abbasid revolution. In that context the conflict was between the gnosticism of Indo-Persian heritage, which privileges irrationalism, and the reason of the Mu’tazilites, championed by Caliph al-Ma’mun. Al-Jabri identifies al-Kindi and al-Farabi as shapers of this “discourse of ‘universal reason’” (p. 56). Ibn Sina, by contrast, is identified as “consecrat[ing] a spiritualist and gnostic trend whose impact was instrumental in the regression of Arab thinking from an open rationalism . . . to a pernicious irrationalism” (p. 58).

Accordingly, al-Jabri believes the Muslim West has inherited the legacy of “reason and rationality” (p. 60). He therefore praises the “Andalusian resurgence” as the model for hope in the contemporary era, because only in the Maghrib and Andalusia did people escape the intellectually debilitating impact of Abbasid dominance. Ibn Hazm and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) are the chief exemplars of this supreme rationality, in al-Jabri’s view. In both he finds merit not so much in content as in their critical method of interpreting the sources, which is ultimately based on empirical data and sound reason. However unconvincing al-Jabri’s argument regarding the authenticity of Ibn Rushd’s methodology, al-Jabri’s motive for making it is clear in his Conclusion, “The Future Can Only Be Averroist” (pp. 120–30). He says that Arabs must put aside the “cognitive content” of Islamic philosophy and return instead to what he calls its “ideological content” (p. 122), its scientific methodology. He claims that this is the only way to “establish a dialogue between our tradition and universal contemporary thought” (p. 126) or “to give a basis to our authenticity within modernity and to give a basis to modernity within authenticity” (pp. 126–27).

Al-Jabri’s work never enjoyed mass popularity. It enjoyed its greatest popularity nearly two decades ago, and then primarily among intellectual elites. Still, this readable translation allows

access to the kind of thought, though marginalized by the dominant Islamist discourse, that may yet prove to be an important component in the developing articulation of Arab historical consciousness.

ROBERT BRODY, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998). Pp. 404.

REVIEWED BY ARNOLD FRANKLIN, Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University

This detailed and clearly written book is an invaluable window onto a period of Jewish history that has remained largely unknown to all but a handful of specialists. For more than six centuries two important institutions of Jewish learning and leadership dominated Babylonia, a loose geographic term used by Jews to refer to an area roughly corresponding to modern-day Iraq. From the middle of the 6th to the middle of the 11th century, the heads of these *yeshivot* (s. *yeshivah*), known as *geonim* (s. *gaon*), exercised a combination of spiritual and political authority over Jewish communities throughout the Near East, North Africa, and Europe. Their most enduring impact on Jewish civilization, however, was the canonization of the Babylonian Talmud, which, as a result of their efforts, became the cornerstone of all forms of medieval rabbinic Judaism. Brody's book, based on a mastery of the primary sources as well as recent work in the field, provides the first comprehensive summary of the achievements of the *geonim* in almost fifty years, a task made both challenging and imperative by the progress of research on materials from the Cairo Genizah since the publication of S. Assaf's *Tequfat ha-ge'onim ve-sifrutah* in 1955.

In the first of the book's three parts, Brody presents the historical background to the world of the *geonim*, paying particular attention to the origins, evolution, and functioning of the *yeshivot*. Despite the claims of the *geonim*, their *yeshivot* were quite different from the corresponding academies of the Talmudic era, exhibiting a far greater degree of institutionalization and hierarchy. Sensitive to the interplay between external factors and internal Jewish developments, Brody notes the decisive and advantageous impact of the founding of the Abbasid capital of Baghdad on the Babylonian *geonim* who suddenly found themselves located near the administrative center of a world empire. He goes on to examine the role of the *geonim* within the *yeshivot* as well the nature of *geonic* authority over the far-flung Jewish diaspora. In this section, Brody also explores a number of sources of competition to the authority of the Babylonian *geonim* that included rival institutions of Jewish leadership such as the Exilarchate and the *yeshivah* of Palestine, as well as anti-rabbinic groups such as the Karaites and various heretical sects.

The second section attempts to reconstruct the intellectual world of the Babylonian *yeshivot* during what Brody terms the "classical" *geonic* period—that is, up to the time of Se'adyah ibn Joseph (d. 942). Unlike the Palestinian center of Jewish literary activity, which produced liturgical poetry (*piyyut*), *midrash*, and works of *masorah*, the Babylonian *yeshivot* focused their creative energy almost exclusively on determining the correct interpretation of the Babylonian Talmud and the practical application of its legal material. The vast body of *geonic* responsa, comprising answers to queries submitted to the *yeshivot* from as far away as Morocco and Spain, demonstrate not only the centrality of the Talmud in the culture of the *yeshivot* but also how the *geonim* was ultimately successful in disseminating their interpretation of rabbinic Judaism throughout the expansive Jewish world. Brody also examines several texts produced during this period in circles connected with the Babylonian *yeshivot*. Like the responsa, they are primarily concerned with elucidating points of Talmudic law, yet as independent works they repre-

sent an important innovation and served as the basis for the subsequent development of post-Talmudic rabbinic literature.

In the third part, Brody explores a change in the intellectual climate of the *yeshivot* that began to be felt during the 10th century. The crucial figure in this transformation is Se'adyah ibn Joseph, a native of Egypt who studied in Palestine before serving as *gaon* of the Babylonian academy of Sura from 928 to 942. Se'adyah's appointment, itself a departure from the standard practice of choosing incumbents from the ranks of a select group of Babylonian families, marked the beginning of a period of openness within the highly conservative world of the *yeshivot*. While making significant contributions to the study of Talmudic law, Se'adyah also cultivated disciplines such as Hebrew grammar, biblical exegesis, and theology that lay beyond the traditional purview of the Babylonian *geonim*. Unlike his predecessors, he showed a profound receptiveness to the surrounding Arabic culture, as well, an attitude reflected in the language, format, and subject matter of his works. Despite this apparent openness, Se'adyah was also the first *gaon* to attack Karaites and other schismatics outright in an effort to delineate the boundaries of rabbinic Judaism. In each of these areas, Brody demonstrates, Se'adyah's innovative lead was followed by at least one of his successors.

The Geonim of Babylonia is not an exhaustive history of Judaism during the *geonic* period; nor does it claim to be. Rather, it is an intellectual history written on the basis of the literary remnants of a highly select group of Jewish leaders who flourished in or near Baghdad during the first three centuries of Abbasid rule. The importance of these texts for the subsequent development of rabbinic Judaism, as well as the complexity involved in clarifying the history of the institutions where they were produced, fully justify the work's narrow scope. Brody's volume is thus best read as a complement to the social, economic, and political history of Jewish life in the Near East currently being written by scholars working on the documentary materials from the Cairo Genizah.

In at least one respect, however, Brody's book would have benefited from a more thorough incorporation of the findings of those historians. By ending his study with the death of Hayya in 1038, Brody adheres to a programmatic view of *geonic* history that derives from the works of medieval Jewish chroniclers living in Europe. S. Poznanski, J. Mann, and others have shown, however, that despite the claims of those writers, powerful *geonim* continue to function in Babylonia long after Hayya. One of these, Samuel ibn Eli, who lived during the second half of the 12th century, left behind a considerable collection of writings that make clear that European perceptions of a weak *geonic* authority after 1038 did not always correspond to reality.

That qualification aside, *The Geonim of Babylonia* is a valuable and much needed introduction to the literature of the *geonic* period. Its readers will come away with an appreciation of the major works of the period, as well as a solid grasp of the principal areas of scholarly debate. Brody has produced an important book that is both accessible to the non-specialist and informative for scholars in the field.

HERIBERT BUSSE, *Islam, Judaism, and Christianity: Theological and Historical Affiliations*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998). Pp. 207.

REVIEWED BY REUVEN FIRESTONE, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem

This book is not about Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. It is about Islam in relation to Christianity and Judaism. And despite its subtitle, it is not an explication of theological and historical affiliations. In fact, because the author never establishes his intent, methodologies, or conceptual approaches in writing this book, it is rather difficult to understand exactly what its purpose is.

The book is divided into five sections. After a short introduction providing a very brief

survey of modern scholarship on Islam, the first section examines the religious context of the Arabian peninsula at the time of Muhammad. This is a survey of previous work on the subject and provides few new insights. The author relies extensively on Ibn Ishaq, ignores other early sources, and omits much important recent scholarly work on this subject from his footnotes.

The second section treats Muhammad's relationship with the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*). Here, Busse orders and contextualizes disparate Qur'anic verses referring to Jews and Christians according to his theory of Muhammad's historical relationship with them. In the earliest period in Mecca (610–22), Muhammad knew only isolated Jews and Christians. His as yet largely unformed monotheism naturally seemed quite like that of Jews and Christians, and as the Meccan pagans' opposition to him grew, he naturally inclined toward a somewhat romantic view of Jews and Christians as natural allies. This explains his sending a delegation to Christian Abyssinia for protection and support and for some of the positive references toward Jews and Christians in the Qur'an. The second stage begins with the Hijra in 622, when for the first time he came into direct contact with an organized monotheistic community—in this case, Jews. After high initial hopes, he was bitterly disappointed, and his anger toward the Jews reaches a peak in the Qur'an that exactly matches the historical situation with the massacre of the Banu Qurayza. After the elimination of the Qurayza, Muhammad took a more moderate position by leaving the judgment of the Jews up to God. "This restraint was the result of pragmatic politics that Muhammad felt compelled to assume after his sphere of influence had grown and it became necessary to declare a pact, not only with the Jews, but with Christians and Zoroastrians as well" (p. 48).

When Muhammad was having his problems with the Medinan Jews, he wrote the Qur'anic verses contrasting them, their beliefs, and behaviors with his superior assessment of Christians. But it eventually became clear that Christians would also refuse to accept his prophetic status and his religion. This led to the third stage, in which he resigned himself to accepting the status of Judaism and Christianity as legitimate if flawed expressions of religious monotheism.

There is clearly a logic to Busse's assessment, particularly if one reads the *Sira* of Ibn Ishaq as an accurate historical depiction of Muhammad's biography. On the other hand, there is no structural, linguistic, or any other textual or extra-textual support for it outside the extremely particularistic religious literature of Islam. One can arrange the Qur'anic verses according to any conceivable chronology, including one based on an assumption of what Muhammad's personal inclinations and responses to theoretical historical situations would be. Busse provides no recognizable methodology, theory, or additional evidence to corroborate his view.

The third and fourth sections examine what Busse understands to be Muhammad's treatment of biblical narratives in the Qur'an: "Narratives from the Old Testament" and "Narratives from the New Testament." These sections provide a very good listing of narrative and typological parallels between the Qur'an and previous scriptures. However, Busse cites few scholarly studies of the individual blocks of material that he treats, despite the fact that there has been a great deal of first-rate scholarship on the literary and conceptual parallels between Qur'anic and biblical narrative by Western scholarship in the past half-century. He relies heavily on Rudi Paret's excellent scholarship, but is generally unaware of scholarly studies in English and certainly unaware of the very significant American scholarship on the Qur'an in the past few decades.

Busse unabashedly writes that Muhammad took Jewish and Christian scriptural sources and commentaries and purposefully manipulated them into the form that they now assume in the Qur'an. "Biblical stories were incorporated in the Koran rather at random; their only purpose was to illustrate the dogmatic and moral teachings of Islam" (p. 26). Or, "From rabbinical and Christian sources it was already known that Abraham was subjected to persecution prior to his exile, as verified by Hironymus. This was Muhammad's source; therein he found statements that confirmed his own experience, i.e., that Abraham acknowledged monotheism, received his

calling to prophethood, proclaimed his faith, suffered distress, and was then delivered by God" (p. 78). The ideas behind such statements are certainly worthy of consideration, but the author provides no evidence for support, whether textual or intellectual, beyond the text of the Qur'an itself.

Busse's reading of the Qur'an is so strongly influenced by his own personal grounding in biblical tradition that he cannot see the Qur'an as an independent source. So, for example, he corrects Paret and Arberry's translations of Q.37:99 because they are not "in keeping with Genesis" (p. 80). Here and throughout, he makes sense of the Qur'an by reading through the refractive lenses of his understanding of the Bible. So, for example, "As lord over nature, some parallels can be made between Solomon and David. As we have already seen, they appear together as wise judges. They also complement each other with respect to their sins. David coveted his neighbor's wife and had her husband killed, whereby he violated the fifth and tenth commandments. Solomon is seduced by worldly goods, i.e., fast-running steed. Here the horses might have been confused with those that the kings of Judah installed at the entrance to the Temple in honor of the sun" Where in the Qur'an does David covet his neighbor's wife and have her husband killed? Are we talking about the Qur'an or the Hebrew Bible? If Busse is writing as a universalist theologian who is trying to make sense of the Qur'an through the Bible, then this is perhaps a fair goal. But if this is the case, then he should state his purpose outright.

The final section is entitled, "The Present-Day Situation and Its Foundation in History." Here Busse gives an extremely brief accounting of the legal and historical position of the "People of the Book" in Islamic political history and the position of Muslims in Europe, then jumps among the modern states of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, and so on, with narrow and shallow accountings of how they treat their religious minorities. He then gives a very short historical overview of Christian and subsequent Islamic attempts at missionizing, and concludes with a sketch of recent attempts to engage in dialogue.

His final words on dialogue are quite endearing, but the tone is different from that in the rest of the book. Busse notes the critical importance of respecting the religious sensibilities of the Other in such meetings, but he seems oblivious of this very axiom in his own explication of parallels between the Qur'an and the Bible. It seems to this reader that the critical issue in dialogue, whether in a public oral meeting or in the medium of written composition such as the work under review, is the openness, even when one is firm in one's own faith, to at least the *possibility* of a reality of transcendence associated with the Other's religion. By stating that Muhammad took material from the Bible and reworked it because of theological problems they presented to him or in order to further his personal career, or even that Muhammad erred in his understanding of the material, Busse denies even the possibility of religious transcendence to Islam. The problem with this book is that it does not succeed either as a careful scholarly analysis or as a friendly attempt to reach out in dialogue.

NADER SAIEDI, *Logos and Civilization: Spirit, History, and Order in the Writings of Baha'u'llah* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland/CDL Press, 2000). Pp. 404. \$45.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DENIS MACEOIN, formerly of Newcastle University, UK

This volume, which succeeds in being both brilliant and riddled with weaknesses, appears at a time when the lines between proper academic study of the Bahai movement on the one hand and faith-based scholarship on the other are being blurred and even derided. To make my own position clear, I am deeply committed to a strictly academic approach to the study of religion and thus find myself alienated by apologetics dressed up as academic studies. I am in particular

profoundly worried by increasing attempts by orthodox Bahais to seize the academic high ground through organizations such as the Association of Bahai Studies, the Bahai Chair at the University of Maryland, Landegg International University, and, most recently, the Bahai-funded Chair at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, while resorting to the use of excommunication against Bahai scholars who take unorthodox positions. The Bahais, like the Unification Church in the 1980s, are using their financial muscle to set the academic agenda relating to their faith.

I started reading Nader Saiedi's book within this context. There is no doubt that he operates from an orthodox (and, I would say, fundamentalist) standpoint that sees normal academic work in this and related fields as essentially distorted and short-sighted because of its rejection of divine truth. That made me uneasy, as did the fact that his book is published not by a university-linked press (as implied) but by a vanity press based in Bethesda.

Yet much to my surprise, I came away deeply impressed by Saiedi's achievement. My reservations (to which I shall return) are considerable. But simply treating the book for what it is—a non-academic exposition of Bahai doctrine through an analysis of the texts of three major works of the religion's founder, Baha'u'llah—I came away convinced that the author had indeed achieved a great deal.

This is the first really intelligent exposition of Bahai texts to appear at any time since the movement's foundation in 1863. Saiedi, to his great credit, goes far beyond the work of earlier Bahai scholars from Gulpaygani to Taherzadeh, all of whom wrote in a tradition that was simply an extension of Iranian Shi'i learned interpretation and historical writing. Saiedi, who is a professor of sociology at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, brings to bear a genuine understanding of Western philosophical and sociological theory.

Deeply familiar though I am with Bahai scriptural writing in Persian and Arabic, I freely acknowledge that Saiedi's hermeneutics made sense of passages in a way that enlightened and humbled me. I could not follow him along many of the paths he took, but I did see texts opened up in a thoughtful, skillful, and resonant manner. The Bahais are fortunate to have such a thinker in their midst, and it will be gratifying if his work has the effect of raising scholarly standards generally within the movement.

But if believers and some outsiders may find much in this book to rejoice in, it has to be said that regular academics and most informed non-Bahais will read it with some irritation and dismay. Saiedi has no truck with rationalist or liberal thinking and is determined throughout his exposition to promote an uncompromisingly orthodox understanding of Bahai and Babi scripture and history. In doing so, he reveals himself as woefully ignorant of historical detail and of academic debate in many of the areas he discusses.

Among his many solecisms I would include the following: 10,000 Babis were martyred in late 1852 (p. 4) (in fact, only about 3,000 Babis died violently in the entire Babi episode)¹; "Baha'u'llah's words here have nothing in common with typical Sufi discourse" (p. 48) (manifestly, they do); "the dominant attitude in Sufism, which took mystic love as the stage of truth and as superior to the realm of law" (p. 49) (in fact, most Sufi orders were and are shari'a-minded); he thinks that the "three pillars" (*sic*) of Islam are the unity of God, prophecy, and return (p. 66); "In all of the Bab's writings, the Promised One of the *Bayan* is systematically introduced as 'Baha'" (p. 122) (the systematic title is *man yuzhiruhu'llah*; "Baha" is rare and ambiguous); in the early Baghdad period, "many prominent Babis claimed to be the Promised One" (p. 200) (numerous claims were made, but only a very few individuals claimed to be *man yuzhiruhu'llah*). And so on.

Saiedi's ignorance seems deliberate at times. A crucial flaw is his reluctance to engage with other writers in debate over controversial issues. His only reference to the issue of jihad in Babism is to an obscure text. He makes no mention of my work on this subject² or the debate with Muhammad Afnan and William Hatcher that ensued.³ His discussions of Babism are marred by a lack of reference to Abbas Amanat's seminal study, *Resurrection and Renewal*:

The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran (which is also absent from the bibliography); his lengthy discussion of the situation following the death of the Bab makes no reference to either of my two long articles on the subject,⁴ his chapters on early texts, including the *Iqan*, ignore Christopher Buck's book on this topic entitled *Symbol and Secret: Qur'an Commentary in Baha'u'llah's Kitab-i-Iqan*.

Simply, he is setting the agenda for his own discourse, referring to books and articles that support his theses and leaving unmentioned those that do not. The only instance in which he does actually engage with another scholar is his dismissal of Juan Cole's argument that Baha'u'llah was influenced by external ideas, changed his views from time to time, and was preceded in his thinking by Western ideas about democracy, women's rights, republicanism, and so on.

Put in a cage and labeled for what it is, this is an impressive introduction to Bahai doctrine and texts. It is not for the faint-hearted or the completely uninformed. Academics will find it uses up time that would be better spent in reading the texts themselves.

Saiedi himself needs to descend from the lofty heights of true belief in order to get his hands dirty in debate with his peers. Once he learns the ropes, his future books may be less hectoring, and he may come across as less uninformed.

NOTES

¹"A Note on the Numbers of Babi and Baha'i Martyrs," *Baha'i Studies Bulletin* 2 (1983): 84–88.

²D. MacEoin, "The Babi Concept of Holy War," *Religion* 12 (1982): 93–129; idem, "From Babism to Baha'ism: Problems of Militancy, Quietism, and Conflation in the Construction of a Religion," *Religion* 13 (1983): 219–55.

³M. Afnan and W. S. Hatcher, "Western Islamic Scholarship and Baha'i Origins," *Religion* 15 (1985): 29–51; D. MacEoin, "Baha'i Fundamentalism and the Academic Study of the Babi Movement," *Religion* 16 (1986): 57–84.

⁴D. MacEoin, "Hierarchy, Authority and Eschatology in Early Babi Thought," in *Studies in Babi and Bahai History: In Iran*, ed. Peter Smith (Los Angeles, 1986) 95–155; idem, "Division and Authority Claims in the Babi Community, 1850–1866," *Studia Iranica* 18 (1989): 93–129.

FRED M. DONNER, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 14 (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1998). Pp. 373.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD C. MARTIN, Department of Religion, Emory University, Atlanta

The origins and early development of Islam as determined from its most important and foundational texts is the project this book undertakes. As such, it stands in a tradition of Orientalist scholarship on early Muslim historiography that reaches back to the 19th century and that continues to generate debates among historians. *Narratives of Islamic Origins* is important for many reasons, not least because it clarifies the history of the issues that have divided historians, offering pointed critiques of major, particularly recent, works in the debate, while at the same time marking out a position that the author consistently defends in the Introduction and twelve chapters and appendixes. The use of the term "Orientalist" here is not meant to evoke, but rather to recognize—as Donner states at the outset—that European scholars of the 19th and early 20th centuries took Arabic sources seriously and made them available to succeeding generations. Donner's purpose is not to question their motives for doing this; rather, it is to analyze the textual evidence, arguments, and conclusions they adduced. The author has also

written numerous articles and chapters on early Islamic history as well as the acclaimed and not uncontroversial book *The Early Muslim Conquests* (1981).

In the Preface, Donner identifies his reason for undertaking over fifteen years the compilation of this study. As a scholar of early Islamic history and historiography, he had come to realize why he sensed that the many earlier works on Islamic historical writing were insufficient: most of these earlier works had asked the wrong question, or, at least, they had neglected an important one—namely, *why* did Muslims begin to write history? This led Donner to investigate the further questions of *when* early Muslim savants first felt “impelled to write history,” and *how* they proceeded “to elaborate their tradition of historical writing, once they decided to do so” (p. xi). The twelve chapters that follow form an impressive argument. The book is divided into two parts. In Part 1, Chapter 1 presents a schematic contrast of four approaches that have characterized scholarship on the literary sources on Islamic origins. The “descriptive approach” took Muslim textual sources, such as the *Sira* of Ibn Ishaq and the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa’d at face value as reliable. The “source-critical approach” has applied Western textual and historical criticism, as derived largely from biblical criticism, to the hadith, early historical texts, and, to a more limited extent, to the Qur’an. The category of source-critical approaches, characteristic of such well-known works as that of Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht on hadith, spawned both a criticism of its methods and conclusions, as well as a more positivistic approaches in the more recent work of John Wansbrough and his students. This latter turn Donner refers to as the “skeptical approach,” which one of its purveyors, Patricia Crone, has described as follows: “[w]hether one approaches Islamic historiography from the angle of the religious or the tribal tradition, its overall character thus remains the same: the bulk of it is debris of an obliterated past” (cited on p. 20).

It was the scholars of the skeptical approach who were least receptive of Donner’s conclusions in *Early Muslim Conquests* and to whose arguments he frequently and judiciously turns a critical eye in much of the present volume. Donner says that scholars such as Wansbrough, Michael Cook, and Crone have, to use a cliché, thrown out the baby with the bathwater. His own approach to the problem of the historiographical reliability of the sources (scripture, prophetic tradition, biography, etc.) is described as the critical-descriptive approach—one that accepts their reliability on a case-by-case basis when no compelling reason to the contrary can be adduced. It is a critical revision of the “descriptive approach” that Donner has nuanced and made more acceptable by applying contemporary historical methods.

Chapter 2 assesses the Qur’anic and other textual evidence of the earliest forms of piety in “paraenetic” passages—namely, the ecstatic exhortations associated with the earliest passages of the Qur’an. These, along with “legal” and “anecdotal” kinds of passages, Donner argues, can be reduced to “one essential message to the hearer: that mankind should be pious” (p. 67). Chapter 3 presents the second half of his thesis, the problem of legitimation and the role (very significant for Donner) of piety in establishing legitimation. “It was natural . . . that when there arose within the community of Believers political and social tensions and disputes over leadership . . . the Believers first resorted to considerations of piety to resolve those issues” (p. 98). This marks Islam off as unique among world religious communities, Donner argues, with the sentence that immediately follows the once just cited: “[o]ther distinctions commonly used in human societies to settle disputes and establish an individual’s status—tribal or family affiliation, historical associations, or claims based on property, class, ethnicity, etc.—do not appear as part of the original Islamic scheme of things” (p. 98). Proponents of conflict resolution and management will not like this claim, because “interests”—the basis for settling disputes—are difficult to grasp and bargain with in “considerations of piety.”

In Part 2, Donner chronicles the early species of historical writing and sifts through the themes of what was written about Islamic history and the longer view of *Heilsgeschichte*, reaching back to the earlier prophets and to creation. The major themes he discusses are proph-

ecy, community, hegemony, and leadership. He builds his case carefully for his traditional-critical approach to the sources of Islamic origins, and, more important in terms of the thrust of the book, I think, for his quarrel with the skeptical approach to the sources by Wansbrough, Cook, and Crone, in particular. One of the most interesting points at issue between Donner and the skeptics is how to explain the consensus about Muslim origins that eventually emerges. The skeptics generally concluded that it was, as Donner puts it, "the process of myth-making in the Islamic community at a much later date . . . fabricated during the second and subsequent centuries AH as a way of explaining both the community identity of Muslims and their internal divisions" (p. 287). Against this view, Donner proposes that we "assume that the consensus exists because events actually did happen in the way described by our sources, and were so well known in the early community that all groups were required to accept the basic 'script' of events" (p. 289). The book can also be said to be about the early formation of Muslim identity over and against Christians, Jews, pagans, and others, as reflected in such debated points as: was Muhammad truly a prophet? Why did Muslim scripture differ from the scriptures of Christians and Jews? Those who are familiar with New Testament scholarship will recognize in this work a familiar problem—namely, what was the impact of time (history) on a community that presumably originally had organized itself around a dire message of judgment?

Narratives of Islamic Origins makes an important contribution to our thinking about Islamic origins. It will be seen—I think correctly—as a work of conservative scholarship on the question of the reliability and historical accuracy of the sources that purport to be about the formation of the Muslim *umma* in the first century of its existence. It is a well-argued work, and on the whole it is well documented. In the second part of the book, dealing with major themes of early Muslim self-awareness, the chapters tend to be illustrative of such themes as *nubuwwa* (prophecy) rather than analytical or definitive in the discussion of the texts. If this is a criticism, then one might go on to say that Donner deserves to be praised for offering a cogent counter-argument to his critics and for mapping out a way to make a case for early Muslim history "wie es eigentlich gewesen." One thing *Narratives of Islamic Origins* will not do is end the debate. Each side of the present historiographical dispute is perforce much too speculative to trump the other in our present state of historical knowledge about the first decades of Islam.

MAYA SHATZMILLER, *The Berbers and the Islamic State: The Marinid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000). Pp. 217. \$69.95 cloth, \$26.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KATHERINE E. HOFFMAN, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois at Chicago

Histories of the medieval Maghrib mention that the three dynasties (the Almoravids, Almohads, and Marinids) that ruled the region of present-day Morocco were founded by Berbers (or "Imazighen"). How this affected the dual processes of religious Islamization and cultural-linguistic Arabicization in the region is a question that has largely gone unexamined due to a dearth of documents written in the Tamazight (Berber) language. Indeed, there is little scholarship addressing the question of what it meant to "be" Berber in the pre-modern period, or whether an Amazigh (Berber) culture or Tamazight language in itself served as grounds for forging group solidarity. In July 2001, King Mohamed VI announced the creation of the Institut Royal pour la Culture Tamazight to integrate the Tamazight language into Moroccan schools. This decision came in the wake of the Kabyle uprisings in neighboring Algeria over police brutality and discrimination against Imazighen. Negotiations over the role of Tamazight in Maghribi state

institutions and national sentiments date back a thousand years. Clearly, the long-established Islamicization of North Africa has not led to an uncontested Arabicization.

The medieval historian Maya Shatzmiller's *The Berbers and the Islamic State* thus makes a timely appearance. This study of 12th–15th-century Islamic institutions as tools of empire distinguishes between the religious and cultural-linguistic processes of assimilation. Shatzmiller argues that Berber rulers and laypeople were invested differently in Islamic and Arabic symbols; the Marinids' adoption of Islamic institutions (primarily *waqf*, land reform, and the *madrasa*) did not signal a mass cultural-linguistic assimilation of the populations under their rule. Instead, the process, which her book sets out explicitly to capture, was one of "interaction and resistance, creativity and digression, evolution and disruption, a continuous process of negotiation between the individual and society over identity and the state's power." Shatzmiller posits the book as "not only the story of what happened to an ethnic identity, expressed in particularities such as local origins, language, social structures [relevant to] Persians, Turks, Indians" but also the story of "what happened to their essential characteristics with the advent of the new religion and the new state" (p. xvii). How, that is, did many Muslims of non-Arab heritage come to associate closely with Arabic language and Arab culture? Berbers, Shatzmiller argues, articulated their resistance to Arab and Islamic hegemony through Arabic and Islamic symbols themselves. For this reason, the use of these symbols does not indicate assimilation. The Marinid state brought Berbers into the mainstream of Islamic statehood through bilingual practices and by introducing what Shatzmiller calls "Islamic norms," or Islamic institutions. From this perspective, she argues, the paucity of documents written in Berber does not in itself substantiate the widespread claim that no medieval Berber intellectual or literary traditions existed.

Shatzmiller is the author of, among other impressive works in both English and French, the meticulously researched and compellingly written *Labour in the Medieval World*. Her recent monograph also deftly culls information from manuscript sources and makes original historiographic as well as substantive contributions. *The Berbers and the Islamic State*, however, hangs together only loosely as a monograph; all but one of the nine chapters were published separately between 1978 and 1991. The book's provocative Introduction establishes a conceptual framework that will interest social scientists, yet the chapters scarcely address it. Claims such as, "The story told here is that of the acculturation and alienation of the Berbers to the Islamic state under the Marinids" (p. xix) and their "individual and group malaise" (p. xvi) remain unsubstantiated, and the terminology is often vague. What besides native language, the reader is left wondering, made a medieval Maghribi a "Berber"? How does one assess "malaise" and "alienation"?

The book compensates for such shortcomings with intriguing discussions spread over three sections of three chapters each, each valuable in its own right. In Part 1, "The Berbers' Search for Their Place in Islamic History," Chapter 1 treats a compilation of fragments in the *Kitab an-Ansab li-Abi Hayyan* manuscript (Rabat K1275) that attests to a Marinid-era interest in Berber history. Thematic unity among the fragments, cross-referencing, and chronological continuity suggest that these fragments, part of which were first published by Levi-Provencal in 1925, constituted a history and historiography of the Berbers dating from the 8th to the 13th centuries. An appendix details the origins and dates of the document's fifty historians. These writings indicate the importance of Berber language in Islamic institutions and practices—most importantly, prayer—suggesting that Arabic hegemony was not yet in place. Chapter 2 asks how the myth of Berber origins in the Arab East became so compelling. Familiar to Moroccans and Moroccanists today, the myth was not adapted by the Moroccan sultan until the 16th century. The masses had their own origins myths, the author claims, with little access to history books or traditions written in Arabic. This line of inquiry hints at a gap between an elite minority and the popular majority "who were still very Berber" (p. 27), although it is unclear how Shatzmiller or the people themselves understood such a Berber–Arab continuum. Chapter

3 supports the widespread claim that the Marinids, like their predecessors the Almohads, used Islam to build consensus among tribes. Although the Marinids staffed their administrations with Berber-speakers and used Berber in religious contexts, tensions persisted with Arabicized elites in the quasi-autonomous towns. Praise for the “Berber race” appearing in 14th-century writings contrasts importantly with earlier writings praising the Zenata, Sanhada, or Masmuda Berber groups. Shatzmiller thus deduces that “race” had by then become a historical and historiographic criterion, but she offers none of the manuscripts’ original Arabic terms that would help the reader assess the validity of this claim. Although she states that “The majority of North African Berbers remained Berber speaking much longer than the Andalusian Berbers did, and were also exposed to the Arab–Islamic notions of race and religion” (p. 35), it is unclear what was specifically Arab or Islamic about these notions.

Part 2, “Devising an Islamic State,” considers the process of Islamic state formation under the Marinids through the development of Islamic institutions. In Chapter 4, “Rural and Urban Islam in 13th-Century Morocco,” a rediscovered document appears to attest to a factional rivalry for control of the Marinid dynasty grounded in the conviction that the Marinids lacked the ideological and religious bases of legitimacy. The document suggests that the victorious faction cloaked itself in Islamic piety, and that this aided its rise to power, countering scholars’ prevailing view that the Marinids’ initial rise to power was devoid of ideology and religious conviction. Chapter 5, on the status of Jews in Fez, and Chapter 6, on the fall of a Qarawiyyin *khatib*, concern the Marinid capital of Fez but otherwise are marginal to the book’s stated theme.

Part 3, “Implementing Islamic Institutions,” argues that Marinid rule was grounded in Islamic institutions rather than religiosity or spirituality. The Almohads replaced Arabic-speakers with Berbers who were able to recite the *tawhid* in Berber. But while Marinid rulers continued to speak mostly Berber in court, as did the tribesmen, there were exceptions. One poet of the 13th-century sultan mixed Arabic and *al-lisan al-zanati* when addressing the sultan, suggesting a shift toward Arabic in formal contexts. Further, Ibn Al-Khatib remarked that although Arabic was spoken in the courts of Granada, rulers in Fez were still addressed in both languages well into the 14th century. The royal *waqf*, or pious endowment, in Fez, introduced under the Marinids, is the topic of Chapter 8. “Enculturation to Islamic norms,” as Shatzmiller terms it, meant that Islamic institutions were regulated by Marinid rulers who struggled with the religious clergy over the management and control of *waqf* revenues. Chapter 9 is the book’s most substantive chapter, with material not published previously on land tenure and taxation under the Marinids, prior to whom little is known about Maghribi landholdings. Shatzmiller compares Marinid control over the land sector and production and commerce to other pre-industrial states. In contrast to states outside the Muslim world, Islamic “norms” allowed jurists to operate according to a universal Islamic legal code that lent the state economic and social stability. In the Maghrib, land distribution and ownership differed from that in the East, where Islamic institutions originated. Property rights in the Maghrib were largely dependent on whether inhabitants converted to Islam before or after the Islamic conquest. Yet the conquest itself did not precipitate radical change in land tenure, Shatzmiller argues; the imposition of Islamic norms based on Eastern models changed property ownership. Shatzmiller states that the “acculturation of the Marinid state to public institutions and especially the domain” did not cause “malaise” among Berbers, whereas acculturation to Arabic language and Islamic history did (p. 132). Shatzmiller’s anthropomorphizing and psychologizing of the state is troubling, as it leads her to evaluate actions of the state alongside those of individuals.

Medieval historians, Moroccanists, and scholars of ethnicity should find material of interest in *The Berbers and the Islamic State*. The framework outlined in its Introduction suggests points of departure for future investigations into the relationship between ethnic assimilation and Islamization both in North Africa and throughout the Muslim world. The book suffers

from poor editing, typographical errors, and an uneven style that divert the reader's attention. These issues should be addressed prior to future printings. Yet Shatzmiller makes an original contribution that merits the attention of scholars. For instructional purposes, Brett and Fentress's *The Berbers* remains more accessible.

FRÉDÉRIQUE SOUDAN, *Le Yémen ottoman d'après la chronique d'al-Mawza'i*, Texts arabes et études islamiques 37 (Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 1999). Pp. 626. \$45.00.

REVIEWED BY ISA BLUMI, Departments of History and Middle Eastern Studies, New York University

During commentary at a conference recently in Istanbul, a well-known scholar of the late Ottoman Empire blurted out something to the effect that Yemen had been under "continuous Ottoman occupation since the 16th century." To my chagrin, when I looked around, the audience did not seem to react to such a statement. The failure of the expert audience to note a colleague's mistake reinforced my long-held suspicion that the history of Yemen, and the history of Ottoman affairs in Yemen in particular, is a misunderstood, unappreciated, and even forgotten area of study. It is in this context of academic neglect that one begins to appreciate Frédérique Soudan's massive work.

Within its covers we find the previously unstudied chronicle of Qadi Shams al-din 'Abd al-Samad ibn Isma'il ibn 'Abd al-Samad al-Mawza'i entitled, *al-Ihsan fi dukhul mamlakat al-Yaman taht zill 'adalat al-'Uthman*. (The Arabic text is provided in full at the back of the book.) The work, commissioned by the Ottoman governor of Ta'iz, Safar, sometime during the reign of Sultan Uthman II (1618–22), provides rare insight into how locals in Ta'iz interpreted Ottoman rule. Soudan does us the favor of providing an internally logical and highly readable annotated French translation (pp. 43–229) that can be studied independently from the rest of the book, giving readers an important look into the first period of Ottoman rule in Yemen (1536–1635). I found many of the annotations non-intrusive, and they adequately dealt with the geographical and biographical details that needed outside referencing. What all this amounts to is a most welcome introduction to a source that brings together otherwise dispersed details of the first period of Ottoman rule in Yemen.

Unfortunately, Soudan fails to provide some important guides that would help the reader appreciate the text under study. First, a map is desperately needed to help guide the otherwise overwhelmed reader, as many of the geographical place names are so obscure that only the most knowledgeable expert of Yemen would know where to locate them. I wish this were my only concern with the annotated translation, but there are more substantive issues that need to be raised. The annotations at times revealed a limited range of knowledge of the primary and referential material, a shortcoming that affects the overall quality of scholarship. I was disappointed, for instance, that more effort was not put into using sources centered on, in particular, Ottoman historiography, which are numerous for this, the height of Ottoman expansion. A more sound background in the Ottoman conquest of the Arabic-speaking lands and the various operational and administrative approaches of Ottoman statecraft could have helped Soudan flesh out some of the significant interventions noted in al-Mawza'i's text. It is also quite clear that Soudan's lack of knowledge of Ottoman or Turkish limited the scope of her research, a shortcoming that is fortunately being overcome by a new generation of scholars who can actually research in both Arabic and Ottoman. That said, I am sure historians of the period will consider the text important for understanding how this province was incorporated into the Ottoman state during the height of its expansion.

Soudan has added to the summary of the history of the manuscript and the author two full sections of analysis on the period of Ottoman rule covered in the chronicle (pp. 231–393). The second and third sections do put the chronicle in a larger, imperial context, but Soudan's narrative is trapped in segments that often are very short and meaningless, constituting a long list of unexplored features of Yemeni political life both before and during Ottoman rule. Because the book specifically sought to “fuse” the narrative of the chronicle into a more substantive social, political, and material history of the period, I again felt that Soudan could have done more with the observations made by al-Mawza‘i during the course of book.

Al-Mawza‘i's manuscript offers a rare opportunity to look into the life of events in and around Ta‘iz, the often neglected Shafi‘a, the mountainous and agriculturally rich southern region of Yemen. I found that al-Mawza‘i's text offered interesting (and contradictory) observations about the quality of life in the region that said much about the nature of Ottoman rule. Generally, what we know of the period derives from either contemporaries who criticized Ottoman policies or locals who retroactively characterized the period as one of oppression and suffering. Al-Mawza‘i's chronicle, however, offers a far more satisfactory narrative filled with the nuance and complexity one would assume to have existed at the time. I sense Soudan is sometimes at a loss as to how to handle the discrepancy between al-Mawza‘i's generous praise of Ottoman rule and the largely derisive approach other (better-known) contemporaries take. Unfortunately, rather than let al-Mawza‘i provide us with a unique picture of how the Ottomans operated, Soudan often stresses the persistent revolts and lack of discipline among the troops, apparently to demonstrate the general shortcomings of the empire. This bias, I suspect, fits in with an implicit goal of finding the reasons for the ultimate decline of the empire through the text rather than the unique things the text has to say about Yemeni social, economic, and political history. That is a shame, for as al-Mawza‘i's work suggests, a lot more is going on than revolt and depredation.

Much as would happen in the second Ottoman occupation in the second half of the 19th century, members of Ta‘iz's diverse population actually flourished under Ottoman rule. Mystical orders in particular appear to have enjoyed a period of growth during al-Mawza‘i's life and command a great deal of local support. There are also a few subtle indications in al-Mawza‘i's text of local familial rivalries taking on new dimensions over the course of the century. These aspects, as well as the clear decline of coffee production and the rise in its place of qat cultivation and the growing consumption of opium in the region, need greater attention. Finally, although Soudan is trying to identify the sources of “imperial decline,” both locally and beyond, Soudan nevertheless does a poor job of arguing that the specific political–military events noted in the text have anything to do with any long-term trend toward imperial collapse. I believe that, rather than leading one to conclude that the empire is on the decline, the text speaks of a complex administrative apparatus that, at least in the areas around Ta‘iz, has become a fully integrated economic, social, and political entity. To be fair, until someone does a more extensive job of studying both the Ottoman records of the period and reading more imaginatively the local Arabic sources, we cannot entirely blame Soudan for using the power of hindsight. Nevertheless, Soudan could have benefited from relying less on outdated secondary literature that tells a story of “decline” and spending more time on the text under scrutiny here.

Although I have significant concerns about how this book was researched and the conclusions it draws from the material, these concerns are, again, not unique to Soudan's work. This is a book that, despite its flaws, has broken important new ground by introducing Al-Mawza‘i's text and has provided helpful consolidation of basic, encyclopedic data. The third section, in fact, ends with most welcome, easy-to-read chronological lists of Ottoman sultans, local elite, and viziers ruling during the period under consideration. If that were not enough, Soudan adds a complete inventory of minted coins known to have been in circulation during the period. The book as a whole, derived from a doctoral dissertation, is logically organized and attractively

decorated with recently taken photographs of surviving examples of Ottoman “political” architecture in and around Ta’iz. It is due to these lists of otherwise dispersed data and the complete Al-Mawza’i text that I strongly recommend this book for historians of the region and period. The book should be of value to a wide range of scholars and amateurs whose interests span from monetary history of the region, its religious diversity, and economic transformation to Ottoman military history in general. The Arabic text, I suspect, will also be of interest to linguists studying southern Arabian dialects, as a number of examples of regionalisms are embedded in the text. Perhaps even more intriguing is the wide use of Ottoman administrative and military terms by al-Mawza’i, suggesting a steady infiltration of Ottoman officialdom into Arab–Yemeni intellectual circles during the early period of Ottoman expansion into the Arab world. Finally, I think a good indication of how worthwhile this book may be is how much I have worn out my copy. I have made plenty of personal notes, and many pages are tagged for future reference, all providing visual confirmation that, despite its analytical shortcomings, this is a book worth owning.

PAUL WHEATLEY, *The Places Where Men Pray Together: Cities in Islamic Lands Seventh through the Tenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Pp. 572.

REVIEWED BY IRA M. LAPIDUS, Department of History, University of California at Berkeley

The Places Where Men Pray Together is a monumental work of scholarship. This is the most complete study ever done of the urban-settlement pattern of North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Inner Asia in the period from the 7th to the 10th century. Basing his work on the 10th-century geographer al-Maqdisi, further informed by a vast array of sources, including the geographies of al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal, and with a full command of the scholarly literature, Paul Wheatley has given us the most comprehensive, profoundly detailed, and clearly articulated discussion of the physical location, historic settlement patterns, and institutions of Middle East Islamic cities. This work follows upon Wheatley’s seminal work in Chinese history, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters*, which provided a new theory of the origin of Chinese cities as shrine centers. One can only stand in awe before Wheatley’s extraordinary linguistic, historical, and cultural range. Sadly, Wheatley died before this work was published.

The book has three parts. In Part 1, Wheatley gives the history of cities in Arabia and the cities founded and modified by the Arab conquests, and an analysis of the principle source, al-Maqdisi’s *Ahsan al-Ta’asim fi Ma’rifat al-Aqalim*. Part 2 is a study of the regional settlement pattern in the thirteen *iqlims* defined by al-Maqdisi. Wheatley analyzes each region for the historical and geographical context in which the cities were situated; the patterns of cities that were service centers, ranked in a hierarchy of *amsar*, *qasabat*, *mudun*, and lesser settlements; and cities that were transportation nodules, industry and craft centers, fortified settlements, and religious centers. Each regional group of cities is analyzed in terms of its geographical context, history in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, degree of continuity with the past, and settlement hierarchy.

Although much of the material will be familiar to students of Middle Eastern urban history, a great deal of new or little-known information comes to light. Out of the plethora of new findings, Wheatley points to the dense pattern of tiny harbors and coastal settlement in the Levant. Fars comes into relief as a region of textile towns, with numerous *tiraz* factories. The *thugur* and *‘awasim* of the Byzantine frontiers of the Umayyad and Abbasid empires are described as an advance line of fortresses backed up by settled bases. In the Maghrib, he shows how Arab rule led to the founding of a disproportionate number of palatine settlements and coastal fortresses that stimulated local and inter-regional trade and led to an increase in the

size of cities at all levels. Khuzistan is shown to have experienced an increased concentration of agricultural production and an increase of city populations in the old Sasanian towns, though not an increase in the number of cities.

In Part 3, instead of the regional patterns, Wheatley looks at the institutional structure and history of individual cities. He catalogues newly built *amsar*, or garrison settlements, and palatine complexes and existing cities adapted to Arab–Muslim rule. Part 3 also deals with internal city institutions: the architecture of government and symbols of political power; the construction history, legal regulation, and location of Friday mosques. A fascinating section discusses periodic markets and fairs—which were essentially markets for merchants—and urban *suqs*, distinguishing among neighborhood and central markets, ribbon and clustered development, general markets and *suqs* specialized in particular products, such as religious articles sold near a mosque or portside ship supplies.

Throughout, Wheatley provides a running assessment of historical change. He shows that the Arab conquests largely maintained the hierarchy of pre-existing Middle Eastern cities. The Umayyad period saw both the foundation of new cities and settlement in and around existing cities, and the Abbasid period was marked by the consolidation of scattered settlements into integrated cities, especially in the former Sasanian domains. Most often, Arab rule promoted the growth of individual cities without enlarging the overall pattern of settlement. In some cases there was regression. Wheatley concludes: “the urban process . . . was principally one of adaptation and accretion rather than creation” (p. 263).

The only weaknesses of the book are the obverse of its extraordinary comprehensiveness and systematization. It adds enormously to the accessible detail, but apart from the extension of the study to other periods, it does not suggest problems and new directions for research. Although the book is marked by precise descriptions of the sources, careful discriminations and sound judgments, its main weakness is that it tries for a precision that exceeds the data on which it is based. The data, after all, consist mainly of impressionistic comments, albeit made by experienced scholars and travelers, and is inherently vague. Wheatley considers the following description to be typical: “Nasibin. This city is more pleasant, but smaller . . . than al-Mawsil. It abounds in fruits, and has good baths and stately palaces. Its people possess both wealth and intelligence. The *suq* stretches from gate to gate, and a citadel constructed of stone and cement dominates the city. The congregational mosque is centrally situated. May Heaven protect us from the scorpions of Nasibin” (p. 80). Medievalists are used to making the best of such information, but it does call for some reservations about how much we can actually know.

Indeed, it is still not entirely clear just what defines a city and a city’s place in the urban hierarchy. Is it administrative designation? Is it population size? Is it some measure of economic activity? Is it religious significance? Usually a city is a place with a congregational mosque, a market, a fortress and a bath—“an instrument for the organization of the surrounding territories” (p. 81), but there are many anomalies. We cannot explain why a large market town with a *jami*^ʿ and a small fortress with a mosque and a barely formed suburb outside the walls are both classified as *mudun*. Are there any criteria to distinguish towns and small cities from villages? Many so-called villages are bigger than many towns, and many villages have a *jami*^ʿ while some towns do not. How do we compare different provinces where the scale of urbanization differs? What basis is there for judging whether there are high or low levels to interaction and integration of urban systems?

This book concludes with the question that obsesses all medieval Middle Eastern urban studies. Is there an Islamic city, and if there is, what is it? Most Middle Eastern cities, Wheatley points out, were pre-Islamic in origin. He regards some of their features as specifically Islamic: “by the tenth century the mosque had become the defining feature of the Islamic city” (p. 238). The proximity of the *dar al-imarah* and the *masjid al-jami*^ʿ, and the design and decorating of individual architectural components, are Islamic features, but he finds no evidence for an Is-

lamic impress upon the formation of housing, neighborhoods, and markets, even though by the 10th century Islam gave cultural meaning to the expectations of urban life. I would conclude that in the period we call the "Islamic era," many city people were Muslims, and some institutions and design features derived from Islam, but cities per se cannot be called "Islamic." "Islam" is not the name of a physical entity; it is the defining religious and cultural identity of Muslim populations.

THABIT A. ABDULLAH, *Merchants, Mamluks, and Murder: The Political Economy of Trade in Eighteenth-Century Basra*, SUNY Series in the Social and Economic History of the Middle East (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). Pp. 198. \$62.50 cloth, \$20.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA RISSO, Department of History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

This concise book concerns 18th-century Basra and its connections both within the western Indian Ocean region and toward the Ottoman urban world, extending all the way to Istanbul. The author is a former student of Hanna Batatu, the well-known scholar of Iraqi history. Hala Fattah (*The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf, 1745–1900*) is another influence. The works of M. N. Pearson and C. A. Bayly also help shape this study. The bases of Abdullah's solid research include the India Office Records in London, New Delhi, and Mumbai, and Ottoman records in the Basbakanlik Arsivi in Istanbul, as well as Arabic and Persian sources.

The book is well organized. In Chapter 1, about Basra itself, Abdullah provides a clear sense of the vicissitudes of population and power. He describes a cosmopolitan commercial center that, in the course of the 18th century, withstood three challenges: fluctuations of Turkic Ottoman rule, invasions by Persian Safavid armies, and the nearby presence of migrant Arabian tribal groups. In the second chapter, he discusses aspects of regional trade, with a heavy reliance on European sources, but also with welcome reference to some Ottoman sources and recent Turkish-language scholarship. Chapter 3 explores "networks of trade," by which the author means interconnected ports, rivers, and caravan routes. There is a self-conscious sense of perspective (esp. pp. 68–71)—that is, the author provides a convincing assessment of how his city fit in among regional inland cities and seaports, some of them much larger and commercially more significant than Basra. In his fourth chapter, Abdullah populates his 18th-century city with individual merchants (*tujjār*), men who were Muslim, Armenian, and Jewish, along with a few Europeans. Abdullah argues that regional merchants identified themselves first by family; then by ethnicity of tribe and religion; and finally by class, although this last category is not easily defined. The fifth chapter is the author's core discussion of trade and politics.

This core chapter provides fascinating anecdotes to illustrate the convoluted relationships between *Mamluks* (that is, the Ottoman administrators, an elite of military slave origin) and local *tujjār*, or well-off merchants. These relationships occurred in a context of political volatility. One recurrent type of interaction was that of some Ottoman political hopeful borrowing money from wealthy Basran merchants in order to buy the governing office of the city. Ottoman governors could abuse their power by gouging merchants for various taxes and "gifts," sometimes driving the merchants to rebel successfully against him by engaging the military pressure of neighboring tribal leaders. Finally, well-connected merchants, such as members of the local branch of the famous Chalabi family, were in a position to influence political policies that affected trade.

Also in Chapter 5, Abdullah argues that factionalism made it impossible for Basra's mer-

chants to work together against growing British influence in the late 18th century. This argument is based largely on the two prominent minorities involved in trade, Armenians and Jews, who competed vigorously with each other. The geographies of their respective trade routes dictated divergent political views. Jews found a usual ally in the Ottoman Muslim government at Basra, while Armenians sought protection from their co-religionists in the city, the British. This hostile situation was the context for the death of a Jewish merchant, presumably at the hands of Armenians. The incident is the “murder” referred to in the alliterative main title of the book. The accused Armenians found a champion in Samuel Manesty, the trade agent of the English East India Company, who manipulated trade in order to obstruct justice in the case. Abdullah uses the murder as a frame for his book and sees the incident as a compelling illustration of the divisiveness that made opportunistic British interference possible. The British were party to factionalism and also benefited from it. Eventually, in the 19th century, as Iraq was drawn into the world economy dominated by the British, Basra declined precipitously, and many of its merchant families relocated to other commercial cities. Although Basra had withstood the challenges described in Chapter 1, the challenge of industrial capitalism was too great.

Abdullah’s argument about factionalism raises a few points of possible disagreement. One is that his discussion of British policy boils down to the opinions and actions of the self-important Manesty, a man who was frequently in trouble with his East India Company bosses for not complying with his job description. Another point is that Chapter 5 tends to withdraw from the regional approach evident in earlier chapters. The chapter does extend outside Basra but only as far as Baghdad and, briefly, Kuwait. Lack of cohesive local resistance certainly made it easier for the British to impose themselves, but there are broader, regional explanations, as well, most generally the growth of British imperial power in India and British Bombay’s trade-motivated policies in the Gulf. These broader explanations may, however, have taken the author deep into a book he did not set out to write. One other quibble: the author discusses difficult situations in Basra—such as the desire of some elites to separate from Baghdad’s oversight—for which the British cannot fairly be blamed. The distinction between internal and external (i.e., British) disruption is not always clearly maintained. These minor points aside, the book should win a readership well beyond specialists and should spark more related research interests for both established scholars and graduate students.

NINA BERMAN, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne: Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur um 1900* (Stuttgart: M und P, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1996). Pp. 378. DM60.

REVIEWED BY ANDREW ZIMMERMAN, Department of History, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Nina Berman’s *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne* consists of a theoretical Introduction and a chapter each on three modern German-language authors who visited, and wrote extensively about, the Middle East: Karl May, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Else Lasker-Schüler. The argument is based on the analysis of literary texts, but Berman also weaves in discussions of the authors’ own travels in the Near East, a wide range of contemporary Orientalist texts, and post-colonial theory. Thus, although her book primarily addresses specialists in German literature, it will also be of interest to anyone concerned with Orientalism and the functioning of imperialist and colonialist ideology.

Germany’s real relations with the Middle East should not, Berman reminds us, be dismissed

as mere fantasies or literary reveries. In her Introduction, she outlines five phases of relations between Germany and the Near East, each marked by different practical relations and cultural attitudes: (1) the Crusades, characterized by religious prejudice against both Muslims and Jews; (2) the period of Ottoman threats to German lands, characterized by hatred and terror; (3) the period after the siege of Vienna, when a more confident Germany indulged in a fascination for things "Oriental"; (4) an ethnocentric phase as German and other European powers began to exercise economic, political, and military power in the Middle East and around the world; and (5) a period after 1945, marked in Germany by an ambivalence toward both Turkish "guest workers" and the State of Israel. Berman's analysis focuses on the fourth period, the ethnocentric period of imperialism proper, when Germany seized colonies in Africa and the Pacific and sought to exert military, economic, and political influence in the Middle East. For Berman, the Orientalist writings of May, Hofmannsthal, and Lasker-Schüler simultaneously work out relations between Germany and the Middle East and address questions specific to German national identity and modernity.

Berman connects German Orientalism and imperialism most directly in her analysis of May's six-volume *Orientzyklus*, written in 1881–88. This cycle of stories follows a German writer as he travels through the Ottoman Empire from Algeria through Istanbul into southeastern Europe in pursuit of a band of criminals, killing them one by one. Berman argues that the fictional hero of May's novels presents a "prototype of the colonizer" (p. 50) precisely in the moment of early German colonization. This prototype serves as a model for real colonizers: the *Orientzyklus* does not simply reflect colonialism and imperialism; it in fact is part of the colonial project. Berman begins her analysis with a persuasive discussion of the protagonist of the *Orientzyklus* as a cultural "cross-dresser" whose ambiguous gender manages to code Europe as masculine and the Middle East as feminine. In doing so, May and his prototypical colonizer hero are able to view the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire with sympathy and fascination, even while reasserting European dominance. The protagonist further asserts his superiority to the people he encounters in North Africa and the Near East by his superior knowledge, techniques, analysis, and weapons. The prototypical colonizer is thus, May indicates, a clever European, whose power comes in part from his ability to astonish the people he rules. This knowledge and ability, Berman shows, comes in part from Orientalist scholarship. Indeed, May himself had an extensive library of linguistic, geographical, and ethnographic texts about the Orient, and used his state-of-the-art knowledge to master his literary project, much as his protagonist used it to master the people he encountered. This knowledge of the colonized Other, Berman points out, also helped stabilize a growing sense of German national identity.

In her analysis of the Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal's 1895 "Tale of the 672nd Night," Berman tackles a text whose connection to the imperialist context is much less direct than May's. Whereas May's work functioned as a kind of manual for the aspiring colonist by presenting a model colonizer, Hofmannsthal's Orient is a projection of his nostalgic anti-modernism. Hofmannsthal reacted against what Max Weber described as the rationalization and disenchantment of the modern world with melancholic nostalgia for an earlier era. In the Orient, and especially in the harem, Hofmannsthal saw an antidote to the modern. Rather than let her analysis of Hofmannsthal rest there, however, Berman asks how it is that the Orient could become a kind of fairy tale for European anti-modernism in the first place. It is here that she connects Hofmannsthal to colonialism. Hofmannsthal's projection of the Orient as the other of European modernity justifies European domination, regardless of the psychic need it fills. Indeed, that the Orient can be used to fill a psychic need of Europe is already imperialist. Hofmannsthal wrote his text in a period in which economic relations between Germany and the Ottoman Empire increased markedly. Furthermore, as Berman writes, "Hofmannsthal's longing for a revival of lost political structures is fulfilled in the colonial context" (p. 257). The connec-

tion between contemporary politics in the Middle East and Hofmannsthal's tale consists in the very fact that the Orient presented by Hofmannsthal has little to do with what Berman calls the "actually existing Orient" (p. 242) but, rather, functions as a European projection. Berman's analysis thus successfully, I think, bridges a real tension in cultural studies of colonialism between seeing the Other as a projection of the self and according the Other an autonomous historical existence.

In her final chapter, on the German-Jewish author Else Lasker-Schüler, Berman turns to the ways in which Jews were connected to the Orient—by Jews and anti-Semites alike. As in her analyses of May and Hofmannsthal, Berman shows that in defining the Oriental, Lasker-Schüler reflects and contributes to real relations between Germany and the Middle East and helps work out questions about modernity and national identity. Like May and Hofmannsthal, Lasker-Schüler traveled in the Middle East—and, in fact, lived in Palestine after 1937 as a refugee from Nazi Germany. Despite this extensive contact with the Middle East, Lasker-Schüler presents the Orient as a fantastic world and makes no attempt to represent realistically historical conditions in the British Mandate. In fact, as Berman shows, the real context of Lasker-Schüler's prose and poetry was a discussion among Jews and non-Jews in Germany about the extent to which Jews were "Oriental" rather than European. While Jew-haters identified Jews as Oriental to marginalize them in Europe, Lasker-Schüler and other Jewish intellectuals also embraced this "Oriental" identity. Berman makes persuasive use of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of "minor literature," which they developed in their work on Kafka, to analyze Lasker-Schüler's own position. This auto-Orientalization differs, Berman argues, from that of non-Jewish Germans such as Rudolf Steiner, who wove together Near and Far Eastern philosophical and religious views to create a kind of anti-modern mysticism. Lasker-Schüler's Orientalization of Jews manifested itself most strikingly in hybrid characters who seemed to be both Muslim and Jewish. Her auto-Orientalist position, Berman argues, differed markedly from Theodor Herzl's Zionism, which called for the development of a Jewish state as a decidedly anti-Oriental, European colonial presence in the Middle East and an "outpost of civilization against barbarism" (quoted on p. 287). Indeed, Berman shows, Lasker-Schüler experienced her years in Palestine as a period of exile rather than of settlement, colonization, or return to a homeland. Lasker-Schüler's Orient, and thus her understanding of Jewish identity, reflected European modernity, as Berman shows in a very nice analysis: The Orient she presents is a world of "luxury, excess, and violence"—in short, Europe in the age of high capitalism and imperialism. By simultaneously Orientalizing Jews and making the Orient a sign of European modernity, Lasker-Schüler creates a "self-affirming minority discourse" (p. 343). Although I am persuaded by Berman's sympathetic reading of Lasker-Schüler's Orientalism, I would have liked her to explore further the connections between this "self-affirming minority discourse" and other, imperialist Orientalisms.

Berman's *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne* contributes to the project of expanding and refining the paradigm forged by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). An issue from Said's work that I wish Berman had further addressed was the extent to which one can speak of a generalized imperialism, colonialism, and Orientalism. Although European relations with the Middle East, parts of Africa, and parts of the Pacific have been characterized by domination and exploitation, the forms and types of this domination and exploitation differed significantly. I wonder whether the ideologies sustained by these varying forms of Eurocentrism can be analyzed as Orientalism generally. This, however, is a minor complaint and will perhaps be addressed by Berman in her current work on German-language travel literature and its relationship to 20th-century imperialism. This book is a very good account of the ways literature shaped, and was shaped by, questions of German national identity and German relations with the Middle East.

J. MILLARD BURR AND ROBERT O. COLLINS, *Africa's Thirty Years War: Libya, Chad, and the Sudan 1963–1993* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999). Pp. 317. \$65.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY GREGORY W. WHITE, Department of Government, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

This volume provides a timely, useful contribution to an under-studied region of the world. Substantial work on Libya and Sudan exists, but Chad remains enigmatic. Fortunately, Millard Burr and Robert Collins are well placed to offer an analysis of the three countries and their complex interactions in the post-independence era. Burr worked for years in the Office of the Geographer of the U.S. Department of State, specializing on Libyan–Chadian relations. For his part, Collins is an academic historian who has written studies of the Upper Nile. Given its level of painstaking detail and specificity, *Africa's Thirty Years War* may not be useful to undergraduates and generalists seeking an initial understanding of the region's history and politics. It is, however, valuable to specialists and experts on the region in search of a useful historical reference, especially on the central role that Chad has played in the region's geo-strategic dynamics.

The book's argument derives from two fundamental axioms. First, the authors argue that there is a continuity in the region's politics, a permanence that has existed for millennia. They argue, for example, "The drive to acquire space, to dominate people, and to proselytize the faith has changed little in these arid lands in two thousand years" (p. 3). They further aver, "Relations between the imperialists on the Mediterranean and those of the desert and beyond were no different in the past than at the end of the twentieth century" (p. 6). They even humorously suggest that there was little difference in the technological revolutions in trans-Saharan travel offered by the introduction of the camel in the 4th century and the introduction of the Toyota truck in the 20th century, "except the former is more disagreeable than the latter" (p. 8).

Second, *Africa's Thirty Years War* suggests that in studying one state's conflict it is not only possible but also essential to take into account the history and politics of neighboring states. The legacy of colonial rule—French control of Chad, Italian domination of Libya, and British rule of Sudan—complicated the determination of borders and, especially in the case of Chad, prompted ongoing colonial involvement in governance long after independence. For example, Chad's President Ngartha (François) Tombalbaye relied on the French for support against northern dissidence and revolt into the early 1970s, almost until his assassination in 1975. In turn, the Cold War and geo-strategic calculations by the West became a crucial context for the region's political struggles, as the United States supported Hissan Habre after his emergence as the leader of Chad in the late 1970s.

The book treats the thirty years from 1963 to 1993 chronologically, with its thirteen chapters examining successive interventions and entanglements. Burr and Collins aptly depict the absurdity of the modern borders of Chad, Sudan, and Libya. For thousands of years, people and goods have flowed across the borders, and new assertions of state sovereignty and territoriality have had tragic consequences. Moreover, respective state support for another country's rebel movement(s)—as in the case of the contentious relations between Sudan and Chad—obscures a careful delineation of borders.

By far, the greatest difficulty in the region has been the Aozou Strip, a narrow belt of desolate land that runs between Libya and Chad and is a crucial political pawn for the thirty-year conflict. Although French Foreign Minister Pierre Laval admitted that he might have "lost his shirt" to Mussolini in 1935 when the French gave the Aozou Strip to Italy, the territorial concession seemed to placate Italian ambitions in French territory. Nevertheless, the French Senate refused to ratify the agreement in 1938, and the frontier was never clearly delineated,

with Chad retaining nominal control. For Burr and Collins, this colonial legacy provided a crucial backdrop for Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi's claims of Libya's rightful possession of the Aozou in the 1970s, especially as magnesium, uranium, and oil were discovered in the territory. "Aggression by cartography" (p. 86), however, violated the provisions of Article 2 of the Organization of African Unity's charter, as African leaders and international observers were not interested in opening the Pandora's box of changing colonial borders.

In its chronological account, *Africa's Thirty Years War* also does a commendable job of factoring in the enormous scope of French, U.S., Egyptian, British, Arab, and African influence in the military, economic, and political conflicts of the region. For example, the Reagan administration's effort in the 1980s to coordinate diplomatic and military efforts to eliminate Qaddafi—not merely contain him—receives solid treatment. In keeping with the initial assumption of the centuries' timeless caravan trails, however, Burr and Collins see such external involvement as merely a glitch in what will remain the region's efforts to "acquire space and dominate people." One may or may not buy such an immutable view of human history, but Burr and Collins are at least consistent in maintaining such a view.

As intimated earlier, *Africa's Thirty Years War* is not thick with theory; nor does it seek to evaluate competing explanations of regional politics. For example, Burr and Collins do not devote their analysis to examinations of theories of state formation; nor do they engage critical discussions of theories of sovereignty, borders, and territoriality in the post-colonial era. The strength of the book lies in its attention to geographical and historical matters, and the volume is replete with meticulous detail, especially to physical attributes of the region and the biographies of key personages. Given their attention to detail, however, perhaps the most surprising snag of *Africa's Thirty Years War* is the frequent deployment of terminology that reduces groups to Muslim, Arab, Christian, tribal, or African. There is no doubt in the case of Chad and Sudan that these terms are applicable—or that perceptions of respective actors as an "Other" has fueled conflicts—but their imprecision as categories demands that such terms be used cautiously. This is especially true given the complexity and fluidity of the categories in regional politics. Burr and Collins go back and forth, offering careful nuance in one instance, then turning to a reduction of the complex conflict in Sudan to a dichotomous clash between northern Arab Muslims and southern African Christians.

This criticism notwithstanding, *Africa's Thirty Years War* is well documented and lucidly written. It will prove useful for years to come as an important resource for scholars of Chadian history and politics. Although its historical scope ends in 1993, the book should be particularly valuable to those seeking to understand the historical backdrop of recent events, such as efforts to bring Hissan Habre, "Africa's Pinochet," to trial for human-rights violations, as well as the controversy over the \$4 billion, 700-mile pipeline to carry crude oil from Chad through Cameroon to the Atlantic coast.

MARTIN EWANS, *Afghanistan: A New History* (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon Press, 2001). Pp. 239.

REVIEWED BY BARNETT R. RUBIN, Center on International Cooperation, New York University.

The time is certainly ripe for a new history of Afghanistan. Nearly twenty-five years of war have laid bare previously hidden contestation of the meaning of past events. Intellectuals, either in exile or under new (if short-lived) authorities not bound to the orthodoxies of the old regime, have reissued old works and penned new ones, proposing new interpretations and presenting new facts. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the release of new documents and narratives, as well.

Martin Ewans, despite his subtitle, has not written that new history. Instead, through the

medium of the appropriately named Curzon Press, he has presented a well-written, accurate, updated chronological narrative of the familiar old history. Though the book ends more or less with Taliban leader Mulla Muhammad Umar's ban on opium cultivation in July 2000, its conceptual framework (and spelling—including "Usbeks" and "Pushtoons") has survived the past quarter-century of war and even the end of colonialism intact. Despite the deep challenges to the narratives of modernity and its incarnation in the state posed by the Afghan conflict (as sketched by Olivier Roy in the 1984 work whose French title, *L'Afghanistan: Islam et modernité politique*, was unfortunately translated as *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*), Ewans adheres faithfully to the interpretation of Afghan history, favored by the old regime elites, communists, and Great Powers alike, in terms of a clash between modernity and tradition.

This "new history" reflects none of the debates about the history of Afghanistan among scholars such as the late Mir Muhammad Ghobar (vol. 2 of whose work, *Afghanistan dar Masir-i Tarikh* [Afghanistan on the Path of History], is now available in an English translation by the author's son), Muhammad Siddiq Farhang, Hasan Kakar, or Sayed Askar Mousavi. Ewan's account of the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan cites none of the documents released or accounts published in Russia since 1991. His account of the fall of Najibullah and subsequent events draws on neither interviews with the U.N. participants nor the published memoirs of Afghan participants such as General Muhammad Nabi Azimi, commander of the Kabul garrison, or General Abdul Rauf Begi, Abdul Rashid Dostum's top military adviser.

In keeping with this framework, Emir Habibullah II (Bacha-yi Saqqao) is portrayed primarily as a criminal warlord, without even a perfunctory nod to the reinterpretations of his role by writers such as Ghobar, Khililullah Khalili, and Nazif Shahrani. The jihad against the Soviets is depicted solely as a revolt against the occupier, with no mention of its challenge to the structure and legitimacy of the Afghan state and that state's relationship to the communities that inhabit it. The Taliban are seen as the resurgence of traditionalism rather than as a contemporary reaction to a violent and murderous form of (self-described) "modernity" by a marginalized counter-elite.

The result is a competent, professionally written, totally conventional work, nearly all of which presents material already found in other sources. Ewans could not have written this work without deep concern and admiration for the country and its people, and it shows the signs of extensive (if sometimes, from a scholar's point of view, inadequately documented) reading. The only primary sources consulted seem to have been British archives, which are of limited relevance for the past sixty years, at least. Ewans gives no indication of any acquaintance with any language other than English and refers to no publications or documents in any other language.

In his concluding chapter, Ewans does evoke some of the issues he ignores through most of the book. He notes that the "modernization" pursued by the old regime mostly benefited a narrow elite, and that the newly educated formed the constituency for revolutionary groups. He notes that the reconstruction of a form of Afghan statehood by the Taliban has involved violent restructuring of ethnic and social relations, with the aid of Pakistan, to serve certain international interests.

Even in his Conclusion, however, Ewans does not discuss the contested nature of the Afghan state and Afghan national identity and their relationship to a Western-dominated international society. Such processes of contestation did not start with the emergence of and resistance to the Taliban. Afghans have not only acted out these conflicts but also reflected on them in numerous works, including some that are available in English. The processes have been at work throughout the history of the state called "Afghanistan," and Afghan intellectuals have proposed new, intensely political, and hotly contested reinterpretations of virtually all the events that Ewans recounts in such a linear, unidimensional way.

Someone needs to weave the conflicting narratives of Afghan history into a genuine new

history of Afghanistan, one that can accommodate the contradictory needs of that country's people for both a plurality of voices and identities and cooperation within a common political system. Probably, we will have to wait for a new generation of Afghan intellectuals to accomplish this task, if such a generation can ever emerge from the violence, deprivation, and obscurantism of that nation's agonizing present.

CHARLES ISSAWI, *Growing Up Different, Memoirs of a Middle East Scholar* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1999). Pp. 111.

REVIEWED BY ŞEVKET PAMUK, Bogaziçi University, Istanbul

In this charming book, the late Charles Issawi, a prolific scholar whose work on the economic history of the Middle East helped at least two generations of scholars and students better understand the origins of the modern Middle East, discusses his life and scholarship. In the first half of the book, Issawi reminisces about his childhood and youth in the form of two essays that include many interesting anecdotes about life in the Middle East in an earlier age. He was born in 1916 in Cairo to Syrian parents. He spent his childhood in Cairo, Khartoum, and Lebanon and attended school in Alexandria. As he states in the book, Issawi considered himself culturally Lebanese and Egyptian. In the fall of 1934, he began to attend Magdalen College at Oxford, where he met Albert Hourani for the first time, beginning a friendship that was to last for more than fifty years. Actually, they had both attended a History Scholarship examination earlier that year and had taken two of the three history scholarships offered by the college, "leaving the third for the whole British Empire." After receiving his bachelor's degree, Issawi returned to Cairo to begin working for the National Bank of Egypt. By 1942, he had grown restless working for a bank in the midst of the war and began writing a book on the Egyptian economy. This first book was published in 1947 and soon was banned in Egypt because of its criticism of the government, Issawi relates. He began teaching at the American University in Beirut, then moved to Washington, D.C., to work in the Arab Office there. In 1951, he began teaching in the Economics Department at Columbia University.

In the second half of the volume, Issawi discusses his work and offers important insights into the state of Middle East studies today. When he began to write on the economics of the Middle East in the 1940s, there was hardly anything written on the subject. By 1960, international institutions as well as scholars in the region had begun work on the subject. Always historically minded, he decided to work on the economic history of the region, about which almost nothing existed. The result was a series of books that examined the integration of the Middle East into the world economy after 1800 and explored the origins of the region's underdevelopment. Although the Islamic civilization had many achievements in its formative years, Issawi argues, there was little progress in Middle Eastern science, philosophy, technology, and economic thought after 1400. By 1500, the Middle East was already technologically less advanced and economically less dynamic than Europe. The primary causes of the poor economic performance of the Middle East were thus internal and not due to the impact of Europe or the world economy.

Economic history absorbed most of Issawi's energy after 1960, but he made incursions into other fields and wrote many articles on historical, cultural, and, occasionally, political topics. Many of these were reprinted in *The Arab World's Legacy*. He also published *Issawi's Laws of Motion*. Tongue-in-cheek, he insisted that he considered that book as the only serious work he wrote.

When Charles Issawi began his career, history of the modern Middle East barely existed as a separate field. It was treated, above all, as part of the study of history, languages, and cultures of the Islamic world. In the post-World War II era, he and his generation of scholars established history of the modern Middle East as a discipline in its own right. This small volume makes clear one more time that, thanks to him, we now have a well-developed understanding of the role of economics and how economic developments related to political, social, and cultural changes in the shaping of the modern Middle East.

VANESSA MARTIN, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000). Pp. 263.

REVIEWED BY YANN RICHARD, Etudes iraniennes, Sorbonne nouvelle, Paris

Vanessa Martin's second book begins like an intellectual challenge and mostly succeeds in giving an original and sophisticated view of Ayatollah Khomeini's political thought. Her previous field of study, the history of clerical militancy in the Constitutional Movement, resulted in a brilliant book entitled, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1989). A common query seems to characterize the two works: how have the Islamic theologians managed to adapt their political beliefs to modernity?

The present book, which is composed of nine chapters, begins with an account of Iran's history from the Qajar to the end of Pahlavi era, so as to make the discourse intelligible for non-specialists. Dealing more specifically with Khomeini, Martin analyzes his formative years by stressing his background in mysticism (*irfān*). According to Martin, Khomeini was influenced by the Platonic tradition, through Molla Sadra, and more directly from readings of the classical *falāsifa*, the philosophers of the Avicennian tradition who transmitted Greek knowledge to the Islamic world. A third period in Khomeini's thought spans from the end of Reza Shah's reign and concludes with the ayatollah's exile to Turkey and Iraq. This is a period in which Ayatollah Borujerdi, the supreme religious leader at the time, was reorganizing the *howza* and centralizing the clerical institution. Khomeini experienced new forms of clerical conflict with the state. While the extremist Feda'ian-e Eslam failed to draw large popular support, the struggle against the Shah's White Revolution in the early 1960s succeeded in temporarily frightening the government.

Another chapter in the book deals with the thought of Ayatollah Mutahhari, who is seen as a direct disciple and interpreter of his master, Khomeini. Ayatollah Khomeini's "vision of the Islamic state" is presented according to its own logic and strategy, which hid its goal until the last moment and gradually evolved into a more pragmatic ideology. Khomeini's ideology is compared to that of such other Islamic movements and thinkers as the Fida'yan-i Islam, Maudoudi and the Jama'at in India, al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, and some other major radical Sunni movements.

The three last chapters describe the establishment of the Islamic state in Iran—as the realization of Khomeini's ideas—and its echo both in the Western media (in fact, in British newspapers) and in the Muslim world. The two last sections (media and "Muslim perspective") do not seem to have been integrated fully into the book. Indeed, they could have been easily dropped, because they are more concerned with the Islamic Republic than Khomeini's impact in shaping the new regime. The Glossary is unfortunately full of approximative, useless, and even erroneous translations of terms. Although some of these terms are defined differently throughout the body of the book, other terms translated in the Glossary are conspicuously absent in the text. And is it not odd to find the mystical term *fanā*, meaning "annihilation (of

the self)”—which is of little use in a work on political ideas—rendered as “state of union with the divine” (p. 231) in the Glossary?

Much has already been written about Khomeini and his political theories. Two recent works have brilliantly described the imam’s life and cultural background (Baquer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* [London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999]) and more specifically his philosophical ideas (Yahya Christian Bonaud, *L’Imam Khomeyni, un gnostique méconnu du XXe siècle. Métaphysique et théologie dans les œuvres philosophiques et spirituelles de l’Imam Khomeyni* [Beirut: Al-Bouraq, 1997]). Moreover, some two decades ago, Hamid Algar translated the major writings of the ayatollah into English (*Islam and Revolution* [Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1981]), which unfortunately did not contain the biography Algar had originally planned to write. Being the only scholar among those mentioned to come from outside the Islamic culture and commitment, Martin challenges these learned works while introducing no hitherto unpublished information. She openly uses translations and secondary works while neglecting all relevant Arabic texts, such as *Kitab al-bay‘* (treaty on transaction), which Norman Calder analyzed in his *IJMES* article (vol. 18, 1982). This source, which is absent from the bibliography, could have provided the author with a more explicit condemnation of democracy, especially considering that it was published contemporaneously with the famous *Vilayat-i faqih* lessons in Najaf.

However, Martin does not seem to have been interested in either justifying Khomeini’s ideas or providing an original scholarly treatment of his thought. The author explicitly states in the Introduction that she wanted to break the image of a rigid and dogmatic cleric, to which Middle East specialists and Western media have predominantly subscribed. Martin maintains that Khomeini’s thought is the result of a confluence of multiple sets of influences, both philosophical and political, and that his personal strategy led him to change his discourse in various stages of his political life. According to the author, “Khomeini used Islam as Nasser used Arab socialism to mobilize the people” (p. ix). Alas, no real historical analysis is given in this “work of history,” except the documentation of changing ideas and minimal reference to events connected with their evolution.

I will underline two interesting concepts raised in this book: an original English coining for the embarrassing concept of *tawhīd* movement. *Tawhīd* refers to the oneness of God, a belief often put as a standard by Muslims to differentiate themselves from worshipers of idols or of a Trinitarian God. Being one with God has been the ultimate goal of mystics. But what is a *tawīdī* society? The concept of “totalism,” proposed by Martin, seems rather appropriate and much more interesting than the confusing “fundamentalism” or even “Islamism” that she rightly rejects. *Islamic totalism* hence, reminds me of the concept of *intégraliste* used to define conservative Catholics in France at the beginning of the 20th century. Both concepts convey the wish for an integrated social order where religion is used to bridge conflicting desires.

Another term, *intégriste*, still in use among French Catholics, refers to those stressing the sacred role of the clergy as sole intermediaries between human beings and the divine. The same trend exists in Shi‘i thought, and specifically in Khomeini’s worldview. However, Martin, who mentions this over-evaluation of the ulema as a differentiation feature of Iranian Shi‘i Islam, puts emphasis on a common element between Khomeini and Sunni political thought: the acceptance of a human authority—no more necessarily infallible but co-opted by the community—as successor of the Prophet. Further, some modern constituents of a state, such as the necessity of having borders, a national identity, central power, efficient military forces, and means of legislation—all of which have been incorporated into the constitution of the Islamic Republic—are analyzed with intelligence. Martin rightly insists that Khomeini “did not have a specific vision of the Islamic state, even by the time of the revolution” His pragmatism prevented him from rigidly adhering to some of his own unacceptable positions, such as the rejection of women’s participation in public life and denying the legitimacy of popular suffrage. In an

original analysis, Martin compares Khomeini to other Third World leaders in quest of political efficiency and independence from East and West. According to the author, the last common feature between Khomeini and the Sunni militants is the secrecy in which he kept his movement until the time was ripe for the seizure of power. This tendency is also discernable among the Sufis, who have tried to prevent infiltration by foreign elements. For example, the influence of the *ṭarīqa* discipline has been observed among the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Among Shi'i, one could say that the *kitmān* method is an old way of protecting the safety of believers. In any case, such discretion is necessary in all revolutionary organizations.

One could mention further minor problems with this book. For example, Martin maintains that the Fida'ian-i Islam were influential in clerical circles. However, apart from a number of rare clerics such as Khomeini, Kashani, and Mutahhari, whom she mentions—and maybe Taliqani and some unmentioned others—the Fida'ian were seen as trouble-seeking adventurers, and their annihilation in 1955 did not cause any mass discontent. Nor did they enjoy the vast audience or prestige of the Tudeh Party at the time. The chapter on Motahhari should have included a discussion of his very original positions on feminism and sexuality. In the absence of such a treatment, this reviewer finds it rather difficult to make such a great thinker from a cleric who could read none of the modern Western philosophers and who justified clerical authority to the point that he publicly denounced Ali Shari'ati as an unbeliever. Moreover, despite Martin's repeated assertion, I believe that Shari'ati was not so much influenced by Marxism. But that is another question altogether.

Overall, *Creating an Islamic State* is a very well-written book that is enriched by a wide range of readings (mostly in Persian). Based on original personal reflections, the book contributes to introducing Khomeini as a clever political thinker who succeeded in toppling the Shah and establishing, to the astonishment of all, a lasting revolutionary regime modeled on the Platonic paradigm of the philosopher-king. This book deserves to be recommended to students of political Islam as well as to anyone interested in Third World ideologies.

At the end, repeating once again that this is not an original scholarly book on Khomeini, readers must be warned about the book's bibliography. Every reference has to be checked, because most of the entries have been abridged. Many references in the notes seem to refer to Hamid Algar while they are meant to refer to Khomeini. Others quote Khusrowshahi while they refer to Navvab Safavi's *Rahnamā-yi haqayiq*, published in Khusrowshahi's book.

Last but not least, the listing for "Behrdad, S. 'Islamic Utopia in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: Navab Safavi and the Fada'ian-e Islam,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1977, pp. 40–65" should be "Behdad, Sohrab. 'Islamic Utopia in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: Navvab-Safavi and the Fada'ian-e Eslām' . . . 1997. . . ." Four mistakes in one reference—to be added to many slight typing errors that any publisher should have corrected. Let us add that the first copies distributed by I. B. Tauris have a p. 130 instead of p. 48. It seems as if some commercial publishers soon forget the Arabic proverb *al-ʿajala ʿamāl ash-shaytān*.

KAMRAN TALATTOF, *The Politics of Writing in Iran: A History of Modern Persian Literature* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000). Pp. 264. \$49.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MOHAMMAD GHANOONPARVAR, Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, University of Texas, Austin

As its title promises, this book attempts to provide a history of modern Persian literature in the context of the political changes and developments in Iran since the early 20th century. Drawing on theoretical concepts in the social sciences, Talattof offers an analytical model for

the study of literature, which he terms “episodic literary movement.” Accordingly, he observed, “Persian literary history is not an integrated continuum but a series of distinct episodic movements” (p. ix). He then identifies four such episodes or episodic movements in modern Persian literature and examines each of these movements in separate chapters. “Persianism” is a term he uses to describe the first episode, which “refers to an ideology that not only inspired authors to write in a new style with the hope of modernizing literature but also made that ideology the theme of literary works” (p. 4). Usually referred to as modernism, and sometimes as nationalism, by other scholars to describe the works of one group of Iranian writers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, according to the author, Persianism is a literary movement that “reflected upon and deeply criticized many aspects of Iranian national characteristics, including social life and traditional culture but excluding the Persian language” (p. 25). The second episode, according to Talattof, is the movement that became known as Committed Literature, in which “Marxist ideology shaped the works of the majority of writers, whose themes revolved around issues of equality, justice, and freedom, colored by Iran’s own cultural particularities” (p. 5).

The first two episodes described by Talattof as “Persianism” and the “Committed Literary Movement”—that is, from the rise of literary modernism to the fall of the Pahlavi regime in Iran—have been examined by other scholars from a historical perspective, though their approach and theoretical outlook have been different from that in the present book. Studies in English, for instance, include Hassan Kamshad’s *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (1966) and M. R. Ghanoonparvar’s *Prophets of Doom: Literature as a Socio-Political Phenomenon in Modern Iran* (1984). Talattof’s major contribution should be considered his next two chapters, in which he discusses the episodic movements of modern Islamic literature and feminist literature in Iran. The outcome of the 1979 Revolution—that is, the establishment of an Islamic regime—the author argues, caused disappointment and depression among secular writers. Because of the change in the political and social climate in the country, literary artists began to look for new tropes and modes of expression that were compatible with the new conditions. With the decline of the Marxist outlook that characterized the work of many literary artists during the episodic movement of “Committed Literature” in the post-World War II period, and particularly after the fall of the government of Mohammad Mosaddeq in 1953 to the onset of the Islamic revolution, and at the same time the adaptation of political Islam as the state ideology, the context was provided for what Talattof calls modern Islamic literature or the literature of the Islamic Revolution. Mostly younger Muslim writers who supported the Islamic regime focused their attention on themes related to the events of the Islamic Revolution, the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88), and the government’s reaction to ethnic uprisings. Also, traditional religious martyrdom stories such as those related to the third Shi’i imam and his family in Karbala were adapted by these writers.

A feminist literary movement is the fourth and final episode postulated by Talattof. He states that “the 1979 Revolution, the subsequent sociopolitical changes, the rise of Islamic literature, the compulsory dress code, and the women’s demonstrations in March 1979, provided the context for and explain the shift in women’s literary enunciations and subsequently the creation of a feminist episode” (p. 171). Pointing out the dramatic increase in the number of women writers in the recent decades, Talattof discusses the thematic focus of the new voices among women writers in the post-Revolutionary period and demonstrates the shift that has taken place in the work of women writers who were already significant literary figures prior to the revolution from political themes to feminist and gender issues.

In the concluding chapter, the author suggests that his analytical model—that is, “episodic literary movement”—may be applicable to the study of modern Arabic and Turkish literature, because, he argues, similar episodes can also be found during more or less the same periods in these two other major Middle Eastern literary traditions. Before examining the applicability

of this model to other literature, the question that must be addressed is, To what extent does this model enhance our understanding of and insight into modern Persian literature?

A main premise behind Talattof's theory of "episodic literary movement," which is often alluded to throughout the book, is that Persian literary history is not a continuum but a series of discontinuous episodes (see, for instance, pp. ix, 173). Nevertheless, on many occasions he also argues for the continuity of certain trends and ideas between movements (for example, the works of modernist authors "are rooted quite purposefully in the literary traditions of Iran" [p. 24]) with the justification that a "movement is not completely structured; its beginning and end are blurred" (p. 15). Every artistic trend—in fact, every work of art—partially subverts and partially builds on previous ones. In other words, there is both continuity and discontinuity from one literary work to another and one literary movement to another, especially within the same tradition. With his often stimulating analyses, Talattof provides a great deal of new insight into the work of modern Persian writers. However, readers may find that the insight he provides is due to his creative critical skills rather than the episodic theory that he applies to the study of Persian and advocates for other literary traditions.

The Politics of Writing in Iran could have benefited from more careful copyediting. *Anjoman-i Danishkadih* is translated as "Association of Colleges" on page 16 and as "The Place of Knowledge" on page 21; Jamalzadi's short story appears as "Haj Qurban Ali" on page 24 and as "Dard-i dil-i Mula Qurban Ali" on page 53; another Jamalzadi story, "Rajul-i Siyasi" (Political Man) is translated as "Political Men" on page 53; the narrator of Sadiq Hidayat's *The Blind Owl* rather than his mother, Bugam Dasi, is identified as an Indian dancer in the second part of the story on page 58; the name of a character in Parsipur's novel is transliterated as Amniyah instead of Aminah on page 145 and elsewhere; the Persian word *khakistar* in a short-story title is transliterated as "Khatistar" on page 168; and there are other translation, transliteration, and typographical errors. Nevertheless, these minor problems should not detract from the contributions that the book makes to Persian literary studies. Talattof's analyses of individual writers and poets are thorough and creative. The segment on Nima Yushij certainly adds to the increasing body of critical studies of this important innovative figure in Persian literature, and the chapters on post-Revolutionary writers and the work of women authors enhance our understanding of the recent developments in literary production in Iran.

DANIEL BRUMBERG, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Pp. 317. \$55 cloth, \$21 paper.

REVIEWED BY VANESSA MARTIN, Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London

Daniel Brumberg challenges what he terms "the fire-breathing fundamentalist vision of Khomeini" and takes up the view that Khomeini's vision was eclectic. He argues that the period since Khomeini's death has seen the emergence of contending ideals on both clerical rule and popular sovereignty that had their basis in his ideology. Thus, Khatami's struggle for pluralism, reform, and constitutional rights has its origin in Khomeini's ideological vision. The contradictory elements in Khomeini's worldview have made it next to impossible for any one faction of his followers to claim that their understanding of Islamic government is any more authentic than another. Brumberg traces the emergence and evolution of what he calls "a system of contending authorities," which demonstrates how Khomeini's efforts to include in the new state various conflicting views of authority prepared the way for the ideological conflict over his legacy.

Brumberg rejects what he sees as the two prevailing views of Khomeini's legacy: the one

that can be seen as a wholly rational struggle over contending interests, and the other that it is a manifestation of some cultural or traditional essence. He likewise challenges the existing argument for a linear transformation from a charismatic to a rational order, which he believes offers no adequate explanation for the contradictory dynamics of politics in Iran. Brumberg presents instead a new interpretation based on four concepts that he considers together constitute the phenomenon of contending authorities. They are multiple biographies (the absorption by an individual leader of conflicting concepts of authority); multiple shared imaginations (the existence of a variety of political visions in society itself); dissonant institutionalization (disagreement over political goals is reproduced in complicated and not always compatible institutions); and complex routinization (the establishment of new institutions is both advanced and impeded by power struggles).

A further argument is that Khomeini grafted onto what Brumberg terms "his charismatic sensibility" two other visions of authority—the first, radical and instrumentalist, derived from the Islamic left and conceiving of Shi'ism as a utilitarian resource to mobilize the people; the second, traditional, and derived from clerical interpretation of the sacred texts.

In order, it would seem, to demonstrate the traditional Iranian component in Khomeini's legacy, Brumberg places great emphasis on mystical charisma, and pays insufficient attention to his role as a jurist. He is determined that Khomeini's charisma as a leader predates the revolution. In other words, Khomeini's charismatic leadership was something other than popular acknowledgement of the overriding authority of one person at a time of dramatic and disorientating change and the continuing authority of that person thereafter (e.g., Atatürk, Nasser). Such insistence creates problems in what is otherwise a reasonable argument. Brumberg emphasizes Khomeini's loss of his parents in childhood and early youth, a loss that was not uncommon in the Qajar period. He then explores, not entirely successfully, the influence on Khomeini of Ibn Arabi (Khomeini's principal mentor was Shahabadi, not Shahabi [pp. 46, 52]; Ibn Arabi was not a disciple of Mulla Sadra [p. 46]; I am misquoted on the subject of his view of the Perfect Man [p. 48]). A subtle argument on the attainment of *'ismat* at a particular moment in *Jihad-i Akbar* is over-emphasized to a point at which Khomeini is taken as seeing himself as having the infallibility of the imams, although he specifically stated that he did not. Khomeini is described as attracting an array of followers as a teacher by radiating mystical charisma, whereas his students' memoirs indicate that he was admired on the usual and rational grounds of being pious, of being a good teacher, and of standing up for his views.

A further point of debate is the argument that the Islamic left specifically influenced Khomeini. Brumberg dates this influence to 1963 and his emergence, which in fact was really the result of a configuration of events arising from the economic crisis and the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi, who was the supreme religious leader at the time.

Further, why attribute such influence to the *Islamic* left when the left itself had been shaping the politics not only of Iran but of the Middle East as a whole since before the Russian Revolution? The argument also does not accommodate the Islamic tradition of social justice, which became intertwined with the undoubted leftist influence. Although a section on the Muslim Brotherhood and the radical right is incorporated into the discussion of the Islamic left, the influence of the left on the Muslim Brotherhood, going back to the 1920s (and possibly even originating in the practice of the Yishuv), is not even addressed. However, with regard to the influence of the Brotherhood, much stress is placed on the use of the term *maslahat* in *Kashf al-Asrar*, which ignores that the term was also used by Fazlallah Nuri and that its interpretation by Muhammad Ghazzali has a legal dimension that is not present in the *Kashf al-Asrar* reference (which is not to say that Khomeini did not read al-Ghazzali). Brumberg gives an interesting account of Khomeini's role in the revolution, though in his coverage of the period of the Iran–Iraq War he could have brought more insight to the problems confronting Khomeini in maintaining a consensus. From the late 1980s, gradually relinquishing the subject of mystical

charisma, the writer produces a penetrating and skillful analysis of political development, deploying in particular his arguments on dissonant visions and complicated routinization. He points out that from 1987, Khomeini emerged as the principal influence on the dismantling of his own charismatic authority in a debate over the very nature of the state. The January 1988 edict on *vilayat-i mutlaq-i faqih* is considered to have originated ultimately from the interests of the system—that is, it was the best way to keep order, a truly Islamic preoccupation. The 1989 constitution both demoted the *faqih*, in that he was no longer necessarily a *marja'*, but also enhanced his powers in giving him responsibility for coordinating the three branches of government. All of Iran's presidents have been caught by the same dilemma—emphasizing their popular mandate alienates the *faqih*, while obliging the *faqih* may alienate the people. Further, Brumberg maintains that the real legacy of Khomeini was anything but mystical, but one of the problems facing the Islamist regime—and one that is not confined to the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution—was how to maintain revolutionary zeal without undermining order. His discussion of the 1990s is particularly strong on the problems confronting each of the factions and leading participants, which often result in their adopting inconsistent solutions.

Brumberg has written a stimulating book on the complex political development of Iran. His argument that the enduring commitment of a well-organized and influential section of Iranian society to traditional concepts of authority means that modernity must be accommodated to a quest for a spiritual life will doubtless generate much debate in the face of the prevailing view that Iran is rapidly secularizing.

FRED HALLIDAY, *The World at 2000: Perils and Promises* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). Pp. 182. \$65.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY NAEEM INAYATULLAH, Department of Politics, Ithaca College, Ithaca, N.Y.

Based on a series of lectures given at the London School of Economics in May 2000, Fred Halliday sets out to give us a 360-degree overview of the contemporary issues and debates in international relations. The task is unenviable, but Halliday's effort is at once broad in its range of topics, deep in its analysis, and nuanced in its presentation—not only of the current debates but also in clearly articulating his own positions. Halliday includes a remarkably concise history of the 20th century: chapters on war and security and on major trends in world politics (all of which he critiques), including what he terms hegemonic optimism, liberal reform, the new anti-imperialism, and the new middle ages; a wonderful chapter that debunks much of the hype about globalization; a much needed critique of U.S. foreign policy under the title, "The Unaccountable Hegemon"; discussions of the difference between past efforts at global government and today's more practical and less centralized "global governance" and of the problems and pitfalls of defending cultural differences (for reasons I formulate later, I consider this perhaps the only weak chapter); and a conclusion on how to move toward what he calls a "radical universalism."

Halliday's view of the horizon is built by standing atop a hill he has constructed with the labor of a lifetime. Although he hides nothing, for those who wish at the outset to understand the source of his vision, it may be worth starting with the concluding chapter, where his call for a radical universalism reveals both the value and the limits of his drive to affect and change the world.

Much of the book is an exercise in mediating extremes—between "complacency disguised as realism, and, irresponsibility posing as conscience" (p. ix). Thus, Halliday wishes to burst the bubble of optimistic globalists who imagine that, with the defeat of communism, an untrammelled capitalism will create a worldwide harmony or an end to history. He rightly insists that

inequality continues to be the central knot of contemporary social life. Yet, at the same time, Halliday also wants to rescue the Enlightenment sense of progress and especially rationality from those—such as culturalists, communitarians, and particularists—who he feels are moving us toward an irresponsible, unethical, and complacent relativism.

As a guide, Halliday is best when he self-consciously works between the various dualisms he presents. This tone can be felt in a passage in which he treats doubt and tension as resources: “[i]n moral discussion about international issues, you are not normally permitted much room for doubt, or for cautious exploration of different positions” (p. 14). Not just in the moral discussion, but in almost all issues, Halliday assiduously constructs meaningful positions. To read this book is to be in the presence of a resourceful, thoughtful, and daring guide. This does not mean, however, that Halliday is without a sense of urgency. Indeed, it is this urgency that both gives the book its sense of logical bearing and humane compassion and points to the idiosyncrasy in his argument.

In speaking about communism, Halliday insists that its failure was not contingent but necessary, both for its internal contradictions and relative to the strengths of capitalism. To his great credit, Halliday insists on a more thorough analysis, one that asks why millions of people were compelled toward an often death-denying loyalty to communism’s aspirations. Evoking the kind of wisdom associated with two theorists he often cites—Karl Polanyi and E. H. Carr—he answers: “[i]t was the development of the modern world itself, in its vicious, warlike and frequently undemocratic character that created communism, that drove people forward into that utopia”. He prophetically adds, “The tensions of that world have far from exhausted their potential to provoke, and to exploit” (p. 143). Agreeing or disagreeing with this assessment is perhaps not the point. What seems important is that it is Halliday’s sense of generosity that drives him to a more comprehensive analysis. But here exactly strength signals limitation. One can wonder why a similar generosity and depth of analysis is not offered to others he rebukes, such as the conspiracy theorists, the Seattle protesters, the abstract utopians, the new anti-imperialists, the relativists, the communitarians, and the culturalists. Like those who committed to communism, are not these people also driven by the vicious, warlike, and undemocratic nature of the modern world? Do they not offer their own implicit utopias?

Halliday’s urgency sometimes gives way to impatience and a tone of righteousness that, perhaps, belies his goal of considered public thought. Indeed, against the claims of various religious traditions and traditional communities, Halliday actually counsels impatience (pp. 151–52). It seems well within Halliday’s grasp to understand that those who espouse such communal claims, and those who want to highlight the cultural basis of all universal claims, are not, as Halliday himself acknowledges (pp. 149–50), arguing for an *absolute* relativism. Rather, either implicitly or explicitly, they are better read as endorsing positions that accept that while universal claims *can* be unlinked from national interest and hegemony, they usually are not. That is, those whom Halliday chides for their complacent relativism are perhaps appropriately suspicious of imperialist–hegemonic projects masquerading as forms of universalism (although one would wish for a greater self-consciousness of this principle regarding their own claims). Thus, Halliday’s desire to rest the future on the three pillars of equality, democracy, and human rights would seem unobjectionable. And yet, one can hesitate at this offering in order to ask: is Halliday proposing or imposing? Here the form of the offering is at least as important as—and perhaps more important than—the content. If one then links Halliday’s prescription to previous attempts to construct universality, such as 16th-century Spain’s efforts to Christianize the Americas, the French and Scottish Enlightenment’s conceptualization of most non-Europeans as ignoble savages, and Marxist and non-Marxist stadial theories of underdevelopment, then more than mere hesitation seems called for. Halliday often refers to nationalism as “atavistic”—meaning that it is not a response to processes of modernization but the reoccurrence of an archaic outlook. However, given the history of projects for prescribing universals—projects that have combined the illusions associated with naive idealism with realism’s

justifications for using force—perhaps it is not nationalism but universalism that is atavistic.

My inversion of what might be properly termed “atavistic” has a conciliatory point. Those who champion universalism often miss the point of the cultural critique. It is not so much the benefits of universalism as the means, the force, and the cultural baggage by which universalism is usually imposed that are under suspicion. By not paying enough attention to the history of universalizing projects, it is universalism itself that allows the irresponsibility of many Third World leaders to pose as conscience. This critique should not be read as undermining the value of this book for the layperson and the specialist. *The World at 2000* is a vigorous, broad-ranging, thoughtful, and useful analysis of international relations, all the more so for the author’s willingness to share his passions publicly.

KRISTIN KOPTIUCH, *A Poetics of Political Economy in Egypt* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Pp. 178. \$17.95 paper, \$44.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARSHA PRIPSTEIN POSUSNEY, Department of History/Social Sciences, Bryant College, Smithfield, R.I.

A Poetics of Political Economy in Egypt is a post-modern study revolving around the role played by petty commodity producers in Egypt’s incorporation into the global economic architecture. The author focuses on two periods: the early 1900s, when free trade was imposed by the country’s colonial master, and the 1970s and 1980s, when Anwar Sadat’s *infitah* policies reopened Egypt to the West after it had been largely closed off during the Nasser era.

In both time periods, Koptiuch argues, Egypt’s subordinate position in international trade and capital flows was made possible by the persistence of small-scale, artisanal enterprises. By providing low-cost goods to the domestic market and subsistence for workers who were not absorbed by the “modern” industrial sector, petty commodity producers contributed to the maintenance of the low-wage environment attractive to foreign investors. In and of itself, however, the material existence and output of small-scale enterprises and the lives of their denizens is insufficient to either explain or maintain this role. Rather, concrete investigations of the latter—the participant observation that the author describes as the stuff of traditional anthropology—must be supplemented by deconstruction of the descriptions of these artisans in the work of scholars and the “hegemonic discourse” of the day, representations that the subjects may come to incorporate into their own self-portrayals. Without such deconstruction, participant observers risk “reducing [their subjects’] complexities by interpreting discourse as the presumed sign of a preexisting referential object cleanly abstracted without contamination from its discursive frame” (p. 5).

That British colonial authorities at the turn of the century proclaimed the disappearance of artisans, the author suggests, reflects both an effort to justify the occupation as modernizing and the primacy of the agricultural sector to colonial economic interests. But the allegedly vanished small workshops and their potential for development were soon “discovered” by French writers. Koptiuch argues that these French texts served as a challenge to British trade policies, which not only constrained the small workshops but also excluded the French from the Egyptian market. Soon thereafter, nascent Egyptian capitalists championed the expansion of small-scale enterprises, also in a discursive effort to carve out an investment niche for themselves while weakening the colonial stranglehold on Egypt’s economy.

Artisans were written out of imperial discourse again after import-substitution policies were introduced in the 1930s, but they re-emerged in the reification of the “informal sector” as a source of job creation in the 1970s. Koptiuch sees this rediscovery as crucially connected to northern pressures on Egypt, as elsewhere in the Third World, to embrace economic liberalism. Petty commodity production was conflated with “private-sector development” more generally,

and its glorification enabled the promotion of the latter, while the state-centered policies that had followed decolonization were undone.

An important secondary argument of the book is the potential for artisans to disrupt the system of dependent capitalist development, given their centrality to it. Artisans in the earlier period revolted against the remaining guild structure and joined a short-lived nationalist union. In the 1970s, a massive exodus of petty commodity producers to the Gulf oil states drove up wages back home, jeopardizing the regime's hopes to attract foreign capital based on low wages and quiescent labor. Koptiuch therefore urges leftist organizations and trade unions, both of which have tended to ignore the small workshops, to recognize them as a key segment of the working class.

Although Koptiuch describes her goal as to "supplement, but not supplant, political economy with cultural criticism" (p. 28), her emphasis is clearly on the latter. The theoretical argument for deconstruction and an elaboration of its techniques occupies almost half of the book and is for the most part explicitly addressed to anthropologists and other ethnographers (pp. 57, 68–69, 135–37). As neither a practitioner nor a consumer of ethnography, however, I am unable to comment on whether the book makes significant new contributions in this area and can only urge those interested in cultural criticism to examine it for themselves.

Elsewhere, though (p. 30), the author does address herself to labor historians, development economists, and other positivist social scientists. Such a readership, invited by the book's perhaps overly broad title, may find much to miss in this monograph, however. Material drawn from the author's extensive 1980 fieldwork among Egyptian potters is scant and intentionally subordinated to her representational analysis. If wooing positivists to constructivism is indeed among her aims, Koptiuch's own discursive strategy would seem to defeat this purpose: the language of cultural criticism she employs is often inaccessible to those, such as this reviewer, who are not trained in that field. Arguing for deconstruction in sentences that only its already devoted practitioners can decipher seems unlikely to win new converts.

Incomplete comprehension, then, may explain why I found the material on the 1970s and 1980s less convincing than that on the earlier period. The current hegemony of neo-liberal orthodoxy is a worldwide phenomenon—it has triumphed over social-democratic ideology in the North and over statist policies in the South—and the defeat of the former did not require the invention of an informal sector. Moreover, most economic analyses of Egypt do in fact distinguish (usually on the basis of number of employees) between the formal private sector and informal enterprises. Thus, the argument that the two were, and had to be, conflated for structural adjustment to prevail in Egypt strikes me as overdrawn.

The economic presentation also suffers somewhat from datedness. Developments in the late 1970s and 1980s are at times described in the present tense, but the author's investigation into the Egyptian economic scene appears to have terminated in 1992. Thus, although she discusses the early discourse on privatization, its actual implementation, which did not begin in earnest until the spring of 1996, is overlooked. This could in fact have bolstered Koptiuch's argument, as the early-retirement incentives designed to woo tens of thousands of public-sector employees from their jobs have explicitly encouraged them to establish "microenterprises."

BRUCE B. LAWRENCE, *Shattering the Myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). Pp. 256. \$47.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PATRICK D. GAFFNEY, Department of Anthropology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

Setting out to "shatter the myth" that links Islam to political violence, to women, and to global economic development requires not only a thorough knowledge of the realities themselves that

have suffered the alleged distortion, but also a solid grasp of the false images or misleading assumptions that stand in need of correction. A work such as this one, which announces rectification of blinkered, poorly informed, or prejudiced views as its chief intention, takes its shape in large measure from the assertions it chooses for its targets. In this case, Bruce Lawrence is returning to a key aspect of the theme treated in a wide comparative framework in his notable 1989 book, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age*, and he has selected a rather broad facade against which to launch his rebuttal.

Located in the center—at the bullseye, as it were—in the concentric circles of myth he aims to redress are the views associated with Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama: the grand civilization stereotyping that characterizes Islam as united, prone to conflict, and virulently opposed to the West. Lawrence does not stoop to hand-wringing exposés of the press, a form of scholarly exercise with its own high- and low-brow exponents, but neither does he directly critique the rationale of these famous, more scholarly works, even as he roundly excoriates the enticing inadequacy of their simplistic conclusions. Instead, he concentrates on a manner of refutation that arises from numerous vignettes of exposition and a few extended analytical explorations, which carry on his project at two levels.

After a concise and stimulating initial chapter that reviews with considerable breadth and insight current debates about how the categories related to religion and nation-state are used or abused with respect to Islam, emphasizing discontinuity and lasting effects of European colonial rule, the book proceeds as a series of long and short case studies. Meanwhile, the slightly polemical edge that ushers in the discussion tends to subside and is soon largely submerged in the ample and articulate footnotes.

In posing the counter-argument touching on his principal subject, Islamic fundamentalism, Lawrence pauses only momentarily to offer his paradigm of a staged evolution, essentially in response to European imperial intrusions. This paradigm starts with revivalism, taking the form of anti-colonial revolt. It then is seen as reform, framed as nation-building movements, and finally becomes fundamentalism, viewed as religious nationalism. Examination of this third development, the present phenomenon, constitutes by far the longest chapter in the book and is most valuable in that it insists on reckoning with specific events and localized historical contexts, as well as global trends, in its effort to define and explain the dynamics of contemporary Islamic political contestation.

In surveying six instances—Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran—Lawrence chooses to focus on pivotal incidents and leading personalities that most observers would have remarked as the high-profile occasions of religious, Islamic conflict in each polity. These are relatively brief summary reviews, of course, and would hardly satisfy those possessing a close familiarity with the sketches presented. However, the highly selective nature of the information offered and the schematic interpretation woven into the narrative are plainly designed to enlighten readers whose knowledge of these particulars has been sadly crimped, truncated, or skewed by the effects of the myth-makers. The overall effect is meant to awaken an awareness of the multiple and variegated processes that occur under the single label of fundamentalism.

Nevertheless, perhaps unavoidably, given the nature of his endeavor, another consequence of this manner of exposition is a persistent reiteration of the linkage, once again, of Islam and state-related violence, because every topic has this alone as its theme. Here and elsewhere, an unsolved problem of who is meant as the intended audience of this study surfaces and lingers. Those who have adequate knowledge to fill in the background in each case will recognize that the varied Islamist or fundamentalist confrontations that are detailed represent discrete incidents embedded in complex social realities. But these are unlikely to be the ones who were victims of the great myth that is here being shattered. Meanwhile, those who lack such background will quite likely be left with an impression of each country as profoundly marked only by events such as the assassination of Anwar Sadat for Egypt, the 1979 seizure of the Great Mosque in Mecca for Saudi Arabia, and the 1982 crushing of the insurrection in Hama for Syria.

In retelling the confrontations relevant to Islamic fundamentalist activity in each country, Lawrence frequently seeks to identify patterns of class conflict; regional, sectarian, and ethnic rivalry; the role of education; and an assortment of resistance dynamics he summarizes as belonging to the Third World. But as he seldom devotes more than a phrase or two to these propositions—his discussion of Iran is a partial exception—it is seldom clear in what way or to what degree such other factors may operate independently of religious motivation. In fact, Lawrence's emphasis on the importance of agency—that is, to allow the actors under study to speak for themselves—seems to encourage a tendency on his part to accentuate the religious strand.

Thus, Islam in a certain discourse is sometimes problematically positioned against another set of attitudes and behaviors labeled “secular,” “Western,” or “modern,” whereas shifting back, typically without comment, into more of a social-science mode can lead to what seems to be the extension of religious semantics into areas in which they are less familiar. For instance, when the author twice refers to the past century's two world wars as “Christian wars,” the choice of terms suggests either a fondness of provocative innuendo or an apparent readiness to draw unexplored parallels between another of the book's themes—namely jihad and wars in other traditions. Indeed, how it is that Japan's imperial impulse in the Asia Pacific region and the struggle, for instance, between Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union fit comfortably into the paradigm of a Christian war certainly invites elaboration.

But if the question remains unanswered as to which features of political behavior and, especially, which recourse to violence can be confidently attributed to religion, Lawrence offers more clarity in his inquiries into Islam's relation to women and to global economic integration, the other major focuses of the book. In his investigation into the issue of women and Islam, the author offers once more a useful, pointed, well-informed survey of varied conditions, illustrating and expounding on the paradox of the veil as a possible instrument both of emancipation and autonomy and of confinement or repression. He also acknowledges that the discourse of modern feminism and its appeal have a very limited public in the Islamic world. The extended analysis of the case of Shah Bano of India counts as one of the most cogent and original portions of the book. Its subtleties would surely slip past the view of any heavy-handed myth-maker, but its inclusion demonstrates magnificently the need for polyvalent definitions.

The final chapter of the book, nominally the conclusion, introduces the peculiar path of Islam translated as “corporate culture,” promoted especially by Malaysia's president Mohammad Mahathir. Lawrence's tracing of the public rhetoric and some of the policy initiatives that have been promoted in efforts to mobilize Malay Muslims toward transformation into an economically advanced society shows once more an important contrast to the formulas and predictions born of concentrating observation on Arab and Persian traditions. The shadow of China in the Pacific Rim region has prompted its own set of Islamic identity issues. Some of the more optimistic remarks Lawrence allows himself in this discussion would need to be tempered in the light of political and economic realities that have stirred in this region since the time of his writing. But the distinctive quality and the clear voice expressing this Malaysian experience, which Lawrence notes privileges the use of English, represents an exceptionally vibrant and widely overlooked dimension of contemporary Islamic experience that the author has done well to showcase.

STEPHEN PELLETIÈRE, *Iraq and the International Oil System: Why America Went to War in the Gulf* (Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 2001). Pp. 250. \$69.95 cloth.

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This is a book whose title invites the reader. Stephen Pelletière, a professor of national-security affairs at the U.S. Army War College and an intelligence officer since 1982, has covered the

Iran–Iraq War and the subsequent Gulf War. For this reason, the reader who picks up this book may expect to find some firsthand accounts, hitherto untapped documents, or a new analytical approach that might shed light on how the struggle for oil has influenced the strategies of the various parties involved in these conflicts.

The author states his thesis in a rather peculiar manner. There is “such a thing [as] an oil system,” which could have been threatened by Iraq’s “victory” in its war with Iran. Hence, several parties conspired to deprive Iraq from capitalizing on its newly acquired position as a leading player within OPEC and the oil system. The second Gulf War was an attempt to cripple Iraq and keep the oil system intact. Pelletière defines a “system” as a “setup to achieve control of something” (p. ix). According to this definition, this “system” has been in place since the 1920s, and despite vast changes in the structure of ownership and control of the oil industry, the system “limped along.” Given the tidal changes in the structure of the oil industry over the past decades, it is very hard to understand what the author really means by an “oil system.” The reader will search in vain throughout the book for a concrete explanation of what this oil system is, what its basic components and constituent elements are, and how it functions.

Eventually, the only answer that one comes away with after reading this book is that the pseudo-scholarly term “oil system” can only mean Western—especially U.S.—influence over the production, supply, and pricing of oil. From here on, the theme of the book becomes familiar, even mundane: to show that there is a relationship between oil interests and Iraq’s international conflicts, or “the fight of the Iraqis against, primarily, the United States,” to use the ideologically charged opening line of Pelletière’s book.

The author justifies his choice of topic by making a surprising claim—that this fight “has rarely been viewed as having much to do with oil” (p. ix). No mention is made of the fact that since day one, various parties to the Gulf conflict made no secret of the fact that oil was the main reason for their going to war. Immediately after Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. administration made it clear that it would not tolerate a situation whereby the “butcher of Baghdad” would lay his hands on 20 percent of the world’s oil reserves. For its part, the Iraqi leadership’s major grievance against Kuwait, which eventually led to the invasion, was that the latter was illegally drilling oil from an Iraqi oil field and that by doing so it was flooding the international markets with oil, thus causing a sharp drop in oil prices and depriving Iraq of desperately needed foreign currency.

How does the author prove his arguments? More than half of the book (121 pages) is devoted to a history of the oil industry in general and its relationship to the Middle East in particular: the beginning of the oil industry in the United States, the formation of an international oil cartel (the so-called seven sisters), its involvement in the Middle East scene and its clash with the Iranian nationalist leader Mohammad Mossadegh, which ended in his overthrow in 1953. One could question the need for such a history given the fact that Iraq appears only sporadically in this narrative. This is more awkward in light of the fact that the second part of the book begins with the admission that the cartel has all but ceased to exist, and the struggle to control oil is now carried out between governments and their agencies. Here again, the problem is that no novel analysis or facts are produced. All those who are interested in this field must know such classics as Tarbell’s *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, O’Connor’s *The Empire of Oil*, Lenczowski’s *The Middle East in World Affairs*, and Sampson’s *The Seven Sisters*. The first half of Pelletière’s book draws heavily on these works, but in the course of providing his long summary, the author occasionally presents his own statements, which for the most part are problematic, to say the least.

In addition to making grossly mistaken judgments, such as labeling the 1870–1914 belle époque of free trade as an age of “protectionism” (p. 24), and using the wrong terminology (saying British imports to the United States when he is clearly talking about exports [p. 87] and calling oil a non-labor-intensive industry when he ostensibly means that it is a capital-

intensive industry [p. 86]), the author's analysis of the political history of the Middle East is seriously flawed and unbalanced. This is most evident in his treatment of the U.S. attitude toward Mossadegh's pioneering attempt to nationalize Iran's oil. The attempts to overthrow him in 1952–53 are viewed as a mainly British endeavor. According to the author, the United States, by contrast, had "a secret agenda" (p. 107): it wanted a unified Iran with an effective nationalist government at the helm. Ayatollah Kashani, the populist leader who was on the CIA payroll to mobilize the mobs against Mossadegh, is viewed here as "unexpectedly" distancing himself from the nationalist leader (p. 111). We are told that a Washington trying to work with Mossadegh was faced with a stubborn Kermit Roosevelt—the CIA agent in charge in Tehran—who "was not so easily put off" (p. 112).

The problem with such sweeping generalizations is not only that they lack evidence, but also that they stand in the face of most available facts. The U.S. administration in the early 1950s (and later) did not only work to overthrow the Iranian nationalist leader; it also opposed Nasser in Egypt and overthrew Arbenz in Guatemala. This was the heyday of the Truman doctrine, where not only communist but also anti-communist nationalist leaders such as Mossadegh and Nasser were viewed as enemies.

Nevertheless, perhaps one should judge the book by the way it purports to deal with its main topic—Iraq and the international "oil system." Iraq is dealt with only in the second part of the book (pp. 123–231), where the focus is heavily on the 1980s (Iraq's eight-year war with Iran and later the propaganda campaign that paved the way for Iraq's invasions of Kuwait in 1990). The overriding theme in this part of the book is to show that the "oil system" again managed to foil an attempt by a nationalist regime (the Ba'thist regime of Saddam Hussein) to control its oil resources, first by trying to deprive it of reaping the fruits of its "victory" over Iran, and then by orchestrating a media campaign that prepared Western public opinion for the Gulf War. Reducing the complex interplay of economic, social, and political forces involving local, regional, and international players into a naive conspiracy narrative has led the author to produce a highly distorted, apologetic, and one-sided account that echoes the official propaganda of the Iraqi regime.

To deal with the "conspiracies" aimed at weakening an independent-minded Iraq, the author had to gloss over several facts. At no point, for example, is there any mention of the Saudi–Iraqi joint effort to undermine the Iranian economy by allowing Iraq to replace Iran as the second-largest producer within OPEC. Similarly, a narrative trying to emphasize the nationalistic character of the Iraqi leadership had to avoid any mention of (1) the exchange of intelligence information between the CIA and the Iraqi military during the Iran–Iraq War, (2) the United States' shooting down of an Iranian civilian airplane, which killed almost 300 passengers; and (3) the quadrupling of Iraqi–U.S. commercial exchange between 1984 and 1988. Labeling Iraq a victor in its war with Iran is not grounded in any facts except Iraq's rhetorical claims. The war ended where it began. Despite a million dead people and astronomical economic costs, none of Iraq's objectives in the war were achieved.

In exploring the "conspiracies" aimed at destabilizing Iraq, the author does not confine his study to the interstate conflicts. A sizeable space is given to internal conflicts, especially the successive Kurdish revolts. This is all natural for a study that tends to treat a country in a monolithic and reified way. Iraq is reduced to its ruling regime despite the fact that here and there we know that this regime has brutally suppressed Iraqi liberals, monarchists, conservatives, communists, left-wing democrats, Sunni and Shi'i Islamists, and even factions belonging to its own Pan-Arabist camp, such as the Nasserites and the various splinter wings of the Ba'th Party. Thus, successive revolts by a people who make up around one-fourth of Iraqi society and shows of opposition by significant segments of the population are seen only through the prism of external threats to stability.

Pelletière's treatment of the Kurdish question deserves particular attention because it gives

an idea of the author's flawed methodology and ideological bias. Throughout the book, he is careful not to describe the Kurds as a nation. At best, they are described as a community. Their 1961 revolt was not a widespread, popular revolt: "[a]t best one or two tribes were involved" (p. 129). The history of the 1974 Kurdish revolt is reconstructed in such a way as to show that it was part of a Western plot. The author paints a rosy picture of the autonomy proposal made by Saddam to the Kurds in 1970. Contrary to all available documents, he asserts that they were offered representation in the country's legislature, the Revolution's Command Council. Then he decides that the revolt began in 1972 in order to make it coincide with the oil-nationalization acts. Finally, some gross insults are generously heaped on the Kurds, such as "the Kurds do not fight unless paid" (p. 154).

Pelletière's treatment of the Kurdish plight reaches its climax when he deals with Saddam's gassing of the town of Halabja and with the Anfal campaign, both of which have been extensively documented by independent human-rights and medical organizations, as well as the media. The first attack took place in March 1988 and led to the instant death of some 5,000 Kurdish civilians. The second attack was a ten-legged military operation that took place between 1987 and 1988. Between 100,000 and 180,000 civilian Kurds were rounded up and killed in an operation that aimed to paralyze Kurdish society and depopulate the Kurdish countryside in order to do away with the partisan war that was being waged against the regime. Pelletière goes to great length to deny these accusations. Against all evidence, he maintains that the Iranians and Iraqis doubly attacked Halabja. As for the Anfal campaign (in which no accusation of chemical-weapon use was made), the author argues that no traces of chemical weapons were found to suggest the killing of such a huge number of civilians.

In order to legitimate the Iraqi regime's atrocities, the author does not mind falsifying geographical facts by claiming that Anfal, which lies about 300 kilometers northeast of Baghdad, is "an Iraqi Kurdish city near Baghdad" (p. 206). Similarly, this intelligence officer and Middle East specialist does not even consult a map when he adamantly claims that all major Iraqi cities "are right on the border" (p. 200). Any novice student of Iraq knows that, with the exception of Basra, all major Iraqi cities—Baghdad, Mosul, Hilla, Kerbala, and Najaf—are between 100 and 350 kilometers from the border.

When presenting his case, the author never bothers to give evidence. His source on the Kurds is a book that he wrote. To link the Kurdish revolts to the book's thesis, the author is satisfied with such statements as "it seems legitimate to speculate that the oil companies were involved here. The timing is certainly suspect" (p. 157).

To the flawed methodology and ideological bias of the book one should also add a final word about its historical and factual mistakes. Thanks to an impressive array of high-quality scholarship on the political history of Iraq (e.g., that of Hanna Batatu, Sluglett and Sluglett, and Phebe Marr), one would expect that the main contours of modern Iraqi history would be accurately presented in this book. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Pelletière does not stop surprising his readers with flagrant historical mistakes, such as stating (without a quote) that the Russians occupied Iraq during World War II (p. 124); and that General Qassim, who ruled Iraq from 1958 to 1963, invaded Kuwait (p. 132), whereas he merely did not recognize its sovereignty. In addition, despite the many books on the Ba'ath Party, what the author does not know is turned into an unknown for all: he simply states that the origins of the Ba'ath Party are mysterious (p. 167). Other mistakes pertain to dates and misspelling of Arab names. The al Subah ruling family of Kuwait is spelled al-Sabagh, and the Kadhūmayn Shi'ī district of Baghdad is spelled Qasimayn (p. 163). The year 1964 is mistakenly given as that in which the first Ba'athist regime fell (it fell in 1963); the Iraq–USSR Friendship Treaty was signed in 1972 (not 1974, as claimed in the book); and Margaret Thatcher, who had been Britain's prime minister since 1979, is described as having "just been elected" in 1985 (p. 180). Perhaps the most flagrant mistake in a book devoted to Iraqi oil is that the author does not seem to know

the exact proceedings of the nationalization of the oil concerns. For example, he talks about the IPC (Iraq Petroleum Company) being shut down in 1963 (p. 154), whereas the IPC continued in operation until 1972, and the rest of the oil concessions were nationalized piecemeal between 1973 and 1975.

In conclusion, while reading *Iraq and the International Oil System* one is tempted to think that Edward W. Said should have added something to his thesis: that not only has the power of knowledge constructed a space called the East, but ignorance can still go unpunished when some try it as a means of constructing the Middle East.