

REVIEWS

THE ANCIENT WORLD

MARC VAN DE MIEROOP:

King Hammurabi of Babylon: A Biography.

(Blackwell Ancient Lives.) xii, 171 pp. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. £14.99.

This little volume marks the debut of a new series called Blackwell Ancient Lives. Given the seniority of Mesopotamia in the history of civilization, it is appropriate that a Babylonian subject should be chosen to inaugurate a series that will soon include lives of Cleopatra, Constantine, Pericles, Julius Caesar and Alexander. But writing real biography at a remove of thirty-eight centuries is a hopeless task. It is clear from his last chapter ('On writing Hammurabi's biography') that the writer of this book would be the first to admit the essential truth of this statement.

The sources at Marc Van De Mieroop's disposal are many and varied: official inscriptions, including commemorative texts, votive inscriptions and year names, letters of the diplomatic and secret services, administrative and private correspondence, economic and legal documents and the famous 'law code' found at Susa in 1901–02. While these amount to a cornucopia of documentation for the life and times of Hammurabi compared with many other ancient Mesopotamian rulers, still they do not permit the writing of a true biography. What emerges is a reconstruction of the political and military history of Hammurabi's long reign (1792–1750 in the conventional chronology), with an especially detailed account of the 1760s, when this king conquered a large part of Mesopotamia and established a short-lived empire.

Hammurabi's empire fell apart soon after his death but nevertheless left behind as an enduring legacy that Babylon remained the natural capital of the land below Baghdad for the next millennium and a half. That aside, Hammurabi's name will always be associated with the great stone stela of laws that is his most prominent monument. Though the Codex Hammurabi was neither a 'code' nor the first such collection of laws, this text secured his reputation in antiquity, as well as today. In pointing out how Hammurabi's laws anticipated in form and content Mosaic and Roman laws, Van De Mieroop can rightly claim that his subject is 'probably the only king of Mesopotamia whose fame is not based on his destructive powers and conquests, but on the positive benefits he brought to his people, and to humanity in general'.

What does not emerge (and cannot emerge) from the extant sources is a portrait of Hammurabi the man. His personal life and personality remain hidden from us. But insofar as it is possible to write Hammurabi's story, Van De Mieroop has done so. Based as it is on a thorough knowledge of both long-known and recently published evidence, a solid acquaintance with the most up-to-date scholarship, and a historian's awareness of the varying reliability of the ancient sources, this book is an excellent account of a fascinating ruler, and as near to biography as one is going to get.

A. R. GEORGE

DAVID T. RUNIA and GREGORY E. STERLING (eds):

The Studia Philonica Annual. Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, vol. XIII: *In the Spirit of Faith: Studies in Philo and Early Christianity in Honor of David Hay*, and vol. XV: *Laws Stamped with the Seals of Nature: Law and Nature in Hellenistic Philosophy and Philo of Alexandria*.

(Brown Judaic Studies, 332 and 337.) 304 pp. (vol. XIII), 199 pp. (vol. XV). Providence: Brown University, 2001 (vol. XIII) and 2003 (vol. XV).

Vol. XIII of the *Studia Philonica Annual* is a *Festschrift* on the occasion of David Hay's retirement. His major research interests, Philo and the New Testament, are reflected by the contributions to this volume. After the introductory articles which deal with Philonic Studies in general and David Hay's own scholarship, the two main parts are 'Philo and Hellenistic Judaism' and 'Early Christianity'. In the section on 'Philo and Hellenistic Judaism' Ellen Birnbaum ('Philo on the Greeks: a Jewish perspective on culture and society in first-century Alexandria') discusses Philo's dual involvement in the multi-cultural environment and the political struggles between the different ethnic groups in Alexandria. She tries to understand Philo's attraction to Greek culture at a time when the Greeks were amongst his political rivals. Peder Borgen ('Application of and commitment to the laws of Moses: observations on Philo's treatise *On the Embassy to Gaius*') maintains that Philo's *Legatio* can be considered part of his exegetical writings: scriptural principles, as understood by Philo, are applied to a particular historical event. The conflict in Alexandria was concerned with the way in which the Torah could be practised in civil life. Another aspect of the Alexandrian cultural environment is addressed by Karl-Gustav Sandelin ('Philo's ambivalence towards statues') who argues that Philo's discussion of statues reflects his ambivalent stance between Jewish tradition and Hellenistic culture, monotheism and polytheism. The rest of the articles in this section examine particular literary and tradition-historical aspects of Philo's work (James R. Royse, 'Philo's division of his works into books'; David T. Runia, 'Philo's reading of the Psalms'). Of particular interest is David Winston's comparison between the writings of Philo and the Sufi mystic Ibn 'Arabi ('Philo of Alexandria and Ibn 'Arabi'). Despite the chronological difference of more than one-thousand years, similarities can be discerned based on their mystical view of reality.

Two of the contributions to the section on 'Early Christianity' are dedicated to letters of Paul. Thomas H. Tobin ('The Jewish context of Rom. 5:12–14') views Paul's reference to Adam's sin against the background of ancient Jewish interpretations of Gen. 1–3. In this context it becomes clear that Paul is not concerned with a theory of 'original sin' but with the relationship between Jews and gentiles, Adam representing humankind before Moses and the revelation of the Torah at Sinai. Dieter Zeller ('Die angebliche enthusiastische oder spiritualistische Front in 1 Kor. 15') argues against those who associate a uniform front of enthusiasts, influenced by Philo, with the deniers of resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:12. No such uniform group is identifiable amongst Paul's opponents. Gregory E. Sterling ('Ontology versus eschatology: tensions between author and community in Hebrews') shows that unlike Philo, Hebrews 'does not reflect a profound understanding of Platonism; it only

betrays a knowledge of Platonizing exegetical traditions' (p. 210). This phenomenon indicates that certain Platonic ideas were common knowledge amongst Jews and Christians rather than being discussed by the intellectual elite exclusively. Paul's contemporary and companion Thecla is the subject of Anniewies van den Hoek and John J. Herrmann's contribution ('Thecla the beast fighter. A female emblem of deliverance in early Christian popular art'). The authors are able to identify her image on pottery bowls from the fourth and fifth century C.E. which bear the inscription *Domina Victoria*. Thecla appears as an example of deliverance already experienced by the heroes of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Daniel) here.

Vol. XV collects articles, originally presented at a conference at the university of Notre Dame in 2001, which analyse the concept of natural law in Hellenistic Philosophy. The contributions show that Philo's understanding of the relationship between law and nature was 'part of a lively debate going on in Jewish and Christian religious communities as well as in philosophical circles influenced by Plato and Stoicism' (p. 1). David Sedley's contribution ('The *Nomothetes* in Plato's *Cratylus*') investigates the role of the law-giver in the construction of legal language and rules and suggests that the *Cratylus* may contain 'an early antecedent of the doctrine of natural law' (p. 16). Paul A. Vander Waerdt ('The original theory of natural law') argues that the rule-based model of moral reasoning is not the only theoretical model developed by the early theorists of natural law and that another internalist or intentionalist model existed in the early Stoa. A reply to and partial criticism of this argumentation is provided by Phillip Mitsis ('The Stoics and Aquinas on virtue and natural law'). Hindy Najman ('A written copy of the Law of Nature: an unthinkable paradox?') suggests that Philo's paradoxical understanding of the (unwritten) law of nature as part of written law revealed by God must be seen as revolutionary and cannot be resolved entirely by logic. Gregory E. Sterling ('Universalizing the Particular: natural law in Second Temple Jewish ethics'), on the other hand, assumes 'that the equation of Mosaic legislation and natural law took place on a routine or semi-routine basis in Second Temple Jewish circles' (p. 79) and may have served as a counter-argument against the common anti-Jewish charges of misanthropy and particularism. The volume closes with Brad Inwood's examination of 'Natural Law in Seneca' in the context of other Stoic authors' reflections on the topic.

CATHERINE HEZSER

THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

KAYS MUTLU:

İsmet Özel: Individualität und Selbstdarstellung eines Türkischen Dichters.

(Bibliotheca Academica Orientalistik, 5.) viii, 108 pp. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004. €24.

Books in western European languages that deal with modern Turkish writers are rare. The publication of Kays Mutlu's *İsmet Özel: Individualität und Selbstdarstellung eines Türkischen Dichters* (İsmet Özel: Individuality and Self-Representation of a Turkish Poet) is a welcome addition to the academic literature on contemporary Turkish writing. Mutlu's subject is a particularly

well chosen one, since İsmet Özel is not only one of Turkey's most original and remarkable living poets, he is also a cultural commentator whose columns and occasional outbursts regularly become a topic of conversation among the chattering classes, at least those following the Islamic media. Indeed İsmet Özel's conversion from a major Marxist intellectual to one of Turkey's leading Islamic thinkers during the 1970s caused much ink to be spilled. Even today his, sometimes iconoclastic, side-takings still cause uproar among the Islamic intelligentsia in Turkey. Mutlu's monograph focuses in particular on Özel's prose works (collections of essays and columns and his autobiography), even though he devotes one section of his chapter on Özel's art (ch. 4) to the study of his poetics and occasionally refers to the ideological dimension of some of his verses. Though several articles have been published in Turkish on Özel's position as an Islamic intellectual, there are very few in western European languages that also evoke this particular dimension of the poet. Two deserve mention, since Mutlu refers to them critically in his work: Hamit Bozarslan's 'İsmet Özel', published in the *Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien* (vol. 10, 1990, 128–34) and Michael Meeker's study 'The new Muslim intellectuals in the Republic of Turkey', published in Richard Tapper's *Islam in Modern Turkey* (London, 1994, 189–219).

Kays Mutlu's aim is to show how self-representation and political discourse are closely interwoven in Özel's works, and he gives a fairly comprehensive introduction to Özel's intellectual universe. The author studies various facets of the Islamic intellectual and discusses the artist and the political activist, exploring several issues such as the role of the intellectual, the definition of civilization and the relationship between Islam and modernity in his writings. Mutlu devotes a separate chapter to Özel's autobiography, since in an autobiography self-representation is the avowed aim. One of the book's strengths lies in the author's rich contextualization of his topic, since the mainly German readership may not be sufficiently informed on socio-political and cultural developments in Turkey. Mutlu translates large portions of Özel's prose, which is a necessity, since, as he rightly remarks, none has been translated before. One of the most difficult sections to write was undoubtedly that on Özel's use of language, but the author was successful, especially in the elucidation of the—never gratuitous—word puns scattered all over Özel's writings. The general remarks on the history of modern Turkish poetry are disappointing however, because the author sticks too closely to conservative historians of literature such as Ahmet Kabaklı. Hence, for instance, he categorizes Nazım Hikmet as a socialist or *toplumcu* poet (p. 8), which, politically speaking, is not wrong, but too reductive from a literary point of view, since Hikmet was miles away from those poets who would later form the socialist realist *Generation of 1940*. Though Mutlu briefly discusses the Garip group, he does not mention that they were the first literary movement in Turkey with a manifesto (p. 8). None the less the overview provides enough information to situate İsmet Özel in the general context of Turkish poetry. The two comparisons, with the German socialist poet and essayist Erich Fried and the French philosopher and critic Roger Garaudy, are appealing. The latter is particularly interesting since the author shows how key concepts such as dialogue and civilization are defined and interpreted in quite different ways by these two writers who both converted from Marxism to Islam. One cannot help but ask whether a third comparative excursion—with Edward Liminov, the Russian writer, national-Bolshevik activist and professional provocateur—would not have been even more pertinent, since for Liminov too, literature, political controversy and public image are closely linked. But such an approach would have required the author to give

a much more critical exposition of Özel's writings. Özel, as Mutlu notes on several occasions, invites his readers to read his columns and essays critically, and to use them as platforms to start thinking. Though he is quite critical of Özel's critics, Mutlu does not make any value judgements on the ideas that Özel develops in his writings, even though some of Özel's contradictions are very apparent. Mutlu draws another interesting parallel between İsmet Özel and Oswald Spengler, one of the major theoreticians of twentieth-century German nationalism, in a section in which he discusses the opposition between modernity and Islam in Özel's writings. He mentions the similarities between the concepts of civilization and culture in the writings of Özel and in Spengler's *The Dawn of Western Civilization* (1923). Just as with Fried, Spengler might not be a familiar name to people who are not well-versed in German cultural history, but this kind of comparison is relevant and eye-opening for the German reader. As a whole this short study gives a good overview of İsmet Özel and it is to be hoped that it will reach beyond the academic community, to which it is primarily addressed. Indeed many of the issues that are central to Özel's writings, such as the relationship between Islam, the West and modernity, or Turkish and European culture, are also major topics in the news.

LAURENT MIGNON

COLIN IMBER:

The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power.

xiv, 405 pp., 5 maps. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

£14.99.

Few historians are able to write cogently for both a general and an academic audience. Colin Imber's *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (1997) was widely applauded as an important example of the latter form, and the present volume on Ottoman institutional history sets out 'to introduce the non-specialist to the field, and to provide a context which makes it possible to read the specialist works'. This is the second of Imber's works to range widely. He prefaced his *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481* (1990) with Sherlock Holmes's observation 'It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts'. These lines might equally stand in justification of his approach here, in another book entitled *The Ottoman Empire*, where respect for the primary sources is paramount in the author's approach. The subtitle, *The Structure of Power*, promises a concern with both the institutions through which power is exercised, and also how power is made to seem legitimate to the population at whom it is projected; but Imber shows little interest in the reaction of those on the receiving end of the relationship, choosing to concentrate on those wielding power in the Ottoman state.

Halil İnalcık's *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600*, first published in 1973, hitherto remains the standard reference work in English on Ottoman institutional history. Seminal in its time, and valuable long thereafter, it is now somewhat outdated, and a concise and accessible account in English of the institutions of the empire informed by the latest scholarship is overdue. Imber covers much of the same ground as İnalcık, and divides his subject matter along broadly similar lines. He sets the events of Ottoman history in generous context—both contemporaneous, by reference to Ottoman interaction with their neighbours, and diachronic, by discussing precedents for

the evolution of individual institutions. A chapter on the chronology of Ottoman history, from the origins of the state until 1650—the eve of the ‘Köprülü years’—is followed by sections devoted to individual aspects of the state: ‘The dynasty’, ‘Recruitment’, ‘The palace’, ‘The provinces’, ‘The law’, ‘The army’, and ‘The fleet’. Imber marshalls much detailed information into a very readable narrative, and each chapter has great merits. Not least of these is Imber’s facility in finding apposite quotations from chronicles and documents to illustrate the point he is making—such as a variety of contemporary voices commenting on the practice of fratricide, or disputes arising at the time of a new cadastral survey. He indicates the procedures by which some of the documents that are the bedrock of Ottoman history came to be produced. He makes it clear when he speculates, and adduces sound historical reasoning for why institutions developed as they did. One point that drew this reviewer’s attention was the useful description of various types of seagoing vessel: Ottoman historians are typically vague about such important, and highly relevant, technical matters.

English versions of Ottoman terms are preferred in the text. Most Ottoman terms still lack an accepted translation into any language (even allowing that meanings alter over time), and a glossary supplies the original for specialists. Other end-matter includes notes that add further sources to those given in the bibliography, which are themselves, most usefully, arranged by chapter and hence according to the institution under discussion. By far the majority of sources utilized postdate the appearance of Inalcik’s *The Classical Age*, making Imber’s an indispensable work.

Imber’s is a dynamic treatment, and a corrective to the impression often produced by institutional history that the institutions of the empire remained unchanged over time. This alone makes it an achievement. He is less successful, though, in revealing the organic links between different parts of the state apparatus, but this is a weakness of the format that is hard to overcome. His exposition is a model of clarity, and he fully realizes what an earlier generation of writers did not: that it is essential for Ottoman historians to speak to non-specialists in language that is not overly self-referential in tone.

Imber’s concluding thoughts are concise, and it is here that he addresses the big questions. His discussion of the various limitations of the sultan’s power is perhaps novel to non-specialists who widely assume him to have been an absolute ruler, unfettered in his exercise of power. But two other points Imber addresses are controversial. A question that invariably occurs to non-specialists but which Ottoman historians prefer to sidestep, is what it was that enabled the empire to survive for so long. Imber ascribes recovery from the troubles that beset the empire following Bayezid I’s defeat at the hands of Timur in 1402, and at the turn of the seventeenth century when Ottoman armies were fighting on widely-distant fronts and Anatolia was in turmoil, to the continued functioning and ability to adapt of the scribal service—the bureaucracy in other words—and similar qualities in the legal system. Both these branches of government retained the confidence of Ottoman subjects even as individual sultans, and the advisers around them, were found wanting. Open to discussion this matter may be, but it is a strike against the ‘great man’ theory of Ottoman history that was once pervasive.

It is a surprise, however, to find Imber repeating the shibboleth that the Ottoman Empire was ‘above all, a military organization’ or, earlier (p. 120) ‘a polity that existed to wage war’. This is not quite as colourful an insight as that of the sociologist Stanislaw Andreski that ‘the [Ottoman] state was really an army on the march’, but it is one that is at variance with current revisionist

trends. For non-specialists, the military aspect of the empire has historically been its most salient characteristic, and seemed to obscure everything else about it. The sultans were not alone among rulers in being military leaders, yet the fact that senior government officials were also commanders in war does not seem enough to support Imber's assertion. War was one of the most absorbing and costly activities of contemporary states of Europe and beyond, and to imply that the Ottomans were uniquely militarily organized would require greater justification than Imber can give here.

This volume is a welcome addition to the scarce literature aimed at the middle ground where the interests of the specialist and non-specialist converge. It will surely be a boon, also, for teachers introducing Ottoman statecraft to those starting out on the long road to becoming a specialist.

CAROLINE FINKEL

DILWORTH B. PARKINSON and ELABBAS BENMAMOUN (eds):

Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XIII–XIV.

(Current Issues in Linguistic Theory.) xiii, 248 pp. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002. €102.

DILWORTH B. PARKINSON and SAMIRA FARWANEH (eds):

Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XV.

(Current Issues in Linguistic Theory.) 214 pp. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003. €110.

These two volumes, jointly comprising 20 papers presented at the thirteenth, fourteenth (henceforth A) and fifteenth (henceforth B) Annual Arabic Linguistics Symposia, provide a useful and encouraging conspectus of the increasing diversity of current research in Arabic linguistics. Traditionally favoured areas—phonology, morphology, syntax and sociolinguistics—are well represented here, but there are also papers dealing with important topics in spoken and written discourse, first and second language acquisition, and a set of corpus-based studies. The number and variety of contributions presented here mean that a full evaluation of each paper is beyond the scope of a brief review such as this (and arguably beyond the scope of a single reviewer). Accordingly, this review will provide a thematic, and necessarily selective, overview.

Two papers in A are concerned with phonetics. Khattab reports on a study of voice-onset time (VOT) in Arabic–English bilingual children which provides evidence to suggest that bilingual children develop separate phonological systems for the languages in their repertoire. Zawaydeh *et al.* investigate rhythm in Arabic, in terms of the trichotomy of syllable-timed, mora-timed, and stress-timed languages. They conclude that Arabic, like English, is a stress-timed language, though more weakly so. Syntax and morphology are well-represented. Two papers challenge traditional descriptive assumptions about Arabic morphology. Gafos (A) argues for a reconsideration of traditional views of Arabic ‘doubled’ verbs, suggesting that the apparent anomalies in the paradigms of such verbs can be resolved by a stem-based, rather than the standard root-based, analysis. Ratcliffe (also A) examines the plural system of Moroccan Arabic, and discusses the intriguing question of the predictability, or lack of it, between singular and plural forms, comparing the adequacy of rule-based versus analogical explanations of patterns. All of the four papers on

syntactic topics are couched in the assumptions of versions of Chomsky's Minimalist Program. Two substantial papers are concerned with agreement, a staple of Arabic grammatical studies, although both depart from the well-trodden paths of subject-verb agreement to examine little-researched manifestations of agreement. Hoyt (A) is concerned with variation in agreement patterns in impersonal constructions in a Palestinian dialect. He argues that the observed patterns are determined by the presence or absence of case requirements in different types of noun phrase. Letourneau (B) focuses on the morphosyntax of number agreement in reciprocal Form VI 'derived' verbs in Modern Standard Arabic. Clausal syntax is the subject of two papers. Sadiqi (A) weighs up the influence of agreement and case on the grammar of small clauses (dependent clauses lacking a copula) in Moroccan Arabic, and Darrow (B) unravels the subtleties of reconstruction effects in Syrian Arabic relative clauses. Generative assumptions also inform two papers on language acquisition. Bolotin (A) investigates the acquisition of Binding principles in Arabic, showing that the emergence of Principle A is relatively delayed in children acquiring Arabic as a first language. Alhawary (also A) looks at the acquisition of inflectional morphology in (Standard) Arabic as a second language. Alhawary finds that English first-language learners of Arabic have little difficulty with subject-verb agreement in Arabic, but find noun-adjective agreement problematic, and conjectures that this may be due to the lack of equivalent forms of agreement in English. Radwan (A) is another study of Arabic as a second language, this time from the functionalist perspective of the Competition Model.

Discourse-analytic and pragmatic studies of written and spoken Arabic are a growing presence in Arabic linguistics. Fakhri (A) shows how secular court proceedings in Morocco incorporate discourse patterns derived from French legal discourse, and places these findings in the context of wider questions concerning the relationship between rhetorical styles, inter-linguistic influence, and cultural values. Mughazy (B) shows how certain uses of the (Egyptian manifestation of) the expression *wallaahi* serve as politeness devices, rather than as oaths. Reinelt (B) presents a brief but suggestive comparison of translations of selected speech acts from the Quran. Bassiouney's paper (B) considers the implications of style-shifting data from Egypt, featuring switches between 'Standard' (MSA) and colloquial forms, for recent theories of code-switching. Bakalla (A) deals with an Arabian 'secret' language—actually an invented variant of Meccan — known as *misf*. Bakalla provides a concise description of the structural features of *misf*, and suggests some sociological and demographic reasons for its growth and decline.

Volume B contains four corpus-based studies, covering the evolution of MSA, noun phrase typology in MSA corpora, frequency of lexical forms and usage of future particles. Taylor's paper—the most 'computational' of the corpus studies—reports on the difficulties of developing a lexical analyser for Arabic. Van Mol identifies grammatical innovation in a study of 'horizontal regional variation' in MSA, using a corpus of radio news bulletins from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Algeria. Al-Ansary analyses noun-phrase structure in spoken and written MSA. Parkinson's study examines the distribution of the future markers *sawfa* and *sa-* in newspapers from four Arab countries, showing that the variable use of the two particles in his data exhibits significant regularities which cannot be adequately described in terms of abstract notions of grammatical structure.

As might be expected, given that the symposia from which these volumes derive are thematically eclectic, the papers presented here vary in terms of

technical complexity and substance. Nevertheless, most are of a high quality and each adds to our understanding of some aspect of Arabic linguistics, and, importantly, to our understanding of wider issues in linguistics more generally. Overall, the contributions to these two volumes attest to the emergence of a lively, modern and sophisticated Arabic linguistics.

MALCOLM EDWARDS

MUḤAMMAD BĀQIR AŞ-ŞADR:

Lessons in Islamic Jurisprudence (translated and with an introduction by Roy Parviz Mottahedeh).

x, 208 pp. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003. £14.99.

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Şadr (1935–1980), as Roy Mottahedeh notes in his introduction, was a figure without consideration of whom the formation of Twelver Shii consciousness in modern-day Iraq cannot be understood. He was both an influential Twelver Shii theologian and jurist and an important personality on the modern Iraqi political scene. In the latter capacity he was intimately connected with, even if he did not actually found, Iraq's Da'wa party, established in the late 1950s/early 1960s as a vehicle for the political organization of the country's Twelver Shiites. Though he soon cut his ties with the party, he remained politically active through the late 1960s when the Ba'ath party seized power and began its persecution of the Shia and in the aftermath of Iranian Revolution of 1978. Arrested several times he was finally executed in April 1980, along with his sister, also a prominent activist.

Both al-Şadr himself and other members of the family have been the subject of some study to date (Mottahedeh cites C. Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law*, Cambridge, 1993), but they have also merited attention in discussions of modern Iraqi politics (see, most recently, F. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, London, 2003). The back dustcover of Mallat's book features a picture of al-Şadr.

The family itself is an interesting example of the 'internationalism' of modern Twelver Shiism: Muḥammad Bāqir's great-grandfather (d. 1847) migrated from the Shii enclave of Southern Lebanon to Iran while his grandfather (d. 1919) was born in Isfahan only to remove himself to Iraq. Muqtaḍā al-Şadr, who has risen to special prominence in post-Saddam Iraq, is the fourth son of Muḥammad Şādiq, a close relative (the precise link is unclear) of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Şadr, who rose to prominence in the aftermath of Bāqir's murder before he too was killed by Saddam, in 1999, along with two other sons. Muḥammad Bāqir was also an associate of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥakīm, a co-founder of the party, who was killed in the August 2003 bomb blast in Najaf.

Al-Şadr's contribution to Islamic economics is well known (a full, though now dated, listing of his works and translations is available in Mallat, 235–6, and translations of many of his works can now be found on the internet).

Where, prior to 1978, there was little information in English on, for example, detailed aspects of Twelver Shii doctrine, since Iran's Islamic revolution a great deal of work has been done. *Inevitable Doubt: Two Theories of Shi'ā Jurisprudence*, published in 2000 by Robert Gleave (recently appointed to the Arabic chair at Exeter), is one of the most recent in a line of weighty contributions stretching back beyond Juan Cole's 1983 essay on Murtaḍā

Anṣari (d. 1864). This is to say nothing of works on Shiism in specific periods or on particularly prominent Twelver scholars e.g. the 1978 work of M. McDermott on tenth- and eleventh-century scholars or S. Schmidtke's 1991 study of al-ʿAllamah al-Ḥilli (d. 1325).

These contributions have been enhanced by the appearance of a growing body of translated material. These allow the specialist to introduce the non-specialist to the faith or even permit the non-specialist to pursue this inquiry independently. The judicious annotation of the text in question, an introductory explanation of the text's historical and doctrinal significance and an insightful bibliography can be of great assistance in either case. In the case of Ismaili Shiism, James Morris's work with *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue* (Arabic edition and English translation of Jaʿfar b. Mansur al-Yaman's *Kitab al-ʿAlim wa' l-ghulam*) (London, 2001) of Jaʿfar ibn Mansur al-Yaman (d. c. 957) is both noteworthy and exemplary.

Lessons in Islamic Jurisprudence, however, lacks all three such tools: there is no annotation, no explanation of the text's historical and doctrinal significance and no reference bibliography. The specialist is left scurrying for help to present the work to the non-specialist and the latter, on his/her own, is left to his/her own devices.

Lessons, according to the translator, constitutes volume one of a three-volume work, written in the 1970s for aspiring (teenage) Shii religious students in the field of *uṣūl al-dīn* 'the principles of the faith', a field of the Shii branch of the Islamic religious sciences in which al-Ṣadr was considered an expert. Precisely what constitutes *uṣūl al-dīn* is left unexplained by the translator, as are references to any of the many works which have appeared to date on Twelver doctrine and practice as these have developed from the formative period of the faith following the 873–74 disappearance of the Twelfth Imam; Mallat's contribution, now more than a decade old, rates a single mention (34 n. 9). The text itself (35–172) appears entirely without reference or annotation, as does the glossary (173–94).

In his lengthy introduction (1–33) the translator discusses the development of Islamic law and jurisprudence, to be sure, but mainly from the Sunni perspective. The historical problem(s) surrounding the rise of Shiism let alone the 873–74 disappearance of the twelfth Imam, rate no mention; indeed Motahedeh, when he mentions reason as one of the four sources of Shii jurisprudence, even neglects to mention the other three but carefully includes an, albeit brief and also unreferenced, discussion of medieval Western/Roman law. Thus a Harvard colleague and Aquinas are mentioned (26–7) but not the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765)! It is assumed that the reader knows all about Twelver Shiism generally, or at least the problems of the Iraqi versions thereof (also without mention are the several recent books on Shiism in Iraq (including Cole (1988), Litvak (1998) and Jabar)), or the translator intends to abstract al-Ṣadr from the larger historical and distinctly Shii context from which he sprang. The translator even fails to justify his selection of this particular work, and only the first third thereof in fact, as the most suitable of al-Ṣadr's numerous contributions with which to attempt such a project.

Lessons is probably best studied in conjunction with the work of Gleave, cited above, with Gleave's informative discussions and notes on eighteenth-century Twelver debates on *uṣūl* serving as a background for study of *uṣūl* towards the end of the last century. But then the translator might have mentioned that himself.

CARLO G. CERETI, MAURO MAGGI and ELIO PROVASI (eds):
Religious Themes and Texts of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia. Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday on 6th December 2002.
 (Beiträge zur Iranistik 24.) xxxv, 460 pp., 14 plates. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003. €110.

This well-presented thematic *Festschrift* for Gherardo Gnoli contains a bibliography of his writings from 1961 to 2001 and 41 contributions in his honour. The articles are in English, French, German and Italian in descending order of frequency. The contributions can be roughly divided into the main spheres they belong to, though this is unfair to the broad scope of some of the articles.

Zoroastrian themes are the commonest: A. Cantera 'Phl. *xwaddōšagih* und die Unterwerfung unter die Autorität im (nach)sasanidischen Zoroastrismus' establishes the meaning 'selfwilled' for *xwaddōšag* and shows that the abstract designates a refusal to accept the authority of the Zoroastrian priests. E. Filippone 'The Mazdean notions of creation and birth: some reflexes in the Iranian languages' studies the vocabulary of creation and birth in Zoroastrian MP, particularly *paydāg* 'manifest' and the verb *wēn-*, *dīdan* 'to see' used in the sense of 'to give birth to' in MP and modern Iranian languages. Ph. Gignoux '*Zamān* ou le temps philosophique dans le *Dēnkard* III' deals with the various aspects of the concept of time in that text. R. Gyselen 'Les grands Feux de l'empire sassanide: quelques témoignages sigillographiques' discusses the evidence on seals for the great Zoroastrian fires. C. Herrenschildt 'Démocrite et le mazdéisme: fragments sur l'homme' identifies the Mazdean triad 'good thought', 'good speech' and 'good action' in a fragment of Democritus. M. Hutter 'Mār Abā and the impact of Zoroastrianism on Christianity in the 6th century' uses the Syriac life of Mār Abā, Catholicos of Iranian Christians 540–552, as a source to demonstrate an Iranian form of Christianity in the sixth century and Mār Abā's rejection of important elements of this compromise. J. Josephson 'The "Sitz im Leben" of the seventh book of the *Dēnkard*' dates the compilation of the text to between 760 and 800 CE and identifies elements that allow her to state that 'Its purpose was to give consolation and encouragement to the members of the Zoroastrian community at a difficult time'. J. Kellens 'Sur quelques grands tendances des études avestiques et mazdéennes au XXe siècle', gives a detailed commentary on the chapter 'Views of Zoroastrian history' in A. de Jong's *Traditions of the Magi*. É. Pirart 'Énigmes arithmologiques dans la composition du *Hōm Stōm*', suggests that the original *Hōm Stōm* (Yasna 11) was extended from two (11.1–3 and 11.4–7) to three (11.8–10) chapters mainly for numerical reasons and to balance the units of the text. 11.9 contains words evoking the numbers one to eleven, the last of which was, remarkably, not recognized by the Pahlavi version. A. Piras 'Simbolismo e mitologie dell'aurora nell'Avesta' interprets the symbolism of dawn and the pre-dawn period in the Avesta with close reference to the *R̥gveda*. G. Scarcia 'Sergio/Sorush in Firdusi?' deals with literary aspects of the encounter of Zoroastrianism and Christianity associated with tales about Khosraw and Shirin. M. Schwartz 'Encryptions in the Gathas: Zarathustra's variations on the theme of bliss' demonstrates the complex linguistic texture of the Gathas in passages containing derivatives of the root **wrāz* 'be joyous, be happy, feel bliss'. He introduces the term 'mixophonism' for 'the technique ... in which a targeted word/name of textual importance is encrypted through the compact repetition of its sounds, in any order, as part(s) of the other words

favorable for purposes of this device'. He points out similarities to encryption in a corpus of Russian riddles and Pindaric Odes and goes on to call 'encryption of targeted phrases through the foregrounding of their initials, put as the first sound of other phrases' by the term 'acrophonism'. S. Shaked, "'Mind" and "power" in the Gāthās: ritual notions or cosmic entities?' points out that 'vedicizing' interpretations of the Gathas solely as ritualistic texts are too restricted and ignore or explain away other religious concerns. Ph. Swennen 'Le cocher de Mithra' offers a new translation of Yašt 10.136 which allows him to conclude that the Avestan priest is the driver of Mithra's chariot. M. Vitalone 'Khosrow of the Immortal Soul in the New Persian Zoroastrian literary tradition' deals with seventeenth-century stories about Xosraw Anušervān, Nušīrvān, sent by Iranian Zoroastrians together with religious texts and instruction to their co-religionists in India.

Six articles are devoted to Manichaeism: F. de Blois, 'Manes' "Twin" in Iranian and non-Iranian texts' studies the range of meanings and usages of the words for 'twin' in Middle Persian and Parthian texts against the background of Mani's Aramaic. G. Lazard, 'La versification d'un hymne manichéen en parthe', revisits the abecedarian Manichaean Parthian hymn on M 10 (R 13 – V 22) which he then places in a continuity with the classical Persian metre *motaqāreb sālem*. Interestingly, he ignores the spelling 'fry'ng in his transcription *friyānag* though the initial ' (which may or may not add another syllable) is the device used by the hymnist to place the word in this place within the abecedarian scheme. The second part of 2b is *yāwēdān anōšag*. Y. Yoshida 'Buddhist influence on the Bema festival?' concludes from the Sogdian fragment Otani 6191 that at the end of the tenth century the Manichaeans in Central Asia moved the time of the Bema festival back by one month to avoid co-occurrence with a Buddhist festival as this would have forced their patrons, the Uighur royal family, to choose between Buddhism and Manichaeism at a time when they supported both. See also the articles by Morano and Reck below.

Bactrian features in the articles: H. Humbach 'The great Surkh Kotal inscription' establishes that the inscription was composed by one person only, Burzmihr, and was copied by a scribe, Mihrāmān, the son of Burzmihr, who indicates this using a formula similar to that in the Sogdian marriage contract Nov. 4. Ph. Huyse 'Überlegungen zum βαρολαγγο des Kaniška I' points out interesting similarities between the setting up of the sites with their statues and their subsequent history as described in the Bactrian inscriptions of Surkh Kotal, Rabatak and Mat and a report by the Armenian historian Movses Xorenac'i that the Armenian king Vałaršak had a temple built in Armavir with statues of gods and that king Erowand later transferred the statues to a place called Bagaran (<*baga-dāna-; cf. Bactr. βαρολαγγο <*baga-dānaka-).

Studies on historical and ideological topics are the following: A.D.H. Bivar 'Cosmopolitan deities and Hellenistic traces at Kuh-e Khwāja in Sistan' confirms Gullini's claim that pre-Parthian phases can be identified at the site by pointing to Hellenistic, Seleucid building phases (rather than Gullini's Achaemenid one). I. Colditz 'Altorientalische und Avesta-Traditionen in der Herrschertitulatur des vorislamischen Iran' demonstrates the twin origins of Sasanian royal titular formulas in an old Mesopotamian and an Eastern Iranian tradition. M. Macuch 'Zoroastrian principles and the structure of kinship in Sasanian Iran' gives a survey of Sasanian Zoroastrian kinship with its main focus on continuity of lineage and the Zoroastrian ideals underpinning it. The system represents an alliance between the clergy and the nobility. She clears up some important points in the model marriage contract. A. Panaino 'The *bayān* of the Fratarakas: gods or "divine" kings?' suggests that

bayān refers to the ancient gods of Pārs. A.V. Rossi 'Echoes of religious lexicon in the Achaemenid inscriptions' discusses OP *anušya-*, for which he postulates a meaning 'who thinks/acts in accordance with (an ethic norm, a moral leader etc.)'. He sees it as an example of religious vocabulary and translates it as 'believer' (e.g. in Darius). S. Cristoforetti "'Ā'in-i išān", un lapsus di Kūšiyār e il *farwardān* di Abiyāma' identifies a scribal lapse rather than a mistake in a calendrical work of Kūšiyār's. R.N. Frye 'Cyrus was no Achaemenid' suggests that the insistence in the Old Persian inscriptions that Cyrus was an Achaemenid can only mean that this was not the case and that Darius was anxious to claim Cyrus for himself. F. Grenet 'L'Inde des astrologues sur une peinture sogdienne du VIIe siècle' identifies a mural from Afrasiab as depicting two astronomers, a Greek master and an Indian pupil, with a round astronomical instrument, probably a sphere, and presents a similar motif on a mosaic from Trier. A. de Jong 'Vexillologica sacra: searching the cultic banner' (perhaps 'searching for' or rather 'investigating?') tries to elucidate the banner on the reverse of the coins of the Frataraka by referring to Zoroastrian, Mandaean and Caucasian evidence for banners. He sees a common Zoroastrian basis but might, for the Caucasian examples at least and possibly even for more, have referred to *Haldi's banner in the Urartian temple at Muşaşir. He suggests that the Frataraka 'based their prestige on the fact that they were guardians of an important shrine'. R. Schmitt 'Onomastische Bemerkungen zu der Namenliste des *Fravardīn Yašt*' gives the first detailed analysis of the great number of personal names in Yašt 13, 95–142. J. Wiesehöfer "'Denn ihr huldigt nicht einem Menschen als eurem Herrscher, sondern nur den Göttern": Bemerkungen zur Poskynese in Iran' discusses the transfer of a gesture of adoration for a deity to a king.

Various articles contain editions of texts in a variety of languages: C.G. Cereti and D.N. MacKenzie 'Except by battle: Zoroastrian cosmogony in the 1st chapter of the Greater *Bundahišn*' gives a detailed presentation of chapters 1 and 1a of the *Bundahišn* combining the Indian and Iranian textual evidence to a complex and stringent text. M. Maggi 'More verses from the Khotanese Book of *Vimalakīrti*' presents a metrically arranged re-edition of vv. 9–33 of this Late Khotanese text. E. Morano, 'Praised and blessed art thou' edits a section of the Parthian hymn-cycle *wuzurgān āfriwān* from four fragments. Ch. Reck 'Die Beschreibung der Daēnā in einem soghdischen manichäischen Text' re-edits a text first published by Henning to which she has been able to add smaller fragments and establish elements shared by the text and an illustration of two sitting figures one of which she with Grenet tentatively identifies as Daēnā, the Zoroastrian figure embodying the deeds of the deceased soul, which the Manichaeans borrowed. N. Sims-Williams 'A Christian Sogdian polemic against the Manichaeans' presents a text which he now thinks was composed in Syriac though translated by someone with a knowledge of Manichaeism in Central Asia. P.O. Skjærvø 'Fragments of the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* (*Kāśyapaparivarta*) in Khotanese' edits four Khotanese fragments he has been able to identify as belonging to the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* together with the corresponding Sanskrit and Tibetan passages. W. Sundermann 'Jesus' rulership at the end of the world: a new piece of Manichaean evidence' edits the hitherto unedited part of the Turfan fragment M 35 in Parthian (with a duplicate in M 907 R) and shows its close connection to the Coptic Homily on the Great War to which it supplies some chronological details.

Some articles explore the history, usage and etymology of individual words. A. Hintze 'When the stars rise: the Avestan expression *aiβisrūθrima-aibigaiia-*' deals with the expression used to describe the last of the five divisions of the Zoroastrian day and which she interprets as meaning 'the time

of chanting characterized by attentive listening', i.e. the evening time when lay Zoroastrians prayed in unison. E. Provasi 'Sogdian *farn*' surveys the various connotations of *farn* 'glory, splendour' in the various categories of Sogdian texts with close reference to the original languages in the case of translated texts. D. Weber 'Μανιαγος' rejects the accepted etymology (< **man(u)ya*- 'of a man') of this Iranian personal name attested in a Greek inscription from the Black Sea in favour of *(n)*mān(i)ya*- 'belonging to the house, master of the house' probably with a *-ka- suffix.

This book will be of great interest to students of so many aspects of Iran in the widest sense in the ancient and medieval periods and is surely a fitting tribute to Gherardo Gnoli.

DESMOND DURKIN-MEISTERERNST

SOUTH ASIA

HANS T. BAKKER and HARUNAGA ISAACSON:

The Skandapurāṇa. Vol. IIA. Adhyāyas 26–31. 14 The Vārāṇasī Cycle. Critical Edition with an Introduction, English Synopsis and Philological and Historical Commentary.

(Supplement to Groningen Oriental Studies.) xvi, 345 pp.

Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004.

Vol. I of this splendidly conceived critical edition and analysis of *Skandapurāṇa*, the original text that has been fairly well preserved in palm-leaf manuscripts, together with its two medieval recensions, was reviewed in *BSOAS*, 63/2, 2000, 302f. This further instalment adds a Kṣetramāhātmya of Benares, well over 500 verses, to some 1,200 verses already dealt with. Three more manuscripts of the most recent recension have become available in the interim, one of which, from Dhaka, has proved to be of independent value. Parallel readings from Lakṣmīdhara's *Tīrthavivecana* have been collated here as an additional feature of the apparatus, and there is extensive consideration of cognate material in *Matsya*, *Liṅga*, etc.

This Māhātmya is the most historically significant segment of the *Skandapurāṇa*: 'The grand scale on which the sacred map of Vārāṇasī was redrawn in the *Kāśīkhaṇḍa* [of the modern *Skandapurāṇa* compilation] completely obliterated the *Vārāṇasīmāhātmya* of the original *Skandapurāṇa* The dark 13th century proved to be a watershed It prompted a reinvention of tradition'. A corresponding increase in the scope of commentary, text-critical, stylistic, and explanatory, all generously indexed, accounts for a considerable reduction in the amount of text processed as compared with Vol. I.

Hans Bakker and Harunaga Isaacson, bereft of the notable contribution that the late Rob Adriaensen had made to Vol. I, have benefited from the ready collaboration of numerous scholars, enthralled by the unprecedented insights into the *raison d'être*, evolution, and import of the Purāṇa genre that this relatively early specimen has provided. Thus Kengo Harimoto was not only instrumental in securing copies of, and evaluating, fresh manuscript evidence, but he has also enriched the authors' valuable 64-page 'Sketch of the religious history of Vārāṇasī' with a more accurate appraisal of the seventh-century description of Benares by Hsüan Tsang (Xuan Zang) than its previous translator could achieve.

Equally interesting is this Śaiva text's cavalier treatment of traditional Brahmanical and Vaiṣṇava historiography. Here Divodāsa Kāśīrāja, inevitably a devoted Śaiva, is nevertheless craftily dispossessed of his realm by Śiva. In *MBh.* 13.31 he had been a protégé of Indra and Bharadvāja, temporarily ousted by a Haihaya protégé of Bhṛgu. The account that the authors give of the *MBh.* passage (pp. 188f.), viz., that Divodāsa came east from the Vatsa country to found Vārāṇasī, is, however, mistaken: his enemies came from (v. 7), and returned to Vatsa (vv. 12, 15); and there is nothing to suggest that Vārāṇasī was not founded within the Kāśī homeland (v. 16), as was indeed still said to be the case in *Hariv.* 23.60.

Their treatment of the garbled account of its foundation in *Hariv.* 23 is equally questionable. The reference to 'Divodāsa, son of Bhīmaratha' tacitly reflects an ill-compatible late insertion (368*), rather than the edited text *Bhīmarathaḥ smṛtaḥ, Divodāsa iti khyātaḥ* (v. 57). Their arbitrarily excising one generation (v. 65ab: an excision sanctioned specifically by only one manuscript, M₄), and rearranging the rest of the text so as to collect together a Haihaya family tree (*Skandap.*, 189, n. 6), contributes nothing towards identifying the layers of interpolation. Vaidya's edition 'is based upon the agreement of ... Ś₁ ... N_{1,3} ... M_{1,3}', 'my oldest and shortest Mss.' (*Hariv.*, xxiv, xxxvii): but it is noticeable that Ś₁ ('my best Ms.': *ibid.*, xli) lacks vv. 63c–66b. Vaidya does not identify this as a haplography: but even if it were such, it draws attention to a repetition (63a *Alarko rājaputras' ca*, and 66c *Alarkaḥ kāśīrājas tu*) which is of the nature of an editorial seam. The material thereby introduced seeks to read *MBh.* dynastic history back into the story; but this is quite irrelevant. In *Hariv.*, the originally hostile Vatsa and Bhārgava elements provide a curious framework (vv. 51ab and 71c–72) for the whole episode, and they have been accommodated as members of Divodāsa's own clan (v. 62). The rival is now called Bhadrāśreṇya, and his dynasty had apparently already been eradicated by Divodāsa (v. 61). The insertion 63c–66b is attempting both to fit Bhadrāśreṇya into the Haihaya dynasty and to explain the apparent reconciliation of Haihayas and Daivodāsas (v. 65 *tena vairasyāntam ... vidhīsatā*): but the piecemeal nature of the interpolations makes it unclear who is supposed to have brought about the merger.

There is indeed plenty of scope for 'speculation, or some might call it wild imagination' (p. 193): but the suggestion to which this refers, their idea that the deer who moved into the area are an allusion to the 'arrival of historic Buddhism' in *miḡadāya*, makes little sense. The deer arrive there in order to provide a suitably romantic setting for Śiva's amours; whereas it is Bhadrāśreṇya, whom *Hariv.* had previously enrolled as the defeated enemy of Vedic Divodāsa, whose name has manifest Śramaṇa associations. One might, however, vary the idea and believe that the Buddhist *miḡadāya* at Benares was the literary inspiration for *Skandapurāṇa*'s paradise, the Devodyāna or Ānandavana.

More might have been made of the fact that the Vyāsa–Sanatkumāra dialogue framework does not coincide exactly with the Adhyāya division (which creates unnecessary additional divisions between 27/28 and 30/31). Indeed it seems strange that this dialogue framework, a rather more intrinsic feature of the compilation than the Adhyāyas, is ignored here in the tabulated 'Narrative Structure' (pp. 15–17), as well as in the corresponding 'General contents of chapters 1 to 25' of Vol. 1.

While there does not seem to be any good reason why the word *siddha*, felicitously rendered as 'master' at 29.60, has been given different glosses at almost all other occurrences (and even later on the same page 228), the 'Synopsis' or summary translation of the text is quite excellent. There appears

to be no misprint of any significance, and the presentation is immaculate. The book continues to provide much carefully researched information, and endless scope for further investigation of the thought processes and diction of the authors of Purāṇa texts.

J. C. WRIGHT

GREG BAILEY and IAN MABBETT:

The Sociology of Early Buddhism.

vii, 284 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. \$47.50.

This is a substantial work of scholarship, closely written, a mass of facts and arguments, with an impressive bibliography. It is certainly a useful compilation. It may also at times appear confusing.

The main thesis is set out on page 5: 'Buddhism expanded and flourished ... because the monk ... was able to function as an instrument of mediation between the forces—political and economic—benefiting from the changes that had taken place prior to, and perhaps during, the life of the Buddha, on the one hand, and those other groups for whom such changes were difficult to digest, ... on the other hand'. Mediation means, for example, that 'the monk had to be able to give advice on matters pertaining to business and social interaction' (p. 195) and 'to communicate the views of the city and the expanding political bodies to those who had only ever lived in a village environment' (p. 186). The monk was 'the proper mediator between the community and the forces that bring about its weal or woe, ... between the culturally isolated locality and the cosmopolitan state' (p. 214).

The authors give plausible arguments why the monk, as 'a paradigm of social virtue', could have, perhaps should have, played this role. But did he? Chapter 10, 'The mediating role as shown in the Canon', is both honest and surprising. 'Evidence is scanty, but a few passages identify specific kinds of mediation forbidden to monks. The tone of admonition indicates that what is forbidden must have been practised' (p. 215). But most of the prohibitions cited are on such behaviour as acting as a go-between or procuring abortions. Even if 'the texts do not tell us the ways in which monks actually dealt with the public' so that 'we have to read between the lines' (p. 219), not one passage cited seems to exemplify what has been claimed.

I can in fact think of such a passage. At the beginning of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta King Ajātasattu sends his chief minister to the Buddha to ask his advice on whether, if he attacks the Vajji, he is likely to win. The Buddha talks of the Vajjis' social solidarity and so obliquely advises against the war. This looks like just the kind of 'mediation' the authors have in mind (though it concerns the Buddha, not any of his followers).

The book begins polemically, claiming various flaws in the reasons previous scholars have given for Buddhism's success. As the authors document, there has been a broad consensus that three (presumably linked) developments in north-eastern India were crucial: economic progress, notably increased trade, which was presumably facilitated by more productive agriculture; urbanization; and the rise of larger, more centralized, states, with new cities as their capitals.

Bureau, whom they set up as their Aunt Sally, dated these changes to the fifth century BCE (p. 3). The authors object: 'In our view the archaeological evidence, substantially filled out by textual evidence from the Sutta Piṭaka, is

quite clear. Buddhism arose in a period when all these changes had already occurred—not while they were occurring' (ibid.). The next chapter, however, seems to offer a different view, for it starts by asking: 'How, then, did Buddhism grow in the India of about 500 BCE?' (p. 13). On textual evidence they reply: 'Apart from the naming of the six cities, none of the more economically advanced stages of urban life are mentioned in the earliest sources' (p. 81); and on archaeological evidence: '... most of the features of full-fledged urbanization do not turn out (despite some earlier claims) to belong to the period before the fifth century BCE' (p. 83). Finally they conclude '... as we have consistently argued—the economy was in a stage of steady growth during the Buddha's lifetime' and 'early Buddhism developed as a consequence of a changed situation, rather than of a rapidly changing one' (p. 260). I find their position somewhat opaque.

The next objection to the consensus is that it presents a 'paradox' (p. 6), because Buddhism is seen to react positively to some socio-economic developments and negatively to others. Indeed! As the authors would surely agree, both Buddhism and those developments are complex phenomena; so one might expect something of the sort. Moreover, the concept of 'ambivalence' might be useful here.

The authors present 'Buddhism as process: three versions of Buddhism' (p. 8). They have constructed these three aspects for heuristic purposes. Fine—but might there not be room also for Buddhism's self-analysis, the stratification into renunciates and laymen? This might account for much of the allegedly self-defeating diversity of interpretations they criticize in chapter 1.

These interpretations are presented by summary references to secondary sources; little is said of the evidence on which those sources rely. Consider the very first example in this chapter. How can Buddhism result from urbanization, they ask, if the Buddha's message is 'as far removed as one can very well imagine from the needs and temper of urban life' (p. 14)? They approvingly quote J.W. de Jong: 'It is ... difficult to understand why members from the urban elite should abandon everything in order to strive for salvation'. Passing over attested cases from St Francis of Assisi to the drop-outs of the 1960s, one could turn to the Vinaya Khandhaka. This begins by narrating how the Buddha came to give his first three sermons and gathered his first following. We are not told the social origins of the first five converts; but we are told that the next people to become monks, starting with a young man called Yasa, were wealthy city gentlemen. What if this account is historically unreliable? Then our case is even stronger, in that the ancient author put into the text the type of people he felt could plausibly be presented as the first converts.

New and challenging interpretations are always welcome; at the same time, not every consensus needs to be overturned.

RICHARD GOMBRICH

DAUD ALI:

Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India.

xx, 296 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. £50, \$75.

Daud Ali's book contributes to our understanding of Indian classical and medieval self representation, concentrating on the literature of Indian polite society from the beginning of the common era until the Muslim period. It is

divided into three parts with seven chapters. Part I, The Rise of Court Society in Medieval India, starts with the people of the court—the personnel, the ruler, his counsellors, and the ladies of the palace. Chapter 2 covers forms of knowledge spread in the court: of the world, of literature, of education and of the martial values. Chapter 3 considers court protocol, the forms of address used, the ideals of service and rewards, as well as ideals of the palace routine. Part II, Aesthetics and the Courtly Sensibility, covers questions of beauty and refinement, of the notion of ornamentation of the body and bearing, and of the speech in poetic language. Then is encountered the ideals of emotional aesthetics though a discussion of emotions and emotional flavours (*rasa*). Part III, Courtly Love and Aristocratic Society, involves courtship and the drama of the palace romantic life, and issues of selfhood and autonomy. The three parts are followed by a postscript of conclusions and further directions. This book sets into perspective the earlier essay by Ali on ‘Royal eulogy as world history: rethinking copper-plate inscriptions in Cōḷa India’, in Ronald Inden *et al.*, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 175–229. Ali’s book may be assessed by what it does do, what it does not do, and problems with its theoretical presumptions.

The book does a good job of covering certain topics well represented in polite literature, especially those surrounding representations of romance, of the relationships between the ruler and his immediate entourage, and the pan-Indian ideology of royal or aristocratic life as found in Indian literature. These topics represent irenic or romantic courtly values and their literary depictions. This aspect of his contribution constitutes the majority of what Ali actually says, and it is nice to see a monograph dedicated to the topics.

Ali’s book does not, however, convey the information in the title, for several reasons. These include excessive temporal extension, insufficient consideration of variation by time and locale, and inadequate consideration of other topics directly concerned with court life. The book’s span is not, in reality, the early medieval period of India, usually considered as the period after the fall of the Imperial Gupta/Vākāṭaka dynasties until the Delhi Sultanate (c. 550–1200 C.E.). Instead, the book also covers classical India, both before and during the Gupta period (c. 1–550 C.E.). Yet everything known about India demonstrates dramatic changes in courts and their culture over twelve centuries. The early medieval period saw the fragmentation of India, the rise of regional courts out of tribal zones, the development of new royal houses (many of which change their religious or cultural allegiance over time), and the development of entirely different aesthetic systems in South India (Pallavas, Cōḷas, etc.). The many changes include those of artistic representations, new forms of literature, the use of local procedures, regional styles of architecture, etc.—all calling into question his homogeneous reading of twelve centuries of Indian courtly life.

Ali acknowledges (p. 264) these questions of variation but acts as if they were inconsequential to the durable values of the courts, even while occasionally showing that literature is an inadequate guide to practice (pp. 54, 60, 184, 210, 218). Yet if such values were so universal in India, we would see all such values iterated equally in all the courts of classical and medieval India, and this we do not see. Ali also acknowledges (p. 183) that personal relationships were the dominant force in medieval courts, and elsewhere (p. 70) he sees the courts as porous institutions. But the logical conclusion—that partially sophisticated new kings in Assam, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere, would have formed their entourage out of their tribal or local supporters—strongly militates against

his model that these regional centres (numerically dominant) would have exemplified the same culture as the great courts of the Puṣyabhūti or the Guptas.

Variation would have been more visible had he covered two other important topics of courtly life, martial culture and religious life, which are largely ignored. Thus, the book gives little consideration to coronation rites, the training of the warrior, treaties, feuds, the religious affiliation of courts, and other matters proper to courtly culture; instead, it emphasizes irenic over agonistic ideals. Consequently, Ali seldom employs much literature that would be germane: the *smṛtinibandhas*, the *dharmaśāstras*, the *purāṇas*, the *tantras*, and so forth. Instead, it is primarily *kāvya* and, to a lesser extent, the *nītiśāstras*, that he uses, even ignoring the *Mahābhārata's Śāntiparvan*, which aligns royal culture and religion.

Finally, we should consider the theoretical suppositions underlying this work. Ali is evidently following the lead of Sheldon Pollock, whose idea of a 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' has gained attention in Indology. The underpinnings of this idea is that literature provides the 'discourse' (in Foucaultian language) for polite society. Ali, in his previous essay ('Royal eulogy', p. 176) articulated the problems of allied theoretical positions: 'These various approaches to texts tend to ignore the historical specificities of representational practices, and side-step the issue of human agency, instead displacing it onto underlying cultural structures or the autonomy of language itself'. But this is exactly what this book does, for it fundamentally articulates a structural schema not unlike Saussure's *langue/parole* model, where the durable courtly values may, in fact, not be used in some courts, selectively appropriated in others, and never found entirely in any court during this time.

Thus, Ali has given us something like a menu of possibilities of courtly behaviour drawn from the poetic literature of these twelve centuries. Those working in the period will be grateful for the spectrum of the ideas, even while the careful student will not be seduced into believing that any one of them was necessarily true in any one place, that they represent enacted behaviour, or that they cover all of the court culture.

RONALD M. DAVIDSON

COSIMO ZENE:

The Rishi of Bangladesh: A History of Christian Dialogues.

489 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002.

This book is located on uneven terrain between Catholic missionary debates and practices and the postmodern or hermeneutic turn in social anthropology and in religious studies. A combination of meticulous historical and ethnographic research of mission among 'the' Rishi—an 'untouchable' group whose traditional livelihood is leather-working—in what is now Bangladesh, the book constitutes a timely and critical reflection on the notion of dialogue in the philosophical writings of Bakhtin, Gadamer and Levinas and on the largely unexplored history of Christian mission in this area of South Asia.

Zene also draws critically from the writings of Said, Guha and Gramsci and, arguing against a narrow literary appropriation of dialogism, and calls instead for a radical reformulation of Western conceptions of truth and knowledge away from a model of domination encapsulated within the opposition of subject to object and towards a notion (and practice) of dialogue which

understands truth and knowledge not as objects or possessions but as ethically structured events emerging through the encounter between self and other. According to Zene, mission and anthropology must draw from a Levinasian conception of dialogue in order to orient their respective practices ethically and responsibly towards and for the other. As such, Zene suggests that taking seriously the notion of dialogue points to a 'need for ethics' and that the aim of the work is 'to unmask a certain deception in the use of dialogue and to re-affirm its possible validity in missionary activity and anthropological enquiry' (p. 1). Thus, Zene frames the book as 'less an attempt at validation and proof than an essay in fragile thinking' (p. 3).

The majority of the book consists of a detailed description of missionary encounters with the Rishi in what is today south-western Bangladesh (PIME missionaries in Jessore-Simulia 1856–1927, Salesians 1928–52, Jesuits in Satkhira-Baradal 1918–52 and Xaverians 1952–94). Drawing from diocesan archives, letters, diaries, conference papers, official Vatican documents and the oral statements, stories and myths of Rishi co-researchers, Zene demonstrates the ambiguity of these encounters, the tensions between individual missionaries and local diocesan authorities and between the Catholic centre and periphery. Further, these ambiguities and tensions are situated within colonial and postcolonial contexts and struggles.

Zene also provides a critical overview of anthropological literature on South Asian religious culture, focusing on notions and practices relating to 'untouchability' and 'Hindu dharma'. This allows Zene to situate missionary encounters with the Rishi in a complex and shifting terrain of religious and political-economic relations between and among the Rishi, other caste groups and Muslims. This layered contextualization allows Zene to explore not only the ambiguities of missionary–Rishi encounters, but also the changing relations of the Rishi and the missionaries with other castes and Muslim populations. Zene further demonstrates the ambivalence of Rishi conversions to Christianity (Catholicism), the different intentions and expectations surrounding conversion, and how conversion itself has on the one hand enabled some of the Rishi to renegotiate their political-economic relations with the wider society and among themselves while, on the other, it has simultaneously led to the creation of, as it were, a caste within a caste.

The argument unfolds on three interrelated levels. The first, on the necessity of missionaries and anthropologists reframing their activities in terms of dialogue and ethical responsibility towards the other, has already been noted. The second rests on Zene's deprivileging of Vatican II as the key event through which the Catholic Church radically rethought the concept of mission through an engagement with the notion/practice of dialogue. Rather, according to Zene, Vatican II inscribed a process of reflection and debate that had already been taking place for some time. Thirdly, Zene focuses on the Rishi as agents in their encounters with the missionaries as an attempt to rewrite the Rishi not as an object of history but as authors of their own history.

This is a complex and difficult but nevertheless rewarding work, and it should prove to be an invaluable resource for those interested in the history of religion and religious change in South Asia, in the history of mission in South Asia and in theoretical developments in anthropology, philosophy, religious studies and theology. Yet the task of a reviewer is not merely to describe the text but to engage in a dialogue with it. As such, I would like to conclude with three questions or problems.

First, throughout the work, mission and anthropology are presented as comparable disciplines with parallel practices and beset with the same problem—namely, the absence of dialogue—which is a result of the fact that

they 'both share the same metaphysics' (p. 6). I am not entirely convinced that the two share as much as Zene suggests, though this does not necessarily negate the observation that both need to take seriously dialogue as ethical responsibility towards the other. Zene references Gramsci's notion of the 'organic intellectual' as a means of pointing towards what an engaged, ethical responsibility to the other might look like, but surely a Gramscian ethics would equally be entangled within the same metaphysics that Zene is arguing against?

Second, Zene focuses primarily on what he calls 'the human dimension' (p. 390) of mission, which involves a de-emphasis on structural and institutional disparities between missionaries and the Rishi and a privileging of encounters between individuals. Some may find this problematic.

Third, Zene begins the work with a story told by a Rishi to a missionary—a story that is referenced a number of times subsequently in the text. When asked by the missionary, 'What is Christianity for you?' the Rishi replies, 'We are like a snake which holds in its mouth a juicy frog, too big to be swallowed, but too good to let go!' An extract from a conversation this may be, but is it a model for dialogue or an act of provocation?

PAUL-FRANÇOIS TREMLETT

MARGARET A. MILLS, PETER J. CLAUS and SARAH DIAMOND (eds):
South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia.

xxx, 710 pp. New York and London: Routledge, 2003. £120.

Alongside the written traditions of South Asia there are other rich, and often vibrant, expressive traditions, as well as a wide range of popular verbal and non-verbal cultural productions, which, for lack of a better term, are generally labelled as 'folklore'. The editors of this encyclopedia have undertaken the laudable task of plotting and assessing this fuzzy and heterogeneous field by bringing together close to 500 essays and articles by more than 250 experts from various disciplines: folklorists, anthropologists, Indologists, historians and others. From 'Acrobatics' to 'Ziyārat' this extremely useful book contains entries as general as 'Sacrifice' or 'Life cycle rituals' and as specific as 'Pabūji' or 'Ghazal'. Thus the volume provides both an overview of the major theoretical issues and a description of a multitude of technical terms in indigenous languages. The articles are generally of excellent quality, written by leading experts from South Asian and Western countries.

As the editors point out in the 'introduction and invitation', the book is organized in such a way as to facilitate a comparative outlook and encourage further research. Each entry includes a detailed 'see also' section which refers to related articles, and there is an elaborate index including a large number of indigenous terms. The combination of 'general concept articles' and 'case study articles' (which often are linked to genre names) allows the reader to find local examples of the abstract categories, or to go through the broader background issues of an indigenous term. For example, the 33 cross-references at the end of the entry 'Epic' point to various local forms such as Dholā, Gopī Cand and Hīr Rānjhā, as well as highlighting some unique features, such as the performance of epics as shadow puppetry. Moreover, a general entry like 'Epic' is often followed by regional specifications in the form of detailed articles: in this case 'Epic, Nepal', 'Epic, Sri Lanka', 'Epic, tribal, Central India'. Thus one can easily browse the volume in a focused manner. One is led to unknown territories—and also sees the gaps in our present knowledge.

The editors are aware that this approach has a number of limitations. For one thing, the general concepts may themselves be problematic as comparative categories (e.g. genre terms such as epic or ballad which derive from a Western context), and the numerous indigenous terms from South Asian languages may be unfamiliar. But there is no easy solution, and the only way to minimize this difficulty is through extensive cross-referencing, as described above. Far from claiming anything like 'completeness' the editors want to present 'only a suggestive sample of South Asian cultural practices and productions' (x), knowing that not all topics are equally well represented. In fact, there are some apparent biases. For example there is an entry on 'Film, video, and television viewing: Nepal' but no similar entry for other regions. And whereas most areas of South Asia, including Afghanistan, are well covered, the state of Bhutan is only treated marginally. But such gaps are unavoidable in this comprehensive undertaking and do not minimize its merits. Without doubt this volume will be a great help for all who try to find their way through the wealth of South Asian folklore. It will be useful not only for looking up little-known local terms, but will also serve as a general guideline for a comparative study of South Asian folklore.

MARTIN GAENSZLE

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE, GURHARPAL SINGH and ARVIND-PAL
MANDAIR (eds):

Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity.

ix, 220 pp. Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001. £65.

This landmark volume derives in part from a 1998 conference held at SOAS and it provides an important conspectus of contemporary Sikh studies scholarship in English, essential reading for any contemporary university course in Sikh studies and a mine of ideas for further research. The range and quality of the contributions included here augurs well for the new (2005) Routledge journal *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* which shares two of this volume's co-editors. Though not all of the contributors to *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity* identify themselves as Sikh, the book is conceived *inter alia* as a contribution to the wider agenda of engaging Sikh thinkers in the diaspora in informed and critical reflection on their own religious tradition. All of the contributors live and work outside of India and a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds (Asian studies, Religion, Politics, Literary criticism, History) is in evidence. The critical space established within this volume by such focused eclecticism yields a thought-provoking mix of often innovative perspectives within the broadly conceived field of 'Sikh studies'.

Especially since the events of 1984, free academic enquiry into aspects of Sikh tradition has been a sensitive and sometimes dangerous matter and, although it occupies the last place in the volume, Harjot Oberoi's cautionary tale of violence to persons and ideas in India and Canada (ch. 10) should perhaps be seen as a backdrop to this volume rather than an afterword. Otherwise, taking the chapters in order, Gurinder Singh Mann provides a challenging account of the (continuing) evolution of the Sikh canon from the time of Nanak, based on analysis of little-known early manuscripts rather than received wisdom. Jeevan Deol's meticulous reconstruction of discourses underpinning Khalsa identity juxtaposes the separatist aspirations of the Khalsa as a religio-political body with the metanarrative of the four yugas, derived from

the Dasam Granth, which locates the Khalsa within a broader Puranic cosmological framework. In a chapter which deserves to be widely anthologized for its wider implications for the study of religions, Arvind-Pal Mandair, challenging McLeod's 'disinterested' academic position on Sikhism as religion, argues that 'as metaphysics history *is* religion'. Balbinder Bhogal, too, takes issue with McLeod's representation of Sikh thought as a coherent system of theology. Taking his cue from the Buddhist concept of 'skilful means' as much as Gadamer, Bhogal draws attention to the role of context and audience in any communication or representation of the *shabad*; truth lies in association with saints, not grasping of concepts. On a more literary plane, Christopher Shackle, in his study of two early twentieth century writers, one Muslim, one Sikh, brings out the significant, continuing and largely unacknowledged influence of Muslim, especially Sufi, literary traditions on modern Sikh literature and thought, while Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh explores the maturation of a postcolonial Sikh identity through the complex figure of Kip (Kirpal Singh), a central figure in Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*. Finally, Gurharpal Singh comprehensively problematizes post-1947 conventional wisdom in relation to Sikh and other forms of ethno-nationalism in contemporary India while Darshan Tatla explores the powerful idea of 'Sikhs as a nation' as it has emerged among diaspora Sikhs. Harjot Oberoi as indicated offers a highly personal account of living and working under threats from those who place homogeneity above human well-being; in Delhi during the 1984 riots he was victimized for being Sikh and in Canada in 1994, following publication of *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, by diaspora Sikhs for allegedly not being Sikh enough. Such irony, as Oberoi reminds us, is seldom captured by social theory.

BRIAN BOCKING

CENTRAL AND INNER ASIA

INGRID KREIDE-DAMANI (ed.):

Dating Tibetan Art: Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology from the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne.

(Contributions to Tibetan Studies, 3.) 135 pp. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003. €35.

After a short introduction from the editor, this volume contains seven essays with the following authors and topics: L.S. Dargyab Rinpoche (Significance of Tibetan Buddhist art and iconography); R. Goepper (More evidence for dating the Sumtsek, Alchi and its relation with Kashmir); C. Luczanits (Art-historical aspects of dating Tibetan art); H. Stoddard (Reassessment of the introduction of the Newar 'Sa skya' style into Tibet); M. Brauen (Forgery, genuine or painted over: on the impossibility of dating a Thangka exactly); D. Jackson (The dating of Tibetan paintings is perfectly possible—though not always perfectly exact); and J. Casey Singer (A Tibetan painting of Chemchok Heruka's Mandala revisited).

The occasion for the publication is succinctly expressed by the editor:

During the past twelve years, international trade in Tibetan art has enjoyed an unprecedented upswing, as buyer demand has confronted

limited supply. Prices have risen to dizzying heights, in line with the maxim: 'The older the piece, the higher the price'.

In order to analyse whether such a development in prices was academically justified and to establish more transparency, Lempertz Auction House of Cologne, Germany, invited nine leading European scholars to present papers on research methods and problems relating to the dating of Tibetan art.

As the irresistible force of money meets the immovable object of academic integrity, this is a commendable attempt to bring the encounter into the open. Not all contributors address the question very directly. Martin Brauen, however, confronts it head-on in his account and analysis of a Swiss commercial court case between a purchaser and an auction house (both unnamed) over the dating ('ca. 19th century') of a Tibetan painting. Not for nothing is Brauen an anthropologist—he gives a fascinating résumé of the clash of interests and experts, eventually declaring himself struck by: (1) 'The unprofessional, unscientific procedure of certain experts (and the difficulty of convincing a court of this)'; (2) 'The impossibility of *proving* the age of a Tibetan religious object beyond the shadow of a doubt'; (3) '... how pointless it is to challenge the authenticity of a purchased art work in court'; and (4) '... a piece of advice for potential buyers: Do not let yourselves be misled by datings such as "*ca. 19th century*" or "*19th–20th century*". One has considerable sympathy for the court which confessed itself incompetent to rule on some matters before it, but in the event the plaintiff withdrew the suit and asked for a ruling on costs and damages (which considerably exceeded the value of the painting).

Against this background the other contributors discuss various problems of the balance of different methods and types of evidence in arriving at the date of a work of art, in the meantime presenting many case studies of considerable interest in themselves—possibly indeed of more value than the basic question at issue.

C. Luczanits concludes: 'Only comprehensive and publicly accessible publication or documentation that enables the scholar to extract all possible information from a painting or object will allow the present limitations in dating Tibetan art to be overcome in the future'.

D. Jackson, while not disagreeing with this counsel of perfection, takes a more pragmatic stance: '... no more general conclusions can be drawn from that court case about the accuracy or reliability of the dating methods that a competent historian might use today ... there is nothing uniquely or impossibly difficult about dating paintings from north of the Himalayas. The methods I have sketched ... are commonsensical and can be applied to historical relics from any highly literate culture, so why not to those from Tibet?'

J. Singer sees a diversity of views as healthy, rather than the reverse: '... it would be unnatural if we were to agree on all chronological matters. ... We will differ in the types of evidence with which we work, in how we weigh and interpret this evidence. More fundamentally, we will differ in the kinds of questions we pose'.

R. Goepper and H. Stoddard, while certainly discussing dating of their respective material, pay no attention to the matters raised above but pursue their individual case studies. In Goepper's case this is not for the first time: his dating of the Alchi Sumtsek temple has been treated several times before and defended against critics. As it happens Luczanits, in his contribution (p. 27), strongly supports Goepper's dating (early thirteenth century). However, the possibility that the main inscriptional and artistic evidence for this could be a later addition seems to be left open by his admission that it is 'depicted in an

unusual way when compared to other lineage depictions of comparable age', and 'appears unusually clumsy'. Stoddard (p. 67 fn.) also suggests doubts as to Goepper's dating on stylistic grounds.

Connoisseurship and questions of dating art objects have been rare, though not totally absent, within Tibetan culture itself: an insider's point of view on art is presented by L.S. Dargyab Rinpoche. However, these questions have not as far as I know had a commercial dimension there. This remains an obsession of outsiders (which some Tibetans are perfectly happy to pander to), who must accept the absurdities and risks involved. Perhaps partly as a reaction, money is now beginning to flow into such fields as furniture, much of which is frankly undatable; and contemporary painting, where dating is seldom in doubt. At any rate the contributions to this book, all displaying sound scholarship of one sort or another, will provide much food for thought on the question, as well as plenty which is of intrinsic academic if not monetary value on Tibetan painting and sculpture.

PHILIP DENWOOD

ANN HEYLEN:

Chronique du Toumet-Ortos: Looking through the Lens of Joseph van Oost, Missionary in Inner Mongolia (1915–1921).

(Leuven Chinese Studies XVI.) 409 pp. Leuven/Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2004. €39.

Joseph van Oost worked as a propagator of European civilization and Christianity during a time when the very foundations of both Europe and of China were being rocked—the former by an unprecedented type of warfare, the latter by the end of the imperial system. The records of the CICM (Scheut) missionary offer rare insight into this period of historic transition, moreover focusing on a geographical entity—the Tümed-Ordos region in Inner Mongolia—usually overlooked by historians of modern China. While van Oost had gained insight into Mongolian culture during an earlier placement (1902–12), his missionary work placed him firmly among the Chinese peasants of the Xiwanzi vicariate, whose culture he understood well and elaborated upon in various academic contributions. The Belgian missionary was also known for his good humour and musical talent: determined to further the fortunes of his mission, van Oost could be seen shuttling to and fro the Mongolian sand routes with a donated piano, alongside his harmonium.

The *Chronique du Toumet-Ortos* consists of a single source, namely the records of Joseph van Oost, annotating the tumultuous aftermath of the 1911 revolution. Initially intended for regular (trimestral) publication in the 'Revue de Scheut', disrupted communications during the First World War entailed the gradual change of his notes towards an ever more personal, even outright autobiographical appearance. Despite its resemblance to a personal diary, the resulting chronicle of 384 pages in three volumes has a strongly didactic tone, indicating that van Oost intended eventual publication. Ann Heylen has organized the analysis of this source material into two main typological sections: chapters of an anthropological and missiological nature (ch. 1 to 3) and those outlining the political developments between Yuan Shikai's imperial restoration and the consequences of the Versailles Peace Treaty (4 to 7). Each chapter, as well as the chronicle itself, is preceded by an introduction to the background of the following source contents. Heylen does not attempt to offer

a profound analysis of the cited passages; suggestions for further reading, as well as brief commentaries on individual terms or events, can instead be found in her footnotes. The reader's full attention is thus focused almost exclusively on van Oost's literary voice, always cited with the date of the entry. Whereas he indubitably intended to provide a local description of Inner Mongolia in the footsteps of his missionary forefathers (cultural customs, religious practices, political situation), Ann Heylen selected her examples with the keen interest of a post-missiological researcher. While remaining faithful to the missionary's intentions for publication, she illustrates aspects of interest also to an academic audience already familiar with time and region.

Thus we learn in the first chapter, dedicated to climate and agriculture, all about the consequences of long-term drought on the mentality and spiritual outlook of the local population (pp. 43–6). Within the subsequent chapter, on the 'beliefs and customs' of the Chinese, we gain insight into the slow-paced pre-industrial mode of life, for instance in van Oost's musings about tea (pp. 66–9), and into popular anti-missionary feelings, for instance in a brief reference to the belief that a newly-built church was at the root of an extended drought, since the foreign priest had used black magic in order to stop all precipitation until his roof was complete (p. 75). Elsewhere (pp. 96–8), the pragmatic reasons for conversion to Christianity are dwelt upon, van Oost showing a fair degree of understanding for the plight of 'millet Christians' (*meizi jiaoyou* 糜子教友). Less sympathy is apparent in his discussion of the use of 'discarded organs', namely body parts of executed criminals, whose consumption was said to enhance mental health and bravery (pp. 113–4). The long second chapter also includes observations about the fluctuating cost of brides: the rate of female infanticide and orphans reduced in reverse proportion to the price to be expected for a girl of good bridal material. Mused van Oost: *Nous sommes bien en pays païen!* (p. 87). Chapter 3 introduces the Scheut mission, and considerable attention is given to health and education. While the latter is described as shockingly backward (p. 139), missionary health care became indispensable during the winter plague epidemic of 1917–18 (pp. 148–59). Perhaps surprisingly for a missionary chronicle, relatively little attention is devoted to daily accounts of Christian life in this corner of Inner Mongolia. Most of the chosen passages refer to clerical organization, liturgical matters and missionary methodology, rather than to the adaptation of Christianity by the converts and 'old Christians'.

The greater part of this book, i.e. chapters 4 to 7 (pp. 163–354), deals with the political development of the young republic, in particular with the relationship between the regional military leaders and the authorities in Beijing. We find detailed descriptions of military formations, from well organized troops to bandit gangs, as well as all possible intermediaries (e.g. the 'Robin Hood' style *dulihui* 獨立隊, pp. 164–71). Church interests became affected when the missionaries found themselves 'in between the firing lines', be this literally or in political terms (pp. 186–90). Old-fashioned banditry was as much of a problem, too, despite the most brutal attempts by the authorities and by private self-defence associations to root out the malefactors (see 'Heads on pins and skinning alive', pp. 213–8). Localized examples of republican history also abound in van Oost's descriptions of Yuan Shikai's attempted imperial restoration. While some Sino-Mongol defenders of the Qing openly yearned for a 'nouvelle dynastie Yuan', millenarian Maitreyans hoped for the coming of an 'emperor from the West', his soldiers bearing the sign of the cross on their chests and backs (both p. 221). But no such imperial glory was to reign over and beyond Mongolia; while Russia rapidly guaranteed the protection of Outer Mongolia, its inner part gradually fell within the sphere of Japan's

greater ambitions (pp. 230–34). The pro-German sentiment of China's military commanders during the war years is another fact only private journals of the van Oost type can detect (see e.g. pp. 324–5). Republican concerns, moreover, become evident when discussing the dilemmas facing Inner Mongolia's opium poppy cultivators. Faced with the choice between abject poverty and the lucrative—since illegal—cash crop, many opted for the latter (pp. 306 ff.). Van Oost cannot suppress a sensation of ironic glee when commenting on the presidential edict of May 1919 forbidding the smoking of cigarettes by anybody under the age of eighteen. Himself an opium smoker, the president seemed to have announced the edict in order to appease puritanical (American) missionaries, more concerned with the platonic lifestyle of their converts than with their economic needs (p. 312). The textual selection is concluded by an appendix including photographic reproductions of manuscript pages (pp. 357–60), a detailed enumeration of Chinese proverbs used in the chronicle (pp. 361–6), a glossary of terms used by van Oost (characters and their equivalents in pinyin and as transliterated by Debesse; pp. 367–78), as well as a bibliography of the impressive list of written works by the Belgian missionary (pp. 379–84).

Despite the fact that Ann Heylen never attempts to deliver an in-depth analysis of the manuscript, this book certainly constitutes a valuable tool for the reconstruction of Inner Mongolia during the Early Republic. More emphasis could have been placed on Joseph van Oost's attitudes towards deviations from the orthodoxies of missionary Christianity, but this may well be the ammunition for a successor volume.

LARS PETER LAAMANN

EAST ASIA

DRU C. GLADNEY:

Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities and other Subaltern Subjects.

xvii, 414 pp. London: Hurst, 2004. £25.

This book follows Dru Gladney's *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1991), which was an anthropological study of the Chinese-speaking Muslims of China who are known today in China as the Hui or *Huizu* and are sometimes referred to as Dungan, the name given to them by the Turkic Muslims of Central Asia. That book was based on a study of Hui communities in central and suburban Beijing; in the village of Najiahu in Ningxia in the north-west of China and in Chendai village near Quanzhou in the south-eastern coastal province of Fujian. It relied heavily on oral testimony and interviews but did use some written sources in Chinese. *Muslim Chinese* has been criticized, most recently by Ma Haiyun in the proceedings of the First Conference on the History and Culture of the Hui Nationality held in Yinchuan in 1998. In particular Ma expresses surprise at the relatively small amount of fieldwork on which the study was based, a total of some four weeks of what Ma describes as 'academic tourism' in the Hui areas, rather than what is often seen as the standard anthropological participant observation period of at least six months. Ma Haiyun also draws attention to the fact that during Gladney's visits to Hui communities and households he was always accompanied by local scholars and officials and that

this inevitably has important implications for the individuals selected for interview and may have distorted the findings. Anyone who has carried out field research in China will be aware of this type of problem but it has to be acknowledged and the limitations that it imposes need to be confronted.

Although the title of the book presently under review might lead the reader to believe that it is a completely new work and deals comprehensively with China's ethnic minorities, the first part at least covers much of the same ground as *Muslim Chinese* and its focus is primarily on the same Muslim communities with some additional material on the Uyghurs and Kazakhs of Xinjiang. Like its predecessor, it is written from an anthropological perspective, and the author's priority is clearly to locate his study in the framework of contemporary anthropology as the constant references to other anthropological studies unconnected with China suggest.

Among the inspirations for this study is Homi Bhabha, one of the leading voices in postcolonial studies, and in particular his proposal that the significance of majorities and minorities can best be determined at the margins, in the interstices of societies. The body of work on subaltern subjects that has developed in India has also been fertile ground. It is not clear whether the approach suggested by these studies is entirely appropriate for China and the arguments are not fully spelled out.

Gladney opens his study with highly contentious, if characteristic, attacks on the work of other anthropologists, and an attack on a distinguished economist of China for 'racism'. To some extent this style permeates the text and although there is much solid and useful material, this jars. For example there are transcripts of unnecessarily cantankerous interviews with officials and at times it seems that the author is occupying centre stage, rather than China's ethnic majorities and minorities.

Gladney confronts the common assumption of the ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of China and the notion that the population is 94 per cent Han Chinese. But is this not already a straw man? Surely this simplistic analysis is only accepted by those who read the official announcements from China uncritically. Many, if not most, academics in the People's Republic of China, as elsewhere, accept that this figure is highly misleading and has skewed the debate on majority/minority relations for decades. Nevertheless he is clearly right to insist that the myth of the heterogeneous Han should be demolished once and for all. There are enough linguistic and ethnographic studies of southern and south-eastern China in particular to persuade us that the difference between the communities is at least as great as that between Portuguese and Romanian populations.

The different sections of the book do not sit easily together. Chapter 6 is based almost entirely on a book of translations of Hui folklore by Li and Luckert although at the same time Gladney criticizes that book severely. Chapter 7 on Sufi tombs is not really new material and chapter 8 is again a restatement of material from *Muslim Chinese*. The final chapters, on Tiananmen, River Elegy and post 9/11 China, and relations with the Middle East, sit very oddly at the end of the other material.

There are errors of transliteration and spelling throughout and there are many failings with the implementation of standard *pinyin* conventions for spelling and word division.

On occasion, concepts are created in order to make the book appear theoretically important: two of these are 'path dependence' and 'relational alterity'. Frankly they add nothing and make the book extremely difficult to read. The book is also marred by the citation mania that currently affects much of the research output of social science departments in the United States and

increasingly in the rest of the English-speaking world. When the writer is constantly looking over his shoulder and frantically trying to avoid leaving out a name or an article, however irrelevant, that might reduce someone's ranking in the league tables of citations, it is easy for the main point of the argument to become obscured.

MICHAEL DILLON

JAMES Z. GAO:

The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949–1954.

(Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University.) x, 339 pp. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. \$50.

Recent years have presented a narrow 'window of opportunity' for scholarly analysis of the period immediately following the Communist victory in China. Widening access to local archives has been complemented by new opportunities, which are already declining, to interview the now elderly participants in the events of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Not surprisingly, these opportunities have spawned a new phase of scholarship, more detailed and nuanced than most earlier work, on the early phase of post-revolutionary transformation.

James Z. Gao's book on the Communist takeover of Hangzhou in May 1949 and the subsequent five years complements two major earlier works on post-revolutionary urban transition: Ezra Vogel's *Canton under Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) and Kenneth Lieberthal's *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949–1952* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). But Gao's book adds a new dimension to studies of urban transition, focusing less on policy and its implementation than, as suggested in the title, on the Communist cadres themselves and their interaction and confrontation with local urban culture.

Gao's stated aim is to examine 'two interwoven processes: the Communist attempt to transform the urban culture in order to facilitate the legitimization of the new regime and the countervailing change in the Communist mentality caused by the resistance and reaction of a resilient urban culture' (p. 5). His conclusion is that the 'southbound cadres' (from rural revolutionary bases in Shandong province) who entered Hangzhou and the residents of the city underwent a 'process of confrontation and convergence in which both the southbound cadres and the urban dwellers penetrated each other's ranks and both, in the end, emerged with a dual identity' (p. 255). While Mao's cadres had believed 'that they could change the whole world but that nothing would change them, in fact, the transformers were also transformed' (p. 261). More broadly, the revolutionary and non-revolutionary cultures 'both confronted and compromised with each other' (ibid.).

Gao's book is a fascinating study of this process, based on local archives (including the Hangzhou and Shanghai Municipal Archives and the Zhejiang and other provincial archives), a range of recently published archival materials, and interviews with thirty-three urban dwellers and former cadres (in their seventies and early eighties) who participated in and/or witnessed the events during and following the Communist takeover. The book is strongest in the local detail it provides on a number of fairly familiar themes: the disciplined behaviour of Communist cadres when they arrived in the city, the

early 'cautious realism' of the CCP—towards both the bourgeoisie and Western interests, and the carrying out of the various political campaigns of the early 1950s, including the Resist-America Aid-Korea Campaign (1950–51), the Thought Reform Campaign (1951–52), the Three Antis and Five Antis Campaigns (1952), and the New Three Antis Campaign (1953–54).

For this reviewer, the most captivating chapter is the one on women cadres, the only one in which the author utilizes his interviews in the manner of an ethnographic historian, rather than simply as a source of information. The chapter complements other recent field research on Chinese women in the 1950s (for example by Gail Hershatter), providing insights into the lives of women cadres and more particularly into their treatment by the male-dominated Communist Party. While the 'southbound cadres' included a few female cadres, women activists with bound feet were excluded because of the Party's fear that they 'would damage the image of the liberated rural areas' (p. 193). These—and other women married to 'southbound cadres'—mostly found themselves left behind in rural Shandong, often deprived of the family breadwinner and in dire financial straits. This only intensified when many of the male 'southbound cadres'—according to the author some 90 per cent—took advantage of the provisions of the 1950 Marriage Law to divorce their rural wives and remarry 'urban girls who were young, pretty, and well educated' (p. 199). The few rural women cadres (usually married to male cadres) who had accompanied the Communists to Hangzhou found their work being subordinated to their 'domestic responsibilities', with the Communist Party only reinforcing their husbands' persistent patriarchal attitudes.

The book is mostly written in a narrative factual style and is very readable. It suffers on occasion, however, from unsubstantiated generalizations. Gao states, for example, that women cadres 'always identified themselves as professional revolutionaries rather than workers on women's issues' (p. 203) and that 'the Party did not abandon its prejudice against women cadres in its work assignments' (p. 206). On peasants he makes even more sweeping statements such as 'opportunism is rooted in the Chinese peasantry' and 'Chinese peasants were usually passive, reactive but not creative' (p. 250). Nor are Gao's broader conclusions as convincing as his analysis and arguments about the interactions between 'southbound cadres' and the urban population. These include the suggestion, which Gao admits needs further theoretical and empirical study, that there were strong continuities between the Communist Party's 'moderate policies' of the 1949–54 period and the revolutionary radicalism of the Cultural Revolution era (pp. 10, 262).

Overall, though, this is a meticulously researched and well crafted book on the Communist takeover of a Chinese city which, while not one of the country's major metropolises, had distinctive features as a prosperous centre of culture and commerce, thereby presenting particular challenges to the new regime.

BEVERLEY HOOPER

SARAH HANDLER:

Ming Furniture in the Light of Chinese Architecture.

vi, 233 pp. Berkeley and Toronto: Ten Speed Press, 2005. \$50.

Beds as miniature rooms, cupboards as miniature buildings: Sarah Handler, director from 1992 to 1997 of the former Museum of Classical Chinese

Furniture at Renaissance in California, has found an original and effective way to present the beauty and meaning of Chinese wooden furniture by relating it to the forms and functions of Chinese architecture. She makes the point that their essential structures are similar, whether on a large or a small scale: both have a supporting timber framework, often of a pillar-and-beam type, within which there are non-loadbearing panels and empty spaces, and the parts of both are held together primarily with mortise-and-tenon joinery. Throughout the book, Handler is able to point to similarities between the pieces of furniture she discusses and architectural forms.

This book would in fact make an excellent text for an introductory course on Chinese traditional culture, since not only does it include a great deal of information on both architecture and furniture, but it also relates to how life was lived in early-modern China, with an abundance of illustrative material from the classic novels *Jin Ping Mei* (The Plum in the Golden Vase) and *Shitou ji* (The Story of the Stone), and from the views of late-Ming writers of 'connoisseurship literature' such as Ji Cheng, Wen Zhenheng and Li Yu.

The book is divided into seven chapters, on architecture, furniture, houses, beds, chairs, tables and cabinets. The three introductory chapters (on architecture, furniture and houses) are particularly useful for giving an overview of how buildings, furniture and social practices were interconnected; this will be the most valuable material for students. The following chapters, in which Handler examines in detail a series of specific items of furniture, are more likely to appeal to those who already have some interest in and knowledge of Chinese furniture. The concept of 'Ming' furniture is fairly loosely interpreted to mean furniture in what is generally accepted as Ming style, which in practice includes much early Qing work; furniture is notoriously tricky to date.

Handler has a remarkable talent for describing the form and style of pieces of furniture in such a way as to make the reader look at them with new attention and awareness. My only significant criticism of her approach would be that she tends to use a large number of technical cabinet-making terms—stiles, spandrels, splats, pipe joins, blind dovetail tenons—without adequate explanation. Furniture specialists will have no difficulty in following her, but non-specialists, to whom this book should be of great interest, would benefit from a few more diagrams to clarify the component parts of a chair, table or bed, and the different types of joints used by Chinese cabinet-makers. Admittedly, this sort of information is not hard to access elsewhere, and references are duly given to previous work by scholars such as Wang Shixiang, Nancy Berliner and Handler herself, but Handler's new book would be such an excellent starting point for a student or interested museum-goer that it is a pity not to have given beginners in the subject the tools to appreciate fully the beauties of Chinese woodwork and the skills of the woodworkers.

The book is lavishly illustrated, in addition to reproductions of Ming and Qing paintings and prints showing furniture in use, with beautiful photographs of pieces from the furniture collection of Ming Furniture Ltd; the anonymous photographer deserves acknowledgement. The photographs show the wood-grain, beading and relief carving on the furniture in exquisite detail, but fine as the photographs are, they are rather spoilt, in my view, by appearing within frames of solid, often disagreeable, colours. Indeed, the whole book gives the impression of being over-designed, and it is unfortunate that such a useful and generally handsome volume is marred by a very large number of misprints.

ALISON HARDIE

KEITH MCMAHON:

The Fall of the God of Money: Opium Smoking in Nineteenth-Century China. xi, 249 pp. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. £18.95.

Whatever the factors may be that determine the waxing and waning of scholarly interest, the past few years have certainly yielded a rich harvest of publications dealing with opium in China's past. This fact alone demands clearly distinct qualities from any new contribution. Keith McMahon's approach, to this end, was to reassess China's nineteenth-century opium culture as a 'cross-cultural' phenomenon, linking Western perceptions of 'the Chinese' with the latter's views of opium smoking. A parallel aim was to establish a more balanced view of China's opium culture, by analysing its portrayal in late nineteenth-century fictional (often autobiographical) accounts. The author's very personal wish, moreover, was to urge readers to reassess the use of recreational drugs, in particular in light of the current anti-narcotic sentiment in the USA.

McMahon's key arguments can be summarized thus: firstly, the opinions of visiting Westerners during the nineteenth century were by no means as uniformly negative as anti-opium voices would subsequently state. The views of eminent observers attesting the relative merits or—at least—harmlessness of the drug, such as Duncan MacPherson (doctor), William C. Hunter (merchant) or Elliot Bingham (naval commander), are contrasted with those of avowed critics (e.g. Lord Robert Jocelyn, Dr Nathan Allen and Rev. R.H. Graves). Secondly, and this is the crux of McMahon's argument, the recreational use of opium as smoked in comfortable and by all means 'civilised' surroundings is highlighted. In this context, the accounts of Zhang Changjia 張昌甲 are of relevance, imaging China as standing before a historic abyss created by its encounter with a dynamic, conquering and Christian West. Literally going up in smoke, ancient China is experiencing its last dream, substituting the cult of money with the veneration of opium smoke. Once the last puff has left its pipe, China—in its old cherished, if not always perfect, ways—would face certain extinction. The end of the wise, cautious use of money (symbolized by the 'Money God' *caishen* 財神), is also the subject of the other authors cited by McMahon (in particular Peng Yang'ou 彭養鵬). Opium fiction, however, made even more of the (alleged) effects on smokers' sex lives.

McMahon's third and final argument deals with Western fears of narcotic addiction and of China in general. Exposing the frequent identification of the drug as a 'wild beast', of female users as depraved addicts and of China as a decadent opium phenomenon, the author argues convincingly against blindly following hysterical stereotypes—a sin perpetrated not merely by moralizing politicians but also by historians of contemporary China.

The structure of the *Fall of the God of Money* mirrors the book's argumentation: chapter 1 analyses the historical opium discourse (in general and in terms of conflating 'China' and 'opium'); chapter 2 presents a brief history of opium in China; chapters 3 and 4 focus on Western interaction with China, in particular in the context of opium. The following two chapters contain an analysis of Zhang Changjia's *Yanhua* 煙話 ('Opium Talk') as well as of several examples of late Qing fiction, while the final seventh chapter is a summary of Chinese and Western perceptions of opium smoking, between abstention, fear of addiction/contagion and prohibitive legislation. The work ends with a translation of the key source: *Yanhua*, by Zhang Changjia.

The sources are mostly of Western origin throughout chapters 1–4 and 7, with a strong emphasis on fiction in McMahon's 'Chinese' chapters (5 and 6, appendix). While many of the cited sources contain excellent examples of the nineteenth-century opium discourse, problems arise when fictional sources form the mainstay of the author's argumentation. As if in anticipation of such criticism, McMahon states (p. 141) that such fictional accounts offer a unique insight into the most intimate sphere of Chinese life, not usually expressed in other sources. This may well be true, although the resulting impressions are thus open to interpretation—in particular concerning the intended impact of such novels on the public (e.g. whether to romanticize opium smoking or to dramatize its negative consequences). Whatever valid criticism could be levelled against the presentation of fictional sources, Keith McMahon's monograph is a genuine contribution to the late Qing opium discourse, even today often mired in the unreflected condemnation of a complex and sophisticated smoking culture.

LARS PETER LAAMANN

GÖRAN AIJMER

New Year Celebrations in Central China in Late Imperial Times.
viii, 180 pp. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003. \$32.

The monograph under review deals with a topic of seemingly timeless quality: the significance and celebration of the Spring Festival, the beginning of the annual cycle in the Chinese world. Because of its conceptual centrality, the Chinese New Year has been commented on from the very first Sinological writings. For any new study to be worthwhile, authors would either have to turn established opinion on its head or produce important insights into neglected niches of anthropological research. Göran Aijmer here pursues the latter goal by producing a localized case study of this otherwise well-researched aspect of pan-Chinese tradition. Aijmer's study is well defined, both geographically (Lake Dongting, Hubei-Hunan borderlands) and in terms of time (nineteenth century).

The author analyses the New Year phenomenon in two key ways: firstly as a ritual event; and secondly as a marker of temporal passage. While its ritual aspects have been documented since the inception of written history, this anthropological study makes a specific connotation with time. Aijmer posits that the desire to segment time can be traced back to the quest to discipline nature. The central role of ancestral reverence is hereby underlined, as an offshoot of the agrarian pre-eminence of production and reproduction. Ever focused on the significance of iconic symbolism, the study is firmly grounded in the concrete realities of rural life. Social rites of passage are in this context given almost equal weighting with the imperatives of daily subsistence.

The author's twofold analysis is mirrored in the structure of his book: subdivided into two parts, Aijmer begins by identifying the ethnographical landscape of his chosen region. In chronological succession, the late-winter rituals are reviewed—from the *la* 臘 festival to the establishment of spring (*li chun* 立春). For each ritual, the pertinent historical roots are introduced, followed by an analysis of late imperial documents relating to the Donghu belt. This 'encyclopedic' first part, dominating the monograph, culminates in an analysis of the 'Little New Year' (chapters 4–7) and the New Year proper (chs 8–11). The interpretative second part (chs 16–22) explores the centrality of food (rice)

and family (ancestors/offspring). It furthermore highlights (see chapters 18 and 19) the significance of time and its segmentation in the calendar of festivals. In this instance, the late winter and spring festivals are put into the perspective of China's ritual system in the wider sense.

The monograph is heavily weighted towards primary sources, chiefly the *Gu jin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (comp. Chen Menglei and Jiang Tingxi) and local gazetteers from the nineteenth century. Anthropological or ethnographic literature is relative rare, and includes, moreover, primary source grade works such as Lou Zikuang's *Xinnian fengsu zhi* 新年風俗志 (Shanghai, 1935). A disproportionate amount of secondary sources are derived from the author's earlier—admittedly very knowledgeable—contributions, at the expense of other eminent authors.

The eclectic choice of secondary sources is typical of the publication in general. The result of several years' intensive preoccupation, this book is certainly among the more unusual anthropological studies to be published in recent years. This potential weakness, however, is also its strength. The arguments made throughout the book never sound recycled or borrowed, but are the direct result of personal interaction with the research topic. In this sense, Göran Aijmer's introduction to New Year rituals in late imperial Hunan and Hubei makes, beyond any doubt, a refreshingly different, interesting and useful addition to any Sinological library.

LARS PETER LAAMANN

RODERICH PTAK:

China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang. Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trade (c. 1000–1600).

(Variorum Collected Studies Series, 777.) xii, 304 pp. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. £60.

Well known as a specialist on Chinese and South-East Asian maritime trade, Roderich Ptak provides here another volume treating various aspects of China's maritime trade. The articles included, it should be emphasized, were originally composed for conferences, anthologies or periodicals and are collected and reprinted in this edition. The contributions are written mainly in English (eight), but partly also in German (three), and cover the period from the Song to the Ming dynasties. Earlier time periods are not investigated. At a time when Zheng He and his voyages receive a great deal of attention from both academics working in the field and the modern media it is Ptak's chief intention to show that China's maritime past cannot be restricted to Zheng He's times, and that it had a much longer maritime trade tradition. The present volume covers various aspects of this maritime trade.

The first part of the book (A; Structural Issues and Trade) investigates China's trade with South-East Asia (I) and with the Portuguese (II) during the Ming dynasty, assesses the role of foreigners living in Macau (III) and examines the trade in camphor around 1500 (IV). The article 'Ming Maritime trade to Southeast Asia, 1368–1567' (I) provides a general survey of China's overseas relations with South-East Asia from the beginning of the Ming until the lifting of China's maritime trade proscription. Ptak describes foreign Muslim and Chinese overseas communities as well as Wokou pirates as being active players promoting trade relations even during a time period when maritime trade was officially forbidden. And he concludes that of all the foreigners and

ethnic groups who 'penetrated into Southeast Asia from outside' (p. I, 191) 'the Chinese outnumbered every other group'. His study includes a comparison of the role of Guangzhou and Fujian within this trade. 'Sino-Portuguese relations, circa 1513/14–1550s' (II) briefly reviews the history up until the founding of Macao and describes the particulars of these bilateral overseas relations. Ptak assesses the role of the Portuguese very positively. In his eyes, whereas foreigners were generally not treated as equals in China, the Portuguese were 'at least close to being treated as equals' (II, p. 33). The third paper investigates the role of foreign enclaves (*fanfang*) in Macau, concluding that Macau can definitely not be put on the same level as '*fanfang*' in other ports such as Guangzhou, Hong Kong or Quanzhou. In Ptak's eyes, the 'liberal and multi-cultural enclave' (III, p. 70) Macau survived many critical years, probably because it was more flexible than other foreign '*fanfang*'. The last contribution of the first section (IV) introduces the network of one of the most expensive commodities at that time, camphor, as it was depicted in Chinese and Portuguese sources.

The next section (B; The perception of space and sailing routes) shifts from concrete questions to abstract concepts. Ptak introduces sea routes and spatial 'ocean concepts', such as Da and Xiao Xiyang, Dongyang, Xiyang, Nanhai, Dong and Xi Dashiyang—to mention just a few—as they are reflected in Song and Yuan sources. 'Quanzhou: at the northern edge' (V) looks at Quanzhou as the northern limit of the Eastern Ocean, which was generally described as part of 'another sphere' in traditional geography. Wang Dayuan's *Daoyi zhilüe* receives particular attention. In contrast to many other texts of this genre, it is striking, according to Ptak, that Wang's description reflects a what we might perhaps call 'modern' view. Whereas other texts investigated, as a rule, divide South-East Asia into different spatial fragments, Wang Dayuan, according to Ptak, comes close to 'the idea of a Southeast Asian Mediterranean' (V, p. 420). He even presented certain countries in a positive light and not simply as a sort of barbarian area. 'Südostasiens Meere...' (VI) introduces spatial concepts in Song and Yuan sources. The final paper of Section II (VII) tries to reconstruct sailing routes to South-East Asia as they are found in route books, such as the *Shunfeng xiaosong*, the *Haidao zhenjing*, the famous *Dongxi yangkao*, the *Zhinan zhenfa* and others.

The third and final section of the book (C; Islands and regions) moves back from sea to land. The first contribution (VIII) investigates the history of the Paracel and Spratly islands, which in modern times are repeatedly claimed as an integral part of China. Investigating a range of historical and geographical accounts, Ptak is able to show that, from textual evidence at least, nobody really saw any need to claim these rocky islands as a part of China's suzerainty. The island of Hainan, however, being located between the Chinese mainland and South-East Asia, was in fact an integral part of Ming China's overseas relations. In 'Hainans Außenbeziehungen' (IX) Ptak provides a lively picture of Hainan's personal and commercial contacts with China. 'Possible Chinese references to the Barus area' (X) reinvestigates references in traditional Chinese sources that may refer to the Barus area on the west coast of Sumatra—a major provider of camphor. The final paper (XI) translates passages of the *Daoyi zhilüe* by Wang Dayuan referring to the Kerala coast.

In putting together this set of articles it was not the author's intention systematically to present the reader with completely new sources or facts on the topic, nor to concentrate on one specific aspect of maritime trade. The present volume is rather a very successful attempt to review sources under new questions and to introduce some hitherto often neglected aspects of China's

maritime trade, both in the concrete (commodities, trade relations, etc.) and in the more abstract, conceptual sense (spatial concepts, etc.). Ptak mentions all recent and most important literature on the issues investigated. Very useful is also the general index. Thus, the present volume is of particular interest to readers, both lay and specialist, seeking a general survey on various aspects of maritime trade between China, South-East Asia and the Portuguese and/or a deeper insight into China's maritime trade 'beyond' Zheng He.

ANGELA SCHOTTENHAMMER

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

KATHARINE L. WIEGELE:

Investing in Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of Popular Catholicism in the Philippines.

(Southeast Asia: Politics, Meaning and Memory.) xi, 207 pp.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. \$21.

As someone working in Philippine studies and the study of religions, it is a rare pleasure to read a book pertinent to both. Katharine L. Wiegele's rich ethnographic account of the El Shaddai movement in Manila in the mid 1990s raises a number of questions relating to religious, political and economic change and notions of space, place and community. As such, efforts are made towards contextualizing El Shaddai in terms of the local religious topography and Philippine modernity, but also in terms of the global spread of prosperity theologies and charismatic Christianities and the utilization of media such as radio, cassette tapes, television, print media and rallies by these new religious movements.

In the opening chapter Wiegele sets out the parameters of her enquiry, informing her reader from where the ethnographic materials were gleaned (metro Manila but also Roxas City and Baguio) and the contexts and assumptions that guided her fieldwork. Early on she states that her intention is to 'document the rise of the El Shaddai movement' (p. 2) and to detail 'its ethos and ritual practices, and the new sociocultural forms it has spawned. In so doing, I seek to understand how and why this movement grew so rapidly to the point where it now yields considerable influence in the public arenas of political, economic, and religious discourse in Filipino civil society' (p. 3). She continues by arguing that 'the El Shaddai movement reveals the changing culture of Filipino lower and aspiring middle classes at a time when old understandings of class struggle and Catholic sacrifice no longer resonate with contemporary aspirations' (ibid.). She then contextualizes the emergence of El Shaddai in a period of dramatic political change in the Philippines (the so-called People Power revolution or EDSA which saw the fall of Marcos and the re-assertion of oligarchal power) and a history of appropriation of Catholic idioms and symbols by lowland Filipinos with which to negotiate social change. These interpretative contexts are of undoubted significance to this study, and the only point of concern is that Wiegele's discussion of them is largely confined to the opening chapter and the conclusion. For example, in the conclusion one finds the following claim: 'The marriage between shamanic traditions of spiritual mediation, on the one hand, and native conceptualisations of charisma and sacred power, on the other, has produced

a revitalized spiritual arena in which authentic “healing power” has shifted to El Shaddai contexts’ (p. 172). The problem with this claim lies in the fact that while Wiegele describes El Shaddai ritual practices clearly and in detail, ‘shamanic traditions’ and ‘native conceptualisations of charisma’ are not explicated, meaning that the link drawn between them is asserted rather than justified with ethnographic evidence or through reference to the works of other scholars.

Wiegele also situates her analysis of El Shaddai in a debate about ‘reductionism’ and what she calls ‘cargo-culting’ (p. 14). She advocates an approach to religion and religious experiences that resists a vulgar functionalism and the reduction of human agents to ‘stress-equilibrium mechanisms’ (ibid.). Wiegele seeks to preserve the integrity and rationality of El Shaddai members: they are not ‘mere followers, a mindless mass’ (p. 15) whose membership of El Shaddai signifies insatiable desire for money, mobility or ‘cargo’. Rather, ‘they are people with choices, people who fashion and transform ideologies, religiosities, and situations for their own purposes, people who are not mindless at all’ (ibid.). However, the author is also well aware of how El Shaddai theology ‘blocks critical discussion’ (p. 98). It could be argued that the desire to preserve the rationality of her informants prevents Wiegele from being sufficiently critical of El Shaddai and in particular its leader Mike Velarde, or interrogating the role a movement like El Shaddai might play in the formation of a capitalist ethos, or how El Shaddai theology—with its focus on individual action and personal transformation—prevents the formation of a critical consciousness and encourages members to interpret their poverty and their illnesses in terms of miracles and grace rather than structural inequalities or a violent history of marginalization and disenfranchisement.

Wiegele also cites Asad’s (1993) critique of Geertz’s (in)famous definition of religion (1973) and Asad’s claim that Geertz’s focus on symbols as vehicles for meaning fails properly to account for those processes and regulatory or disciplinary practices through which meaning is authorized and through which symbols efficaciously generate ‘moods and motivations’ (p. 10). Wiegele makes no further reference to either Asad or Geertz, and neither does she engage in an analysis of El Shaddai symbols leaving the reader wondering why these scholars were invoked in the first place.

Wiegele’s strategy of writing is also worthy of comment. There are a series of shifts in linguistic register throughout the text: for example on page 71, the authoritative voice of the anthropologist gives way to a more subjective and located voice. This strategy of writing appears to simulate Wiegele’s description of her own telescoping between ‘aerial gazing’ and what she terms ‘underwater swimming’ (p. 61) in her efforts to negotiate both Manila and the demands of ethnography. Oddly, Wiegele makes no reference to her mode of writing except for a brief reference to ‘style’ (p. xi) in the acknowledgements.

Wiegele concludes by claiming that her investigation has revealed two kinds of transformation: ‘the first is a transformation of self ... the second transformation is in the way Roman Catholicism is practised in the Philippines’ (p. 170). On Wiegele’s account, the dramatic rise and power of El Shaddai has radically transformed the religious landscape in the Philippines, providing lower- and middle-class urban Filipinos with new means to articulate, represent and identify themselves. Wiegele has made an important contribution to the study of religion(s) and Philippine studies and this is a well-written and well-observed account of religious and social change in an urban environment.

AFRICA

DEREK NURSE AND GÉRARD PHILIPPSON (eds):

The Bantu Languages.

(Routledge Language Family Series.) London: Routledge, 2003.

xvii, 708 pages. £170.

There are approximately 500 Bantu languages, spoken by around 240 million people in 27 sub-Saharan African countries. Of all the African language groups, the Bantu languages have the longest tradition of scholarly linguistic attention and probably the highest degree of description. To put all this into one book—even a very large one—is no mean feat. Yet Derek Nurse and Gérard Philippson are brave enough to aim to provide an up-to-date reference book on the Bantu languages. The 700+ page book achieves its high aims at least in part. It presents an overview of the field of Bantu linguistics, bringing together a set of distinguished Bantu scholars, the majority of whom have been in the field for decades. The book provides an informed discussion of some of the more important areas of Bantu studies, and presents a wealth of case studies of individual Bantu languages, including a plethora of new data.

The book is divided into a thematic section of 12 chapters, and a second part comprising 17 grammatical sketches of selected Bantu languages or language groups. In addition, the book includes an introductory chapter, an updated classification of the Bantu languages, and language and subject indices, and numerous maps and tables. Yet, even though it is in hard covers and the production is of a high standard, the published price of £170 makes libraries the most likely buyers of this book; the pricing may actually prevent the wide circulation a book of this kind deserves, and I hope the publishers will offer a paperback edition soon.

The thematic chapters cover phonetics, phonology, tonology, derivation, tense and aspect, nominal morphology, and syntax on the one hand, and historical linguistics, historical classification, grammaticalization, language contact, and language acquisition on the other. The first three chapters deal with sound structure—including the important topic of tonology, the second three with morphology, probably the most important area of Bantu grammar, including the key aspects of the noun class and agreement systems. This is all as it should be, but strangely all other aspects of Bantu grammatical structure are covered in one chapter entitled 'Syntax'; the following chapters then turn to historical linguistics. Thomas Bearth, on syntax, does his best at least to mention some of the work in the field, but his real interest is in discourse-pragmatic and information-structure related effects on word-order, and his chapter might better have been called, and focused on, 'Topic and focus'. This would have allowed for another chapter on syntax, and perhaps also for chapters on semantics or typology; in this way, important work on Bantu languages conducted from a more formal-theoretical perspective, for example within Lexical Functional Grammar or Principles and Parameters, would have received the attention it deserves, and some discussion could have been included on the role of Bantu languages for the formation of linguistic, in particular syntactic, theory.

The following three chapters, on historical linguistics, include Tom Güldemann on grammaticalization, which is of theoretical interest; the other two provide an overview of the state of the art in Bantu historical linguistics

(Schadeberg), and an update on ongoing work on Bantu classification by the editors. The final two thematic chapters provide well-informed and accessible discussions of language contact (Mufwene), and language acquisition (Demuth). Yet this final part of the thematic section of the book is subject to another odd omission—there is no chapter on socio-linguistic aspects of Bantu languages: multilingualism, language and society, language policy and language endangerment are all aspects of a language group which are no longer ignored, and play a significant role in the African discourse on Bantu languages—see, for example, Vic Webb and Kembo-Sure's *African Voices* (Oxford, 2000), an excellent introduction to African linguistics which highlights precisely these socio-linguistic questions, alongside structural aspects. Of course space is limited, but the absence of a discussion of these questions to me is indicative of a slightly narrow conception of the field.

The second part of the book contains descriptions of 17 Bantu languages or language groups, selected according to geographical spread, availability of suitable authors and, in case of doubt, by including 'lesser, rather than better known languages' (p. 11). The authors of the chapters have quite a bit of freedom, and highlight different aspects of the language(s) they describe, although there is often a bias towards morphology, given the importance of this for Bantu on the one hand, and the slightly more difficult task of providing a good description of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics on the other. The sketches are certainly useful, and offer a wealth of new and interesting data, but there are two points which might be raised: first, more coherence—and cross-referencing—between chapters would have made a better book. Thus, for example, all examples in all chapters should have been fully and consistently glossed, translated, and graphically separated. Different concepts mentioned in the thematic articles should have been taken up and cross-referenced in the relevant sketches. For example, in the historical linguistics chapter, reference is made to Katupha's law which can be found in Makhuwa (p. 148), but the law is not referred to in Kisseberth's Makhuwa chapter in the second part (and hence not in the index), even though the relevant data are discussed. Similarly, both Bearth in 'Syntax' and Watters in 'Grassfield Bantu' discuss focus in Aghem, using almost identical examples, without cross-references.

Secondly, I am not convinced it was wise not to include better-known languages in the second part. It is true that there is a need to describe more Bantu languages, but how much can you say about a whole language in 25 or so pages? It seems to me that for grammatical descriptions of lesser-known languages a separate publication (e.g. Köppe's series of grammatical sketches) might be more appropriate. And since we know more about languages like Swahili and Chichewa, typological statements made about them in a short space are likely to be more accurate and more poignant.

The book, then, provides a good summary of the results of work on Bantu language over the second part of the twentieth century, as well as an impressive collection of grammatical summaries of a variety of Bantu languages. However, as noted above, there are at least two major thematic omissions: there is insufficient discussion of theoretically informed work on Bantu, in particular on Bantu syntax and semantics, and of sociolinguistic and anthropological aspects of Bantu languages. I think that these omissions are not accidental. Rather, they seem to follow from an editorial decision essentially to restrict the scope of the book to, alongside descriptive work, work in the historical-comparative tradition, which, of course, is the context in which the editors work. This is a pity, as this narrow scope does no service to the study of Bantu languages. Work in the historical-comparative tradition has been

extremely important in Bantu studies for a long time. It is, in a way, the foundation on which all of our work on Bantu rests. But it is also true that most practitioners of the historical-comparative framework are based in Europe and the USA, and are academically quite mature: of the 27 contributors to the book, only two are from an African university, and only two are native speakers of a Bantu language; seven authors are from a North American university, three from the (American-based) organization SIL, thirteen from Europe, and quite a number are retired. It seems to me that a fair number of younger Bantuists (judged, for example, by recent theses) are interested in theoretically informed work on Bantu, and that, especially in Africa, linguistic discourse includes 'applied' questions such as language policy, language and identity, or computational linguistics. One may deplore this, but I believe that a book such as this would have benefited from a wider perspective, not least to make the field of Bantu linguistics more transparent and attractive to the general linguist, and to the general linguistics student.

In sum, *The Bantu Languages* is an important resource for the study of Bantu languages, and a valuable summary of the state of the art in the field, with special emphasis on historical-comparative work. The short language descriptions are a rich primary source of data, which will ensure the book's longevity. Although the book would have benefited from a slightly wider perspective, so as to present a more comprehensive picture of current research in Bantu, it is nevertheless a very welcome and important contribution to Bantu linguistics.

LUTZ MARTEN

RUTH WATSON:

'Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan': Chieftaincy and Civic Culture in a Yoruba City.

(Western African Studies.) xii, 180 pp. Oxford, Athens, and Ibadan: James Currey, Ohio University Press, and Heinemann Educational Books, 2003. £45.00 (cloth); £16.95 (paper).

This historical monograph examines the making of a civic political culture in West Africa's largest city during the period 1829–1939. The author's principal concern is to explicate the relationship between chieftaincy and city politics, and how debates over Ibadan's *Olubadan* and lesser chiefs constitute the substance and boundaries of urban political discourse. The book's method, practically speaking, is also its argument—to challenge normative views of Ibadan politics 'as a fixed set of political attitudes', and to reveal instead civic cultures 'as a contentious historical process' (p. 9).

This approach yields a number of important conclusions. Watson shows that it is Ibadan's history of militarism, and not any typological model of urbanism, that forms the major contours of the city's political culture in the nineteenth century. The core unit of Yoruba urbanism, the *ile* (household or compound), were in Ibadan neither spatialized patrilineages nor firmly-rooted residences but constantly shifting military retinues which could absorb new refugees as clients and soldiers according to merit. By extension, chiefly titles were neither reserved for particular *ile* nor hereditary in nature, but earned through military fitness. Far from generating money, titles in fact created enormous expenses for the holder, and were regarded above all as public recognition of a chief's achievement of *ola* (honour). Ibadan's infamous

'disorder' was not just its chronic instability, but 'an endeavour to assert control over an imagined civic Ibadan' (p. 48). This combination of external imperialism and internal rivalry and intrigue, Watson argues, paradoxically held Ibadan together in the nineteenth century.

Following the end of war spoils, with the arrival of British rule in 1893, Ibadan warrior chiefs had to reconfigure the basis of political mobilization. Administrative initiatives designed to bureaucratize Ibadan instead stimulated chiefly competition. Tax revenues were inherently unstable on account of the clientelist, rather than territorial, nature of chieftaincy. Thus the simple notion to transform chiefly tribute into salaried tax collection after the First World War intensified contests for acquiring the largest retinues, which chiefs could then transform into tax revenues to maintain or acquire various titles. Aspiring 'Big Men' also transformed profits from cocoa and timber enterprises into chiefly titles. In short, Ibadan's civic culture tended to envelop bureaucratic and capitalist projects within recognizably traditional forms of chieftaincy. But not all was continuity. New paths to status and power under colonial rule necessitated the creation of new civic institutions, such as the Mason-like *Egbe Agba O'tan* ('Elders still exist'), formed by literate Christian men in 1914 to advise British officials and Ibadan chiefs on town history and 'Yoruba' culture.

The great insult of this period was the British decision in 1914 to move the administrative capital of Southern Nigeria from Ibadan—by far the largest city in Nigeria—to historically important but presently inconsequential Oyo. This imposed 'vassalage' to an Oyo *Alaafin* humiliated and infuriated Ibadan chiefs, who in turn successfully gained administrative independence from Oyo with the establishment of the Ibadan Native Authority in 1934. It is at this point that the British Resident, Ward Price, collaborated with Ibadan chiefs to re-work a vibrant Ibadan civic culture, constituted spatially in Mapo Hall, ceremonially in various 'warrior pageants', materially in the *Olubadan* damask, and in print through the *Ibadan Native Administration Chronicle*. The effect was anything but a stilted 'invention of tradition'. Rather, Ibadan's tradition of civil disorder, which in the nineteenth century was characterized by military competition, was firmly shifted to the realm of the pen in the twentieth century. Lacking royal lineages, competitive chiefly politics continued to constitute the core of Ibadan civic culture.

Civic Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan makes an important contribution to West African political history and the history of urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa, although a more sustained engagement with the larger urban historiography would have illuminated the wider significance of the book's main arguments, such as the critical role of militarism in pre-colonial urban Africa. The book's most striking lacuna is a full consideration of economic change that has defined, and occasionally over-determined, the thematic emphases of an earlier body of literature on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Nigeria. Watson takes fruitful aim at generalizations of Toyin Falola's research on nineteenth-century Ibadan, but does not address Falola's important arguments about how the city was affected by wealthy but politically disenfranchised Egba, Ijebu and particularly Hausa 'outsiders'. Economic ties between the sprawling city of Ibadan and its hinterland during the subsequent period of cash crop 'revolution' are addressed only fleetingly. None the less, Watson's book is a well-told political history of one of Africa's most important cities, and one that presses researchers to take seriously civic culture as a major factor to explain change and continuity within urban Africa. A glossary of Yoruba terms would have aided this and other non-specialist readers.

JAMES R. BRENNAN

DIANE B. STINTON:

Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology.

(Faith and Culture Series.) xiv, 303 pp. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004. £17.99.

Over the last few decades there has developed considerable interest in the inculturation of Christianity in various parts of the world, and nowhere more than in Africa. All elements of Christianity have been studied for their 'Africanness'—ritual, worship, organization, and particularly theology, especially Christology, or the understanding of the person of Christ.

Stinton has taken six theologians, and examined their writings and interviewed each of them. She has conducted interviews with lay Christians and clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, and has assembled twelve focus groups. In section one she describes the background to her study, explains why Christology is important, and how the question has been addressed over the last fifty years. In section two she analyses all her data under four headings: Jesus as life-giver, as mediator, as loved one, as leader. Under the theme of life-giver she deals with the category of 'healer', most interestingly as 'nganga', and shows how African Christians are divided as to whether this is a helpful category with which to investigate the significance of Jesus. Under Jesus as mediator, she particularly examines the concept of 'ancestor', and again shows the great ambivalence towards this concept (some of those reluctant to pursue this image of 'Jesus as ancestor' refer to the sometimes dysfunctional behaviour of ancestors, not least their involvement in the slave trade). Under the notion of 'Jesus as loved one', she discusses the categories of brother, mother, lover, friend. Under Jesus as leader, she deals particularly with the titles of Akan leaders (and shows the reluctance of some to use these concepts because of the often self-serving emphasis on status rather than service). In all this discussion she collates much good material (the sections outlining Ela on suffering and Mugambi on reconstruction this reviewer found particularly helpful) and offers many perceptive comments.

Yet questions arise as to the strength of any possible conclusions. There is considerable difficulty in assessing how representative is the information discovered. Stinton gathered data from six theologians, various interviewees, and focus groups. Take the six theologians: Bénézet Bujo, Jean-Marc Ela, Jesse Mugambi, Anne Nasimiyyu Wasike, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, and John Pobee. Of these, Bujo and Ela are professors at Western universities. Ela, the nearest Africa has produced to a liberation theologian, is from Cameroon, where he was largely an outsider ('pas bien intégré' was the euphemism often used; I remember one Cameroonian churchman explaining that Ela wrote solely for Western publishers and Western academic readership; in other words, Ela was not very representative of any African understanding—in fact, he was quite unrepresentative). Likewise, two of the others, the Ghanaians Pobee and Oduyoye, spent a large part of their careers in Geneva at the World Council of Churches, at a time when the WCC was actively promoting African theology and positively encouraging Africans to speak in a distinct voice. Again, what can one deduce about Africa from those voices? Oduyoye's Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians produces fine work, but what it reveals of ordinary African women's perspectives is a moot point. Admittedly, Stinton sometimes acknowledges the soft nature of her conclusions. A footnote on p. 278 observes 'no claim is made that the statistics presented based on this sample are proportionately representative of the population at large'.

However, the back cover promotes the book as 'The most complete contemporary study available of how Africans understand and relate to Christ', and even Stinton herself at times seems to suggest as much.

Other observations dilute the representative force of the findings. She admits her fieldwork in Uganda comprised only one week. Her method is qualitative, and charts and tables presented do not make the data quantitative. All interviews were with urbanized, educated English speakers (p. 19). The 'focus groups' were often far from representative. In Ghana the Catholic lay group was made up of workers at the Catholic Secretariat. In Kenya the Protestant lay group were all participants at an Africa Inland Church Bible Study. The group of Protestant Clergy in Ghana were all participants in a workshop on Gospel and Culture (p. 96)—thus not representative in any strict sense. The fact that one priest reverences the ancestors during Mass (pp. 126, 139) may indicate a general openness to belief in Jesus as Ancestor, but he may be totally unrepresentative (he is after all an expatriate missionary). How widespread is it beyond Asante that royal titles are sometimes applied to Jesus? Again, in the third section, the impressive public involvement of the Ugandan priest John Waliggo shows that such dedication is possible, but does not tell us how widespread it is.

This book is thus extremely revealing and instructive, but it is not precisely what the publishers (if not exactly the author) proclaim. The book explaining 'how Africans understand and relate to Christ' remains to be written. Stinton has shown here that she would be very capable of writing it.

PAUL GIFFORD

ANDREW B. SMITH:

African Herders: Emergence of Pastoral Traditions.

xvii, 251 pp. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005. \$27.

This volume is the eighth of the African Archaeology Series published by the AltaMira Press and the most comprehensive in its scope. It provides an opportunity for the author to update his earlier survey of the topic published in 1992 under the title *Pastoralism in Africa: Origins and Development Ecology* (London: Hurst). This broad topic has clearly been a fertile area for more recent detailed research, and the present summary of findings by an energetic authority on the subject should serve to keep the broader agenda in view. In other words, it is essentially a secondary source and as such it appeals to a wider readership encompassing historians, anthropologists, and all those with a general interest in African studies.

The problem of the archaeology of pastoralism is spelled out in chapter 2. Nomadic herders inevitably travel light and leave very little in the way of material culture for excavators to rediscover. It is not just that the bones they leave behind are very bare, but they are also rather recent and fragmentary. In this respect earlier pastoralist societies have a 'low archaeological visibility' and pastoralist archaeology is essentially an impoverished relation of the parent discipline. Yet equally clearly, traditions of pastoralism throughout Africa give this topic a historical prominence and this weighs in favour of the available evidence, however inadequate. The author is engaged in a long and uphill trawl throughout the pre-historical record that contains vital clues towards answering some of the most far-reaching questions, while he acknowledges that this search may never reach fruition in the fullest sense. An anomaly of prehistoric archaeology is that it draws on some of the most sophisticated

scientific techniques—unlike so many other social sciences—and yet it is confronted with a chasm of uncertainty when trying to put flesh on the bones. The topic is fraught with problems that are compounded in the case of earlier nomadic cultures.

It is the author's attempt to bridge this chasm that is the most unsatisfactory aspect of this work. In his earlier (1992) volume, he provided some thumbnail sketches of a variety of pastoralist societies taken from the historical and contemporary anthropological record. The argument was that these reveal the ecological constraints and opportunities of nomadic pastoralism which would have been present in earlier times, tying in obliquely with archaeological fragments, and suggesting ancestral forms of recently described societies. This worked quite well, building some useful interdisciplinary bridges.

The present work attempts to build further bridges, but it is less convincing when citing secondary sources obliquely to suit the argument and in the tendency towards far-fetched speculation. Why should one surmise that the replacement of skulls with plaster moulding was a ritualized confirmation of authority among new leaders (p. 66)? On what evidence can one suggest that graves were flat-topped so that people could lie on them and communicate with the dead (p. 111)? Why should arbitrary parallels in the basic architecture of huts provide evidence for some earlier link between widely separate peoples (p. 132)? Why should the appearance of villages with gardens suggest the development of slavery (p. 147)? Equally unconvincing are the speculations on the ritual behaviour of contemporary pastoralist society as survivals of ancient customs and the appeal to 'deep meanings'. Thus the involvement of women in peripheral curing rituals is taken to suggest that they had more political power in the past and the possibility of matrilineal descent (p. 129); the involvement of uterine nephews in sacrifices is considered as evidence of a once more powerful matriarchy (p. 134); the discussion of cattle in ritual refers to overlays of deep meaning linking with the past (chapter 7). Such comments implying the survival of earlier social forms in contemporary ritual would be more appropriate in E.B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (London: Murray, 1871) than in any modern tome. The author argues (p. 137) that the time depth between prehistoric and modern 'should not be used as an argument against the survival of deep meaning in any society'. Quite so; but this has proved a dead-end in anthropological theory and any attempt to resurrect a discredited approach requires more than an act of faith. It would be unfair to imply that the present volume is riddled with notions of ritual survivals in the present and deep-meanings hidden in the clues of the past, but where these occur, one has the odd juxtaposition of a discipline that demands very high standards of forensic analysis in order to arrive at informed guesses and the undisciplined resort to idle speculation that devalues the argument. Again, the quotations at the beginning of each chapter are often obscure, and with no obvious relevance they appear somewhat pretentious.

An odd feature of this work is that there appears to be no explicit suggestion that it is a sequel to or an updating of the earlier 1992 volume, which is only referred to when the author wishes to correct some point that he had made. The discussion on matters of detail is new; and yet the overall argument and the structures of the two volumes are very similar, dealing successively with the origins of pastoralism in Africa, its spread region by region, and concluding with a non-archaeological view of the contemporary scene and problems of the future. The new volume is somewhat shorter, padded out with nearly four times as many low quality photographs, and with altogether fewer

maps, charts and tables, which one would expect to be at the core of an archaeological compendium. The indexes of the two volumes were not sufficiently detailed to facilitate my attempts to link them together on specific topics.

These criticisms do not detract from the importance of the author's endeavour to open up the discourse on pastoralist archaeology in Africa. If he proposes to undertake a further update towards the end of the next decade, then I would hope that this might take the form of an expansion of his original 1992 volume, augmenting it with more recent developments in archaeological findings, and continuing his attempt to build bridges with more contemporary accounts (as in 1992), while avoiding the looser forms of speculation that mar the present volume.

PAUL SPENCER

GENERAL

SIMON P. JAMES:

Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics.

(Ashgate World Philosophies Series.) viii, 142 pp. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004. £50.

This book takes seriously the idea that the popular discourse of Zen can be both the subject of rational-philosophical enquiry and may also be employed to produce an environmental ethics. The book is principally concerned with articulating an ethics which harmonizes with many of the beliefs held by those writing on environmental issues, while simultaneously to some extent demystifying the Zen discourse and translating it into a politico-philosophical vocabulary.

The first chapter gives us a fairly uncontroversial political and doctrinal summary of the history of early Buddhism, and the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China and Japan. It then presents a short summary of how Zen has been presented in the post *Silent Spring* (1962) environmental literature: this includes brief discussions of those who take a pro-Zen position (e.g. White 1967), and also those who highlight the dangers of looking East for environmental salvation (e.g. Passmore 1980).

The second chapter takes up the charge that Zen rejects morality and is in some essential sense amoral. James points out that the current deontological and consequentialist ethical debates, which are most often determinative for the meaning of moral and amoral, were preceded historically by the concept of a virtue ethics. And the case is made that it is as a virtue ethics that we can most profitably understand a 'Zen ethics'. Drawing on Keown (2001), James contends that virtues such as wisdom (*prajña*) and compassion, which may be developed through Zen practice, are integral for and not merely instrumental to the good life (*eudaimonia*).

The third chapter is concerned with the implications of a Zen (virtue) ethics for the natural environment. Responding to the charge that a virtue ethics is inherently anthropocentric, James claims that valuing nature for its own sake is constitutive of human excellence and the good life. This is so because through the expansion of the idea of Buddha-nature to include non-sentient beings, as in certain Japanese Buddhist traditions, nature comes to be seen as

possessing certain kinds of salvational power and in fact can be understood as something from which humans can learn virtue itself. With reference to this expanded idea of the Buddha-nature, James argues against linking certain Buddhist moral prescriptions vis-à-vis sentient beings with a utilitarian defence of (only) animal rights, and instead argues for an ethical holism as the theoretical model for the Zen Buddhist attitude towards nature as a whole. At the same time the idea, contained within ethical holism, of sacrificing the individual part for the whole is criticized from the point of view of Dōgen's conception of the Buddha-nature wherein the part 'contains' the whole. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the similarities and differences between Zen and deep ecology.

Chapter 4 takes up the claim that nature possesses an intrinsic non-instrumental value and considers how this might relate to apparently incompatible Buddhist conceptions of emptiness. James attempts to sidestep the charge of intrinsic equalling non-relational and therefore substantive by pointing out that the 'intrinsic' values ascribed to nature are very often precisely *relational* but at the same time non-instrumental for human ends, e.g. ecological holism. This argument is then supplemented by a defence of emptiness as being manifest precisely in the presence of things rather than in or as some kind of non-existence. Moments of Joycean epiphany and empathic identification are seen as experiences of this intrinsic value, although James leaves its precise ontological status open.

The final chapter refutes the various charges of quietism that have been levelled against Zen since this is obviously important if one is considering Zen as a philosophy for environmental action. This fairly detailed discussion may usefully be summarized in terms of the main claims that James wishes to make for Zen: Buddha-nature is not a claim that all entities possess intrinsic value since it is not a theory of properties but an example of skilful means; the cultivation of mindfulness prevents a kind of vacuous form of living for the moment and such cultivation, along with the resulting development of character, could well be compatible with and generative of political action.

In summary, although many in the field of Japanese religions will object to James's somewhat decontextualized use of the terms and language of Zen practice, such objections beg larger questions relating to the various merits of different methodological approaches. James does not address such matters nor, arguably, is it incumbent upon him to do so in this book. Instead he gives us a stimulating and informative account of many of the issues that arise if one attempts to articulate Zen within a comparative religio-political philosophy.

CHRIS H. JONES

MICHAEL PYE:

Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism.

(Second Edition.)

xi, 209 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. £21.99.

This is a most welcome reissue of Michael Pye's hard-to-obtain but highly influential 1978 study of the concept of 'skilful means' in Buddhism. The content of the new edition is more or less unchanged from the Duckworth original. This is as it should be, since the purpose is to make a now-classic work widely available, and there are undoubtedly many students and scholars who would like to own a copy. The phrase 'skilful means', coined by Pye and

disseminated through this important work, has in the last twenty-five years become the standard English translation for the cluster of Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese terms (*upāya-kausālya*, *fang-bian*, *hōben*, etc.) discussed in the first chapter of the book. Many of the themes explored repeatedly by Pye during a prolific and continuing writing career are reflected in this relatively early work: syncretism, ambiguity, hermeneutics, comparative theology of religions and Buddhism, often viewed through the lens of Japanese religion. An up-to-date bibliography of Pye's work is found in C. Kleine, M. Schrimpf and K. Triplett (eds), *Unterwegs: Neue Pfade in der Religionswissenschaft/New Paths in the Study of Religions* (Munich, 2004), pp. 17–28.

A brief preface has been added for the new edition in which Pye reaffirms the relevance of his analysis to wider debates about doctrinal concepts in different religions. Pye mentions John Hick's 1993 chapter on skilful means in relation to Christian theology, and to this we may add Balbinder Bhogal's intriguing reference to the concept in his discussion of the hermeneutics of Sikh thought and praxis in C. Shackle, G. Singh and A. Mandair (eds), *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity* (Richmond, 2001), p. 95. An internet search for 'skilful means' yields more than half a million instances of the term on the web, sure testimony to the influence of Pye's work among English speakers interested in Buddhism.

Pye's discussion of skilful means is avowedly conceptual, the main body of the work comprising a careful appraisal of several early Chinese (effectively Sino-Indian) Buddhist texts translated by Kumārajīva, principally the Lotus Sutra (chs. 2, 3 and 4), the Teaching of Vimalakīrti (ch. 5), and various Perfection of Insight and Madhyamika works (ch. 6). Chapter 7, 'Skilful means in Pre-Mahayana Buddhism' is an excursion into non-Mahayana, mainly Pali, texts. Chapter 8 is a study of the term *hōben* in modern Japanese, and while making much of dictionary definitions it also incorporates ideas drawn from interviews with leaders and representatives of Japanese Buddhist groups, a real rarity in the 1970s. Throughout the study, Pye makes thought-provoking and nuanced connections between the more rarefied conceptual structures encountered in the texts and ordinary religious practice, pointing out for example that the notion of merit earned by a child's fingernail scratching an outline of the Buddha is underpinned by the Mahayana teaching that the intentionality of the devotee is never separated from the far-reaching merit of the Bodhisattva (p. 28). Pye's own skilful exegeses of the various texts builds up over the course of the book into a cumulative and persuasive argument that Buddhism's central method is indeed that of skilful means.

A study of skilful means undertaken today could probably not avoid addressing late twentieth-century concerns such as power, gender or Tibetan Buddhism, and perhaps few scholars today would feel it necessary to identify 'the' method of Buddhism, so the book has to be taken in the context of its time, when rounded, watertight and authoritative accounts still seemed both possible and desirable. Pye does not reveal where and how he first became aware of the potential significance of skilful means as the key to understanding the dynamics of Mahayana Buddhist doctrine and practice (presumably during his years in Japan), or why it attracted him as a research topic, but he returns more than once to the liberal notion of 'conceptual restraint' and clearly values the ideal of a religious doctrinal system which on the one hand has its 'omega point' (p. 149) and yet can genuinely accommodate different truths without relativizing one at the expense of another, even if this is very often what happens in sectarian Buddhism (pp. 148–54). Pye does not ask, as Hick does, to what extent the concept of skilful means is itself a skilful means. His

self-imposed conceptual restraint in this regard exemplifies the strength of this work as a contribution to Religious studies; it is grounded in a critical understanding and appreciation of religion.

The main chapters in the new edition appear in a new font and layout, with the 1978 running footnotes transplanted as chapter endnotes. Many of these notes were, in the style of the times, fairly extensive discourses, so the overall effect of the new layout is more modern if less convenient for the reader. In the resetting process some minor errors from 1978 have been preserved (e.g. p. 11 succinct for succinct; p. 76 *Gadgasasvara* for *Gadgadasvara*) and some new ones introduced (e.g. p. 74 *Prabhūtaratna* has become *Prabhūaratna*; in notes 11 and 12 on p. 77 the Chinese character *ling* (command) has usurped *jin* (now). The appendixes (pp. 164–96) are a straight facsimile of the 1978 edition in the old typeface, which detracts somewhat from the overall book design. The index appears to have been automatically regenerated so that, for example, the entry ‘Tokyo’, which in 1978 sensibly pointed to one passage on p. 3 about modern housewives in the capital, now lists all the pages where ‘Tokyo’ appears in the notes as a place of publication. To dwell on such peripheral matters however would be ‘to take hold of the branches and leaves’ (p. 129) and to miss the essence of the matter; that *Skilful Means* was, and is, a very good book indeed.

BRIAN BOCKING

HAE-KYUNG UM (ed.):

*Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts:
Translating Traditions.*

xi, 235 pp. Abingdon: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005. £65.

This is an ambitious book. It has to situate the performance arts of a number of diasporas in respect to their former and current geographical locales, and as a result it is diverse in both content and approaches. At the same time, the literature on diaspora more generally considered is vast, and much has to be glossed over. The book began as two panels at a Leiden University conference in 2000, ‘Audiences, patrons, and performers in the performing arts of Asia’. Individual authors have risen to the challenge of transferring spoken papers to the written page in different ways. One chapter, by Deborah Wong, has already been published elsewhere. Some chapters take broad brushes to offer overviews that will probably become parts of larger monographs, and some are particularly personal and reflective studies of one or two performance events. The volume as a whole, and not surprisingly, is as a result a little uneven.

Um, in her introduction, nicely ties the volume together, discussing definitions of diaspora and their uses within the transnational and intercultural sphere of modernity. Definitions, she notes, are evolving. She accepts that diasporic communities make new transformations of traditions and cultures, but that they face hybridity within their identity. At the other end of the book, Colin Mackerras draws things together with a personal and reflective conclusion drawing on the constituent chapters. In many ways, his is a more difficult task than Um’s. He notes the diversity encapsulated by the volume’s contributors: most authors appeal to personal experience, some to diasporic performances merely attended, but some are active participants in the performance arts they discuss. He disentangles the definitions of diaspora that Um provided at the outset. He notes that change is a normal part of the performing arts, and that, hence, there will always be dynamic interchange between diasporas and

the places where they reside. This, though, contrasts with an emphasis that Um and others place on the maintenance of tradition, and his primary conclusion contrasts with the concern of authors including Giovanni Giuriati, when he insists that 'despite this globalization, there is absolutely no sign that local cultures are going out of existence. Diasporas are contributing a great deal to preserving the cultures of their original homelands...' (p. 226). The subject, clearly, is too broad, and too personal, to be adequately encompassed in just this single volume.

The book divides into two sections. A larger chunk, Part I, consists of nine chapters and is subtitled 'Asian diasporas and performing arts', with a rump of three chapters, Part II, titled 'Intercultural performances and transnational audiences'. The first commences with Mackerras's primary contribution, a broad-brush overview of Chinese diasporic performing arts that also incorporates considerable and closely detailed data. Frederick Lau's contribution, 'Morphing Chineseness', narrows our focus to two Singapore-based Chinese music associations. The broad approach returns with Um's discussion of the Korean diaspora in the former Soviet Union and China, then Shuhei Hosokawa and Deborah Wong zoom in on, first, the Japanese diaspora in the Sao Paulo carnival and, second, Japanese *taiko* drumming in California. Each of these case studies is given detailed scene-setting, and each is excellent on its own terms. Wong's chapter is particularly noteworthy, deftly combining personal participation in training and performance events with an informative discussion on the personalities and groups encountered.

The broad/narrow sequence is then inverted in two considerations of South Asian performance arts in Britain. First, Magdalen Gorringer offers an account of an *arangetram*, a ceremonial performance by a 15-year-old girl that marked her becoming a fully-fledged *bharata natyam* dancer. Gorringer, we are told, has also gone through her own *arangetram* and so, in place of offering much in the way of background to *bharata natyam* and its performance, the chapter dwells on reflection. Second, Gerry Farrell, who sadly died prematurely a year ago, joins with Jayeeta Bhowmick and Graham Welch to give a lengthy but broad account of 'South Asian music in Britain'. This includes a thorough survey of what happens where, coupled to considerations of community organizations, language, concepts (including a second definition of the *arangetram*: the authors clearly never saw Gorringer's chapter), and the influences apparent in the emergence of new popular genres. The chapter concludes with a useful glossary that defines South Asian music genres from acid *bhangra* to *Rabindra sangit*.

Part I ends with two accounts. Giuriati's 'Idealization and change in the music of the Cambodian diaspora' is based on fieldwork conducted since the 1980s in the USA, France and Cambodia. Its basic standpoint is that 'in the case of musics of the refugees, change manifests itself at a faster pace' than amongst more stable communities (p. 130). This, and other statements on refugees and their cultural practices, are somewhat sweeping. He couples his own material on Cambodia with Reyes's account of Vietnamese refugees, but I wonder whether a comparison with refugees from, say, the Nazi era might prove constructive. Again, comparison might have helped to avoid his non-committal conclusions, where he writes that he does not know how second- and third-generation Khmer refugees will develop or maintain their performance arts, or that, since the process is ongoing, it remains to be seen what direction their arts will take. Paula Bos's chapter, 'Nagi music and community', is more narrowly focused, looking at the island people of Flores in eastern Indonesia and comparing examples of their traditional and pop music.

Part II presents three distinct accounts. The first and third essentially connect, but the second stands isolated. First, Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak looks at *Jingju*, Beijing 'opera'. Over four pages she explores its existence and practice in Shanghai and Nanjing, although she omits reference to Jonathan Stock's recent work: *Huju: Traditional Opera in Modern Shanghai* (Oxford: The British Academy, 2003). Then, seven pages detail how it has been taught and performed to students at the University of Hawai'i. Third, Peter Eckersall discusses the Gekidan Kaitaisha-NYID (Not Yet Its Difficult) intercultural collaboration project between Japanese and Australian theatre companies. Eckersall's biography at the start of the book profiles him as the 'dramaturg' for NYID, so it is not surprising that, in addition to offering description and consideration, he contends that this form of intercultural project is part of globalization and undermines the well-known and widely cited universalist tradition advanced by Richard Schechner, Peter Brook and others. It is, though, the second account in Part II that I find most impressive. This is Yayoi Uno Everett's exploration of the use of Japanese court music, *gagaku*, in post-war art music by Japanese and foreign composers. Taking three pieces, by Matsudaira, Messiaen and Takemitsu, she illustrates her account with notations, and with the only character glossary in the book. This wonderfully extends her consideration of the representation of East Asia in (western) art music that was previously encountered in her co-edited volume with Frederick Lau (*Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004)).

In sum, while some chapters are gems, others are merely worthy. However, because the volume offers material that is usually neglected in accounts concentrated on dominant cultures and in accounts concerned with performance arts where they originate rather than in the host cultures where diasporic groups reside, it is an important contribution. It will appeal to many and, indeed, at a time when we are struggling to navigate our way between interculturalism, crossculturalism, and multiculturalism, a number of individual chapters will doubtless become essential reading.

KEITH HOWARD