

# REVIEWS

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## THE ANCIENT WORLD

PIRJO LAPINKIVI:

*The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence.*

(State Archives of Assyria Studies, 15.) xix, 309 pp. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004.

This beautifully produced paperback is a University of Helsinki dissertation that aims to shed new light on one of the most fascinating aspects of ancient Mesopotamian religion, the sacred marriage. The best known such marriage involved the king and the goddess Inanna, as seen in texts from the opening centuries of the second millennium BC. Scholars do not agree as to whether this divine marriage was consummated symbolically or by an act of sexual intercourse in which the king impersonated Inanna's lover, Dumuzi (Tammuz), and made love to a priestess representing the great goddess herself. The problem will probably never be resolved while the ritual itself is known only from allusion and incidental references. The principal primary sources are Sumerian love songs featuring Dumuzi and Inanna, which may or may not have played a part in the ritual. Just recently these songs have been re-edited in a modern and reliable edition (Y. Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature*, Ramat Gan, 1998). The topic of sacred marriage as a whole has been discussed by several senior Assyriologists in the last few years, including Jerrold S. Cooper in 1993 and Piotr Steinkeller in 1996. What room does this leave for a doctoral student to make the subject her own?

Pirjo Lapinkivi's answer lies in making a comparative study of sacred marriage using a wide range of sources. After setting out the Sumerian evidence in an admirably clear and concise manner, she begins her real task by collecting evidence for sacred marriages in later Mesopotamia, when those ceremonies that are known affirmed relationships between deities without obvious human impersonation. This evidence includes love lyrics that seem to have been used in rites of divine marriage and references to such rites in cultic calendars and other texts.

In the section on first-millennium Mesopotamia Lapinkivi too often shows an uncritical preference for secondary literature over primary sources and this sometimes leads her astray. For example, in discussing the divine ladies who enjoyed the attentions of the god Nabû, Lapinkivi reiterates Matsushima and Nissinen's contention that 'Tašmetu was Nabû's wife in Assyria ... whereas Nanaya was his wife in Babylonia' (p. 81, n. 267). Things were not that neat. According to the cultic topographical texts and other primary sources of the first millennium, it was Tashmetum, not Nanay, who resided with Nabû in Babylon as his consort, both in his temple and in the shrine on the ziqqurrat, and Tashmetum, not Nanay, who was stationed in the inner sanctum of Esangil, the temple of Marduk, Nabû's father, like a good daughter-in-law waiting on the *paterfamilias*. These cultic arrangements reflect conservative theology. Tashmetum's status as Nabû's consort was much older than Nanay's, being attested in Babylonia already in a god list from the early

second millennium. Nanay, a hypostasis of Ishtar of Uruk in the deep south, came later on the north Babylonian scene through syncretism, and thereafter was at times Nabû's wife, at others his girlfriend, much as Ishtar was Marduk's concubine. Modern, text-based studies of Nanay have been published by Joan Goodrich Westenholz (1997) and Marten Stol (1998); Lapinkivi seems not to have used them.

Other errors arise from lack of knowledge and recourse to outdated literature. Because it describes a bed in the shrine on Marduk's ziqqurrat, a copy of the Esangil Tablet dated to the reign of Seleucus II is cited to 'indicate that the marriage ceremony [of Marduk and his consort] was still taking place in the third century BCE' (p. 89). It may well have been, but not in that location, for the ziqqurrat was dismantled maybe one hundred years before the tablet was written! Explanation: the manuscript in question is a late copy of a text from the scribal tradition, and reports information many centuries old. It cannot be used as evidence for ritual practice in the Hellenistic era.

There is no temple of Dumuzi *ša KILBAD* listed in the 'Stadtbeschreibung' of Babylon (p. 82); this text has been comprehensively re-edited since Eckhard Unger's unsatisfactory attempt in 1931, and the temple belongs to Dumuzi *ša kimīti* 'of captivity'. To take the presence of this temple in Babylon as 'implying Dumuzi's close relations with Marduk and his city', seeking corroboration in references to Marduk as 'brother of Ištar and Šamaš' (p. 82), is forcing a point. Traditionally there were 43 temples in Babylon, which as the capital of Babylonia was the terrestrial counterpart of the heavens, and the abode of all the gods. Just as pertinently, but unobserved by Lapinkivi, Dumuzi occupied a 'seat' in Esangil itself; but then, so did a hundred other gods. The term 'brother' need imply no more than membership of the same generation. Marduk was not Dumuzi; indeed, first-millennium theologians made him Dumuzi's enemy, responsible for his captivity in the netherworld.

After examining the rituals of first-millennium Mesopotamia Lapinkivi moves on to the Song of Songs, which is reminiscent of Babylonian love songs in many ways. Though secular in origin, this text became sacred when reinterpreted as an allegory of love between God and his worshippers. Allegorical interpretation is one of the elements common to mystical traditions of religion, and it is to these that Lapinkivi turns next. The exploration of the themes exhibited in the Mesopotamian sacred marriage texts in the light of later religions of the Near East and India forms the book's heart. Readers familiar with the work of other Helsinki Assyriologists, especially Simo Parpola's studies of the 'tree of life' and Assyrian prophecy, will note that in content and method Lapinkivi's book belongs to what may be called the Helsinki school. She repeats and develops many of Parpola's ideas concerning the Assyrian and ancient Mesopotamian origin of concepts, beliefs and rituals found in Christianity and other, less enduring, east-Mediterranean mystery religions.

Particularly important for Lapinkivi's understanding of Inanna are (a) Parpola's reading of the myth of Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld as an allegory of the human soul's redemption and salvation, and (b) the (quite plausible) proposal that Ishtar, the Babylonian Inanna, was the centre of an ecstatic mystery cult whose secrets were known only to initiates. Her main contention, finally, is that the 'marriage of the goddess Inanna and the king is also to be understood as an allegory for the union of a human soul with the divine' (p. 242). Consequently the sexual allusions of the Sumerian songs of sacred marriage are 'allegorical or symbolic', and intercourse took place only 'in the imagination of the observers'.

The methodology employed by the Helsinki school has already been exposed as faulty by Jerrold S. Cooper in his critique of Parpola's work, where he characterizes some of the argument as 'circular and flawed' ('Assyrian prophecies, the Assyrian tree, and the Mesopotamian origins of Jewish monotheism, Greek philosophy, Christian theology, Gnosticism, and much more', *JAOS* 120, 2000, 430–44). Lapinkivi's attempt to substantiate Parpola's ideas by asserting a Babylonian 'concept of the soul' and equating this soul with the goddess Ishtar is similarly problematic. She begins by identifying 'soul' as a meaning of the Babylonian *zaqīqu*. This is a word of wide semantic field that essentially conveys the idea of the intangible; when it refers to that invisible part of the human individual that the Babylonians thought survived the death of the body, and more often called *eṭemmu*, it is usually translated 'ghost' or 'spirit'. The notion that *zaqīqu* means 'soul', with all that that implies, is sufficiently controversial to warrant a proper philological investigation. Lapinkivi instead cites an encyclopedia article by Jo Ann Scurlock (1995), which makes the suggestion only that *zaqīqu* was the 'closest ancient Mesopotamian equivalent to the modern concept of "soul"'.

Scurlock tossed in the notion that the *zaqīqu* was 'probably bird-like', no doubt because in Babylonia the shades of the dead were envisaged as clad in feathers. Lapinkivi seizes on this detail, because the goddess Ishtar is sometimes portrayed with wings and once equated with the owl-goddess Kilili. Other deities were portrayed with wings, but that is not mentioned and the reasons why wings might be appropriate for some immortals are not explored. Lapinkivi would rather have us know that in some Finno-Ugrian languages the words for 'wife', 'spirit' and 'intelligent' are cognate, leading her to assert that the 'concept of soul/spirit and wisdom being feminine in nature is not restricted to Near Eastern traditions—Gnosis and Judaism—but is a universal idea' (p. 143). Things have to be more widely attested in order to be universal, but never mind. The conclusion is, 'it is not impossible to believe that this same idea was already extant in ancient Mesopotamia'. Not impossible, but that is hardly secure ground for building an hypothesis. A philological enquiry would have thrown up *ab initio* the awkward (but not insurmountable) fact that both *zaqīqu* and its near synonym, *eṭemmu*, are masculine in gender, a situation that does not tally well with the notion of a universally feminine soul.

Everywhere in this study of sacred marriage is commendable evidence of very wide reading in non-Assyriological sources. As a doctoral thesis in Assyriology, however, the topic was overambitious, for the need to cover such an enormous field of comparative religion has in places compromised control of Assyriological detail and soundness of method. Noting the author's handling of evidence from her own discipline, the cautions reader may lack confidence in her use of data from other fields of study.

A. R. GEORGE

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## THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

CAROLINE FINKEL:

*Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923.*  
xix, 660pp. London: John Murray, 2005. £30.

As a rule, I am very reluctant to read popular histories of the Ottoman Empire, since as Caroline Finkel herself says in the introduction to *Osman's*

*Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923*, ‘Much of what passes for general history-writing about the Ottoman Empire in its varied aspects is in reality quite innocent of “history” and reduces the Ottomans and their world to a theatre of the absurd’. The question, therefore, is whether the author herself succeeds in the task which she sets herself of creating a ‘new narrative’. This is a daunting undertaking: it is difficult enough to condense more than 600 years of history into a single volume, but even more difficult in the case of the Ottoman Empire, where the available secondary literature is patchy, and what there is, of uneven quality.

The core of the book presents a continuous, and consistently well written, narrative history of the Empire. This is welcome on two counts. First, it is a pleasure to read, making the book particularly appealing to the non-specialist reader, whom the publisher lures by printing a puff from the novelist Orhan Pamuk on the dust-jacket: ‘Caroline Finkel effortlessly conveys the high drama of Ottoman history’. In this case the puff is quite true. Whereas the narrative is continuous, it lingers at greater length on the more colourful incidents in the Empire’s history, such as the fate of Bayezid II’s brother Cem, who died in Italy in 1495, or the insurrection which led to the murder of Osman II in 1622. Second, a reliable narrative provides a useful tool for Ottoman specialists, who frequently make mistakes simply because they do not know the wider context of the subject of their specialist research. In this respect, it is a handy work of reference. However, an aspect of the book that makes it unique among popular histories of the Empire is that, in constructing the narrative, Dr Finkel has in many places—and in particular when dealing with the seventeenth century—used primary source materials, including a great deal that is still unpublished. Another virtue of the book is that, in addition to providing a continuous narrative, its account of events serves to highlight some of the major themes of Ottoman history. Dr Finkel is consistently good in her analysis of foreign relations, a particular strength being the attention paid to the northern frontiers of the Empire before the emergence of Russia as a great power in the eighteenth century. Equally, her judicious account of the death agonies of the Empire and the traumatic experiences of various ethnic groups both within and outside its borders is a very welcome voice of sanity amidst the partisan clamour that passes for the ‘history’ of this period. The book ends not with the final death of the Empire in 1923, but in 1928, when Mustafa Kemal gave his speech outlining his version of the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the last successor state to the Ottoman Empire. Obviously the format of the book and the limitations of space do not provide the scope to discuss Ottoman institutions or institutional developments at length. None the less, Finkel does succeed in giving brief—and often elegant—summaries of the internal structures of the Empire, which she considers important to an understanding of the dynamics of Ottoman politics. Her explanation for the emergence of powerful dynasties of provincial notables in the eighteenth century is particularly successful.

The book does, therefore, provide a ‘new narrative’ and, in doing so, renders all other popular Ottoman histories redundant (if they were not redundant already). At the same time it will act as a valuable guide to Ottomanists and other professional historians whose work requires a knowledge of the Ottoman Empire.

As is the case with any work of this scope, *Osman’s Dream* contains some mistakes of detail. A few of these are based on common misunderstandings. For example, Mehmed II was not—as Halil İnalcık and others assert—‘the first to codify a body of dynastic law’ (pp. 78, 145). The two codes attributed

to him date from after his reign: the first codes of dynastic law appeared in the reign of his successor, Bayezid II. A few other errors show a misunderstanding of the sources used. For example, Ebüssuud certainly did not fabricate 'a basis for the claim that the Ottomans were connected to the Quraysh' (p. 145); and when the head of the Meccan ulema issued a fatwa against the *Tanzimat* reforms, he did not say that the blood of the Turks would be 'spilt in vain' (p. 499), but rather that 'their blood will not have the protection of the law'. However, these and a few other slips are minor blemishes, and inevitable in an undertaking of this scope. Finally—and this is no criticism of the author—it is a pity that Handan Nezir Akmeşe's *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* did not appear in time to be used in writing *Osman's Dream*. By investigating the ideologies current in the Ottoman officer corps before 1914, Akmeşe has uncovered an ideological continuity between the late Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, adding a new dimension to the themes which Finkel discusses in her final chapter.

COLIN IMBER

KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB:

*Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800.*

x, 210 pp. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. £23.

The perception of the ethical norms—be they real or assumed—of the respective other constitutes one of the most sensitive areas in any intercultural and/or interreligious encounter. This holds even more true for norms related to sexuality. Accusations of allegedly loose sexual norms and even promiscuity were frequent in Muslim polemics against Byzantine Christians during the first Islamic centuries, and Muslim polemical writers against Judaism throughout the ages adduced in Genesis 18:32 ff. (containing a report that the daughters of Lot gave him wine until he got drunk and fornicated with both of them) or II Samuel 11–12 (describing David's killing of Uriah to marry the latter's wife, Batsheva) as proof that the Jews have falsified the scripture. By the same token, Christian polemical writings against Islam were deeply concerned with topics such as polygamy and the quranic promises of paradise virgins (*houris*). The issue of sexuality becomes even more sensitive when it comes to sexual relationships between members of the same sex. European scholars and travellers throughout the ages were astonished, often disgusted, to witness expressions of sexual attraction, feelings and behaviour among males in literature and in reality. The 'vice' or 'sin of sodomy', as it was usually known, was interpreted as a symbol of corrupt morals and decadence, and provoked a variety of explanations. In poetry the masculine beloved was as a rule translated into feminine, and sensitive passages were often rendered into Latin rather than French or German. By the same token, representatives of the homosexual liberation movement that emerged during the nineteenth century incorporated Arabic and Persian love poetry with homosexual connotations into their literary canon. Translations of the *Arabian Nights*, of Shaykh Nafzawī's *Perfumed Garden* and of poetry by Abū Nuwās or Sa'dī are even now among the titles to be found in virtually every list of gay literature. Moreover, the allegedly widespread tolerance of Islamic societies towards same-sex relations was often seen as proof of the ubiquity of the phenomenon

and held up as an ideal model. The paucity of research devoted to same-sex love in Islamic societies indicates the extent to which this topic has been fraught with prejudices and reservations among academics. Moreover, most of what has been written in this field by scholars of Islamic studies is as a rule based on a select literary genre that hardly allows comprehensive assessments of the various categories of same-sex love in Islamic societies.

The volume under review rectifies many of the above-mentioned prejudices and misinterpretations in a masterly fashion. Khaled El-Rouayheb analyses the notions and perceptions of male homosexual behaviour and feelings during the centuries immediately preceding the beginning of modernization and westernization in the nineteenth century, focusing on the Arab-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire. His careful distinction between the different categories of feelings, expressions, behaviour, terms and actors of same-sex love shows, in a nutshell, that many of the evaluations of modern scholarship on Islamic societies and Arabic literature, and on the comparative history of homosexuality need to be revised, and that the modern concept of homosexuality is inappropriate in view of the multifaceted attitudes towards love among male members of these societies during the period under consideration. The author draws on an impressively wide range of literary genres: primary literary sources in Arabic such as belletristic works in verse and prose, chronicles, biographical dictionaries and other historical works; Islamic mystical, medical and legal literature; and Western travel accounts, and he successfully uses these different genres through what is virtually an interdisciplinary approach so as to analyse in a differentiated manner the various notions of and attitudes to the phenomenon of same-sex love. The book consists of three dense and well-written chapters, each depicting a different strand relevant to perceptions of same-sex love among the culture of the male urban elite of the time. Chapter 1 analyses the differentiation between the 'active' versus 'passive' or 'insertive' versus 'receptive' roles in sexual intercourse and the notion that a man who sought to have intercourse with a beardless male youth was not violating the ideal of masculinity as long as he stuck to the 'active' or 'insertive' role. Chapter 2 explores the general aesthetic sensibility towards human beauty, be it in the form of women or beardless youths. The chapter contains, among other elements, a thoughtful discussion on whether Arabic love poetry dedicated to boys was purely fictitious and inauthentic—i.e. a merely literary exercise—or whether the poets were expressing their own feelings and experiences in their work. El-Rouayheb argues that the frequency of expressions of pederastic love in that genre certainly must have corresponded to a prevalent cultural notion among the poets and their audience, who considered the refined and chaste love for boys with sympathy and in an idealistic manner. Chapter 3 is concerned with the evaluation of the various forms of sexual relations between men in the Islamic legal literature, with detailed discussions of the various legal opinions regarding issues such as gazing at beardless boys, sexual intercourse between men, the question of whether *liwāt* could exist in paradise, and of what falls within the boundaries of *liwāt* and what does not. Every chapter is very carefully argued and replete with literary references and examples. In the conclusion the author briefly elaborates on the dramatic cultural change that occurred during the nineteenth and particularly the twentieth centuries, in the course of which European Victorian attitudes were gradually adopted, and the diverse strands of same-sex love were now subsumed under a new term *shudhūdh jinsī*, corresponding to the European pathological understanding of homosexuality as 'sexual perversion', and its far-reaching consequences.



It is to be hoped that the volume will serve as a model for similarly in-depth studies on same-sex love among Islamic societies of different geographic and temporal boundaries and, depending on the availability of sources, of different social groups.

SABINE SCHMIDTKE

ALEXANDER HARIDI:

*Das Paradigma der "islamischen Zivilisation"—oder die Begründung der deutschen Islamwissenschaft durch Carl Heinrich Becker (1876–1933).*

(MISK—Mitteilungen zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der islamischen Welt, 19.) 204 pp. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2005. € 34.

C.H. Becker is one of the key figures in the history of German-language Islamic studies (meant hereafter in the sense of 'Islamwissenschaft'). He did more than simply play a crucial role in the establishment of chairs for the discipline at various universities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; his numerous publications also helped to demarcate the newly emerging field's content and basic assumptions. Furthermore during the Weimar Republic he rose through the Prussian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to serve as a minister in various governments. Here, he sought to reshape educational institutions according to his outlook until his retirement from politics in 1930. As a consequence of his importance, a number of articles and chapters have dealt with different aspects of his academic and political career.

In the field of Islamic studies, his various overviews of Islamic history and culture that aimed at synthesis have established his position. Becker adhered to some degree to the late nineteenth-century universalistic mode of history writing. In his contributions to Islamic studies he spelled this out by putting forward the idea of a joint Islamic-Christian cultural sphere around the Mediterranean, which was unified by its shared Hellenistic roots. It is this departure from the period's dominant perspective, which understood Islam mainly in terms of difference, that represents his lasting legacy. In addition, several other elements in Becker's approach to Islamic history have retained topicality, such as his conviction that Islamic civilization was not inherently static, but had the potential for development and change.

Haridi's study integrates, for the first time, the various elements of C.H. Becker's career and thought into a monograph. The book's three parts deal respectively with 'The justification and functions of the paradigm of "Islamic civilization"', 'C.H. Becker and the problem of "culture" in German humanities at the turn of the century', and 'Becker's influence on Islamic studies'.

The first part describes what Haridi defines as the key element in Becker's outlook, the paradigm of a single Islamic civilization. With reference to Becker's publications, especially those aiming at synthesis, Haridi firstly works out in which ways Becker built this paradigm by drawing on his predecessors' research. In a second step Haridi analyses this paradigm and shows its inherent inconsistency: Becker never spelled out exactly how the various elements were linked to the overarching entity, the Islamic civilization, as he assumed

its homogeneity from the outset. Furthermore, Becker did not apply it in a consistent manner as he was split between materialistic and idealistic approaches to history. The underpinning element of his paradigm was the 'Orient' (understood in its widest sense as stretching from Africa to East Asia), which is characterized by the common character of the Oriental peoples adhering to the Islamic faith. He ascribed to these Orientals (a concept constituted on a biological basis) intrinsic negative qualities and considered them, for the time being at least, to be unable to access Western modernity.

In the second part Haridi contextualizes Becker's paradigm within the field of humanities and late nineteenth/early twentieth-century society. He demonstrates that Becker's thinking was deeply influenced by the period's reactions to Historicism, namely the writings of Max Weber and the professor of theology and philosophy at Heidelberg, Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923). Belonging to the liberal and Protestant middle class, Becker's quest for a universal framework for writing history was furthermore informed by the growing sense of a cultural crisis within this milieu.

Finally, the third part deals briefly with the influence of Becker's work on German Islamic studies, namely on the work of Richard Hartmann (1881–1965), Jörg Kraemer (1917–62) and Heinrich Schrader (1896–1957). Further space is devoted to a discussion of previous evaluations of Becker in secondary literature.

Haridi's study offers an excellent overview of Becker's work and thinking, drawing on the relevant sources and taking heed of the period's intellectual environment. It is an important contribution towards understanding the discipline of Islamic studies in the phase of its developing its own profile independent from other subjects. Taken together with recent studies dealing with the discipline as a whole, most importantly Ludmilla Hanisch, *Die Nachfolger der Exegeten: deutschsprachige Erforschung des Vorderen Orients in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 2003) and Sabine Mangold, *Eine 'weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft'—Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2004), we are in the process of gaining a considerably more informed picture of late nineteenth/early twentieth-century German-language Islamic studies.

This book not only fills an important gap in the history of the discipline, but also rectifies major misconceptions that are commonly repeated. For example, Haridi refutes the thesis, famously put forward by Edward Said in *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London, 1978), that German Islamic studies was, compared to its French and English counterparts, less instrumental in the period's policies owing to Germany's short-lived colonial ambitions. This detailed study of a key figure demonstrates that Becker was convinced of the German *mission civilisatrice* in the predominantly Muslim colonies in Africa and justified the German quest for colonial expansion in his writings on Islamic civilization. Furthermore, his successful attempt to establish the discipline at universities was intimately linked to his argument that the colonial authorities were in dire need of the discipline's competence in order to administer the colonies successfully.

Minor shortcomings (the rather descriptive third part is—with the exception of the discussion of the Arabic literature—of limited interest; only names are indexed; the text is occasionally poorly edited [e.g. p. 113 'Nicht nur, daß uns das *missing link* fehlt']) do not detract from the study's importance for anyone interested in the history of the discipline.



MICHAEL G. MORONY (ed.):

*Production and the Exploitation of Resources.*

(The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, 11.) xi, 398 pp.

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. £75.

MICHAEL G. MORONY (ed.):

*Manufacturing and Labour.*

(The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, 12.) x, 378 pp.

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. £75.

These two volumes contain previously published articles, selected by Professor Morony because 'they defined the issues, are still widely cited, are significant in modern historiography, and deserve to be available'. All are based on, or deal with, literary sources and archaeological evidence from the seventh to the tenth centuries, the first three centuries of Islamic rule in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain. The articles in the first volume are grouped into four sub-sections: mining, stock raising, agriculture and irrigation. They deal with mining and smelting techniques, the role of the nomads, farming techniques and crops, and different irrigation techniques. The second volume is devoted to manufacturing and labour. It contains four articles on production techniques, mostly relating to textiles and ceramics, and nine on labour, dealing with the identity and status of labourers from different social groups. Some of the articles, such as Goldziher's on crafts among the Arabs, published in 1894, are older, but most were written between 1959 and 2003. Any articles originally written in other languages have been translated into English.

The two volumes complement each other thematically: the first reconstitutes the availability of natural resources in the regions surveyed and the techniques involved in their exploitation, while the second deals with the human element which transformed them into products. Together, however, they do not amount to, nor do they claim to be, a comprehensive synthesis of the economic history of these two subjects in the early Islamic period, even though each article is called a 'chapter' and is given a numerical order. The editor has supplied an introduction for each volume, explaining his choice of articles, and giving a bibliography of books which would provide either an economic context or a general synthesis of the various subjects. Without contesting Professor Morony's choice of material, the absence of any of Claude Cahen's numerous articles is surprising, given both his outstanding contribution to the field and his methodology, guidance and inspiration during the many years he served as editor of the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*.

The two volumes are part of the series The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, which envisions the publication of forty-eight similar volumes of collected scholarly articles covering the first 300 years of Islamic rule. This is an ambitious project, which raises some methodological questions of its own, though only those related to the field of economic history will be mentioned here. The most fundamental of these questions concerns the relationship between the objectives of the series as a whole and how representative of those objectives the selection of articles in these two volumes really is. The historiographical epistemology of the series is one of continuity and change in the region, as suggested by the use of the word 'formation' in the title. This criterion is easily perceived by those interested in intellectual history thanks

to the two parallel processes of Islamization and Arabization. However, for the four titles devoted to economic history—two further titles, one on money the other on trade, are planned—one has to wonder just how relevant such epistemology is to economic history. The choice made by the editor of the present two volumes seems to favour the view of the Barudalian Mediterranean of *longue durée* structures—geography, climate, resources—rather than change. No reference is found to political or legal aspects as economic factors, although the editor does refer to the relevance of demography to manufacturing and markets, but without elaborating. Judging by his selection of articles, Morony's answer to the question of structures was to reconstitute and evaluate elements such as local resources and their exploitation, and manufacturing techniques, highlighting subjects such as nomads and *qanats*, which were unique to the region as it claimed its Islamic identity. With this guiding principle of what constituted the economic foundations of the newly reconstructed societies the editor has also devoted more space to archaeological evidence on production, and more attention to the physical aspects of items produced. Most of the authors see a simple continuation with a slight but gradual improvement in the quantity and quality of production, especially in the textile industry, but not all of them deny that a drastic change in the economic history of the Middle East took place. Andrew Watson does see such a change, heralded by the advent of Arabization and Islamization as tools of the agricultural revolution, while others highlight the unique input of Islamic technical developments as reflected in the Arabic technical manuals. Morony, himself a long-time contributor to the field of early Islamic economic history, has recently expressed his views on the question of the emerging Islamic economy in an article published in *JESHO* 47/2 (2004), 166–94, which readers interested in the subject could consult.

One hopes that the articles selected for the next two volumes will provide a fuller view of the formation of the economic history of the early medieval period, not only by reconstructing the existing structures, but in showing how the incoming polity affected them. The significance of the period as a transition period coalescing into a genuine Islamic economic system is hard to answer in simple terms without considering the effect of the new legal order on the economy, particularly on commercial activities, and how the political structures and elites affected the direction and progress of the economy of the societies inhabiting the regions. When considering continuity and change in economic history, all these factors will have an across-the-board effect.

The question of audience is equally valid. In all probability, these collections of previously published material have been compiled for the benefit of undergraduate and graduate students. While scholars may find it useful to have them grouped in this manner, they none the less reflect a personal selection, made by one individual, and those economic historians who use the volumes may already possess copies of many of the articles. But the main question in this context remains whether and how the collection would inspire and contribute to furthering research in economic history. The nature and achievements of the Islamic economy in the medieval period are impressive and unique, but its historiography lags behind that of other areas. While the stumbling block and the traditional complaint is always the lack of sources, one could also argue that the lack of methodology is another cause. The chronic lack of archival records rich enough in numbers to allow for quantification is well demonstrated in the articles in these two volumes, which are based mostly on literary sources. The editor has attempted to counteract this shortcoming by including publications recording findings from archeological

digs. Morony has done good work in pointing to new directions, indicating where new evidence might come from and what new fields are likely to provide new vistas and new themes to build on them. New input and approaches are eagerly awaited.

MAYA SHATZMILLER

NAVID KERMANI:

*Der Schrecken Gottes: Attar, Hiob und die metaphysische Revolte.*  
335 pp. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005. €24.90.

When a book on a classical Persian Sufi poet is reviewed in German broadsheet newspapers and appears in lists of bestselling non-fiction books, it cannot be attributed solely to the recent wave of interest in Islam and Sufism. Kermani's book is not really an academic monograph on Farid al-Din 'Attar (c. 1142–1220) and one of his lesser-known and understudied works, the *Musibatnama* (The Book of Suffering), but an essay on how this Persian Sufi poet approaches the problem of theodicy; the question of how a God who is understood as the source of all good, just, merciful and omnipotent, can allow evil to happen in this world and can let the innocent suffer. In his published PhD thesis *Gott ist schön: das ästhetische Erleben des Koran* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2000), Kermani exhibited his talent at combining academic rigour with an accessible essayist style which allowed his book to be marketed for a non-academic readership. This publication on 'Attar and the *Musibatnama* is in a sense a continuation of his published thesis. While *Gott ist schön* deals with the intrinsic aesthetic beauty of the Quran as a constituent element of Muslim religiosity, *Der Schrecken Gottes* is about another of God's attributes—not his beauty but his terror as expressed in one of his epithets, *al-qahhar* ('the Subduer'), whose calligraphic rendering is placed on the book cover.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition Job is the biblical figure epitomizing the problem of theodicy. In the first chapter of the book, Kermani's aunt Lobat is presented as a female Job. A deeply religious woman, she underwent a painful ordeal in the final months of her life. For her family, aunt Lobat's suffering appeared unique and unjust, as she was seen as the most god-fearing and righteous member of the family. From his personal account of his aunt, which he relates to the biblical Job, Kermani begins to examine the core problem of theodicy: how can the suffering and injustice in the world be harmonized with the understanding of God that the three monotheistic religions teach?

Kermani looks at the response Farid al-Din 'Attar develops. Providing an introduction to the mystical Persian poet and the historical context in which he lived, Kermani discusses the actual contents of the *Musibatnama*. The structure of Attar's work is inspired by the 40-day retreat a Sufi adept enters, fasting, meditating and remembering God. The *Musibatnama* describes the journey of the Sufi adept through forty different spheres, similar to the narrative of the mystical ascent provided in 'Attar's other, more famous, work, *The Conference of the Birds*. The Sufi adept starts his journey with a pessimistic, almost nihilistic, view of the world, perceiving its futility and the general decline of religion. On his journey, the Sufi adept meets angels and the prophets of the past. But rather than providing spiritual insights and illuminations, the celestial and prophetic figures appear desperate, ignorant and helpless themselves, and are unable to provide hope for deliverance to the adept: even paradise is not seen as a place of eternal bliss but a desolate locality, not inhabited by the righteous but by ignorant fools. The treatise develops a

'Kosmologie des Schmerzes' (cosmology of pain) (p. 61) in which the things in this world are seen as signs—yet not as signs of divine bounty and grace as the Quran suggests, but as signs of despair, of the absence of God in this world and of the futility of life.

How can such a negative perception of the world be brought into line with Islamic orthodoxy? After each visitation of a mystical sphere, the *pir* of the adept interprets his visions and brings them into line with orthodoxy. In the final encounter with the Prophet Muhammad, deliverance is granted when the adept receives the counsel to look for God in himself rather than travelling through the entire cosmos. But for Kermani the reassuring words of the adept's *pir* throughout the journey, and the final resolution in the encounter with Muhammad, are included to appease the representatives of religious orthodoxy and do not change the overall pessimistic tone of the treatise. Out of this pessimistic perception of existence, which cannot even find purpose in the afterlife, 'Attar develops an alternative theology which shares features with similar discourses in the two other monotheistic religions and in European philosophy and literature.

Kermani covers a wide range of religious and intellectual terrain, from orthodox Muslim theologians to Muslim saints, from Chassidic Judaism to Martin Buber, from Augustine to Albert Camus. Out of the comparative presentation of the different answers to theodicy, Kermani illustrates that within all three monotheistic religions traditions of a counter-theology have emerged. It is a different kind of theology which is uncertain of itself in the light of all the suffering in the world. It is the discourse of pious heresy which does not deny the existence of God because of all the evil in the world but retains a belief in Him while at the same time accusing Him, protesting against Him and even mocking Him. Kermani introduces the reader to a different kind of religiosity which is self-reflective, pluralist and humanist and present in Islam in a figure like 'Attar as it is present in other religious traditions and in modern philosophical discourse.

Kermani's book is neither a linguistic study of a poetical Sufi treatise in Persian nor is it a disinterested presentation of the Sufi ideas developed in the *Musibatnama* but an introduction to the problem of theodicy that is both accessible and engaging. The particular merit of this book lies in its attempt to bridge European and Middle Eastern intellectual traditions by placing 'Attar in the apparently alien cultural context of European philosophy and literature. Such an approach has the advantage of making a remote figure like 'Attar accessible to an educated Western readership. In addition, it exposes the reader to a different kind of Islam which counters stereotypical perceptions of it as submissive and unquestioning. Furthermore, the fascinating juxtaposition of Muslim, Jewish, Christian and various philosophical and literary sources questions monolithic understandings of cultures and religions, as it reveals an unexpected familiarity in the intellectual and religious quest of representatives of these various traditions. The identification of parallels in these sources also hints at 'osmotic processes' of intercultural influence. Islam incorporated the biblical heritage in its religious discourse as 'Attar's work gives evidence of and likewise influenced the formation of European literary traditions. For Kermani, the *topos* of a heavenly journey which appeared in medieval European literature such as in Dante's *Divine Comedy* suggests a possible influence by Sufi works that had been translated into European languages at that time.

Such an approach, however, contains certain dangers as well. In the whole discussion of theodicy, 'Attar and his work are rather sidelined. The creation of parallels between 'Attar and modern European philosophy and literature could also lead to a cultural misreading of him. The *Musibatnama* is viewed

from the perspective of a modern sceptical attitude towards religion which might distort the content of the Sufi treatise. A pessimistic view of the world has always been part of certain strands of Sufism which stress the necessary renunciation of the world as part of the mystical journey. The final resolution offered by the Prophet Muhammad is not just an appeasement of orthodoxy but expresses the Sufi understanding of divine realization which occurs in the moment of introspection, as illustrated in *The Conference of the Birds*, for example. Kermani, one might argue, turns 'Attar into a sceptical humanist by viewing him from the lenses of post-Enlightenment philosophical discourse on theodicy. Regardless of these possible misapprehensions, Kermani's book is both important and timely as it illustrates the familiarity of religious and philosophical discourses in various cultures and thereby counters increasingly common notions of an inevitable clash of civilizations.

OLIVER SCHARBRODT

M. ISMAIL MARCINKOWSKI:

*From Isfahan to Ayutthaya.*

(Contemporary Islamic Scholars Series.) xiv, 121 pp. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, 2005. £40.

One of the by-products of Marcinkowski's many years at Kuala Lumpur's International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation [ISTAC] was an interest in Thailand which eventually led to his academic research into contacts between the old Thai capital at Ayutthaya and the Safavid court of Isfahan in the medieval period. Marcinkowski has already produced an annotated translation and analysis of the Safavid manual of administration, the *Dastūr al-Malūk*, and his intimate knowledge of the Safavids is evident in this current book on the Persian delegation to the Siamese court and role of the mysterious Shaykh Ahmad and the Iranian community of Ayutthaya in the seventeenth century. Marcinkowski's study is based on the official report of an embassy to Siam written by Ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, a scribe in an envoy sent to the Siamese capital by the Safavid Shah Sulayman. The envoy was one of many which flocked to Ayutthaya at this time, and it is their intrigues and machinations which the Persian scribe observed and recorded in his notes. Today the report is better known as the *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī* (Tehran, 1999), translated into English as *The Ship of Sulayman* (New York: John O'Kane, 1972). Marcinkowski's book, however, is more than just an account of the *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī*, a study of which he delivered in a paper presented at the International Conference on Iran and the World in the Safavid Age held at SOAS on 6–8 September, 2002. *From Isfahan to Ayutthaya* explores contacts and relations between Iran and Siam in the seventeenth century and diplomatic and economic activity generated by the Safavid administration and the Siamese authorities based in Ayutthaya from the middle ages onwards. In fact Persians played a significant role in Siamese life for some centuries, and even before the arrival of the Safavid envoy were involved in the political and commercial affairs of Ayutthaya. In his introduction to Marcinkowski's book, Ehsan Yarshater claims that descendants of those medieval Safavid Persians still hold distinguished positions in present-day Thailand. He applauds Marcinkowski's study for bringing to light the 'by no means marginal Iranian–Siamese connection' and focusing the attention of a wider circle of readers and scholars on a neglected area of academic interest.



The *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī* was written by the embassy's secretary Moḥammad Rabī' b. Moḥammad Ibrāhīm, known generally as Ibn Moḥammad Ibrāhīm, and constitutes one of the most important primary sources for the study of the history of the reign of King Narai of Siam. It consists of four chapters referred to as *tuhfah*, 'rare objects given as gifts', which O'Kane has translated as jewels. The text is written in a highly embellished style interspersed with quranic verses and quotations from Persian poets, including a number of poetical compositions which are the work of the author Ibn Moḥammad Ibrāhīm himself. The book identifies its author by name and informs its readers that he was a scribe to the contingent of the *tufangchī* corps, or royal musketeers (p. 20) and continues with a passage in exaggerated praise of the Safavid Shah, Sulaymān. Ibn Moḥammad Ibrāhīm evidently held the Siamese king, Narai, in high esteem, though he admits that cultural misunderstandings and a lack of familiarity with Siamese protocol caused some problems in the relationship between the hosts and their foreign guests. The author explains that this embassy, for which he acts as the official scribe, was sent in response to a Siamese embassy to Iran in 1682 headed by an Iranian, Ḥājji Salīm, a representative of the Siamese king and former ambassador. Interestingly, when the party stopped on their sea journey to Siam at Mergui in modern-day Burma, the author mentions that the governor of the Siamese province was an Iranian, Moḥammad Ṣādiq. Ḥājji Salīm had a good command of the Siamese language and was charged with introducing and explaining aspects of the local culture to King Narai's Persian guests.

The first chapter of the *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī* recounts the sea journey from the Persian port of Bander Abbas to India and the adventures, hardships and people the envoy encountered on the journey. The second 'jewel' details the journey from India to the Siamese port of Tanāsuri, in modern-day Burma, the initial contacts with the Siamese welcoming parties and the reception the Iranians received. The third 'jewel' concentrates on the state of the Siamese kingdom, with an explanation of the term *Shahr-i-Nāv*, the name by which the country and its capital, Ayutthya, were known. As well as interior affairs this chapter gives an account of the conflict between Siam and neighbouring Pegu. The final 'jewel' is concerned with some of Siam's neighbours—the Spanish-dominated Philippines, Indonesia, China, and even Japan, but for the most part the information is derived from hearsay. In addition Ibn Moḥammad Ibrāhīm includes his observations on Siamese flora and fauna, and his rather fanciful views on the effects of the tides on the land. The author includes a detailed appendix on the Mughal conquest of Haydarabad ruled by the Shiite Qubtshahs. The final report concerns the escape of the Mughal prince Akbar to the court of Iran in 1682. The author provides useful information about the collapse of the southern Indian Shiite kingdoms in the face of the Mughal irruption, since he had travelled through the region shortly after that time.

What makes the period covered by *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī* of particular interest is that, unlike the situation after the Burmese invasion of 1767, the majority of the Muslims domiciled within Siam were Shiite, many of them with links with Iran. Siam lost all contact with Iran and the Shiite states of the Indian sub-continent after the demise of King Narai. This can be attributed to three main causes: first the collapse of the Safavid administration in 1722 and the devastation of Isfahan in the aftermath of the Afghan invasion; second, almost mirroring events in Iran, the destruction of Ayutthya by the Burmese in 1767; and the activities of the Greek Phaulkon whose influence was particularly strong towards the end of the reign of King Narai. Though relations with Iran were effectively severed after the reign of King Narai, the descendants of the mysterious Shaykh Aḥmad remained influential until the



twentieth century. This is a neglected period of history and the *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī* is a rich and absorbing source key to seventeenth-century Siam. Marcinkowski's timely study serves as an excellent introduction to both this period of history and to the *Safīneh-ye-Sulaymānī*.

GEORGE LANE

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## CENTRAL ASIA

MICHAL BIRAN:

*The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World.*

(Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization.) xvi, 279 pp.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. £45.

Though the Qara Khitai or Western Liao have attracted a certain amount of research over the years, it is a great pleasure to welcome the first monograph in English devoted entirely to their history and culture. The topic calls for a rare combination of skills both in Chinese and Muslim sources and in the related scholarship in a number of languages that very much calls to mind the golden age of Pelliot—though like Pelliot, the author does not seem at home with Japanese, and so the publications of scholars like Haneda or more recently Nagasawa that touch upon her topic are not amongst those laid under contribution. Even so, the results are impressive, and this volume is surely bound to remain a key work on the Western Liao for many years to come. Given the nature of the sources, there are, no doubt, many points on which future readers may find cause to quibble. On the religious composition of the empire it is of course only right to note (p. 180) Waley's reservations over the observation by the Daoist leader Qiu Chuji that there were Daoist priests to be found in its former territories shortly after its demise, but his rather tentative suggestion that they were actually Manichaeans is by no means supported by more recent research (cf. p. 175, and the recent work of T. Moriyasu), and it is of course unfortunate that Waley's name is misprinted both here and in the bibliography. The criticism of the sixth volume of the *Cambridge History of China* on p. 131, for stating that 'Western Liao history is associated with Central Asia not China' also appears to this reviewer a little captious. In context this remark is not made as a blanket statement about the nature of the regime—the Chinese elements of which are certainly very well brought out by Biran's study—but about its political and military interaction with its neighbours. In this respect Biran's research largely confirms the notion that any efforts made by its leaders to re-establish themselves in East Asia were of little significance compared with their interaction with the Islamic world.

But while quibbling and counter-quibbling is an agreeable academic pastime, it should not distract us from the very real contribution that this volume makes not simply to the history of the twelfth century but also to larger issues in Eurasian history. The Western Liao was essentially a refugee regime that had upped sticks and moved from East to Central Asia following the defeat of its parent regime at the hands of Jurchen conquerors. Such a relocation of a basically sedentary or semi-sedentary polity was a somewhat unusual event in the west of Eurasia during this period—one thinks of Little Armenia at the time of the Crusades, but by and large the experience in late antiquity of mobile regimes like that of the Vandals has probably disposed us to take a dim

view of the practice, and so we do not think of it at all. Far more attention has therefore been given to the contrast between civilizations like those of Europe, Iran and China and their encounters with the nomad empires of the steppes, which seemingly occupy a dangerously fluid space in the middle of the map. Long-forgotten but now increasingly often cited works like that of F. J. Teggart on the apparent relationship between the history of China and Rome have encouraged us to think of this intervening fluid medium as capable of transmitting stimuli in waves across endless miles of unbroken land mass. But that space was not simply occupied by horsemen galloping to and fro in a hopelessly volatile fashion: the regime of the Qara Khitai, who had moved into the area not out of the sheer pleasure of moving about in a marauding nomadic horde but, *faute de mieux*, because of a mishap elsewhere, was on reflection by no means unparalleled.

Biran compares her Khitan refugees (p. 207) to the Moghuls in India, and that comparison and others that she makes are certainly instructive. But closer to home (that is, to the new home of the Qara Khitai) one might point to the Uighurs of Gaochang, to the north of whom the fleeing Khitan were forced, it seems, to traverse to find their new kingdom. Originally a Uighur kingdom had been based much further east, until the upheavals of the ninth century had caused the re-founding of a new Uighur state out of harm's way. Nor was this move without fairly exact precedent: in the middle of the fifth century refugees from the collapse of the Northern Liang arrived in Gaochang, and although their regime lasted only about two decades at the most, they did, in the view of Meng Xianshi, as expressed in his *Han-Tang wenhua yu Gaochang lishi* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2004), initiate a development that eventually brought a stable and independent dynasty in Gaochang to power at the start of the sixth century. But the most exact analogy to the Qara Khitai would probably be the Yuezhi, who in Han times were obliged to move from the borders of China to Bactria, where obscurely but indubitably they played a role in the establishment of the Kushan empire, a polity of no little significance in the history of Eurasian civilization.

Yet, as Biran shows, the history of the Qara Khitai, for all the heterogeneity and frequent contradictions in the sources available, can with patient effort be reconstructed in some detail so that, as the second part of her study shows, a number of important issues relating to their institutions and culture can be examined in ways that Pelliot (for example) was never able to do. This volume marks a major step forward in a number of ways, and will undoubtedly be recognized as such in the years to come.

T. H. BARRETT

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#### EAST ASIA

JOHN JORGENSEN:

*Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Ch'an.*

(Sinica Leidensia, 68.) xxiv, 862 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005. €185.

Great vessels take time to create, says the *Tao-te ching*, and this is certainly true of this magnificent study of the origins of the Zen tradition by John Jorgensen, who has been working steadily if unobtrusively in this area for over

a quarter of a century. No wonder, then, that he confesses (p. x) to a certain feeling of affinity for his prime subject, the Sixth Patriarch of the lineage, who likewise lived most of his life quite obscurely in a semi-tropical area far from the metropolitan centres of his day. But equal credit should go to the publishers of the series in which his work now appears, for his patient efforts have now created a study of great length and complexity, hardly the type of work that is likely to make a fast buck out of the term Zen. One is indeed amazed to see how much Jorgensen has been able to achieve against the odds—only very occasionally, as on p. 539 with regard to the writings of Tu Cheng-lun, does he confess to having been unable to track down all the information that he would have considered ideal, and in this case at any rate he has missed nothing of any consequence. No one touching on the early history of Zen in future will be able to ignore this richly researched and consistently stimulating book, especially since with regard not simply to the complex story of the evolving hagiography of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng, but also to the religious milieu in which these texts appeared, suffused as they are with conceptions of relic worship entirely alien to most contemporary practitioners of Zen, Jorgensen is right up-to-date with the relevant scholarship and always judicious in his interpretations. Particularly gratifying is his use of modern Korean scholarship in the field, since this forms an important body of learning insufficiently known to most researchers in the English-speaking world, who tend to get by (at least in the case of this reviewer) with no more than Chinese and Japanese.

But while great vessels may have their day of completion, and be justly celebrated at the time, of making books there is no end, and for all the great riches of detailed historical research provided here, there may still be one or two loose ends that could continue to cause trouble. After straying into the endlessly debated area of the origins of the *Platform Sutra* ascribed to the Sixth Patriarch, I was surprised to discover both an obscure conference paper by Yanagida Seizan apparently explaining away what has been taken to be the first reference to it, and also an early version of an inscription radically different in its textual details concerning the second supposed description of this famous book. These findings, in William Bodiford (ed.), *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 114–17, have now appeared too late to attract Jorgensen's attention, but one hopes that on some future occasion he will have some opportunity to comment authoritatively on the matter.

And for every toiler in relative obscurity there is always some unknown figure simultaneously groping in the same direction. Jorgensen presents in this volume an excellent account of the earliest biography of the Sixth Patriarch, long lost in China but preserved since the early ninth century in Japan; but a doctorate translating this work has already been completed—in English—at the University of Groningen, in 2002, by C. J. Kuiken, under the title 'The other Neng: topography and hagiography of the Sixth Ancestor' (ISBN 90-71809-59-5), and though this work inevitably cannot match the great weight of erudition displayed in Jorgensen's volume on the basis of his much longer acquaintance with the topic, it does contain some additional information that is not without interest. A poem supposedly addressed to the Sixth Patriarch that, if genuine, would be the first document to testify to his existence, is for example shown to be incompatible with composition in the far south of China. This piece Jorgensen does not mention at all, probably wisely in view of the complexity of the more important material he has to present in any case. But it does underline the point that he makes at the end of his preface, where he states his aim: 'Hui-neng is placed in the socio-political

context of his times, or rather, in that of his image-makers. This understanding is required before we can impute any teaching to him, and before any speculations can be made about his thought, as so many have sought to do'. For all the rhetoric of immediacy within this tradition, it is only extremely patient and detailed historical work that can reveal the context from which it emerged. This is a book that should be on the reading list for every introductory course about Zen, for every student should know of its existence, even if they choose to ignore it.

T. H. BARRETT

XIAOFEI TIAN:

*Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table.*

x, 319 pp. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005. \$60.

This is an intriguing and in many ways engaging book, tackling a poet of acknowledged stature, who has already attracted some of the most accomplished academic translators of Chinese poetry into English of the twentieth century, from a new angle that opens up basic and important questions about how we study the Chinese literary tradition. Of course James Hightower and A. R. Davis are given due acknowledgement where their scholarship is drawn upon, but this book has its own distinctive character, based upon an informed appreciation of the way in which the poetry of Tao Yuanming has been transmitted since the early fifth century, and especially of the processes involved in the creation of printed editions of his works from the eleventh century onwards. As Tian shows, following the pioneering research of Susan Cherniack and others who have started to take seriously the particularities of East Asian book culture, literary figures of the Song era had both a marked disinclination to pay any attention to the *lectio difficilior* and a supreme confidence in their own ability to resolve, on the basis of their own literary knowledge and tastes, textual problems bequeathed by the proliferation over several centuries of a vibrant and complex manuscript culture. As a result, all the editions we use today generally need to be interrogated quite closely before any tentative translation work can begin, especially since under subsequent dynasties Song editions were looked upon as precious heirlooms of unquestioned value.

Questioning the texts a little certainly opens up our reading of Tao, and here results in a study that is well worth having. The reader should probably bear in mind, though, that we still have some way to go in bringing into focus exactly what we need to know about the history of writing, reading and publishing in China. For Tao's own times Tian defers to a forthcoming study by Robert Ashmore, though it is patently obvious that for all Tao's protestations of poverty or having spent everything on drink, he was well able even in his country retreat to get hold of plenty of books. And not just everyday books, but more obscure works like the *Travels of King Mu* that appealed to his taste, and even books such as the *Liezi* that, whatever its origins, only became available for copying in his own lifetime. We should perhaps recall that a generation or so later Shen Yue, who admittedly spent more time closer to the centre of power, confessed to having in his collection more than 200 scrolls about which he felt a bad conscience—presumably that he had

borrowed and failed to return. Books, then, were certainly not rare and precious objects chained to library desks, but commonplace items in fifth-century China.

The Song craze for creating new editions and launching them *en masse* onto the market in printed form also needs to be assessed carefully. For despite first impressions of a complete free-for-all, in some areas, such as the preparation of texts included in the state-sponsored canons of Buddhism and Taoism, editorial exuberance seems to have been curbed at the start of the dynasty at least by fear of authority. How far did textual norms decreed by the state extend, and how long did they last? We still need more of a sense too of the nuances of the terminology used by Song scholars, especially since existing dictionary entries do not always seem to cover the usage of this particular epoch. One obvious problem here is the term *zhenben*, or 'genuine copy', introduced by Tian on pp. 9–10 in opposition to *luben*, or 'transcribed copy'. Dictionary entries might tempt one to suppose that 'genuine' implied something like a facsimile of the author's holograph, though this is intrinsically improbable for works already transmitted by recopying for over half a millennium. In fact the *Tingzhai shihua* of Zeng Jili, a work of the twelfth century cited here by Tian (p. 290) for information on a Song edition of Tao's writings, contrasts the word *zhenben* with 'recent' editions or (specifically in one case) printed editions, apparently meaning the word to refer to the manuscripts of (in both these cases) eleventh-century writers: see the edition of Zeng's work in Ding Fubao (ed.), *Lidai shihua xubian* vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 310, 294, respectively. 'Zhenben' is also used by Zeng with reference to an anthologist of c. 850, whose aberrant readings of the poet Du Fu are earlier (Ding, p. 297) remarked on as a puzzle: more explicitly the second time he states 'since he was not far in time from Du, the copies (*ben*) that he saw must have been fairly *zhen*' (p. 318). This suggests that *zhenben* was a term that was not necessarily well defined, capable of categorizing a text in an either/or fashion, but rather one indicating a relative level of presumed authenticity.

Of course now that we have massive electronic databases for Classical Chinese at our disposal a little more work should allow us to clarify the matter yet further, though given the range of issues involved a separate study would seem to be called for. Tian has even so rendered the signal service of making readers of Chinese texts from before the age of printing aware of the problem of reassessing Song editorial work, as well as having proved herself a worthy successor to Hightower and Davis. We look forward to her future work with interest.

T. H. BARRETT

THOMAS MICHAEL:

*The Pristine Dao: Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse.*

(SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture.) xi, 170 pp.

Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. \$21.95.

In the introductory chapter of this book Thomas Michael sets forth as one of its main aims to 'attempt to wipe away the dichotomy imagined in many quarters between "philosophical" and "religious" Daoism' (p. 1). What is announced as a promising inquiry is not always articulated as a clear thread throughout the remaining pages of the book. Chapter 2 rehearses the basic features of early Daoist cosmogony (the cyclical progression of the world out

of an inchoate stage, the primal role of water, the image of sexual generation, etc.), and goes on to discuss the main actors and images in mythological narratives associated with it (Fu Xi and Nü Gua; dragon and tiger; the transformation of Zhuangzi's Kun fish into the Peng bird). Michael claims that most early Daoist imagery feeds on mythologies of the south and detects a transition from a water-based mythology to Dao-based cosmogony. As a transitional phase in this development he singles out the Guodian *Taiyi sheng shui*, the first piece of evidence alluding to 'a being, principle, or entity predating the existence of the watery chaos' (p. 23). The *Xici zhuan*, then, is pitched as a distinct Confucian model of cosmogony on the basis that it sacrifices spontaneous unity for dualistic hierarchy (p. 15). In ch. 3 the same *Taiyi sheng shui* is credited as a foundational text for the appearance of the tripartite (Heaven-Earth-Sage) structure that marks early Daoist cosmology. This initial emergence of the world prior to the sage's intervention in the cosmological project of completing the world is identified as 'first-order harmony'. Michael argues against a political reading of the *Laozi* in favour of a recovery of its religious dimensions, to conclude, unsurprisingly, that 'early Daoist discourse is constructed on a Dao-based cosmology, and the reason that the Sage is able to journey far-off is that he unites with Heaven and Earth, and through successively passing through the gateways of the separate realms, comes to possess and embody the pristine Dao' (p. 68). In chapter 4 the author identifies as a basic ontological problem in early Daoism the perceived threat of humans' separation from their original unity with the Dao through the imposition of discrimination, the use of language, and acts that 'border' human existence from this original union. Zhuangzi's 'Qi wu lun' is selected as the text exemplifying these themes. Early Daoist soteriology, chapter 5 recapitulates, is to be understood as the sage's advocacy for a return to a cosmic union with the Dao ('second-order harmony'). The rest of the chapter examines perceptions of the body in the *Guanzi* 'Neiye', the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi* and develops a notional distinction between a foundational (cosmic) body versus a constructed self as a key theme in early Daoist discourse. The final chapter ('Early Daoism and modernity') is a brief personal plea for religious plurality appraising the relevance of the ancients for an *oikumene* of ideas across world religions.

Although claiming a stake in a scholarly debate on early Daoism as set out by Herrlee Creel, Angus Graham and Harold Roth, several assumptions and methodological approaches in this book are problematic. First, it lacks a historical framework. 'Early Daoist' for Michael means anything ranging from the Guodian *Laozi* to the death of Liu An (122 BC) (p. 3). This does not prevent him from discussing the *Liezi* or from overlooking both the received and excavated versions of the *Wenzi* (now readily accessible through work by Charles Le Blanc). This reticence to come clean about sources occurs elsewhere. For instance, what is the reader to make of the following statement in a discussion of *jing* ('seminal essence') in the *Neiye*: 'I still consider these writings as early Daoist, albeit extremely early and therefore somewhat rough in comparison to later writings, rather than non-early Daoist' (p. 102)? Throughout the reader is presented with an a-historical amorphous corpus of texts for which the author advocates a 'religious' reading. While I remain unsure as to what exactly is meant by 'religious' in this context, the book does take significant steps in de-politicizing the reading of the narratives selected, especially the *Laozi*. Yet much of this analysis depends on the choice of texts or passages selected for discussion. Can one reasonably classify the *Huainanzi* as 'early Daoist' and not read substantial parts of this work politically? In short, without an attempt at reconstructing a historical or sociological context



for the transmission of ideas and imagery, regardless of how little we have to go on, claims to read texts in one paradigm or another will always remain tenuous. The same caution should apply to coining analytical concepts and terms to discuss Daoism, especially when addressing a non-sinological readership. In this book the notion of the 'pristine Dao' (which, if I am correct, is not always to be taken here as a straight translation of *yuan/xuan dao*) is introduced yet left largely unexplained ('I recognize any piece of writing as early Daoist if it demonstrates an active participation in this complex of notions cohering around specific conceptions of the pristine Dao' (p. 2)). Likewise the elasticity with which concepts and imagery are related to each other in this book will strike some as problematic. For instance on p. 27, where the author claims no direct relationship between a cosmogonic Dao and Taiyi (Grand Unity) we learn that there was 'nonetheless, enough leeway in their fields of signification capitalized on by the early Daoist writers such that they were able to take advantage of a certain assonance among these designations that aided the development of their cosmogonic speculation'. To be sure, fixing the semantic boundaries of concepts in Daoist texts is notoriously difficult, but by couching our conjectures in a roundabout way are we not mystifying what, to many readers who do not read Chinese, are texts sufficiently opaque as they are?

This book has its merits as an informed view on Daoism for students and scholars with an interest in the study of comparative religion and mythology. I suspect that sinologists will find its appeal rather limited. It lacks a critical apparatus and fails to engage with a representative sample of secondary scholarship (the bibliography contains one reference to a title in Chinese and there is no mention of Japanese scholarship). While Michael has put forward a number of challenging hypotheses his contention that this 'remains first and foremost a book of history' (p. 147) might strike some readers as rather peculiar.

ROEL STERCKX

GLEN DUDBRIDGE:

*Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China.*

(China Studies.) xii, 325 pp. Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2005. €99.

This volume, brought together from amongst his published chapters and articles, with the addition of his separately published inaugural lecture, under the anonymous collective editorship of his colleagues, marks Glen Dudbridge's retirement as Shaw Professor of Chinese at Oxford. One of the chapters—the first—is in fact still to appear in the volume for which it was originally intended, and even some that have been available for a while may yet have escaped the attention of many who appreciate the combination of good scholarship and good sense consistently on display here. The component parts of this collection are distributed into three groups, one (ch. 1–3) on books and publishing, one (ch. 4–9) on medieval narrative and religious culture, and the final one (ch. 10–15) on vernacular culture. This distribution may make the collection seem somewhat heterogeneous, but quality aside, there is also a recurrent tone that pervades and unifies everything at quite a subtle level.

Glen Dudbridge reminds one of the famously puzzled Wittgenstein in G. E. Moore's lectures. Where the continuity of Chinese civilization had, for his predecessors, at best been a given, and in earlier times a cause for contempt

directed at a civilization supposedly so placid and inert as to be incapable of radical change, here everything is problematic. This sense of problem ranges from the concrete and bibliographic, in which the continued existence of the same printing blocks links but does not entirely define successive editions (ch. 3), on through worries about when a term presents the translator with a mere cliché and when it still brings with it overtones from other contexts (ch. 8), and right on to doubts about the genetic coherence of China's population in the inaugural lecture (ch. 10). Continuities in the field of religion from distant times to the present come across as particularly baffling; worries about the imposed blinkers that the process of transmitting texts places upon our perceptions of their original place in the literary worlds that created them particularly frustrating. It is the same with his five chief monographs listed in an Editorial Note on p. ix—there is no full bibliography of his publications, though perhaps a forthcoming volume in his honour will contain one—which at first glance might be mistaken for classic bricks in the great wall of sinological enterprise, but which also on close reading open up into paradoxes and uncertainties on every hand. As a legacy one can scarcely think of anything better—not some cut and dried achievement, but a demonstration of what disciplined research can do to discover the limits of our knowledge, a demonstration that is moreover always ready to draw the reader in to the excitement and frustration of discovery rather than simply to put scholarship on the record. How Oxford will be able to find a second Shaw Professor of Chinese to sustain teaching and research at this level I do not know.

T. H. BARRETT

JAMES REARDON-ANDERSON:

*Reluctant Pioneers: China's Expansion Northward 1644–1937.*

(Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University.) xvii, 288 pp. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. \$60.

The key questions in *Reluctant Pioneers* revolve around how and why Chinese migration to Manchuria differed from westward migration in the United States and eastward migration in Russia. The richness of the book, however, is in the detailed look at land, the migrants, and the economy these pioneers developed.

The land is the focus of three chapters. The first is concerned with the set-up of manors, banners and estates from 1644 to 1740; the second recounts the loss of land during the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century to new Han-Chinese settlers from Manchu and Mongol bannermen (Manchus and Mongols loyal to the dynasty and organized into military banners); and the third chapter traces the opening of Manchurian land during the late Qing dynasty (1850–1911).

The manor system varied right from the start of this Manchu-ruled dynasty, with different policies existing in the north and south of Manchuria. The system was set up to allow Manchu and Mongol banners to manage the economy employing Han-Chinese farmers who had no rights to the land.

After the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing began to intervene to keep the land in the hands of bannermen by buying back land from Chinese who had purchased rights. As the manor system declined, however, the government eventually backtracked and a *de facto* land market emerged. Over time, the

system came to favour the market, and Chinese farmers moved further northwards, often in a step migration. By the late Qing, rebellions began to shake the empire and the government permitted peasants to go to north Manchuria in order to help balance the budget through taxation of their farms. The threat of Russian encroachment also encouraged the opening of the north. Thus in the end, the Manchus came to promote developments that earlier in their rule they had tried to inhibit. Reardon-Anderson comes to the conclusion that the Qing was not as ineffective nor was it as Chinese-dominated as is often thought. The pragmatic Manchus realized that China Proper was the core of the empire and they were willing to neglect their homeland for the benefit of their empire.

Reardon-Anderson discusses the settlers as sojourners, networked migrants and refugees. He calls some 'sojourners' because they were reluctant to make a long-term commitment to the frontier despite the lack of hazards when compared to the American West or Siberia. This was a push migration driven by famine in north China and not a pull migration driven by the allure of wealth to be obtained from virgin lands. Most of the people were networked to their place of origin with strong identities to their home province, and they formed new village networks closely emulating the ones they had left behind. Even the bandits were networked with many moving in and out of legitimate work, the military and banditry. By the late 1920s, the migration turned into a flood to the north facilitated both by famine in north China and to some degree, the availability of railways.

The Chinese settlers did not transform the economy. Reardon-Anderson shows this by focusing on the early soybean trade. The Qing moved between open and closed markets much as their land and migration policies had fluctuated. The discussion of the soybean trade comes largely from foreign travellers' reports that suggest crop patterns did not change that widely. Without substantiated data, this argument is a bit thin despite the well-founded discussion that scale did not provide for a major change in the agricultural economy.

The book takes a very different approach to urban development by comparing the roles of Newchwang and Dairen to St. Louis and Chicago. Late-comers to Dairen and Chicago came to dominate their respective hinterlands over the earlier centres because of railway development. The geography of the two situations is somewhat different but the comparison holds up. We are also given a comparison of the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway much to the favour of the latter under Japanese management.

In the final chapter we get an economic analysis based upon the Manchukuo *kotoku* surveys of the 1930s, which shows that the further north one went the more productivity there was per worker on the larger farms of the wealthy. The idea that China entered 'early modern' development between 1870 and 1930 without increases in capital investments and technological improvements is rather widely accepted. It seems the Manchurian economy supports this thesis. Reardon-Anderson raises comparisons with studies from other parts of China on economic growth and concludes that what happened in Manchuria was that the prosperous always hedged their bets by going into sideline industries rather than using their capital to take innovative risks.

There is a major shift in emphasis in the conclusion, which is an essay about 'Manchurian identity'. The lives and literature of two lovers who were members of the Northeastern Writers Group, Xiao Jun and Xiao Hong, form the basis of this postscript. While both described harsh village life in the North East, their literature was widely accepted in China Proper. To me this is not as odd as Reardon-Anderson found it. The Xiaos are 'Chinese people' describing

'peasant life on the frontier', which gave their works a somewhat exotic quality in China Proper. In the end, Reardon-Anderson gives two reasons for the Chinese frontier being different from the Russian and American frontiers. One is that he sees Manchuria as geographically more hostile. I really doubt this—especially in the case of Russia. More convincing is the idea that the Chinese were 'reluctant pioneers' and that, after all, is the main theme of this book.

This is an entertaining book with sound, if not brand new, conclusions. It cements the role of the Manchurian frontier in late imperial and early modern Chinese history in a proper perspective. The history presented here can help us to understand Chinese overseas settlement as well.

RICHARD LOUIS EDMONDS

FRANK DIKÖTTER, LARS LAAMANN and ZHOU XUN:

*Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China.*

xi, 319 pp. London: Hurst; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. £25.

Sometime in the 1960s, opium lost its appeal as an academic topic. It had become so thoroughly a part of the standard account of imperialism and its defeat that it might do double duty as both China's shame and China's triumph, but could offer little else. The sole lingering question was the old canard of whether molasses might equally have been the commodity that provoked war in 1840. In the 1990s, the intellectual terrain on which the subject had rested started to shift. More complex understandings of China's interaction with global processes inspired a new generation of scholars to wonder whether everything the earlier generation had told them about opium was true. The new work no longer invoked opium to confirm the correct course of modern Chinese history. Instead, it asked what was done via opium, and how politics, economics and culture facilitated and filtered its effects.

In this new wave, *Narcotic Culture* stands out as the most aggressive bid to re-interpret the history of opium. The book is animated by one overwhelming idea: that opium was not 'bad'. No more than an innocuous sedative with few negative physiological or psychological effects, opium eased the symptoms of many illnesses and provided a social lubricant of the sort the Chinese needed to cope with their 'culture of restraint'. The authors argue that its prohibition was a 'disaster' for the Chinese state, which could otherwise have used the revenues from an opium tax. Narcophobia, they declare, is all that stands between us (and the zealous private and state reformers, Chinese and non-Chinese, of close to two centuries) and a recognition of opium as nothing more dangerous than the proverbial post-prandial glass of brandy that a few old China hands thought it was.

Taking one powerful idea and running vast masses of data through it to demonstrate its truth can produce a book that is clear, focused, and delightfully argumentative. But the intolerance of other views, indifference to critical distinctions, and contempt of previous scholarship that sometimes go along with this approach can reduce the delight, at least for the more mild-tempered among us. This book falls somewhere between these strengths and weaknesses. Densely written and voluminously documented, it demolishes many shibboleths that should not have stood the test of time. The authors present, with good reason, ideas that will startle many readers: that most opium smokers consumed in moderate quantities and were able to control their drug use; that addiction was not as widespread as we believe; that anxieties about the effects

of opium opened the door to a great deal of bad medicine; that the Chinese were not duped by foreigners into using opium and indeed could not imagine mobilizing public opposition to it until foreign missionaries had taken up the cause; and that Chinese nationalists went on to sensationalize the effects of opium in order to create an anti-imperialist rallying cry for the nation. These ideas come together in a devastating critique of old views, and do so on a bed of rich documentation. The topic will never be the same.

On the other hand, the authors also float some extraordinary propositions that go not only beyond received wisdom, but beyond actual evidence and even common sense. Here are a few of the tendentious and unproven (and unprovable) claims they put forward: that the popularization of opium was already underway before the middle of the sixteenth century; that opium prevented alcohol addiction from devastating China; that opium smoking both facilitated greater cross-class social inclusion in nineteenth-century China and provided an occasion for asserting social distinction and social exclusion; that the vast majority of smokers took up opium as an affordable form of self-medication, not as a recreation; that the vast majority of smokers also took up opium to enhance sexual stamina, to dull it, or both; that foreign agitation against the widespread use of opium was a kind of cultural imperialism that harmed the Chinese people; that Lin Zixu's crusade against opium in Canton 'may well have accelerated and deepened its proliferation' (p. 119); and that the criminalization of opium created untold misery and suffering for Chinese people. They even suggest that, if Yan Fu had not kicked his opium habit, he would not have died in 1920.

I might have been better disposed to reflect more sympathetically on some of these remarkable claims had they been presented in a way that acknowledged the possibility of other interpretations. There is a totality about these claims, an urgency to the insistence that everything previously black is now white, and that everything we have presumed to be white is black after all, which suggests that some agenda other than a purely historical reconsideration of China's experience with opium is at work. One detects a hint of this in the throwaway comment at the end of the opening section of the chapter entitled 'War on Drugs', that a government has no right 'to police the bloodstream of the nation' (p. 96). This may well be the moral position that the authors favour for addressing the war on drugs today, but does it not import inappropriate assumptions about how state and society interact in the Chinese context, especially in the present but even in the past? The Yongzheng emperor was eloquently unhappy about opium use as early as 1729. He did not need a heavy dose of nationalist or eugenic modernity to regard its social, moral, economic, and diplomatic effects as negative, nor did he have to subscribe to the modernist's state-building zeal to insist that his government had a responsibility to act. This observation may make me appear to be just another hopeless narcophobe misreading the past, but it does make me wonder whether the authors of this book haven't put themselves in exactly the same predicament.

TIMOTHY BROOK

KARL GERTH:

*China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation.*  
xvi, 445 pp. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.  
£32.95.

Amid the current obsession with the seemingly unstoppable rise of China as an economic superpower, the history of its consumer culture has received

relatively little attention. Perceptions of the Republican period seem to have been engraved with the negative connotations which the 'Liberation' of 1949 subsequently bestowed. One such preconception links the meteoric rise of a Westernized urban youth, shedding traditional mores and spending money as if there were no tomorrow, with the impoverished 'masses' of cities such as Shanghai. Another myth posits that the perception of a Chinese national identity was propelled solely by the forces of Communism, as an unlikely yet historically unparalleled agent of modern nationalism. Earlier political events, such as the May Fourth demonstrations, remain suspended in ideological limbo. The same fate befalls the National Goods (*guohuo* 國貨) movement of the 1920s, claimed by both Nationalists and Communists as their own creation, and as a precursor to full national sovereignty. Given its alleged importance it is astounding that we have had to wait until this moment for a detailed history of the movement, taking into account the mechanisms of China's emerging consumer market.

The *guohuo* movement exhorted the citizens of Republican China to 'buy Chinese' in order to strengthen its nascent industries, as well as to punish certain foreign powers (USA, Great Britain, Japan) for politically unacceptable behaviour. Karl Gerth argues that the consumer culture which arose during the 1920s in China's cities was essentially 'political', since it was linked to the national prosperity of the Republic. Gerth also maintains that China's economic development received a boost by cutting (or rather merely attempting to reduce) its commercial dependence on Western and Japanese markets. The author refrains, perhaps wisely, from investigating whether the strong foreign presence in littoral China promoted the growth of its industries or stifled demand for domestic goods. Nor does he attempt to write a history of modern material culture, a task which would have taken him well beyond the confines of the Nanjing period.

Faced with an avalanche of archival and visual material, the monograph is divided into four main parts. Part 1 (pp. 29–121) begins with the origins of the *guohuo* movement, as it emerged from the outgoing Qing dynasty. It also focuses on the transformation of Chinese clothing habits, with Western garments as the outward face of a new, 'modern' China. The second part (pp. 125–200) focuses on the creation of a new consumer market, by means of commercial boycotts and industrial action. Part 3 (pp. 203–81) provides an analysis of the national goods movement, culminating in Gerth's assessment of the Commodity Nation (p. 281). One by one, the ideological programmes, its propagation through public events and in the press are discussed. This part is concluded by a discussion of the role played by local industrial champions. The final part (pp. 285–354) attempts to reach a verdict on the movement's effects and legacy, claiming that the consumer movement was instrumental in raising China's fledgling consumer industry and in rallying support against perceived foreign cajolement (p. 362). Gerth does concede that boycotts rarely made economic sense (pp. 130–1, 189), but maintains that they were instrumental in the creation of patriotic awareness (pp. 356–9). Even this may be overstretching the point, since consumer action was very much linked to concrete individual causes—from the anti-American boycott of 1905 against restrictive immigration policies, through the anti-British May 30<sup>th</sup> events (1925), to the boycott of Japanese goods in the early and mid-1930s. Meanwhile, as parents were encouraged to buy China-made toys and games in order to raise patriotic citizens, adults and children alike were enthralled by the Anglo-Saxon manifestations of Christmas (pp. 326–8). Women were expected to purchase luxury commodities and everyday items—aiding the motherland



eventually to reach tariff autonomy and the return of all extraterritorial concessions (pp. 289–90). That such questions were unlikely to have been at the forefront of any consumer's mind is in fact the key to understanding why foreign goods remained so successful. While devoting some space to the role of imported consumer goods as status symbols, the volume lacks a systematic appraisal of conspicuous consumption in Chinese society. Instead, the logistical predominance of major global corporations as well as lacking national confidence are cited as reasons for the persistent lure of the foreign.

The archival sources employed by the author indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the monograph. Overwhelmingly based on adverts (posters and newspapers), contemporary reports (campaigns, exhibitions) as well as on *guohuo* propaganda, the work lacks a thorough economic analysis based on commercial and industrial statistics. Such statistical information was made available by the Republican authorities, providing valuable insight into the degree of material progress during the Nanjing years. But most likely it was never the author's intention to reinterpret the development of China's economy during this period. Instead, *China Made* should be read as a political history of Republican China, exemplified by the inception of a 'consumer nationalism'.

Mesmerized by the very nationalism that has become such an entrenched feature of Chinese society today, *China Made* is a substantial contribution to an important chapter in the history of modern China. Whatever its analytical shortcomings, the material presented in the monograph—including its more than fifty pages of relevant bibliography—will be of great value for the study of Republican China. Moreover, several of the developments outlined for the Republican period point to patterns of mass behaviour in today's China. Gerth's observations provide priceless material for an analysis of the simultaneous emergence of modern nationhood and of an equally a modern consumer market. *China Made* does not, on the other hand, account for the evolution of material culture in the wider sense, leaving important areas, such as the integration of urban China into the nascent utility networks, open to future research.

LARS PETER LAAMANN

STEPHEN JONES:

*Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China.*

(CHIME Studies in East Asian Music, 2.) ix, 426 pp., CD. Leiden: CHIME Foundation, 2004. €39.

*Plucking the Winds* is an awkward title for a superb book laying out in great detail an ethnohistory of amateur ritual musicians in a north China village (Laishui district, 100 km south of Beijing). This reviewer is no ethnologist and knows nothing about music, but hugely enjoyed reading it and learned even more than first expected. This is the first book on rituals in a north Chinese village; the rituals are now performed by amateur musicians organized into a 'Music Association' (a century ago some were performed by professional religious specialists), described and analysed within a detailed picture of village history and present-day social conditions.

The book, with a CD to bring the music to life, is published by CHIME (European Foundation for Chinese Music Research) and beautifully made.

Indeed, if the book had been published by a University Press, it would most certainly have been tightened up and shortened; readability might possibly have been improved, because *Plucking the Winds* is a little unwieldy, repeating itself occasionally and making the reader wait many chapters before introducing the basic ritual formats that form the core of the study. Yet so much might otherwise have been lost: *Plucking the Winds* is crammed with tell-tale details, excellent background information and personal anecdotes and jokes (this is the only sinological book where I have found viola jokes to tell my musician relatives). Indeed, one rarely laughs when reading sinological books, but this one made me more than once look silly when uproariously laughing on the subway. So, it is a relief and a welcome change from the more polished, straight-to-the-point style of most presses. Stephen Jones hides nothing of his role in village life, of his feelings about it, and of his own personal history. Both the musicians and the author come through as remarkably endearing yet unromanticized.

What might be most controversial is the decision to devote a good half of the book to a general history of the village. The main reason for this is that music association members have always been very close to, even indissociable from, village leadership through the regimes (Empire, Nationalist, Communist). This is obviously true and the argument would have been compelling without all the details of village history through revolutions, banditry, collectivization, and now transition to capitalism. What is really new is the detail of how rituals, notably New Year festivals and death rituals, and knowledge of them (theoretically 'superstitious', and banned) actually survived, hiding with the complicity of village cadres during the worst periods, and reviving at short but crucial intervals (e.g. 1960–64).

As a village history, a distinct genre in the historiography of modern China, *Plucking the Winds* is very worthy, free of preconceived analytical frameworks, and thoroughly attentive to villagers' voices and views. One can only hope that social and political scientists will not catalogue it as 'music' (which they deem irrelevant, alas) and actually read it. But its true value and uniqueness is that it puts culture, music and ritual (or religion, a term the author avoids, but that can be put in by the reader, if distinguishing culture, music, ritual, and religion makes any sense) at the centre of the village. Studies of rural China tend to pay attention to 'religion' prior to 1900, but not after that date, as if secularization had occurred all of a sudden. As Stephen Jones eloquently shows, no such thing ever happened, and culture, music, ritual and religion are just as important in the village as they were a century ago.

This reviewer, who is working on Chinese religious specialists, was particularly fascinated by the book's take on the issue of ritual roles in modern Chinese society. First, Jones offers tantalizing glimpses into how, in the past, village musicians had learnt from Peking temple clerics, though this continuum between high clerical culture and peasants needs to be substantiated by further historical research. Second, when clerics were expelled from the countryside in modern reforms (temples were ruined or forcibly closed), the musicians seemed to have taken over most of their roles. In this regard, musicians were beneficiaries of the same process of substitution of ritual roles that has benefited sectarians, diviners, or spirit-mediums in other locations. And while Jones does not insist that musicians are religious specialists, his description of their attitude towards 'religion', being mostly relaxed and agnostic, but very respectful in times of performance (when the deities are present) recall very much what has been described of other specialists such as married Taoists—indeed, the music association members call themselves Taoists. In contrast

to much current literature, which consists mostly of monographs on monastic music, this offers new perspectives on the relationship between Taoism, music, and village culture.

At the same time, music association members are not just like any ritualists. Their stand on remuneration (they cannot accept cash payments, because that would offend both the deities and their own dignity) puts them in the specific socially valued role of amateurs (this is a role, not a category of person, since an amateur can in other circumstances be a professional), hence the fact that they often end up as village leaders, unlike professional providers of ritual services (members of professional music bands, full-time Taoists, etc.) who never become community leaders. Last but not least, the issue of transmission is also beautifully explored. Why would a Chinese peasant take up the time-consuming process of learning the music and performing it for free whenever requested? It entails both individual contingencies, as detailed in many individual histories, and the more abstract status of music and ritual in village culture.

VINCENT GOOSSAERT

FAN PEN LI CHEN:

*Visions for the Masses: Chinese Shadow Plays from Shaanxi and Shanxi.*

(Cornell East Asia Series, 121.) xv, 262 pp., 17 plates. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Shadow theatre and other forms of Chinese puppet theatre have been rather neglected as a field of study by both Chinese and especially non-Chinese scholars. This form of theatre was very widespread indeed and has been produced for, but also by, the masses. The 'masses' in this case are not the vague entity depicted in communist terminology, but the flesh-and-blood people who watched shadow theatre and the performers who presented the plays. These plays could be elegant or bawdy and crude, but always reflected grass-roots values. The shadow puppet companies could bring their theatre to the most remote areas of the countryside, not only providing theatre and music, but also playing a significant role in local religious ceremonies. This is all rapidly changing, as Fan Pen Li Chen points out at the end of her introduction: 'the shadow theatre is indeed a dying art in China'. In the brief account of her three field trips to China, from 1996 to 1998, the author takes us on a fascinating journey all over China in search of the remnants of China's shadow theatre traditions. She discovers companies in remote areas, texts and performers, many of whom are in their seventies or eighties. The fact that many eminent performers have died during the writing of this book and that audiences prefer new kinds of entertainment only emphasizes the urgent need for more fieldwork and research on this topic. However, the emphasis here is not on fieldwork, but on the translation of several texts from the Shaanxi and Shanxi shadow theatre traditions. In the introduction the author provides us with a brief history of shadow theatre in China and discussion of the research on the subject, as well as the important shadow traditions of Luanzhou and Shaanxi that were of great influence on traditions in other parts of China. The Shaanxi shadows present both the widest variety of styles and areas of influence. Every style is based on a distinct type of music and repertoire, yet it is not clear

from the text if there are also differences in performance technique or shadow puppets. The shadow theatre has a scripted tradition, yet many puppeteers perform from memory. The seven plays translated here cover a wide range of styles. They include two plays attributed to the scholar Li Fanggui (one of the rare known authors of shadow puppet theatre scripts, who died 1810), as well as three plays of which the authors are unknown, and two popular skits. All translations, except for those of Li Fanggui's works, are based on transcriptions of orally transmitted plays.

The translations start with two skits: Henpecked Zhang San and Rotten-kid Dong Sells His Ma. These short skits from Shaanxi, lasting about 15 minutes, were performed late at night for a male audience. The translator does not mince words and manages to bring the humorous content to life; while reading we can readily image the laughing audience. These popular skits of the shadow theatre never appear in written texts, because of their bawdy content.

The next two plays, The Jade Swallow Hairpin and The White Jade Hairpin, are both attributed to the scholar Li Fanggui. These are famous plays from Shaanxi and stand out because of their refined style and intricate plots. The author even calls The White Jade Hairpin: 'one of the most intellectual shadow plays ever written'. In the translation the author makes ample use of modern colloquial English (for example: 'Darn, what a bummer' by the clown Dong Yin in The Jade Swallow Hairpin), and this gives the translations an immediacy that makes reading very enjoyable.

The Coral Pagoda and Yang Long Draws the Bow are also from Shaanxi, but far less refined. The plays present action-packed martial scenes, romantic interludes and court intrigues, i.e. entertainment that must have appealed to a wide audience.

The last play, The Temple of Guanyin, is from Shanxi and its main protagonist is the female warrior Hu Yunzhuang, who actually turns out to be the goddess Guan Yin at the end of the play. The author only briefly mentions the importance of female power in popular imagination, it may be hoped more attention will be given to this subject in her next book, *The Chinese Shadow Theatre, Popular Religion and Women Warriors*.

This book will appeal to a wide audience, especially to those not familiar with the Chinese language and local culture. The lively translations give the reader a unique glimpse at traditional Chinese grass-roots culture.

ROBIN RUIZENDAAL

WANG ZHENPING:

*Ambassadors from the Islands of the Immortals: China-Japan Relations in the Han-Tang Period.*

(Asian Interaction and Comparisons.) xvi, 387 pp. Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawaii Press, 2005. \$53.

This highly readable account of Sino-Japanese official relations during the first thousand years or so of the interaction of these two great East Asian powers forms an excellent complementary study to the volume published in 1985 by Charlotte von Verschuer in French. Though the focus is somewhat more narrowly on diplomatic activity, the time-span covered is much greater, and particular care is given to contextualizing the practice of Sino-Japanese

diplomatic relations within China's more general contemporary interactions with other foreign peoples. Due attention is also paid the broader context, for example to the type of cosmopolitan culture that the Japanese envoys would have encountered in Tang China—I am not sure that 'fairy poet' (p. 111) is quite the right label for Li Bai, but it is good to see his poetry worked into what might in less sensitive hands have become a very routine account of well-known sources. Something of the real dangers of diplomatic travel are also tellingly conveyed, for example by reference to the biography of Ganjin (to use his Japanese name), and one only regrets that more reference could not have been made to the available English translations of his travels, packed as they are with tales of storm and shipwreck as forbidding as any collected by Hakluyt.

As it is, more space is perhaps wisely given to a topic curiously neglected in earlier sinological scholarship, namely the detailed examination of the diplomatic language of the day, which makes the relevant chapter, the seventh, the longest in the book. The discussion here brings a great deal of clarity to an area usually glossed over by historians, so although it seems necessary to put on record a few complaints about one or two places where this theme could perhaps have been treated better, even so this reviewer should also put on record the fact that this chapter helped to elucidate somewhat matters of terminology that had escaped him in the past. The chapter certainly opens in stimulating fashion, citing the famous letter of 607 from Japan beginning 'The Son of Heaven in the land of the rising sun addresses the Son of Heaven in the land of the setting sun' (p. 141). There is perhaps room for disagreement on exactly how choleric the Chinese emperor became on receiving this statement of implied Japanese equality—I certainly find it suspicious that the letter delivered in return to the Japanese ambassador somehow went missing on the journey home, though the possibility that the message contained expressions that could have had unpleasant repercussions for the messenger must under the circumstances remain no more than a guess. But the problems caused by the answering letter carried back to Japan simultaneously by the Chinese ambassador are not quite accurately described: the 'lost' *Biography of Prince Shōtoku* mentioned at this point (p. 149) and quoted at second hand is not actually lost, since it may be found, with the information drawn from it for the discussion here, in the *Dainihon Bukkyō zensho*. And if Wang's conclusion—that the text of the *Nihongi* that the biography purports to discuss introduced into this letter, in the form in which it is currently known, terminology of a later date—is correct (as I rather think it is), then what validity can be assigned to other examples of *Nihongi* terminology describing the Japanese emperor, such as that concerning the 'Emperor of the East' cited on p. 168, which presumably might equally well result from anachronisms introduced into earlier materials by the compilers of the chronicle?

For the sake of clarity, too, one might have wished for a better reference to the origins of the *man'yōgana* method of representing the Japanese language than that given in n. 41, p. 287, since there is in fact some good research on this point by John R. Bentley in *BSOAS* 64/1 (2001), 59–73. In n. 192, p. 299, moreover, it could have been pointed out explicitly that the *Du duan* of Cai Yong only provides a partial parallel for the system of imperial nomenclature used in Japan, and that at least one of the Japanese usages listed could not claim this precedent. All these points, however, are the merest quibbles, and only go to show the triviality of the level at which Wang Zhengping's work can be criticized. Anyone with the least common sense will immediately discern that this volume is even so a very useful addition to existing scholarship on the

East Asian world of the period. The clear-eyed conclusions in particular on the mutual self-interest that enabled both parties to cope with all the potential points of diplomatic conflict between them may well be welcomed yet more widely still. The author fully deserves the enthusiastic support of the eminent scholars quoted on this jacket of his work.

T. H. BARRETT

## AFRICA

JAMES BYNON:

*Recherches sur le Vocabulaire du Tissage en Afrique du Nord.*  
(Berber Studies, Volume 11.) Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag,  
2005. €34.80.

A little while before penning a review of this excellent pioneer study, I visited a blacksmith in Århus, Denmark, who impressed me by his dexterity at his anvil, his expertise in shaping the iron objects of his craft, and for the skill which was required of him in order to fashion replica artefacts for the archaeological museum of Moesgård, outside his city: impressive copies of spear-heads, of swords and of the axe of Thor. What struck me, in particular, was the manner whereby he combined his technical artistry and his apparently inexhaustible knowledge of the technical vocabulary of his Nordic and pre-Nordic ancestors who had once lived nearby in a dim and distant past.

A similar startling knowledge of technology, of history and pre-history of Berber societies, and of Berber linguistics, seem to have been happily combined in order to produce this remarkable volume, which Harry Stroomer has now made available to the wider public. It is Dr Bynon's original thesis which he defended in the Sorbonne, in 1963. Its publication now makes it available to Berber specialists, to anthropologists and to archaeologists, and to those who may be interested in weaving. Within it one finds a vast fund of information which is all but inaccessible to most and the content of which is unlikely to be superseded, especially now, in an age where specialists in the Berbers, their language and their arts, are sadly absent from British universities. In our time, the study of 'African arts and crafts' is predominantly concerned with the sedentary peoples much further to the south. Stroomer, though, indicates in his preface, that, in recent years, world museums, countless collectors, the growth of North African tourism and the art of the carpet makers, attract an ever increasing number of enthusiasts and *commerçants*. Hence, this is, it would seem, an exceedingly timely publication.

The book contains a very full bibliography covering Southern and Central Morocco, Northern and Central Algeria, including Kabylie and the Aurès, Libya and Egypt, but excluding the Tuareg Sahara. However, Bynon makes it clear that the loom, in which he is specifically interested, is by its very nature exclusively confined within the sedentary Berber-speaking communities of Northernmost Africa. The cut-off point for his sources is 1963. His bibliography is the primary source material, and is pivotal, for his entire study. However, an additional bibliography is now provided, pp. VIII–X, including several recent publications.

The pioneering character of the book is highlighted by Plate I, a North African high warp (*haute lice*) loom, described in detail on pp. 3–7, and its



geographical distribution (pp. 7–10). Bynon's introduction furnishes a lucid and well-documented history of the vertical loom in Antiquity, in the Mediterranean region in general and within North Africa, in particular. Illustrated examples of historic looms are shown in his plate II. Bynon has carried his investigation into the historical significance of this loom much further since he completed this thesis although the seeds of his pioneering explorations were already within it.

The Roman 'warp weighted' loom, hitherto used by the Greeks, was replaced, suddenly, it seems, in Italy by the innovatory 'two-beamed vertical' loom. The character of the former loom required the weaver to stand, whilst the latter allowed the weaver to sit, and to weave downwards. So different were these looms and techniques that any possibility of evolution from the one to the other must be discounted. From whence could it have entered the Roman world? Archaeology confirms that it was when Rome conquered and colonized North Africa. Was the latter the source for the loom? This puzzle spurred Bynon into investigating the possibility that a study of weaving techniques in the modern Berber language might help solve this question. His approach is strictly linguistic. His secondary aim, of shedding light on the surviving Berber 'two-beamed vertical' loom, was to be an investigation of great interest to students of the history of textile technology.

Roman weaving was the task of women and slaves, a situation which prevails amongst the Berbers even today. These suspicions, this historical curiosity, this archaeological search, have guided the direction of the approach in the thesis from the very outset. Bynon has tried to determine, through the contemporary Berber languages, the name of the loom, its parts, and the local history in regard to the loom. He has argued his case by employing purely linguistic arguments with a particular attention to vocabulary of native origin or to loan words, borrowed by Berbers, either from Latin or from North African Arabic.

His conclusion, which he still accepts today, is that the name *azeŭ'a*, '*métier à tisser*', or 'loom', in Berber, is not the name of an instrument but is still closely associated with the Berber verb *eẓd*, meaning 'to weave', or 'to plait', etc. The noun action, e.g. in 'knitting', in the sense of the ensemble of woollen ball, knitting needles, and a half-completed product (thereby linking a noun with its verb of action), suggests an English parallel. He concludes that this feature originated at a very early stage of the proto-language before the split into contemporary Berber languages. In contrast, North African Arabic only employs instrumental terms for the 'two-beamed vertical' loom. Individual components are all in Berber, with only one identifiable word, *ifilu* 'thread', being a Latin loan word. In sum, his case offers sound linguistic evidence for a Berber precedence in antiquity for this loom and its plausible introduction into Roman Europe as the empire expanded south into Africa.

To summarize, the goal of this study, as described in the '*Méthode de travail*' (p. 19) is to furnish an extremely detailed analysis of factual information derived from dictionaries, grammars, linguistic texts and travellers' descriptions, whereby the notation is presented, though retaining the system of transcription of each author and source concerned. Tribe and location are indicated in each instance, followed by the abridged title, the pagination and the date of publication of his sources.

Following his guidelines, the heart of the thesis presents a linguistic comment and a comparative analysis of the variety of Berber terms which relate to every detail of the equipment and the process of weaving; terms such as (and here I am grateful to Bynon personally, for guidance) *métier à*

*haute lice* 'two-beamed vertical loom'; *montants*, 'loom uprights'; *ensouples*, 'loom beams'; *ensouple dérouleuse*, 'warp beam'; *ensouple enrouleuse*, 'cloth beam'; *fil de chaîne* 'warp thread'; *fil de trame* 'weft thread' or 'yarn'; *lice* or *lisse*, 'heddle'; *bâton de lice*, 'heddle rod'; *roseau de tissage*, 'shed stick'; *tendeurs latéraux* or *pincés de tension*, 'cloth stretchers'; *peigne à tisser*, 'comb beater'.

It is interesting that the art of weaving has influenced nomenclature even where, as indicated (p. 8), the upright loom has never been known, or, if known, has vanished over the centuries. An example of this is on the fringes of the southern Sahara where it has been a feature of the cultural influences from within Mali or Niger, not those that have come from the Berber north. Within the social structure of the Mauritanian Bīdān, for example, more especially the part Znāga Zwāya, imagery from 'the loom' has influenced the social system to the extent that 'white tributaries' (*lahma*, Classical Arabic *luhma*), were once portrayed as the weft of a woven fabric, whilst the warp were the, originally Berber, Znāga, and the overwhelming Hassānī lordly 'Arab' *mujāhidūn*. Other weaving terms still exist in Hassāniyya; such as *sde* 'chaîne de métier', and *sdē*, 'montage de la chaîne sur le métier à tisser' (Catherine Taine-Cheikh, *Dictionnaire Hassniyya-Français*, Vol. 5, zā'-sīn, p. 974). A picture of 'primitive' Saharan weaving techniques may be seen in Caro Baroja's *Estudios Saharianos*, p. 233, Fig. 132.—El telar sahariano donde se tejen los *filfa*.

In his conclusion Bynon, after carefully analysing the varied Berber vocabulary and terminology gleaned, offers a number of interesting historical and cultural deductions. He has suggested that, corresponding to the loom used for weaving, one Berber form was to be found, geographically, between Morocco and Sokna in Libya. The purely Berber term that is used is not the specific name of an instrument but an ancient noun of action, the specific sense of which very loosely conveys the meaning of the object and tool of the action itself. He contrasts this with the Arabic term where nouns which describe the instrument itself are the norm. This leads him to weigh up the possibility of some parallels with the Latin, *tēla*, a possibility which is not unreasonable in view of the major cultural impact of the Romans on North Africa. But he remains unhappy about the evidence so far collected, though he is certain of the considerable antiquity of the Berber terms which are indigenous to the Maghrib itself.

This debate is clearly still ongoing and is open to varied hypothetical theories. In any event, this book is a benchmark amongst the studies of the loom and of weaving in North Africa and it should be on the reading list of all who are specifically interested in weaving amongst its sedentary Berber peoples.

H. T. NORRIS

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## GENERAL

JOHN R. HINNELLS:

*The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration.*

xviii, 865 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. £130.

In our globalized world, religion has ceased to be a local phenomenon. Nowadays there is no major religion which has not spread around the globe. But what characterizes many diasporas is, in Ninian Smart's definition, 'an element

of exile'. This applies particularly to a community as microscopic as that of the Zoroastrians, whose numbers are in the region of 120,000 world-wide. The oldest diaspora community is that in India, and this dates back to the early Islamic period. There they became known as Parsis, because they came from 'Pars' (Persia). As to the modern Zoroastrian diaspora, Hinnells aptly distinguishes two main phases of migration, the first in the mid-nineteenth and the second in the second half of the twentieth century (p. 699). From about 1850 onwards, diaspora communities developed in China, Sindh (then part of British India, present-day Pakistan), East Africa and Britain. The Zoroastrians of this diaspora came from India and their migrations were linked to trade within the British Empire. By contrast, the migrants of the second phase came not only from India, but also from Iran. In addition, there were 'twice-migrants' from Pakistan and East Africa. Their destinations were, again, Britain, but also Canada, the USA, Australia and Germany. Their diasporic movements were only rarely for trade, but more typically for education, career development and for leaving hostile regimes. In particular, it was increasing islamization in Pakistan after independence and Iran after the 1979 revolution, together with Black African policies in East Africa, which made Zoroastrians leave those countries. As a result of such migrations Zoroastrians are now found in more countries than at any stage in their long history. To the present day, the Parsis of India constitute the largest and most important of diaspora groups, but their numbers are decreasing while the size, influence and significance of those in the New World are growing.

With this substantial book (both in volume and price), John R. Hinnells has delivered an awesome piece of research, the fruit of thirty years of study. He not only undertook an unprecedented survey of Zoroastrian diaspora communities by means of a questionnaire, which yielded 1,840 responses, on demographic issues, religious belief and practice and secular culture, but he also visited the eleven diaspora centres he writes about, studying their archival sources and living with local Zoroastrian families. His unrivalled first-hand familiarity with communities world-wide enables him both to present fiercely debated topics in a sensitive and impartial manner, and to convey personal perceptions of individual Zoroastrians. The present work is based on his Ratanbai Katrak Lectures delivered in Oxford in 1985. Following *Zoroastrians in Britain*, published in 1996, it is, in one sense, volume 2 of those lectures. Volume 3 is planned to be *The History and Religion of the Parsis in Bombay Presidency (1662–1947)*, which Hinnells and the Zoroastrian high priest Dastur Dr K. M. JamaspAsa are jointly preparing for publication.

In eleven chapters, Hinnells discusses Zoroastrian diasporas in post-independence Bombay (pp. 33–137), Hong Kong and the China Seas (pp. 145–88), Karachi (pp. 189–244), East Africa (pp. 245–313), Europe, especially Britain (pp. 314–424), the United States and Canada (pp. 425–542) and, finally, Australia (pp. 543–602). The structure of each chapter follows a similar pattern: a historical survey providing the background against which Zoroastrian migration into the region is presented, followed by a discussion of the community and the role of religion within it. An introduction outlining key issues of the book (pp. 1–32) provides the theoretical underpinning of the study, a chapter on 'The global Zoroastrian diaspora' (pp. 138–44) gives a broad picture of Zoroastrians world-wide drawn from Hinnells' survey questionnaire, 'Globalizing trends' are discussed in chapter 10 (pp. 603–98) and the results of the study are summarized in the 'Conclusion' (pp. 699–736). There are, moreover, three appendices. Appendix 1 gives the text of a speech delivered by the President of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Sir Shapoorji

Bomanji Billimoria, on the occasion of Indian Independence at a function held on 15 August 1947 (pp. 737–40). The data resulting from the survey are given in Appendix 2 (pp. 741–99) and the full text of the questionnaire in Appendix 3 (pp. 800–17). The book is concluded by a selected bibliography on Zoroastrianism (pp. 819–22), a glossary (pp. 823–27) and excellent indexes (pp. 829–65) compiled by Nora Firby.

Contrary to the claims of some scholars, especially W. Safran and R. Cohen, Hinnells argues convincingly that Parsis have a strong concept of, and powerful emotional attachment to, Iran, the homeland of their religion, and therefore do constitute a diaspora. Although it is not uncommon for Parsis to consider themselves to be Indians first and Parsis second, they are profoundly aware of their Persian ancestry. Moreover, many second- and third-generation Parsis in America regard Persia, rather than India, as their homeland, a sense of belonging illustrated by the film *In the Footsteps of Our Forefathers*, which records the pilgrimage of American Zoroastrian professionals back to the homeland of their religion. This tie with Iran is kept alive by the practice of praying in the ancient Iranian language of the Avesta, by motifs of Achaemenid art which decorate the walls of many homes and prayer rooms and by stories from the Persian epic of the *Shahname*, which forms part of Zoroastrian culture. To these arguments may be added that places depicted in Zoroastrian religious imagery are located in Iranian lands. For instance, the Zoroastrians live in expectation of a world saviour who will complete the battle against evil victoriously at the end of time: he is expected to emerge from Lake Hāmūn in Sistān. There the Kūh-i Khwāja, the 'Mountain of the Lord', attracts Zoroastrian (and also Muslim) pilgrims to the present day.

Hinnells identifies several features that characterize all Zoroastrian diaspora communities. One of them is that diaspora Zoroastrians have made considerable contributions to the society and economy of both their sending (India and Iran) and new countries. In particular, much of the wealth of diaspora Zoroastrians flows back to charitable foundations in India, especially Bombay. For instance, Hong Kong Parsis funded not only two housing colonies in Navsari, but also made huge donations to the Parsi General Hospital in Bombay and funded the new fire temple in Godrej Baug on Malabar Hill, the Shapurji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary, which was inaugurated in 1999. Back in Hong Kong, Parsis had an important role both in the growth of banking and the stock exchange and in the founding of Hong Kong University (H. N. Mody). Another example is Sindh, where members of the small community made immense contributions to the economic development of Karachi and served society in leading positions. In Britain, the first three Asian Members of Parliament were Parsis.

Another characteristic of diaspora Zoroastrians is a strong sense of loyalty to whichever country they inhabit. When they feel unable to give such loyalty they move on and emigrate. Loyalty even has priority over communal ties. For example, in the dispute about the ceding of the East Coast Strip to Zanzibar, Dara Patel of Mombasa, who was against the transfer, negotiated with two Zanzibari Parsis on the opposite side, namely Rustom Sidhwa for the Afro-Shirazi Party and Ratti Bulsara for the Nationalists (p. 293). Furthermore, Parsis in virtually all diaspora groups are proud of the part women play in their societies, and in this, as in other respects, they see themselves as being distinct from other Asian groups. The 'coming out' of Parsi woman took place much earlier than it did in other Indian communities. For instance, the first Indian girl to go to school was a Parsi (Dosebai Cowasji Jessawalla), as was the first Indian woman (Cornelia Sorabji) to study at Oxford, where she read law from 1889–92 (p. 327). Among Zoroastrians it is typically the mothers who teach the religion to their children.

A common feature of diaspora communities is that they tend to preserve a traditional religious orientation more strongly than in the sending country. While the level of secularization is relatively high amongst Bombay Parsis (pp. 114 f.), East African Zoroastrians, for instance, remained religiously orthodox and, when migrating to Britain in the 1960s, became an important factor in the reassertion of traditional boundaries in the London community (pp. 385, 422). Key causes of communal, highly divisive, disputes are intermarriage and conversion. In earlier Indian society Parsis were a 'caste'-like group and traditionally married within the fold. 'In-marriage' is still common in rural areas and among Parsis living in housing colonies, but is becoming increasingly difficult in small and dwindling diaspora communities. Intermarriage occurs most frequently among the highly-educated cosmopolitans.

While most studies of South Asian communities in Britain are of a sociological or political nature, Hinnells identifies religion as a crucial marker of identity in diaspora groups (pp. 321 f.). With *The Zoroastrian Diaspora* he has made an important, indeed ground-breaking, contribution not only to the study of Zoroastrianism but also to the debate on migration and diaspora communities. This is a book which nobody working in Zoroastrian or Diaspora studies can afford to ignore.

ALMUT HINTZE

MU-CHOU POO:

*Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China.*

(SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture.) xviii, 211 pp.  
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. \$29.95.

Defining and 'knowing' the Other have long constituted a yardstick for self-positioning and self-empowerment. Among the various 'others', the Foreigner is one that may attract attention and cause acceptance, refusal or indifference. But who or what is Foreign? The as yet unknown? The different, the outsider? And if so, different or outside in what respect: 'nature' or culture, so to speak? This cultural/political notion being closely dependent on the eye of the beholder, it challenges attempts to define and substantiate it, all the more when we refer to a distant past, when the risk increases of pigeon-holing antiquity according to modern constructs.

In spite and in (optimistic) defiance of these issues, which he is apparently well aware of, Mu-chou Poo has produced a comparative study of the attitudes towards foreigners in Mesopotamia, Egypt and China as seen in textual, graphic and archaeological evidence. Proposing to better understand some of the characteristics of these ancient civilizations, particularly in terms of cultural consciousness and self-perception, by observing and comparing the way(s) in which they related to (or ignored) foreign people or things, this study investigates the oft-dichotomic theory and practice of dealing with the Other.

After illustrating the relativity of both cultural identity and the notion of Foreign itself, Poo shows how outsiders, whatever their nature, often were—or were constructed to be—conducive to identity-building. A few interesting points are raised concerning the necessity for the existence of foreigners, though more could have been said on the politics and requirements—often unrelated to effective differentiation—of branding somebody as foreign. Representations, descriptions of and attitudes towards foreigners are then



explored by looking at a number of sources which—according to their agenda, usage and public or private nature—include derogatory images and politically charged depictions, as well as a few more nuanced views. Most sources describe foreigners as different/inferior in terms of lifestyle, habits and civilization, but not in the physical sense, except for a few occurrences where alleged beastly features also form a basis for demonizing the outsiders (see for instance p. 84 on the *Shanhaijing*). Poo's analysis of this evidence brings him to the conclusion that value judgements and distinctions were made for the most part on a cultural basis, not on biophysical grounds. While this is surely notable, one wonders whether the relatively modern culture/race dichotomy may actually be applicable when assessing antiquity. If the use of 'biology' to arrange differences hierarchically is linked to the discourse of science as a rational, 'natural' justification to eminently cultural classifications, the absence of 'race' as a cataloguing criterion in antiquity is not very surprising.

On the other hand, the analysis of the practical relations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and China with foreign people and things highlights a number of noteworthy issues. If recurrent warfare coupled with political, cultural and social rationales caused foreigners to be often labelled as 'enemies', though sympathetic views and peaceful relationships did of course exist, foreign goods were praised, their possession and usage symbolizing power and status. Whereas officially-sanctioned representations stigmatized barbarians, exotic objects meant prestige. This relationship between (imported) material culture and (non-)appreciation of foreigners is indeed interesting, and might have deserved further investigation. The gap between discourse and praxis is further emphasized in the analysis of evidence—or lack thereof—concerning the life of foreigners. We are thus shown that, despite prejudice, several foreigners gained admission and respectability in Mesopotamian and Egyptian society, whereas there is almost no reference to their life inside pre-Qin China. According to Poo, such a lack is due to the prevailing 'Sino-centric ideology', whereby foreigners were supposedly 'assimilated' and whoever lived in China came to be considered 'Chinese', regardless of ethnic origin, while neither Egypt nor Mesopotamia apparently developed any 'assimilation' discourse. Interestingly, Poo finally illustrates how the Sino-centric 'acculturation' discourse was in many respects delusional, not corresponding to reality, and how the allegedly unique power of assimilation of Chinese culture is in fact a social construct that has long been made to suit specific political agendas.

Poo pleads for intercultural thematic comparison as a fruitful approach to history. Indeed, his hint at the possibility of gaining, by comparison, further insights into how 'Chinese' was the ancient—or modern, for that matter—Chinese cultural consciousness is a well taken point, and the overall issue of (allegedly unique) 'Chineseness' certainly deserves further analysis. In this sense, and notwithstanding their intricacy due to the level of expertise needed, comparative studies may yield significant results, although serious methodological issues remain open on the selection criteria of subjects and sources. For instance, the choice of Mesopotamia, Egypt and China as elements of comparison might be debatable. Poo affirms that his choice is due, alongside reasons of personal expertise, to the fact that these civilizations were the 'dominant culture' of their area, and regarded themselves as 'culturally superior' vis-à-vis their neighbours (p. 11). This might, at least in discursive terms, be true, but one is left wondering whether outcomes could have been different by choosing, for example, India or Central America. Most of all, given the difficulty of comparing such complex civilizations and fully appreciating the varying historical/cultural conditions in which evidence on attitudes toward the Foreign was produced, findings—though noteworthy—cannot but be introductory. Since China seems to be the target culture within this work, a



closer emphasis on it, with fewer or more focused comparisons, might have led to deeper analysis. Furthermore, extant sources being few and for the most part political, they provide a perspective on the official discourse, but certainly not on general perceptions or attitudes. Poo is thus faced with the problem of reliability, and of discerning real attitudes from decorum (see ch. 7). He attempts to overcome these obstacles by contextualizing evidence, and by looking at what we could term sources in spite of themselves (material culture, life and social position of foreigners): he does partially succeed, but the wide scope of his work tends to thwart his efforts.

These limitations notwithstanding, and despite the need for more thorough editing that would have avoided the occasional typographical errors (e.g. 'apotropeic', p. 56; 'apparantly', p. 125), incongruent romanization (e.g. different spelling of the same word on the same page: Guifang/Guei Fang, p. 77) and mistaken quotations (e.g. Revista should be Rivista, p. 193; Momigliano should be Momigliano, Istituto should be Istituto, p. 199; premiere should be première, p. 201), this is a readable, clear and interesting introductory study that may foster further investigation on a complex matter.

VALENTINA BORETTI

ROS BALLASTER:

*Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785.*

xii, 408 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. £25.

The publicity for this book is quite literally true: this is the first book-length study of the Oriental tale in England to appear for almost a century. In 1908 Martha Pike Conant published through Columbia University Press a volume entitled *The Oriental Tale in Eighteenth Century England* that Edward Said acknowledged as one of the few forerunners to his own enterprise, though the spirit that animates Conant's work is somewhat different. She sees her task as a straightforward one of surveying a body of literature listed in an appended bibliography, and grouping it thematically into tales philosophical, imaginative, moral and satirical. Ballaster's temporal limits are not quite the same, and her notion of fiction spreads further than the limits chosen by Conant, so she is able, for example, to pull in Dryden's play *Aureng-zebe* from the seventeenth century, while confining her remarks on William Beckford's *Vathek* of 1786 to a brief closing chapter on later developments. Although her introductory remarks are followed by some general comments both about themes and sub-genres, the bulk of the book is organized along regional lines into three substantial main chapters. The longest of these covers Turkey and Persia, the Asian societies best known to the English at this point, but the chapters on China and on India also contain much of interest.

This organization does, however, lead to further differences from Conant's work, since the earlier researcher assigns a particular importance in the genre, along with *Vathek*, to Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, which because it is set in Ethiopia is only incidentally mentioned here. But the divisions chosen by Ballaster are of much greater interest to an age more concerned with area studies, and needless to say Ballaster's readings of the sources are informed by a good knowledge of the historical and literary research that has been carried out since Said's time, much of which does not simply reiterate his insights but rather brings some quite intriguing nuances to the relationship between England and the imagined Orient during this particular period. Some points made by Conant do inevitably recede into the background in this scheme of organization, for example the indebtedness of Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*

to George Lyttleton's *Letters of a Persian in England*. But Ballaster is quite clear that we cannot deduce from such examples the conclusion that the Orient was seen at this point as a mere undifferentiated lump of alterity: distinctions between Shia and Sunni within the Islamic world, and the tensions between Muslim and Hindu in India were, by her account, at least partially understood by some of her authors.

It must be said, however, that a certain amount of ignorance and confusion does mark the writings of the time, and this inevitably causes some minor pitfalls for the unwary researcher. Buddhism, for example, manifested itself in different parts of Asia in different ways, and it was not until much later that most scholars were able to see the connections that might be made between these manifold cultural and linguistic disguises—some would indeed, with a certain amount of justice, see the 'Buddhism' we study today as nothing more than a construction of the nineteenth century. Reconstituting the eighteenth-century fragments out of this nineteenth-century unity and then tracing the genealogies of the separated fragments is by no means an easy task. On p. 228 the transcription of the Buddha's name as 'Chacabout' cannot be derived from Marco Polo's terminology, and must reflect direct contact with Asia. The assertion on p. 198 that the 'Fohi' identified with Noah in William Whiston's 1696 *New Theory of the Earth* is also the Buddha is due to a couple of unfortunate mistakes. Despite the bold appearance of Whiston's 1696 book in the bibliography, I can confirm that this first edition contains nothing about 'Fohi' whatsoever, and the real source of Ballaster's information, William Appleton's *A Cycle of Cathay*, indeed says as much—according to Appleton, the identification is only added to the 1708 edition of Whiston's work, at p. 140. But Appleton equally makes clear that 'Fohi' has nothing to do with the Buddha, but refers instead (as higher up on Ballaster's same p. 198) to the Chinese sage Fuxi, regarded by some as the inventor of the Chinese script, which was then the topic of much speculation.

Elsewhere the Buddha does genuinely appear in the literature Ballaster surveys, but quite pardonably neither she nor Conant before her are able to penetrate the disguise he wears. On p. 195, where the original version of the Turandot story is discussed, the prototype for the later slave girl Liu is depicted as the adherent of a nihilistic cult attributed to one 'Xaca'. That the Buddha was in fact a cynical exploiter of the credulous is a very early slander that was to have surprising ramifications in the nineteenth century in certain intellectual circles, as Roger-Pol Droit has shown, in *The Cult of Nothingness* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2003), though without tracing the origin of the notion. This transcription of the Buddha's name as 'Xaca' here points to a very early Portuguese transcription from Japanese, perhaps from as early as the time of Xavier, who certainly did not care for Buddhism. The same spelling is still used by Alvaro Semedo in writing on China in the mid-seventeenth century, but his account of Buddhism is not quite so darkly negative, so my hunch is that in order to understand this aspect of the original Turandot tale, a treatment of Europe's conception of Japan, a civilization entirely ignored by Ballaster's work, might become necessary.

Such minutiae will of course interest the historian of British knowledge of Asia much more than the student of English literature. One or two trivial slips do obtrude in this study, for example the accidental dating of Voltaire to the seventeenth century on p. 56. But for the readership for which this volume seems to have been intended it will undoubtedly come as a very welcome addition to the available scholarship. Let us hope that we do not have to wait almost another century before it is joined by further contributions to the field.

T. H. BARRETT

EDWARD ALPERS, GWYN CAMPBELL and MICHAEL SALMAN (eds):  
*Slavery and Resistance in Africa and Asia*.  
 ix, 143 pp. London: Routledge, 2005. £60.

Publishers should be much more careful about the titles under which their books appear. In this case, most of the book actually concerns resistance by owners and slaves to abolition, rather than resistance by slaves to their owners. The rejection of abolition is an interesting topic, but it needs to be more clearly reflected in the title. Similarly, the volume does not really address Africa, but rather what the editors clumsily call 'Indian Ocean Africa (IOA)', which in effect means the islands of the south-western Indian Ocean. The Asian case studies are more geographically representative, however, ranging from Arabia to Korea.

A reader expecting a book about slave resistance gets a skilfully crafted and wide-ranging introduction to this issue, by Gwyn Campbell and Edward Alpers. Mercifully, they resist the temptation to summarize the volume's essays, and instead begin by insisting on the diverse gradation in servile statuses. Servility was potentially reversible when debt was the root of bondage, and the authors stress that indebtedness has been somewhat neglected in the mainstream historiography of slavery. The tasks allocated to subalterns included many domestic and sexual services. Upward social mobility was common, often resulting in partial or total manumission, which in turn stimulated a search for fresh sources of slaves. The distinction between 'open' and 'closed' servile systems was blurred by the ability to rise socially without acquiring freedom. The coerced were deeply divided by ethnicity, race, place of birth, occupation, status and rights, to which the authors might have added religion and caste. However, the prevalence of women owners made little difference, for mistresses proved to be as merciless, or as benevolent, as masters.

Given this type of servitude, major rebellions were generally rare and unsuccessful, although Kim Bok-Rae's ground-breaking chapter on Korea indicates that revolts there were quite common. Short-term marronage was the most usual form of resistance, perhaps more accurately described as absenteeism. Campbell and Alpers carefully resist the siren calls of romanticizing 'grand marronage', indicating that maroon communities raided for female partners, captured people for sale, and even became major slave traders. The contradictions of marronage are explored in the greatest depth in Richard Allen's chapter on Mauritius, which considers escapes by both African slaves and Indian 'coolies'. Religious resistance needs more emphasis, although Kim analyses the role of the Buddhist millenarian Maitreya sect in Korea, and Michael Lambek, writing on the Sakalava of western Madagascar, demonstrates the ambivalence of an Animist cult.

Over the longer term, the main goals of servile populations tended to be acculturation and social promotion. Kim's essay demonstrates this well over a long period, although her argument lacks a discussion of the distinction between slaves, serfs and free peasants. Richard Allen shows how former slaves and indentured labourers preferred to work for 'people of colour', who progressively acquired land on Mauritius. Some slaves even refused freedom, a theme explored in detail in Lambek's essay on the Sakalava, and in Suzanne Miers' chapter on the 1943 abolition of military slavery in Hadhramaut. South Arabia also provided a good example of Campbell and Alpers' point that Western powers connived at delaying abolition by declaring their possessions to be 'protectorates'. Janet Hoskins' chapter on the island of Sumba, in

eastern Indonesia, demonstrates the difficulties of achieving true assimilation, although Dutch abolition in indirectly ruled parts of Indonesia occurred much later than the 1860 date that she cites.

The attitudes of colonial elites towards slavery and abolition take up a large part of this volume. In a thought-provoking piece, Michael Salman analyses the outrage provoked by Dean Worcester's 1913 pamphlet on slavery in the Philippines. Writing in Spanish, Catholic Filipinos denied that slavery under their former colonial rulers corresponded to the stereotypical plantations of the ante-bellum United States. They further maintained that contemporary forms of subordination resulted from kidnapping, corruption of minors, adoption and debt. Although Salman shows that much of this was special pleading, he remains ambivalent about Worcester's initial accusations, and makes no use of William Scott's important 1991 book on Spanish slavery in the Philippines. Kim briefly considers Confucian reformers' opposition to slavery, but fails to draw on James Palais' interesting work on this topic, published in 1996. Timothy Walker's chapter shows how owners in India evaded Portuguese orders to register slaves in 1855, but unfortunately makes no more than tantalizing references to the Indians, Malays and Chinese enslaved alongside Africans. Edward Alpers surveys the French literary output on Réunion, coming to the unsurprising conclusion that marronage symbolized evil to planters, but liberation to abolitionists and subalterns.

Most controversial is the assertion in the introduction that there was no 'Western concept of individual liberty' against which the coerced could evaluate their status, and that there were no indigenous parallels. In reality, Western concepts of freedom were accessible to slaves, most saliently, in terms of this book's case studies, in the Mascarenes, Portuguese India and the Philippines. Moreover, Campbell and Alpers themselves hint at Islam's carefully elaborated concepts of individual freedom, and at possibilities emerging from Kim's chapter that Confucianism might be similar in this respect. They show that even 'lineage societies' differentiate clearly between the free, who have kin, and the unfree, who are either kinless or relegated to an inferior quasi-kin status. At one point, the authors claim that 'coerced labour was probably extracted from the majority of non-elite populations of Africa and Asia well into the twentieth century'. This flies in the face of Marshall Hodgson's magisterial analyses of Islam, and contradicts a mass of evidence on free East Asian peasantries. Even in the cases of Hindu India and Animist Africa, it is a doubtful proposition. As this volume arises out of one of the Avignon conferences on slavery, organized by Gwyn Campbell, it might be possible to envisage a future session on the concepts and realities of freedom.

WILLIAM G. CLARENCE-SMITH

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#### SHORT NOTICES

JANE DAMMEN MCAULIFFE (ed.):

*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Volume Three, J–O).  
xxiii, 608 pp. Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2003.

This work represents the third of the proposed five-volume encyclopedia devoted to the academic study of the Quran in all its extensive and diverse aspects. The range of entries which form the basis of this volume covers material from the letters J to O. There are over 100 fully cross-referenced entries in this volume, including a significant number of extended essays and articles.

These include entries on Jews and Judaism, Language and Style of the Qur'an, Last Judgement, Law and the Qur'an, Literary Structures of the Qur'an, Literature and the Qur'an, Medicine and the Qur'an, Muhammad, Myths and Legends, Names of the Qur'an, Narratives, and Orality and Writing. Moreover, four of the extended essays, Manuscripts of the Qur'an, Material Culture, Mosque, and the entry entitled Ornamentation furnish splendid examples of illustrative plates and diagrams. The system of English-language entry words adopted for this project has generated a number of peculiar titles for entries in this volume, just as it has done for previous tomes. Thus, one finds subject headings for entries such as *Joy and Misery*, *Lamp*, *Laughter*, *Left-Hand and Right-hand*, *Load or Burden*, *Marvels*, *Maturity*, *Memory*, *Milk*, *News*, and *Odours and Smells*. The connection with the Quran in such instances appears at first sight to be somewhat contrived; but on circumspect review of these entries one senses a clear-cut and appropriate nexus with the sacred text, confirming the wide-ranging coverage which the *EQ* claims to offer. As mentioned previously, the individual volumes do not include a register of subjects or list of entries, although a comprehensive index is planned for the final volume. The encyclopedia remains an indispensable research tool for the academic study of the Quran for the new millennium.

MUSTAFA SHAH

HO PENG YOKE:

*Reminiscences of a Roving Scholar: Science, Humanities and Joseph Needham.*

xii, 240 pp. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2005.

Although the power of the dollar has ensured that many of the best-known overseas Chinese scholars are usually associated with North America, we may be grateful that those who have strayed within the British orbit have generally been amongst the cream of the cream. One thinks of Cheng Te-k'un, of D. C. Lau, and of Wang Gungwu—not alas in this last case as a teacher, but as perhaps now the most eminent holder of a doctorate in history from SOAS. And one thinks of Ho Peng Yoke, though perhaps not as often as we should. I once heard one senior colleague greet the news that Ho had just been appointed to the Directorship of the Needham Research Institute with the observation that though he was undoubtedly an excellent fellow, he was a rather surprising choice for that delicate and important post, for at that time Needham still lived, though he was elderly and increasingly frail, and the future of his legacy seemed far from assured. Had my colleague been able to consult this plainly told yet telling account of Ho's career, he might have thought twice about that judgement, for as it shows, his talents were such that he had already been approached with a view to becoming a cabinet member at a particularly tricky point in the history of his homeland, Malaysia, and though he prudently turned this offer down, it does stand as testimony to the degree of confidence reposed in him by those who knew him best.

And even in much smaller matters, his capacity for lateral thinking can only be accounted impressive—discovering, for example (p. 55), on his arrival that the 'college' he has been invited to address is in fact a kindergarten, he folds up the learned address that he has prepared, and gives an impromptu demonstration of the art of origami. The number of institutions of higher learning across the world that have benefited from his unspectacular yet highly

effective assistance is considerable: I would judge, for example, that without his support the teaching of the history of Chinese medicine would not now exist in the University of London, whilst, thanks to his skills in managing a prolonged period of transition, the Needham Research Institute—a purely private venture—has outlasted some state supported departments of Chinese. This volume of reminiscences is therefore more than welcome, for though one suspects that his achievements may well be inimitable, his unique blend of humanistic and scientific scholarship will surely provide inspiration within his field for years to come, and to know something of the scholar behind them is a real treat.

T. H. BARRETT

MICHELINE GALLEY (ed.):

*Taghriba. La Marche vers l'Ouest des Fils de Hilal.*

61 pp. Paris: S. N. Librairie Orientaliste. Paul Geuthner 2005. €19.

Micheline Galley is rightly regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on the famous *Sīrat Banī Hilāl*. Her most recent publications include her co-authored article with Omar Bencheikh, 'À propos d'un manuscrit de la geste hilalienne conservé à la Bibliothèque Vaticane', published in *Oriente Moderno's* special number entitled 'Studies on Arabic epic' (ed. Giovanni Canova), xxii (L XXX III), n.s. 2 2003, pp. 307–33.

This little book offers, firstly, an attractive overall view of the *Taghriba*, in which the plates show wood engravings (of Dhyāb) and paintings on glass from Tunisia (of al-Zāzya/Jāzya), the battle between Zanāti Khalifah and Khwāja 'Āmer, painted on glass, from Cairo, 'Antara and 'Abā, also on glass, from Cairo and, likewise, from Tunisia, 'Antara and his archer Shaybūb. All these works of popular art illustrate, in colour, the delightful way in which characters from the geste are portrayed by artists in the countries represented. Galley also reproduces the final page of a copy of the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* from the Bibliothèque nationale in Tunis. Passages of printed and transcribed Arabic text, both written and oral, are translated with a commentary. They are attractively printed and placed amidst the selected illustrated material. The 'Paroles d'Abū Zayd' are printed in Arabic with a French translation. This particular passage is taken from the manuscript in the Vatican Library and the passage of text is reproduced in Arabic and French, on pp. 32 and 33. In a short compass, Galley has been remarkably successful in conveying the message and the appeal of this folk epic.

Her little book also contains a map showing Arabia, the Fertile Crescent and North Africa, where the geste is told and recited to this day, and the illustrations are introduced by a survey of the manner of presentation of the geste. She discusses the history of the dissemination of the geste in manuscript form, an outline of the oral tradition and its recitation in the Arab World, a general introduction to the chief *siyar* or *malāhim*, the poets, the historical Hilālīs, the heroes and the heroines in the gestes, the channels of oral transmission, and the artistry of the poets who recite them.

This lucid, condensed, beautifully balanced, and colourful little work furnishes an ideal introduction to those who, for whatever reason, desire to know more about popular Arabic folk epic. It will also interest others who explore the folk epic tradition in other cultures in Africa and Asia. I do not know of any other book which does this so sensitively and so authoritatively.

H. T. NORRIS