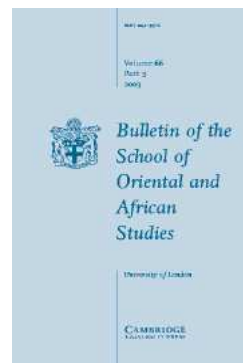


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JENNIFER HOWES: The courts of pre-colonial south India: material culture and kingship. (Royal Asiatic Society Books.) xvi, 259 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. £50.

CRISPIN BRANFOOT

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REVIEWS

THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

JAMES DICKINS, SÁNDOR HERVEY and IAN HIGGINS:

Thinking Arabic translation.

x, 256 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. £19.99.

This book, replete with invaluable tips on how to translate Arabic into English, is a practical work intended to produce competent Arabic translators (both Arabs and non-Arabs) for whom there is presently a considerable need. It is based on a course taught by James Dickins at the University of Durham, which, in turn, was modelled on a course in French–English translation by his co-authors (*Thinking translation: a course in translation method: French to English*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992). Showing just how differently an Arabic text can be rendered into English, chapter 1 presents three well-known translations of a *sūra* from the Quran. For the Arabic *walam yakun lahu kufa'an 'ahad*, we note a (1909) translation by Rodwell: ‘And there is none like unto Him’, the very close (1997) Al-Hilali and Khan: ‘And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him’, vs. the radically different (1997) Turner version: ‘And there is nothing in the whole of the cosmos that can be likened to Him’ (pp. 11–12). Indeed, quranic translation, according to most Muslim scholars, is much more of an interpretive enterprise, since they believe that the Quran, in fact, defies translation (witness the fact that Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall’s subtitled ‘explanatory translation’ of the Quran is, in fact, entitled *The meaning of the glorious Quran* (New York: Mentor Books, 1953)). The authors, however, are perfectly justified in calling Quran translation an exercise in ‘exegetic translation’ (p. 11).

Chapter 2 (pp. 15–28) discusses literal and idiomatic translations, among other interesting topics. The colloquial Arabic expression *'illi fāt māt* ‘what has passed has died’ (lit.) is much better rendered by ‘let bygones be bygones’ (p. 17) or ‘what’s done is done’ (p. 35). As the authors explain: ‘Here the grammar is completely different and the *metaphor* of “dying” is lost’ (p. 17). Another good example cited is the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) proverb *yawm laka wa yawm 'alayka*, lit., ‘a day for you and a day on you’, elegantly translated as ‘you win some, you lose some’ (*ibid.*).

One of the strengths of this work is the solid emphasis placed on communicative translation (pp. 17, 18, 29, 35, 42, 49, 254). By way of illustration, let me explain that one of the most typical characteristics of Arabic is the use of religious formulae in everyday speech. Thus, expressions such as *'in šā('a) 'allah* ‘if God wills’ occur literally dozens of times daily, if not more, in the speech of millions of native speakers throughout the Arab world. Rather than translate this as ‘if Allah wills’ or ‘God willing’, or something to this effect, I concur with the authors’ assertion that this may most often be rendered by ‘I hope’ (p. 35). Of course, the religious nuance is lost, but that is quite understandable across cultures, and quite acceptable.

One of the most difficult aspects of translation, in my opinion, has to do with collocational meanings and the ranges of specific lexemes. One must therefore have a firm grasp of both of these topics to function as a proficient translator. As the authors correctly observe, although *waṭīq* usually means

'firm', in *atta'āwunu lwaṭīq*, it is to be translated 'close co-operation'. Also, 'commercial acumen' is the correct rendering for 'commercial intelligence' (MSA *aḍḍakā'u ttijārī*) and *ibtisāma muṣṭan'a* is literally 'an artificial smile', much better translated as 'a forced smile' (p. 71). The work abounds in this type of useful commentary.

Turning to the fascinating area of irreversible binomials (pp. 71–2), English has a set word order in binomial expressions such as 'pots and pans', but not the reverse. One of the best-known examples from Arabic of this phenomenon is 'black and white', which reverses these colour adjectives, viz., *'abyaḍu wa 'aswad* (cf. Italian *bianco e nero*). The following examples show just how pervasive this type of construction is in Arabic when contrasted with English: *min damihi wa laḥmini*, which is translated quite appropriately as 'his own flesh and blood' (p. 71), as well as the common: *laylan wa nahāran* 'night and day'; *almawtu walḥayāt* 'life and death'; and *almuḍnibu walbarī* 'the innocent and the guilty'.

Let me close with a reaction to the authors' treatment of dialectology and diglossia (pp. 166–8). Firstly, I certainly agree with the assertion that MSA is not the native tongue of any speaker, but do not concur that there are five stylistic registers in MSA ranging from acrolectic on down, and three levels in the colloquial dialects. Rather, the situation is that of a huge MSA continuum, for which the reader may examine my essays 'Formal vs. informal in Arabic: diglossia, triglossia, tetraglossia, etc., polyglossia-multiglossia viewed as a continuum', in *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* (27, 1994: 47–66), and 'Diglossia: the state of the art', in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (152, 2001: 117–29).

This is a pioneering tome with much valuable information about language in general and Arabic translation in particular. I recommend it highly as the leading handbook in this important field of study.

ALAN S. KAYE

HERBERT BERG:

The development of exegesis in early Islam: the authenticity of Muslim literature from the formative period.

(Curzon Studies in the Qur'ān.) xii, 251 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000. £45.

One of the oldest disputes in the study of classical Islam is the authenticity of the early sources in the vast ninth- and tenth-century historical and exegetical compilations. The many approaches that have been applied to these sources represent an extensive corpus. In *The development of exegesis in early Islam*, Herbert Berg focuses on the methods that have been applied to analyse a crucial component in this debate, the *isnād*, or list of transmitters that precedes the content of each interpretation. Berg proves very much up to the task: from Abbott to Zaman, the views of practically all scholars who have substantially weighed in on the debate are reliably summarized. Berg's original contribution to this discussion comes in a statistical study of transmitters' exegetical techniques in al-Ṭabarī's commentary compilation. From his statistical 'experiment' Berg concludes that *isnāds* cannot be trusted to authenticate the traditions they transmit. He concedes, however, that those scholars who do not accept the sceptical assumptions implicit in his experiment's design will not be convinced by its conclusions. While Berg's

extensive review of the secondary literature is useful and his statistical experiment is innovative, certain faults in the delineation and handling of his data raise doubts about his conclusions.

Berg arranges his comprehensive review in dialectical rather than chronological format. Chapter 2, on the methods to ascertain the authenticity of *hadīth*, and chapter 3 on the authenticity of exegetical *isnāds*, begin with the ‘traditional Sunni Muslim account’ and Western ‘sanguine views’ (Abbott, and Sezgin and others), proceed to ‘early Western criticism’ (Schacht and his followers) and ‘sceptical’ views (John Wansbrough and his students), and then conclude with the ‘search for common ground’ (Juynboll, Versteegh, Gilliot, etc.). Berg’s short, clear summaries of the many books, articles, and dissertations (many in German and French) are a boon for those out-of-date on current scholarship.

In his statistical study in chapters 4 and 5, Berg starts with the premise that while the *matn* (content) of an individual interpretation may be invented based on the topical polemics of the day, the exegetical devices (paraphrase, analogy, lexical explanation, prophetic tradition, etc.) used by a particular transmitter are unlikely to have been fabricated. Because these devices are fairly straightforward, it is possible to derive a ‘stylistic fingerprint’ for a particular transmitter based on the exegetical devices he employed. Further, he reasons that we would expect a teacher to pass on a similar approach to his students. Thus, if the names in the *isnāds* are meaningful, we would expect some consistency in the methods employed by a particular teacher and his students. Berg chooses Ṭabarī’s massive exegetical compilation as the source for his data pool, and the commentaries narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas as the object of examination. Berg finds that because the ‘stylistic fingerprints’ of the different generations of teachers and students are inconsistent, his experiment suggests that the *isnāds* are unreliable.

Certain assumptions in the study’s design and parameters are questionable. Berg assumes that every student’s method would follow the method of his teacher; however, according to the *isnāds*, students would have had many teachers. Also, there is little to suggest that early commentators were concerned with maintaining a rigorously consistent method in their commentary. Further, given that his concern is not Ṭabarī *per se*, but the *isnāds* contained in his work, and that identical *isnāds* are found in other near-contemporary commentaries, Berg’s choice to limit his body of data to Ṭabarī seems arbitrary. In addition, as Berg notes, Ibn ‘Abbas was a legendary figure to the exegetes, and there were probably more traditions falsely ascribed to him than to lesser known personalities. Choosing a more obscure narrator and taking the data from a broader range of exegetical sources might produce more valid results.

A number of steps in Berg’s handling of the data are problematic. In order to make the data less cumbersome, he includes only transmitter–informant combinations that occur in high frequency, and therefore drops a large percentage of the available Ibn ‘Abbas *isnāds*. Excluding data based on expediency rather than a theory-driven selection technique can affect the results in ways impossible to account for *post hoc*. And the fact that such a small percentage of the available data conform to Berg’s inclusion criteria raises more questions about his results.

Berg’s choice of data analytic methods is also problematic. For example, he compares the use of the exegetical device, ‘the anecdote’, in terms of percentages (Ibn Jubayr 42.7 per cent, ‘Ikrima 34.5 per cent, etc.). But comparing percentages is not meaningful without simultaneously taking into

account information about the magnitude of the raw numbers on which they are based (does 20 per cent represent two in ten or 2,000 in 10,000?). After comparing the percentages, Berg provides subjective interpretations ('significant variation', 'slightly', 'much more/less frequently') as to whether they suggest consistency in the use of exegetical devices. He does not clarify, however, how he distinguishes a 'slight' difference from a 'significant' difference, and whether a slight difference is small enough to reflect exegetical consistency.

A standard solution would be the use of chi-square (χ^2) table analyses. Stated briefly, the chi-square test determines whether there is a relationship between rows and columns in a table of countable data. In Berg's data the chi-square would determine whether there is a statistical association between students and the distributional pattern of exegetical devices. Chi-square analyses account for magnitude differences in the raw data, remove interpretive subjectivity by providing a pre-established definition of what constitutes a 'significant' difference, and reduce statistical error by analysing large portions of the data at one time. This would obviate the need for the extended comparative sections such as those in chapter 5.

In one of Berg's key findings, he determines that Ibn Jubayr and 'Ikrima cite *hadīths* consistently, while overall, the students of Ibn 'Abbas cite his *hadīths* in an inconsistent manner. From this finding, Berg concludes that 'overall the data for the students ... must be characterized as inconsistent' (p. 189). Our preliminary chi-square analysis supports Berg's result; however, we disagree with Berg's conclusion. In light of Berg's initial decision to limit the number and scope of *hadīths* and students chosen for the analyses, the consistency of Ibn Jubayr and 'Ikrima may be as important a finding as the overall inconsistency of the other students. At the very least, that finding warrants a more extensive investigation and discussion.

We recommend Berg's extensive and reliable review of secondary literature as a useful introduction to the field of *isnād* authenticity. Berg's statistical method offers a new and potentially important approach to the study of early sources. While his initial attempt is flawed, we look forward to his further statistical trials.

DAVID HOLLENBERG and SETH A. ROSENTHAL

DANIEL GOFFMAN:

The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe.

(New Approaches to European History.) xxiii, 273 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. £14.95.

The publication of Daniel Goffman's latest book is a welcome sign that Ottoman history written by Ottoman historians is at last displacing the 'faction' that has for too long served non-specialist readers as a simulacrum of the history of the empire. More particularly, it is part of an energetic effort to understand Ottoman history not as inexorably divided from, but rather constantly interacting with, developments in European history and culture. Aware that he must shock his readers out of their presumed Eurocentrism, Goffman asks them to become Ottoman-centric instead, to put Istanbul at the focus of their mental map and consider the vitality which Ottoman civilization brought to the Balkans and beyond. His text is suffused with an

impassioned plea for recognition that Ottoman history cannot simply be explained through the tropes of imperial 'rise' and 'decline'.

The Ottoman–European relationship has typically been considered a hostile one, expressed only in the frequent wars between West and East. Yet this is only the most visible aspect of intense contacts over six centuries as the Ottomans—both collectively and individually—conducted commerce and diplomacy with, at various times, France, the Habsburgs, Venice, Hungary, Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, Muscovy and Russia, Prussia, England, the Papacy and a host of lesser powers. By the sixteenth century the sultan ruled over one-quarter of Europe. Throughout its history the empire fascinated and terrified contemporary observers in equal measure. Mutual distrust among the European powers was frequently greater than their enmity towards the Ottomans.

The three chapters of the first half of Goffman's book consider the empire from inside and, respectively, tell the story of: the Ottomans before Sultan Mehmed II's capture of Constantinople in 1453; the development of the institutions through which the empire was governed; and the century from the reign of Süleyman I, 'the Magnificent', to the crises which beset his successors. These are explained in the context of the transformations occurring within and without the empire. Goffman analyses the differences between Ottoman and European modes of governance and explains their rationale, utilizing recent academic studies to present a deft restatement of familiar topics that is both original and accessible.

In the second half of the book Goffman turns to 'The Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean and European worlds'. Although warned in the preface that the book is primarily concerned with Ottoman–Venetian relations, unwary readers who have overlooked this may be anticipating more from the promise of the title than the section delivers. Ottoman relations with anywhere in Europe other than Venice are barely considered, except when the patterns of ties between Venice and the Ottomans during the period from roughly 1300 to 1700 can be generalized to describe the relations of the Ottomans with other states of Europe. This bias is not surprising since Goffman is above all a historian of the Mediterranean world rather than of the landbound states lying to the north-west and north of the Ottoman lands, but it is surprising that his map of 'sixteenth-century empires' includes France but leaves blank the huge territory of Poland-Lithuania, a European state bordering the Ottoman lands which, as a recent exhibition in Istanbul has reminded us, had close ties with the Porte over many years. Even the Ottoman Balkans receives short shrift: in Goffman's words, 'the case of the Ottoman Balkans remains shadowy'.

The sensibilities of authors are often disregarded by publishers aiming to widen the appeal of the books they publish, and the title of this volume doubtless derives from such an impetus. 'The Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean world' might more convincingly describe the content of the volume—and would surely sell as well. Leaving these objections to one side, praise for the first part of the book may equally be extended to the second. Goffman's particular interest is the presence of non-Muslim merchants and diplomats in the Levantine world. He describes with understanding and élan the mutual influences of the Ottoman and European worlds in commerce and diplomacy as states and individuals accommodated themselves to the intimate entwining of West and East. He describes many facets of the Ottoman–Venetian relationship in peace and war, over time and in space, and

illuminates the strategies employed by the ‘cultural chameleons’ who hoped to succeed in their new environment.

Lack of personal detail in the sources is one reason why it is hard to make Ottoman history accessible to non-specialist readers used to the memoirs and letters which typically enliven narratives of European history. Goffman adds vitality to his story with discussions of individual Catholic and Anglican proselytizers, English merchants and the Ottoman Jewish Mendes family; he also compensates admirably by including some contemporary Ottoman voices to break the habitual silence. He boldly subverts the muteness of Ottoman individuals by animating the character of Kubad, an Ottoman envoy sent to Venice in 1567, whom we know from Benjamin Arbel’s *Trading nations*. Snippets of Kubad’s imagined life preface each chapter: his childhood in an eastern Anatolian frontier village; his capture and transfer to the sultan’s service; his life in Istanbul, and at court, as a member of the corps of envoys sent all over the Empire and beyond on imperial business. Kubad sails for Venice knowing that an Ottoman attack on Cyprus may be in the offing and remains there as a ‘tourist’, musing on the discomfort of sitting on a chair rather than a divan, the absence of coffee and the religious intolerance of the Serenissima. Following his return to Istanbul, in 1670 Kubad was back in Venice to demand the handing over of Cyprus to the sultan; once war was declared, he was arrested and remained confined in Venice for the next three years.

Images of the Ottomans ‘camp[ing]’ in Europe, and as ‘an Islamic intrusion into Christendom’ (in the words of Perry Anderson), are resilient, however, and pioneers in the promotion of new ways of thinking about the Ottomans may be forgiven for striving to redress the balance. Thus Goffman makes frequent reference to Ottoman ‘accommodation’, ‘flexibility’, ‘pragmatism’, ‘adaptability’ and ‘compromise’: if the practitioners of the ‘new Ottoman history’ are not to ascribe the empire’s longevity to outside forces, and are to make the Ottomans actors in their own story, it is perhaps only through the dialectic of discredited and revisionist patterns of thinking that historians can gain new insights. Moreover, Goffman makes the timely observation that the Ottomans were not tolerant and unprejudiced in any modern sense, an anachronism which the nostalgic are prone to indulge.

Introductory books aiming both to attract general readers and interest undergraduates often suffer from a paucity of footnotes. This volume, despite a very useful bibliographical essay, is no exception: the absence of full documentation diminishes its value for those—especially, perhaps, students—wishing to learn more about the many intriguing particulars of which Goffman writes. Perhaps publishers might make provision for full scholarly apparatus to be posted on the web.

Yet none of these quibbles detracts from the significance of this book and its orientation towards a non-specialist readership which is at present so poorly served. Goffman’s new book convincingly shows that the history of the Ottoman Empire desperately needs re-telling. There was nothing inevitable, or even very historical, about the notion of the empire’s rising and declining in conflict with European nations. In starting this task of re-telling, *The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe* contributes to one of the most urgent historical tasks of our time, that of replacing outdated paradigms of contestation and otherness which set East and West at each others’ throats, inextricably locked in a confrontation of absolutes.

CAROLINE FINKEL

AMY SINGER:

Constructing Ottoman beneficence: an imperial soup kitchen in Jerusalem.

(SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies.) iv, 240 pp. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002. \$20.95.

On paper and in its principal contours, Amy Singer's blueprint for configuring the Ottoman institution of the Islamic pious endowment (Arabic *waqf*; no notice of its Ottoman counterpart *vakıf*) and the inner dynamics of Ottoman beneficence (Arabic *sadaqa*; Ottoman counterpart *sadakat* omitted) is excellent. Having largely devoted the past decade to 'philanthropy in all its permutations' (p. xi), Singer has here chosen to illuminate the axes of a single pious endowment in relation to the monumental edifice of Ottoman beneficence (p. 6). The five weight-bearing pillars of Singer's exposition take the measure of this institution from religious, historical, and socio-cultural perspectives (chapters 1, 3 and 5) and describe its administrative and functional components (chapters 2 and 4). Unlike previous studies, the author's goal is not merely to scrutinize the façade of the Islamic pious endowment, but rather to furnish the reader with a glimpse of the nexus between one exemplar as a structural member of beneficence and the shaping framework of Ottoman society (pp. 12–13).

Written for the 'non-specialist' (p. 9), Singer's study opens with a discussion of the historical evolution of the Islamic *waqf* up until the Ottomans. Not specifically charged in the Quran, as is the giving of alms (Arabic *zakāt*), the basis for the Islamic pious endowment as a charitable enterprise can be traced to the traditions, or *ḥadīth*, of the Prophet Muḥammad. After providing a brief historical overview of the tradition of pious endowments among polities in the same region (the Mamluks of Egypt, the Seljuks of Anatolia, and the Byzantines) Singer emplaces the keystone of her exposition: the establishment of pious endowments, whether by the reigning sultan or by his female kin and affines, was, she claims, integral to 'the institutional canon of Ottoman imperial identity' (p. 22).

The endowment restored by Singer as a model was established in 1557 by Hurrem Sultan (d. 1558), popularly known as Hasseki, or 'the favorite', a wife of Sultan Süleyman I (the Magnificent, r. 1520–66). (The feminine honorific sultan, or sultana, was traditionally borne by the sisters and daughters of Ottoman rulers.) Activity in the structural complex in Jerusalem endowed by Hurrem Sultan (located on the site of a former residence of the wife of a Mamluk sultan) was centred in a soup kitchen, or *imāret* (p. 48). Albeit physically remote from the Ottoman capital, the public kitchen, by reason of its being an imperial foundation, was subject to close official governance by Ottoman overseers, of which Singer furnishes ample primary evidence. At the same time, integration at the local/regional level was a necessary outcome of supplying provisions, water, and personnel, and of interaction with the clients. As Singer points out, the detailed re-creation of its operation was made feasible only by the typically copious Ottoman written record (pp. 44, 53).

Raising the question of the existence of a 'natural' link between the female gender and acts of charity (71 ff.), Singer touches on comparable philanthropic activity by Hasseki Sultan's own predecessors as well as by counterparts in earlier Turkic and other cultures, such as elite female members of the Russian Orthodox Church (p. 162), and even on the American symbol

of succour, the Statue of Liberty (p. 98). Another kind of link is fashioned in the final chapter: the claim that the prominence of the soup kitchen is distinctively Ottoman is placed within a continuum of acts of provisioning undertaken by the Ottoman sultan, such as the autarkic provisioning of the society, especially of the court elite, of the military forces on campaign, and of the pilgrimage processions (pp. 132–43).

To conclude, and in the interest of clarity (assuredly, this work should constitute but a preliminary to a more comprehensive tome), notice may be taken of certain aspects of Singer's work that could benefit from further definition. The title suggests that this study should shed light on the general character of charitable acts in Ottoman society, with the soup kitchen in Jerusalem representing a typical example. Yet, the reader is never offered an overview, such as might be extracted by a survey of the numerous studies of individual endowments available and the nearly contemporary (1546/953) summary registers of 2,517 endowments of Istanbul published by E. H. Ayverdi and Ö. L. Barkan (Istanbul, 1970) and which includes the endowment of a similar complex, including a soup kitchen, by Gülfem Hatun, another of Süleyman's favourites. While Singer might counter that her study constitutes but an initial step towards this end, the impression is created that virtually nothing is known about Ottoman philanthropy. Moreover, the author seems to imply that Ottoman beneficence (or that of any other society) signifies that which is characteristic of the ruling family or elite. This stance might be assigned to a professional hazard: constant contact with records pertaining to the dynasty alone may blur peripheral vision. At the very least, the presumption that Ottomans were guided exclusively by the actions of the imperial family might be opened to examination.

In addition, the selection of a founder who was exceptional (as Singer acknowledges on p. 98)—she was the first concubine to gain the privilege of marrying a sultan and also to acquire the title and salaried position of *hasseki*—results in reduced persuasiveness. (But, as she indicates, the founding and operation procedures remain identical.) Some inconsistency and confusion is created by identifying Hurrem Sultan as a concubine (as well as a consort and wife), for this would make her ineligible to found an Islamic endowment (pp. 1, 4, 89, *passim*). Similarly, Singer refers to Hafsa Sultan, Süleyman's mother, as the first concubine to found an 'imperial mosque' (today known as Sultan Mosque, in Manisa; the soup kitchen in the complex is overlooked by Singer, p. 90), a term whose Ottoman counterpart is uncertain and left unspecified (cf. Ottoman, *selâtin camii*, or sultanic mosque). Of greater import: Hafsa Sultan's endowment deed is headed (and validated?) by Süleyman's cipher. And Hurrem Sultan's deed is also prefaced by Süleyman's cipher (p. 45), which begs the question of whose endowments they were—an ambiguity also reflected in the related texts (p. 69). Notably, Hurrem Sultan's name has lacked association with her soup kitchen (known as *Takeeyya*), and the bath belonging to the complex is called *Hammâm al-Sultân* (p. 118).

For the Ottoman tradition of the soup kitchen, we may recall the actions attributed to Osman (1258–1326), the eponymous founder of the dynasty. The seventeenth-century *History of Müneccimbaşı* reveals that 'The clothing and feeding of the poor were a source of great satisfaction to [Osman]... He personally set up meal trays every day and served the poor and the orphan' (n.p., n.d., I: 69). Thanks to Singer's labours, all that is wanting for the (re)construction of Ottoman beneficence is assiduously to plumb the foundation.

JOYCE HEDDA MATTHEWS

SOUTH ASIA

RIAZUL ISLAM:

Sufism in South Asia: impact on fourteenth-century Muslim society.
xxvi, 489 pp. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002. £25.

The abundant literature produced in the Sufi circles of fourteenth-century northern India has long provided a resource with which historians have attempted to side-step the courtly perspectives of the royal chroniclers to present a fuller picture of the social and religious life of the period. Through a commandingly thorough survey of references to the receiving of gifts, family life, work and politics in the Sufi sources of the period, Riazul Islam inverts this approach by asking what this literature can tell us about the place of Sufi groups within that wider society. In addressing, across a whole century, a region that is vast in both geographical and discursive terms, *Sufism in South Asia* forms a detailed and colourful commentary on medieval north Indian life as seen through the capacious and sometimes capricious writings of its Sufi critics.

Like a number of other recent OUP publications in the field of South Asian Islam, the book consists partly of articles previously published elsewhere with which specialists may already be familiar. However, several other chapters present entirely new work and, occasional repetitions notwithstanding, the book's origins do not prevent its parts from achieving a consistency that is unusual in publications of this kind. While special attention is afforded to the Chishti writers of the period, the author is careful not to neglect sources on such other orders as the Firdawsiyya and Suhrawardiyya as well as at times discussing more obscure individuals and movements. A particular strength of the book is its attempt to connect the themes of medieval South Asian Sufi writings to the wider vehicle of Muslim pietistic and Sufi literature outside the region, to which many South Asian writers were the heirs. However, in addition to its wide use of classical materials, the book is also notable for its citation of modern Iranian scholarship on Sufism as well as of the vast labours of scholars writing in Urdu.

Chapter 1 presents a useful methodological essay on the source material, addressing in particular the character of the edifying Sufi 'anecdote' (*laṭīfa*). After a short second chapter sketching the historical context, the following four chapters address Sufi attitudes to the receiving of gifts (*futūḥ*), working for a living (*kasb*), marriage and family life, and politics and the state. Three final chapters address the ethical character of the Sufi life, the master-disciple (*pīr-murīd*) relationship that has been much debated in modern South Asian scholarship on Sufism and the problematic question of the Sufi impact on wider thought and learning.

In providing an encyclopedic survey of these issues in the vast literature of the period, the author has made a durable contribution to the field that is unlikely to be surpassed. Yet the copious and sensitive presentation of the anecdotes told by medieval Sufis also lends the book a lightness of touch and readability that are all too rare in such publications. The reader will be alternatively amazed, amused and occasionally appalled by the tales and attitudes of the Sufis to the world around them. We hear of traditions of a

Sufi *éminence grise* behind the Mongol invasions, of how the grave of a dog was mistaken for the tomb of a saint, and of how one early Sufi was said to have smiled for the first time in thirty years on hearing news of his son's death. In presenting the wide berth of references to wider social life in Sufi writings of the period alongside the vivid intellectual and moral strangeness of the Sufis' mental world, Riazul Islam has performed an important scholarly service in unveiling new dimensions of the richness and strangeness of Indo-Persian literature. A number of fascinating appendixes present research into such Sufi practices as the deliberate wearing of dirty clothes and the pastime of some dervishes of drinking wine to excess (possibly even involving the maintenance of their own wine-cellars).

As in much previous scholarship in this tradition, however, later Sufis fail to live up to earlier ones, resulting in an overall effect that is at once disenchanting and hagiographical. As Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence have recently noted in *Sufi martyrs of love: the Chishti order in South Asia and beyond* (London, 2002), 'the spell of hagiography is so strong ... that few writers have been able to escape its influence altogether. That is to say, most of the scholarly literature on eminent Sufis ends up adopting the same rhetorical style of presentation employed by devotees' (p. 48). As any scholar who has worked with hagiographical material knows well, the strategies of such texts form magic circles that are difficult to step out of. But the result in *Sufism in South Asia* is to uphold a diluted version of the long-standing model of classicism and decline that has until recently characterized much of the modern historiography of Sufism. Fortunately, the author's meticulous attention to detail means that he is not averse to presenting evidence to dent haloes and challenge the meta-narratives within which the book partly operates.

The content and approach lend *Sufism in South Asia* much in common with K. A. Nizami's *Some aspects of religion and politics in India during the thirteenth century* (Bombay, 1961), of which it may be fairly considered a sister volume. Most successful when read as an account of medieval Indian Sufi attitudes to society rather than as a guide to the place of Sufis within wider social life, it is likely to remain a standard work on a tradition of writing that reflected the official conscience of an age.

NILE GREEN

AMIT S. RAI:

Rule of sympathy: sentiment, race, and power, 1750–1850.

xxi, 225 pp. New York: Palgrave, 2002. £35.

Sympathy, now a non-politically-correct word (substitute 'solidarity'), had an illustrious career in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Rai's aim is to uncover its philosophical roots and its ramifications in novelistic and political discourses. His main argument is that sympathy was a mode of European power, a 'style of rule' that participated in the diffuse and successful attempt to regulate ('police') the self, the other, one's family, society, nation and eventually colonized peoples—to use Foucault's term, in 'governmentality'. Although the primary site for the development and exercise of sympathy was the family, the family then, as we know, stood as the model for social and political affiliation, and we find sympathy thoroughly enmeshed in political discourses and bourgeois-colonial hegemony (p. xi).

The philosophical roots of sympathy are in the Scottish Enlightenment's effort to counteract Hobbes's view of man. In the moral philosophy of David Hume and Adam Smith, sympathy pertains to both nature and culture: it is natural in man (the 'common bond of humanity'), but it also needs to be cultivated in order to create the (new) ideal of bourgeois civility. In this respect, sympathy was seen as the prerogative of the civilized: as Hume argued, one needs to be gentle to categories of beings inferior in strength, such as women, animals and Indians (quoted on p. 40). Rai detects here the first trace of a divergence between sympathy and justice; although Henry Mackenzie's novel *Man of feeling* (1771) and some slave narratives seem to transform sympathy into solidarity (p. 108), Rai argues that such movements remained fraught with ambivalence. For one thing, sympathy posits the sympathetic agent as different from the object of sympathy: the first paradox of sympathy is that although it solicits identification, it first requires the 'othering' and 'objectification' of those with whom we sympathize. The object of sympathy is construed as seemingly passive, disempowered and often suffering and mute—were he or she to react or act, he or she would immediately lose that sympathy! Thus, discourses of sympathy hardly ever consider the agency of the object. Secondly, sympathy is pre-eminently a sensual motion, legible on the bodies of both subject and object, and activated in particular by the (aestheticized) spectacle of the pained body. The mixture of fascination and horror this spectacle aroused was famously developed in Gothic fiction, which in turn provided slavery narratives with 'a new language to represent the savagery of slavery: the pained body, the distanced, sympathising observer, the archaism of the detached scene of horror, the moral uplift of sublime terror, anxious demarcation of savagery and civilisation' (p. 75). Thirdly, conceptualizing sympathy as a 'gift', Rai argues that sympathy places the object in debt and also strengthens the subject; in fact, 'sympathy needs this abjected other, as the constitutive exclusion that would cohere its own fantasy of identity' (p. 42).

Rai tests these arguments first against the dominant genre of eighteenth-century fiction, the sentimental novel, where sympathy (and sentiment in general) is firstly and comprehensively feminized; significantly, slavery narratives draw on the conventions of sentimental and Gothic fiction. Two insights are striking here: the first is that the peculiar agency of the feminine subject crystallizes the type of agency of the sympathizing subject: 'at once resisting violence, and on another level reproducing it' through her own policing of social and racial inferiors (p. 87). The second insight concerns the 'temporality of sympathy': in the novels sympathy comes in unique and discrete moments that freeze the story-time, tableaux that 'place the maximum pressure on the relation between the subject and the viewer', yet in a way that will not threaten the viewer's position (p. 66).

It is in missionary discourse that Rai traces the emergence of sympathy as an 'institutional form of power'. The figure of William Wilberforce, who was active both in the abolition movement and also in the parliamentary campaign for opening India to missionaries, epitomizes this development and the protean nature of sympathy: just as Britain had a duty to sympathize with the Africans and bore the responsibility for creating their 'uncivilized state', Wilberforce argued, it now had the responsibility of remedying to that state by bringing the civilizing light of the Gospel. How educated Indians reacted to this discourse is shown through the example of Keshub Chandra Sen, who opposed European racism and claimed Christ as 'Asian' while accepting universal humanism and the progressivist agency of liberal education, both

acknowledged as ‘gifts’ of colonial rule. Other ramifications could have been explored here: the Indian genealogy of benevolent paternalism, for one thing; or the perceived need to create sympathy for one’s fellow countrymen that sets, for example, Tagore’s *Gora* on a trip of discovery; the protean ideology of *seva*, service, inspiring associations as well as male and female activists; and the use by Indian writers of metaphors of the diseased body of the community, as in Altaf Hussain Hali’s *Musaddas*: judging from Hali’s own surprise at the enthusiastic response to his violently castigatory poem, clearly the audience did not feel browbeaten into a passive, objectified state. It is here that I wonder if Rai’s Foucauldian and Derridean model of ‘policing’ and ‘propriating subject’ on the one hand, and of scattered traces and silences pointing to a subterranean ‘other history’ of sympathy is really useful, or is also the product of his own categories. I wonder if focusing on other, more popular or more radical, texts or traditions one could have traced ‘another history’ of sympathy that did not exist only at the margins of the dominant one, a sympathy practised, as Rai augurs, ‘without turning the suffering other into an occasion to consolidate a subject in sovereignty’ (p. 161). In any case, Amit Rai has written a dense and ambitious little book that will engage historians of colonialism and Empire, historians of ideas, readers and historians of the modern novel, and theorists of colonial and postcolonial literature.

FRANCESCA ORSINI

JENNIFER HOWES:

The courts of pre-colonial south India: material culture and kingship.
(Royal Asiatic Society Books.) xvi, 259 pp. London:
RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. £50.

This book is a revised version of the author’s PhD thesis submitted to SOAS in 1999. The author assesses a wide range of evidence—including *vastushastra*, palace architecture, urban planning, early eighteenth-century wall paintings, later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial photographs, drawings and oil paintings—to build a picture of the culture of the royal courts of pre-colonial Tamilnadu, focusing on eighteenth-century Ramnad. The study builds on both the nineteenth-century scholarship of early colonial visitors to this region and the recent studies by historians of south India from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, including Burton Stein, Nicholas Dirks, Pamela Price, Philip Wagoner and Joanna Waghorne.

The author seeks to reconstruct an image of south Indian kingship and material culture based on indigenous sources and categories. The discussion thus begins with an assessment of *vastushastra*, the author extending the restricted focus on architecture and planning in previous assessments of such sources as the *Manasara* to include the position of kings and royal paraphernalia in a ‘material hierarchy’. The following chapter surveys the remains of courtly structures at Vijayanagara and Madurai from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as expressions of ritual sovereignty. Though the author endeavours to avoid what she describes as the ‘old-style art history of describing monuments’ (p. 7), some of the most interesting parts of the book occur when she makes an initial attempt to do just that, useful in the largely uncharted territory of south Indian architecture away from the better-known and numerous temples. Thus, a reconstruction of Tirumala Nayaka’s palace

in Madurai from late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers' accounts, paintings, drawings, aquatints and surveys is particularly welcome.

The core of the book in chapters 3 to 7 is a discussion of the palace and kingdom of the Setupatis of Ramnad in south-east Tamilnadu. Following a discussion of the kingdom's foundation in the seventeenth century, the image of kingship and the court expressed through material remains radiates outward from the painted murals in the regal-ritual centre of the palace, to the palace buildings themselves, then Ramnad town and finally the kingdom's peripheral territories. The discussion of the early eighteenth-century paintings in the two-storey Ramalinga Vilasam in Ramnad palace seeks to explain the iconographic programme of deities, battle scenes and erotic imagery that express the ideals of south Indian kingship. In this and the following analysis of the layout and organization of the palace, Howes seeks to avoid earlier distinctions between public and private spheres in favour of the indigenous, and more subtly expressive, notions of interiority and exteriority, adapted from early Tamil poetics. The chapter on Ramnad town returns to the material on *vastushastra* outlined in chapter 1, and considers the role of processions by the king in defining royal, urban space in much the same way as the processions of deities defined sacred space. The larger geographical area of southern India ruled by the Setupatis of Ramnad is the theme of the penultimate chapter, a shifting region of control and influence defined through alliances and the warfare that features in some south Indian wall painting, including that in the Ramnad palace. The rivals of Ramnad in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are considered in the final chapter, which briefly analyses the palaces at Srivilliputtur, Shivagangai, Pudukkottai and Tanjavur.

This book is generously illustrated throughout with numerous black-and-white photographs, maps, plans and diagrams, some reproduced from earlier sources, others, such as the plan of the palace at Ramnad, accurately surveyed as part of this research. Of the thirty colour plates, many are unfortunately rather poorly reproduced, particularly those of the early eighteenth-century wall paintings in the Ramnad palace that feature so prominently in this book. Details of many of these are additionally illustrated in black-and-white. If this admirable attempt to produce a good record and analysis of these important wall-paintings is less than successful, then it does at least highlight the need for a full, well-illustrated study in colour of south Indian wall-painting before any more examples disappear under the renovators' whitewash. In seeking to reconstruct a fuller picture of south Indian kingship and court culture, the author might also have considered other aspects of material culture, such as the prevalence of royal imagery in life-sized stone portraiture in temples and the numerous ivory carvings dating to this period.

Though this study seeks to distance itself from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, colonial foundations of knowledge about south Indian kingship and palace architecture, some of the most engaging material is in the discussions of the visual sources, scholarship and travellers' accounts from this period. The variety of illustrations from colonial sources of many of the buildings discussed are well-produced, drawing attention to the rich, visual sources for the study of South Asia in the Royal Asiatic Society and India Office Library in London, such as the photographs taken by Linnaeus Tripe and Edmund Lyon in the 1850s and 1860s, and the drawings and maps prepared for Colonel Colin Mackenzie's survey in the 1800s. In short, this is useful study of a neglected area of South Asian material culture that draws on a rich variety of sources to illustrate the court culture of late, pre-colonial southern India.

CRISPIN BRANFOOT

EAST ASIA

CHRISTOPHER MUNN:

Anglo-China: Chinese people and British rule in Hong Kong, 1841–1880.

xvii, 460 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001. £55.

With this substantial volume Chris Munn intends to fill an important gap in our understanding of the formative period in the founding of the British colony of Hong Kong. He attempts to do so by exploring ‘the workings of the complex and fragile structures erected’ between the governors and the governed, and by investigating ‘the activities of those who inhabited its murkier regions’ in the first four decades of colonial Hong Kong. By making extensive use of judicial records and local newspapers in addition to the more usual colonial archives, he ‘argues that, far from seeking to leave the Chinese population to its own devices, the early colonial government intruded into the lives of Chinese residents of the colony far more than it did later in the nineteenth century, when Chinese elite organizations took on many of the functions of government that had proved so difficult for the colonial power’.

The central theme running through this volume is the inadequacy and inefficiency of the early colonial administration in Hong Kong. As it could not rely on local collaborators to maintain stability and good order, and had few resources of its own, the colonial authorities used summary justice to do so. In the process, they paid little regard to the rights of the Chinese residents or to the high rhetoric of some Victorian imperialists, including a few of Hong Kong’s own governors. Early colonial rule in Hong Kong was intrusive, since the quality of justice delivered by a small settler community, which attracted few high-calibre professionals, was generally very low. This was made worse by a severe language barrier, corruption, and the social and racial bias inherent in mid-nineteenth-century colonialism. Munn’s arguments are powerful and ought to be taken seriously in any evaluation of the colonial history of nineteenth-century Hong Kong.

Although the main thrust of Munn’s arguments have already been revealed in collaborative volumes edited by others, and in his PhD thesis on which this volume is based, I warmly welcome the publication of this book as a major contribution to the early history of Hong Kong. Munn’s arguments are much more fully developed here. He has done an excellent job in challenging the established view and should be congratulated. His research is meticulous, his arguments well supported, and his case eloquently argued.

Where I disagree is in the judgement of the harshness and oppressiveness of early colonial rule on the local Chinese. While I readily agree with his reconstruction and assessment of what went on in Hong Kong itself, I take the view that he is too hard on the colonial administration. With colonial Hong Kong at the edge of the Chinese Empire, within which there was practically free movement of people, I feel that the harshness of life for the poor Chinese residents of this colonial outpost should be compared with what they would have enjoyed in mother China. They voted with their feet as they left China for Hong Kong despite the existence of a body of anti-Chinese legislation in this British imperial possession seized from China within living memory. Munn is aware of the generally brutish and occasionally hellish life that prevailed in part of his period of study in Guangdong province,

particularly when it was badly affected by the Taiping or other rebellions. Nevertheless, he takes the view that since life in Guangdong was so incredibly harsh and the administration of 'justice' so unbelievably cruel, the fact that it was nowhere near as bad as that in Hong Kong did not say much for British rule. This is of course a fair moral view to take at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, it is in my view too hard a judgement on the history of the mid-Victorian era where even the quality of justice in England was low by modern standards. As a historian I prefer to give greater weight to the conditions and standards that prevailed at the time when the events unfolded, since I make judgements in a wide historical context.

My disagreement with Munn has not in any way diminished my enthusiasm for this book. It is based on first-class scholarship which has superseded much of the earlier work covering the same general issues. Any new work on the nineteenth-century history of Hong Kong must take Munn's scholarship seriously. This is a book that I recommend strongly to all interested in the history of Hong Kong and of the British Empire in East Asia.

STEVE TSANG

CATHERINE C. SWATEK:

Peony pavilion onstage: four centuries in the career of a Chinese drama.

ix, 425 pp. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2002. £42.50.

This is a splendid study of Tang Xianzu's (1550–1616) parent *chuanqi* drama text *Mudan ting* (*Peony pavilion*), first performed probably in 1599, passing through the hands of scholar publishers Zang Maoxun (1550–1620) and Feng Menglong (1574–1646) of the late Ming period, publishers of drama extracts, *piaoyou* (friends of the box office), professional actors, and foreign-based directors. The various interactions between these groups and cultural norms form the main theme of this original study.

The author begins with a close reading of the musically grounded adaptations of Zang Maoxun and Feng Menglong. Building on the work of Hirose Reiko and Stephen West, the author discusses structural changes that affect plot development and the depiction of characters. She compares scenes from *Mudan ting* and Zang's adaptation *Huanhun ji* (*The Soul's return*) (1618), and argues that in Zang's version, cut from fifty-five to thirty-five scenes and written for highbrow connoisseurs like himself who enjoyed drama in private household performances, the actions of the main characters become more self-initiated, where for example, the heroine Liniang's manner of expressing her feelings becomes direct and purposeful, but less complicated emotionally. (pp. 30, 34). Like his revisions of *zaju* drama of the Yuan period, Zang sought to make Tang's play conform to the orthodox Confucian value system and world view of his social group (p. 39). A close comparison of treatments of the socially marginal character Sister Stone by Tang and Zang, for example, shows clearly Tang's personal statement about the relationship between the orthodox and heterodox, the central and marginal in life, in contrast to Zang's conventional disdain for this type of character (p. 49).

Feng Menglong wrote a new adaptation of *Mudan ting* entitled *Fengliu meng* (*Romantic dream*) (after 1623), also simplifying the structure from fifty-five to thirty-seven scenes, for a broad, middlebrow, opera-loving public.

Directorial in intent, it was also intended for fellow playwrights and professional actors. The author examines how Feng modified *Mudan ting*'s macrostructure (scene structure and plot), but goes on to examine Feng's changes to the microstructure (aria and dialogue) and to show that Feng's adaptation also engages Tang's text on a literary level. While both Tang and Feng are identified with the late Ming cult of *qing* (feelings), interesting differences emerge in their treatments. Through a close reading of the meaning of the imagery of the plum tree and the portrait in *Mudan ting* and the reworking of this imagery in *Fengliu meng*, the author argues that while Tang celebrated the creative force of passion with powerful unconventional use of imagery, Feng was determined to contain Tang's imagery, to reduce its complexity and to redirect it to his own thematic expectations of romantic plays, 'never to allow the private play (the love story) to overwhelm the public play (the celebration of social values and harmonies)' (p. 82).

Neither adaptation did particularly well, and Tang Xianzu probably smiled in his grave, but further forms of adaptation followed. In chapter 4, the author discusses miscellanies that contain extracts of plays (*zhezixi*). These show a wide spectrum of choices by the publishers in terms of texts with punctuation or no punctuation, with musical notation or rhythmic notation, with or without illustrations, and different strategies to distribute the extracted scenes through the volumes (p. 18). The author sorts out the types clearly for us, and discusses those miscellanies containing extracts of *Mudan ting* from the 1600s to the 1900s. In the early period of 'publishing *chuanqi* texts as *zhezixi*, the example of *Mudan ting* suggests that scenes extracted from Kun operas did not depart significantly from the text of the scene in the complete play' (p. 150). In the early Qing period, the extracts differ textually from those in the original play for the first time, because of extensive cutting of arias and dialogue, but there is little alteration of the remaining text (p. 151). A pronounced reflection of an actor-centred environment appears in the 1760s and 1770s, when editions of the miscellany *Zhui baiqiu* began to list scenes from *Mudan ting* in distinct versions and 'extensively adapted in ways intended to enhance their performability and show to advantage the talents of the actors' (p. 152). In the nineteenth century, we find works like *Shenyin jianglu lu*, which attempts to document performance techniques and an orally transmitted tradition. The author also discusses the nature of these *zhezixi* in relationship to the parent play. For the first 150 years of the period when drama miscellanies were a favoured way of disseminating texts of plays, *Mudan ting* was represented in them by only a few extracts of exceptional literary quality, of quiet and poetically evocative scenes. For the next 150 years (1740–1890), the selection favoured theatrically live and vivid scenes. This difference leads to a discussion of the effects of different combinations of elegance (*ya*) and commonness (*su*) in Tang's play and in the versions presented by actors, which constituted a second stage of creativity. Actors' memoirs are used to tease out different interpretations of how scenes such as 'Wandering in the garden' and 'Startled by a dream' should be performed.

The last two chapters are a critique of Peter Sellars' re-interpretation of *Mudan ting* in 1998 and Chen Shi-Zheng's fifty-five scene, eighteen-hour middlebrow version, also of 1998. The work ends with a stimulating discussion of Chinese drama in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. There are also three useful appendixes on the system of roles for *chuanqi* drama and Kun opera, scene summaries for complete texts of *Mudan ting*, and extracts from *Mudan ting* in collections.

The above is a brief introduction and does not do justice to the sensitive

interpretations of and rich layers of ideas presented on the nature of Chinese drama scripts and performance. It also succeeds admirably in enticing readers into the world of Chinese theatre.

ANDREW LO

CURTIS ANDERSON GAYLE:

Marxist history and postwar Japanese nationalism.

vii, 200 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. £55.

Marx, of course, was not a Marxist. His ideas have manifested themselves in many forms throughout modern world history and have been diversely interpreted. Despite the apparent collapse of Marxism the literature of political theory is exhibiting a renewed taste for Marx and his multifarious interpretations. Curtis Gayle suggests that Marxists have been and continue to be ‘surprisingly numerous in the Japanese academic world’, and his book represents a serious inquiry into the historical writings of this ‘surprisingly’ large group.

Gayle’s book should not be located only within the resurgent field of Marxist revivalism, but also in another increasingly fashionable arena: wartime revisionism. In a welcome addition to the literature, Gayle devotes an entire chapter to ‘Marxist history and the ethnic nation during the 1930s’, and goes on to compare and contrast the ‘Marxist’ ideas developed during this tumultuous period with those of the postwar era. In some areas, such as the activation of social movements, Gayle finds pre- and postwar Marxism rather different in Japan, whereas in others, such as in the emphasis on the historical construction of the ethnic-national self-consciousness, he insightfully highlights a number of important conceptual continuities.

For most intellectual historians of Japan, the late 1930s and early 1940s are considered a wasteland; the conventional wisdom has been that even the fledgling Marxist movement offered no resistance to the imperial regime or ideology. Gayle successfully establishes the existence and importance of an energetic ‘Marxist’ counter-discourse during the war years, which acted to destabilize simplistically ‘ethnic’ conceptions of nationalism by insisting on the importance of historicity. Whilst this movement may not have resulted in a socialist revolution, Gayle is quite right to suggest that this Marxist thought was of value in itself, both during the war and (increasingly) afterwards. Gayle appears to grant the label ‘progressive’ to this Marxist tradition in Japan. My only concern about Gayle’s treatment of this thoroughly worthwhile issue is its brevity—the reader is left to infer much of the significance of Gayle’s findings because the author is keen to leave the war-time period behind and immerse himself in his real interest, postwar Marxist thought. To some extent, Gayle misses a golden opportunity to make a major contribution to the intellectual history of war-time Japan.

The discussion of postwar Marxism in Japan is richly textured. Gayle takes us from the apparent crisis of introspection amongst Marxists in the immediate postwar period, through the creation of the *Rekishigaku kenkyūkai* (Historical Science Society), and into subsequent debates. Gayle is concerned with the way in which the idea of the nation (*minzoku*) was conceptualized and problematized in the discourse of ‘Marxist historians’ focused on the attainment of ‘national awakening’ (*minzoku jikaku*) or ‘national consciousness’ (*minzoku ishiki*) in the postwar era. For Gayle, one of the key

concerns of postwar Marxists was to liberate the nation of Japan ‘from the deleterious influences of external manipulation and internal coercion’ (p. 1), both of which were vivid in the minds of intellectuals during and after the US occupation, which followed Japan’s totalitarian war-time regime. Interestingly, Gayle suggests that these were the dual bugbears of the war-time Marxists as well.

Gayle provides an intricate and tightly argued presentation of the writings of major postwar Marxist thinkers, such as Ishimoda Shō, Inoue Kiyoshi, and Uehara Senroku. His discussion is well-informed and thoroughly researched, grounded firmly in a wealth of primary resources. The scholarship is excellent. However, Gayle’s writing is sometimes overly introspective; he does not always give the reader quite enough information to work with, as if he assumes we already know what he is going to tell us. Nowhere is this more evident than in his use of philosophical or theoretical terms. Whilst discussing Tosaka Jun, for example, Gayle places the terms ‘category’ and ‘social relations’ into quotation marks, but he does not expand upon the precise meaning of these important phrases (p. 32). Part of the problem, perhaps, is the slight ambiguity about the interested audiences: born-again Marxists (who will be familiar with theoretical ‘categories’ but not with Tosaka) or historians of Japan (who will be familiar with Tosaka Jun but not with his ‘categories’). As it stands, the text is likely to frustrate both readers—which is a great shame, since it might easily have been expanded to cater for everyone. Serious intellectual historians, on the other hand, might find the pitch of Gayle’s writing refreshingly streamlined. We should, perhaps, lament the relative scarcity of this audience rather than Gayle’s writing.

In some places, however, it is not entirely clear that Gayle has fully or consistently conceptualized his terms. The cluster of words around ‘history’, for example, provide a case in point. This reviewer remains a little confused about the way in which Gayle employs the appellation ‘historian’: was Tosaka Jun really a historian (p. 27), or was he a philosopher, or a social theorist? As a criticism, this may seem frivolous, even pedantic, but ‘history’ is central to Gayle’s project yet he never explicitly tackles questions such as, ‘what does it mean to engage in writing history?’. Consequently Gayle is able to include a wide range of ‘thinkers’ in his study without really needing to link them rigorously to the idea of history at all—literary theorists, philosophers, economists ... all are historians, it seems. The issue overflows into adjacent themes: what is the difference between ‘national history’ and ‘nationalism’, ‘nation creation’ or ‘national identity’? Gayle is not always explicit.

This slightly under-specified style is also evident in Gayle’s presentation of the other key term from the title of his book: Marxist. Nowhere does Gayle spell out exactly what he means by this emotive term. Some of the ‘Marxist historians’ Gayle discusses are scarcely recognizable as Marxists, at least in the European tradition. I do not dispute that most of the thinkers discussed in this book were self-consciously engaged in a *Japanese Marxist* discourse, but I would have liked to have seen some explanation of the significance of the genitive: what is Marxist about *Japanese* Marxism and why does it appear so dissimilar from ‘mainstream’ Marxism (whatever that might be)? Gayle certainly appears to have a delicate and highly nuanced understanding of the answer to this question, but he does not tackle it head-on and, instead, allows it to linger unanswered around the edges of his narrative. This might be a problem of the ambiguity of audience, but this reviewer would have found an answer to this question a most valuable inclusion.

On the whole, Gayle provides us with an insightful and intricate exploration of the Japanese Marxist discourse surrounding questions of national identity in postwar Japan. He also makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the forms taken by Marxism in non-Western cultures, and to our appreciation of the intellectual vitality of war-time Japan. This is a valuable and challenging book which deserves to be read attentively.

C. S. JONES

HUGH BORTON

Spanning Japan's modern century: the memoirs of Hugh Borton.

(Foreword by James W. Morley.) (Studies in Modern Japan.) xii, 273 pp. Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002. \$80.

In 1941 Hugh Borton was one of only a handful of American academics with a well-founded knowledge of Japan. Nearly all of the others had come to know the country as the children of Americans working there. Borton was an exception. Born in 1903 to a long-established Quaker family in Pennsylvania, he had had a liberal arts education at Haverford College, then, together with his wife, Elizabeth, taken a job as teacher at a rural school in Tennessee. He had no contact with Japan until 1928, when the Quakers asked him to go to Tokyo for three years to report on conditions there, with a view to planning their future work. He took the task very seriously, starting at once to learn the language and making every effort to acquire information through books, newspapers and personal conversations.

In a sense the timing was fortunate. He was in Tokyo to witness the fall of the Tanaka government over the first step towards the Manchurian crisis (the murder of Chang Tso-lin); to learn of the growing problems posed by Japanese censorship, especially as applied to relations with China; to experience the early stages of economic slump; and the growing importance of right-wing nationalism in Japanese politics. Despite the problems these caused, he was able to pay a visit to northern China, returning to Tokyo via Korea. He was, in fact, becoming something of an 'expert' on the current situation in Japan and north-east Asia. As a result, he decided to make this his chosen field of graduate study, for which he enrolled at Columbia University when he returned to the USA in 1931.

Like his contemporary, Edwin Reischauer, Borton quickly discovered that American universities were not equipped for the kind of studies he had in mind. He therefore set out for Leiden, where he was able to extend his formal language training and to begin research for the PhD on the topic of peasant revolt in the Tokugawa period. Work on this took him back to Tokyo again, this time to study at the imperial university (now Tōdai). Once again he found himself living in a country in crisis: first, the Minobe affair, then the attempted army coup of February 1936. Again his attention was divided, though now between academic purposes and his interest in contemporary politics. The dichotomy was to characterize most of his career.

Back in Leiden he completed his PhD in January 1937. This was the entry to a teaching post at Columbia, during which he devoted part of his time in the next year or two to preparing a study of contemporary Japan for the Institute of Pacific Relations (a connection that later helped to put him on McCarthy's 'suspect' list). As war with Japan approached, however, an

academic life that included the preparation of language courses and a part in the founding of *The Far East Quarterly* was increasingly interrupted by discussions of foreign policy, first in a study group of the Council of Foreign Relations, later (after Pearl Harbor) as a research associate at the State Department.

His Quaker principles, which always surface when he writes of his personal life, led him to register as a conscientious objector when war broke out, but as a full-time adviser to the State Department he was kept very busy in Washington thereafter. His principal task was the preparation of briefing papers for government discussions of peace proposals and postwar policy towards Japan, but there is little doubt that in explaining and defending his views in committee he played an important role in shaping decisions. Two views he argued strongly. One was that only by retaining the monarchy would it be possible to ensure stability in Japan after the war. The other was that it would be entirely feasible to create a democratic Japan, once the influence of the military had been destroyed. He found powerful allies: the former US ambassador to Tokyo, Joseph C. Grew, and (for Britain) Sir George Sansom. Together they finally carried the day against the arguments of representatives from the armed forces and the China interest in the State Department. This became evident in the instructions given to MacArthur after the Japanese surrender, though it is by no means clear how far they influenced Roosevelt, while he lived.

Historians of the American occupation of Japan will undoubtedly find Borton's 'insider' account of the formulation of postwar policy the most important part of his memoirs. To this reader it gave fresh emphasis to two points: the fact that detailed discussions of a peace settlement were already in progress by the summer of 1942 argues a remarkable self-confidence about the outcome of hostilities; while the involvement of a number of persons from outside officialdom, like Borton himself, underlines not only the lack of specialist knowledge about Japan in the United States before 1941, but also the readiness of Washington to make use of it wherever it could be found.

The narrative extends also to the early stages of the occupation itself, on which some interesting light is thrown, but in June 1948 Borton left the State Department to return to his post at Columbia, where he was at last given tenure. There he engaged in the establishment of the East Asian Institute, at first under Sansom, then as Director. It is to this period that belongs his influential textbook, *Japan's modern century*. The institute, and Borton's part in its work, played a key role in the development of the study of modern Japan in America.

He left Columbia in 1957 to become President of Haverford College, an appointment that was a fitting tribute to a man whose life had been marked as much by his humanity as by his scholarship. He does not tell us a great deal about what he did there. In fact, the book ends abruptly, which suggests that there might have been more to come had Borton had time to write it.

W. G. BEASLEY

C. ANDREW GERSTLE (ed. and trans.):

Chikamatsu: five late plays.

(Translations from the Asian Classics.) 534 pp. New York:

Columbia University Press, 2001. £28.50.

Although up to this time almost exclusively contemporary-life drama performances, the Japanese playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon's (1653–1721)

works are slowly but surely being more widely recognized and appreciated outside Japan, following international stagings in London, Moscow and St Petersburg.

C. Andrew Gerstle's *Chikamatsu: five late plays* is a highly engaging and awe-inspiring first collection of English-language translations with annotations of five of Chikamatsu's mature works—four period dramas and one contemporary-life drama: *Twins at the Sumida River* (1720), *Lovers' pond in Settsu province* (1721), *Battles at Kawa-nakajima* (1721), *Love suicide on the eve of the Kōshin festival* (1722), and *Tethered steed and the eight provinces of Kantō* (1724)—all of which were unavailable in translation until now, and which have been released with excellent timing for the 350th anniversary of the playwright's birth.

Even Japanese scholars consider the textual complexities, intricacies of plot, and archaic language of Chikamatsu's dramas challenging, and in light of this, I consider Gerstle's translations (of the period dramas in particular) to be exceptionally competent. Gerstle's work indeed makes an enormous contribution to furthering our understanding of the playwright himself and of his dramatic works by offering a further dimension to our comprehension of his dramas and his milieu, which can consequently help promote more advanced international study in this field.

Gerstle's book is highly scholarly and will be of most benefit to readers familiar with some of the playwright's earlier works and with some knowledge of pre-modern Japanese history and culture. Although the two books are recognizably different in focus, it is useful to read Gerstle's work alongside Donald Keene's *Major plays of Chikamatsu* (Columbia University Press, 1961). Since its publication, Keene's work of eleven translations has been of great importance to English-speaking scholars studying Chikamatsu's works, particularly his 'contemporary-life' (*sewamono*) dramas.

Despite the large number of popular Japanese publications focusing on Chikamatsu's period dramas, Keene almost completely neglects them (the exception being *The battles of Coxinga* (1715)) since he judges them as being 'literally inferior' to the playwright's contemporary-life plays. Keene points out that Chikamatsu's period dramas have been received less favourably among non-Japanese readers because of their abstruse story-lines and because of folklore elements which unquestionably require a detailed knowledge of Japanese historical background impossible to explain with limited footnotes. Keene also indicated that because Chikamatsu distorted historical facts by setting his scripts over vast expanses of time and place (due to the Tokugawa regime's feudal restrictions) his period dramas seemed to lack verisimilitude, and that they were not, until recently, valued as literature because of their 'lack of unity'.

Gerstle's perspectives, however, differ from Keene's. As he states in his introduction, 'the attraction of these plays lies precisely in their abundant variety over a day of theatre,' (p. 2) and it is precisely this appreciation that makes the book a valuable addition to the field. Gerstle introduces a wider range of the period dramas and, through an examination of their intricate dialogues in the combined texts—derived from both the Japanese and Chinese traditions—sees them as portraits of contemporary politics in Chikamatsu's time and showcases for the playwright's critical views of the predominant Tokugawa regime. Gerstle's new insights complement Keene's work, which emphasizes the attraction of the contemporary-life dramas.

One of the most absorbing aspects in Gerstle's work are his annotations on the themes of each play. In the introduction, he elucidates three major

aspects of Chikamatsu's last decade of writing including his more detailed psychological depictions of human weakness, his criticisms of governmental corruption, and his representations of the demanding ideals of honour and nobility for those in positions of power. Here Gerstle succeeds in revealing significant changes in Chikamatsu's later writing. One of the dominant themes shared by the plays in this volume is Chikamatsu's characters' struggles when caught in webs of conflicting duties, exemplified by Kansuke, a samurai strategist in *Battles at Kawanakajima*, who utters in his anguish, 'If I fulfil filial duty, then I lack loyalty; if I'm loyal, I'm unfilial' (p. 222), and also by Hanbei, a former samurai adopted by a merchant in *Love suicides on the eve of the Kōshin festival*, who despairs when his foster mother confronts him with, 'I'll slice my throat with this butcher's knife! Will you kill your mother or divorce your wife?' (p. 313)

The overall structure of the book is clear and easy to follow, and the information provided in the introduction is a wide-ranging outline of Chikamatsu's career, his unstable position in the rigid social hierarchy, his great involvement in both *ningyō jōruri* (bunraku) and kabuki, and information on the many figures particularly significant for the development of the playwright's works and ideas, such as Uji Kaganojō, a noted jōruri chanter, and his disciple Takemoto Gidayū. Here, Gerstle attempts no interpretation and analysis of the dramas, but instead encourages readers to devise their own. Significant sources, brief summaries of the themes, and information on other versions precede each play, and supply a more exhaustive elucidation of each drama's contents and significance, while the bibliography, the glossary of key terms, and the maps also help to delineate the framework of each plot. Moreover, Gerstle's incorporation into each translation of a number of Japanese illustrations and figures portraying scenes from the plays makes the texts extremely enjoyable to read. Furthermore, his aim of conveying how the texts were traditionally read and performed through the inclusion of musical notations appears to be successful, as it certainly offers the reader a chance to imagine the dramas' appearance on stage. In addition to these efforts, Gerstle, as was his intention, succeeds in making his English 'fluid and lively' by subtly refining some of the complex features found in the original texts, which, by way of example, included no paragraphing and sometimes not even clear indications of the connection between utterances and characters.

Finally, I feel the need to counterbalance my enthusiasm for Gerstle's work by offering some minor criticisms. The book contains some typographical errors, repetitively similar subheadings, and some important omissions of words from the glossary, all relatively minor things, but more importantly, for me, there appears to be some confusion with traditional Japanese age calculations. Gerstle explains that Chikamatsu lived from 1653 to 1725 according to the Gregorian calendar (also stated by Keene), making his age at death 72. The confusion is that all the reliable sources I have found in Japan clearly state that Chikamatsu died in 1724, even while quoting the playwright's age at death as 72. In traditional Japanese calculations of age, a new born baby is one year old in its first year of life with a year added to its age every New Year's Day. Therefore, I feel that perhaps it should be explained that in terms of the Gregorian calendar Chikamatsu died aged 71 in 1724.

Despite these few minor errors, I consider the book an essential text for any scholar or student wishing to enhance their understanding of the playwright and his works, as well as those wishing to explore 'new' approaches to further their discoveries in the traditional performing arts of Japan.

AI KAMIKAJI

SAMUEL S. KIM and TAI HWAN LEE (ed.):

North Korea and Northeast Asia.

(Asia in World Politics.) xiii, 278 pp. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. £22.95.

A recent series of crises has attracted world attention to North Korea—a hitherto largely neglected Stalinist enclave. Predictably, this has led to an explosion in the number of publications dealing with the DPRK's past and present. Some of these works are hastily written and relatively shallow, but others manage to combine topicality with a real depth of analysis. The book under review is a good example of this latter fortuitous combination. Among its authors are a number of established and experienced Korea-watchers: Victor Cha, Marcus Noland, Samuel Kim—to name just a few. The book's editors, Samuel Kim and Tai Hwan Lee, have succeeded in fusing the articles by different scholars into a coherent whole—to a point where the book reads like a monograph, not a collection of loosely related articles.

In spite of its bizarre political system and economic ruin, North Korea has demonstrated exceptional survival skills. A decade ago experts were virtually unanimous in their expectation of a looming North Korean collapse. This did not occur, and the major task of this work is to investigate what may be termed the 'Pyongyang paradox'—the Stalinist regime's 'uncanny resilience and ability to survive in defiance of the gloomy predictions' (as Samuel Kim puts it in his introductory chapter).

The book contains a wealth of factual information and a deep analysis of North Korea's foreign policy and its relations with major powers in the region—Japan, the USA, China and Russia. It is noteworthy that South Korea is not included in the list: obviously, it is not seen as a 'foreign power'. This is perhaps a doubtful concession to the current diplomatic fiction—the book would only gain in quality and scope had South Korea been treated as another outside player, as is in fact the case.

The authors analyse how the recent dramatic changes in the power balance in the region influenced the fortunes of North Korea. These changes were significant indeed: the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Communist system, the political and economic decline of Russia, and the steady growth of China's power. However, the reclusive state not only managed to adapt itself to these new circumstances, but was also very successful in playing risky games with its powerful neighbours—and the book provides readers with a detailed and insightful description of these games.

The first part of the book includes chapters analysing relations between North Korea and particular countries. The first, authored by Robert Manning, deals with the history of Pyongyang–Washington dialogues and uses the wisdom of hindsight to provide a new assessment of the Agreed Framework of 1994. It is followed by Myonwoo Lee's chapter on Japan. Lee provides a much-needed historical background to the recent speculation about the prospects of a Pyongyang–Tokyo normalization. The editors, Samuel Kim and Tai Hwan Lee, also contribute a chapter on China which deals with what they style the 'asymmetrical interdependence' of the two Cold War allies. They document how Pyongyang uses its 'negative power' (that is, its ability to create unnecessary problems) to influence its giant neighbour. At the same time, the Chinese experience as described by the authors is also quite valuable: after all, China is remarkably adept at handling this extremely unruly ally. Elizabeth Wishnik provides a perceptive analysis of the reasons behind the

recent Russo–DPRK rapprochement—and the goals which both countries hope to achieve through a revival of their diplomatic interaction (largely unsupported by any significant economic exchanges). Alas, this chapter also includes a number of minor mistakes: Mitrofanov is not a communist deputy (in fact, he is anti-communist) (p. 147), Kim Il Sung did not visit the USSR in 1967 (p. 140) and so on.

The second section includes chapters which deal with various aspects of North Korean foreign policy: economic interaction with the world and its security policies. Of special importance is a major article by Marcus Noland which deals with the foreign trade of the DPRK. Among other interesting data, the article dwells on the ‘unconventional measures’ which are taken by Pyongyang to augment its meagre hard currency income—drug trafficking, ivory smuggling and the like. Noland’s description of the Kim Jong Il regime as a ‘continuing criminal enterprise’ might sound harsh, but it is founded on hard facts. Another interesting article is written by Victor Cha, who concentrates on the equally important question of whether the DPRK is a potential military threat and, if so (which he believes to be the case), what measures might increase or decrease the likelihood of a new violent confrontation.

We must congratulate the contributors and editors: this is one of the best books to deal with current North Korean issues. It is to be recommended to all who are interested in this reclusive yet important country.

ANDREI LANKOV

GENERAL

D. R. THORPE:

Eden: The life and times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon, 1897–1977.

xxv, 758 pp. London: Chatto and Windus, 2003. £25.

The *Bulletin of SOAS* is not the place to review a work of this nature, but Anthony Eden’s education and career touched many orientalist and African aspects which may, perhaps, be considered relevant to this journal. He was fluent in French and German and generally gifted for languages. When he returned from war service he went to Christ Church, Oxford, to study oriental languages, in his case Arabic and Persian. Among his teachers was the renowned D. S. Margoliouth, the Laudian Professor of Arabic, who was also at home in most other Semitic languages. I have myself heard Eden speak Arabic, but I believe he had a preference for Persian (p. 48) which I myself do not know. As he was always interested in art, he assembled a library of Persian art which I could inspect when I was invited to the home of the Earl and Countess of Avon at Alvediston near Salisbury. Eden obtained first class honours, an ideal preparation for someone who became the longest serving Foreign Secretary of the twentieth century. No less a personage than Gilbert Murray said that no scholar of Eden’s generation left so deep and permanent a mark on oriental studies (*ibid.*).

Harold Macmillan noted admiringly how Eden, as Foreign Secretary, ‘spoke in excellent and idiomatic French’, and he was also able to interrogate some German prisoners of war in their own language (p. 46). As far as I

know, no other Foreign Secretary had those attainments in addition to a knowledge of oriental languages.

Eden throughout his life had an important connection with Ethiopia. When the Hoare-Laval plan, which advocated the division of Ethiopia between itself and Italy, ended in uproar, Hoare had to resign and Eden was appointed Foreign Secretary in his stead in December 1935 at the early age of thirty-eight. Just over two years later, in February 1938, Eden felt he had to resign because Chamberlain was determined to offer *de jure* recognition to the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. On both occasions Eden showed himself a man who adhered to his principles. A third occasion arose when, after the reconquest of Ethiopia in May 1941, some of the senior British colonial officers, such as Sir Philip Mitchell, wished to administer Ethiopia—with Emperor Haile Sellassie purely as a figurehead. The Emperor then turned to Eden who sharply rebuked those officials reminding them that the war was not being fought for territorial aggrandizement.

These events cemented the feelings of friendship Haile Sellassie cherished for Anthony Eden—to the extent that in the second volume of his autobiography he described him ‘as our only [foreign] friend’ (Amharic, p. 335). One can observe their mutual sympathy on a photograph (between pp. 598 and 599) taken on Barbados when the Emperor visited the island where the Earl and Countess had a home for a number of years. When the Anglo-Ethiopian Society elected the Earl of Avon as their president in the mid-1960s, Haile Sellassie expressed his pleasure at this election (*lela yälum* ‘there is no other [possible]’).

The Earl and Countess presided over the annual dinners of the Society and helped in many other ways. They invited the Ethiopian Ambassador and his wife to their home at Alvediston and did the same for the Emperor’s grandson, Zar’a Ya’qob, after the deposition of Haile Sellassie and the incapacity of the prince’s father, the Crown Prince.

But Anthony Eden’s most important act for oriental studies was his appointment of Lord Scarbrough, towards the end of the Second World War, to preside over a committee to advise the government how oriental studies could be encouraged and furthered, both for their own sake and for any future contingency when a shortage of orientalist would otherwise again be experienced (see also Sir Cyril Philips, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, especially p. 155). This initiative led to the appointment of orientalist in several British universities; and SOAS was, of course, the principal beneficiary.

EDWARD ULLENDORFF

CLARK CHILSON and PETER KNECHT (ed.):

Shamans in Asia.

viii, 199 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. £55.

This volume marks the revival of the occasional Asian Folklore Studies ethnographic series. It assembles six articles previously published between 1984 and 1999 in the journal of the same name, adding an extensive introduction by Peter Knecht. The articles do not give a comprehensive picture of shamanism in Asia, since they discuss only Bangladesh, China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, omitting huge parts of South-East Asia and South Asia. Erroneously, the jacket states that Siberia is also covered, perhaps since the concern of the article on China is the 200-strong reindeer-herding Evenki who have settled in China’s north-east.

The introduction takes as its basic premise the comment made by Shirokogoroff back in 1935 that shamanism has over time proved itself able to adapt to new circumstances. In keeping to the spirit of this statement, Knecht never really fully comes to grips with the rapid decline of shamanism today. He observes an audience in Japan, and characterizes it as 'merely onlookers' rather than clients, and he notes the emergence of 'neo-shamans' who practise self-healing rather than the traditional restoration of order in a society's cosmos. His focus, though, remains the persistence rather than the loss of ritual practices, as his opening account, of a ritual in Seoul held for delegates of the 1991 conference of the International Society for Shamanic Research by a shaman dressed as General MacArthur who handed out whiskey and American cigarettes, suggests. I would like to see more deconstruction of this ritual: I was also present, intrigued by the shaman's controlling Buddhist 'husband', by the way MacArthur spoke perfect Korean when delivering an oracle, and only too aware that this shaman was considered unusual by her peers.

Knecht develops his overview by marshalling considerable literature in English, French, Russian, German and Japanese, adding insights from his own considerable fieldwork in Japan, China and Siberia. Early twentieth-century accounts are revisited, along with Eliade's classic *Shamanism: the archaic technique of ecstasy*. This is largely a literature review, and the extensive bibliography is split into cited references and other additional materials. Knecht deals with the call to practise, with initiation, the social roles of shamans, and their distinct identities in different cultures. He discusses the thorny issue of whether trance or possession characterizes shamanism—trance was part of Eliade's key definition, but possession is arguably more common in East Asia. He notes that shamans rarely use medicines, although I suspect Nepalese practice would suggest otherwise. He reflects on issues of gender, although he makes no mention of Korea, where the vast majority of shamans are women. This, then, provides a useful overview.

F. Georg Heyne offers the first case study, 'The social significance of the Shaman among the Chinese reindeer-Evenki'. The Evenki were originally from Siberia, and hence close to the putative place of shamanism's origins. Here, 15 out of 17 pages are devoted to a summary of accounts published in the mid-twentieth century, primarily two books and an article by Shirokogoroff. Less than two pages is left for contemporary ethnography based on an interview with the last shaman, now an eighty-year-old woman, Njura Kaltakun. Heyne concludes that shamanism will die with this shaman, although, curiously, he has already noted that Shirokogoroff's main informant back in the 1930s was at that time the only shaman in the group, with no identified successor. Heyne offers no discussion of shamanism elsewhere in China, amongst the Han, the recognized mainland minorities, or Taiwan's aboriginal groups. Next, Anwarul Karim provides an overview of shamanism in Bangladesh. Based on fieldwork in three villages of Kushtia, this is a detailed description that seeks to show that shamans are psychoanalysts. Karim finds that shamans have 'distinctive cognitive capacities' that are used to impose order through the sometimes psychotic magic of trance. Again, though, the broader picture of South Asia, which could so easily have been informed by Bruce Kapferer's *Celebrations of demons* (Bloomington, 1983), Geoffrey Samuel's *Civilised shamans* (Washington, 1993) and Piers Vitebsky's *Dialogues with the dead* (Cambridge, 1993), is missing.

Jean Mottin's distillation of a Hmong séance is clearly part of a much broader enterprise. He has observed more than twenty rituals, and here in an

excellent and polished account shows how each can be reduced to five stages of a journey undertaken in trance. This, then, mirrors Eliade's description of the core of shamanism. Next comes an extensive observation of a single Korean ritual, *Chaesu kut*, performed by Woo Manshin, by John A. Grim. Photographs illustrate the elaborate description, but Grim is reliant on English-language source materials—the only translation of a chant is taken from a publication by Lee Jung-young that Grim states is 'similar'—and the translations of an assistant. He never accesses any of the incredibly rich sources available in Korean. Chinese characters are given for terms, but no Korean, despite the common Korean claim that shamanism is indigenous to their culture. Grim finds roots for specific Korean ritual practices in East Asian Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism, and he allows for the possibility that Siberian cosmologies are present. Finally, he compares aspects of Korean shamanism such as the initiation illness (*sinbyong*) to Siberian, Mongol and North American examples.

Two final chapters—the longest in the book—are written by Takiguchi Naoko and look at aspects of Miyako shamanism. The Miyako archipelago forms part of the Ryukyu island chain of Japan, and little in these chapters connects to anything elsewhere in Japan or East Asia. The first chapter is a description of traditional beliefs, discussing the conceptualization of the heavens, gods, the earth, major sacred sites, the sea, afterworld, ancestors and so on. The second translates, abridges, and edits the diary of a single shaman, identified as 'NT'. This gives the shaman's personal perspectives on his initiation, his relationships with the spirits, and his difficulties with human social relations, all annotated by the scholar.

Somehow, I still want more. Too many of the articles are too limited: Korea, based on a single ritual but lacking all access to Korean-language sources; China, represented by a marginal community which has migrated from Siberia; Bangladesh, but nothing on India, Sri Lanka, Nepal or Tibet. The jacket claims that this is the 'first book in English to provide in-depth accounts of shamans from different regions of Asia'. Technically this may be correct, but many monographs exist on the shamans of single cultures, and there are several collections of articles—for example, nineteen short articles on Asian shaman practices in the edited volume by Mihály Hoppál and Keith Howard, *Shamans and cultures* (Budapest, 1993). Rather than select material from the venerable *Asian Folklore Studies*, could the editors not have commissioned a set of regionally encompassing or more representative articles?

KEITH HOWARD

ANNE-MARIE CHRISTIN (ed.):

A history of writing: from hieroglyph to multimedia.

403 pp. Paris: Flammarion, 2002. £45.

This is haute vulgarisation and, at times, something more. Anne-Marie Christin and her collaborators have produced a big book about scripts in which many of the profuse colour illustrations are (a) beautiful, (b) relevant, (c) useful in their own right. The accompanying texts deal with almost the whole world of writing, generally adopting a fairly consistent point of view.

Quoting Paul Klee ('Art does not reproduce the visible but makes visible') Christin in her introduction sets out the aim clearly: to explore the role of the image in writing, from the invention and development of scripts to the modern

‘reincorporation of imagery into the Western alphabet’. This review will skim over Part 3 (‘The image in Western writing’) to bring out what is best in parts 1 (‘Origins and reinventions’) and 2 (‘Alphabets and derived scripts’). There are fifty-eight chapters, according to the blurb; many of them are two-page sketches (no less useful for that), leaving plenty of room for lucky authors to engage with favoured topics.

It is not quite the whole world of writing, after all. The chapter title ‘Writing in China’ is badly chosen: the chapter deals with Chinese only, leaving the local scripts of southern China unmentioned. Tibetan and Mongolian scripts, early Turkic inscriptions, and the scripts used for Elamite and for ancient and middle Iranian languages, are scarcely mentioned in this book. South-East Asia is allowed a mere eight pages. One cannot cover everything, of course, but the lack of focus on Central and South-East Asia is surprising since the universities of France could have found scholars at the forefront of relevant research and French national collections could have provided illustrations. On the other hand, several other atypical and difficult writing systems, from the ‘Vinča signs’ of the prehistoric Danube basin to the Bamum script of nineteenth-century Cameroon, get a fair allocation of space. Jean-Pierre Mahé, who writes on ‘Christian alphabets of the Caucasus’, finds room for a page on, and an illustration of, the almost-forgotten script devised for the language known in ancient times as ‘Albanian’, ancestor of modern Udi (North East Caucasian).

Having criticized his title, I must now praise Léon Vandermeersch, along with Pascal Griolet and Jean-Pierre Drège, for what they achieve in their well-illustrated chapters on Chinese and Japanese scripts. They take on the whole history, beginning with the oracle bones. The spectrum of writing, graphic art, book-making and printing in East Asia turns out to exemplify very well what the editor is getting at: these authors show how images and written texts are combined intimately, and how the viewer attends to both in ‘reading’ a page or a picture. Vandermeersch demonstrates how the practice of calligraphy and the skill of ink painting become almost as one.

Georges-Jean Pinault writes about ‘The scripts of continental India’. He is allowed thirty pages—the longest chapter—but sensibly does not try to illustrate or describe all the modern scripts. His text, well-chosen illustrations and full bibliography focus on the early period, exploring the question of the relationships between Kharosthī and Brāhmī, their controversial origins, and the ‘limited rivalry’ between them.

The mainstream of Near Eastern scripts is dealt with by Jean-Marie Durand and Dominique Charpin on cuneiform, by Pascal Vernus on Egypt, by André Lemaire and Jean-Pierre Olivier on Aegean and Western Semitic scripts respectively, and by François Déroche on Arabic script (nice pictures but no bibliography). The Phaistos Disk, says Olivier firmly, ‘is not of Cretan origin ... since the shape of the signs in no way relates to those of Cretan hieroglyphic or Linear A’. Nor to any other known script: by this logic it must have fallen from outer space. The best of the chapters in this group are the ones by Vernus, ‘The scripts of ancient Egypt’ (with handy bibliography), and by Charpin, ‘The Mesopotamian scribes’.

Michel Davoust, currently working on the decipherment, writes on ‘Mayan script and society from the second through the tenth centuries’. He gives proper credit to others, from Diego de Landa (*c.* 1570) to Linda Schele (1996), who have struggled to read Maya hieroglyphs. Marc Thouvenot discusses ‘Nahuatl script’. I found his exposition particularly clear: he rounds

it off with a sample text, a historical extract from the Codex Xolotl, and gives a good bibliography.

The translators have worked hard: none the less, there are details over which they stumbled. It is admittedly not easy to write lucidly about orthographic practices in ancient scripts and the complex relationships between language, meaning, image and writing. Readers will encounter some passages that do not say what the author meant, or that cannot be understood without a sympathetic awareness that they are translated from French. Several persistent errors have to be attributed to translators or copy-editors: they include the misuse of 'annotation' (to mean 'notation') and 'scripture' (to mean 'script, writing'), the misspelling 'Indo-Arian' and, most irritating, the failure throughout to capitalize 'semitic', though other language families are allowed their initial capital.

The problem of translation is at its worst when authors are expounding how the individual scripts work. Never mind: that is not the real aim here, and the job has been done in *The world's writing systems*, ed. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright (New York, 1996). What the present book does, better than any other, is to explore the relationship between image and writing, a relationship that varies in fascinating and challenging ways from one literary culture to the next. On this subject every reader will learn something.

The paper is good and opaque, but the binding, in paper-covered boards, will not stand up to library use for very long. The illustrations are beautifully sharp and clear. The book was first published in French, under the title *Histoire de l'écriture: de l'idéogramme au multimedia*, in 2001.

ANDREW DALBY

SEENA FAZEL and JOHN DANESH (ed.):

Reason and revelation: new directions in Bahá'í thought.

(Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 13.) xi, 243 pp.

Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2002. \$29.95.

When a religious community is under academic scrutiny, its followers frequently view such an endeavour with unease and scepticism. Academic methods are discarded as materialistic, one-sided, partisan and spiritually ignorant when the academic investigator begins to question dearly-held assumptions on the history and doctrines of a religion. The collection of articles under review contains the works of several Bahá'ís with an academic background who share a scholarly interest in their religion and promulgate the application of academic methods for the understanding of its history and doctrines.

The Bahá'í faith is a new religious movement with about 7 million adherents around the world. It emerged from millenarian strands of Shiism and is the only religious movement with historical roots in Islam which has undertaken a complete departure from its mother-tradition. Its Iranian prophet-founder Mirza Ḥusayn 'Alí Nuri Bahá'ullāh (1817–92) began to develop theophanic claims and claimed, from the 1860s onwards, that he was the promised eschatological figure of all religions and a new prophet. He places Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muḥammad and also the Iranian prophet Zarathustra in a cyclical scheme of salvation history, with his own theophany as its climax. Bahá'ullāh envisions his religion to be the future world religion, leading to the unification and pacification of humanity and providing universal principles and moral values for a global civilization. After

his death, his eldest son ‘Abdu’l-Bahā’ (1844–1921) succeeded him as head of the community. Today a network of local, national and international institutions governs the affairs of the Bahā’ī community with the ‘Universal House of Justice’ as its supreme body.

Seena Fazel and John Danesh, former editors of the *Bahā’ī Studies Review*—the academic organ of the Association for Bahā’ī Studies for English-speaking Europe—have selected nine articles from previous issues and published them under this ambitious title. The articles cover a variety of unrelated theological, historical and socio-economic issues and are divided into three thematic sections.

The three articles in the first section, ‘Interpreting principles’, approach certain doctrines and rituals in the Bahā’ī faith. Udo Schaefer, in his contribution ‘Infallible institutions?’, discusses the extent to which infallibility can be applied to the supreme governing body of the Bahā’ī community, the Universal House of Justice. Schaefer distinguishes between ‘essential infallibility’ (p. 7), which is a privilege of the prophets, and ‘conferred infallibility’ (p. 10) which the Universal House of Justice possesses. Challenging a common assumption among Bahā’īs who believe in the absolute infallibility of the Universal House in all its decisions, Schaefer argues that it can only be infallible in its primary function of adapting and passing religious laws. In all its other executive and judicial decisions it relies on information from other parties which are not infallible.

A similarly contentious issue is discussed in Sen McGlinn’s article ‘Theocratic assumptions in Bahā’ī literature’. McGlinn refers to another common assumption among Bahā’īs—that after a future conversion of the majority of humanity to the Bahā’ī faith, the institutions of the community will assume the role of local and national governments. McGlinn surveys the use of theocratic models in Bahā’ī secondary literature and comes to the conclusion that most authors assume the fusion of secular and religious institutions in a future Bahā’ī state with no scriptural foundation for their arguments in the writings of Bahā’ullāh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahā’. A thorough investigation of their writings shows quite clearly that they endorse the separation of political and religious authority. In the final contribution to the first section, Christopher White examines the purpose of prayer according to Bahā’ī doctrine.

The second section, entitled ‘Understanding texts’, contains articles presenting scholarly approaches to religious scripture and challenging its literalist interpretation. Franklin Lewis in his contribution ‘Scripture as literature’—certainly one of the strongest in this volume—proposes a literary approach to the writings of Bahā’ullāh. With several examples from Bahā’ullāh’s Arabic and Persian writings, Lewis shows how he imitates, alludes to and breaks with themes and conventions of the Arabic and Persian literary traditions and how such a literary approach to scripture not only provides further insights into the literary quality of scripture but also into its doctrinal and legal contents. For Lewis, such an approach aids understanding of ‘the process of moulding a scriptural tradition from a literary tradition’ (p. 107). By analysing the formation of Bahā’ī scripture out of the literary traditions of the nineteenth-century Middle East, one can develop methods which may assist in comprehending the formation of other scriptural traditions, such as Christianity and Islam.

While Lewis introduces a literary approach to scripture, Sholeh A. Quinn’s article ‘The end of history?’ gives an accessible overview—written for a non-academic audience—of historical methodology and its application to the sources and scripture of the Bahā’ī faith.

Moojan Momen's article 'Fundamentalism and liberalism' appears to be misplaced in this section. His comparative study of the characteristics of religious fundamentalism and liberalism has probably been placed here because fundamentalism is usually associated with scriptural literalism. However, Momen does not discuss the question of textual hermeneutics but gives a succinct—sometimes simplified—overview of the features which sociological studies have attributed to religious fundamentalism and religious liberalism. Momen argues that fundamentalism and liberalism represent two different 'cognitive styles' (p. 146) which are not so much determined by social factors but arise from two different psychological orientations. However important a psychological approach towards both attitudes might be, Momen's argument that a fundamentalist or liberal position is psychologically pre-conditioned can lead to psychological determinism. If one is a fundamentalist, because one possesses a natural psychological inclination towards a fundamentalist understanding of the world, any possibility of choice and change is precluded.

The three articles in the final section, 'Applying the teachings', discuss the application of Bahā'ī doctrines in Bahā'ī proselytization, in economics and in development studies. Christopher Buck shows, in his contribution 'Bahā'ī universalism and native prophets', how Bahā'ī missionaries among indigenous people in North America have responded to their quasi-messianic expectations and presented Bahā'ullāh as the return of the expected saviour of their tribal religious traditions. Buck's insightful article gives an interesting account of indigenization in the North American Bahā'ī community, a rare example of such a process in a new religious movement.

The two final contributions apply Bahā'ī doctrines to socio-economic problems. Bryan Graham offers a review of secondary literature on the Bahā'ī faith and economics and Geeta Gandhi Kingdom presents results from recent research showing the socio-economic benefits of female education in developing countries.

This collection of articles on a variety of doctrinal and historical issues does not serve as an introduction for a researcher or student with no prior exposure to Bahā'ī studies. The articles require some basic knowledge of the history and doctrines of this new religious movement and also some awareness of current issues discussed within its community. The editors do not seem to target the wider academic public but rather the Bahā'ī community itself, particularly Bahā'īs with a scholarly or academic interest in the study of their religion. The articles vary in content and quality but all have in common an implicit apologetic tone which is also present in the editors' introduction. They defend the use of academic methods and of 'a rational approach to the texts and teachings of the Bahā'ī Faith' (foreword, p. ix). Apparently, the re-publication of these articles is a response to voices within the Bahā'ī community which are critical towards the academic study of their religion. The authors challenge fundamentalist, literalist or theocratic understandings of the Bahā'ī faith and are eager to illustrate the benefits of applying academic methods for a deeper understanding of its history and doctrines. This intention explains the title. The articles do not provide new insights into the relationship between reason and revelation from a Bahā'ī perspective but claim the role of reason—as present in academic methods—in understanding revelation. In this respect, they document current discussions in the Bahā'ī community and are interesting for any researcher in Bahā'ī studies or in the field of new religious movements who intends to become acquainted with present debates in this religious community.

OLIVER SCHARBRODT