

Medieval Coins and Monies of Account: The Case of Large-Flan Mamluk Dinars

by Warren C. Schultz

Readers of this bulletin know about coins, and I need not go over the familiar territories of the importance and diversity of medieval Islamic coinages. But when one moves from numismatics to monetary history, there are other issues that must be taken into consideration, for there is more to a monetary system than coins. Among the most important of those issues is an understanding of how coins were valued. I will address one aspect of this issue by examining the gold coinage of the first half of the Mamluk sultanate (648-922/1250-1517). The coins studied are the Mamluk dinars struck before the appearance of the gold reform issues al-Ashraf Barsbay (825-841/1422-1437) and similar coins minted by his successors. These Ashrafi and Ashrafi-type coins were likely inspired by the Venetian Ducat, and lay beyond the scope of this essay (cf. Bacharach 1973). In general, the Mamluk mon-

etary system underwent a major transformation in the first decades of the ninth/fifteenth century. The coinage of this period is immediately recognizable as different from that which preceded it. There were also unsuccessful reform gold issues by al-Nasir Faraj (801-815/1399-1412, with a brief interregnum) and al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (815-824/1412-1421) (See Bacharach 1973 and Balog 1964, 279-83 and 299-301). As the accompanying illustrations show, the Ashrafi-type dinar is quite different in appearance from those "large-flan" gold coins of the earlier sultans. (A flan is the metal disk upon which the coin dies are struck. As the illustrations indicate, the flans of the pre-Ashrafi dinars are usually considerably larger than those used in the production of the Ashrafis.) The time period under consideration is thus the "Bahri period," slightly extended

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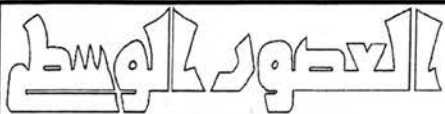
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Al-'Usur al-Wusta

The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists
Volume 12, Number 2 • October, 2000

Editor: Fred M. Donner

Associate Editors: Warren C. Schultz (Member News), Michael G. Morony (Book Reviews), Donald Whitcomb (Archaeology)

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Al-'Usur al-Wusta is published twice yearly (April, October) by Middle East Medievalists, and is produced at The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Middle East Medievalists, its officers, the editor of *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*, or The Oriental Institute.

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Middle East Medievalists

Middle East Medievalists (MEM), founded in 1989, is a professional non-profit association of scholars and organizations interested in the Islamic lands of the Middle East during the medieval period (defined roughly as 500-1500 C.E.). MEM's main objectives are to encourage scholarship on the medieval Middle East and to foster lines of communication among its members.

Regular membership in MEM is open to scholars and students of all nationalities interested in any aspect of the history and civilization of the Middle East in the medieval period. (See the membership application form on the last page of this issue.) Annual membership dues for members with addresses in Canada, Mexico, or the United States are US \$15.00. Members with addresses outside Canada, Mexico, or the United States are required to pay a postal surcharge of \$2.50 in addition to their dues, for a basic annual rate of US \$17.50. See the membership application form on the last page of this issue for multi-year memberships and payment options. Payment should be made by check or money order in the appropriate amount, in U.S. dollars payable on a U.S. bank or in British pounds only, and made out to "Middle East Medievalists." Send membership applications and dues payments to Warren C. Schultz, Secretary-Treasurer of MEM, Department of History, DePaul University, 2320 N. Kenmore Ave., Chicago, IL 60614, U.S.A.

The Board of Directors of MEM is elected annually at the general business meeting, normally held in the fall at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. (For information, see "Annual Meetings" section inside this issue.) The next business meeting will take place in Orlando, Florida in conjunction with the 34th annual meeting of MESA (16-19 November, 2000). The Board of Directors for 2000 consists of the following members:

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to the early years of the ninth/fifteenth century.

Monies of Account

Most definitions of money explain it in terms of function: money is what money does. Money serves a measure and store of value and as a medium of exchange. In other words, while it is common to think of objects such as coins or paper bills as money, money is more than these tangible items: it is a system of valuation. Coins themselves may be valuable, but their use requires a method of measuring that value. Such a reckoning system is usually called a money of account. It should be emphasized that this money of account is not an "imaginary" money. It may lack physical form like a coin, but it is nonetheless real (Spufford 1988, 411-414). Any discussion of the circulation of pre-modern coins should take the relevant money of account into consideration as well. While the following passage was written about medieval Europe, it is also applicable to medieval Islamdom: "On the one hand money of account was the measure of value, whilst on the other, the actual coin was the medium of exchange and the store of wealth. Money of account derived its name from its function. As a measure of value it was used almost exclusively for accounting purposes. Most financial transactions were first determined and expressed in money of account, although payments were naturally made subsequently in coins. *The coin itself was valued as a commodity in terms of the money of account, and like any other commodity, its value frequently varied* (emphasis added). This variation of the value of the coin in terms of money of account has been the cause of much confusion of thought about the nature of the money of account." (Spufford 1963, 593)

This concept is sometimes hard for we moderns to grasp. We are used to our physical money object and its money of account having an exact correspondence. We look at a dollar bill or a one pound coin and we see an object that is always precisely worth what it says it is. The object and its value unit are paired up exactly. There is no discrepancy: barring extreme mutilation, we can always use that physi-

cal object to purchase one dollar's or one pound's worth of goods and services. (Of course, the purchasing power of that bit of money can vary tremendously!) However, there is a world of difference between the tightly regulated monetary markets of today, in which coins and bills are fiduciary only (i.e. the materials which those objects are made to do not themselves have any significant intrinsic value), and the economic arenas of the medieval Islamic world.

In the medieval Islamic world, the primary determinant of value of gold and silver coins was their bullion content. (The writings of the jurists and the anecdotal evidence of the chronicles leaves little doubt of that.) Given the irregular precision with which pre-machine made coins were frequently made, a correspondence between coin and money of account cannot and should not be always and everywhere assumed. This is definitely the case with the large-flan Mamluk dinars issued before the appearance of the Ashrafi and its successors. As I will illustrate below, these coins were themselves com-



Figure 1. Ashrafi-style dinar of al-Ashraf Aynal. Mint: (Damascus). Date: 862/3 H. Weight: 3.40 grams. Diameter: 14 mm.

modities, whose values were determined in terms of their money of account.

Bahri Gold: The Numismatic and Metrological Evidence

Throughout the span of the regime, the Mamluk sultans (and some of their unsuccessful rivals to the throne) issued gold coins. Although some modern scholars have asserted the existence of a Mamluk gold shortage, there does not seem to have been a persistent dearth of gold in the Mamluk domains. This is certainly supported by the chronicles (in particular, see the frequent accounts of the confiscations of fortunes from high ranking officials, too numerous to list here) as well as by the surviving numismatic evidence (a noted scholar and dealer in Islamic coins describes many Mamluk dinars as "com-

mon" [Album 1998, 51-53]), which clearly shows that gold was struck with regularity at the major mints of Cairo, Alexandria, Damascus and Aleppo. (There are very few gold coins known from the mints of Tripoli or Hamah, both of which produced large numbers of silver and copper coins. The reasons for this are unknown.) Hundreds, if not thousands, of large-flan Mamluk dinars survive, and numismatists have catalogued many different types -- to use the classical numismatic terminology to designate differences (mint, date, ruler, design, purity, etc.) that can distinguish coins.

Despite the minor differences seen in the epigraphic legends found on the Mamluk large flan dinars, when it comes to matters of circulation and valuation, it is best to consider these coins as making up only one type. That is to say, while they may have different royal names, dates, and mints stamped upon them, there is no difference in the way they worked in the marketplace. This conclusion is the only one that makes sense in light of the following numismatic evidence. First of all, there is the matter of alloy: all the large-flan dinars of this period are consistently high in purity. As Ehrenkretz has written, there was only one type of gold coin in circulation in the Bahri period, and that these coins were over 22 carats in purity. Furthermore, any "temporary debasements should be regarded as an exception to the rule" (Ehrenkretz, 503, note 2; cf. Bacharach 1983, 173-176). Secondly, while published accounts of hoards of Mamluk dinars are rare, those few that have seen the light of day show the same characteristics as Mamluk silver hoards: they contain coins of multiple rulers from many mints. While other explanations have been offered, this strongly suggests that given consistency of purity, neither place nor date of issuance mattered once these coins entered circulation (Digby, 129-138; Album 1992). Finally, as has been oft-noted, Mamluk large-flan dinars were prepared at widely irregular weights. I will first illus-

trate this last fact with a frequency table, then discuss the repercussions in the final section of this essay.

The Mamluks inherited a system of irregular weight dinars from their Ayyubid predecessors (Balog 1980, 35). Whereas the Ayyubid dinars vary up to a gram or two in weight, the Mamluks took this variance to farther extremes. In order to illustrate the tremendous weight variance seen in large-flan Mamluk dinars, I have plotted the weights of 134 gold coins minted in Damascus on a frequency table. A frequency table plots the number of coins (vertical axis) which fall within set weight intervals (horizontal axis), and the shape of the resulting graph can illustrate much about the metrology of the coinage graphed. In this case, the large-flan dinars of Damascus range from less than 4.00 grams to almost 15.00 grams in weight. The distribution is quite scattered; there is no pronounced peak found in any weight interval. These characteristics are also found in frequency tables of large-flan dinars struck at the other major Mamluk mints, where the extremes reach to less than 2.00 and more than 20.00 grams, and no specific interval occurs with greater frequency. (Similar tables for Cairo (280 coins), Alexandria (97 coins) and Aleppo (40 coins) are found in Schultz 1995, 89-95. All show the same characteristics. The possibility exists, of course, that the heavier coins were presentation pieces and not for general circulation.) Such tables leave little doubt that these coins were prepared with little or no attention paid to their weight. The question remains, however, as to how these irregular weight coins were valued.

The Mithqal: the Unit of Account

When the numismatic data is illustrated in this fashion, it is no surprise that it has long been accepted that these Mamluk dinars circulated by weight (Popper, 45). When one or more of these coins changed hands they would have been weighed, since a heavier coin was undoubtedly worth more than a lighter one. When larger amounts of gold were required, it is known that sealed purses of predetermined values were often used, no doubt to avoid the cumbersome requirement of frequent re-weighing. In any case, what mattered was not the number of coins but the total weight of gold coins which



Figure 2. Large-Flan Dinar of al-Nasir Faraj. Mint: Damascus. Date Missing. Weight: 8.19 grams. Diameter: 26 mm.

changed hands.

But this does not mean that gold ceased to be a currency as has sometimes been stated (Balog 1964, 40). Even in the form of irregular-weight ingots, these coins were still money. When gold coins are mentioned in the contemporary sources, their value is stated in terms of a money of account. This was not a development new to the Mamluks, but was widespread throughout the medieval world, as indicated by the passage cited above. (This phenomenon has been noted by scholars of Islamic money; see Bates, 87. Bates uses the term "accounting unit of payment," but the meaning is the same. In the case of Egypt in Fatimid and Ayyubid times, see Goitein, 229-266.) The Mamluk sources reveal that the basic unit of this money of account was the mithqal. The mithqal, of course, was a well known weight unit in many regions of the medieval Islamic world, and was often associated with coins and other items of high value. What seems to be less widely known, however, is that the value of the mithqal, often cited as a universal 4.25 grams, in fact varied from place to place and time to time. For the Mamluk period, the evidence is contradic-

tory -- as I have examined elsewhere -- but the value of the Mamluk mithqal was likely in the range of 4.25 to 4.30 grams. Whatever its exact value, the following passages about how Mamluk dinars circulated leave little doubt that in these contexts, the mithqal refers to the weight of an ideal dinar. In other words, if these coins had been carefully prepared to a weight standard, they would have weighed one mithqal each. Accounts would be totaled using this ideal coin weight as the unit of account, and then enough coined gold of sufficient weight would be exchanged regardless of the number of actual coins it took to realize that weight.

The Mamluk era authors seldom use monetary terminology in a consistent fashion. Nevertheless, frequent mentions of quantities of gold coins being worth so many mithqals are found in the sources throughout the time period under consideration here. A few citations are sufficient to illustrate this. In 672/1273-1274, for example, Ibn Shaddad writes of a sum of several different types of gold coins having a total value of 980 mithqals. During the reign of al-Mansur Qalawun (678-689/1280-1290), al-Maqrizi states that 1000

mithqals of gold were worth 20,000 silver dirhams. An exchange rate of 694/1294-1295 preserved in al-Suyuti reveals that a sum of silver totaling 170 dirhams is equivalent to eight and one half mithqals of gold. In 741/1340-1341, in an account of the wealth of the amir Tankiz, al-Maqrizi writes that the former's personal fortune included coined gold worth 400,000 mithqals. In 788/1386-1387, another exchange rate states that eighty dirhams of silver could be exchanged for four mithqals of gold (Al-Maqrizi, *Sulūk*, 3:559). (Note that this 1:20 ratio for gold and silver coins is relatively constant over the first century and a half of the Mamluk Sultanate.) Many such anecdotes may be found in the chronicles. When combined with numismatic evidence, the available data all support the notion that a monetary system is more than simply the coins it contains. It is clear from the passages in which the term mithqal is used that it is not only a weight unit but also a unit of value. Since when mithqal is used in monetary contexts it is invariably linked to gold coins, it is safe to conclude that the money of account used to determine the value of one or more of these large-flan dinars was based on the mithqal.

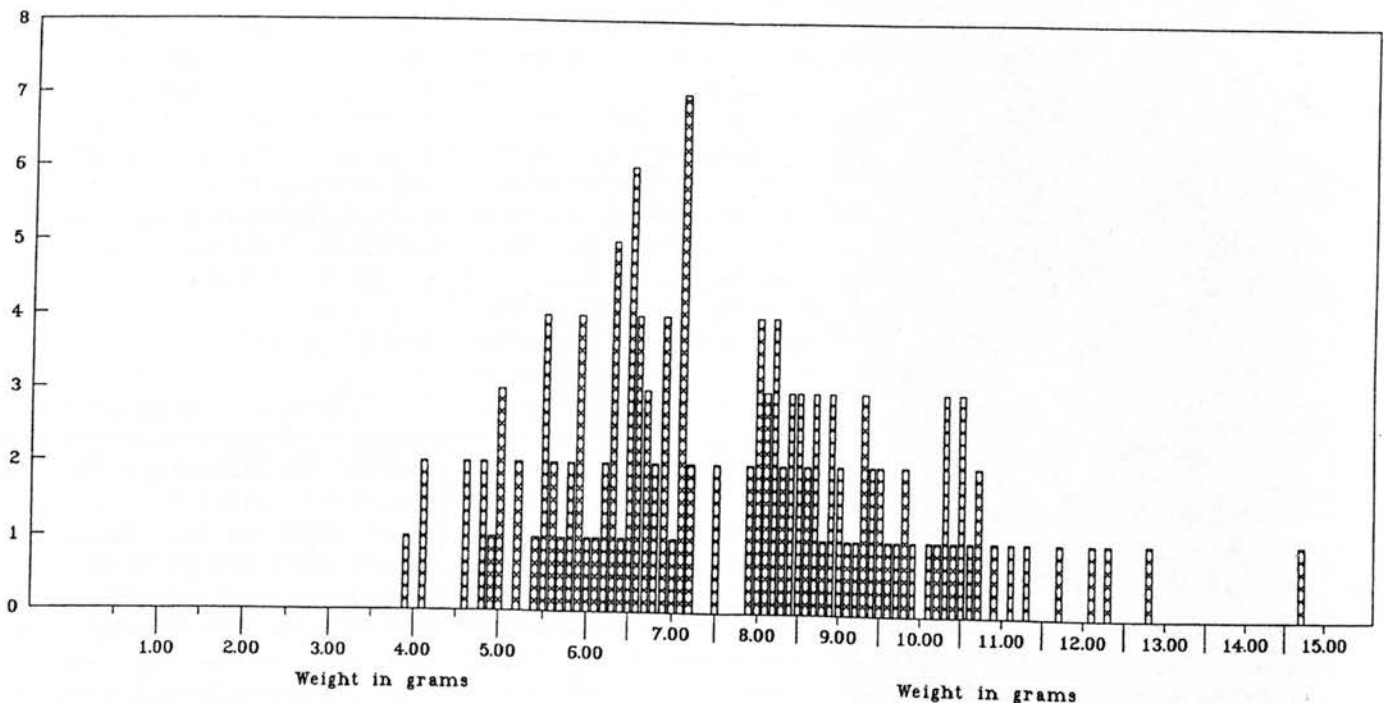


Figure 3. Frequency Table of Weights of 134 Large-Flan Mamluk Dinars Minted in Damascus.

Two final comments are in order. The first concerns the matter of clipped or holed gold coins. In a system where irregular weight coins are valued in comparison to a money of account, it would serve no fraudulent purpose to clip a coin or shave metal from the edge. Any loss of bullion would automatically lessen the weight, which would of course lower the value. No fraud would be involved, since the perpetrator would be fooling no one. The loss in weight would show up in the next transaction in which the coin was used. It is not surprising, therefore, to find very few clipped large-flan Mamluk dinars. Holing or piercing a coin for attachment to clothing or jewelry is more commonly encountered, but again, it is not as if the person responsible was marring a perfect weight coin, for such items never existed except by chance. And presumably, the individual would save the small bit of gold from the hole for use in some other manner.

The second concerns how the term *dinar* should be understood. For the Mamluk period, at least, it is clearly not a denominational term. Rather, the situation described above indicates that the term has a generic meaning of a gold coin. Even when the words *dinar* and *dinar mubarak* occur on the coins themselves, as they do in the early Bahri period, they must be descriptive labels rather than denominations, since those coins are just as variable in weight as those large-flan dinars that lack the words in their legends (Balog 1964, 16-17).

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World History and Islamic History

by Sam Gellens

Editor's note: Below is a somewhat expanded version of a presentation delivered by Sam Gellens, one of MEM's founders and its first president, on November 19, 1999 in Washington, DC at MEM's annual meeting, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the organization's founding. Sam founded MEM and served as its first president. He completed his Ph.D. in medieval Islamic social history at Columbia University and his dissertation, written under the direction of Richard Bulliet, was awarded the Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Prize in Humanities by the Middle East Studies Association of North America in 1986. Sam is now an instructor at Horace Mann School, a private N-12 school in the Bronx, NY, where his primary teaching responsibility is ninth grade modern world history.

Initially, let me thank Jere Bacharach for extending to me such a generous invitation to say a few words to MEM on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. And now to memories: How did MEM begin? I still recall an impromptu meeting with Richard Bulliet, Abbas Hamdani, and Michael Bates at MESA in 1989 in Toronto about the need for some type of organization that would encourage regular exchange among scholars of the medieval Islamic world and give them a more prominent voice within MESA. These three gentlemen had somehow gotten it into their heads that I possessed both the requisite organizational abilities and knowledge of the field necessary to get such an organization under way. Armed with a \$150 check from Dick, I began the process of compiling a mailing list, strong-arming various innocent victims into helping me in various and small ways, and launching a biannual newsletter. During the initial year of MEM's existence when I served as its first president and all-purpose troubleshooter (and troublemaker!), I remember all too well working on the newsletter with rivulets of sweat pouring off me during a humid New York City summer as I took my initial steps at mastering word processing while tending a one-year old boy in a steamy Upper West Side apartment. It really was a one-man effort at that point, but I survived, as did MEM, and Dick's loan was promptly repaid as dues began to come in. At that point, I benefitted greatly from both Dick's advice and Christopher Taylor's willing-

ness to share with me several of the more mundane and often nettlesome bureaucratic burdens. And, boy oh boy, did I learn a great deal about academicians and academic life that graduate study never taught me!

Did we succeed? Indeed, yes we did. MEM now has a membership of over 300 individuals who work in a variety of academic fields and come from all over the world. Still capably edited by Fred Donner, the bulletin, *al-'Usur al-Wusta*, is a very professional publication produced at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago which very much reflects our organization's mission. Bulletin articles, which include detailed obituaries of important scholars, occasional studies of pioneers in medieval Middle Eastern/Islamic studies, reports on recent excavations and archival research in progress, and reviews of new books in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, encourage scholarly exchange and comment. Aided by the wonders of electronic mail, we can follow up on what we read in *al-'Usur al-Wusta* and initiate a dialogue with a member in Yemen, Israel, Australia, and, yes, even the Bronx which can only further serve MEM's goals. Yes, we have succeeded and congratulations to all of you for persevering. Dick, Abbas, and Michael - we were present at the creation and lived to see it flourish!

But, are there challenges, conundrums, and issues which still await our

attention and energy? I believe there are. First, isn't it high time that we find a way to substitute Southwest Asia for Near and Middle East? Second, what are we going to do about the term medieval? I've taught enough comparative world history by now to know that it just does not work. It's a misnomer in every sense of the word, an outmoded Eurocentric construct that is not even appropriate for European, much less Islamic or Japanese history during, for example, the Tokugawa period (1600-1868). Nomenclature counts, for it says a great deal about how we view ourselves and our organizational enterprise. Yet, five years after the publication in these pages of Mike Morony's provocative "Is 'Medieval' Evil?", we have not gotten beyond the problems he posed. Finally (and here I speak primarily as a secondary school instructor of fifteen years' experience who has had to largely forego serious professional research since completing my dissertation), we need to rise above what I consider to be the overly specialized and sometimes rather narrow confines of our various fields within medieval Middle Eastern studies (pardon the latter phrase!). Believe me, now more than ever, there are many, many teachers out there who could benefit from any outreach initiatives we might undertake, either organizationally or locally, to improve how Islamic culture and civilization are presented to American secondary school students. Like Dick Bulliet and Ross Dunn, I am very committed to world history teaching and curricu-

lum development (I co-directed a world history training workshop for teachers at Horace Mann during summer 2000 which was jointly sponsored by the World History Association and the College Board, and funded by the NEH). As a secondary school history instructor, I know that any efforts MEM might make in this regard would be warmly welcomed. In sum, we

need to see our work in both its specialized confines and how we might share it as regards the relatively new field of world history (I strongly urge every MEM member to have a look at an issue of the highly regarded *Journal of World History*). These, colleagues and friends, are challenges which come to mind and I suspect that there are others as well.

I've spoken too long. May the second decade of MEM's life be as successful as its first, and may we all be fortunate to gather again in ten years' time to celebrate in good health. Thank you very much.

A.I.Y.S. Fellowships for Research and Study in Yemen, 2000-2001

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (A.I.Y.S.) is a non-profit consortium of academic institutions founded in 1978 for the purpose of supporting research on Yemeni and South Arabian studies and promoting scholarly exchange between Yemen and the United States. A.I.Y.S. maintains a research center in Sana'a, Yemen, consisting of a library, hostel, conference/working space, and administrative offices. The A.I.Y.S. Resident Director in Sana'a coordinates the applications for required research permits for work in Yemen from all scholars based in the United States.

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For details about specific programs, eligibility, and application requirements, please see the A.I.Y.S. website at <http://www.aiys.org/fellowships> or contact Dr. Maria deJ. Ellis, Executive Director of A.I.Y.S., at the A.I.Y.S. administrative office: The American Institute for Yemeni Studies, P.O. Box 311, Ardmore, PA 19003-0311. Tel.: 610-896-5412; Fax: 610-896-9049; email: mellis@sas.upenn.edu.

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For further information and application forms, please contact F. Jamil Ragep, Department of the History of Science, The University of Oklahoma, 601 Elm, Room 622, Norman, OK 73019-3106. Telephone: (405) 325-2213; fax: (405) 325-2363; email: jragep@ou.edu; website: <http://www.ou.edu/islamsci/Rockefeller.htm>.

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Middle East Studies Association (2001 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2001 San Francisco, CA [Abstract Deadline: Feb. 15 2001]	see preceding	see preceding
Middle East Studies Association (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 23-26, 2002 Washington, DC	see preceding	see preceding
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The Medieval Institute (2001 Meeting)	May 3-6, 2001 Kalamazoo, MI [Abstract Deadline: Past]	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. 1201 Oliver Street Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3851	Tel.: (616)-387-8745 or (616)-387-8717 Fax: (616)-387-8750 mdvl_congres@wmich.edu www.wmich.edu/medieval
College Art Association (2001 Meeting)	Feb. 28-Mar. 3, 2001 Chicago, IL [Paper Deadline: May 15 2000]	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-691-1051 ext13 www.collegeart.org
College Art Association (2002 Meeting)	Feb. 20-24, 2002 Philadelphia, PA [Paper Deadline: Past]	see preceding	see preceding

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone No.
Byzantine Studies Conference (2000 Meeting)	Oct. 26-29, 2000 Cambridge, MA [Paper Deadline: Past]	Ralph W. Matheisen Dept. of History Univ. of South Carolina Columbia, SC 29208	Tel.: (803)-777-5195 Fax: (803)-777-4494 www.sc.edu/bsc
International Medieval Congress (2001 Meeting) "Familia and Domus"	July 9-12, 2001 Leeds, UK [Paper Deadline: Past]	M. O'Doherty/J. Opmeer IMC, Parkinson 1.03 University of Leeds	Tel.: +44 (113) 233-3614 Fax: +44 (113) 233-3616 IMC@leeds.ac.uk
Dumbarton Oaks Conference (2001 Meeting)	May 4-6, 2001 (?) Washington, DC [Paper: Invitation only]	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-339-6940 www.doaks.org
ARAM International Conference (2001 Meeting) "Palestinian Christianity"	July 16-18, 2001 Oxford, UK	ARAM The Oriental Institute Oxford University Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE England	Tel.: 44-1865-514041 Fax: 44-1865-516824 aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk users.ox.ac.uk/~aram
ARAM International Conference (2002 Meeting) "Wine"	July 15-17, 2002 Oxford, UK	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2000 Meeting)	Nov. 18-21, 2000 Nashville, TN [Paper Deadline: Feb 2000]	American Academy of Religion 1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5 Atlanta, GA 30329-4019	(404)-727-7920 aar@emory.edu www.aarweb.org/annualmeet
American Academy of Religion (2001 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2001 Denver, CO [Paper Deadline: Feb 2001]	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 23-26, 2002 Toronto, Canada	see preceding	see preceding

NEWS OF MEM

MEM Graduate Student Prize, 2000

Each year the Board of Directors of Middle East Medievalists offers a prize of \$250 for the best graduate student paper on a medieval topic at the annual Middle East Studies Association meeting. The winner is announced at the annual business meeting of MEM. Although modest in amount, it is hoped that this award will encourage graduate students with an interest in the medieval period to attend the conference. One need not be a member of MEM to be considered for this prize.

This year's MEM business meeting will be held Thursday, November 16, at 2:00 p.m. in the MESA Conference Hotel.

Graduate Students who are scheduled to present a paper on a medieval topic at MESA-2000 and who wish to have their contributions considered for this year's prize should submit a copy of their paper to MEM's Vice President, Margaret Larkin, by November 1, 2000. Send papers to:

Margaret Larkin
Department of Near Eastern Studies
250 Barrows Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720, USA.

MEMber News

Shahab Ahmed (Society of Fellows, Harvard University) has completed his PhD at Princeton University in 1999. His dissertation was entitled "The Satanic Verses Incident in the Memory of the Early Muslim Community: A Study of the Early Reports and their Transmitters." His article "Mapping the World of a Scholar in 6th/12th century Bukhara: Regional Tradition in Medieval Islamic Scholarship" appears in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120.1 (2000). Another article entitled "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses" appeared in *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998). He is at work on a monograph on "The Problem of the Satanic Verses and the Formation of Islamic Orthodoxy."

Paul E. Chevedden (UCLA) has the following recent publications: "The Traction Trebuchet: A Triumph of Four Civiliza-

tions," *Viator* 31 (2000): 439-493; "A Unique Bilingual Surrender Treaty from Muslim-Crusader Spain," *The Historian* 62 (Spring 2000): 510-534 (with Robert I. Burns); *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain under James the Conqueror* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999) (with Robert I. Burns); "The Finest Castle in the World," *History Today* 49 (November 1999): 10-17 (with Robert I. Burns); "Fortifications and the Development of Defensive Planning during the Crusader Period," in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1999), 33-43.

Maribel Fierro (CSIC) published the following in 1999: *Repertorio bibliográfico de derecho islámico (R.B.D.I)*, Primera y Segunda Partes, with M. J. Carnicero, A. Fernández Félix, S. Peña, C. de la Puente, D. Serrano, and A. Zomeño, coordinated by M. Fierro, Murcia: Universidad de

Murcia/Sociedad Española de Estudios Arabes. "The legal policies of the Almohad califs and Ibn Rushd's Bidayat al-mujtahid" in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10 (1999): 226-248; "Los mawali de `Abd al-Rahman I," in *Al-Qantara* XIX (1999): 65-98; "Opposition to Sufism in al-Andalus," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested. Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemic*, ed. by F. de Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 174-206.

S.M. Ghazanfar (University of Idaho) has published "Economic Thought of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274): Some Comparative Parallels and Linkages," in *History of Political Economy* 32.4 (Autumn 2000).

Avner Giladi's (University of Haifa) book *Infants, Parents, and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* was published in 1999 by Brill.

Johannes Den Heijer's (Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo) current research project is a study on the religious policy of the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamali (1074-1094), particularly with regard to the Christian communities in Egypt. He has recently published "La conquête arabe vue par les historiens coptes" in C. Décobert, ed., *Valeur et distance. Identités et sociétés en Egypte* (Paris, 2000), 227-245.

Jonathan G. Katz (Oregon State University) enjoyed a Fulbright in Morocco (Jan-July, 2000). His article "The Monchamp Affair and The French Civilizing Mission" is forthcoming in *The Journal of North African Studies*.

Richard P. Lorch (Universität München) has published "The Treatise on the Astrolabe by Rudolph of Bruges" in *Between Demonstration and Imagination. Essays in the History of Science and Philosophy*

presented to John D. North, ed. by L. Nauta and A. Vanderjagt (Leiden 1999), 55-100; and *The Melon-Shaped Astrolabe in Arabic Astronomy* (with E. S. Kennedy and P. Kunitzch) in the series Boethius, ed. by M. Folkerts, no. 43 (Stuttgart, 1999), 235 pp.

Neil D. MacKenzie (Independent Scholar) has just completed a six month grant (ACOR/NMSRTP) in Jordan on an archaeological survey of Ayyubid and Mamluk sites in the Ajlun area.

Mathews, Karen (University of Colorado at Denver) has been awarded an ARCE grant to continue her research on the use of *spolia* in the Mamluk architecture of Cairo. This research will appear in a book entitled *The Construction of a Mediterranean Past: The Use of Spolia in the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo*.

Julie Scott Meisami (University of Ox-

ford) published *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1999).

Linda S. Northrup's (University of Toronto) book *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Mansur Qalawun and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (679-689 AH/1279-1290 AD)* was published as vol. XVIII of the Freiburger Islamstudien series (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998).

Knut S. Vikor (University of Bergen) has recently published *The Oasis of Salt. The History of Kawar, a Saharan Centre of Salt Production* (Bergen/London: SMI, 1999) and *The Exoteric Ahmad Ibn Idris: A Sufi's Critique of the Madhahib and the Wahhabis: Four Arabic Texts with translation and commentary*, with Bernd Radtke, John O' Kane, and R. S. O'Fahey (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000).

Workshop Announcement:

"Exchanges of Medical Knowledge between Islam and Europe"

The University of Oklahoma, Norman

November 19-20, 2000

The University of Oklahoma's Rockefeller Fellowship Program, which is devoted to research on "Scientific Exchanges Between Islam & Europe 1300-1800," will sponsor a workshop on "Exchanges of Medical Knowledge between Islam and Europe" to be held 19-20 November 2000. Invited participants include Lutz Richter-Bernburg, Gül A. Russell, Nancy G. Siraisi, and Alain Touwaide.

For details, contact:

F. Jamil Ragep
 Department of History of Science
 University of Oklahoma
 Norman, OK 73019-3106
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 E-mail: jragep@ou.edu. Web page: www.ou.edu/islamsci/Rockefeller.htm.

Conferences and Symposia

Eighth International Conference: "From Jāhiliyya to Islam"

The Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

July 2-7, 2000

The Eighth International Conference on "From Jāhiliyya to Islam" was held at the Institute for Advanced Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem on July 2-7, 2000. The following papers were delivered:

Joshua Blau (Jerusalem), "The Emergence of the Neo-Arabic Lingual Type;" Aryeh Levin (Jerusalem), "Sībawayhi's Attitude to Ancient Poetry as a Source for his Linguistic Description of Old Arabic;" Albert Arazi (Jerusalem), "Périodisation de la poésie arabe ancienne;" Simon Hopkins (Jerusalem), "Judaean-Arabic Inscriptions from Arabia;" Shaul Shaked (Jerusalem), "Manichaean Presence in Sasanian Babylonia;" Michael Lecker (Jerusalem), "Medina on the Eve of Islam;" Wilferd Madelung (Oxford), "Rabī'a during the Jāhiliyya and Early Islam;" Claude Gilliot (Aix-en-Provence), "Collecte ou mémorisation du Coran. Essai d'analyse d'un vocabulaire primitif;" Uri Rubin, "Further Reflections on the Relationship between the Life of Muḥammad and the Qur'ān: The Case of Muḥammad's Hijra;" Gerd R. Puin (Saarbrücken), "Leuke Kome in the Qur'ān: A Way out of the 'Tanglewood'?" Vardit Tokatly (Jerusalem), "A'lām al-ḥadīth by al-Khaṭṭābī: A Commentary on al-Bukhārī's al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ or a Polemical Treatise?" Roberto Tottoli (Torino), "Jesus and the Skull in the Muslim Tradition;" Harald Motzki (Nijmegen), "The Author and his Work in Early Islamic Literature: Was 'Abd al-Razzāq Really the Author of al-Muṣannaf?" Meir J. Kister (Jerusalem), "Al-'amā'im tijān al-'arab;" Yohanan Friedmann (Jerusalem), "Interfaith Marriages in Sunnī Muslim Law and Tradition;" Larry Conrad (London), "The Trojan War in Syriac: On the Christian Reception of Greek Epic Poetry in the Islamic Near East;" Remke Kruk (Leiden), "Sharaf al-Zamān al-Marwazī as Transmitter of Greek Heritage;" Robert Hoyland (Oxford), "The Beginnings of Islamic Hippitry: Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq's Translation of Theonnestus of Magnesia's 'On the Treatment of Horses';" Amikam Elad (Jerusalem), "The Beginnings of Futūḥ Literature;" Chase Robinson (Oxford), "Sealing and Taxing in Early Islam;" Isaac Hasson (Jerusalem), "Ziyād b. Abīhi;" Ella Landau-Tasserion (Jerusalem), "From Tribal Society to Centralized Polity: An Interpretation of Events and Anecdotes in the Formative Period of Islam."

International Workshop on Euro-Asian Nomads and the Outside World

The Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

June 4-5, 2000

A workshop on "Euro-Asian Nomads and the Outside World" took place at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on June 4-5, 2000 in the context of the group on "The Interaction of Nomadic Conquerors with Sedentary Peoples: Turco-Mongolian Nomads in China and the Middle East (A.D. 1000-1500)" which was in session at the Institute for Advanced Studies from February to August, 2000.

Some of the lectures given at the workshop were: Gideon Avni (Israel Antiquities Authority), "The Archaeology of Nomads and Farmers in the Negev during the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods (4th-8th centuries CE);" Michal Biran (Hebrew University), "China, Nomads and Islam: Nomad-Sedentary Relations under the Qara Khitai (Western Liao);" Reuven Amitai (Hebrew University), "The Resolution of the Mongol-Mamluk War;" Beatrice Manz (Tufts University), "Nomads and Settled in the Military of Southern Iran during the Timurid Period;" Hodong Kim (Seoul National University), "A Reappraisal of Güyük Qa'an."

Some of the topics discussed at the research group on "The Interaction of Nomadic Conquerors with Sedentary Peoples" were: David Morgan, "Ibn Battuta and the Mongols;" Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered;" Reuven Amitai, "Whither the Mongol Army? Ghazan's Campaigns into Syria, 1299-1303;" Moshe Gammer, "Conversion of Nomadic States;" Joseph Kostiner, "The Evolution of States in Tribal Society: Cases from the Arabian Peninsula;" Yehoshua Frenkel, "The Image of the Turks in Arabic Geographic Literature."

REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

FROM • THE • MIDDLE • EAST

REVIEW POLICY

Members of MEM are invited to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, reviews of books in English or other European languages will be printed, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are not usually made available.

Reviews should be brief, 250 words or, if possible, fewer. A short note is sufficient in many cases, as it serves the main purpose of bringing a worthwhile work of scholarship to the attention of MEM members who may be interested in the subject it treats. Be sure to include full bibliographical information: full name of author, full title, place and date of publication, publisher, and number of pages. Send reviews directly to the editor.

Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhīb [Sulayman A. al-Theeb], *Nuqūsh al-Ḥijr al-Nabaṭiyya* [The Nabataean inscriptions of al-Ḥijr] (al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya, 1998). 419 pages.

One of the few contemporaneous sources we possess for the reconstruction of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic history of the Arabian Peninsula are inscriptions. In the last few years Saudi scholars have published a number of collections and studies of inscriptions written in the various languages spoken in the Peninsula. Because of the poor state of preservation of many inscriptions, and in the case of Nabataean in particular because of the graphic similarity of several of the letters, such inscriptions can be notoriously difficult to read. If one looks at the different published autographs and readings of any one particular text, they sometimes seem to reflect different inscriptions.

Al-Dhīb's book is an edition of 263 Nabataean inscriptions located at al-'Ulā, ancient Dedan; this city was a com-

mercial and military center of the Nabataeans, second in importance only to Petra. A few texts are dated, others not, but all apparently date from the first century BC to the fourth century AD. Although mostly short, ranging in size from a single word to one text of fourteen lines, the inscriptions contain a wealth of personal names, divine names, and geographical names, and in this lies their importance for historians. Al-Dhīb includes complete indices of all proper names and of most vocabulary, along with a study of the meaning of each inscription.

Perhaps the readers who will benefit most from this book are students whose first language is Arabic and for whom this is their first exposure to Nabataean studies. All of the inscriptions treated here have been published previously, but the original publications may not be accessible to such students. The texts are presented in transliteration into Arabic characters, followed by a translation into Arabic and a detailed commentary. Much of the extensive lexical and grammatical commentary will seem unnecessary to specialists, but helpful to others. Al-Dhīb includes autographs of almost all the inscriptions, but these autographs are not based on examination of the original texts in situ; rather, they are his own re-copies of already published autographs, thus diminishing their usefulness. Specialists will also note problems with al-Dhīb's transliteration into Arabic characters, whereby Nabataean values are confused with Arabic values.

While of most use to novices in the study of Nabataean, specialists will also find some interesting observations scattered throughout the commentary, and al-Dhīb also quotes from native Arabic lexicographical sources, adding to the usefulness of the book.

- John Hayes

Muḥammad Māhir Ḥammāda, *Al-wathā'iq al-siyāsiyya wa-al-idāriyya al-'ā'idā lil-'aṣṣal-'abbāsi al-awwal* [Political and Adminis-

trative Documents of the Early 'Abbāsīd Period] (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1985). 445 pages. *Silsilat wathā'iq al-Islām* 2.

The goal of this series is to put primary source materials for Islamic history in the hands of researchers and historians. The present volume contains the texts of 427 political and administrative documents, including treaties, correspondence, letters of appointment to office, *khuṭbas*, and so on, from the reign of al-Saffāh to that of al-Mutawakkil.

Ḥammāda has tried for full coverage of originally written sources, but purposefully has been more selective with orally delivered documents such as *khuṭbas*; the latter are very numerous and contain less historical "facts". The selections I have checked against the originals are faithfully reproduced, with a minimum of typos.

The work includes a discussion of the types of documents preserved and an overview of the history of the early 'Abbāsīd state. This latter is drawn from the usual traditional Arabic sources, and historians will not find anything new here.

As Ḥammāda of course points out, not a single one of the documents he cites is directly preserved from this period; all are quoted from traditional historical and adab-works, in particular Ṭabarī. Ḥammāda does not try to evaluate any document as a historical artifact, rather, he introduces each document and then presents it to us.

Ḥammāda does not discuss the potential audience for his book. Professional historians will need to see the documents in their larger context. For students, however, both native speakers of Arabic and perhaps graduate students elsewhere, this volume will serve as a convenient tool.

- John Hayes

Hava Lazarus-Yafeh (ed.), *Muslim Authors on Jews and Judaism: The Jews Among their Muslim Neighbors* [In Hebrew]. (Shazar Center

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for Jewish History, 1996). 272 pages.

This volume of sixteen essays does not claim to be a source book on Muslim-Jewish relations. As the editor notes in her introduction, the essays do not deal directly with the material in Qur'an and Hadith, but, rather, address issues of Muslim-Jewish cultural interaction, especially in the area of religious polemics.

Moshe Perlmann's essay, "The Medieval Polemics between Islam and Judaism," is here translated from the English original, first published in 1974. The footnotes and bibliography have been updated to include important sources from the 1980s and 90s. Perlmann's cautionary note to the reader is still relevant - that though polemics shed light on Muslim-Jewish relations, they tell only part of a much larger story. "One shouldn't exaggerate the influence of these religious polemics."

The relationship between religion and literature is the nexus of Joseph Sadan's article, "Polemics as Religious and Literary Writing: Al-Jahiz and Later Authors." Sadan makes the case for Al-Jahiz as medieval Islam's most original literary stylist and independent thinker. Going beyond Charles Pellat's work on Al-Jahiz as a literary giant, Sadan engages the philosophical and social aspects of Al-Jahiz's writings, focusing on what he describes as Al-Jahiz's "humanism", both in the sense of his interest in what Westerners would dub "the humanities," and in the sense of his emphasis on the importance of protecting and maintaining human dignity.

- Shalom Goldman

T. Alexander, G. Hasan-Rokem, S. Sabar (eds.), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* [In Hebrew] (Vol. XVIII, 1996).

Yair Zoran's fascinating essay, "Magic, Theurgy and the Knowledge of Letters in Islam and their Parallels in Jewish Literature," points out numerous paral-

els between Islamic and Jewish use of scripture as *materia magica*. The author's main concern is with the status of magic in Islam, a subject which has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Zoran's survey of that literature is valuable unto itself. "Letter Mysticism," *ilm al huruf*, comes in for special attention here, for even though Islamic theology condemns magic, certain forms of it, especially those relating to the text of the Qur'an, persisted in the medieval Islamicate.

Julia Rubanovich's "Storytelling and Meta-Narration in a Medieval Persian Popular Romance," analyzes folkloric and literary elements in the twelfth century Iskander-nameh. The roots of this group of stories lies in the Arabic translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes, the fourth century A.D. Hellenistic Egyptian tale of Alexander the Great. In various Persian forms - both in prose and in poetry - the Iranian Alexander tradition produced the Iskander-nameh, which Rubanovich categorizes as a "popular romance." Using contemporary methods of textual analysis, the author presents a carefully delineated view of the process which led to the formation of this influential romance.

- Shalom Goldman

Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry. (Vol. 75, Spring, 1998).

This issue is devoted to "the relationship of Judaism to Islam and Christianity." At least four of the articles will be of interest to the readers of MEM. Eitan Kohlberg's "Martyrdom and Self-Sacrifice in Classical Islam" makes the point that although actual martyrdom is less of a literary theme than it is in Christianity and Judaism, it is an integral part of the religious tradition and Islamic history.

Kohlberg develops a typology and chronology of martyrdom in Islam; the earliest were martyrs who fell in battle. (Here he takes up the interesting question of whether women fighters are eligible for the designation of *shahid*). Other forms of martyrdom include those who lose their

lives at the hands of doctrinal opponents within Islam - that is, by Sunni or Shia opponents, or by opponents from within the schisms of the Shia.

In the chronology of those who were martyred for their beliefs, pride of place is often given to Sumayya, a woman whose son, Amar bin Yasser, was among the early supports of Ali. ("Woman as martyr" was a problematic category only in military deaths; in other rosters of martyrdom, women were included).

Taking the martyrdom question from the realm of the theoretical to the realm of the historical, Avraham Grossman's article "Martyrdom in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries" aims to explain the relatively small number of Jewish martyrs in the Muslim world compared with Europe during the Crusades. He juxtaposes the influence of Christian ideas of martyrdom with the Muslim concept of *Taqiyya*, and speculates (in the footsteps of Bernard Lewis and Haim Soloveitchik) that Ashkenazi Jews were affected by Christian ideas of martyrdom, ideas which had no resonance for Sephardi Jews.

Of equal importance, says Grossman, is Judaism's radically different perceptions of the Rabbinic "otherness" of the religious practices of Muslims and those of Christians. As Maimonides stated, the Christian churches of his day were "places of idolatry, without a doubt." Islam, whose followers have "cut out idolatry from their midst," was, in Maimonides' eyes, "not in error in matters of God's unity." Thus, apostasy to Christianity was read as reversion to paganism, while conversion to Islam was understood as abandonment of Judaism, but not as the rejection of monotheism.

Two other articles of interest are H. Lazarus-Yafeh's essay on "A Hebrew Translation of the Qur'an in the Seventeenth Century," and David Sklare's piece on contacts between Jewish and Muslim intellectuals in eleventh-century Baghdad.

- Shalom Goldman

Dror Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the*

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Seventeenth Century (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1997).

This 200 page monograph examines the relationship between the structures of Ottoman Imperial rule in Palestine and the manifestations of local leadership in the discrete area of Jerusalem. Building on the work of an earlier generation of scholars, Ze'evi highlights an emerging situation in which Jerusalem's role as a Muslim religious center outpaces its role as a political and administrative center. Of special interest to students of Islamic religious history is the extended discussion (in Chapter 3) on Sufi personalities and institutions in 17th century Jerusalem.

- Shalom Goldman

J. Prawer (ed.), *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Islamic Period, 638-1099* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1987).

This is the first in a projected multi-volume series on the history of Jerusalem. It is a multi-authored work, and, unlike some efforts of this kind, it achieves a degree of stylistic and intellectual unity. The volume's thirteen chapters open with a survey of the physical layout of Muslim Jerusalem. A very fine set of foldout maps accompanies this survey.

This solid opening is followed by articles on the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities of the medieval city. Religious and literary topics are the subjects of the subsequent articles. Outstanding among them are Avraham Grossman's "The Yeshiva in Eretz Israel," and "Jerusalem in the Jewish Apocalypse of the Early Middle Ages." The author's sensibility to the literary aspects and nuances of religious texts is commendable.

- Shalom Goldman

Ḥusayn b. 'Alī Abū al-Ḥasan, *Qirā'a li-kitābāt liḥyāniyya min Jabal 'Akma bi-minṭaqat al-'Ulā* [Lihyanite Inscriptions from Jabal 'Akma, in the region of al-'Ulā] (al-Riyād: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya, 1997). 500 pp.

If inscriptions contribute to our knowledge of the Nabataeans, this is even more so in the case of the Lihyanites, about whom we have little extra-inscriptional material. This volume consists of a publication and study of 196 Lihyanite inscriptions found at al-'Akma, a mountain near al-'Ulā. Abū al-Ḥasan is a native of al-'Ulā, and studied under al-Dhīb, whose work was reviewed above. 40 of these inscriptions were published previously, in photograph and transliteration, by Stiehl in 1971; 156 are published here for the first time. They are mostly short, averaging about five lines in length. A few are dated to the reigns of individual Lihyanite rulers, but the question of Lihyanite chronology is thorny; some kind of Lihyanite state existed into the second or first century BCE. Abū al-Ḥasan does not attempt to date the texts.

The texts are presented in auto-graph (no photographs), transliteration into Arabic characters, and translation. In some cases the readings and interpretations of the texts are distressingly different than those of Stiehl. Although Stiehl's publication did include photographs, they are not always clear enough to resolve such differences. The first two lines of Abū al-Ḥasan's Text 36, for example, had previously been published as the last two lines of his Text 37. Abū al-Ḥasan does not discuss this, and only rarely does he present any paleographical notes justifying his readings (in a few cases the concordance between his texts and Stiehl's publication is wrong).

Abū al-Ḥasan presents several improvements in understanding of the texts since their first publication. The new texts contain a wealth of proper names, several of which are names of women. While one may disagree about Abū al-Ḥasan's interpretations of these names, they will be of much interest to specialists. The texts also

throw light on pre-Islamic religious practices, making this a welcome publication.

- John Hayes

Muḥammad Munīr Sa'd al-Dīn, *Al-Madrasa al-islāmiyya fī al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā* [The Islamic Madrasa in the Medieval Period] (Sidon and Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1416/1995) (Silsilat al-kitāb al-tarbawī al-islāmī).

The title of this book notwithstanding, its author, Muḥammad Munīr Sa'd al-Dīn, did not set out to write a history of the madrasa (pl. madāris) in the Islamic Middle Ages. In fact, despite numerous citations to and quotations from primary Arabic sources, from Ibn al-Muqaffa' to Ibn Jamā'a, this book very much concerns the present, to wit, the sorry state of schools, madāris, in the Arab and Islamic worlds. "The Arab and Islamic umma," writes Sa'd al-Dīn, "is these days passing through difficult times on all levels: religious, intellectual, social, political and economic" (p. 5). Accordingly, Sa'd al-Dīn undertakes "to uncover some of the treasures of our heritage, especially those which are connected with the Islamic madrasa and its role and functions in medieval society, and then to turn to a brief comparison between the Islamic madrasa and the modern, contemporary madrasa" (p. 6). In fact, Sa'd al-Dīn's comparison of the two institutions -- the medieval madrasa and today's school -- emerges as the primary mission of this book.

In Chapter 1, Sa'd al-Dīn reviews the origins of the word madrasa in Arabic, dates the beginnings of the institution to the 4th century of the hijra, and lists various reasons that led to the founding of individual medieval madāris. Chapter 2 surveys various salutary suggestions about how to run schools today and then adduces passages from primary and secondary sources showing that the medieval madrasa illustrated, perfectly, the suggested principles. Chapter 3 catalogues various de-

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tails about the day-to-day functioning and administration of the medieval madrasa, with reference to contemporary ideas about the running of schools today. Chapter 4, again with constant reference to contemporary issues in education, discusses the roles of teachers and students in madāris, as well as the ijāza.

It is convenient for Sa'd al-Dīn's project that the Arabic word for a medieval institution for religious instruction and that for today's public school are the same in Arabic: madrasa. The fact that the same word denotes two different institutions allows the author to argue repeatedly, often on the basis of modern studies of education theory, that the madrasa (today's) ought ideally to do X, and then to adduce numerous examples to show that the madrasa (yesterday's) in fact did X superbly. This form of argument, the book's main engine, serves again and again to make the point that the medieval madrasa functioned as the ideal educational institution, especially when compared with today's modern schools, which are in hopeless disarray.

In short, the medievals can do no wrong and we moderns (or rather, today's Muslims) ought to emulate them in all matters pedagogical. Sa'd al-Dīn's view of the madrasa -- the medieval variety -- is thus tinged with nostalgia for a golden age of Muslim perfection and solidarity. "The Islamic madrasa," he asserts, "perceived [wa'at] the need for close cooperation between the madrasa and society, perceived its participation in the processes of the larger society [a'māl al-mujtama' al-kabir], and opened its doors to all" (p. 32). Such optimism can lead to ahistorical conclusions. For example, Sa'd al-Dīn claims that, in the medieval madrasa, student housing was not overcrowded, as it is in today's university dormitories (p. 115). He also suggests that many different degree programs were open to students in a medieval madrasa, including the possibility of studying to become a faylasūf (p. 178). Incidentally, it is not always clear whether Sa'd al-Dīn means the medieval madrasa to be a model for contemporary secondary or post-secondary (or even primary?) education.

Although Sa'd al-Dīn recognizes that the madrasa came into being (pp. 12-

15) and eventually declined (pp. 109-113) in particular historical circumstances, he otherwise portrays the institution as static and unchanging. What is important to him is that the medieval madrasa's specifically Islamic character determined -- and superbly at that -- the shape of all educational activity in the Islamic Middle Ages. Sa'd al-Dīn never considers the possibility that the medieval madrasa could have represented a site of competing interests, functioned as the preserve of a restricted literate elite, or constituted a means for exercising control over knowledge. His portrayal of the institution contrasts sharply, therefore, with some recent studies concerning the role of the madrasa in medieval Muslim society, such as those by Jonathan Berkey (*The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)), Michael Chamberlain (*Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)), and, most recently, Daphna Ephrat (*A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni 'Ulama' of Eleventh-Century Baghdad* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000)). These authors may not have said the last word about the importance (or lack thereof) of the medieval madrasa, but a more nuanced view of this institution might provide a more workable basis for re-imagining and appropriating those aspects of it which could help to address the ills of modern public education -- ills which are hardly unique to Arab or Islamic societies. There is no question that the madrasa contributed to the rich educational and intellectual life of medieval Muslim society.

Given its reformist spirit, this book may be of less interest to medievalists than to those who study the invocation of the past in debates about contemporary Muslim society. Still, the work is well documented. Students of medieval Muslim educational institutions may want to peruse Sa'd al-Dīn's evidence, and perhaps especially the many Arabic secondary sources in his notes and bibliography. On the other hand, a work as fundamental as Makdisi's *Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh

University Press, 1981) is absent from the bibliography and, had the author consulted it, he could have saved himself a lot of time gathering material, especially in his chapters 3 and 4.

Sa'd al-Dīn cites three European-language references in his bibliography: Bayard Dodge, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times* (Washington, D.C., 1952); Gary Leiser, "Notes on the Madrasa in Medieval Society," *The Muslim World* 76 (1986): 16-23; and Munir ud-Din Ahmed, *Muslim Education and the Scholars' Social Status up to the 5th Century Muslim Era (11th Century Christian Era in the Light of Ta'rikh Baghdad)* (Zurich, 1968). A few other European-language secondary sources were consulted in Arabic translation.

- Joseph E. Lowry

Lawrence I. Conrad (ed.), *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996) (Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science, Volume XXIV). 305 pages, summary of research resources and general index.

This volume is a collection of essays, most of which were given at a symposium sponsored by the Wellcome Institute. The aim of the symposium was to foster scholarship from a variety of disciplines on a single text, namely, Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Each paper was presented from a particular "methodological perspective or research field" (p. 5), and the interdisciplinary dimension emerged in the discussions that followed the papers. Although the editor of the published collection, Lawrence Conrad, admits the collection is unable to recreate the "stimulating discussion that dominated the proceedings of the symposium" (p. 5), his "Introduction" (pp. 1-37) draws attention to the questions that the papers and discussion raised. The topics of the Introduction are 1) "Ibn Ṭufayl's personal intellectual inter-

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ests," 2) "his public career under the Muwahhids," 3) "the literary sources and cultural influences that served to shape *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*," and 4) "issues of literary form" (p. 5).

A summary of the arguments of the ten essays is as follows. Dominique Urvoy argues that Ibn Ṭufayl "appears to have been the first author in the history of philosophy to ask himself the question of the "conditions of possibility of thought" (p. 40). Urvoy is sympathetic with Marx's criticism of philosophers who are unable to link "their critique" with "their own natural environment." Ibn Ṭufayl, in contrast, is able to show "the rationality of everyday life." The most humble experience is structured like a thought. This is exemplified, for example, in Ibn Ṭufayl's explanation of the proper diet of a philosopher. This rationalization of everyday life is not, however, the genius of Ibn Ṭufayl, but of Ibn Tūmart, the "mahdī" of the Muwahhids (p. 40). Fedwa Malti-Douglas argues that the philosophic tale "clearly defines sexuality and its resultant motherhood as a problem" (p. 59). The tale presents a "male utopia," a place where sex and the female are excluded. This utopia is present, for example, in such characteristics as: 1) in one of the creation accounts, the jealous ruler would not allow his beautiful sister to marry (pp. 56-59), 2) in the other creation account, sex is not necessary for spontaneous generation, 3) in the fact that Ḥayy dissects the dead gazelle even though she has been the only mother Ḥayy has ever known, and 4) in the friendship of Absāl and Ḥayy and in their retreat to Ḥayy's island in order to be in solitude. The "male couple" reveals that Islamic society favors "homosocial (distinct from homosexual) relations" (p. 67). "The absence of the female is essential to the utopic harmonious elements of Ḥayy's and Absāl's perfect society" (p. 68). Remke Kruk argues that Ḥayy's discovery that nature originated from an eternal and immaterial Being leads Ḥayy to imitate the celestial spheres, that is, pristine parts of nature, as one way to become like this Being (p. 87). Kruk says that this encourages Ḥayy to do "ecology-conscious behavior" (p. 89), and Ḥayy may even be the first "ecology-conscious person in the Is-

lamic world" (p. 87). Lutz Richter-Bernburg examines the tale from the view of Ibn Ṭufayl's medical knowledge; he argues that Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of medicine as a "handmaiden to philosophical theory ... deprives it [medicine] of its dignity as a science in its own right" (p. 92). J. Christoph Bürgel argues that the tale "is dominated by the dichotomy of *zāhir* and *bāṭin*" (p. 127), between the exoteric and esoteric. This distinction allows "the adaption of the meaning of the Quran to one's own philosophical doctrines and personal persuasions" (p. 129), an adaptation which is present in Ibn Ṭufayl's tale. Vincent Cornell gives an extensive account of Maghribi Sufism in order to show that Ibn Ṭufayl's tale is not that of a typical Sufi in western Islam. Ibn Ṭufayl's mysticism is modified by the science of *falsafa*. Bernd Radtke argues that Ibn Ṭufayl does not hold a Sufi view of the union of God and man because, *inter alia*, Sufism is creationist and Ibn Ṭufayl is emanationist. It is Ibn Ṭufayl, rather than the Sufis, who is most accurately identified as a pantheist or monist. Salim Kemal provides an Aristotelian account of poetics as it is mediated through Ibn Sina's *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* in order to show that, in contrast to the plethora of recent theories of literary aesthetics, Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophic tale requires a reflection on Truth as part of the appreciation of its art. Kemal explains that although poetic syllogisms are not true demonstrative syllogism, poetry creates pleasure and wonder through recognition of harmony and unity of the piece. Wonder is, in turn, an evocation to thought on the Truth, and thus Truth is a necessary part of "aesthetic" appreciation. Larry Miller alerts us to Moshe Narboni's commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*. Narboni was a fourteenth-century Jew from southern France. Miller concludes on the basis of his study that Narboni held in high esteem Ibn Ṭufayl's vision of the conjunction of the soul with the active intellect. Finally, Lawrence Conrad argues against two previous views of *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, one by L. Gauthier and the other by G. F. Hourani. Gauthier maintained that the purpose of the tale was to show the harmony between religion and philosophy, a harmony dem-

onstrated in part through the unity of the tale. Conrad criticizes this reading by calling attention to various contradictions found in the tale (pp. 242-243). Hourani claimed that the purpose of the tale was "the Truth" (p. 249), and, in particular, the ascent of the soul to Necessary Being. Conrad criticizes this reading by noting that the "social dimension is not exterior to the main concern of the book." (p. 249). Ibn Ṭufayl knew that his book would be "read from different perspectives and approached at different levels" (p. 258). In order to appreciate the tale, it must be recognized that "changes in the terms of reference involve commensurate changes in perceived meanings" (p. 259). The notion of "ultimate meaning" has to be expanded beyond the meaning the text has for its author to the meanings of the social realities of the readers in the western Maghrib. It is perhaps no coincidence therefore that the interdisciplinary approach of the symposium helps to illustrate that modern readers, like twelfth-century readers, have a variety of viewpoints on truth.

The variety of essays in the collection is, to be sure, of interest. There is insufficient space to enter into evaluation of each of the essays in this review. It is sufficient to recognize that the monotheist thinkers were continuously intrigued by the Aristotelians and the Platonists because these Greeks were, like themselves, incessant evaluators of the degree to which every entity and every idea participated in Perfection. Things have a Unity, were one, or came from One, and they have a rank according to their participation in that Unity. This collection of essays is an attempt at human community, an attempt to bring various points of reference to a text. Variety is, of course, a great good and deserves recognition, although there is not only variety, but contradictions, in and between the essays. We encourage these contradictions to be used as starting points of further discussion in the common pursuit of true judgement. The ideas and arguments need to be ranked according to the standard of, well, Ibn Ṭufayl's imitation of Truth. There is no detail of culture of the Maghrib that could not have influenced the tale, but these details are not equal in their influence. The criticism of various judgements

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about a text is the most difficult, albeit the most enjoyable, part of creating human community -- unless, of course, contrary to Ḥayy's discoveries, Truth is not One.

- Terry Kleven

Farouk Omar Fawzi, *al-Istishrāq wa'l-Ta'rīkh al-Islāmī* [Orientalism and Islamic History] (Amman: Dār al-Ahliyya, 1999).

This study by Farouk Omar, well known specialist on the 'Abbasids, gives an overview of orientalist contributions to the study of early Islamic history over the past century. The book divides the topic into broad chronological frames: the Qur'an, the Sira, the Umayyads, and the 'Abbasids but gives greater attention to the latter than the other eras. Omar's approach is mainly one of brief labeling of different works, and listing of the names of contributors in different fields.

The author begins with a somber note on the missionary and colonialist impulse that colored the origins of western interest in the study of the Middle East, then moves on to emphasize the range and pioneering work done by classicists, such as De Goeje, Brockelmann, Margoliouth, Arberry and others in the areas of editing

and translating classical texts. In addition to admiring the task of the latter beyond all other, Omar shows favor to broad historical overviews, such as works by Bartold, Spuler, and Lewis. He reserves all criticism, however, for interpretive works and the issues that have risen to the level of controversy, and appears harshest toward the new skeptical approach to the sources.

The book reiterates ideas previously outlined by the author in his book, *al-Ta'rīkh al-Islāmī wa Fikr al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn* [Islamic History and Twentieth-Century Thought] and in the Iraqi journal *al-Istishrāq* [Orientalism]. For western readers, the various listings of western works may not add much to G. Endress' bibliographical survey in his: *An Introduction to Islam*. Of greater utility, perhaps, may be the author's listing of some works by Arab writers, and his commentary on the shaping of these authors' points of view. Omar makes important observations on the issue of contexts, such as the deep interest in Umayyad history with the Arab awakening at the turn of the century, and laments the persistence of a phenomenon he refers to as "*istighrāb*," referring to rigid applications of historical paradigms (especially the materialist) by scholars in the Middle East, after the original paradigms and ideologies have been revised or discarded. He considers H. Muruwweh an example of such work, and prefers instead

an unfettered reading of the sources based on no preassumptions as in the work of A. Duri, M. A. Jabiri, H. Djait. In the latter, especially, he sees an overthrow of a pervading cultural hegemony (*ghazw thaqāfi*) and the dominating agenda of orientalist writings (*wiṣāya fikriyya*).

Less successful is the author's attempt to define western biases and draw a distinction between research results and the writers' identities. There is a running tone of "we" and "they" in his treatment, with both categories turning arbitrary and fuzzy in membership. It is also unclear how he defines what he perceives as an original (native) reading (*naẓra dhātiyya*) vs. (*fikr dakhil*), and whom he considers to be a legitimate voice in various fields (especially on issues of religion). On the whole, Omar's view of orientalism is somewhat dated, and does not take into account the wider spectrum of contributions in various fields over the past decade. It also ignores the growing multi-cultural changes in the West and the changed nature of area studies (especially in the American arena). Unique problems no doubt exist in the mainstream of western perception of the Middle East but this book neither identifies these problems nor explains their persistence.

- Tayeb El-Hibri

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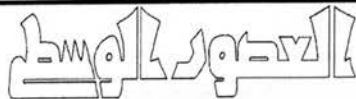
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