

Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge: CUP, 2011. 278 pp. £55.00 (\$90.00). ISBN 978-110-7000-55-1 (hardback).

After two weeks of mass demonstrations demanding his resignation, on 11 February President Hosni Mubarak finally gave in and stepped down. In this way, the Egyptian *thawra* ('revolution') led to the end of Mubarak's thirty-year rule over Egypt and (at least partial) regime change.

Notwithstanding its essentially autocratic character, the Mubarak regime included some democratic elements. Most importantly, it offered competitive elections between multiple parties. The process started in 1976, when then-president Anwar Sadat re-introduced multi-party elections in Egypt. After his ascendancy to presidency in 1981, Mubarak maintained this system. Elections became increasingly competitive during Mubarak's rule, culminating in the country's first multi-candidate presidential elections (held in 2005). Contrary to democratic governments, however, there was no possibility of changing the existing regime through the ballot box. The now-defunct ruling party (NDP) ensured that no real political opposition developed in parliament. The last parliamentary elections in late 2010, which saw significant intervention in the election results by the government, provide an excellent example of this. Nevertheless, parliamentary elections have been highly competitive since the early 1990s with official NDP candidates competing with party-affiliated independent candidates and, to a lesser degree, with the candidates of the accepted opposition parties and de facto Muslim Brotherhood candidates. Despite government manipulation, in most cases the contests have been genuinely competitive.

Lisa Blaydes's study, published just before Mubarak's ouster, begins with an examination of the paradoxical combination of autocratic regime and competitive elections in "semi-authoritarian" Egypt. The salient questions of the study address this apparent contradiction. Why did an autocratic regime, such as Mubarak's hegemonic-party regime, hold elections even when they played no role in the selection of the regime's leaders and the regime could easily impose its will without elections? Further, the study asks, why did politicians in Egypt under Mubarak spend huge sums of money to run for parliamentary seats in a legislature that did not make policy and was more or less a rubber-stamp for the regime? A third, interrelated question raised by the study involves the role of voters. Why did a comparatively large number of Egyptians (especially the poor) take the trouble to vote, despite potential violence associated with the elections, long lines and, most importantly, the fact that elections typically did not bring much change?

It is often argued that elections in autocratic regimes are a sign of the democratization process. Furthermore, the relation between economic liberalization and democratization is commonly assumed to be a positive one. Economic liberalization advances democratization. Western governments have therefore put heavy emphasis on these two factors when assessing the democratization process of various countries. Competitive elections and market-orientated liberal economies are seen as signs of on-going democratization. Blaydes partially disagrees. She maintains that competitive elections in the Mubarak era were not a sign of a democratization process, but an institutional and rational strategy for regime survival. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods, she is able to convincingly show how the regime used elections in various ways to maintain the regime, but not to further democratization. Furthermore, the economic liberalization that began with Sadat's *Infitah* policy in 1974 led to rampant corruption and growing differences of income between the new rent-seeking elite and the majority of Egyptians. Thus, the policies of liberalization did not result in a deeper level of power-sharing between the ruling regime and the broader citizenry.

In the first part of her study, Blaydes reviews political and economic history since the 1952 revolution and, especially, since the Sadat era. Economic liberalization, which was initiated in the early 1970s and continued during the Mubarak regime, led to the state's gradual withdrawal from its earlier dominant economic role. This led to diminished direct economic resources at its disposal with which it could buy support from its constituencies. At the same time, the economic opening strongly empowered the conservative and market-orientated capitalist sub-group within the elite, which increasingly became the essential power base upon which the regime was dependent. This elite (consisting of successful businessmen, influential family and clan heads, and senior bureaucrats) became dominant in the Sadat years and was further strengthened during the Mubarak era.

How to maintain the support of this group became a major political question for the ruling regime. This entailed an important decision as to how resources were to be distributed within the elite, a relatively large group, in a way that did not lead to political instability. According to Blaydes's analysis, elections played a central role here. Blaydes argues strongly that the regime used competitive elections as a tool to manage the elite and choose those who were entitled to receive "spoils" from the state through membership in the electorate. In a sense, the regime left the selection to the markets (the electoral market, in this case). The candidates who were able and willing to use large amounts of money in the increasingly expensive electoral campaigns ("wallet wars") were the most likely to receive the reward of election to the parliament. Hence, the regime was not forced to pick and choose its favourites within the elite, but left the selection up to "market forces" (i.e. voters).

Thus, the most important function of elections in autocratic or semi-autocratic Egypt was to control potentially delegitimizing conflicts between the elite over state rents. The elections, however, were also intentionally used for other aims. Blaydes empirically shows how those areas in Egypt that supported opposition parties (the Wafd-Muslim Brotherhood alliance or merely the Muslim Brotherhood) in the elections received less government funding for their water and sewage infrastructure. Elections were also used to gather data on constituencies, either for rewarding loyalists or punishing opposition-minded constituencies. From the late 1990s onwards, areas supporting the NDP also received less support; following structural adjustment programs, fewer resources were available for distribution. This, of course, made individual candidates an even more important source of redistribution.

Blaydes convincingly demonstrates that elections matter to autocratic regimes, even though the reasons differ from democratic regimes. For the autocratic regime, elections serve as a management tool. They also matter to the rent-seeking elite, as a parliament seat becomes an important vehicle through which the elite can promote their business interests. In the Mubarak era, the Egyptian parliament served as a façade for a corrupt elite to make fortunes. Immunity from parliament allowed the elite to engage in more or less illegal businesses with little fear of prosecution. As one Egyptian journalist put it, the candidates would spend millions on their campaigns to reap billions. In the Mubarak system, according to Blaydes, the president was a kind of “patron-in-chief”; together with his closest circle, he accepted pervasive corruption because it ensured the loyalty of the rent-seeking elite.

Blaydes’s book also covers many other important elements associated with the Egyptian elections. As regards the decisions of voters, the study buttresses the hypothesis that voting in Egypt is strongly based on rational calculations. Mainly in the case of the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, voting has a clear ideological basis. But otherwise, decisions are made on the basis of clientelism. As the study shows, those who stand to potentially benefit from patronage and consumption of goods and services are more likely to vote in elections. Consequently, in the material analysed by Blaydes, illiterates are shown as voting twice as commonly as literates. The illiterate and poor are also more vulnerable to intimidation, which along with vote-buying is rampant in the Egyptian elections. Other things analysed include electoral budget cycles, the role of the liberal opposition, and external pressures on Egypt for further democratization.

The book ends with a comparative section in which the Egyptian elections are contrasted with those of other authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Blaydes identifies four types of election institutions among Middle Eastern

authoritarian regimes. These are (a) hegemonic-party regimes with high levels of electoral competition; (b) constitutional monarchies with high levels of electoral competition; (c) single-party regimes with limited competition; and (d) non-constitutional monarchies with low levels of electoral competition. Interestingly but not surprisingly, she finds many parallels between Egypt and other regimes (in particular, other hegemonic-party regimes that exhibit high levels of electoral competition). In terms of areal comparisons, however, much work remains to be done. The fact that the *Intifadas* of 2011 have so far been prominent both in countries with high levels of competition (notably Egypt and Yemen) and in countries with little or no political competition (notably Syria and Libya) probably implies that the existence of competitive elections was not a factor that made public revolution more or less likely.

Blaydes's study is one of several recent attempts to explain the resiliency of authoritarianism in the Middle East. The events of this year must, of course, be taken into account for future studies about the remaining authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, whether they are indeed stable or whether their perceived resiliency merely constitutes a temporary pause in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. In her study, Blaydes also considers factors that can cause the Egyptian regime to fall, such as the delegitimizing influence of rampant corruption (which, it now seems, was essential in creating the broad-based political movement that ousted Hosni Mubarak). Yet it is also evident that Blaydes, like many other scholars, was not able to see how fragile the regime actually was. The collapse of Egypt has shown that regime survival cannot depend only on a rent-seeking elite while increasingly ignoring the vast majority. In the end, the constituency was too narrow.

All things considered, Blaydes's study provides a highly important contribution for the study of the Mubarak era in general and for the aims of competitive elections in an authoritarian context in particular. Notwithstanding the important changes that have occurred in 2011, it is likely that many elements described and thoroughly analysed in this book will remain of great relevance for the post-Mubarak Egypt as well. The legacy of the Mubarak era will definitely haunt Egypt for years to come.

HANNU JUUSOLA

Uri Ram, *Israeli Nationalism: Social conflicts and the politics of knowledge*. Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics. London: Routledge, 2011. ISBN 978-0-415-55316-2 (hardback) 978-0-203-84441-0 (ebook).

As the well-known Israeli sociologist Uri Ram himself admits, the title of his book *Israeli Nationalism* is an “imaginative construct”, since the designation hardly exists. Throughout its history, the “official” Israel has formally rejected its existence by, for example, barring any “Israeli” category of nationality from its identification cards and by maintaining that no Israeli nation exists apart from the worldwide “Jewish nation”. The very notion of *Israeliness* appears to be a clear threat to the official ethno-religious *Jewish* character of Israel. Consequently, Ram accepts that the concept of Israeli nationalism refers to something as yet potential and still emerging in the increasingly “post-national” reality. Nevertheless, questions related to Israeli nationalism and identity have been heavily debated over the past few decades in Israel. These debates and conflicting conceptions of Israeliness are the main topics of Uri Ram’s recent book. Ram traces the development of Israeli (Jewish) national identity from the nation-building period until the recent post-Zionism debates. His aim is not to offer a comprehensive study of the development of nationalism in Israel, but to explore the question through three separate but interrelated lenses: the development of Israeli historiography, the development of Israeli sociology, and the construction of the Israeli polity through exclusion and inclusion. The emphasis lies very much on elite and academic discourse and debate.

In the first part of the book, Ram explores the development of academic historiography and the teaching of history in the Israeli state. The focus of his analysis is Ben Zion Dinur, a leading Zionist historian, educator and minister of education during the formative years of 1952–1956, who played a major role both in academic historiography and the creation of an Israeli educational curriculum by means of which school children learned the “official” historical narrative. Using Ben Zion’s work, Ram shows how Zionist historiography nationalized Judaism and replaced earlier trends of Jewish historical interpretation, with the result that Zionism and a Jewish state in *Eretz Yisrael* came to be seen as a self-evident and pre-determined conclusion of all Jewish history.

In the following chapter, Ram describes how “new historians” who highlighted narratives of the groups, which were forgotten or marginalized in the hegemonic narrative, later challenged this hegemonic national agenda. These excluded or marginalized groups included Palestinians, Oriental Jews (*Mizrachim*), ultra-Orthodox Jews (*Haredim*), women, and homosexuals. According to Ram, the

appearance of alternative narratives to the hegemonic narrative testifies to the democratization and individualization of Israeli society. This is certainly true.

The next major topic of the book is Israeli sociological thought, which, Ram maintains, is another arena wherein “Israeli nationalism is defined”. His point is that, in parallel to mainstream historiography, Israeli mainstream sociology created a picture of a homogenous society, whereas later sociological trends from the late 1970s onwards emphasized that Israeli society is in fact very heterogeneous and stratified. According to this criticism, presenting a picture of society as an integrated whole (“melting pot”) deliberately ignores power-relations within the society. The seemingly homogenous society was not based on a consensus of values and goals, but on manipulation and coercion, by means of which non-Jewish and non-Ashkenazi elements were marginalized. Mainstream sociological research, according to this argument, served to provide apologia for the domination of European Jews over “Oriental” Jews and Palestinians. The socio-economic gap between the groups, especially European and oriental Jews, is understood to be based on the cultural abilities of the groups to “modernize”, not on deliberately maintained power structures between the various groups. To these critics, Israeli society appears not as a homogenous Jewish nation state, but as a highly divided and stratified society typical of any colonial-settler state.

The last part of the book addresses more thoroughly the debates associated with post-Zionist criticism towards Israel. The ideological debates since the 1980s have tried to give an alternative to the official Zionist self-identity of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The critics have emphasized inherent tensions between the “democratic” and “Jewish” dimensions of the definition. Furthermore, there has been an attempt to find alternatives to the ethno-national Jewish identity, which would include all citizens living in Israel. In other words, post-Zionism represents aspirations to reformulate national identity as a more inclusive entity. The central demand has been to “de-Judaize” Israel and transmute it into a “normal” liberal democratic state inclusive of all its citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity and religion.

Parallel to the post-Zionist liberal trend, a strongly nationalist “neo-Zionist” discourse has emerged. Here the emphasis is on the Jewish component of the Jewish and democratic formulation (whereas post-Zionism highlights the democratic part). The result has been a divisive cultural war, which has affected Israel since the early 1990s. The once hegemonic Zionist narrative has thus yielded to a radically ethno-national or even racist neo-Zionism on one hand and to a liberal and universalist post-Zionism on the other. The breaking of meta-narratives is, naturally, a well-known phenomenon associated with post-modernism

or, as Ram put it, the “post-Fordian” world. Strangely enough, Israel is in this respect rarely compared in its Middle Eastern context, even though the dialectics of “McWorld versus Jihad” is well attested in other Middle Eastern countries.¹ The young and urban activists rebelling against the autocrats in central Tunis or Cairo represent the globalist McWorld, whereas the counter-modern “Jihad” of the conservative Islamists, like its Jewish counterpart neo-Zionism, represents localist/tribalist and particularist tendencies. Hence, the post-autocratic Arab world is likely to exhibit a similar kind of culture conflict between the universalists and particularists over the nature of the society as has been the case in Israel since early 1990s. The triumph of the liberal and individual tendencies would indeed mean a substantial change for the better, both for Israel and for its Arab neighbours. While unfortunately, alongside other wars, the war on definitions is still raging in the region, some recent changes in Israeli society (shown in Ram’s study) are positive signs for the whole area. At least the once hegemonic narratives are being increasingly challenged.

All in all, Ram provides an interesting perspective on the development of Israeli society in general and on Israeli nationalism in particular. However, while most of the chapters are more or less directly based on Ram’s earlier works or closely resemble his earlier ideas, the book offers little for readers who are familiar with his scholarly work. For those who do not know his ideas, *Israeli Nationalism* is an excellent overview of his positions. Furthermore, the study is essential reading for scholars of comparative politics or nationalism who wish to get a general idea of the fascinating case (i.e. of nationalism) of Israel. As mentioned above, development in Israel should be compared more within the context of general Middle Eastern developments and not always analysed only in terms of Western states, as has been common in Israeli studies. Perhaps this, too, represents a vestige of an earlier self-image of Israel as a European state.

HANNU JUUSOLA

¹ See Ram’s important earlier book, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (NY: Routledge, 2007), where he applies Benjamin Barber’s terminology Jihad versus McWorld (cf. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World*. NY: Ballantine Books, 1996) to the Israeli society. In Ram’s interpretation, “Jihad” in Israel is represented by ultra-national neo-Zionism, whereas Post-Zionism is a representative of the liberal and individual “McWorld”.

Jaiminiya Ashvamedha Parva. Transcreated śloka-by-śloka from Sanskrit by Shekhar Kumar Sen. Ed. Pradip Bhattacharya. 486 pp., n.p., n.d. [Preface: Kolkata 2008]. ISBN 978-81-8157-849-5 HB / 978-81-8157-850-1 FB.

The *Jaiminiya-Aśvamedha* has been a rather neglected text. Known only in a few manuscripts, it would perhaps have completely disappeared were it not read because of the popularity of Lakṣmīśa's *Jaiminibhārata* in Old Kannaḍa (Daniel Sanderson's old [Bangalore 1852] edition with translation is now available on the internet). Even the editions of the Sanskrit text were rare (one appeared in Bombay in 1863), until Gita Press published the text in 1961 (repr. 1995). Here we have an English translation of this text.

The long introduction discusses the history, style, and contents of the text. Here the traditional position is taken, seeing both Vyāsa and Jaimini as historical persons and authors in North India in the fourth to second centuries BCE. In my opinion, it is much later and rather a southern work (note the list of offerings in 15, 52–53 with several southern products). While I certainly disagree with some of the conclusions, it is well written and instructive.

The main part of the text deals with the wanderings of Yudhiṣṭhira's aśvamedha horse, guarded by Arjuna who is assisted by Kṛṣṇa. It is made clear that the heroes are now old, but they are still great warriors and helped by the younger heroes of the second and third generations. A long excursus (Chapters 25–36) tells the story of Rāma's aśvamedha, stopped by Kuśa and Lava. The whole text is divided into 68 chapters.

Unfortunately, I do not have the full Sanskrit text at my disposal. For the two Yavana passages I have, thanks to Petteri Koskikallio, a comparison shows that the present "transcreation" is quite accurate.

Even from the translation, we can see that the author had poetic ambitions, using a number of devices of the kāvya style. Descriptions are important. In addition to a number of macabre battle scenes (e.g. Ch. 13, 53 ff., 18, 119 ff. and 24), we find descriptions of a city with gardens (3, 43 ff.) and of a hermitage (16, 15 ff.). There is an interesting account of the marvels of the far north in Chapters 21–22. The author seems to be interested in Āyurveda: in Chapter 48, we have an account of various diseases personified as servants of Yama and in 57, 17–42 there is an interesting list of various symptoms and portents of the closeness of death. In Chapter 9, we have an exceptionally detailed description of Kṛṣṇa's great dinner, with many courses listed, which certainly deserves to be studied in the original. During the dinner, Bhīma's arrival is announced (Ch. 10), and Kṛṣṇa decides to tease his old friend, eating with much gusto and not inviting the gluttonous Pāṇḍava to join the feast. Hāsyarasa is certainly achieved. Another

passage points out that the gopīs worshipping Kṛṣṇa are now all old women. A further banquet scene is found in Ch. 65.

Even the erotic *rasa* is not left out, although this caused some difficulty for the orthodox author (Ch. 53). Keeping in mind the famous rule, he makes it very clear that the princess and her friends were exactly thirteen and a half years old. Their breasts have developed and they are quite capable of feeling romantic emotions, but they have not yet had their first menstruation (and thus can be unmarried without making sinners of their fathers). However, the description of their water sports and other games and of the princess seeing *him* and falling in love is charming and can be well read beside the many similar passages in Kāvya.

The book is illustrated with Mughal miniatures from the Persian version of the text, the *Razmnāme*.

KLAUS KARTTUNEN

Asko Parpola, B.M. Pande & Petteri Koskikallio, *Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions. III New material, untraced objects, and collections outside India and Pakistan. 1. Mohenjo-daro and Harappa*. 60+444 pp., 3761 b/w & 125 col. pictures. (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae B 359 / Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India 96) Helsinki 2010. ISSN 1239-6982, ISBN 978-951-41-1040-5.

This is the first part of the third volume of the massive corpus of the Indus seals collected and edited by Asko Parpola. Earlier in the series have appeared volume I *Collections in India* (32+392 pp., c.3900 b/w & 35 col. pictures. AASF B 239 / Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India 86. Helsinki 1987), in collaboration with Jagat Pati Joshi; and volume II *Collections in Pakistan* (32+448 pp., 5417 b/w & 36 col. pictures. AASF B 240 / Memoirs of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan 5. Helsinki 1991), in collaboration with Sayid Ghulam Mustafa Shah. Petteri Koskikallio has also been involved in earlier volumes. The present volume contains the collections outside South Asia and additions to the previous volumes, starting with those coming from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Actually the additions are much more numerous than seals kept in museums outside South Asia. In the running numbering of the Corpus, we have here M-1660 to M-2134 for Mohenjo-daro and H-1020 to H-2590. The new finds of the Harappa Archaeological Research Project (HARP, 1986–2007) are included. For lost seals – and there are quite a number of them – old photos were reproduced, and in a few cases, also drawings

made by Parpola at the Mohenjo-daro site museum in 1971. Volume 3:2 will conclude the work with the seals from other sites and some further additions.

KLAUS KARTTUNEN

Śabdaprakāśa. Śabdaprakaśa. Zografskij sbornik. Pod redakcij Ja.V. Vasil'kov i S.V. Pahomova. Vypusk 1. 315 pp. Sankt-Peterburg 2011 (with English summary by Yaroslav Vassilkov, 302–313). ISBN 978-5-98709-297-2.

The name of Georgij Aleksandovič Zograf (1928–1993) is remembered for many reasons among St Petersburg Indologists. In the spring of 1980, he arranged an Indological meeting in the then Leningrad. This meeting, also participated in by colleagues from Moscow, became annual and after Zograf's death was named after him as “Zograph Readings” (*zografskija čtenija*). The present volume contains the papers of the 30th Zograph Readings held in the spring of 2009. There are 23 contributions, extending from the Rigveda to the English-language literature of the Indian diaspora. The first paper, by T.Ja. Elizarenkova (1929–2007) was originally read at the meeting of 2005 and is now published for the first time to honour the memory of an active participant in these meetings. Here the famous scholar of the Rigveda once again takes on the problem of Vṛtra. In the second article, Ja.V. Vasil'kov traces the archaic theme of “pastoral heroism” from the Veda to the *Mahābhārata*. Classical Indian philosophy is represented with no less than seven articles, including two on Kashmir Śaivism and one on Yogācāra Buddhism. Two papers discuss the *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartṛhari, one the *Arthaśāstra* and one the Pāli textual transmission. Dharmasāstra is represented by a study of ordeals. Classical Tamil culture and literature is dealt with in three contributions, oral literature in two and the Bengal renaissance in one. The volume concludes with a study of the Christian interpretations of the Advaitic *sat-cid-ānanda* and the above-mentioned paper on diaspora literature.

KLAUS KARTTUNEN

Juan Abellán Pérez, *El ajuar de las viviendas jerezanas en época de Isabel I de Castilla (1474–1504)*. (Monografías. Historia y Arte) Cádiz: Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz, 2011. 206 pp. ISBN 978-84-9828-330-3.

Depuis les deux dernières décennies, l'étude des maisons du bas Moyen Âge en péninsule Ibérique ainsi que leur mobilier ont fait l'objet de nombreuses recherches notamment dans le but de mettre à la disposition des historiens de nouveaux matériaux relatifs à la vie quotidienne des individus. L'ouvrage, prétexte à ce compte-rendu, entre en ligne directe avec la volonté de mieux connaître les contours à la fois généraux et détaillés de la société de la fin du Moyen Âge dans la région de Jerez de la Frontera (Andalousie occidentale). Son auteur, Juan Abellán Pérez, professeur d'histoire médiévale à l'Université de Cadix, n'en est pas à sa première tentative puisqu'il a consacré d'autres livres à ces problématiques d'histoire matérielle et de société. Sur ces thèmes relatifs aux faits économiques et sociaux, on lui doit notamment la publication des ouvrages *El Puerto de Santa María a fines de la Edad Media (urbanismo y vida cotidiana)*, El Puerto de Santa María 2006 y *El ajuar de las viviendas murcianas a fines de la Edad Media (cultura material a través de los textos)*, Murcia 2009.

Le livre est divisé en onze parties bien distinctes les unes des autres. Après le chapitre 1, qui est en fait l'Introduction de l'ouvrage, on trouve le chapitre 2 consacré à la maison de la région de Jerez de la Frontera au xv^e siècle ; le chapitre 3 est dédié à la cuisine avec une foule de détails concernant les divers objets et ustensiles ; le chapitre 4 fournit des éléments utiles sur le service et la présentation des aliments ; le chapitre 5 donne quelques informations sur le stockage et le transport de divers produits : containers de céramique, containers de verre et containers de fibre végétal et métal ; le chapitre 6 renseigne sur les divers systèmes de chauffage ; le chapitre 7 rend compte des données relatives aux instruments d'illumination ; les chapitres 8 et 9 permettent d'en savoir plus sur le matériel agricole et les machines de transformation des produits de la terre ; le chapitre 10 offre des renseignements de choix sur les différents éléments du mobilier domestique et le chapitre 11 est constitué de dix-neuf appendices tirés de la documentation originale de la région de Jerez de la Frontera au bas Moyen Âge. Ces matériaux textuels sont d'un grand intérêt pour l'historien de la société et ils sont la preuve évidente que ces sources d'information sont inépuisables tant par la quantité des informations que par la qualité intrinsèque de celles-ci, même si on peut leur reprocher le caractère trop sériel et donc dépourvu de la spécificité profonde et intime du renseignement que tout historien recherche en travaillant sur les individus et les faits de société.

En résumé, nous pouvons affirmer qu'il s'agit d'un livre tout à fait utile qui au-delà de la zone géographique qu'il étudie permet de voir avec une grande précision comment les éléments de la vie quotidienne étaient organisés au sein d'une société urbaine mais intimement tournée vers le monde rural. Outre ces quelques remarques, on soulignera également l'intérêt de telles études pour mieux comprendre les modalités sociales et économiques qui présidèrent au passage de l'époque médiévale vers la période moderne dans un espace géographique aussi spécifique que l'Espagne.

MOHAMED MEOUAK

'Allāwa 'Amāra, *Dirāsāt fi l-ta'rīḥ al-wasīṭ li-l-Ġazā'ir wa-l-Maġrib al-islāmī*.
(Silsilat al-kutub al-asāsī fi l-'ulūm al-insāniyya wa-l-iġtimā'iyya 8) Al-Ġazā'ir:
Dīwān al-maṭbū'āt al-ġāmi'iyya, 2008. 231 pp. ISBN 978-9961-0-1129-4.

Pendant près de vingt ans, la recherche sur l'histoire du Maghreb central au Moyen Âge réalisée en Algérie a souffert d'un ralentissement sensible en matière de diffusion de résultats et de publications continues, et il est agréable de rendre compte aujourd'hui d'un ouvrage consacré à cette même aire géographique. Celui-ci est en fait un recueil de treize articles, accompagné d'un glossaire de termes techniques utiles pour l'historien, signés par 'Allāwa 'Amāra (Allaoua Amara en version française), professeur d'histoire médiévale à l'Université Émir Abdelkader des Sciences Islamiques de Constantine. Ce jeune chercheur algérien est déjà bien connu du milieu des médiévistes travaillant sur l'histoire du Maghreb. Outre sa Thèse de Doctorat consacrée à la dynastie des Banū Ḥammād, souverains qui régnèrent sur un vaste territoire, et qui est en cours de publication, on lui doit des travaux de qualité sur l'histoire économique et sociale du Maghreb, les collections de manuscrits arabes du Sud algérien, les Ibadites, les questions d'historiographie arabo-islamique, etc. Le volumineux ensemble de publications qu'il a à son actif est la preuve d'un certain renouveau de la recherche historique sur le Moyen Âge en Algérie.

Pour les besoins du compte-rendu, nous avons opté pour une présentation thématique des articles contenus dans le volume, et nous avons dégagé cinq thèmes principaux. Le premier d'entre eux est celui consacré au concept de "décadence" ayant touché le Maghreb musulman au Moyen Âge. C'est d'abord à partir de l'exemple des migrations hilaliennes vers l'Occident du monde musulman (*taġrībat Banī Hilāl*) qu'il est possible d'observer les tenants et les aboutissants de diverses situations qui vont marquer l'histoire du Maghreb autour du 5^e/

xi^e siècle et provoquer plusieurs changements sociaux et culturels. Puis, en proposant une discussion théorique sur les concepts de décadence et renaissance, l'auteur offre une réflexion subtile sur la base d'une relecture critique des textes arabes médiévaux et de la littérature scientifique moderne (H. Roger-Idris et J. Poncet notamment). Le deuxième axe thématique est organisé autour des Banū Ḥammād. Trois articles composent cette partie intéressante qui propose des matériaux nouveaux (sources écrites et documentation matérielle) et un renouvellement des approches à la suite des travaux pionniers de H. Beylié, P. Blanchet, R. Bourouiba, L. Golvin et autres chercheurs du siècle passé. Dans ce bloc thématique, on relève des nouveautés méthodologiques importantes comme l'usage simultané des textes arabes avec les données issues de l'archéologie et une profonde révision des problématiques de la construction, du peuplement et de la fin du site de la *qaḥ'a* des Banū Ḥammād à la lumière des faits historiques. Ce volet est sans nul doute l'un des plus suggestifs de tout le volume car il offre un rajeunissement méthodologique à la recherche historique sur une région stratégique du Maghreb central. Le troisième groupe de travaux est constitué par deux articles consacrés au célèbre écrivain Ibn Ḥaldūn qui aurait fait l'objet de plus de 1500 publications en diverses langues. L'auteur de la *Muqaddima* est étudié selon deux angles méthodologiques fondamentaux : l'usage de la critique historique basée sur la production écrite d'Ibn Ḥaldūn et la vision que ce dernier avait de l'Occident chrétien médiéval. Le résultat consiste en un apport riche en informations mais également en hypothèses de travail. Le quatrième ensemble est marqué par la présence de travaux relatifs à l'historiographie et à ses modalités. On lira avec intérêt une étude sur les fondements de l'Islam à la lumière d'une lecture de travaux récents produits en Occident, puis un article dédié à une lecture socio-historique du *madhhab* malékite au Maghreb central médiéval et enfin un texte important sur l'écriture historique (historienne?) dans l'Occident musulman au Moyen Âge. Ces trois publications montrent le niveau de maîtrise documentaire et méthodologique de l'auteur et elles représentent une leçon à prendre en compte pour qui souhaiterait s'essayer à la recherche en histoire médiévale maghrébine. Enfin, dans un cinquième et dernier groupe de travaux, nous avons trois écrits consacrés à deux personnages célèbres et une discussion sur le commerce en Méditerranée médiévale. La première étude porte sur 'Uqba b. Nāfi' et sa place dans la recherche historique occidentale. Il y est notamment question de l'homme vu comme un "tueur de peuples" et un "chef militaire mythique". La deuxième recherche est consacrée à l'activité commerciale sur la côte orientale de l'Algérie du 2^e/VIII^e au 6^e/XII^e siècle à partir de la documentation arabe, des théories de Henri Pirenne et faisant mention des quelques relations avec l'Italie. Enfin, le dernier travail de ce bloc est une note détaillée sur le fameux

écrivain arabe al-Šarīf al-Idrīsī (c.560/1165 ou 571/1175–1176), auteur, entre autres écrits et documents, d'une carte géographique de l'Occident chrétien.

Au total, il s'agit d'un volume très utile pour divers motifs comme le fait d'accéder à des publications dispersées ici-et-là et pour fournir des données parfois inédites et des interprétations nouvelles permettant ainsi de remettre la recherche algérienne dans le cours normal d'une production de travaux historiques de qualité. Cette nouvelle dynamique, ayant repris sa véritable vitesse de croisière, fait également la jonction entre deux mondes et deux temps : à l'intérieur de l'Algérie avec un respect des travaux anciens et le pari de risquer de nouvelles approches, et à l'extérieur de l'Algérie car elle se pose en une alternative fine, sérieuse et renouvelée des thèmes et des concepts de l'histoire du Maghreb médiéval face au puissant mouvement de la recherche sur les mondes musulmans pré-modernes notamment en Amérique du Nord et en Europe occidentale.

MOHAMED MEOUAK

Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)*. (The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 4) Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 2011. xxxv+352 pp.+CD-ROM. ISBN: 978-1-57506-209-9.

As new texts have been found and knowledge of Assyrian vocabulary and grammar has improved, most of the early editions of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions have become outdated. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia (RIM) project began preparing modern high-quality editions of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions in the 1990s, publishing Kirk Grayson's *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC* volumes I and II (1991 and 1996). These volumes cover Assyrian inscriptions from 1114 BC to 745 BC.

Following the expired RIM project, the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period project (RINAP) aims to publish most of the remaining Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. In other words, the RINAP will cover Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) to the reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 BC). Reviewed here is the last volume of the series (despite the fact that it was published first).

This long-awaited volume does not disappoint. Carrying on the fine traditions of the RIM project, the RINAP has published a dependable and modern edition of the Esarhaddon inscriptions. Leichty's edition finally replaces Borger's *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, which was published more than fifty years ago (1956).

The volume opens with a foreword by Grant Frame, the editor-in-chief of the project. This outline of the history of the RINAP is complemented by Leichty's preface, which sketches the long research process behind this particular volume.

As was the custom in the RIM series, this is followed by some "editorial notes". This section carefully outlines the differences between RINAP and RIM. There are two major changes, both positive. The first is the addition of indices of proper names, which indeed constitutes an excellent inclusion. The second is the insertion of nineteen photographs that showcase some of the types of objects upon which the inscriptions were written. Additionally, a more straightforward system for numbering the texts is used. For example, RINAP 4 text no.1 is represented as "Esarhaddon 1" (instead of following the old RIM style of "A.O.112.1"). A separate numbering system is used for texts which have a tenuous link to the reign of Esarhaddon (nos 1001–1030) and the inscriptions of the royal women (nos 2001–2010). All these additions are welcome, as they have made the inscriptions even easier to access. There are also some small differences in style, mainly to comply with the standards of *Oracc*, the project where the RINAP is hosted online.

These fairly minor changes notwithstanding, the RINAP stays true to the familiar format of the RIM series; minor variants and comments are listed at the end of the volume, major variants in the pages of the text. As was the case with RIM, all texts begin with a short introduction to the text and the catalogue listing of all relevant information of the "exemplars". This is followed by commentary, the bibliography and the "master text". The scores of all exemplars (which in the RIM project had previously been attached on microfiche) are now included on a CD-ROM in PDF format.

A completely new development is online access to the data, which is published "in a fully lemmatized and indexed format".¹ This is an outstanding resource, both for scholarly work and for teaching. An excellent webpage regarding general Neo-Assyrian history, which can be recommended for teaching purposes, is also available. Furthermore, the names index available online includes the names in RIMA 1–3. Cuneiform view of the transliteration was not yet working at the time of this review, but it promises to be a nice addition.² Although "master texts" are available online, the actual volume is necessary in order to ascertain which "exemplars" are included in a certain text.

As in RIM, a short introduction to the reign of Esarhaddon precedes the texts. This includes some remarks regarding the corpus of texts and their dating and

1 RINAP's online resources are available at <oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap>.

2 Note that the viewer in *Oracc* automatically generates a cuneiform font, making it unsuitable as a basis for scholarly work.

chronology, as well as references to a number of important studies on the subject. While it is certainly understandable that controversies or differing interpretations cannot be included in a short introduction, one still feels uncomfortable when reading such generalizations as “I know virtually nothing about the raising of Esarhaddon and assume that Assyrian harems operated in the same, or in a similar, manner as in other societies” (p. 2). These “other societies” remain unnamed, although one assumes that the Ottoman Empire was meant. It is highly doubtful that the Assyrian women’s quarters resembled this institution, which followed two thousand years later.³ Heavy critique has been presented over the past thirty years about the use of the term “harem” and related a priori assumptions regarding the Orient and women.⁴

The texts themselves are now organized by find location and the type of object upon which they were inscribed. The bibliographies provided for the texts are very thorough and the translations are meticulous. Interestingly, Leichty has decided to avoid translating *ša/šūtrēši* as ‘eunuch’. He does not give any specific reason for this, only stating in his footnote (p. 15) that “contemporary evidence does not demand this meaning”, while nonetheless accepting that some references do show that men serving as courtiers were eunuchs. Instead, he translates *ša/šūtrēši* as ‘official’. A recent article by Siddall supports this,⁵ but personally I think that arguments for its translation as ‘eunuch’ are still persuasive as well. In any case, one would have hoped for some more arguments for this choice of translation, especially as Grayson (in his RIM volumes) prefers the translation ‘eunuch’.

The concordances are excellent and extensive, making the volume easy to use in tandem with the earlier literature on the subject. For example, in reference to Borger’s earlier edition, Leichty provides all possible coordinates: page numbers, clauses, and commonly used abbreviations (Ass. A, Mnm. C, etc.).

The stated aim of RINAP – to provide basic text editions that can serve as a starting point for further analytical studies – is certainly met in this volume.

3 E. Solvang 2007. Another Look ‘Inside’: Harems and the Interpretation of Women. In: S. Holloway (ed.), *Orientalism, Assyriology and the Bible*: 374–398. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press.

4 For examples of such critiques, see J. Asher-Greve 1997: 161–179 (Feminist Research and Ancient Mesopotamia: Problems and Prospects. In: A. Brenner & C. Fontaine (eds), *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*: 218–237. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press); M. Van de Mierop 1999: 138–160 (*Cuneiform texts and the writing of history*. London: Routledge); J.G. Westenholz 1990. Towards a New Conceptualization of the Female Role in Mesopotamian Society. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110: 510–521.

5 L. Siddall 2007. A Re-examination of the Title *ša reši* in the Neo-Assyrian Period. In: J. Azize & N. Weeks (eds), *Gilgameš and the World of Assyria: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the Mandelbaum House, the University of Sydney, 21–23 July, 2004*: 225–240. Leuven: Peeters.

The new volume will undoubtedly be an essential addition to the libraries of Assyriologists. In addition, its clarity and accessibility make it an important source for specialists in other fields interested in royal inscriptions.

SAANA SVÄRD

Barry Dov Walfish with Mikhail Kizilov, *Bibliographica Karaitica. An Annotated Bibliography of Karaites and Karaism*. (Karaite Texts and Studies 2) Leiden: Brill, 2011. lxxxii+810 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-18927-0.

Karaite Judaism is a Jewish movement which emerged in ninth- and tenth-century Babylonia by rejecting the authority of rabbinic oral tradition. A brand-new series launched by Brill intends to publish a wide variety of Karaite texts and studies. The second volume of the series is the long-awaited bibliography of Karaites and Karaism, compiled by Barry Dov Walfish with the help of Mikhail Kizilov. Using the sources listed in Zvi Ankori's *Karaites in Byzantium* (1959) as a starting point, Walfish began the painstaking collector's work more than two decades ago. The bibliography is divided into four hefty parts covering the areas of general matters, as well as the history, religion, and culture of Karaite Judaism. The diversity of Karaism becomes palpable in view of all the geographical and historical locations covered in the bibliography: Karaite centres have flourished in Egypt and North Africa, Byzantium and Turkey, in Eastern Europe, including the Crimea, and in modern Israel. The number of languages and scripts used by Karaites and written about Karaism is enormous: titles may appear in English, Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Karaim, Lithuanian, Tatar, and Greek. Nothing is omitted: even minor newspaper articles on Karaism are indiscriminately included among the entries.

Despite its pivotal role in the development of medieval Judaism, the study of Karaism remained for years in the margins of Jewish studies. Both as an opponent and as an alternative option for "normative" Judaism, Karaites produced an important mass of medieval exegetical literature both in Hebrew and in Arabic. Previous research on Karaite Judaism had, with good reason, centred on this "Golden Age" of Karaism in Persia, Iraq and Palestine of the ninth- and eleventh-centuries. Certain recent developments have brought Karaites and their literatures back to the limelight. Many documents unearthed from the Cairo Geniza testify to vibrant Karaite and Rabbanite co-existence in medieval Egypt, which may come as a surprise to those who have imagined them as perpetual enemies and rivals. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Firkovich collec-

tions were finally re-opened to western researchers. This improved availability and wealth of sources have attracted a new generation of scholars to take up Karaite studies.

While the bibliography contains more than eight thousand entries, East European entries comprise more than forty percent of the entire work. This is due to Mikhail Kizilov, who began contributing to the bibliography during the previous decade. With Kizilov's expertise in the field, articles and debates in Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian on East European Karaism are made known to researchers who are not proficient in these languages. The introduction of the bibliography, accordingly, appears both in English and in Russian. In addition to libraries and archives, Kizilov has visited many forgotten private collections scattered throughout Poland, Lithuania, and Russia.

Some of the entries are supplied with highly informative annotations. The reader acquainted with Karaite studies will surely appreciate these concise notes. Sometimes the remarks reflect the preferences of the editors; for instance, concerning general works on Karaite Turkic languages, it is Dan Shapira's article in *Karaite Judaism* (2003), which is defined as the "comprehensive analysis of the topic, based on published and archival materials" (p. 625). In the introduction, the editors briefly refer to the ethnicity debate on the origins of East European Karaites, namely whether they are of Turkic or of Jewish background. While both parties of the debate are even-handedly included in the bibliography, the editors emphasize that in their opinion the Turkic theory is academically questionable. A wise choice is to "let readers decide for themselves which case is most compelling" (p. liv). Nevertheless, the editors do not refrain from commenting on some of the cases they consider dubious; for instance, Ananiasz Zajączkowski's article in the Karaim journal *Mysł karaimska* is defined as follows: "The author exaggerates the influence of alleged 'nomadic' traditions on Karaim" (p. 630). To Simon Szyszman's work *Le Karaïsme: ses doctrines et son histoire* the editors have added: "This work, written by a Karaite of East European origin ... does not recognize any connection between Karaism and Judaism" (p. 20).

Despite minor misprints, the bibliography is very usable. The wide-ranging indices (arranged in groups of authors, reviewers, titles, subjects, locations, manuscripts, printers, and publishers) help readers to find their desired targets fairly effortlessly. The bibliography will without doubt serve researchers and enthusiasts for years to come. Hopefully, the editors will soon release a regularly updated online version of the bibliography.

RIIKKA TUORI

Joachim J.M.S. Yeshaya, *Medieval Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Egypt. The Secular Poetry of the Karaite Poet Moses ben Abraham Dar'ī*. (Karaite Texts and Studies 3) Leiden: Brill, 2011. xii+345 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-19130-3.

Moses Dar'ī was a twelfth-century Karaite Jewish physician living in Fuṣṭāṭ-Cairo. Dar'ī is known as a prolific poet, who composed hundreds of liturgical and secular poems in Hebrew. In *Medieval Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Egypt* – the third volume of the freshly launched series of Karaite texts and studies by Brill – Joachim J.M.S. Yeshaya publishes an annotated edition of 152 secular poems by Dar'ī. The work includes chapters on previous research on Dar'ī and a historical depiction of Dar'ī's life in its socio-cultural context of twelfth-century Egypt. The work also includes a concise analysis of the genres (panegyrics, complaints, wisdom poetry, and wine and love poetry), motifs and themes, as well as the Hebrew language and style of the poems. The chapters on Dar'ī's poetry are embellished with several informative and beautiful English translations. Yeshaya's notes on the poems published in the edition are for readers proficient in Hebrew.

Leon Weinberger (2000) quite recently published most poems written by Dar'ī. There are several valid reasons why Yeshaya has done the work anew. While Weinberger's edition was based on fairly late nineteenth-century copies of Dar'ī's poems, Yeshaya's edition is based on the earliest extant text, a fifteenth-century manuscript from the Firkovich collections of the Russian National Library in St Petersburg. Yeshaya supplies many corrections to Weinberger's variant readings and, as opposed to Weinberger, strives to follow the assumed original form of the *ḏīwān* as closely as possible. Such order is more loyal to the intention of Dar'ī himself. Most significantly, Yeshaya's edition contains the Judaeo-Arabic headings, which Weinberger had regrettably omitted. Since Dar'ī intended the headings to be useful for his readers, they should be published alongside the poems. Headings, translated here into English, typically contain crucial information about the genre, themes, and poetics of the poems. From the headings the reader may discover that the poem describes “marriage and its sufferings” and “abandoning friends whose love is untrue”, or laments old age. Many of these themes are very familiar to a reader of secular poetry written by other medieval Hebrew authors. With the publication of such hitherto neglected Judaeo-Arabic headings, medieval Jewish life in Muslim societies becomes more vivid.

Special mention should be made to Yeshaya's introduction to earlier research on Moses Dar'ī in the first chapter of the work. This brief review succeeds in being both informative and intriguing to any student of Karaitica and medieval Hebrew poetry. Yeshaya's treatment of Abraham Firkovich, the controversial Russian Karaite scholar, is particularly balanced. Often anything connected with

Firkovich is seen as tainted and suspect. In fact, Firkovich may have altered dates in colophons but rarely touched the contents of the manuscripts. Another important point made by Yeshaya shows that the poets of the Muslim East were previously often considered pale imitators of the Andalusian “Golden Age” Hebrew poets. As a Karaite Jewish author writing in Muslim Egypt, it was until recently quite difficult to find a fair evaluation of Darī’s poetry. Yeshaya demonstrates that definitions of aesthetic beauty and literary “value” are not as clear-cut as claimed by previous literary scholars. While as a poet Darī is not particularly “original” – whatever this elusive concept means – he was capable of a few rhetorical and formal innovations. Darī certainly knew the Andalusian tradition by heart but was also perfectly comfortable making his own adjustments to the tradition: one of his innovations was to write bilingual poetry with Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew lines. In addition, his poems contain references to sexuality in a much bolder style than was common among his Andalusian predecessors. Darī is far from being another mediocre poet stuck in imitative and ornamental poetic patterns.

Yeshaya’s work is an excellent contribution to the study of both medieval Hebrew poetry and Karaitica, showing Darī to be a central representative of Hebrew poets writing in the Muslim East and, most importantly, a charming author, whose Karaiteness only adds to the attraction.

RIIKKA TUORI