
Review

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argument that Ibn Sa'ūd was quick to recognize, and to acknowledge, the extent of British power in the Gulf should also, perhaps, be modified in the light of the repeated, probing, attempts which he made to influence the politics of Bahrain in the years after the First World War. The overall argument is, however, an interesting one, it is based on good knowledge of British diplomatic documents and it is presented persuasively. It is regrettable that quotations in the text are sometimes given without a mention of their source, while those at the head of each chapter are of little value in the absence of any dates. On some occasions the periods of service of various British officials in the Gulf are wrongly reported. These could have been corrected if reference had been made to the work of P. Tuson, *The Records of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf* (London, 1979). British policy was, as the author notes, sometimes rather slow-moving; but the unfortunate, and repeated, cacographical error of ascribing the publication of archival papers to H.M. Stationary (*sic*) Office should surely have been avoided in a book from a learned press.

R. M. BURRELL

RODNEY WILSON (ed.): *Middle Eastern exports: problems and prospects*. (Occasional Papers Series [Durham], No. 29.) [ii], 119 pp. Durham: University of Durham, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1986.

This useful little book contains four papers which deal with some problems of exporters in Turkey, Egypt and the Gulf. The paper by Bahri Yilmaz surveys the export performance of Turkey in recent years. Despite the shift towards the Middle East since 1980 the E.E.C. remains Turkey's principal market as well as being the centre of its political hopes. Yilmaz compares Turkey's competitiveness in various industries with that of the three most recent entrants into the E.E.C. and concludes that Turkey presents a sufficient threat to their economic position to ensure that they are likely to exert pressure to restrict Turkish access to the E.E.C. market. Rodney Wilson considers Egypt's performance: once more the E.E.C. is the main market, but Egypt's lack of competitiveness in cheaper goods leads him to suggest a shift towards high quality textiles. The papers by Paul Stevens and T. Hamauzu both look at the effects of the development of the petrochemical industry in the Gulf states. Stevens's paper is gloomy about the prospects for the industry, pointing to the large excess of petrochemical capacity in the world and the protectionist measures taken by the E.E.C. Looking at the same problem from the point of view of Japan and East Asia, Hamauzu is more optimistic. Japan's dependence on Saudi oil makes her reluctant to introduce measures to exclude Saudi petrochemicals and her strong economy enables her to bear the contraction of her own industry with greater equanimity than Europeans display. And, although large over capacity in petrochemicals does exist, Hamauzu

argues that demand is still growing rapidly. The shift in the location of petrochemicals towards the Gulf he regards as inevitable and permanent. In his conclusion he implies that the E.E.C., which has been slowest to adapt to the change, will eventually suffer most.

M. E. Y.

MICHAEL G. FRY and ITAMAR RABINOVICH (ed.): *Despatches from Damascus: Gilbert MacKereth and British policy in the Levant 1933–1939*. 225 pp.: Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University and the University of Southern California, 1985.

Gilbert MacKereth was British Consul in Damascus from 1933 until 1939. His views on the Arab question, which have attracted favourable comment from Elie Kedourie in a recent essay, ran counter to those which were current in the Foreign Office during those years. MacKereth was sceptical about the Pan-Arab movement and believed that the nationalism of existing Arab states would prevail over that sentiment. He also disagreed with his superiors over the interpretation of the Palestine rebellion of 1936 to 1939: he saw the affair as no more than a criminal disturbance whereas they saw the rebellion as an expression of a widespread Arab movement against British policy in Palestine. As MacKereth's doubts about the Arabs increased so his belief in the value of French rule in the Levant also grew: before 1936 he was opposed to French government in Syria but by the end of 1938 he was telling the Syrian nationalists that France was their only friend.

MacKereth's views are of sufficient interest to justify the publication of this selection from his despatches. There is also a substantial introductory essay which describes contemporary British policy in the Middle East, the situation in Syria and MacKereth's early career. There is too a descriptive list of British officials who are mentioned in the text. Unfortunately, no similar list of Frenchmen or Arabs is given, an omission which will make the work less easy for students to use than might otherwise have been the case.

M. E. Y.

PATRICIA RISSO: *Oman and Muscat: an early modern history*. xvii, 258 pp. London: Croom Helm, 1986. £19.95.

The period covered by this monograph—from the 1740s to the early years of the nineteenth century—is an important one in the history of Oman. It is also an era characterized by considerable confusion, and the authoress has performed sterling work in compiling the most detailed and accurate chronology yet available. She has done this on the basis of the few extant local histories together with the much more voluminous British and French political and commercial records. One of the notable merits of the book is its willingness to admit that the sources are fragmentary and that there are significant gaps in our knowledge,

particularly with regard to internal rivalries and the nature of inter-tribal relations. Some of the lacunae are unlikely ever to be filled; so there is much that will inevitably remain obscure and conclusions can only be tentative. Professor Rizzo makes the judicious point that though it is challenging and tempting to try to discern links between the domestic political history of Oman and the development of its external trade, such a process is formidably difficult given the limited nature of the available evidence.

Even in the field of commerce there are few consistently dependable records and while this book indicates some significant shifts in the pattern of trade it is rightly cautious in its analysis. It is also refreshing to note that the work does not shy away from consideration of the slave trade—other writers have allowed the sensitivities of modern times to turn their attention away from such evidence.

Another commendable feature of this study is the fact that it treats the history of Oman in an appropriately wide context. In particular it looks at the influence of events on the shores of the Persian Gulf as well as at the better-known trading links which reached out to the ports of India and East Africa. No ruler of Oman who had the desire to attain maritime power at the end of the eighteenth century could afford to ignore the actions of either the Ottoman Sultans or of the various Persian tribal leaders who held sway during this period. It might have been noted that the word 'gumruk' is widely used in Turkish and is not just 'a local Gulf term for customs duty' (p. 29). Other errors are few, the bibliography is comprehensive and the index is adequate. In brief, this is a welcome and useful addition to the historical literature on Oman. It must be said, however, that the presentation of the text leaves something to be desired. Publication of the work was aided by 'an incentive grant for the use of newer technology' from the Canadian Social Science Federation. While the use of a circumflex accent instead of a macron is not new, the replacement of a subscript dot by a cedilla is a most inelegant and unwelcome innovation.

R. M. BURRELL

BARBARA SCHÄFER (ed.): *Die Chronik aš-Šuġā'is. Teil 2: Übersetzung.* (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Kairo. Quellen zur Geschichte des islamischen Ägyptens, Bd. 2b.) x, 340 pp. Wiesbaden: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Kairo, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985.

The first volume of Barbara Schäfer's edition of the chronicle of Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī, containing the Arabic text, was published in 1977 (noticed in *BSOAS*, XLIV, 1, 1981, 220–1). In addition to the German translation, this second volume contains a compendious introduction which describes the unique MS of this fragment (Berlin Ar.9833 We. 7), assembles the very sparse data it provides about the author, and accepts the conclusion of Donald P. Little (*JSS*, 19, 2, 1974, 252–68.) that al-Shujā'ī's chronicle is largely a summary of an

earlier work by al-Yūsufī (d. 759/1357–8). Apart from this literary source, al-Shujā'ī incorporates material obtained orally from named informants. His work covers the period 737–45/1336–45, i.e. the last years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the time of troubles which followed, for which extant contemporary sources are almost completely lacking. The editor concludes the introduction with a brief survey of the characteristics of the text as a specimen of the literary Arabic of the period. The publication of this volume completes a valuable contribution to the study of Mamlūk history and historiography.

P. M. HOLT

JEAN RENARD, S.J. (tr.): *Ibn 'Abbād of Ronda, Letters on the Sufi path.* (Classics of Western Spirituality.) xviii, 238 pp. New York: Paulist Press, 1986. \$9.95.

Ibn 'Abbād was without doubt one of the greatest figures in the history of the *Shādhiliyya Tariqa* and a major figure in the Sūfī revival in Morocco during the middle of the fourteenth century. His teaching married Sūfī traditions which were esoteric with the popular movements amongst the laity at that time. The substance of this fluent and eminently readable translation of the thoughts of Ibn 'Abbād is contained within a series of letters, in all 16, which were sent by this penetrating thinker from Salé to his friends in Fez. They date from between 1365 and 1375.

Ibn 'Abbād was a great admirer of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh and his *Hikam* and it is one of the attractions of this book that it provides a very comprehensive introduction (pp. 1–54) to these letters, explaining how they form the sequel to a long period of Sūfī life and a growth of vocabulary in order to express the spiritual vision of firstly, the individual ascetics of early Islam, and later, the founders of the orders which increasingly became central to the evolution of Sūfī thought and practice. Central to Ibn 'Abbād's spirituality is a belief in the *Shari'a* as the 'Main Road', that each individual seeker has his *Tariqa*, (p. 18, 'The problem is not one of finding God, but of allowing oneself to be found'), and that the goal of the individual Sūfī is the 'Mystic Truth' (*al-Haqīqa*). In this quest, Ibn 'Abbād stressed the interrelationships between the Revealed Law, the Path and the Mystic Truth. Great stress is placed on the Prophet as the example, doctrine and action being of an equal importance. 'In short, Sufism is tantamount to the true religion and the Straight Path that our Prophet Muhammad came to preach.'

There is a useful section of the Introduction (pp. 33–6) specifically concerned with Maghribī Sūfism, with the *Shādhiliyya Tariqa* (pp. 37–47), concluding with a short biography of Ibn 'Abbād himself. Each letter has comprehensive notes. There are biographical details on Sūfīs who are cited by Ibn 'Abbād and the volume ends with a bibliography and an index of Qur'ān references. It is attractively printed except for the indexes, where there are a number of printing errors and confused transcriptions