

The Lineaments of Islam : Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner, edited by Paul M. Cobb (Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, 95), (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), xviii + 488 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-21885-7, €168.00 / \$234.00 (hb)

Published in honor of Fred M. Donner's long and distinguished career as a leading scholar of early Islam and a professor of Near Eastern History at the University of Chicago, the book encompasses 17 original studies conducted by a number of Donner's students and colleagues. The studies range over a wide array of sub-fields in Islamic history and Islamic studies, including early history, historiography, Islamic law, religious studies, Qur'ānic studies, and Islamic archaeology. The book also includes a bibliography of Donner's works and a biographical sketch of sorts. It is clear that the book was intended as a tribute to Donner's career and his impact on the scholarship in the field. However, while Cobb's introduction serves as a heartfelt tribute to Donner's life and career, it refrains from identifying the academic significance of the collection as a whole to the field of scholarly research.

To aid navigation of the text, the book is divided into four parts, each of which will be reviewed in the following paragraphs: (1) History and Society, (2) Historiography, (3) Qur'ān, Law, and Narrative, and (4) Texts and Artifacts.

The first part of the collection discusses various aspects of early Islamic history and society, particularly focusing on the role of dissent and fringe movements on the development of the Islamic religion. First, Anthony looks at Jewish and Messianist responses to the Islamic conquests of Syria and Mesopotamia, both under Marwānid rule at the time. Then Yücesoy considers the political dissent of the Sufis of the Mu'tazila in the ninth century. Following this, Brown evaluates scholars and charlatans active on the Baghdād-Khurāsān circuit between the ninth and eleventh centuries. Finally, Cook examines the recorded assassinations undertaken by Ismā'īlī assassins. A common thread in the first section of the collection is that all the essays seek to document the history of fringe movements that affected early Islamic history and society, and in turn, the influence of these movements upon present-day Islam. Cook, Anthony, and

Yücesoy all note that the movements they studied were largely ignored by contemporary scholars and chroniclers, meaning that the history of such groups remained largely undocumented. For example, Cook explains that descriptions of attacks by the assassins were presented in Arabic sources in such a way as to immortalise their victims as Sunnī martyrs. Because of this, little is known about the ultimate fate of the individual assassins, although it is clear that most attempted to flee rather than commit suicide in the spirit of modern suicide attacks. Similarly, Yücesoy's research on a group of Muṭazilī ascetics who took a radical stand on the question of legitimate rule during the ninth century reveals that alternative discourses were frequently ignored in Islamic historiography. And in a similar vein, Anthony's study is an attempt to uncover the history of Jewish apocalyptic and messianic movements that emerged in the wake of the Islamic conquests.

Another thread that holds together the first part of Cobb's collection of essays is the fact that all the essays chronicle reactions to the dominant Islamic regime in early Islamic history. For example, Anthony argues that the Islamic conquests inspired "deeply transformative religious dynamism" (p. 21) among Jewish subjects, resulting in apocalyptic speculation and messianic movements. He concludes that these movements had particular relevance because of the upheaval the Jewish communities experienced as a result of the Islamic conquests. Brown shows that the dominant Sunnī Islamic scholars were overwhelmingly popular with the public but were challenged by the charisma of populist preachers. Thus, it was clear that "the Sunnī 'ulamā' justified their existence by claiming to be the guides of the masses, but they also served at the masses' pleasure" (p. 94). The first part of the collection reveals that the dominance of the Islamic conquerors often served to stifle the voices of those who challenged their rule.

Part 2 of the collection is more diverse than the first part, covering a period from the origins of Islamic history to the nineteenth century. First, Urban examines the question whether Abū Bakra was the voice of the Prophet or merely a polemical tool. Then, Scheiner considers the writing of the history of the *Futūḥ*, focusing on three particular writers, while Shahin evaluates the treatises and monographs on Muṭāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān that were written from the eighth to the nineteenth centuries. Finally, Schick assesses the role of Umayyads and 'Abbāsids in Mujīr al-Dīn's fifteenth-century history of Jerusalem

and Hebron. While Scheiner and Schick focus on historical writings, Urban and Shahin investigate the historiography of a particular person. Urban argues that Abū Bakra's story tells scholars a great deal about how Islamic scholars recorded historical events. She challenges the traditional depiction of Abū Bakra, arguing that he was not a *mawlā*, i.e. a kinsman of the Prophet Muḥammad, as the sources say he was. Instead, she claims that Abū Bakra was a slave who had been freed during the 630 siege of al-Ṭā'if. This event then created a *walā'* or kinship bond between Abū Bakra and Muḥammad. As such, Abū Bakra's story provides an informative insight into how personal relationships were understood during the life and times of the Prophet. Similarly, Shahin observes that the writings on Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān reveal how the monarch's controversial reign was perceived. He notes that each of the Mu'āwiya texts focuses on a certain aspect of his reign instead of presenting a chronological narrative or attempting a full biography. Both of these essays examine how historiography was understood by Islamic scholars and how it differed from Western scholarship. On the other hand, Scheiner looks at how early *Futūḥ* works were written and how they relate to later *Futūḥ*, while Schick examines a fifteenth-century history of Jerusalem. Nonetheless, these two essays share the purpose of the studies focusing on particular individuals: they all seek a better understanding of Islamic scholarship and of the process whereby certain traditions came about.

Part 3 evaluates the nature and role of Qur'ānic law and narrative and their effects on Islamic society. Toward this aim, the first two essays consider the influence of individual narratives presented in the Qur'ān, whereas the third, fourth, and fifth essays explore the role of the Qur'ān in Islamic society throughout the ages. Evaluations of the impact of individual Qur'ānic narratives are undertaken by Kueny, who considers the role of such narratives in the reproduction of power, and Lowin, who looks at narratives of villainy in the Qur'ān, focusing on the stories of Titus, Nebuchadnezzar, and Nimrod. Kueny argues that the Qur'ān presents three major models of how God granted human life: first, by depicting God as using clay to fashion life forms and then breathing life into them; second, through the use of pagan motifs; and third, by drawing on Greek paradigms of fetal development. Studying these aspects of Qur'ānic depiction allows Kueny to analyse how God generates life but requires feminine material to properly give such life. Although the Qur'ān is unclear on

the feminine influence on life, it does claim that God possesses medical wisdom from which individual life springs, indicating that God has profound influence over human life. Lowin examines Muslim reproductions of texts concerning villains who occur in Jewish history. While historians such as David Sidersky have concluded that such reproductions were due to transcription errors, Lowin argues that these texts instead prove that Islamic authors were keen to teach their readers lessons about villainy by emphasising the long history of such villainy. Both essays thus show the important role that God played in Islamic history in giving life and punishing misbehaviour. In the next three essays the role of the Qurʾān in Islamic society is elucidated by De Gifis, who evaluates the role of Qurʾānic rhetoric in ninth-century Muslim-Byzantine diplomacy; Wheeler, who attempts to put Ibādī *fiqh* scholarship into context; and Katz, who examines Qurʾānic texts created during the early sixteenth century. Overall, this section sheds light on both the role of God and the impact of the Qurʾān in Islamic society during its long and diverse history.

Finally, the fourth section of the book examines Islamic texts and artifacts. While Sears and Vorderstrasse focus upon textual analysis of certain texts, Hoffman and Eger discuss the significance of particular archaeological remains that have played an important role in Islamic history. Hoffmann attempts to trace what Coptic glazed ware tells scholars about Islamic Ascalon, and Eger evaluates frontier fortifications in the early Islamic period. Hoffman's study is particularly useful, as she uses the archaeological remains of Ascalon to fill in blanks in the written historical record. Sears examines eighth-century Khurāsān through the lens of the revolt of al-Hārith ibn Surayj and the countermarking of Umayyad Dirhams, using textual motifs to explore the narrative characteristics of the sources. Similarly, Vorderstrasse considers varying descriptions of the Pharos of Alexandria in Islamic and Chinese sources, comparing Islamic scholarship to what contemporary Chinese sources have to say about similar subjects. While each of these studies is fascinating in its own right, it is hard to overlook the fact that the essays in this last group have very little in common, which makes for a disjointed end to an interesting collection.

Overall, the collection of essays compiled by Cobb shows how Donner's influence has encouraged Western scholarship of Islamic history to develop in diverse directions over the years, reviving

strands of Islamic social history that had previously been forgotten or neglected. It is difficult to review each of these excellent examples of scholarly research in detail due to the wide and complex range of topics under discussion, but a full reading of the volume gives the researcher a new, deep appreciation of the diversity and scope of Islamic history and scholarship. Interestingly, many of the essays hark back to the history shared by Islam and other religious traditions such as Judaism and Christianity. For example, Anthony highlights the messianic and apocalyptic religious movements that arose in Jewish communities following the Islamic conquests, while Lowin shows how Jewish villains were appropriated by Islamic scholars to teach their readers important moral lessons. Cook makes the related point that studying the history of the assassins is particularly relevant today given the present terrorist threat and America's history of designating external threats, as it did with communism during the 1950s. Therefore, the collection emphasises the fact that Western and Eastern history form an integrated whole, rather than being entirely diverse or separate. In conclusion, this collection makes a great contribution to the study of early Islamic religion and history and gives the reader a useful overview of the complex nature of Islamic history and scholarship.

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