

Reeves's book begins with a well-researched and highly original introduction to the religion of Mani and the history of the sect. The section on 'Prophetology' is of particular importance given the significance of the concept of the 'Seal of the Prophet' (a term already used by the Manichaeans) in later religious traditions in Arabic-speaking countries. The translations include, as one would expect, the relevant sections of the better known authors such as Ibn al-Nadim, al-Biruni and Shahrastani. But it also contains many less well-known authors such as Ibn al-Malahimi, Marwazi et al. Particularly welcome are translations of important Syriac authors such as Theodor bar Konai and Theodor Abu Qurra. The selected texts, all expertly translated, are grouped around topics, which means that if one wishes to read the *Fihrist* entry on Mani one would have to use the Index of Sources to locate all the relevant passages and read them in the correct order in which they appear in the original text of Ibn al-Nadim. The value of the thematic arrangement of the material, however, will not be lost on researchers and university students in Religious Studies or History of Religion. A wide range of topics is covered in the volume ranging from the canonical writings of Mani (90–131) to Manichaean cosmogony and ethics (133–224) and down to the Manichaean script (pp. 92–3). The translated texts are accompanied by very detailed footnotes, and even textual emendations are clearly indicated.

This work is likely to remain standard in its field for a long time to come and is a welcome addition to a number of substantial collections of Manichaean texts in translation (e.g. H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road* [New York 1993] and I. Gardner and S. Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* [Cambridge 2004]). What the Manichaean scholar now needs is a similar collection of Manichaean sources in Chinese to complete the full range of languages in which original Manichaean texts have survived.

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SAMUEL LIEU
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

ANNA CONTADINI, *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Na't al-Ḥayawān) in the Ibn Bakhtīshū' Tradition*. Brill, Leiden 2012. Pp. xiii + 209 + 67 figures + 69 plates + 86 images. Price: €99.00 hardback. ISBN: 978-90-04-20100-2.

This is a wonderful book, or rather a book full of wonders. Anna Contadini has unearthed and opened up a treasure chest for us, and with a rare combination of artistic perception, historical knowledge and philological skill she is also able to explain to us the various marvellous objects it contains. Her book is, in that sense, a window to another world — a world whose curious imagery appears naïve and dissociated only on the surface but reveals an inner coherence and astounding sophistication when seen through Contadini's lens. This is no small feat, and I for one should like to admit right from the start that I will never look at an Arab painting or book illustration from the 'medieval' period with the same eyes again. What is it all about?

Zoology as an independent scientific discipline in the current sense of the term does not figure in medieval Arabic literature. However, there existed early on a fairly large body of writings relating to animal lore, laid down in different literary genres, treated also in the form of monographs by philologists and ultimately tracing back to pre-Islamic poetry as a source of knowledge for notably desert-dwelling creatures. The translation into Arabic during the ninth century CE of Aristotle's *Περὶ ζῴων*

ἱστορίαι (ten books), Περὶ ζώων γενέσεως (five books) and Περὶ ζώων μορίων (four books) and their combination into a single corpus of nineteen parts under the title *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* ‘Book on Animals’, greatly influenced the character and the course of zoological inquiries among the Arabs. Together with this rather speculative, philosophical approach to the subject, the Arab scholars which ingested, again through translations, other brands of relevant literature in which animals were considered from a miraculous, occult and/or medical point of view, and the information gathered from such diverse writings was handed down in numerous books running under *Manāfi* / *Ṭabāʿi* *al-ḥayawān* ‘The Uses / Natures of Animals’. Here, the teachings about sympathetic properties (*ḥawāṣṣ*) of animal parts and products merged, on the one hand, with exotic and fantastic reports (*ʿaḡāʾib wa-ḡarāʾib*) of Indian sailors and, on the other hand, with purely descriptive and utilitarian branches of zoological literature in such a way that it is often impossible to draw a clear line of demarcation between these different forms of literary expression. It is worth noting en passant that the indigenous Arabic productions regarding animals — from the philological writings of Abū ‘Ubaida and al-Aṣmaʿī to the *adab* masterpieces of al-Ġāḥiẓ — are remarkably sober-minded and pragmatic when compared to the cluster of works that were inspired, directly or indirectly, by Greek models: Xenocrates of Aphrodisias’ Περὶ τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ζώων ὠφελείας, Polemon of Laodicea’s Φυσιολογικὰ, Timotheos of Gaza’s Περὶ ζώων τετραπόδων καὶ φυμακῶν αὐτῶν ἐνεργειῶν, the so-called *Physiologos* as well as certain pseudepigrapha on poisons are steeped in parascientific and superstitious expositions so deeply that the Arabs hardly had to engage their own imagination. Another important text in that vein is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb Nuʿūt al-ḥayawān* ‘Book on the Characteristics of Animals’, compiled probably in the tenth century CE and based largely on the Arabic translation of the anonymous Syriac *kitāb dakyānāyāwā* and the aforesaid writing of Timotheos. Among the many Arabic works that contemplated animals as a medico-magical commodity and thus, source of wonder, we need to mention in particular the *Kitāb Ṭabāʿi al-ḥayawān wa-ḥawāṣṣihā wa-manāfiʿ aḍḍāʾihā* ‘Book on the Natures of Animals, their Sympathetic Properties and the Uses of their Organs’, written by Abū Saʿīd ‘Ubaidallāh ibn Ġibrīl ibn ‘Ubaidallāh ibn Baḥtīšūʿ ibn Ġibrīl ibn Baḥtīšūʿ ibn Ġurġīs ibn Ġibrīl ibn Baḥtīšūʿ (d. after 1058 CE), a member of the famous Baḥtīšūʿ family of physicians in the seventh generation. Anna Contadini’s book is set against this background and links up directly with the last-named Arabic work.

The manuscript *British Library* Or. 2784 consists of 258 folios in disturbed order, including 86 paintings; it lacks the original binding and both *incipit* and *explicit*, and hence provides no information about the author, the painter, the date or the place of production. The title *Kitāb Naʿt al-ḥayawān* ‘Book on the Characteristic(s) of Animals’ is only recorded in two Persian annotations dating from the nineteenth century, and is therefore somewhat hypothetical (albeit plausible). As regards authorship, the unknown compiler states in the opening passage of the *Naʿt* that he derived his material partly from Aristotle and partly from ‘Ubaidallāh Ibn Baḥtīšūʿ, adding that ‘anything quoted from Aristotle is *naʿt* and anything quoted from Ibn Baḥtīšūʿ is *manfaʿ*’ — in other words, what is associated with Aristotle and the pseudo-Aristotelian cluster of texts runs under *Naʿt* ‘Characteristic(s)’, and what is associated with the Ibn Baḥtīšūʿ tradition of texts runs under *Manāfi* ‘Uses’. Accordingly, the material as presented in the manuscript is arranged for each animal in three sections: the characteristic(s) of the animal (*naʿt*); a pictorial representation of it; and the uses to which its parts may be put (*manāfi*). Apart from the cluster

of (pseudo-)Aristotelian writings and those works that can be identified as belonging to the Ibn Baḥtīshū‘ tradition, the compiler of the *Na‘t* drew on numerous related sources, notably from among the vast Greco-Syriac medical and zoological literary heritage (now mostly lost), but no doubt he also incorporated material from preceding Arabic authors who in one way or another contributed to the subject matter. According to Anna Contadini, the production of the *Na‘t* can be dated to c. 1225 CE, and located with high probability in the southern region of Iraq. She also stresses the hybrid nature of the *Na‘t*, which is neither a zoological nor a medical manual but rather ‘a composite product reflecting the inquisitiveness of intellectual life during the Abbasid period, a work that would have appealed to the interdisciplinary curiosity of scholars of the time and would have stimulated a sense of wonder (*‘ajab*) through the beauty of its images’ (p. 1); elsewhere she says that the *Na‘t*, ‘for all its connections with classical and Syrian traditions, is a rather isolated text within the Arabic zoological corpus, one marked by an original form resulting from the juxtaposition of material from Aristotle and Ibn Bakhtīshū‘ to create a ‘new’ text’ (p. 53), which may be regarded justifiably as unique. For me, the most impressive feature of the manuscript — and the starting point of the most impressive display of scholarship on the part of Contadini — are the 79 coloured illustrations of various animals from India, North East Africa and the Middle East, preceded by 7 equally beautiful illustrations from the kingdom of man. Among the latter we find, for example, stylized representations of the compiler, of Aristotle, of Ibn Baḥtīshū‘ and, already forming part of the *manāfi*‘ sections, of a man and a woman; among the animals we find mammals (domestic quadrupeds and beasts of prey), birds and birds of prey, fish, reptiles, insects, two mythical creatures (the unicorn and the swan-phoenix) and, my favourite, the *dākil* ‘a fish like a pot’ (*samaka kal-qidra*). In order to contextualize and interpret these wonderful paintings Contadini embarks on an art-historical tour de force of the comparative kind, which I have read with the greatest admiration and profit. Particularly interesting are her expositions regarding the relationship between text and image, showing, among many other things, that the painter was trying above all to create a ‘composition’, that is a balanced and symmetrical arrangement of space within which the animal communicates an artistic idea rather than anatomical precision; at the same time, these paintings are more than decorative ornaments, representing as they do various aspects of the scientific content of the text and transposing it onto a visual plane. Contadini’s treatment of this unique and challenging Gesamtkunstwerk is ingenious and sparkles with bright ideas, original suggestions and lucid judgements at the turn of every page. Despite its deceptively specific title, her book is actually a very fine example of how general and expert knowledge can combine to produce a broad, deep and highly authoritative piece of work that is also refreshingly free of academic jargon.

For all those who are now on the verge of acquiring a copy, here is a brief overview of the book’s content: an introductory essay on image and (con)text (pp. 1–10) is followed by a detailed study of the manuscript (pp. 11–37), an investigation into the sources of the text (pp. 39–53), chapters on the human figures depicted therein (pp. 55–84), on the animals (pp. 85–101), on composition, iconography and style (pp. 103–46), on the date and provenance of the manuscript (pp. 147–56), and finally some very interesting thoughts about patronage and milieu (pp. 157–64); there are several explanatory tables, diagrams, grids and helpful lists, there is a chemical analysis of pigments and inks, and of course an extensive bibliography as well as a detailed index. But most of all, Anna Contadini’s book is itself richly illustrated

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by 67 black-and-white figures, 69 (fairly large) colour plates and 86 (smaller) colour images, the latter showing all illustrated folios of the *Na't* manuscript.

In sum: a truly splendid achievement. And considering the many photographic representations on high-quality paper, the care that has gone into producing an even, aesthetically pleasing script face, and the attractive overall design, the book is also, thanks to the publishers, very reasonably priced.

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OLIVER KAHL
UNIVERSITY OF MARBURG

MUSA SHAWARBAH, *A Grammar of Negev Arabic: Comparative Studies, Texts and Glossary in the Bedouin Dialect of the 'Azāzmih Tribe* (Semitica Viva 50). Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2012. Pp. xvii + 470. Price: €98.00 hardback. ISBN: 978-3-447-06647-1.

This dialect grammar is a detailed look at the phonology, morphology, and lexicon of the Arabic Bedouin dialect of the Negev 'Azāzmih tribe, with extensive comparative footnotes and excursions on other dialects. Appendices include fourteen texts, and a nearly ninety page lexicon arranged by root. The grammar is based on the author's own fieldwork, with frequent reference to other grammars of Negev and Bedouin Arabic. Though the book has some typographical issues that make the division of the text unclear at times, it is a very useful resource for both Negev Arabic and for comparative dialectology.

The introductory chapter gives a basic overview of the history and tribal divisions of the Negev, and the full colour map of the Negev at the beginning of the book makes the overview easier to follow. The overview also covers the major sources for Negev dialects, as well as giving an excellent list of internal and external isoglosses which delineate and divide Negev dialects from other types of Arabic. Finally, the author gives a breakdown of his transliteration methods, as well as lists of the extensive abbreviations which are used throughout.

The next chapter covers the phonology of the 'Azāzmih dialect, with a complete listing of minimal pairs between phonemes, separated by the contrasting features; an overview of the major Arabic shibboleths such as the interdental, the Q and J variables, and the glottal stop; major phonological processes (assimilation, nasalization, emphasis spread, *gahawah* syndrome), syllable structure and stress. Each process is illustrated with numerous, well translated examples and the comparative notes help contextualize most of these features within Arabic dialects. However, like many grammars of Arabic dialects, it is often unclear whether what is being described are synchronic phonological processes operating on underlying forms or a diachronic sound change from an (assumed) ancestor of the dialect, and the two are frequently conflated in a single section. There are a small number of typographical errors in this section, some of which are occasionally confusing, such as when the realization of the /w/ phoneme is described as a 'voiced interdental fricative' but no IPA symbols are used to clarify this statement (p. 80). Moreover, there are instances when the author uses traditional Arabic linguistic terminology without an immediately apparent gloss, which might be alleviated by an index to help readers unfamiliar with the Arabic grammatical tradition find where these terms are originally introduced.

The following chapter covers the morphology of 'Azāzmih Arabic, though the coverage here is less consistent. Closed-set nominal classes (pronouns, demonstratives) are generally covered exhaustively, while open set nominal classes (such as