Brief Reviews of Books

The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism. By Cyrus Ali Zargar. London: Oneworld, 2017. Pp. 341. $30, £20 (paper).

The Polished Mirror represents a rare work in which an entire field (or, in this case, fields) of study can potentially be recast and reframed, and this in the most positive way possible. Islamic philosophy and Sufism are two disciplines that are not often brought into conversation with each other, largely because scholars in both fields choose to be ghettoized, as it were, with the net effect that the only questions asked are of a historical and philological nature. When there is engagement with other traditions, particularly in the case of Sufism, it is often rather superficial or even misplaced. The recent wave of works on Sufism and critical theory is a case in point.

Cyrus Zargar is acutely aware of these problems and therefore takes another approach altogether, namely, one guided by a different set of questions. He is not alone in this regard, as a number of scholars have approached the traditions of Islamic philosophy and Sufism looking for a *rapprochement* between them. Yet Zargar not only stresses the commonalities between Islamic philosophy and Sufism, but shows how their common approaches and interests relate to our ethical and moral concerns.

In *The Polished Mirror* we are offered a sampling of the views of many major figures in the Islamic philosophical and mystical traditions, equally distributed among authors writing in medieval Arabic and Persian. Most of the heroes we would expect to see are present: Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Sīnā, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, al-Ghazālī, Miskawayh, etc. One immediate result from the careful selection of figures and the attendant analysis of their writings is the realization that Islamic philosophy and Sufism indeed share much in common, even if their historical representatives worked in distinct traditions that overlapped. It is therefore not surprising to see so many parallels in their explorations into such topics as the nature of happiness, the virtue of temperance, and how one ought to live the good life.

To illustrate the intricate moral universes of these writers, *The Polished Mirror* does not present us with the manner in which our authors engaged in arcane, philosophical argument, which would likely only appeal to a handful of specialists. Rather, the book focuses on how they imparted their philosophical, spiritual, and ethical goals by way of creative prose and poetry. That is to say, many of these premodern authors were just as concerned with conveying the significance of their ethical quests and visions to a wider audience as we are today—they were, after all, addressing issues of abiding human concern. To transmit their insights, what better way than through an exploration of their literary genius vis-à-vis the art of storytelling and even mythmaking?

The Polished Mirror is a remarkable book in every way. It gives us a first-rate presentation of what was significant in Islamic philosophy and Sufism in the past, and how this significance is very much alive in the present. The topic is fascinating and Zargar has made his intentions and the importance of the investigation eminently clear. Both generalists and specialists will find this work useful, not least because of the author's considerable narrative skill. The inquiry is framed and discussed very well throughout the book, as it is set against the backdrop of a critically sophisticated understanding of the categories of virtue ethics with respect to Islamic civilization on the one hand and contemporary ethical and moral theories on the other. Furthermore, Zargar is not slavish in accepting the claims of any one ethical tradition and also gives us much food for thought with respect to our assumptions on a host of issues, from the notion of ethics itself to even that of "humanism."

The Polished Mirror strikes a fine balance between analytical rigor and poetic sensitivity, which is rare in contemporary writing on Islam. It further recommends itself in that many of its broached topics have strong parallels with issues that arise in cognate religious traditions, particularly Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. There is no doubt that this volume will serve as a very effective point of entry into the Islamic ethical landscape, and will be of great benefit to anyone interested in the broader fields of comparative philosophy, virtue ethics, moral psychology, and theology.

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The Bronze Age Towers at Bat, Sultanate of Oman: Research by the Bat Archaeological Project, 2007–12. By Christopher P. Thornton; Charlotte M. Cable; and G. L. Possehl. Museum Monographs, vol. 143. Philadelphia: The University Museum, 2016. Pp. 352, illus. $69.95.

One of the first statements which I heard as a newcomer to Oman in the 1980s was that Bat is the country's best archaeological site. The reason is that this large site (2000 × 1500 m), which boasts a scattering

of magnificent tombs, harbors remains from the entire Bronze Age and other periods. Significantly, in 1988 this site was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The authors of this welcome volume focus on the Bronze Age towers, the emphasis of their project. Building on excellent previous excavation research, the authors document the building substance, stratigraphy, and analysis of the pottery and other finds recovered during the campaigns undertaken by the team from the University of Pennsylvania Museum jointly with the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Culture from 2007–12.

The report is circumspectly conceived, well-written, and illustrated. As opposed to many far larger site reports, this one is compact, structured, and focused. The authors' work commands all the more respect in the context of the qualitatively heterogeneous—even sometimes anarchic—specialist literature on the archaeology of Oman.

The introduction sets out clearly the temporal and spatial scope of the cultural assemblages investigated. There is a broad picture of geographic distribution (p. 2, fig. 1.1), as well as a chronological table which subdivides the Hafit and Umm an-Nar periods (p. 3, table 1.1). Unlike the authors, following D. Potts (1986), I see Magan located on both sides of the Gulf. The authors push the date of the beginning of Umm an-Nar up from the usual 2500 BCE to 2800. These datings rest on stratigraphic equation with the pottery of Hili H8 and other sites, not to mention radiocarbon assays.

Chapter 2 consists of a terse and circumspective analysis of the site and its environment. Chapters 3 to 8 encompass detailed reports on numerous towers: 1145–1148, 1156, ADS1, ADS2 as well as others. Several km west of Bat lie the poorly published towers known as al-Khutm and Wahrah Qala, which receive real publication here for the first time.

Chapter 9 contains a detailed catalogue of Hafit and Umm an-Nar pottery—among the most detailed treatment for these periods to date. Previous literature is discussed in an integral fashion, which is necessary to define provenance and differentiate the various periods. Most welcome is a fresh discussion of the Wadi Suq pottery from central Oman. Pottery typologies for the Bronze Age in this region tend to be general. In the section on other ware types, the question of the existence of the Late Iron Age can be complemented by detailed studies which the reviewer published from 2014 and 2016, among others. Based on currently documented finds, it is doubtful that Oman specialists would agree to dismiss the little-known Late Iron Age in Central Oman. This is not really a question of chronology but rather simply of the nomenclature for different periods.

The documentation includes a stately 423 pieces of knapped Bronze Age lithics (chapter 10).

Chapter 11 publishes the 135 metal finds and legitimately raises the question whether the extant evidence justifies the view that Magan produced copper on an industrial scale (Yule in preparation). The reviewer would prefer a thoroughgoing illustrated catalogue even for unprepossessing metal debris. Interestingly enough, Oman's earliest confirmed metallic arrowheads (two belonging to my arrowhead class Ar2) appear in an early Wadi Suq context (p. 236, fig. 11.3b–d). Evidence is still lacking for Umm an-Nar or earlier metallic arrow points.

Ground stone artifacts (chapter 12) comprise the scourge of all excavators, since their developmental patterns are conservative, making dating difficult. So-called processing stones include hammers, anvils, and querns, many of which at Bat are dated stratigraphically. They indicate material production but also food processing.

Thoughtful concluding statements (chapter 13) place the study of Magan in cultural and academic contexts. The authors have reason to date the use of different towers to various times within the Umm an-Nar period. Modestly, the authors point out that more work will result in a clearer view of the reasons for the construction of the towers in the first place. Furthermore, study of imports will allow the ebb and flow of relations with Mesopotamia to be more precisely mapped than previously.

Archaeobotanical studies here analyse forty samples (appendix I), updating the work of D. Eckstein, W. Liese, and J. Stieber (1987) on the charcoal samples excavated from prehistoric al-Moyassar and other sites. This new dating is particularly welcome since such studies are difficult for excavators to finance and are consequently often not seen through to publication.

Without irrigation, no habitation can exist in central Oman. Appendix II discusses the *aflāj* and other relicts of water management, which appear to have been in use until the drop of the water table during the past thirty years. Costly excavation is necessary to determine age and origin of such works, which may not necessarily produce clear results.

A third appendix (III) considers a neglected topic—the use of hand-made mudbrick as a building material. Unfortunately, most of the recovered bricks were broken, hindering an estimate of their original size. However, tower 1147 yielded bricks which measured 50x40x5–6 cm. Such bricks also occurred in the settlement al-Moyassar M25 of the Umm an-Nar period (unpublished).

Nineteen radiocarbon datings (appendix IV) cover the main buildings: 1146, 1147, and 1156, complementing those made by the previous Danish team for tower 1145. They strengthen the Umm an-Nar absolute chronology.

Most archaeologists consider Bat to be an Umm an-Nar site, but in fact other periods are also represented, such as the Wadi Suq tombs in Tower 1156 (appendix V). Such tombs (p. 304, fig. V.1) closely resemble those of the Wadi Suq period excavated from Samad al-Sha'n in their general chamber form and outside rings on the surface.

This is one of the best books that I have come across regarding the southeastern Arabian peninsula. Based on

careful documentation, it succeeds in contextualizing contexts and finds into a larger whole. It belongs in every library devoted to southeastern Arabian archaeology.

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Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in der westlichen Oberstadt von Ḫattuša I. Edited by ANDREAS SCHACHNER and JÜRGEN SEEHER. Boğazköy-Ḫattuša, vol. 24. Berlin: WALTER DE GRUYTER, 2016. Pp. x + 225, illus. $140.

The excavations at the site of the Hittite capital of Hattusa (located adjacent to the modern Turkish village of Boğazkale) certainly represent one of the most significant archaeological projects in the Near East. Begun already in 1906 and carried out under the aegis of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and later of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, the work has resulted in many interim and final reports as well as innumerable individual philological and scientific investigations in both article and monographic form. The volume under review is the first in a new series of studies planned to present results of digging in the western portion of the Upper City (p. ix), where the expedition's efforts have been concentrated over the past decade.

Included here are two final reports, the first authored by the current director of the project, Andreas Schachner, on the dig at the impressive limestone outcropping called Yenicekale, with technical contributions by Birgül Őğüt on the ceramics recovered there and by İsmail Őmer Yılmaz and Demir Altıner (assisted by five other specialist geologists) on the provenience of the large stones employed in constructing the ancient walls atop the rock (in English). On the basis of the analysis of terrestrial cosmogenic nuclides (TCNs; the authors helpfully explain this technology to non-scientists, pp. 69–77), they conclude that while some of the blocks had been hewn in the process of leveling the top of the knoll itself, the majority were quarried elsewhere, undoubtedly in the near vicinity of Hattusa (p. 87).

This leveling has contributed to the difficulty in interpreting the history of Yenicekale: the deposits are very shallow and disordered, allowing for no stratigraphic analysis (p. 31) or carbon dating. The sparse pottery recovered (124 diagnostic sherds) indicates a primary occupation during the fifteenth and early fourteenth centuries BCE, followed much later by scanty Byzantine use—seemingly as a storage facility—in the tenth-eleventh centuries CE. Only a handful of small finds were recovered (pp. 54–61) for either period.

It remains unclear whether the foundations atop Yenicekale supported a roof, that is, were part of a building, or whether they rather simply structured a terrace or platform (pp. 88–90). In either case, as Schachner explains, the site may well have constituted a ^{NA4}*hekur*, "(royal) funerary monument on a peak," since other shrines that probably belong to this type (Nişantepe at Boğazköy, Chamber B at Yazılıkaya, Gâvurkalesi) were open-air affairs. (On the philological evidence for the ^{NA4}*hekur*, see Theo van den Hout, "Tombs and Memorials: The (Divine) Stone-House and *Ḫegur* Reconsidered," in *Recent Developments in Hittite Archaeology and History: Papers in Memory of Hans G. Güterbock*, ed. K. A. Yener and H. A. Hoffner [Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns, 2002], pp. 73–91.) The disuse of Yenicekale during the last half-century of the Empire as indicated by the total absence of ceramic remains from this time (p. 36) would harmonize with the claim that King Muwattalli II (c. 1295–1272) had transferred "the gods of Hatti and the manes" (DINGIR.MEŠ ^{URU}*Hatti* GIDIM.ḪI.A-*ya*, Apology of Hattusili III ii 52) to his new capital at Tarhuntassa (p. 106).

The second final report is by Daria Hollenstein and Geraldine Middea, "The Faunal Remains from the Square Building Horizon in the Valley West of Sarıkale, Boğazköy-Ḫattuša, Turkey (16th/15th Century BC)." Digging in the area just north of Yenicekale has revealed the foundations of three edifices dating to the late Old Kingdom. Displaying a single unusual plan, the buildings have plausibly been interpreted in the introduction to this discussion (pp. 147–53, in German) by Jürgen Seeher, former head of the German team, as barracks (Kaserne) for guard troops.

The material analyzed by Hollenstein and Middea in great detail supported by copious tables (pp. 181–213) was recovered from the floors of these structures. As might have been expected from our knowledge of the Hittite diet, the bulk of the remains (61.8%) represent the butchery waste of sheep and goats (ovicaprids). Through an examination of the degree of developmentally conditioned bone fusion in this waste, the authors demonstrate that most of these animals were at least four years old at time of slaughter. This contrasts with results obtained by other scholars concerning osteological remains of ovicaprids from the Lower City and the royal citadel (Büyükkaya), where the victims were "prime meat animals, aged between one and two years" (p. 166). This contrast might reflect class-based differences in diet, but we are cautioned against drawing hasty conclusions, since the various bone deposits are not strictly contemporary (p. 167) and other factors might have been involved.

Additional interesting findings include the remains of a five-month-old lion cub (p. 175) and evidence that canines were occasionally butchered and thus consumed (pp. 173–74). Striking as well is the discovery of oysters that had seemingly been transported to central Anatolia while still alive (pp. 175–76).

Both final reports have been provided with Turkish summaries as well as bibliographies. The illustrations (photographs, maps, tables, and charts) are excellent and well reproduced, and a separate loose plan of