

BURNETT, Charles & MANTAS, Pedro (eds.), *Mapping Knowledge. Cross-Pollination in the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, «Oriens Academic. Series Arabica Veritas» 1 (Córdoba – London: CNERU – The Warburg Institute, 2014), 292 pp. ISBN 978-84-616-9744-1

Present volume reflects the collaboration between the Córdoba Near Eastern Research Unit (CNERU) and the Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe (CHASE) at the Warburg Institute in London. Accordingly, this volume reflects in an exemplary way the research focus of these institutions. The CNERU focuses on research in late classical and early medieval period, and the cultural exchange between various linguistic and religious traditions of that time period, such as, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, Jewish, Christian, Manichaean, whereas the Warburg Institute promotes research on the European encounter with Arabic and Islamic culture. This volume is the outcome of a conference held in Córdoba on the 'Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages' with a few later added contributions.

An impressively broad variety of topics is discussed in depth in this excellent collection of scholarly contributions. The volume is divided into two major thematic sections. The first one is entitled: "Before the New World Order in the Near East" and is dedicated to the multifaceted culture in the Near East before the Islamic conquests. A number of topics are discussed in this context.

Rifaat Ebied studies the Syriac reception of a number of works by Athanasius of Alexandria as preserved in the work of Peter Callinicus.

Jesús de Garay Suárez-Llanos analyses the survival of the ideas of Neoplatonist Proclus in Byzantine texts from the 9th to the 15th century. More specifically, the author shows the reception of Proclus in the work of Michael Psellos in the 11th century as the epitome of the pagan Greek philosophy.

Carlos Martínez Carrasco discusses in an interesting historical review of the relevant material the cultural, political, economic and theological image of the pre-Islamic Arabs as well as their role in the region on account of Arabic and Western documents

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focusing on the history of the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids. The issue of the impact of Christianity on pre-Islamic Arabs is addressed in particular in this article.

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala analyzes the formation of “Arabhood” on account of the figures of two notorious Arab queens, Zenobia of Palmyra and Mawiya respectively, as portrayed in both the Arabic and Syriac versions of the Chronicle of the patriarch Michael the Syrian in the 12th century. Michael the Syrian provides a very interesting treatment of these two queens, their particular religious personalities and development thereof. As Monferrer Sala ingeniously demonstrates, Michael’s account was not particularly objective but was carefully constructed, in order to serve the patriarch’s own politico-religious agenda.

Alberto Quiroga Puertas questions the criticism of Church authors of the 4th and 5th centuries, such as Gregory of Nazianzen, Sozomenus and Socrates Scholasticus with regard to the use of rhetorical devices by contemporary preachers, known as Philostratean bishops. Those bishops used and adapted for their own sermons and purposes the famous work of Philostratus, the *Lives of the Sophists*. The author shows how certain rhetorical devices became an important feature in the cultural transfer process in late antiquity but also the controversy that they stirred in the context of the formation of a religious orthodoxy and of contemporary cultural canons.

José Soto Chica and Maila García Amorós discuss the little known historical issue of the early diplomatic relations between the Mongols and the Byzantines in the 6th century.

Sofía Torallas Tovar presents certain aspects of Christian burial practices in Late Antique Egypt and their relations with ancient Egyptian pagan customs. She demonstrates that mummification was also practiced in Christian Egypt but that Christians also had their own funerary traditions. Accordingly, an intriguing continuous intercultural contact would take place, during which old techniques were adapted to new needs.

The second section of the book deals with a broad array of themes that relate to the time period after the emergence of

Islam. Charles Burnett discusses the educational exchange between the Islamic Southern Spanish centers of learning along routes of intellectual trade, such as between Córdoba and Seville and Northern Christian Spain.

Ann Giletti explains the transformation of *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas in the work of Ramon Martí, known as *Pugio Fidei*. She shows that the work was especially adapted so as to be accessible to a Muslim readership by integrating into it ideals from al-Ghazali's oeuvre.

Enrique Hiedra Rodríguez presents a poem by Ibn Shuhayd that relates to medieval Córdoba and to a boy compared to the biblical figure of Joseph. He shows how this figure would have been equally appealing to a Jewish as well as to an Islamic audience.

Manuel Lázaro Pulido analyses the language applied for the conversion of Galician Suevians from paganism into Catholicism.

Pedro Mantas-España looks at the Spanish translation movement of the 12th century with regard to the Arabic works of Adelard of Bath and explores the possible connections between Adelard of Bath and the Iberian Peninsula. As he argues, the works in question testify to the increasing knowledge of the routes of cultural transfer used by contemporary scholars and travelers, who circulated textual material.

Maurizio Massaiu discusses the date of the *muqarnas* in the Algerian Qal'at Bani Hammad, proposing a later date as previously thought.

José Meirinhos offers an insightful analysis of the use of the Cordovan philosopher, Averroes, in medieval and early modern scholastic Portuguese authors.

The most challenging contribution of this volume is the article by David Nirenberg, who discusses Christian polemics against the Jews through the centuries according to which the Jews would stress the literal over the spiritual interpretation. The article focuses on the scientific projects of Alfonso X 'The Wise' as a proof par excellence for this attitude. However, the article extends over a much longer historical period of time and actually starts with the beginnings of Christianity and reaches up

to modern times. It is indeed intriguing to follow the argument of the author that combines in the same line of argumentation (and even in the same sentence) “Matthew’s first century criticism of learned Pharisees, and 20th century dicta such as Joseph Goebbels’ proclamation (at the Nazi burning of the ‘Un-Gemran books’ in 1933)” (p. 257).

The final article is authored by Rafael Ramón-Guerrero and deals with the Peripatetic school of Baghdad in the 10th and 11th centuries and the scientific and religious relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in this context.

The quality of the contributions is overall outstanding and reflects the quality of scholars that participated in that conference. One of the strengths of this volume is that it offers a thorough discussion of a number of interesting and little known or otherwise neglected primary sources accompanied by fine new translations. An additional important aspect of present publication is that it brings together scholars from various inter-related fields and above all, that it shows the relevance of Eastern Christianity for the study of Christian-Muslim relations even in the West. Concluding, this is a publication that offers an impressive range of contributions, which, all, however, demonstrate the importance of the study of the interrelations and exchange between the various religious communities of the East and West shortly before but also long after the emergence of Islam.

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