

Book Reviews

**The Present in History and Areal Science—
A View of the Contemporary Middle East,**
ITAGAKI YUZO Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten,
1992. pp. xvii + 428 + 28 (in Japanese).

This is a selected collection of articles written during the past 25 years (1956–91) by a prominent researcher of modern Arab and especially Egyptian history. The author has played a leading role in the Middle Eastern and Islamic studies in Japan.

Contained are 27 articles in six parts dealing with: (1) theoretical debate of the basic concepts in areal science, 'area' and 'nation' for example; (2) imperialism and nationalist movements in Egypt and the Arab East; (3) institutionalization of revolutionary ideologies during the Egyptian revolution and in Arab socialism; (4) political culture in the Arab-Islamic world; (5) the crisis of the system of Middle Eastern states; and (6) the critiques against Orientalism, as found in studies of the Palestine-Israeli question, the Jewish problem, and urbanism in Islam.

Interestingly, the author adds an introductory note to each article, commenting on the contemporaneous circumstances in which each article was written. These notes complement the formal articles provide the personal history of a researcher who has witnessed changing of the 'present in history,' as referred to in the first half of the title.

For a Japanese researcher of a younger generation working on modern Egyptian history, the articles in part (2) and (3) are classics to which we must refer when studying the same fields. Three of the classical articles are as follows: "The 1919 Revolution of Egypt," originally published in 1970 (in Japanese); this described the multi-layer structure of the imperialist rule, and analyzed the confrontation between 'nationalism' (or national government) and a 'nationalist movement' in the Wafd movement, and in peasant revolts during the 1919 revolution. "On the Dissolution of Muslim Brethren," an article written in 1963 (in Japanese); this stressed the self-dissolution due to ideological defects in Islamic state theory rather than the oppression by Nasser's government; in a later article, the author confessed that he altered 'his somewhat

strict attitude' toward Islamic social movements and Islamic state theory, after seeing a series of popular Muslim movements after the 1979 Iranian Revolution (p. 251). "On the Perception of the 'Class' (Tabaqa) concept in the Arab Socialism," written in 1968, an article that tried to reveal the ideological quality of Arab socialism by analyzing the text of the National Charter (al-mithaq) and debate about it, with focus on use or avoidance of the concept of class.

More than anything else, it seems that the main purpose of this work is to advocate the establishment of 'areal science' (chi'iki-gaku), that is rightly expressed in another half of the book's title, and to put an end to the old area studies. The author's own results are intended to provide material for discussion of this new science. In the foreword the author states:

"I tried to approach Areal Science by reference to the area studies of others working in the Middle East, from the standpoint of a research of the Middle East, and by showing the locus of my own Middle East studies" (p. vii).

How can studies of the Middle East or this author's studies be used to establish a new areal science? Itagaki answers:

"The Middle East is considered an abnormally mysterious area which can not be understood except in the continuous and unlimited process of internationalization. The Middle East problems always tend to become global and at the same time the world has been embedded inside the Middle East" (ibid.).

The author started his discussion on the possibility of a new areal science by assessing basic notions like 'area' or 'nation' systematically. He revealed the flexibility or fluidity of these notions in relation to the Middle East as well as the interdependency between them. In other words, the meanings of these notions vary according to their context and the changing modern world system. Itagaki has tried to grasp the notion of 'area' as an entity which embodies the bipolarity of the whole and the part.

For example, in the case of the history of imperialism and nationalist movements, one area can be defined "a place of the confrontation between three factors ($P \times R \times Q$) as follows; P: the power of reproducing and expanding the

multi-layer structure of the system of discrimination, Q: the nationalist movement, which resists the P power and tries to overcome the discrimination and to build solidarity, and R: nationalism as a political and ideological institution which is knocked between P and Q as a wedge" (pp. 5-6).

To comment further, it is not difficult to recognize in this non-stereotyped way of thinking an influence by the late Eguchi Bokuro's study of imperialism and people's movements.

In addition to this 'relativity' (or 'world system') approach to areal science, the present author seeks another approach by emphasizing the immanent and ontological values in an area. Some results of this second approach can be found in his discussion about the political culture of the Arab-Islamic world; the magnificent research project entitled 'Urbanism in Islam,' organized during 1988-90, represents an experiment with this second approach.

How did Itagaki synthesize these two approaches? For me, it is difficult to see any clear and systematic methodological synthesis in this book. There is the hint of an answer to this question in the discussion of the notion of 'tawhid' in Islam, which indicates the possibility of integrity within the diffuse notion of 'area' (the area which is always changing in relation to its context in the world system). I sincerely hope that the possibility of a methodological synthesis for 'Areal Science' will provide a positive counter to the traditional arguments and approaches of Orientalism.

EIJI NAGASAWA
University of Tokyo

Studies on the Palace of Malqata, Investigations at the Palace of Malqata, 1985-1988. Waseda University, Architectural Research Mission for the Study of Ancient Egyptian Architecture. Edited by the Group for Publishing Papers in Honor of Professor Watanabe Yasutada on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday. Tokyo: Chuo-Koron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1993. pp. ix+300+28 col. pls. (in Japanese).

One might be inclined to disregard the study on mud-brick architecture in the context of the ancient Egyptian culture, where the majority of architectural studies have focused on the lithic religious buildings so far. But the overwhelming majority of ruins are actually of mud-brick construction, to which future research will certainly shift. In the Thebe region at present, there is no better place to study ancient secular structures than the site of Malqata on the west bank, investigation at Lux-

or on the east bank being hardly practical in the developed circumstances today. Therefore, this voluminous publication will be favorably received without fail. The main text of the book is written in Japanese, and is followed by an English summary (pp. 273-300). Part one of the book (pp. 1-23) is entitled "Architecture at Kom al-Samak in Malqata-south". Archaeological investigations in the Malqata-south area, south of ruins of the palace complex founded by Amenhotep III (1417-1379 B.C.) in the 18th Dynasty, were started by the Waseda University Mission in 1971. In this area, excavations at Kom al-Samak were conducted by Professor Y. Watanabe from 1974 through 1980. Full reports on the architecture were published in Japanese in 1983 (Waseda University 1983). In 1985, field research was resumed again by Watanabe at the palace ruins, and is described in Part Two: "Architecture at the Malqata Palace" (pp. 25-272).

In Part One, written by Watanabe, the work at Kom al-Samak is simply summed up. Stamped bricks proved that the founder was the same king as had erected the palace. The discussion is focused chiefly on reconstruction of buildings in the first and second phases. The thorough analysis of dimensions led to a convincing identification of the basic module, the east-west length of the platform of the first phase building, and the building cubit that was possibly applied there. The author has been able to reproduce the construction of the building. Watanabe emphasizes the similarity with *Kiwari*, a traditional Japanese design system. A complete renovation of the first phase of the building, and the alteration of its axis, are attributed to the thirty years' jubilee celebration of the king. This interpretation is based on observations of the northern stairway, including the number of stairs, and the ritual character of the paintings, for which this architecture is famous. The brevity of description may, however, make readers inclined to peruse the full report mentioned below (the English summary of Part One is not based entirely on the Japanese text, but on a separate publication in English (Watanabe & Seki 1986); this is noted by the editors).

Part Two is written by twenty six authors. The introductory chapter provides a concise history of previous investigations into the same site by other missions, and is followed by seven chapters describing the work by Waseda University. This part is essentially an edited compilation of articles previously seen in several issues of *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ)* and *Transactions of AIJ*. The present edition is valuable because the texts and illustrations have been

revised and augmented, and because various viewpoints and discussions have been brought together in a single book form that allows us to appreciate the complexity and huge site of Malqata Palace.

In Part Two are emphasized three themes: (1) the present state of the remains, (2) the reconstruction of wall and ceiling paintings, and (3) spatial structure. The second theme is covered almost entirely by one author, S. Nishimoto, and includes excellent drawings in full color. In my view, the descriptions of spatial structure require more comprehensive discussion, to indicate more of the basic principles of the palace design. The interpretations could be made far more interesting for scholars who are not involved with Egyptian sites. According mainly to H. Goto, one of the present authors, the spatial structure of the Main Palace as a whole, is fundamentally analogous to the arrangement of rooms of an individual lady's apartment, or the typical residence of a contemporary (i.e. the 18th Dynasty) noble. Studies on the planning method, including the possible building cubits, are referred to by K. Seki for the Main Palace and M. Kawasaki for the Amen Temple.

Professor Watanabe compares the "raised alcove" in the noble or royal bedchamber with Japanese Medieval bed construction among the higher classes (*Choudai-Gamae*). Moreover, the former structure may have a religious significance or context since the ceiling painting depicts the goddess Nekhbet. The Malqata bedchamber reminds me immediately of a long-room sanctuary with a raised platform, as is typical in Assyrian temples, or the divine bedchamber in the shrine of the goddess Ningal at Ur.

In this book, the whole complex of the palace is viewed as befitting the name of "palace-city." This needs some comment. The concept of the palace-city is somewhat disputable, since the book lacks a general discussion of ancient urbanism in Egypt. What defines Malqata as a palace-city? A rambling and large number of diverse buildings is most probably what we would expect of a city in ancient Egypt. The typology of the Egyptian city has not been established so well as that of the Mesopotamian. The creative activity of King Amenhotep III at Malqata must have been derived from the urban heritage at Luxor on the other bank in Thebe. His activity must also have been a foundation for the subsequent urban prosperity at 'Amarna.

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YASUYOSHI OKADA

Kokushikan University

Gender, Development and Identity: An Ethiopian Study. HELEN PUNKHURST, London & New Jersey, Zed Press, pp. 216.

The purpose of this book is to discuss the relationship between the state and the peasantry, and relations between men and women. The book is focused on the peasantry and women, rather than the state and men, and is based on the fieldwork during 1988-89 in the Menz Region of northern Shewa Province.

The author examined:

- 1) peasant perceptions of ministers and policies that promoted by the government,
- 2) gender relations and the lives of rural women.

The author wished to counter the state- and male-centric approaches that have dominated scholarly research until recently. She challenges previous generalisations about peasant societies. She does not accept division of the peasant world into an Asian male-plough-based agricultural system and an African female-hoe-based agricultural system (the Boserup-Goody theory). Nor does she accept that socialist theories will help to reduce gender inequality. According to Punkhurst, these theories do not fit the Ethiopian case.

Part I of this book consists of three chapters. These provide some background information about Ethiopia and the Menz Region, the peasants' association, and the different forms of state presence at the local level. Punkhurst gives particular attention to a government policy regarding "villagization."

In the first four chapters of Part II, Punkhurst moves to issues in which the state's presence is increasingly marginal. These include the household economy, marital relations, life-cycle, religion, and language. In latter chapters, she goes beyond specific issues and the empirical data to bring together the main themes of state-peasant and gender relations. The final chapter is devoted to the recent situation in Menz, after the Mengistu Regime.

The outline of the contents is as follows:

Part I. After the revolution in 1975, the state began to intervene in local structures through two policies—one was land reform (redistribution), and the other was to organize peasants' associations. These new policies did not serve peasants' interests and only benefited a handful wealthy *males*. Various other systems organised by the revolutionary government were set up with the help of ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education. These included local law courts, labour tax (which the peasants disliked), women's and youth associations (which lacked real power), producer cooperatives (which aimed voluntary communal land ownership without any success), service cooperatives (which can be said the most popular system because they often installed and ran a mill and sold a few goods more cheaply than anyone else, despite inefficiency and corruption).

In order to achieve an economic, social and political transformation, government started "villagization scheme" in late 1985. By 1988, about 40% of the population was organised into villageages with some benefits for peasant life. The attitude of the people towards this scheme depends on the gender and generation. For example, female-headed families felt security and comfort and youngsters were glad to be able to find friends in the village. But in general people did not like this scheme. Wealthier people disliked having to live next to the poor, older people disliked the orderly housing pattern of the village, some people complained about inconvenience for herding cattle and fetching wood for the fuel, and many people resented the cost and labour that was required to relocate and build new houses. Although the scheme was voluntary in theory, it was sometimes forced on people by officials though not in the author's field area.

Part II. In Menz, as in much of Ethiopia, the household retained a primary economic and social role. Production, reproduction and consumption were all oriented towards the household unit where sexual division of labour is apparent.

The main crop in the area is barley, wheat is less important. Livestock (cattle, donkeys, horses, sheep, and goats) became more important after the revolution because the state intervened in land distribution but not in livestock trade. Under the new socialist regime, when peasants had to obtain cash for tax payments and daily needs, livestock trade helped them. In wool economy, women spin and wind, men shear and weave with controlling the larger sum of profit which is the most important source to meet the cash requirement in Menz.

Under these circumstances, women's role has been valued even less than before, state has continued devaluing women's activities, which have never been evaluated properly in the community.

Traditional customs have been changed not just by state intervention, but also by worsening economic and environmental conditions. For example, marriage ceremonies became less formal and funeral less expensive. In the religious field, the state tried to reduce the role of Christianity, but without any success. Spirit beliefs, in which women are more involved than men, were also discouraged as backward. These beliefs nevertheless continued to play a central role in the women's ideology.

The author concluded that "the state's economic contribution to society was marginal, while the ideological penetration of socialism was even less significant" (p. 174). This was the result of the peasants' attempts to "minimize the costs of state actions whilst also taking advantage of any beneficial policies" (p. 99). In terms of women's position, the author found that "within the overall framework of male dominance, women have found means of expression and rebellion" (p. 179), through spirits and by divorce, that "their reproductive role is central to the definition of their identity and status" (p. 178). Under the cumulative pressures of state and famine, it was women who really supported the life and economy of Menz.

Thus this book opened new horizons not only for Ethiopian studies but also for socialist feminism in general. The author views the latter as an alternative strategy to the previous and existing oppression of women. It is not yet certain that her analysis can be generalized to the other Ethiopian villages and beyond. It is hoped that the further surveys in Ethiopia and other countries clarify the work done under the "socialist" regime.

Finally, as a historian, I would like to make some suggestions about this book:

- 1) It would have been more easy for general readers to understand the peasants' response to state intervention if the author had referred to the economic background of Menz before the socialist Revolution.
- 2) The connection between the Part I and Part II is not clear, since each part deals with rather different areas of society, namely development and gender problems. The author should have discussed the connections in the synthesis in Chapter 9.
- 3) In relation to 2), it is not clear what the author regards as desirable "development" for the peasants—especially for women. The author wrote "unless conditions im-

prove and women's material grievances are alleviated, it is more than likely that the spirit beliefs will survive" (p. 167). Does she believe or accept that development should change traditional customs? If so, what will happen to the identity of the women?

- 4) Economic equality must be a very important indicator for assessing the development under the socialist regime. Was the gap between the rich and the poor minimized by state intervention or because of the famine? The answer to this question is not clear in this book.

Despite these problems, this unique book gives us a marvellous insight into the situation of women in Ethiopia under the Mengistu regime.

Dr. Helen Punkhurst was born and brought up in Ethiopia as a daughter of the historian Richard Punkhurst. She trained as a development economist at Sussex University, and has published many reports and papers on Ethiopia.

CHIZUKO TOMINAGA
Miyagi Gakuin Women's College

The Rendille—A Camel Keeping Pastoral People of Northern Kenya. SHUN SATO, Peoples of the World No. 3, Tokyo: Kobundo, 1992, pp. 186, ISBN4-335-52003-4.

Note: this is a much abbreviated and slightly modified version of my review of the same book published in Japanese in *Minzokugaku Kenkyu* (The Japanese Journal of Ethnology) vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 404-408, March, 1994. The reply by Dr. Sato to the review is taken into consideration.

This monograph is a strange mixture of academically very useful chapters and of frustratingly vague or incomprehensible chapters and sections. I shall consider the reasons for this later.

Sato first visited the Rendille in 1975 and altogether seven times over thirteen years, the total length amounting twenty five months. The Rendille numbers about 22,000 and subsist mainly on camels with subsidiary small stocks of sheep and goats.

Chapter 1. 'Rendilleland' is mostly a record of the author's first contact with the people. An outline of environments, of neighbouring ethnic groups and of the history of migration and administration are given rather repetitively, consuming precious space.

In Chapter 2. 'Natural Environments and

Calendar,' geographical and seasonal features and fauna and flora are fully described. The complicated lunar calendar and the week system are briefly summarized. Religious and ritual activities associated with certain days of the week and certain months are introduced. No reference is given to preceding literature, if any, about the Rendille calendar system and it is difficult to assess the degree of Sato's own contribution to this theme.

In Chapter 3. 'Age Grades and Dress Styles,' we learn that both the age-system and the clan-descent system are the bases of their social organization. One would, then, expect detailed and coherent accounts of them. As it is, Sato only gives a very summary sketch of the age system, without even explaining technical terms adopted by him; some of them are almost incomprehensible to me. He claims for instance that *gokakugumi*, together with age-sets and age-grades, is one of the three basic units of the system and that there are two kinds of *gokakugumi* (*marada**; asterisk indicates a Rendille term spelled in Japanese by Sato) the 'large' and the 'small.' Yet he does not explain what he means by *gokakugumi*, nor its organizational structure. In his reply to my review, Sato simply states that he means by 'gokakugumi' an 'alternation,' without any further elaboration and he remains silent about the difference between the 'large' *gokakugumi* and the 'small' one.

There are two age-grades, that of the youth and that of the elder, the latter further divided into four sub-grades of the junior, the middle, the senior and the retired. Twelve years after the circumcision, youths are allowed to marry and all of them are married in three years. Then they enter the elder grade.

An age-set is formed one year after the circumcision rite, which is held every fifteen years. The first son should enter the age-set third from his father's. 'Among the linear series of age-sets, every three set forms one age-set line. There are altogether three such age-set lines.... One of them is specifically called *tehria**.'

A girl whose father belongs to the *tehria* is called *sapati* and to marry as late as the time when her brothers are to marry, that is, after the age of 41 years old, while ordinary girls start to marry at 27 years old.

These descriptions of age-sets and age-grades, and of related marriage regulations are very limited and little to add to what Schlee had already reported (G. Schlee: *Identities on the Move*, Manchester U.P., 1989). It is deplorable that Sato never directly refers to the Schlee's work, although it is listed in the Reference; the same is true of other literature

on the Rendille.

The title of Chapter 4, 'bases of pastoralism and the people who carry it,' is not a good pointer to the contents, which are nevertheless very commendable. After briefly describing the moiety, clans, sub-clans and smaller descent groups, courtship procedures, marriage negotiations and the details of bridewealth and their distribution are well presented in the section entitled 'Marriage and Family'; strangely no mention is made about family though. Then the author diligently explicates the settlement pattern and rules of deciding the relative positions of huts, according to the social positions of their owners, and then compares settlements with camel camps. Excellent analysis of herding technologies and of the system of stock holding follow. We can thus fully grasp the nature of the daily life of the Rendille.

The Chapter 5, 'Animal Products' is a useful contribution to the field of food and society, with detailed accounts of processing, distribution, consumption and exchange of milk and meat.

The following two chapters, 6 'Jural Modes of Camel Holding' and 7 'Transfer of Camels and Social Structure' are highly commendable. First, the special position of the first son is analyzed. Ritually he seems to be identified with his father and socially he inherits all the stock at the death of the latter and then gives some of them to brothers and the eldest sister. The system of female camel trusteeship is then described. The trustee has the right to consume milk and blood and to dispose male off-

spring, while all the female offspring remain in the status of the trusted. General principles about exercises of the owner's right and about the dissolution of the trustee relationship follow this. Case studies of conflicts concerned with the relationship and of manners to solve them are very useful.

The last chapter, 'Curse and Blessing,' is the shortest and worst of all, for Sato simply lists up categories of people who are said to be endowed with mystical power with very limited, and often vague, explanations.

Throughout the monograph, the imbalance between the parts well written and those badly done is, as stated above, incredibly big. There seem to be two main reasons for this. First is the author's academic backgrounds, in that Sato is very competent in ecological-material anthropology but is poorly trained in social and cultural anthropology. This not only biased his focus in fieldwork but also led him astray when he tried to describe socio-cultural aspects which were not familiar to his thinking. The second reason is the editorial policy adopted to this series, that is, to publish an ethnographical monograph interesting both for academic and general readers within very limited space. This aim inevitably leads to very frustrating results for both kinds of readers, as is the case of this book.

NOBUHIRO NAGASHIMA
University of Hitotsubashi