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Al-Shajarah is a refereed international journal that publishes original scholarly articles in the area of Islamic thought, Islamic civilization, Islamic science, and Malay world issues. The journal is especially interested in studies that elaborate scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age, scholarly works that provide fresh and insightful Islamic responses to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. *Al-Shajarah* will also consider articles written on various religions, schools of thought, ideologies and subjects that can contribute towards the formulation of an Islamic philosophy of science. Critical studies of translation of major works of major writers of the past and present. Original works on the subjects of Islamic architecture and art are welcomed. Book reviews and notes are also accepted.

The journal is published twice a year, June-July and November-December. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief, *Al-Shajarah*, F4 Building, Research and Publication Unit, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), No. 24, Persiaran Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Taman Duta, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. All enquiries on publications may also be e-mailed to alshajarah@iium.edu.my. For subscriptions, please address all queries to the postal or email address above.

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ignorance and misunderstanding of the Prophet among Westerners. Dr Batchelor's present book would be an invaluable source of reference to anyone interested in understanding the relevance of the Prophet's leadership qualities and management wisdom in our contemporary world.

Roberta Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing: Shifts and Continuities in the Definition of Islam in China*. Boston, Brill, 2016. 246 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-31925-7 (E-book).

Reviewer: Omar Min Ke-qin @ Omar Min, formerly a Research Fellow at ISTAC-IIUM, Kuala Lumpur. Email: omarminkeqin@yahoo.com.

Like the well-received works of Zvi Ben-Dor Benite,¹ James Frankel,² and Kristian Petersen,³ Roberta Tontini's *Muslim Sanzijing: Shifts and Continuities in the Definition of Islam in China* is a prominent scholarly work on textual analysis in the Chinese Islamic literature of the *Han Kitab* genre. In her book, the young scholar Tontini focuses her study on selected Islamic primers written in a three-character format (three-character classics of Islam) to "initiate Chinese Muslims in the basic tenets of Islam" (p. 8). She mainly discusses the *Sanzijing* genre of Chinese Islamic literature, one of the writing styles of *Han Kitab* literature. The *Sanzijing*, as one knows, is one of the Chinese classics, a very popular small book composed by an unknown author, in the form of three Chinese characters ("sanzi" 三字 denotes three characters while "jing" 经

¹ See Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China," *Harvard East Asian Monographs* 248, 2005.

² James Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011).

³ Kristian Peterson, *Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, & Language in the Han Kitab* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

signifies "classic") with the rhyme scheme. This form is easy for children to read by heart, at the same time installing in them the basic knowledge of Confucian teachings, Chinese history, geography, astronomy, and more. Chinese Muslim intellectuals knew well the role played by this literature in child education, thereby boldly adopting this form of Chinese literature into Muslim education. The first Chinese *'alim* who employed this form in Muslim education in China was Liu Zhi 刘智 (d. 1764), a prolific Chinese Muslim writer whose works, especially of *Tianfang Dianli* (Elegant Rituals of Islam) and *Tianfang Sanzijing* (Three-Characters Classic of Islam) are the main subjects of discussion in Tontini's current work.

Tontini divides her work into six chapters, followed by references (Works Cited) but without an index (in e-Book). After laying the frameworks and methodology for her work in the introduction (the first chapter), in chapter two, the author "examines the theoretical foundation of Muslim *Sanzijing* tradition by delving into the Islamic legal theory set forth by Liu Zhi in his *Tianfang Dianli Zeyaojie*" (p. 6). After that, in chapter three, she "explores the content of the earliest version of the Muslim *Sanzijing*" (p. 6). Then in chapter four, she embarks on "the redefinition of Islamic law by late Qing scholars based on Liu Zhi's model" (p. 6). In chapter five, she continues the "redefinition in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries through the lens of three new versions of the *Sanzijing*. Finally, in chapter six, Tontini assesses "Islam's filiative transmission to modernity" (p. 7).

A careful reading of the whole work reveals that the author is quite familiar with her subject, namely *Sanzijing*, one of the forms of *Han Kitab* literature. More importantly, the work shows that she can render Chinese words (language) into English with great accuracy, notwithstanding the misinterpretation of some Chinese words and text, which is unavoidable in an extensive study such as the one she has undertaken. Although only partially, the account of the "Norms and Rites of Islam in Imperial China" in chapter 2 shows her familiarity with *Han Kitab* literature. Her textual analysis in four subsequent chapters of "Tianfang Sanzijing" (chapter 3), "Islamic Law in the Aftermath of the Anti-Qing Rebellions" (chapter 4), "Hu Song-shan's Three Character Primers of Islam" (chapter 5), and

"Islam's Filiative Transmission to Modernity" (chapter 6), testifies to her thorough understanding of the contents of the works at her disposal. Her scholarly effort is highly commendable because it is a painstaking task for researchers to engage in this kind of intellectual inquiry.

To my knowledge, Tontini is one of the few Western scholars, besides Sachiko Murata, Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, Kristian Petersen, and James Frankel, who have made significant contributions to the textual analysis of *Han Kitab* genre literature. The present work is a further significant contribution to the field from her. It focuses on the *Sanzijing* genre of Islamic literature written by Chinese Muslim scholars, both past and present.

In reading the scholarly works written by Western Sino-Islamists, we get the general impression that they intend to present Chinese Islam as a potential challenge to the firmly established Chinese sociopolitical establishment. This is a hyper-exaggeration. This assumption is by no means factual, not tallying with the historical settings of Chinese Islam. Muslims in China, since the beginning of their history until today, have never intended to become a major force, politically and economically, to the point of being able to challenge or replace the Chinese indigenous political establishment. This claim is well testified by the appearance of *Han Kitab* literature, which grew largely due to the historical fact that at the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the later descendants of Chinese Muslims mainly were assimilated into the indigenous Chinese culture to the point of becoming ignorant of their ancestral tradition. They had already lost their distinctive features: their clothes, facial appearance, and languages. In the face of this challenging situation, the community-minded Chinese Muslim *ulama* (pl. of *'alim*), like Zhang Zhong, Wang Dai-yu, Ma Zhong-xin of the earlier generations, and Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi, and many more of the later generations, set about to write on Islam in Chinese or translate Islamic work originally written in Arabic and Persian into Chinese, with the intention of saving those Muslims who were on the verge of total assimilation.

Assimilation was widespread, especially among those who chose to attend public schools and later got jobs in the Ming

government establishments upon passing the national examination. Many such instances can be listed, but suffice it here to mention Li Zhi 李贽 (d. 1602), a famous philosopher, historian, prolific writer, and a fearsome critic of Neo-Confucianism, who lived about a century and a half earlier than Liu Zhi 刘智 (d. 1764). He was born to a Muslim family in Quanzhou, a metropolitan port city during Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties. He had his education in a public school, later joined the officialdom of the late Ming, and in his late years of life, converted full-heartedly to Buddhism before his suicide in 1602.

Li Zhi's case was not peculiar but was common among the Muslim descendants of his life. This pressing issue in the Muslim community made the *ulama*, in their overarching solicitude, worried about the future of the community. For this reason, they took responsibility for elucidating Islam in the Chinese language, intending to inhibit the process of assimilation. Liu Zhi has made known his motive for composing *Tianfang Dianli* and his other works very clearly. He "intended it for the educated audience (of especially Muslim descendants)," who was "familiar with teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism but unfamiliar with the rites of Islam" (p. 20) to enable them to understand their ancestral culture and belief. However, having learnt Islam, they must decide whether they still want to maintain or change their faith. Thus, the emergence of the *Han Kitab* was a response to internal changes in the Muslim communities rather than their initiative to present Islam to mainstream Chinese society as Western Sino-Islamists have claimed in their studies.

The same is true of the Islamic law discussed by the author throughout this book, which she viewed as a potential competitor to the Chinese legal establishment. The author says: "The importation of Islam in China set the ground for the contact between Confucian and Islamic patterns of law and governance..." (p. 11). But this claim has no basis in the history of Chinese Muslims. As I have stated above, the *Han Kitab* were, to a great extent, if not exclusively, written for internal consumption in the Chinese Muslim communities rather than for presenting Islamic teachings to the Chinese Confucian society. For this reason, the purported *Han Kitab* literature was

almost unknown to the Chinese majority. The circulation of those *Han Kitab* was very much limited. This explains why those Han Kitabs are not easily found even among the Chinese Muslim communities. Quite the case, some of them are already extinct not long after their first printing. Modern investigators like Yang Xiao-chun, a prolific modern Chinese writer on textual analysis of *Han Kitab*, took pains to find a copy of, for example, *Xingmi Zhenyuan* for his analysis.

In my view, this work deserves high praise. However, this is not to say that this work has no apparent flaws. The flaws can easily be detected, firstly in her translation of Chinese texts into English, for example, (1) Jingtang Jiaoyu is rendered as “education of the hall of the scriptures” (pp. 3, 14) instead of “mosque education” or “Islamic education in mosques”, which is, to me, a more proper rendering of the term; (2) the *Han Kitab* literature is rendered as “Chinese language Islamica” (p. 11) instead of “Islamic Books in Chinese”, which would be more appropriate; (3) wugongpian五功篇 (p. 24) is rendered as “'five endeavours' section”, instead of the more appropriate term “chapter of five pillars”; and (4) “momin” (p. 22; 23) is rendered as “Muslim”, instead of “the faithful”. Secondly, the flaw is in the absence of a comprehensive glossary. For this kind of work, which deals with Chinese Islam, a glossary at the end of the book is very much necessary, as one knows that Chinese writing is ideographic, with many characters sharing the same or similar phonetic sound; in other words, for one phonetic sound we can write many characters, denoting very different meanings, for example, for “wugong”, we can write characters like 武功 (marshal art), 务工 (working), 误工 (delaying work), 蜈蚣 (centipede) etc. instead of the correct one 五功 (five pillars of Islam).

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	
ء	ب	پ	پ	ز	ز	ز	ز	گ	—	g	g	g
ب	ب	ب	ب	ژ	—	—	ř	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	پ	پ	پ	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m	m
ت	ت	ت	ت	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h ¹	h ¹
ث	th	th	th	ص	ş	ş	ş	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḏ	ḏ	ž	ی	y	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	—	-a ²
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al ³	—	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	—	—	—	—	—
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh	—	—	—	—	—
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f	—	—	—	—	—
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	q	—	—	—	—	—
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	—	—	—	—	—

¹ – when not final

² – at in construct state

³ – (article) al - or l-

VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form i)	iy (final form i)
	و	uww (final form ū) uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ū
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. جھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

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