Milwright considers the connection between trade and pilgrimage, which is reflected, for example, by a series of forts built in Jordan and northern Arabia in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries to protect caravans of pilgrims. In other words, pilgrimage routes also served military and economic purposes. Beginning in the tenth century, Muslim trade with countries around the Mediterranean intensified, as indicated by the discovery of Islamic pottery and glass around Europe (with glazed bowls embedded in the facades of some churches). Interestingly, wealthy Frankish inhabitants of the Crusader kingdom in Palestine acquired some Islamic luxury stonepaste wares, but not the less expensive lead-glazed wares. Milwright also reviews evidence of trade on the Indian Ocean, focusing on the ports of Sirāf (Persian Gulf) and al-Qusayr (Red Sea).

In his consideration of the “post-medieval” Islamic world, Milwright notes how events from the fifteenth century on transformed the medieval Muslim world. For example, the introduction of firearms impacted not just methods of warfare but fortification types. Milwright focuses on the impact of the introduction of tobacco and coffee to the Muslim world, which is reflected in the archaeological record by the appearance of clay tobacco pipes and porcelain coffee cups. By the nineteenth century industrialized production and the introduction of steam ships to the Mediterranean enabled European manufacturers to dominate the lucrative porcelain coffee cup trade. The low cost of European imports put many glazed pottery workshops in the Middle East out of business. Milwright also discusses the transformation of rural areas under Ottoman rule through the creation of agricultural estates called çiftilik. Comparing the case of the Ottomans with other types of “colonial archaeology,” Milwright notes that whereas the Frankish inhabitants of the Crusader kingdom seem to have avoided establishing settlements in areas occupied by Muslim villages, the Ottomans founded çiftilik in predominantly Christian rural areas. A concluding chapter summarizes some of the points made throughout the book.

This review has highlighted some of the topics covered by Milwright. The book is clearly and concisely written, and it provides a good introduction to Islamic archaeology by indicating the rich and diverse information provided by the material remains. Milwright successfully demonstrates archaeology’s usefulness in shedding light on long-term processes and changes, and on rural and non-elite populations. On the other hand, Milwright’s uneven and selective treatment, in which some themes or topics are summarized and presented in a loose chronological manner, means that the book is not easily read or digested. I was able to follow it because of my familiarity with much of the material, but I doubt it would be suitable as a textbook for undergraduate students in the U.S. Nevertheless, Milwright’s book is a real contribution to the emerging field of Islamic archaeology, and will be a useful resource for scholars and graduate students.

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This wide-ranging collection of essays contributed by students, colleagues, and friends of Robert Hillenbrand is a fitting tribute to a scholar of Islamic art and architecture who began his teaching career at Edinburgh University in 1971. Over the course of his academic life, which continues now in retirement, Hillenbrand has published many books and articles (listed in Iconography of Islamic Art, pp. 325–30), with emphases on the formative era of Islamic architecture in the seventh and eighth centuries, Saljūq through Šafīvid architecture of Iran, Central Asia, and Afghanistan, and the arts of the book and painting in Persian manuscripts. He has also written about other media and across the full chronology of Islamic art and architecture, including, for example, studies on domestic architecture in Qājār Iran and Ottoman Jerusalem from 1517 to 1917.

The essays in The Iconography of Islamic Art complement Hillenbrand’s impressive breadth and depth of interests, reflective of a range and an approach to the field of Islamic art and architecture
that can no longer be attained by any one individual, at a time when increased specialization, within circumscribed regional and chronological subdivisions, is the norm and raises the bar for scholarship on any one of those areas. Several essays convey the contagious excitement and curiosity elicited by Hillenbrand, whether in the intimate context of the seminar classroom or in the public lecture auditorium. I shared those experiences as an undergraduate student in Fine Arts at Edinburgh University in the 1980s when I was first introduced to the field through Hillenbrand’s lectures in the yearlong art history survey—which began with the Late Antique and Early Christian and ended with the Renaissance—and later in specialized seminars on such topics as “Royal Iconography in Islamic Art” and “Medieval Islamic Painting.” Hillenbrand stimulated interest and debate among a group of beginners, seamlessly directing us to assess evidence, argument, and interpretation, and somehow also leading us to believe that we could make useful contributions to scholarly debate as novices. He presented the field as one wide open, encouraging intuitive, even speculative, responses to works of art and architecture without front-loading discussions with an externalized list of desiderata or a prescribed method or theory. He neither stated what he thought should be done to remedy a particular shortcoming or problem, nor described how we should go about tackling a corpus of objects or a specific medium. Hence, he made the classroom a place of discovery where students also learned lessons about the practice of research by doing it. All the while, Hillenbrand set an example of the academic life by an unflagging capacity for hard work and a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and writing.

Bernard O’Kane, who completed his doctorate at Edinburgh under Hillenbrand, has expertly edited the collection of essays published in The Iconography of Islamic Art. (In the preface O’Kane shares some of his experiences and impressions of Hillenbrand, pp. vii–viii.) Like other recent Festschriften, this one groups its essays around a theme, in this case iconography, though it is not clear whether this was by design or the result of a self-selecting process whereby the authors thought about what Hillenbrand might appreciate and wrote accordingly. Whichever is the case, the essays are case studies about questions of meaning as they obtain to portable objects, illustrated manuscripts, and architectural monuments of Islamic art, and are consistent with Hillenbrand’s general approach and proclivities as a scholar. ¹

No single author directly questions the meaning of iconography as it concerns his or her individual essay; how it was understood by Hillenbrand; the history of the concept in art history (especially since Erwin Panofsky’s pioneering Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance [1939]—the most renowned work on iconography in the discipline); or how the study of iconography in Islamic art might be related to iconography in other artistic traditions. For Panofsky, iconography was concerned “with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form” (Studies in Iconology [reprt. 1972], p. 3), and involved three strata: the initial perception of the form of the artwork, basically its apprehension as an artwork (“Primary or Natural Subject Matter”); the conventions established as a set of social codes (“Secondary or Conventional Subject Matter”); and the factors of historical contingency that shaped the artwork (“Intrinsic Meaning or Content”), as caused by the group, the individual (whether conscious of it or not), system of belief, or medium. Together, the latter constituted what Panofsky would later, in revisions to his program, term an iconology, in which pre-existent and inherited iconographic symbols and their meanings were adapted and transmuted to generate different results and new meanings. Several of the problems that subtended Panofsky’s approach—for example, the separation of the natural eye, or ocular perception, from processes of mental cognition; the clear-cut distinction drawn between form and content; and the notion of “disguised symbolism,” hidden meanings embedded in artworks waiting for the savvy sleuth to reveal—have been elucidated in recent art-historiographic literature, and explored by revisiting case studies from

Panofsky’s scholarship. Assessments of Panofsky’s approach, and its utility to a wider history of art, have also contended with the fact that his method was built through a particular art tradition limited by medium, geography, and chronology, and hence question its suitability to the analysis and interpretation of other world art traditions.

Without reflection on the meaning of “iconography” or any method it might imply, the essays in The Iconography of Islamic Art stand as tacit engagements with an art-historical approach but with no clear mediation on its use, value, effect, assumptions, or salience today, particularly in light of semiotic theory. “Iconography” as a set of cultural codes that persisted over time, subject to ongoing adaptation, is accepted as a given, as something out there in need of decoding and elucidation. The hope might be that sufficient work along these lines might yield a lexicon of codes for Islamic art and architecture, in its widest definition, comparable to the Index of Christian art founded by Charles Rufus Morey in 1917 at Princeton University.

In reviewing the several useful studies presented in The Iconography of Islamic Art, it may be more expedient to group them according to sets of shared approach and assumptions rather than giving synopses of each. Most of the essays, to their authors’ credit, are assiduous in attempting to locate the meaning(s) of objects in specific contexts and to understand them as historically contingent. They do this by establishing taxonomies of related objects, things, buildings; by determining patterns of incidence (artistic practice and process as conventions); and by identifying departures from the norm, which are then correlated to extrinsic, but contemporary, written sources or historical events. These approaches are most fully developed in essays on medieval capitals in Cairo, including spoliated pre-Islamic capitals and newly made ones modeled after Classical and Late Antique prototypes (Marianne Barrucand), the opus sectile floor of the Norman Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Jonathan M. Bloom), and incense burners reflecting adoptions and adaptations from Buddhist art (Géza Fehérvári). Other essays, related to these three by method, widen their panorama to cover extended chronological periods but the results can be more diffuse and the arguments less persuasive, even when they are propped up by numerous literary references.

Another group of essays employs the iconographic approach outlined above but also raises the idea that pictures, either single-page images or paintings made for books, represent the world in which they were made. As well as reflecting a contemporary historical reality, they are also the artistic constructions of their makers. This proposition plays out in differing ways. In “A Mongol Envoy,” Sheila Blair opines that “the painting shows how art history can illuminate history” (p. 45) because it serves as a form of documentation of Mongol protocol whose correct identification can then help to resolve problems of dating and foster a deeper understanding of later processes of transmission through acts of copying. In Barbara Brend’s essay, “A Kingly Posture: The Iconography of Sultan Husayn Bayqara,” the author’s concern lies partly in court customs and protocol, but is built from the suppositions that Timūrid artists “modelled their pictures largely on the world around them,” that the objects and practices of the real world formed the basis of a pictorial iconography, and that it is “legitimate to search pictures of real subjects for elements that go beyond reportage” (p. 81). The author attempts to find the relation between what she terms “realism” and “convention” in pictures. This is the essay closest to Panofsky’s idea of “disguised symbolism,” especially in Brend’s suggestion that amid the well-known scene of Sultan Ḥusayn in audience (the frontispiece of the 1488 Bustān of Saʿdī) lies a portrait of prince Bāḍīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā. In one sentence she moves from the statement that the figure is “evidently a portrait” to the conclusion that it “must be the sultan’s eldest son” (p. 83) and that his “curious isolation, tense figure and averted face suggest that the painter was already aware of bad relations between father and son, a state of affairs that would be confirmed by the latter’s rebellion in 902/1496–7” (p. 83). The undisguised explanation for the figure’s tension would be a distraction stimulated by the

bustle and commotion behind and before him—a scene of men transferring liquid between containers, delivering food, and leading a drunkard to the nearest exit. On a larger scale, though this is unstated, Brend’s essay engages a commonly held belief that the art of painting in royal books of the Iranian and Central Asian courts offered the possibility for both artists and patrons to express social intrigue and rivalry among members of the court.

History figures in a slightly different way in the essay by B. W. Robinson on “The Vicissitudes of Rustam,” an attempt to identify the creation of a fixed iconography for the hero of Firdawsi’s Shāhnāma. Here Robinson suggests that Timur’s campaign against the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I brought Iskandar Sultan, or the artist Pir Ahmad Baghshimâli, into contact with the classical and Hellenistic remains of Anatolia and that this exposure prompted the use of the leopard’s head mask in the iconography of a “compleat Rustam,” whose first example occurs in Iskandar Sultan’s 1410 Anthology (London, British Library, Add. 27261) from Shirâz (esp. p. 258). The idea of a landscape comprising the traces of many historical cultures of the past, which inspired artistic practice, could be taken much further than Robinson does here, especially considering the rich pre-Islamic history of the province of Fars which Iskandar Sultan governed, and it also poses the interesting problem of how these foreign and often historically distant artistic traditions were understood—and on what registers—and how artistic subject matters and motifs were adapted to new purposes.

There are other essays in The Iconography of Islamic Art that engage histories of iconography, not so much as moments of origination followed by reiteration, but through diachronic frameworks that highlight ongoing changes to objects and buildings over time, and hence imply a history of response. The principal examples, unsurprisingly, come through works of architecture and/or their sites, in the contributions of Avinoam Shalem (“Made for the Show: The Medieval Treasury of the Ka’ba in Mecca”) and Finbarr Barry Flood (“Persianate Trends in Sultanate Architecture: The Great Mosque of Bada’un”). Landmarks and their settings in particular are ideal for looking at vertical histories, because the repeated interventions made to buildings and their configurations over time are, more often than not, readily visible. Though each author follows a different agenda than a full study of diachronic history—Flood is interested in using the mosque at Bada’un to fill a “gap in the architectural record” (p. 159), Shalem in tracing the shift in the early Islamic period from the Ka’ba as a site of storage to a “space of display” (p. 269)—the reality of change over time is implicated in how they approach their materials.

A recurrent limitation evidenced in the essays of The Iconography of Islamic Art concerns the specific forms assumed by works of art and architecture. It is not that formal aspects of objects and buildings are not considered—they are frequently described for the purposes of laying out taxonomies and establishing variations from normative practice—but rather that media and their forms are not approached as choices that engender particular meanings. Two essays address this question directly, the first being “Silk, Pots and Jugs: Al-Jahiz and Objects of Common Use” by Oleg Grabar. Using al-Jâḥiẓ’s Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ as a source, Grabar scours the text to build a typology of references to the portable objects and furniture that make up the appurtenances of an early medieval Islamic household. It is a refreshing and innovative use of a source underutilized by art historians. Despite its brevity, the essay contains many useful insights and directions for future research, but more importantly poses the question of why some objects were made in certain media—glass in Grabar’s example—as opposed to others, and how choices of medium were related to use and sensory experience (p. 197). Grabar’s question exceeds issues of the function and suitability of medium to engage the affective properties of the work of art, the complete effect of the object as something seen and touched as well as being crafted into a shape and developed through visual motifs in the form of writing, figural, and non-figural designs.

The second essay to focus on the physical properties of medium, “‘Waves of the Sea’: Responses to Marble in Written Sources (Ninth-Fifteenth Centuries),” by Marcus Milwright, surveys the “imaginative projection[s]” (p. 212) of viewers who wrote about marble in Arabic and Persian literary sources, building productively on comparable traditions of description found in Classical and Byzantine sources. The Islamic sources record comparisons made between marble and water, flowering meadows, and patterned textiles, among others. The essay is a welcome contribution to a growing literature on Arabic
and Persianate aesthetics and the habit of cross-media references at work in the reception of works of Islamic art and architecture.

There are many intriguing materials and arguments presented in The Iconography of Islamic Art. And as they remain true to Hillenbrand’s “just do it” approach, they offer fascinating case studies for how one can elucidate the possible meanings of a work of art or architecture.

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Richard C. Taylor’s English translation of Averroes’s Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle is undoubtedly the most eagerly awaited translation of a work of Islamic philosophy of the past decades. This lengthy commentary—over four hundred pages of annotated text in the present edition—is arguably the most difficult to understand of all of Averroes’s commentaries. The translation was made from F. Stuart Crawford’s classic edition of the Latin translation (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953). Taylor explains that the translation is the result of a collaborative effort with Thérèse-Anne Druart, and thanks her for “providing invaluable detailed critique, comment, and advice on every part of the project in the role of subeditor.” The translation is introduced with a learned wide-ranging monograph of over one hundred pages, distilled from the leading studies of the past decades, including many by Taylor himself. Most of the introduction is dedicated to providing an eminently readable and coherent account of Averroes’s theory of the human intellect and the development of that theory through various stages.

The introduction begins with brief remarks on Averroes’s career as commentator and the dating of the long commentaries. The account is concise and to the point, although it may be noted that Sarah Stroumsa has recently questioned the veracity of al-Marrākūshī’s oft-cited report of Averroes’s encounters with Abū Yaʿqūb, the Almohad ruler. It may also be misleading to describe all of Averroes’s middle commentaries as “paraphrastic summaries” (p. xvi), although this description certainly fits some of them (there is also a lack of consistency in the form and structure of Averroes’s short commentaries; see Druart’s 1994 study, cited in the bibliography, where she muses whether Averroes had read the De anima carefully before writing the short commentary on it). Taylor is right to emphasize the distinction between Averroes’s philosophical commentaries as “for the most part demonstrative works” and works such as his Incoherence of the Incoherence as dialectical (pp. xviii–xix n. 7). In addition to the clear statement cited in n. 7 in defense of this claim, one might mention Averroes’s statement at the outset of the Incoherence where he states the book’s aim.

As is well known, Averroes wrote three kinds of commentaries on the De anima: an epitome or short commentary, a middle commentary, and the long commentary. In recent decades scholars have disagreed on the order in which these three commentaries were written, the relation among the three commentaries, and—given the fact that Averroes revised at least one and perhaps all of them—which commentary contains his final teachings on the soul and the intellect. Indeed, over the course of the three decades during which Averroes wrote his three commentaries on the De anima, he changed his views on various elements of the workings of the soul and the intellect. Most famously, he presents very different views of the material intellect in each of the three commentaries. These issues have been at the center of recent research on Averroes’s psychology, and are explored again in the introduction, beginning with Averroes’s early views on the human intellect. Taylor agrees with the scholarly opinion that “Averroes’s final philosophical position on the human intellect is to be found most complete in the Long Commentary on the De anima” (p. xxii; see also pp. xxxi, l–li). In the introduction he persuasively explains that Averroes’s views on this subject are developed over four distinct periods: that