

There are, of course, some faults. Although the author observes that some Tibetan consonants are later innovations (e.g. the palatalization of *ŋy, *mj > Tib. ny, pp. 78–85, 153–7), the historical phonology of Tibetan is less discussed, and thus most of the comparison is directly based on Written Tibetan. Furthermore, recent studies, especially those in Western languages, are somehow rarely cited, making some of the arguments appear rather conservative. For example, the author compares the Tib. *k* : *kh* : *g* etc. with Chinese *jiàn* 見 *k- : *qī* 溪 *kh- : *qún* 羣 *g- etc. (p. 48), but it is now generally believed that aspirated and unaspirated voiceless consonants in Tibetan are not phonemic (cf. Nathan W. Hill, “Aspirated and unaspirated voiceless consonants in Old Tibetan”, *Language and Linguistics* 8/2, 2007, 417–93). In the bibliography, some studies are referred to in Chinese instead of the original language, while others are not, which can make some items difficult to locate.

In conclusion, this book offers a concise presentation of the scholarship history and recent progress in Chinese-Tibetan linguistics. It will be particularly useful for those with a background in Chinese historical linguistics and interested in extending their knowledge to the fundamentals of the Tibetan language and script, as well as Sino-Tibetan comparative linguistics in general, while experts in the field will also find the book very enjoyable and inspiring to read.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X23000253

Antonio Almagro (ed.): *Arquitectura sa‘dí: Marruecos 1554–1659*

597 pp. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2022. €60. ISBN 978 84 00 11064 2.

Umberto Bongianino

The Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
umberto.bongianino@ames.ox.ac.uk

If we exclude the small sensation caused by the French “discovery” of the Saadian tombs in Marrakesh at the beginning of the twentieth century, the architecture of the Saadian (or Sa‘dí) dynasty has historically been neglected and disparaged. In his magnum opus *L’architecture musulmane d’Occident* (1954), Georges Marçais lumped Saadian architecture with that of the ensuing Alawite (or ‘Alawī) dynasty, considering both emblematic of cultural and social *décadence*. The only significant treatment of the subject in English so far, a chapter in Jonathan Bloom’s *Architecture of the Islamic West* (2021) where the “Sharifian dynasties of Morocco” are also discussed jointly, provides a useful yet hardly sympathetic introduction to the topic. The reassessment of Saadian architecture in its own right began in 2008, with the publication of Muḥammad Abū Riḥāb’s monograph *al-‘Amā‘ir al-dīniyya wa-l-janā‘iziyya bi-l-Maghrib fī ‘aṣr al-ashrāf al-Sa‘diyyīn* (“Religious and funerary architecture in Morocco in the age of the Saadian sharifs”), and it gained momentum with the sumptuously illustrated and capably researched *Marrakech: splendeurs saadiennes* by Xavier Salmon (2017). It is thanks to Antonio Almagro and his colleagues that we are now able to delve into a full-scale, thoroughly groundbreaking study of Saadian religious



and secular architecture, compellingly analysed in its technical aspects as well as its political, social, and aesthetic dimensions. The new picture that emerges from this study is not one of decadence, stagnation, and insularity, but of renewal and cosmopolitanism.

Arquitectura saʿdī is structured as an edited volume comprising eleven essays, ten in Spanish and one in French, prefaced by a historical introduction on the rise of the Saadians by Mercedes García-Arenal. Drawing on her previous work on the socio-political milieu of sixteenth-century Morocco and the personality of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (including her 2009 book *Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco*), García-Arenal aptly sets the scene for the following essays by highlighting the Saadians' competitive relations with the Ottoman, Portuguese, and Spanish powers of the day. Her overview is rich and informative, but it would have occasionally benefitted from more frequent references to the sources: to give but one example, Aḥmad al-Manṣūr is presented as "passionately fond of the eastern art of calligraphy, which [...] brought him to establish the first academic chair of calligraphy in Morocco" (p. 17), without mentioning where the information is taken from.

As the editor, Almagro contributes two essays to the volume: one is devoted to Saadian military architecture in Larache and Fes; the second is an exhaustive study of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr's greatest building project, the celebrated Badīʿ Palace of Marrakesh, erected between 1578 and 1594 and spoliated by the Alawites a century later. In 140 pages, Almagro synthesizes his investigations of more than fifteen years, rigorously reconstructing the original structure and its decorative apparatus on the basis of textual sources, building archaeology, and a masterful contextualization of the Badīʿ within Islamic palatial architecture, from the Alhambra to the Topkapı Palace. The essay is enhanced with newly drawn floor plans, hypothetical reconstructions of the elevations, and virtual recreations of the sumptuously decorated pavilions, arcades, ceilings, and water pools that once made the Badīʿ ("marvellous" in Arabic) worthy of its name. José Miguel Puerta Vílchez complements Almagro's architectural survey with a fascinating chapter on Aḥmad al-Manṣūr's passion for poetry, the intellectual milieu of his court, and the epigraphic programme of the palace as preserved in literary sources, featuring encomiastic poems originally carved on marble and wooden friezes. Puerta's Spanish translations of these incredibly elaborate texts are superb, and his argument on the symbiotic relationship between poetry and architecture establishes a compelling parallel between the Badīʿ and its illustrious predecessor, the Alhambra, showing that Islamic palatial "architecture" was more widespread than commonly thought.

The other major contribution to the volume is that of Íñigo Almela, a former student of Almagro who expands on his 2022 monograph *Arquitectura religiosa Saadí y desarrollo urbano* in three separate essays, respectively devoted to the socio-religious complexes of Muwāssīn and Bāb Dukkāla, the famous Ibn Yūsuf Madrasa, and the three *zawiyas* that the Saadians erected around the tombs of al-Jazūlī, Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Sabtī, and Yūsuf b. ʿAlī al-Ṣanhājī. Almela innovatively treats these sites as conglomerations of civic facilities and instruments of urban renewal, rather than as isolated monuments. With painstaking care, he collates the testimony of early modern sources, the documentation of previous scholarship, and the new data yielded by his own fieldwork, including original floor plans of the complexes and sections of the main buildings. The result is methodologically exemplary. Five more essays complete the volume: a useful discussion of the legacy of Almohad architecture in Saadian mosques by Alfonso Jiménez Martín; an overview of the recent restoration of the Saadian tombs by Faissal Cherradi; a study of the Muwāssīn bathhouse by Hasna Hadaoui, Aicha Gantouri, and Aba Sadki; and two technical analyses of Saadian wooden ceilings, by Enrique Nuere, and *muqarnas* domes, by Mila Piñuela. The latter chapters are especially noteworthy as they relate Saadian artisanal

practices to their Iberian counterparts, and to the contemporary manuals of *artesonado* carpentry by Andrés de San Miguel and Diego López de Arenas.

Arquitectura saʿdí is a tremendous addition to the limited number of research-based publications about Islamic art and material culture in Morocco. It is uplifting to see Saadian architecture being finally approached in all its complexity, rather than treated as a bizarre interlude or an insignificant appendix to the achievements of earlier dynasties. The scholarly depth and paradigm-shifting nature of this volume nicely match those of another collective work published in 2022: *Les livres du sultan. Matériaux pour une histoire du livre et de la vie intellectuelle du Maroc saadien*, by François Déroche, Nuria de Castilla, and Lbachir Tahali. To those interested in the reappraisal of this and other neglected phases in the history of the Maghrib, Almagro and his colleagues demonstrate the merit of combining the study of buildings with an in-depth reassessment of the ideological, religious, and intellectual motives that determined their construction.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X23000459