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- 1 The book deals with the 13th century encyclopaedia of natural history '*Ajā'ib al-maḥlūqāt wa ḡarā'ib al-mawjūdāt*' by Zakariyā' al-Qazwīnī. The analysis intends to define the place of Qazwīnī's work and the concept of the created world it presents within the framework of the intellectual history of Muslim culture (p. 15). This is done, first, by trying to establish a biography of Qazwīnī, including his birth date (1202), mainly based upon material found in works by Ibn Fuwatī and in Qazwīnī's own geographical text *Āṭār al-bilād*. Even if one would not accept every conclusion of the author, she sketches a plausible picture of Qazwīnī's historical and intellectual background.
- 2 Second, the main part of the book analyses the '*Ajā'ib al-maḥlūqāt*' by comparing selected entries to descriptions of the same subjects in other Arabic and Persian works from a wide range of genres, which may have been used as sources by Qazwīnī. The passages chosen for comparison are from the chapters on animals and on angels. As a result, Qazwīnī's selection and arrangement of information appears as the most comprehensive, systematic and consistent presentation, at the same time quite comprehensible and entertaining. The author convincingly shows how far Qazwīnī smoothly integrated philosophical ideas.
- 3 The '*Ajā'ib al-maḥlūqāt*' text mainly used by Hees is that of the oldest known copy, the Munich manuscript cod. arab. 464 of 1280. She only shortly discusses problems of textual tradition and seems unaware of the real differences between the first and the second redaction. Basing the analysis on a manuscript comprising the second redaction means brushing aside the first, no less widely distributed redaction with its condensed, somewhat more demanding (including language), and less entertaining text. It was this redaction that was dedicated to 'Alā' al-Dīn Juwaynī, as its earliest manuscript (about

1300, British Library, Or. 14140) reveals. The dedication is originally absent from the second redaction, that was obviously intended to appeal to a larger public. Therefore, the conclusions drawn by the author pertain, strictly speaking, only to the second redaction of Qazwīnī's work. Her positive assessment of the *ʿAjāʾib al-maḥlūqāt* as an outstanding compendium of natural history will stand.

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nompropre Qazwīnī, Zakariyā' al-Qazwīnī, 'Alā' al-Dīn Juwaynī, Ibn Fuwatī, Juwaynī

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