

ISLAM

WHITCOMB, D. (Ed.) — Changing the Social Identity with the Spread of Islam. Archaeological Perspectives. (Oriental Institute Seminars, Number 1). Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago, 2004. (25.5 cm, X, 101). ISBN 1-885923-34-1. \$ 17.95.

As the editor stresses in the preface of his book, little attention has been paid to Islamic archaeology so far. Usually the interest in the Islamic period is historically based. Hence the book is a very important contribution to the development of the study of Islamic archaeology worldwide.

This book is the result of a seminar aimed at a “comparative analysis of different sites and regions, based on archaeological monuments or artifacts and exploring processes of adaptation or adjustment to local cultural complexes”. The assembled group of archaeologists has their field of study in different countries and in different periods (which makes comparison difficult), but their common interest in this seminar is the impact of the adoption of Islam in their regions and on their own previous cultures. How can archaeological evidence be used to interpret this impact of adoption of Islam, the “social change”, what questions are raised by archaeological data and what is the connection between data and historical sources?

The process of Islamization is “not a single act of conversion, but a long process toward greater conformity and orthodoxy”, which is expressed by the change of architecture or objects as signs or symbols which express this new identity.

Five authors, namely Jodie Magness, Tracy Hoffman, Yury Karev, Mark C. Horton and Timothy Insoll, presented case studies in this monograph. The contributions of the participants of the discussion, which could have expressed the results of the seminar are, unfortunately, missing.

Jodie Magness’ case study is based primarily on architecture. Pottery is used to date the archaeological site. The change of architecture in the Islamic period is defined by the appearance of small rooms all of equal dimension. There is no clear evidence of a second storey and of a differentiation in dwelling size or elaboration within. Differences which can be found in cities are the decentralised position of sacred buildings, narrow, private streets or cul-de-sacs with houses on each side and the suqs filling the former open areas. Differences can be explained “not so much by a different system of patronage or commercial activity, but in the location”.

Tracy Hoffman bases her study on an analysis of public institutions (if little evidence of institutions was found, the focus must, for example, be on public institutions, — written records — and mosaics) and vernacular architecture. The dating system is based on stratigraphy and ceramics found within bundings. In most of the structures excavated at Ascalon there is a pattern of reuse and renovation of the buildings constructed during the Byzantine period. In addition there are new buildings with unregulated growth and the status of non-public areas was maintained. The author stresses that private architecture must be used as a tool for examining social identity rather than public buildings.

Yury Karev opens with the dilemma that “on the one hand we have clear indications of the construction activity of the Muslims in Samarqand, and on the other hand the great scarcity of archaeological data”. The remains of a sacred

building features an outlay and size that did not belong to local tradition, but local features, such as the lack of symmetry and irregularity of the general setting, did. This suggests that the building of a mosque introduced another irregular orientation while other buildings still followed the ancient traditional orientation. Another example is the layout of the palace: in the Islamic period the rooms are built around a central courtyard. Furthermore the author stresses that there was an influence on ceramics and also a large production of baked bricks.

Mark C. Horton suggests that a different approach must be taken when studying urban or village environments. While in the village environment there were weak political ties, in the major cities there are only economic and religious ones. Towns should be studied in terms of “Islamic practices of piety and charity (...) women and houses (...) and honour and reputation of men”. The author states that the geographical knowledge of the position of Mecca was not always correct which means that early Islamic buildings do not necessarily face Mecca, with which I agree. Also a lack of *mihrābs* in early buildings does not necessarily exclude an Islamic presence. The author suggests that mosques and burials are the only reliable indicator for conversion to Islam, but this diagnosis then excludes other buildings and ceramics. The author is correct in stressing that the study of Islam must be done “within the framework of a complex understanding of African society as a whole”.

Timothy Insoll states that “the influence of religion can be all-encompassing and can potentially influence all aspects of life”. Religion is a social institution, an idea which is also described by anthropologists such as E. Durkheim and R. Rappaport. This indicates that religion can be seen as “a primary structuring agent for the archaeological record”. The problem with this is that religious actions can be embedded within daily actions each with its own function. The author also stresses the secularity of archaeologists and the problem they have with the notion of religion. Influences of Islam can be seen by changing grave inscriptions (1100-1300), by the adoption of the name of the prophet and the two first caliphs, house constructions -which changed from round to square or rectangular- and in Islamic law restrictions on the African cuisine. The author uses the word syncretism as “the blending or fusing of different religious traditions or elements that can emerge as a practical mechanism for reconciling time” to explain the stage of conversion to Islam for different social groupings. He argues that the first converts in West Africa were the nomads. They were the first to have contact with Islam resulting from trade. What can be seen archaeologically is that they changed their cemetery pattern to Islamic norms. The second group to convert are the people in urban areas. For them the notion of community was of importance to overcome ethnic differences. The last group to convert to Islam were the bulk of the population, the sedentary agriculturalists, because here the old conceptual balance of ancestral belief would be broken or altered. This group adhered to urn burial, grave-goods and figural statues, all prohibited by Islam. However, it is important to note, in contradiction to what the author states, that grave-goods were and are common in Islamic cemeteries, so this is by no means a sign of conversion. The last important statement is that the Islamic world can be recognized by changing social identity.

The five authors have shown that Islamic influences are present in archaeological data and that Islamic public archi-

ecture can be universal. That the African culture is complex and the impact of Islam different in each previous culture has also been discussed. Phenomena such as social change, religion and culture must be dealt with cautiously. What becomes clear is that each excavation has its own data, such as -public- architecture, ceramics and burials, which can be best used. This makes comparison between different sites difficult. Besides that, each author has his or her own preference for particular data to prove Islamic influences.

In short, the book covers many angles of approach, which should be finished with a concluding discussion.

The Hague, April 2006

Marloes BORSBOOM

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RADTKE, B. — Neue kritische Gänge. Zu Stand und Aufgaben der Sufikforschung/New Critical Essays. On the Present State and Future Tasks of the Study of Sufism. M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, Utrecht, 2005. (19 cm, XIV, 330). ISBN 90-801040-6-X. € 50,-, available through houtsma.stichting@ision.nl.

Bernd Radtke, a disciple of the late Fritz Meier of Basel, offers the reader specially interested in the study of Islamic mysticism a collection of five articles, four of them in German, the last one in English, which were not published before. All are examples of the most severe form of philological elaboration and probing criticism, mixed with not a little sarcasm such as are rarely met today in the review sections of our scholarly journals.

The first is about the life's work of Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003), the well known German Islamologist, who was the victim of a vicious attack by many of her colleagues and other members of the intelligentsia in Germany at the occasion of the awarding to her of the prestigious *Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels* in 1995. Radtke does not approve of those colleagues but neither has he any appreciation for the quality of Schimmel's Orientalist scholarship. He questions whether her work has contributed at all to a greater understanding between East and West and qualifies her publications as products of a pathological need for harmonization. Everything Islamic is "wunderbar" to her. Schimmel seems to suffer from "a conscious/subconscious suppression of the reality" (p. 6) in her study of Islamic mysticism in aid of creating the image of a "warmer" (p. 7) Islam by transmitting to the Western public a "peace-friendship-sweet egg cake sufism" or "sweetened marmalade sufism" (p. 7). The success of her books must be due to the public's ignorance of the really sound introductory works on the meaning of Islamic mysticism such as by Fritz Meier ("The Mystic Path", in Bernard Lewis (ed.), *The World of Islam* (London 1976), pp. 117-128).

The second article forms the main part of the book. Pages 29 to 201 are devoted to a critical re-edition in (transcribed) text and translation of Ibn al-ʿArabī's "Treatise of the Lights" (*Risālat al-Anwār* or *Kitāb al-Khalwa*) dealing with the Prophet Muhammad's ascension (*miʿrāj*). An extensive critical apparatus is offered on the text of this popular religious tract, known in a multitude of mss. and printed editions. Radtke used only ten of them. To construct a stemma of a textual tradition as this one is unfeasible, this is well known.

The treatise has been translated before, *i.a.* by Rabia Terri Harris, *Journey to the Lord of Power* (London and the Hague 1981), with the notes by ʿAbd al-Karīm Jīlī and an introduction by the Djerrahi derwish sheikh Muzaffer Ozak, who was well known to Western Orientalist booklovers at his shop in the Istanbul book bazaar of Beyazit. Radtke, in his commentary to this and other editions and/or translations, has chosen the books of William Chittick, *The Sufi Path* (1989) and *The Self-Disclosure of God* (1998) for close consultation. The result is a detailed analysis of the contents followed by an edition and a new translation in German by our author and one in English by John O'Kane, each following per paragraph. Radtke's intermediate commentaries and criticism on his predecessors are always very sharp in noting error and imprecise interpretation due to a lack of proper philological training.

Article three (pp. 203-250) is a critical appreciation of present day on-going research on Islamic mysticism in Germany. Needless to say, it is a merciless philological commentary on a number of mystical texts published by Anke von Kügelgen, Ashirbek Muminov and Michael Kemper, *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia. Vol. 3: Arabic, Persian and Turkic Manuscripts (15th-19th Centuries)* (Berlin 2000). A selected number of the ten texts published, some in facsimile, most in modern edition plus translation and commentary in German, Russian and English, are the subject of a devastating linguistic and philological analysis. Radtke distributes his criticisms piecemeal per part of the originals, which is a very indigestible process for any but the interested specialist in this field. Once more the conclusions are pointing to the incompetence of the "victims" brought about by their lack of proper schooling.

This piece is followed by a review of an article published by Christopher Melchert, "The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E." in *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996), pp. 51-70. When dealing with this scholar, who is a declared follower of the theories ventilated by Max Weber on the development of Islamic mysticism, our critic sets out to demonstrate that these theories are devoid of any base in the (textual, of course) sources produced by the mystics themselves, if only properly understood by means of a sound philological analysis. Poor Melchert's efforts are condemned to a sorry state of uselessness, no mistake!

As an extra the work of Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint. Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin 1998), is adduced to refute Clifford Geertz and all his works as being "dilettant", "incompetent", indeed "brazen generalizations" (p. 289).

The last contribution to criticism of recent studies of Islamic mysticism, ancient and modern, consists of looking again at the article published by both Radtke and Sean O'Fahey, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered" in *Der Islam* 70 (1993), pp. 52-87. O'Fahey in the meantime has disassociated himself from Radtke's scholarly approach. By means of a careful scrutiny of a great number of relevant publications of himself and others, listed on pp. 294-296 our author finds himself vindicated on the concept of Neo-Sufism being no more than a unreliable generalization.

One of the major causes of the sorry state of studies on Islamic mysticism Bernd Radtke deems to be that the precious scholarly publications in this field by such masters as Fritz Meier, Helmuth Ritter and Richard Gramlich are being ignored because written in German and hence not under-

standable for the great majority of the present generations of researchers.

This whole volume is a remarkable example of valuable though pitiless scholarly criticism without any concessions to readability. Texts in (transcribed) Arabic and Persian mingle with German, English, French and Spanish. The minute details are at times printed in the smallest typeface. All this is a pity since now only the very keen fellow Orientalist will discover the philological and other entertaining delights contained in this deceptively small sized booklet.

Leiden University, May 2006

Alexander H. DE GROOT

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DAFTARY, F. and J.W. MERI (Eds.) — Culture and memory in medieval Islam. Essays in honour of Wilferd Madelung. I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2003. (22,3 cm, XVI, 464). ISBN 1-86064-859-2. £ 25,-.

Doubts about collective volumes, especially relatively unfocused volumes such as Festschriften or conference proceedings, have repeatedly been uttered. Addressing such doubts, Josef Meri, one of the editors, starts this Festschrift with a *captatio benevolentiae* stating (p. 1) that even though this according to some “unprofitable enterprise may well in time fade from the collective memory of academia, or at least, from the realm of conventional academic publishing”, he sees it as our humanist duty not to give in to such trends.

The resulting book materialized with support of the Institute for Ismaili Studies, which has been instrumental in publishing a number of Madelung’s source publications. It is certainly not an unfocused volume, concentrating as it does on some of Madelung’s major spheres of interest, namely the development of Shi’ism and the legitimization of power. The contributions are of high academic standing, and the volume is a must for any library collection on Islamic history.

The Festschrift is divided into three parts. Part I, “The Transmission of Knowledge”, starts with George Makdisi, “Universities, Past and Present”, an article written in 1990. It offers no new information, but gives a useful summary of the findings laid down in Makdisi’s earlier publications.

Sabine Schmidtke writes about an *ijāza* relevant for the history of Twelver Shi’ism in Bahrayn. Especially useful is the extensive bibliography about *ijāza* which she includes in note 1.

Martin J. McDermott, one of the contributors who published jointly with Madelung (1991: Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Kitāb al-mu’tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*), writes a short note discussing the puzzling views of Abū Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, a student of Ibn al-Jabbār, on God’s volition. Baṣrī says that volition is God’s motive for his acts. McDermott gives Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s explanation of Baṣrī’s point of view, but fails to inform us whether he personally feels satisfied with this explanation.

A Shi’ī core question forms the topic of Andrew J. Newman, namely the traditions on occultation in the works of the Qummī traditionalist Kulaynī and those in the *Kitāb al-Ghayba* of his student al-Kātib al-Nu’mānī. The difference between them turns out to lie mainly in the sources, Qummī sources for Kulaynī, non-Qummī ones for al-Nu’mānī.

Fascinating is the contribution of Emilie Savage-Smith, “Memory and Maps”, showing the author’s usual keen

analysis and vivacity of mind: her explanation of certain types of Islamic maps in terms of the well-known map of the London Underground is very elucidating. I hope she has read, and appreciated, Ruth Rendell’s *Solomon’s Carpet*!

Wadād al-Qādī gives a lucid and informative analysis of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī’s attitude towards Shi’ism in the historical, theological and experiential sphere, showing how he struggled to keep upright -in writing as well as in practice- his Sunnī views on the position of ‘Alī and the Prophet’s family against the overwhelming Shi’ī tide and its re-interpretation of sources and events.

In Part II, “Memorializing, Remembering and Forgetting”, a variety of subjects come up, such as the matter of “Persianizing” earlier material (the contributions of Elton L. Daniel, about Bal’amī on early Islamic history, and that of Abbas Amanat, “*Meadows of the Martyrs*: Kāshifi’s Persianization of the Shi’i Martyrdom Narrative in the late Timūrid Herat”).

Joseph Bell writes about Daylamī’s seventh sign of man’s love for God, described by al-Daylamī as “rejoicing in the remembrance of His blessings and favours to you” (p. 192). The article focuses on a beautiful anecdote about Abraham illustrating this concept and on its treatment by various authors.

Julia Bray’s contribution is devoted to the function of lists as an organizational device, a mnemonic technique and a way to shape cultural memory. She describes some of the principles involved, such as enumeration and contrasting, and points out that didactic mnemonic lists such as the one in Ibn Qutayba’s *Ma’ārif* are by no means an end in themselves, but present a stage in the author’s cultural agenda. She then analyzes the essential difference between Ibn Qutayba’s list of quotations from Genesis and that in *al-Muḥabbar* of Muḥammad ibn Ḥabībī, describing them in terms of modern databases.

References to a widely known folklore theme come up in David J. Wasserstein’s interesting contribution, “A Jonah Theme in the Biography of Ibn Tūmart”.

Madelung’s direct scholarly influence is discernable in those contributions which explicitly refer to his publications. These mostly are in evidence in Part III of the volume, “Commemorating Rulers, Dynasties and Conquests”.

This part includes Michael L. Bates’ contribution on “Khurāsānī Revolutionaries and al-Mahdī’s Title”. Further, Luke Treadwell, “*Shāhānshāh* and *al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad*”, addresses a theme close to Madelung’s heart, namely the legitimization of power. Treadwell focuses on the way this matter was handled in Sāmānid and Būyid Iran.

Ismail K. Poonawala firmly builds on earlier work done by Madelung, and focuses on Qādī al-Nu’mān’s description in his *Ifṭitāḥ al-da’wa wa-ibtidā’ al-dawla* of the rise of Fatimid power as the result of Ismaili propaganda. Poonawala analyzes Nu’mān’s presentation of the facts as an attempt to draw a parallel to the events that took place in the early days of Islam, when the Prophet’s small army managed to defeat the much more numerous Quraysh. Poonawala inelegantly, and unjustly, attacks Wadād al-Qādī, editor of the *Ifṭitāḥ*, accusing her of having “failed to realize Nu’mān’s interest and purpose for writing the *Ifṭitāḥ*... like most conventional historians of Islam she was probably looking for dry facts or ‘objective’ history” (p. 352).

Paul E. Walker published jointly with Madelung basic source material on the rise of the Fatimids (*The Advent of the*

Fatimids; Ibn al-Haytham's Kitāb al-Munāzarāt, London 2000). In his contribution, "Purloined Symbols of the Past: The Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and Fatimids", Walker, like Treadwell, connects to Madelung's many studies on the legitimization of power. It provides interesting new facts on the Fatimids' dealing with symbolic objects of legitimacy, successful at first, but later turning against them.

Saïd Amir Arjomand delves into the question of authority in connection with the transition of Shi'ism from a sectarian religion to the state religion of Iran. Working in the line of Madelung's ground-breaking studies on authority in Twelver Shi'ism, he deals with a fairly short but crucial period, and makes ample use of political and ethical treatises to show how the blending of the Greek and the Persian traditions was instrumental in shaping a concept of the ruler-Mahdī that made possible the Safavid move to make Twelver Shi'ism the state religion.

Pieter Smoor, concluding the volume, explains how the poet 'Umāra tried to stay afloat in a time of political intrigue involving a quick succession of Fatimid viziers. Smoor aptly analyzes 'Umāra's laudatory poems to several of these viziers, and also shows us the difference between the views of 'Umāra on the vizier Shāwar expressed in poetry and in his memoirs. 'Umāra's poetical turn of having a pretty girl swoon over the vizier Ruzzīk earns him an outraged (or acclamatory?) exclamation mark of Smoor on the mention of Ruzzīk's age at the time, fifty years old (p. 417).

As is customary, the volume contains a short biography as well as a full bibliography of Madelung's publications.

Leiden University, January 2006

Remke KRUK

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WAARDENBURG, J. — *Muslim-Christian Perceptions of Dialogue Today*. Editions Peeters, Leuven, 2000. (24 cm, 360). ISBN 90-429-0874-2; 2-87723-502-5. BEF 1500; € 38,-.

This volume contains the papers prepared for a symposium, organized in Crêt Bérard (Lausanne), Switzerland, in December 1997, on the present state of Muslim-Christian dialogue. As stated by the editor in the introduction, "the actual reality of Muslim-Christian (...) dialogue has turned out to be rather different from the ideals that the bishops at Vatican II or the theologians of the World Council of Churches had in mind". It is clear that almost ten years after this symposium these words have lost nothing of their actuality; hence this study which purports to focus on the reality of dialogue, with much attention for the specific contexts of "dialogue" rather than envisaging it from an "idealistic" perspective is much needed and of interest not only to scholars, but to a much wider public.

In the introduction, the editor discusses the concept of dialogue, with insightful remarks on the different levels on which "dialogue" is carried out. The first two articles offering some fundamental reflections on the concept of dialogue continue this discussion. In the first paper, *Dialogue des religions ou sur les religions?*, Abdou Filali-Ansari (Casablanca) considers the many present-day dialogues, exchanges and encounters which take place either between official representatives

of religious institutions or between individuals as unrealistic and idealistic, since they neglect the societal and ethical aspects of religion. An alternative to these forms of dialogue can be found in a common (by representatives of the different parties) study *on* religion in order to free it from interpretations conditioned by historical or local developments, abuse and reifications, contributing in this way not only to a reduction of obsolete or "dogmatic" theologies and the rejection of all modern forms of "instrumentalization" of religion, but especially to promoting a universal ethical sensitivity.

The second article, *Reflections on Mutual Perceptions and Dialogue*, by Tarek Mitri, former coordinator of the desk of inter-religious relations of the WCC (Genève) and professor in Balamand, but actually the minister of culture in the Lebanese government, draws attention to the often idealistic perceptions which Christians and Muslims have of each other, not taking into account the plurality of Christian and Muslim self-understandings, and discusses the consequences of wrong perceptions for any Muslim-Christian dialogue on religion, society and state. Special attention is given to the simplistic opposition as Christianity seen by many Muslims as a spiritual religion and Islam perceived by many Christian as a call to theocracy.

After these two general introductory papers, a number of case studies are offered to the reader. K. Steenbrink (University of Utrecht) analyzes the situation in Indonesia in the period 1965-1998. He gives a survey of government initiatives for interreligious dialogue, which are generally characterized by a preference for issues of law and order, whereas private initiatives, by churches or individuals tend to focus on common initiatives for social (and political) actions. Strictly theological issues are considered less important. E. Méténier (IFEA, Damascus) discusses Christian-Muslim dialogue in Egypt, distinguishing between the general Muslim-Christian encounters which affect also the situation in Egypt, since it houses some prestigious universal authoritative Muslim institutions such as al-Azhar, and the relations between the local Churches (orthodox, catholic and protestant Copts) and the local Egyptian Islamic community. Especially, the inventory of initiatives taken by the different Coptic communities shows the author's familiarity with the local situation. His reflections on the gap between a Muslim-Christian encounter of intellectuals and the absence of dialogue between the majority of Coptic and Muslim believers, seem to confirm some intuitions discussed in the first two articles. Jacques Levrat (Rabat) describes the particular situation of Morocco. From his experience as director of "La Source", a Catholic research centre on Morocco and the Arabic Muslim world in general, he describes how encounters at "La Source" can lead to dialogue on a scientific, cultural and personal level. The author stresses the fact that dialogue on this neutral, cultural level can help to demystify interreligious dialogue where the "Other", belonging to a different religion, is necessarily perceived as different. Mokdad Arfa Mensia (Tunis) describes the particular form of dialogue practised by the well-known Groupe de Recherches Islamo-Chrétien (GRIC), constituted in 1977. Dialogue is explicitly situated here within the context of faith. Christians and Muslims should recognize each other first of all as believers, not in the sense of members of different religions, but as "brothers in faith in God". A Siddiqui (U.K.) presents an interesting and concrete analysis of the challenges and difficulties of co-existence and dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Great-Britain. K. Steenbrink does the

same for the Netherlands, giving a detailed description of the factors preventing or promoting contacts between Muslims and Christians. Christian Troll (Rome) analyzes some Catholic documents on Christian-Muslim dialogue, firstly, the general official declarations, such as the documents issued at Vatican II or some papal letters and messages; secondly, some documents issued by the local Catholic hierarchies in the Middle East and North Africa. The final paper by J.C. Basset (Lausanne) tackles again the issue of dialogue in general. The book ends with a postscript by the editor with some personal reflections inspired by the Symposium.

Generally speaking, this volume not only contributes in a substantial way to the discussion on the very concept of dialogue in general or of Muslim-Christian dialogue, approaching it from different perspectives, it also gives original and first hand information on the day-to-day reality (positive and negative) of Muslim-Christian encounter in varying cultural settings. It is regrettable that the situation in countries like Turkey, Syria and Lebanon (with many interesting initiatives) could not be taken into account. The work contains an index of personal names and a most useful index of technical terms and expressions. This volume is a worthy successor to two preceding volumes on Muslim and Christian reciprocal perceptions, also edited by Prof. Waardenburg. Its value is still enhanced by a most useful “selected bibliography” composed by the editor.

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