

a pleasing uniform typeface. No attempt has been made to make the articles consistent in spelling, transliteration or reference style. A brief index has been provided at the end of volume 4. All the articles are models of scholarship and their 'critical concepts' vary widely, as is appropriate.

Certain elements of these volumes raise considerable concern, however. They are plagued by issues of accuracy and copyright. 'Von Isaiah Goldfeld', listed as the author (in three separate places!) of an article reprinted from the German journal *Der Islam*, is really quite humorous. Some typos are almost inevitable in volumes of this dimension and character, and it is pointless to list them here. The chronological list of the publication dates of articles will surely mislead beginning students in catastrophic ways because it prevents the reader from achieving any sense of the history of scholarship's approach to the Quran: articles by Nöldeke, St. Clair-Tisdall and Jeffery (by whom there are two pieces which are here blended into one with no explanation) are listed as having been published in 1998 because they are reprinted from Ibn Warraq's *The Origins of the Koran* rather than having their original dates of 1891, 1901, 1935 and 1937 (respectively) listed prominently. The same thing happens with two articles credited to my *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation* (1999) and six from my *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents* (2001). Furthermore, the reprints from these three volumes raise concerns about copyright that really should worry every scholar: in the case of my volumes, I do not believe that the publisher holds rights that could appropriately be reassigned to Turner's volumes. In one case (Bijlefeld), the original publication is found in *The Muslim World* (as is one of Jeffery's articles which was reprinted from Ibn Warraq's volume, with 'permission' granted by Prometheus and Brill [!]). That is a journal from which the editor apparently secured republication rights for several other articles; however, for this particular article which I republished in *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents*, credit is given to Ashgate. This is sloppy in the extreme and hardly excused by the legal 'disclaimer' at the beginning of the book which claims that 'every effort' has been made to contact copyright holders. Mistakes happen certainly, and one or two such obvious mis-assignments might be excused, but in these volumes it really goes beyond such limits.

A. RIPPIN

MICHAEL G. CARTER:

*Sibawayhi.*

(Makers of Islamic Civilization.) viii, 159 pp. London and New York: Oxford University Press, I.B. Tauris, 2004. £9.99.

This book is published as part of the Makers of Islamic Civilization Series, which explores outstanding figures in the history of Islamic culture and learning. The subject is the distinguished Arabic grammarian Sibawayhi, who lived in the mid-eighth century CE in the city of Basra. He was the author of a work which represents the earliest systematic study of the Arabic language. The text, appositely entitled *al-Kitāb* (the Book), served as the *magnum opus* of the classical Arabic linguistic tradition. Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* was distinctive not only in terms of its revolutionary attempt to examine the language of the Arabs within the framework of a general theory of language, but also because it adopted an inventive approach to the analysis of the syntactic, morphological, and

phonological features of the Arabic language, employing legal–ethical paradigms. The book under review is an attempt to introduce those interested in the history of Arabic grammar to the scholarly accomplishments of the author of this outstanding text, highlighting the historical context in which the *Kitāb* was conceived. Michael Carter is a respected authority on both classical Arabic grammatical thought and Sībawayhi's role in its refinement and development. His unpublished PhD thesis entitled 'A study of Sībawayhi's principles of grammatical analysis' (1968) remains an authoritative and discerning exposition of this original grammatical text. Indeed, as we shall witness, Carter's insights into the nature of the early Arabic grammatical tradition, together with his assured understanding of its conceptual complexities, are effectively marshalled to unravel the text's technical features.

Examining the origins of the development of Arabic linguistic thought, Carter argues that Arabic grammar did not exist as a comprehensively defined discipline before the advent of Sībawayhi and his *Kitāb*. Classical biographical literature, which places the beginnings of linguistic thought within the confines of the activities of the early codifiers of the Quran and those engaged in its functional preservation, is therefore of little utility in aiding the reconstruction of its genuine history. In Carter's view these accounts do not inspire confidence as they provide an idealized version of the inception of linguistic thought. He comments that there are no extant tracts or treatises to substantiate many of the claims found in these biographical notices. Furthermore, the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi shows no evidence of being critically shaped by the supposed enterprise of these earlier pioneers. The same biographical notices refer to a profusion of luminaries who are purportedly recalled as having been mentors of Sībawayhi. Carter explains that a circumspect review of the context in which Sībawayhi's peers and predecessors are mentioned in the *Kitāb* reveals that their opinions and thoughts are invariably adduced to illustrate an argument or perspective with which he disagrees, or which he qualifies; the *Kitāb* therefore represents Sībawayhi's unique and unsurpassed contribution to Arabic grammatical thought.

Carter concludes that there are two noteworthy scholars who can be justifiably regarded as genuine mentors of Sībawayhi. One is the celebrated Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (d. 175/791–2), noted for his enterprise in lexicography, prosody, and philology, and the other is Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 183/799–800), an individual whose reputation as a philologist and grammarian was exceptional. The former is quoted in the *Kitāb* on 608 occasions, the latter some 217 times. However, Carter takes the view that Sībawayhi had set out to discover the organizing principles of Arabic by adopting a deliberately descriptive approach to grammar. He surpassed the hitherto rudimentary enterprise of his peers, predecessors, and even those individuals designated as his mentors. It is evident that the informative chapters in this monograph on syntax, morphology and phonology demonstrate the advanced and sophisticated levels of theoretical discourse consistently maintained in the *Kitāb*. A further crucial point relates to historical developments in the subsequent emergence of the so-called schools of Arabic linguistic thought and the attempts by later linguists to associate themselves with the *Kitāb*. This was viewed as a text whose reputation was in the ascendancy. Carter also uses the subtle shifts in positions to explain the proliferation of biographical anecdotes placing earlier grammarians within the compass of critical thought expounded upon in the *Kitāb*, although it has to be admitted that the same biographical notices furnish critical details regarding its textual transmission.

The issue of the origins of Arabic linguistic thought is tackled on the basis that the oldest surviving exhaustive work of grammar is the *Kitāb; ex hypothesi*, grammar (*naḥw*) only comes into being proper with this very text. Carter argues there is no evidence to suggest that Greek, Syriac and Indian antecedents in the study of language served as the hypothetical basis for Sībawayhi's grammatical constructs. A number of scholars such as the late Rafael Talmon contended that the linguistic traditions of antiquity supplied the paradigms and the precepts for the development of Arabic linguistic thought, although his line of reasoning was always tempered with the realization that Sībawayhi's grammatical achievements represented a genuine break with existing conventions in linguistic thought. Another scholar, Kees Versteegh, concluded that early quranic exegesis served as the discipline through which grammatical concepts were originally cultivated and refined. Carter believed that the inspiration for the Sībawayhian model of grammar came principally from the discipline of Islamic law. Having been trained in this discipline, Sībawayhi was able to transpose standard legal–ethical concepts and methodologies into his own theoretical synthesis of the study of the phenomenon of language. Scholars who dispute this thesis advocate that there existed a rich stock of grammatical terminology and notions from which Sībawayhi was able to draw. It is also maintained that the *Kitāb* presupposes a distinct awareness of linguistic ideas among Sībawayhi's contemporaries and immediate predecessors; this is something Carter accepts, although he remarks that it does not diminish the unparalleled theoretical achievements of the *Kitāb*.

In presenting an overview of the sources utilized by Sībawayhi in the *Kitāb* Carter observes that quranic usages and structures were employed in the text to bring to light Sībawayhi's own ideas about grammatical constructions and models of speech. He concludes that the *Kitāb* did not set out to establish the grammatical features of the Quran as an archetype for ordinary communication. Sībawayhi's criticism of certain readings of the Quran is highlighted to give some perspective to the authority of readings at this early juncture in the history of the Islamic tradition. This also leads to the statement that there is no trace in the *Kitāb* of the concept of the linguistic inimitability of the Quran (the doctrine of *i'jāz*). However, in the grammatical literature of the early linguists the commanding status awarded to the language of the Quran is essentially *a priori*; it did not require qualification given the format and objectives of the *Kitāb*. The issue of Sībawayhi's approach to the grammatical authentication of quranic readings does not impinge upon the integrity of their established authority as sources within the early reading tradition, a tradition which attached particular value to these readings' devotional import. Moreover, one has to bear in mind that the nature of grammatical variance among these readings was infinitesimal in countenance. It is fascinating to observe that a pedantic treatment of the idiosyncratic grammatical features of quranic readings was championed by scholars before Sībawayhi and continued among grammarians even in the centuries after his passing. This very fact does not reflect attitudes towards readings within the Islamic tradition *per se*, although it does demonstrate the very broad confines within which grammarians were able to operate and express their views candidly.

It is difficult to do this book justice within the confines of this brief review; its principal achievement is that it succeeds in lucidly presenting not only the grammatical intricacies and workings of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, but also the extent of its legacy within the tradition of Arabic grammatical thought. I came across one typographical error on p. 34: compilation for compilation. This book will

serve as an invaluable introduction to the history of Arabic linguistic thought, serving researchers and interested readers. Students embarking upon the study of Arabic and Islamic studies would also benefit from reading this text.

MUSTAFA SHAH

ABBAS POYA:

*Anerkennung des Iğtihād—Legitimation der Toleranz. Möglichkeiten innerer und äußerer Toleranz im Islam am Beispiel der Iğtihād-Diskussion.*

178 pp. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003.

In this short book, Abbas Poya explores a possible relationship between the modern notion of tolerance and the Muslim juristic concept of *ijtihād*. The work raises some important questions for Muslims who might wish to use the scholastic tradition as a source for the justification of modern social desiderata, such as ‘tolerance’. Poya places his analysis of both concepts (*ijtihād* and tolerance) within the epistemological structures which dominate classical juristic discussions. There are, on the one hand, doctrines which are known with certainty to be true. These include not only theological dogma (the existence of a single deity and the creation of the world, for example), but also certain general legal, moral and ritual duties (that one is commanded to pray or go on pilgrimage, pay alms and fast, for example). On the other hand, there are legal issues on which there is debate and dispute—and in these areas, the jurist is able to perform his personal juristic reasoning (these being the *masā’il ijtihādīyya*). This distinction (between certain doctrine and debatable jurisprudence) leads to an epistemological distinction between areas of religious investigation where knowledge is possible (*qaṭ’iyyāt*) and where it is not (*ẓanniyyāt*). The fact that there is a potential for diversity of opinion in the latter, and that the majority of both Sunni and Shii jurists have accepted this is, for Poya, a fissure in the apparently monolithic apparatus of Muslim Sharī’a discourse. Into this fissure, a modern concept such as tolerance might be wedged. Acceptance of juristic difference brought about by a jurist’s *ijtihād* could be seen as a model for an expression of Islam which permits diversity of opinion (*contra* popular mythology), and from a broader perspective, an Islam which can participate fully in a democratic system. Or at least, so it might seem. In fact, as Poya concludes, the acceptance of juristic difference within the Muslim legal tradition does not necessarily lead to tolerance as it is usually conceived.

Poya’s discussion begins with a survey of the various attitudes towards *ijtihād* found in both Sunni and Imāmī Shii traditions (pp. 19–44). These are competently presented, and Poya’s analysis has the edge over nearly all other Western-language summaries of the topic in that it recognizes the vitality of the Shii juristic tradition. In this way, Shii *uṣūl al-fiqh* is treated as an equal partner with the Sunni tradition in the development of Muslim legal thought, and this may be due to Poya’s own training: the analysis reveals the author to have a solid grounding in the work of both major modern Shii jurists (Āyatallāhs Muṭaharrī, Jannātī, Faḍlallāh, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, etc.) and Sunni legal commentators (Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Zuhaylī in particular). Also illuminated in this section are groups who denied *ijtihād* (such as the Shii