

termes de possibilités ou d'impossibilités des jésuites (du premier tiers du XVII^e siècle, et pas ceux du XXI^e) à adapter le message catholique de l'après concile de Trente, qui je le rappelle, avait réaffirmé haut et fort la doctrine catholique.

En conclusion, je voudrais insister sur le fait que ce livre aborde une période chronologique extrêmement large, d'ailleurs la bibliographie est de ce point de vue assez impressionnante, demandant de la part de l'auteur des compétences variées en termes linguistiques. Mais justement à vouloir trop en faire, il était difficile en à peine 200 pages couvrir l'ensemble de la période, proposer des analyses nouvelles. Comme je le soulignais à propos du chapitre 6 qui me semble être le plus pertinent, l'auteur aurait eu intérêt à construire un ouvrage autour de ce qui constitue la colonne vertébrale de ce livre.

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Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext*, London – New York (Routledge) 2010 (= Routledge Studies in the Qur'ān, 10), XI+304 pp., ISBN: 978-0-415-77893-0

The starting-point adopted by the author of this work could usefully have been taken as a *veritas universalis* among scholars, thus saving thousands of pages of pointless research into the literary aspects of the Qur'ān. Having said that, the rigorous application of any principle, brooking no exceptions, may clearly constrain and even cloud the researcher's view of things. The scholar, after all, must in principle be open to everything, however aware he/she may be of the potential need to undo much of a painstakingly-wrought picture on finding that the pieces fail to fit, or that exegesis demands a change of tack with respect to the inherited tradition.

This caveat, of course, is by no means confined to the Qur'ān. It applies equally both to religious texts (e. g. the various books of the Bible) and to non-religious writings (*Beowulf*, *Nibelungenlied*, *Chanson de Roland*, *Cantar de mio Cid*) which have been turned – through religious or nationalist tradition – into 'sacred texts' representing a specific outlook, be it religious or nationalist; I use this latter term in the strictest sense of political praxis.

The text addressed by the book under review belongs to the first category; from the outset, Islamic tradition has acted and interacted not only to shape the interpretation of the texts making up the Qur'ān itself, but to lay down strict guidelines regarding the traditions and events linked to those texts, with a view to establishing a single 'correct interpretative reading' of every text, unit or segment contained in the 'Book'.

Reynolds follows in the steps of earlier scholars who have argued the existence of a textual network underlying the conception and composition of the Qur'ān, claiming that its narrative basis is provided by the Bible. Reynolds is by no means the first to advance this working hypothesis; others have made similar claims for certain *suwar* (e. g. Lüling, or more recently Luxenberg, among others). But he brings to his argument a combination of analytical power and insight, and his fresh treatment of the evidence makes the book as illuminating as it is enriching for any reader with a passion for literary criticism.

The research presented here reflects the author's thorough knowledge both of the Qur'ān and of the biblical texts in their original languages. Reynolds is clearly no *amateur* or *dilettante*, but an honest and diligent researcher who aims not to persuade us ideologically, but to convince us scientifically of the right way of interpreting a text within the coordinates required by the text in question. He refuses to allow any exegetical tradition created *ad hoc* by the religious or political establishment to strip us of our right to freely interpret the text, untrammelled by religious or political constraints of any kind.

The book is divided into four sections, preceded by acknowledgements (p. vi), a list of abbreviations (pp. ix–xi), and a useful introduction in which the author sets out his initial approach to the text (pp. 1–2). Following the four main sections, the book closes with a bibliography arranged by subjects and usages (pp. 259–282) and three indices: of quotations from the Qur'ān (pp. 283–291), of quotations from the Bible (pp. 292–295), and of people, places and subjects (pp. 296–304).

The first of the four sections is really a full-scale introduction to Qur'ānic studies in particular, and to Islamic studies in general. It is entitled 'The crisis of Qur'ānic studies' (pp. 3–36), and comprises two chapters. In the first chapter ('The scholarly conflict over the Qur'ān', pp. 3–22), Reynolds sets out in

detail the main landmarks of Western research on the Qur'ān, drawing attention both to its major achievements over time and to its deficiencies. The result amounts to a concise historiographical treatise on Qur'ānic analysis, in which the author examines – rigorously and with immense critical insight – the approach adopted by successive scholars. The second chapter ('The format of the present work', pp. 23-36) introduces the body of the work, accounts for the way it is structured and arranged, and tells us – clearly and succinctly – about the approach used thereafter (i. e. from section 2) to deal with the basic material on which his subsequent analysis is based.

Between the first and second sections he includes an *excursus* entitled 'Regarding the dates of Jewish and Christian texts' (pp. 37-38), which is evidently of particular value for comparing the Jewish and Christian textual material of which Reynolds makes use throughout the book, in his attempt to reveal the various subtexts underlying the Qur'ānic texts addressed.

The second section, as its title 'Qur'ānic case studies' (pp. 39-199) suggests, comprises the texts themselves. Rather than simply presenting these with no comment, Reynolds follows each text (in the original Arabic and English translation) with a perceptive and detailed analysis of the various elements – concepts, *hapax legomena*, formulae – that may hinder the reader's interpretation, with a view to rendering the texts as transparent as possible before offering a commentary on them. This preliminary step, we should add, is both crucial and essential, since in each case he presents the text itself, followed by its most immediate (Islamic) interpretation; he then goes on to locate subtexts either for the whole text or for some of its compositional elements.

A total of thirteen texts are chosen for analysis. Their titles and location in the Qur'ān are indicated below:

1. The prostration of the angels [Qur'ān 2:30] (pp. 39-54).
2. *Al-Shaytān al-Rajīm* [Qur'ān 15:17] (pp. 54-64).
3. Adam and the feathers [Qur'ān 7:25] (pp. 64-71).
4. Abraham, the Gentil monotheist [Qur'ān 26:70-81] (pp. 71-87).
5. The laughter of Abraham's wife [Qur'ān 11:69-72] (pp. 87-97).
6. Hāmān and the tower to heaven [Qur'ān 28:5-6] (pp. 97-106).
7. The transformation of Jews [Qur'ān 7:163] (pp. 106-117).
8. Jonah and his people [Qur'ān 10:98; 37:139-148; 21:87-88] (pp. 117-130).
9. The nativity of Mary [Qur'ān 3:35-37] (pp. 130-147).
10. »Our hearts are uncircumcised« [Qur'ān 4:155; 2:87-88] (pp. 147-155).
11. »Do not think those who were killed in the path of God dead« [Qur'ān 3:169] (pp. 156-167).
12. The Companions of the Cave [Qur'ān 18] (pp. 167-185).
13. Muḥammad [Qur'ān 3:144; 33:40; 47:2; 48:29; 61:6] (pp. 185-199).

The third section opens up another front in this approach to the study of Qur'ānic texts, as indicated by its title: 'Qur'ān and tafsīr' (pp. 200-229). The section comprises three chapters, the first of which – entitled 'Exegetical devices' (pp. 201-219) – is divided into five parts: 1. 'Story-telling' (pp. 201-206), 2. 'Occasion of revelation' (pp. 206-208), 3. *Variae lectiones (qirā'āt)* (pp. 208-214), 4. *Ta'hīr al-muqaddam* (pp. 214-217), 5. 'Judaico-Christian material' (pp. 217-219). The other two chapters bear the titles 'The mufasssirrūn' (pp. 219-228) and 'Tafsīr and Qur'ān' (pp. 228-229), the latter serving as a conclusion to the third section.

These three chapters seek to explore the following specific issues: 1. What the study texts tell us about the relationship between the Qur'ān and the commentary tradition (*tafāsīr*), about the way the text of the Qur'ān was made to 'match' the interests of the *traditio islamica* through a set of procedures used by the *mufasssirrūn*; 2. How differences between the *mufasssirrūn* – differences in ideology, in the handling of texts, in theological positions – provide valuable information on the treatment of Qur'ānic texts and on the analytical mechanisms used by each commentator; 3. How the differing interests of the *mufasssirrūn* are reflected in their individual approach within the context in which they worked, even though mostly deriving from a shared sectarian approach.

Reynolds has used the fourth and final section, 'Reading the Qur'ān homily' (pp. 230-258), to re-examine three of the *topica classica* in Qur'ānic textual research: 1. Issues surrounding the translation of the Arabic text: 'The problem of translating the Qur'ān' (pp. 231-231); 2. The text as homily: 'Homi-

letic features of the Qur'ān' (pp. 232-245) and 'The Qur'ān and Christian homily' (pp. 245-252); 3. The question of the sources: 'The Qur'ān and its Biblical subtext' (pp. 253-258), which at the same time serves largely as a conclusion of the arguments advanced in earlier chapters.

The main interest of this last section lies in the suggestion of a homiletic relationship between the Qur'ān and biblical literature (which mirrors, though for other parameters, the relationship between the *tafāsīr* and the Qur'ān); the Qur'ān is thus seen as a text belonging to the biblical tradition, and chronologically unrelated to the interference of the medieval Islamic tradition, whose interpretations are not always self-evident in view of the Qur'ānic text.

Reynolds' work is truly exemplary, splendid. Its methodological rigour is matched by solid arguments, carefully weighed up to reflect the demands of the text in question. The methodological approach used seems to me, personally, to be the right one; unlike the analytical procedures used by Luxenberg, which are not always either acceptable or appropriate, Reynolds' system of textual analysis rightly consists in first conveying the immediate meaning of the text, and then seeking those substrate elements – subtexts – that contributed to the composition of the Qur'ānic text.

Though Reynolds has undoubtedly produced a splendid piece of work, it is still a shame that – as is increasingly the case due to the growing use of English in the international scholarly community over the last few decades – he makes no reference to research work carried out in Spanish. Some of the reviewer's own studies might have been of some interest in this specific context, among them »*Ḥanīf < ḥanpā*. Dos formas de un mismo concepto en evolución. Notas filológicas en torno a un viejo problema«, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 14 (2003), pp. 177-187, and »Ḥurūn 'in, una vez más«, in M. Hernando de Larramendi & S. Peña Martín (ed.), *El Corán ayer y hoy. Perspectivas actuales sobre el Islam. Estudios en honor al profesor Julio Cortés* (Córdoba: Berenice, 2008), pp. 429-446.

These are not the best of times for scholarship of this kind: books like Reynolds' are now something of a risky enterprise. Luxenberg's strategy is, as we know, to use a pseudonym, as protection against the threats that would otherwise be highly likely. Like other specialists, Reynolds has eschewed this strategy; from the outset, he has shown himself willing to stand up in defence of what is lawful in any humane or scholarly sense: to offer an honest piece of work for others to analyse and, if necessary, refute using the same weapons, the weapons provided by their human and scholarly background.

This work, the fruit of that dual background, is excellent in approach, full of valuable suggestions and solid analysis through which Reynolds teases out and sheds light on each of the study texts. Especially praiseworthy is his expert knowledge of the Qur'ānic text and its language, which gives special force to the intratextual analysis which serves as a key tool in seeking the exact value of a specific concept, formula or text.

Reynolds' undertaking was certainly not an easy one. Anyone familiar with the text of the Qur'ān is aware of the challenges it poses. The subtexts used cannot always be readily located; the search for sources usually involves a whole network of textual traditions which cannot be pinned down with any certainty. Yet in the selected texts, Reynolds' method has succeeded admirably, as is clear at the end of his treatment of each text. As a result, his arguments and explanations are textually convincing, and shed a clear light on the Qur'ānic text, which certainly made use of the subtexts suggested by Reynolds.

In conclusion, and at the risk of confirming that *verba repita generant fastidium*, we can only congratulate the author on a brilliant piece of work, full of suggestions and careful interpretations; a responsible and honest undertaking reflecting expert knowledge applied with rigour and devotion. This book marks a new watershed in Qur'ānic studies; the work done by Reynolds and other contemporary scholars constitutes a perfect contribution to the teasing-out of what lies enclosed in the Qur'ānic texts.

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Martin Tamcke / Arthur Manukyan (Hrsg.), *Kulturbegegnung zwischen Imagination und Realität*, Würzburg (Ergon-Verlag) 2010 (= Orthodoxie, Orient und Europa. 2), 195 Seiten, ISBN 978-3-89913-784-2, 32,00 €

»Kulturbegegnung ... vollzieht sich auch nonverbal dort, wo Einer den Anderen sieht. Sie ist sogar vorstellbar in der reinen Imagination, wo ein Mensch in seiner Phantasie Vorstellungen von einer kultu-