

beschädigt oder zerstört wurde, oder daß versäumt worden war, den Fund dem Eigentümer oder Besitzer des entsprechenden Grundstückes bzw. der zuständigen Behörde mitzuteilen.«⁴⁾

Für den vergoldeten Silberbecher der Zeit Assurbanipals besteht der dringende Verdacht, daß er zu einem Anfang der neunziger Jahre in der Nähe von Horramabad entdeckten Silberhort gehört, von dem ein Teil bei Schmugglern beschlagnahmt wurde, ein anderer Teil aber offensichtlich illegal ins Ausland gelangt ist.⁵⁾

In diesem Fall empfiehlt der ICOM-Kodex die betreffenden Objekte weder zu identifizieren noch deren Echtheit auf andere Weise zu bestätigen. Man sollte sich darüber im klaren sein, »daß es für Museen bzw. den ganzen Berufsstand höchst unethisch ist, den rechtswidrigen Handel mit Kultur- oder Naturgütern entweder direkt oder indirekt zu unterstützen.«⁶⁾

Aus diesem Grunde wird von einer inhaltlichen Besprechung abgesehen.

Das Miho-Museum wäre gut beraten, wenn es die Prinzipien des ICOM akzeptieren,⁷⁾ und, dem guten Beispiel des Metropolitan Museum folgend,⁸⁾ den Becher des Assurbanipal dem Teheraner Nationalmuseum übergeben würde.

Würzburg, Dezember 2000

R.M. Czichon

ARABICA

MOOREN, Thomas — Es gibt keinen Gott — außer Gott. Der Islam in der Welt der Religionen. Würzburg 1996. (195 S. + 70 Abbildungen). ISBN 3-429-01839-0 (Paperback, Echter Verlag); ISBN 3-89375-128-9 (Paperback, Oros Verlag). DM 48,00. [= Religionswissenschaftliche Studien 39, hrsg. von Adel Th. Khoury und Ludwig Hagemann].

Thomas Mooren, the author of the book under review, is a specialist in theology and the history of religion. He is a professor of comparative religious studies and anthropology at St. Paul University, Ottawa, Canada. This latest publication of his is the "fruit of a long process of dealing with Islam" (p. 6). The profound knowledge and the scholarly experience he gained over years as well as the respectful approach toward the religion of Islam are noticeable throughout his analysis.

The value of the book, however, becomes obvious only at "second glance"; a) the title *There is no god but God. Islam in the world of religions* says little about its actual contents; and b) the publisher's photomechanical reproduction of the typescript requires additional concentration. However, if the reader is willing to accept small characters and the large amount of text accumulated on each page, he will enjoy discovering exciting and valuable insights in this publication.

⁴⁾ Aus Kapitel 3.2. der deutschsprachigen Fassung von ICOM-Deutschland (Stand: Februar 1999); der vollständige Wortlaut findet sich im Internet unter »<http://www.icomdeutschland.de/kodex.htm>«.

⁵⁾ Bleibtreu, siehe Anm. 1, 21; Dies, AfO Bh. 28, 4.

⁶⁾ Zitiert nach Abschnitt 8.5. der deutschsprachigen Fassung des ICOM-Kodex, siehe Anm. 4.

⁷⁾ Eine Anfrage bei ICOM-Japan ergab, »Miho-Museum is not a member of Japanese National Committee for ICOM« (E-Mail-Mitteilung vom 5. Dezember 2000).

⁸⁾ J. Özgen/J. Öztürk, *The Lydian Treasure*, Istanbul 1996.

Mooren's book investigates how Muslims in medieval and modern times perceive Islam in contrast with other religions. As far as the Arabic sources are concerned, the study relies predominantly on works by the following scholars: the Mu'tazilite theologian and judge 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad (d. 1025 AD); the theologian Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' (d. 748), whose doctrinal formulations gave the Mu'tazilite faction coherence as a religious sect; the celebrated mystic-philosopher Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), who gave the esoteric, mystical dimension of Islamic thought its first full-fledged philosophic expression; the Persian al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), an encyclopaedist of profound and original mind, who was — in addition to Arabic, in which he wrote — knowledgeable in Turkish, Persian, Sanskrit, Hebrew and Syriac; and finally the well-known contemporary scholar Aḥmad Shalabī.

The study is preceded by a number of questions which seem to serve as a guide to the book (p. 7). They make the reader curious to discover the author's reasoning. Some of these questions may appear provocative. However, they deal with issues that are of importance in our present time. The author asks, for example, what makes Islam so special? Other questions are: Is Islam a "monotheistic troublemaker" which undermines ecumenism by "seemingly considering everything non-Islamic to be idolatry"? What can be said about the radical monotheism of Islam in comparison with Christian missionary activity, which at present seems to be more accommodating towards Islam? What about the so-called West, which, on the one hand, "is afraid of Islam" and which, on the other hand, "seems to surreptitiously admire it"? Has the Islamic creed *There is no god but God* possibly "made Muslims blind to an adequate or even sympathetic understanding of the other, non-Islamic religions" such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or Christianity (chapter 1, 2 and 5)? What is the position of Islam concerning history and mythology (chapter 4)? Has Islam created a particular mystic world of imagination, and, if yes, what is its intellectual-spiritual capacity (chapter 6)? Are there in other religions parallels comparable to the outstanding and particularly honourable position of Prophet Muḥammad, who is — according to Muslim understanding — the ultimate and authentic conveyer of the message of the One God? What can be said in this respect about Apostle Paul when he is compared with Prophet Muḥammad (chapter 3)?

To inquire into these dimensions, the author has decided to let "as often as possible the religion of the Arab prophet speak for itself" (p. 6). He frequently quotes lengthy passages drawn from the sources. Those excerpts in German translation provide extensive original substantiation to the author's analysis.

Chapter 1 (pp. 8-41): Mooren's research has also taken him to Afghanistan and, further, to India. He hence has followed, so to speak, in the footsteps of the outstanding medieval scholar, al-Bīrūnī, to whom the first part of this book is dedicated.

Al-Bīrūnī came to India in the wake of military campaigns of Maḥmūd of Ghazna (Afghanistan). He accompanied the Sultan, possibly as his official astrologer, on several military expeditions to north-west India. There he taught Greek sciences and received in exchange, with his initiation into Sanskrit and various dialects, an incalculable amount of knowledge. This knowledge is reflected in his *Description of India*, i.e. "An account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws

and astrology of India”, as E. Sachau subtitled the edition of the book.¹⁾

This work of al-Bīrūnī's is indeed an outstanding contribution to the cultural history of India from the viewpoint of a medieval Muslim. This book shows the considerable efforts al-Bīrūnī made to provide his Muslim readership with an accurate and authentic report of what he had learned and seen in India about Indian culture and Hinduism. This unbiased portrayal especially applies to al-Bīrūnī's description of seemingly irreconcilable difficulties that Hindus and Muslims were faced with in everyday life. The passages quoted by Mooren even display a certain degree of admiration which the Muslim al-Bīrūnī showed for Indian culture without, however, ever questioning his Islamic belief. Thus al-Bīrūnī's description of India indicates a balance of respect and criticism, based on profound knowledge. This is a legacy, as Mooren concludes, that al-Bīrūnī has left to the world and, in the first place, to the world of Islam (p. 41). Al-Bīrūnī almost seems to represent a kind of Muslim predecessor of the Ages of Enlightenment and of Humanism.

Mooren states that it is illustrative that al-Bīrūnī's "humanistic" approach has not found successors among the Muslims in medieval times. This argument, however, is not completely accurate. Other attempts to learn and report about other cultures were made by Muslim scholars before and after al-Bīrūnī. One example of these is Ibn al-Kalbī (d. in 819 or 821), who wrote his Book *K. al-Aṣnām* about pre-Islamic customs and religious practices. Furthermore, there are several famous travelogues reporting about non-Islamic countries and cultures, written by travellers such as Ibn Fadlān (who journeyed to the Volga Bulgars in 921-2), Ibrāhīm al-Turtuṣhī (who travelled 1325-53 around Europe), Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217), the famous Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (d. 1368/69) or, 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731). However, one has to note that these travel reports are descriptive rather than reflective.

Chapter 2 (pp. 42-46), "How Islam conceives non-Islamic religions", presents a survey of the history of religion from the viewpoint of a contemporary Muslim. It examines the religious teaching of Aḥmad Shalabī, professor of history and civilization of Islam at the Dār al-'Ulūm College in Cairo. Shalabī has presented his "theory of convergence" of religions in a book entitled "*Muqāranat al-adyān*" ("Comparison of Religions"), of which lengthy passages are given in translation.

Shalabī's analysis has been reprinted several times.²⁾ It deals with Hinduism, Jainism (an anti-Hinduistic protest movement), Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity. In discussing Christianity, emphasis is placed on the so-called "true monotheistic elements" in early Christianity, on the one hand, and on its "distortion" by Apostle Paul, on the other. Shalabī considers Paul as the founder of the Teachings of the Holy Trinity. Those teachings, as Shalabī suggests, did not spread in Asia Minor but in Europe because they combined themselves with old European myths.

In his comparison of these religions with Islam, Shalabī sets all these religions side by side and combines them with each another. Shalabī's conclusion then states that Islam is

the "only religion which has not been distorted". Mooren does not give this conclusion of Shalabī further thoughts. However, it can be noted that, strictly speaking, it is only the Qur'ān, which is commonly considered by Muslims as being "pure" and "undistorted". To set this Qur'ānic principle equal to modern Islamic belief and practice, as Shalabī seems to conclude, would have merited further investigation by the author of the book under review.

Furthermore, the "history of salvation" (Germ.: *Heilsgeschichte*) of the religions older than Islam is, according to Shalabī, just "a history of decay". This decay had started already after Abraham, the "first monotheist" (*ḥanīf*, Q 30:30). This history of salvation has eventually found its ultimate and solely possible solution in Islam.

Shalabī also explains that Islam fulfills the concept of the "innate nature" (*fiṭrah*) which means that "Every human being is born as a Muslim" [as especially Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) state]. *Ipsa facto*, any non-Islamic religion would mean "distortion" (p. 64) of monotheism or human nature. However, Shalabī moralizes that this distortion is the result of human failure, especially of certain leaders. Therefore he calls upon mankind to replace discordance (*khiḷāf*) and conflict (*ṣirā'*) by concord (*wi'āq*) and harmony (*wi'ām*), and to return to the truth (*ḥaqq*) [which eventually means that everybody should become a Muslim?].

Chapter 3 (pp. 67-102) examines the destinies of two believers which, as Mooren suggests, are typically Semitic: Apostle Paul and Prophet Muḥammad.

As "self-styled apostate Jew", Paul's choice between Christianity and Judaism seems to be an either-or-decision to a larger extent than other evidence of the time suggests. As a "self-styled apostle", as he claimed, "sent by Jesus" in the vision on the Damascus road, however, he overshadows the status of those who were chosen by Jesus before his death. "This is Paul at his most subversive: the most dominant figure in the New Testament ... and the Lenin of the early church ...".³⁾ After Jesus had appeared to him, Paul wrote a letter to the inhabitants of Asia Minor to warn them against breaking from the *Glad Tidings* (New Testament). This "*Epistle to the Galatians*" is crucial to the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity. In that text all Christian values seem to be fundamentally 're-valued'. And by including Abraham as a significant element into his theological framework, Paul presents himself as the founder of the new People of God (p. 80).

There seem to be two similarities between Apostle Paul and Prophet Muḥammad striking:

Firstly, for Paul, the totally reinvigorated People of God is not anymore a 'People of Law', but a 'People of Mind' (p. 75); this People of Mind acts only based on love and mind (p. 78). Likewise, the warnings of the first parts of the revelation of the Qur'ān, uttered by Muḥammad, are emphatically directed at a 'moral' and 'intellectual' renewal of the people (pp. 94-95).

Secondly, Abraham was of special importance to both Apostle Paul and Prophet Muḥammad. According to the Qur'ān, Abraham is a "community by himself" (*ummah*, Q 16:121) and a "believer in One God" (*ḥanīf*, e.g. Q 3:95; see pp. 80-81). Abraham is a "good example" (Q 60:4) of how someone becomes an 'outsider' due to his strict monotheism. Like Abra-

¹⁾ This work was completed in 421/1030, shortly after the death of the Sultan. The Arabic text has been edited by Edward Sachau, London: Trübner, 1887. Its translation into English by Sachau was published one Year later., 2 vols., London 1888¹, 1910² (Repr. Delhi: S. Chand, [1964]).

²⁾ 7th ed., Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1982. — (2nd ed.) Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjūl al-Miṣriyyah, 4 vols. [1960-66].

³⁾ *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, edited with an introduction and notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett, Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, explanatory notes, p. 415.

ham, Muḥammad was initially considered an 'outsider'; Muḥammad's propagation of strict monotheism were disliked and fought by those in power. However, Muḥammad, the 'dissident' in the view of the polytheists, eventually becomes a prophet. What was earlier considered 'heresy' by the Meccans becomes later 'orthodoxy' (p. 84). This kind of drastic change can similarly be observed in terms of Paul and his teachings.

This religious-historical comparison is certainly one of the most original chapters of Mooren's book. In the context of modern research on the history and understanding of the Qur'ānic text,⁴⁾ approaches like this contribute to better understanding the success of Prophet Muḥammad and the development of the principles of Islam in its early stages.

Chapter 4 (pp. 103-133) deals with two forms of religious-historical transformation: a) the consistent development of religious ideas from the abundance of what has grown (Germ.: *Mytho-Logik*, "logic resulting from myths") as well as the radical break with old concepts and the beginning of a new religion (Germ.: *Theo-Logik*, "theologically based logic"). The latter refers to examples such as (a) the exodus of the Jews (which transformed a 'non-people' into a 'chosen people'), (b) the Hijrah of the Muslims (which united the Arabs, leading them from the time of 'ignorance' (*jāhiliyyah*) to a religiously defined community), and (c) Easter, which marks a similar milestone for Christians. The most credential formula of Islamic belief is also investigated under these theoretical premises. Corresponding to the logic of beginning, first a *tabūla rasa* has to be made: *lā ilāha* ("there is no god"). Then the mighty *illā llāhu* ("but the One God") follows (p. 112), as Mooren states.

As known, monotheism in its strictest form was the crucial principle for the Qadarites and Mu'tazilites. That is why they believed that the Qur'ān was 'not eternal' but 'created'. This also is the reason behind their refusal to ascribe attributes to God. And that is why especially the Mu'tazilites rejected so emphatically the Christian teaching of the Holy Trinity as something "anti-rational" and "rooted in the belief in miracles" (p. 147). This becomes clear again in Mooren's elucidation of 'Abd al-Jabbār's critical attitudes towards the Holy Trinity (chapter 5, pp. 134-147).

Chapter 6 (pp. 148-176): Mooren's book concluded with an examination of the dynamics which theological power of imagination. Mooren gives the mystic Ibn 'Arabī as an example to demonstrate these dynamics in Islam.

Considering the questions, which were put programmatically at the beginning of Mooren's book and which are followed by a profound discussion of several quite complex topics, some readers may wish to see some concluding remarks. This would not only have offered the possibility to put the thematically relatively independent chapters into relation to each other, but to indicate the main features of the relationship of Muslims with other religions as described in this study. It also would have furthered the understanding of how Muslims understand themselves and their belief in the past and present.

⁴⁾ From a different angle, it well complements some new attempts to investigate the text of the Qur'ān based on the ancient Qur'ānic fragments discovered in 1972 in the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā', Yemen. See "Neues Zentrum für Koranforschung? Bislang unbekanntes Handschriftenfragment wissenschaftlich erschlossen und ausgestellt" (by C. Brettar) and "Etwa ein Fünftel des Korans muß neu gelesen werden" (by M. Leber), in: *Campus* ([Zeitschrift der] Universität des Saarlandes) 29 (1999), Ausg. 4, pp. 10-11 and 20-21. Furthermore T. Lester: "What is the Koran?", in: *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 1999, pp. 44-56.

Nevertheless, this study of Thomas Mooren offers insights for inter-religious dialogue — an issue which becomes more and more important in recent times. This book is a valuable contribution to opening channels toward further discussion among scholars in the field of comparative religious studies.

University of Toronto, April, 2000

Sebastian GÜNTHER

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STROUMSA, Sarah — *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam. Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, and Their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, XXXV). E.J. Brill Publishers N.V., Leiden, 1999. (24 cm, XI, 261). ISBN 90 04 11374 6; ISSN 0169-8729. Nlg. 135,- / \$79.50.

En une civilisation si profondément religieuse que celle de l'Islam médiéval, la «libre pensée» ne peut apparaître que comme une attitude scandaleuse et subversive, visant à miner les fondements mêmes de la société. Aussi, depuis notre Siècle des Lumières, d'innombrables orientalistes ont apposé le label de «libre penseur» à une pléiade hétéroclite d'intellectuels musulmans vaguement rationalistes, qui ont osé s'opposer à la dite tyrannie d'un «clergé» obscurantiste. En bien des cas, ces orientalistes ne font qu'exprimer leurs propres préjugés anti-cléricaux ou anti-religieux, plutôt que de cerner une réalité historique concrète. Dès lors, il était nécessaire de faire le point sur la question et d'étudier d'une manière critique le phénomène de la «libre pensée» en Islam médiéval. Sarah Stroumsa nous présente ici le fruit de ses recherches en la matière. Son livre est une refonte de plusieurs articles antérieurs dont elle a révisé le contenu en tenant compte des observations et critiques émises par plusieurs collègues (pp. X-XI).

Le domaine auquel Stroumsa nous convie, est effectivement très controversé. Face au scepticisme de van Ess (p. 12), elle défend avec conviction l'existence d'une «libre pensée» en Islam médiéval (notion qu'elle retrouve dans l'*istibdād bi r-ra'y* de Ṣahrastānī, p. 4), dont elle essaie de déterminer la spécificité par rapport à la libre pensée moderne en Occident. Ainsi, les libres penseurs musulmans n'étaient point athées, l'athéisme se réduisant à une simple hypothèse théorique envisagée par les théologiens et les hérésiographes (pp. 121-130). En revanche, ils nient au nom de la raison la nécessité, voire la possibilité, de la prophétie, rejettent par conséquent toute religion révélée et considèrent les prophètes comme des imposteurs, dont les prétendus miracles ne seraient que des tours de prestidigitation propres à tromper un public crédule. Certains aspects de cette définition de la libre pensée islamique se rencontrent, au dire de leurs adversaires, chez des hérétiques, *zindīqs* ou *mulhīds* de tout poils: chiïtes, manichéens, mu'tazilites et philosophes. Mais après élimination, Stroumsa ne retient que deux figures majeures qui correspondent pleinement au profil: Ibn al-Rāwandī et Abū Bakr al-Rāzī. Tout en reconnaissant qu'il s'agit donc d'un phénomène d'une ampleur extrêmement limitée, tant par le nombre que dans le temps (car les deux auteurs se situent aux 9^e et 10^e s.), Stroumsa le considère comme une phase décisive dans l'évolution de la pensée musulmane (pp. 12-16).

Malheureusement, nos sources concernant les deux hérétiques sont fragmentaires et semblent se contredire sur bien des points, ce qui a engendré dans la recherche contemporaine des interprétations très divergentes de leur pensée. Avec