BROECKAERT, B.; S. VAN DEN BRANDEN ; J.-J. PERENNES (eds.), *Perspectives on Islamic Culture. Essays in Honour of Emilio G. Platti*, «Les Cahiers du Mideo» 6 (Louvain – Paris: Peeters, 2013), 350 pp. ISBN: 978-90-429-2734-6

The sixth issue of *Les Cahiers du Mideo* consists of a series of fifteen essays written and published in honour of Dr. Emilio Platti. Emilio Platti spends his time in both Cairo and Leuven, where he applies himself to Theology and Oriental studies at the 'Katholieke Universiteit Leuven'. He has also taught at UCL (Louvain-la-Neuve), US Thomas (Manila) and at the 'Catholic Institute' of Paris. He mainly teaches about the relationships between Christianity and Islam. He joined IDEO en 1972 and, since then, he travelled to Cairo regularly to take part in the Institute activities. Amongst many other books, Platti has published *Islam, étrange?* and *Islam, Friend or Foe?* He is in charge of the series *Mélanges de l'Ideo*, of which the book being reviewed is a part.

The book is divided into three parts. The first one is made up of 5 text critical studies; analysis of the content of Islamic texts in grammatical, contextual or comparative contexts. The second part is made up of articles comparing Islam and Christianity, whether discussing the meaning of concepts such as *predestination* or *submission* in these two religious contexts – establishing the philosophical and religious possibilities for dialogue between both faiths, or examining the case of a medieval scholar stuck between both worlds. The third part examines the place of Islam in Europe. It consists of sociological studies investigating the particularities of Islamic culture created in Europe since the 1960s.

*I. Text critical Studies*

Neal Robinson, 'The dynamics of the Quranic Discourse: Tradition and Redaction'. Robinson studies the use of pronouns and of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person in the Quran. This is done in three parts: in the first he applies it to the Fātiha, a text with problematic interpretations. The similarities between the use of this language in the text, and the rest of the Quran lead him to conclude that, in opposition to other interpretations, it is an integral and original part of the Quran; secondly, he examines the Sūrat al-Baqara in a similar way, but merely uses this technique to further the understanding of the text; the third part compares the use of these language structures in the Bible and other Jewish and Christian sources, with their use in the Quran. It is determined that the uses in the Quran are predominantly alien to Christian and Jewish sources suggesting lesser influence of these in the writing of the Quran.

C. Gilliot, 'Retrospectives et Perspectives. De quelques sources possibles du Coran mecquois'. The article is an effort in detailing the history of Quranic exegesis in the lines historically followed by biblical exegesis. The author feels the need to justify this exercise. Nothing comes from nothing, and this includes the

Quran, which has its roots in history. This fact is not denied even by Islamic Quranic scholars. History is explored by examining the positions of the most important scholars in the field chronologically and divided into two parts: authors believing in Jewish sources for early Islam, and authors believing in a Christian influence with varying degrees of importance.

In the first group we find researchers like Abraham Geiger who believes that Mahomet was truly inspired by Jewish, and other religious texts and traditions. Going against contemporary scholarship, he championed the view that Mahomet was not a mere swindler but someone with a message he believed in himself.

Hartwig Hirschfeld, who examines Islam with a historical context that Geiger lacks, and notices the similarity between certain Quranic passages and some of the poetic parts of the Christian Bible, therefore entertaining the idea of a link between the Quran and the early Christianity. Nevertheless, Rudolph Leszynsky opposes this idea: he claims the 'soul of Islam' is in Judaism – the idea that the 'soul of Islam' was to be found in the same place as the 'soul of Christianity' was previously espoused by Julius Wellhausen. This 'soul' common to both faiths consists in man's responsibility unto God after death.

Charles Cutler Torrey continues Geiger's work, but not in a convincing way. He claims there is a Jewish foundation to Islam, and that Mahomet was closer to Jews before the Hegira. Proof of this would be that Biblical names in the Quran are derived from the Judeo-Arab dialect and possibly from Aramaic. Neither Geiger nor Hirschfeld deny the possibility of Christian influence, though Torrey does. For Torrey, Christian ideas are brought into the Quran for political reasons, and not directly through Christian sources, but through Jewish informants.

The second group begins with an prolongation of Julius Wellhausen's ideas. He believed there were mostly Christian influences in early Islam. Christian names and words predate Islam in Arabia; these are not Orthodox Byzantine Christians sources, but heretic sectarian forms. Another commonality to Islam and Christianity is that the Final Judgment is to be found in both faiths. Father Henri Lammens  rejects these ideas. He denies the Quran has any historical validity, and furthermore considers the Quranic interpretation of Jesus is not at all Christian in origin.

Adolph von Harnack contributes to the debate declaring 'Mahometan religion is more a Christian sect than a Manichaeism', giving a list of seven traits to be found in Gnostic Judeo-Christianity and Islam, and also a list of six traits to be found both in Elkasaï and Mahomet. These ideas nevertheless also have their opposition: Carl Clemen believes Harnack exaggerates the influence of Christianity, and sees other links as being important, for example the Manichaeism origin of Ramadan's fast, while Adolph Schlatter believes Jewish Christianity evolved into Islam.

Wilhelm Rudoph believes in a dual dependence of Islam to Christianity and Judaism. In the first place both religions have an original influence on Mahomet,

but also, it is degenerate Christianity that impulses Mahomet's actions. Karl Ahsens proposes that the influence is mostly Christian, and even specifies the sources as being a Christian hermit and Christian slaves whom Mahomet would have had contact with.

Finally the text concludes with Tor Julius Efraim Andrae's ideas. He links the Quran's eschatological piety to religious conceptions dominating the Syrian Christian Nestorian church prior and concurrent to Mahomet, also showing a strong monophysist influence. Andrae's arguments are solid and well articulated.

The text concludes promising a second part in which this Syrian origin will be examined further. In spite of the abrupt end of the historical examination of Quranic exegesis, the text gives us an excellent introduction to the theme.

Godefroid de Gallataÿ, 'Kishwār-s, planètes et rois du monde : le substrat iranien de la géographie arabe, à travers l'exemple des Ikhwān al-Safā'. The article examines the section on Geography of the brethren of Basra's encyclopaedia. It is the only Islamic text on geography which was translated into Latin in the Medieval Ages. He searches for Iranian influences in the way geography is described.

The first passage of the encyclopaedia states that there are 17.000 towns. There he finds a breakdown of town numbers according to climatic zones. Problematically, by counting the number of towns, the number obtained is only of 732. It seems that the first number was originated from a legend in which a king has all the counted towns in the world, coming up with this number. The origin of the legend itself is not detailed, though further on an Iranian origin seems likely.

The second passage has another contradiction; on one hand it espouses the Greek conception of seven bands of climate, based on empirical observation, on the other, it supports the Iranian 'Ancient Kings theory', in which the climate bands are artificial constructs determined by ancient kings with no real meteorological basis. The Greek theory has horizontal bands of climate parallel to the equator; the ancient Kings theory has concentric circles with Babylon in the centre.

The third passage has a correspondence between planets and regions, and planets and climates, in which small contradictions due to Iranian influence are also detected. Finally, the Iranian and Greek ideas, in spite of all their contradictions, are seen to form a functional working model in which the Greek horizontal bands make way to seven geo-climatic zones corresponding to the Iranian model, to the planets, and to the idea of seven primitive races of men.

J. Druel, 'How to deal with contradictory Chapters in the Kitāab of Sībawayh?' This article is, self admittedly, slightly out of place. The author confesses it would not have been of Emilio Platti's interest. Nevertheless it is a thorough piece of analysis, devoted to understanding the apparently contradictory ideas on the grammar of numbers in an Arab book on Grammar, Sībawayh's Kitāb. The objective is to show modern readers that this book is internally coherent in spite of appearances. For example, the

author of the Kitāb proceeds in two contradictory ways. First he proceeds through analogies and then gives us a consistent grammar that does not always fit well with the analogies. Nevertheless part of the problem is understanding that Sībawayh only occasionally gives us his own opinion, and gives us different views on the same problems.

Amir Jajé, 'Choix de testes d'un ritual de 'Āshūrā': trois Majālis Husayniyya'. This text examines a manuscript describing a Shiite mourning ceremony, typical of the last two hundred years in Iraq and neighbouring areas. It makes no conclusions, being no more than a report on part of the manuscript. The manuscript consists of a series of stories told in verse and narrative with the function of comforting the mourners. It tells the story of the death and suffering of Husain, grandson of Mohamed, and his family. The part of the manuscript which is studied is copied and transcribed.

## II. Islam and Christianity

S. Khalil Samir, 'Le Traité sur la prédestination de Būlus al-Būshī'. The article is a report on the second document enclosed into the two manuscripts *Princeton Garret 1140H* and *Beyrouth B.O. arabe 341* of the same treaty on predestination addressed from Būlus al Būsi to the Sheik Faḫr al-Dawlah, in response to the first, unexamined document.

The author discovers that the recipient is a high ranking Christian state civil servant, likely to be the martyr Talmānus from Kafūr. The treaty is an examination from a scriptural perspective on the problem of whether people have any control over the length of their lives, or whether it is totally predetermined by God. The answer is drawn from the *Book of Esdras*: life is a gift of God, taken or not at his pleasure and for man's greater good. Specific questions are answered: Why do children die before their parents? Why do they die young? Is man's life and destiny inevitable? It is concluded that the manuscript is a brief but model pastoral response. The article concludes with a translation of the text to French, and a copy of the original Arabic.

M. Elkaisy-Friemuth, 'Tuhfat al-Arīb fī al-radd 'alā Ahl al-Salīb: the Case of Anselm Turmeda or 'Abdallah al-Turjumān'. In his essay Elkaisy-Friemuth unravels the problematic biography of Anselm Turmeda or 'Abdallah al-Turjumān, a fifteenth century Catalan-writing Majorcan who lived much of his life as an Islamic scholar in Tunisia, his original Majorcan name, with which he wrote in Catalan, is well known in the West. The information we have comes from a book purchased in Cairo, the only known book Turmeda wrote in Arabic and with his Arab name. The first half of the book is autobiographical, the second is a refutation of Christianity. The text is well known on Islamic websites.

It is sometimes used to convert Christians and to avoid Muslims from converting to Christianity.

The manuscript's autobiography is examined and compared to different sources, discovering that it has been heavily edited. His life story is developed drawing the picture of a young dynamic scholar converted to Islam for political reasons, seeking to end Catalan domination of the Balearic Islands with Tunisian help; and unable, or unwilling, to return to the West in spite of his strong cultural links there.

David Thomas, 'The use of Scripture in Christian-Muslim Dialogue'. Thomas claims that both Muslims and Christians read Scripture and previous books as leading to a culmination of history. What differs is the point of history this culmination takes place at. For Christians it is Jesus, for Muslims, Mohamed.

Muslim scholars following the doctrine of 'text corruption' believe that everything in the original Bible and other true Christian and Jewish texts, clearly foreshadow and prophesise the appearance of Mohamed, but that these texts have been changed, making the prophecies harder to spot. These scholars sometimes change Jewish and Christian meanings in these scriptures, or even the scriptures themselves, to make their own interpretations easier to understand.

Christian scholars, for example Paul of Sidon, use the Quran to support their view that Islam, and the Quran is only meant for Arabs, who had not previously had a Prophet. Therefore they can claim it is true, without contradicting their own Christian beliefs.

It is asked whether it is possible to read another's scripture without applying one's own suppositions. The answer given is positive, and examples of this are given. Nevertheless a limitation is discussed, fruitful dialogue with the other using his scriptures are often only possible with a limited reading of preselected passages which provoke no conflict. Nevertheless, the willingness to do this on both sides in the last decades is ground-breaking, and has allowed a search for similarities.

There is a risk in this. It is possible neither Christians nor Muslims will identify with the results of this dialogue, which can be viewed as an artificial construction, of Scriptural reading, and not a natural reading.

The author proposes another idea, using Q.2:177 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan as launching points for both faiths, it is possible to use the others faith to scrutinize one's own action in the eyes of the other.

Jules Janssens, 'La philosophie peut-elle contribuer au dialogue interreligieux?' Janssens studies four religious philosophers in an attempt to prove the validity of using philosophy as a bridge between faiths in religious dialogue, and whether the common philosophical ground is strong enough to support sensible dialogue.

The first philosopher to be examined is Al-Ghazāli. Though he is generally thought of as ending Islamic Philosophy, this conception points more to how he has been used and not to the reality of his criticism of philosophy. This critique was not nearly as hash as is generally believed. Al-Ghazāli merely points out inconsiste-

ncies and faulty logic in philosophers' thought and writings. Not everything philosophers say is wrong. What is important to Al-Ghazāli is truth, and not the origin, revealed or reasoned, of truth. Things are wrong in philosophy when they have been badly reasoned or demonstrated.

The second author is Maimonides. There is a certain opposition in his thought to Al-Ghazāli's, and he is certainly more willing to use philosophy. He believes philosophy should be over revelation, and be used to examine and understand the true meaning of scripture. He is aware of the limitations of philosophy – admiring Aristotle because he is also aware of these limitations, and his warning against the study of obscure things. Maimonides admits there are profound errors in many, if not most, metaphysical doctrines – in this way is very close to Al-Ghazāli. Man desires to hold on to what he is used to even when it is not strictly true, explaining why many errors persist. In defence of philosophy, Maimonides points out that there is an Aristotelian difference between proof and demonstration. The first is always attainable, but doesn't necessarily imply truth. The other isn't always attainable, but does imply truth, whenever it is. According to Maimonides, philosophy can inform religion mainly by the 'via negativa', but also in the sense of interpretation of Scripture, and its defence.

The third author to be studied is Thomas Aquinas. He is the founder of Catholic theology, and therefore neither rejects human reason, nor philosophy, but does limit their role. Philosophy is a servant of theology. It cannot seize the totality. Man's finality is God, and can only be saved by revelation. Truths about God can only be sought by a few persons, and even then only inexactly, without revelation. Philosophy, in its own domain, is autonomous, but all sciences are vassals to theology in its own domain. If philosophy ever goes against religion, Aquinas will claim philosophy is being abused.

The last philosopher to be examined, as proof of the possibility of dialogue, is Yaḥyā ibn 'Adi, a Christian Jacobite theologian, previous to any of these authors nevertheless he was able to use some of the ideas that these authors shared to deal with the possibility of a religious dialogue. Aristotelian philosophy in the Middle Ages was the key to interreligious dialogue. Today neither philosophy, nor other sciences are subsumed to theology. Nevertheless philosophical definitions of concepts such as *God*, *man*, etc, may allow a common language, that would allow interreligious dialogue once again.

M.Van Mol, 'Submission in Christianity and Islam'. Islam can be translated as submission, but is also the name of the religion of Muslims. Has the second meaning, that of religion and its doctrine, made the original meaning lose any of its strength? It's difficult for this to happen, taking into account that a correct understanding of the Quran depends on the existence of both meanings. Nevertheless, recently, signs of a certain confusion of the terms have arisen. Amongst some translators sometimes the interpretation of Islam meaning the

Religion is taken more often than others. The extent of this isn't always clear when the word Islam itself is not translated. The meaning of the word in other contexts, such as dictionaries, is also examined.

The concept exists in both Christianity and Islam, as well as in Judaism. Nevertheless the study shows that the dogmatic/religious meaning of Islam is in the rise in the Islamic meaning, to the detriment of the meaning as Submission. On the other hand, the concept could be used as a bridge to initiate interreligious dialogue.

*III. Islam in /and Europe*

Stef Van Den Branden & Bert Broeckaert, 'My Age is predetermined by God'. This sociological study examines thoughts on pain control of elderly Muslims in Belgium. Three positions are maintained. The first, and most followed option is that of supporting pain control even in the unlikely cases in which it reduces life-expectancy. This is justified according to the respondents, because the expected reduction in life-expectancy is unreal, as only Allah controls the length of someone's life, whereas the Quran instructs Muslims to seek medical attention when it is needed. The second opinion is that pain control is acceptable, only when it helps the process of curing. In spite of also holding the view that only Allah controls the length of someone's life, they believe that the instruction to seek medical attention includes the need to critically evaluate this attention, and not accept it if it does not contribute to future health. The last posture, held by only one interviewee, does not accept pain control in any instance, as he doesn't believe it is essential to health, whereas pain is essential to the Islamic religious experience.

Jaxques Scheuer, 'Valeurs universelles et convictions particulières. Le dèfi du vivre ensemble'. Religious debate is now inevitable. Other options, such as emigration/exile, or isolation/imposition are impossible or impracticable nearly everywhere. In spite of this need, some of the terminology needed for this debate, and which often seems universal is not so. This includes terminology such as: Religion, Private/Public, Dialogue, and Laity. Without certain uniformity in the use of this terminology, dialogue will be impossible.

On the other hand the author doesn't believe dialogue will lead to uniformity. Different regional continental and civilization systems can coexist and influence each other without recourse to hegemonising universalisations. At the local/national level this degree of difference can sometimes be hard to accommodate, especially when majorities play with rules that would be unacceptable to them if the situation was reversed. One of the problems is defining up to what point individual rights or communal rights protect difference.

Answering these questions and solving these problems is an endless task and though certain institutions can make these simpler, they are still inevitable, necessary and, in a way, beneficial.

Claude Gefré, 'L'émergence d'un islam européen a l'épreuve de la modernité'. Taking distances from Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, Claude sees the emergence of Islam in Europe as something other than the 'Islamification of Europe'. Rather, he sees the emergence of a European version of Islam.

Islam is sometimes seen as clashing with European modernity, nevertheless European Christianity has also clashed with modernity, so this problem isn't exclusive to Islam. Modernity doesn't recognize rules other than those originating from man, and man's reason. Modern society works as if God didn't exist, independently of the beliefs of those living in society. Though philosophically religion helped create modernity, institutionally it was a victim, and an opponent to it.

Modernity itself is in crisis. Postmodernity questions its self-assurance, leading to a return to religion, to reason understood in a new more rational way, accepting emotional, and other kinds of reason, not only instrumental reason (ultramodernity), or a neo-pagan Nihilism reclaiming life in the tradition of Nietszche.

Simultaneously, in Islamic countries there is a yearning for an Islamic enlightenment to modernize those countries. To understand this process the author proposes separating modernity into three separate aspects:

- Technical and scientific modernity: it is accepted even by extremist Wahabite and Salafist Muslims.
- Political modernity: Catholicism took a century to accept free religion. European Islam finds itself in a position where it is also going to have to accept it. Simultaneously European society needs to make it easier for full active citizenship to be compatible with Islam. This is particularly true in countries such as France, strongly steeped in nearly religious republican citizen mentality.
- Cultural modernity: it's very hard to assimilate for Muslims. Whereas the Bible is inspired by God, the Quran is said to be written by God.

Europe is well situated for Christianity and Islam to meet and oppose materialistic monetized nihilism based on giving man's life a merely economic sense. This can be done by reimagining what is truly human, a 'Global Ethic' based on the idea of man made in God's own image, and protecting the environment.

F. Dassetto, 'Le devenir de l'islam européen face aux défis citoyens'. European Islam starts being constructed as an identity in the 1970s, after a decade of immigration and reislamization in origin countries for this immigration. This process is ongoing. During this process many things happened. There was a greater visibilization of Islam in Europe, which made necessary a new understanding of Islam when not under Islamic rule. Also, and institutionalization of Islam occurred. More recently, Islam has had to take a public stance on radicalization and radical

movements within Islam. The prolongated presence has also meant the creation of a European Islamic identity, and changes in Islam as it has been transmitted over generations.

Future problems include leadership and Intellectual deficit. Leaders exist but there is a lack of structure. Therefore there is an excess of leaders, but a lack of leadership. Intellectual deficit is problematic because of philosophical differences within Islam, due to influences from Islam outside Europe. These differences cause a large political polarization in Islam within Europe impeding fruitful intellectual discourse within Islam, or a common front without. Future intellectual growth is difficult due to the lack of European Islamic superior education centres.

A number of questions need to be answered to facilitate coexistence. Means and conditions for conflict resolution need to be addressed. Islam in Europe needs to accept and internalise Pluralism and Democracy so as to be properly protected by them. These concepts demand constant evaluation and force difficult balancing acts to satisfy different sectors of society's needs, desires and aspirations. Secularization must also be accepted, and it must be realised that Religion cannot be the ultimate arbiter in politics in Europe.

Therefore the article concludes that Islam has problems in Europe. Finding the means of resolving these problems demands intellectual work. Multiculturalism can be made to work, but only if all parts collaborate.

Esma Yildrim & Johan Leman, 'Islam and Education amongst Turkish Belgians : the Impact of Diyanet, Milli Görüş and Gülen Movement'. This articles focus on the 'Society Orientated' practices of Diyanet, Milli Görüş and the Gülen Movement. These are European Turk movements working in Belgium. Though the three movements vary in the way they are involved in politics, in their attitude to both Turkey and Europe, and in their religiousness, all act as vectors of Turkish culture in Belgium, and as vectors of European Turkish culture within the immigrant culture and their European offspring. All movements offer educational variety in the Belgian landscape, and in different ways affect immigrant communities. The description of these aspects of the organisation, including in what way they can be classified as organisations, and of what kind, is detailed and informative.

The issue of *Les cahiers du Mideo* is engaging for different reasons. We can be sure that the theme of these collected papers is that of topics interesting Emilio Platti. This means that there is a wide selection of subjects touched upon, and both grammatical studies of Arabic literature and sociological studies of Muslims in Europe fit in the same book. This can be seen as an advantage: it gives us a fair look at the wideness of Platti's academic interests and perspectives, though it also has its drawbacks. The threefold partition of the book, even if very sensible due to the similarity of the subject matter of the essays within each, can also make it seem as if we are confronted with three different books, rather than a unified whole.

Nevertheless this impression is of little importance due to the appealing nature of the articles, and the two unifying threads of Emilio Platti, and Islamic culture.

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BRUNS, Peter; Heinz Otto LUTHE (eds.), *Orientalia Christiana. Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, « Eichstätter Beiträge zum Christlichen Orient », 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), XXX+ 683 pp. ISBN: 978-3-447-06885-7

Le titre de cet épais ouvrage pourrait être celui d'une revue intitulée « Etudes du christianisme oriental ». De fait, cet ouvrage se présente comme une série de trente-sept études sur le christianisme oriental, aussi variées par leur objet que par leur genre (traduction, édition et commentaire de textes, enquêtes historiques, essais théoriques, etc.) et leur domaine de recherche (philologie, droit, théologie, liturgie, histoire, art, littérature, sociologie, etc.). Une telle variété de contenus ne se laisse rassembler que sous un titre général. Mais cette généralité n'est pas ici seulement verbale, elle a été incarnée par un homme, chercheur infatigable, esprit encyclopédique et aventurier à la fois, et longtemps éditeur de la revue *Oriens Christianus* : Hubert Kaufhold. Edité à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire, l'ouvrage est le produit de la reconnaissance de ceux qui l'ont côtoyé de près ou de loin, élèves ou collègues, ou même simple lecteurs, et cherche à renouer avec son approche transversale et unitaire du christianisme oriental. En deçà des nécessaires spécialisations, une unité existe, qu'on peut rendre visible en multipliant les liens et les échos entre les textes. S'il apparaît au premier abord comme un ensemble disparate, l'ouvrage se transforme, après qu'on l'a fréquenté, en un tissu vivant aux fils inextricablement entrecroisés.

Les premières trente pages de l'ouvrage, numérotées en chiffres romains, sont dédiées à Hubert Kaufhold, dont la photographie orne le verso de la page de titre. Après une courte préface signée des deux éditeurs – bref, mais efficace exercice d'admiration pour l'inlassable chercheur –, on trouve une biographie et une bibliographie exhaustive de ses œuvres.

Puis suivent les études que les éditeurs ont fait le choix de classer alphabétiquement, d'après le nom des auteurs. On comprend qu'un classement par rubrique ou par thème aurait été non seulement impossible, mais encore trompeur : il n'y a pas vraiment de domaine délimité de recherche au sein des études du christianisme oriental, mais plutôt des fils pour s'orienter dans un objet d'étude aussi labyrinthique qu'il est vaste et complexe.

Tentons de suivre, pour commencer, le fil du droit, puisque Hubert Kaufhold est d'abord un spécialiste du droit canon et de la littérature juridique chrétienne orientale. On trouve un ensemble de textes qui font un simple, mais nécessaire travail d'édition et de présentation. Dans « Canons prepared by Afram Barsoum in