

Umayyads. Chapters 8–16 survey first “the Abbasid revolution and beyond”, followed by separate treatments of the schools of law, theological debates, Twelver Shiism and Zaydism, the Ismailis, the origins of ascetic movements and early Sufism, later Sufi institutions, philosophy versus theology and the transmission of knowledge by the *ulama* in *madrasas* and Sufi lodges. Finally, the ethos of basic Islamic beliefs and practices are discussed together with Muslim rites of passage from birth to death. These chapters form the volume’s rich core and are both highly readable and informative. The subsequent chapters (17, 18, 19) are most welcome treatments of Islamic art and architecture, the status of Muslim women, and Islam and the West from the Arab conquests to “The curious (and inexplicable) rise of the West”. The final five chapters cover the sixteenth century to the present, the challenge of European colonialism and modernity together with the varied Muslim responses to them ranging from reform and renewal, to liberalism and global jihadism. In sum, a formidable achievement.

David Waines

DENIS HERMANN and SABRINA MERVIN (eds):

*Shi‘i Trends and Dynamics in Modern Times (XVIIIth–XXth Centuries)/
Courants et dynamiques chiïtes à l’époque moderne (XVIIIe–XXe siècles).*

(Beiruter Texte und Studien/Bibliothèque Iranienne.) 180 pp. Beirut:

Orient Institute/Würzburg: Ergon, 2010. €32. ISBN 978 3 89913 808 5.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000183

In recent years, a number of international conferences have been held on the history and doctrines of Twelver Shiism, which almost inevitably yielded anthologies of the respective papers. The book under review joins this kind of literature, although whether it is also based on such a conference remains unclear. In order to avoid too broad a range of topics, the editors have prudently decided to restrict the subject matter to intellectual developments after the decline of the Safavid Empire and well into the twentieth century, i.e. to debates and disputes in the fields of philosophy, mysticism, jurisprudence and political thought. The nine articles are accordingly divided into three parts: diversity and change in philosophy and mystic; Shi‘i jurisprudence; and doctrinal debates and political theories.

Without going into detail, the following notes aim to provide a short overview of each article, starting with the first part on philosophy and mysticism. Todd Lawson (“Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā‘ī and the world of images”, pp. 19–31) gives a (sometimes slightly esoteric) interpretation of the Shaykhī concept of the *‘alam al-mithāl*, which he compares to the ideas of the earlier theologian Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1680). Whether changing opinions about this world of images really constitute what might be termed “scientific progress” (p. 27), rests, however, largely in the eye of the beholder and strongly depends on one’s own ideas of science and progress. Oliver Scharbrodt (“The *quṭb* as special representative of the hidden imam: the conflation of Shi‘i and Sufi *Vilāyat* in the Ni‘matullāhī order”, pp. 33–49) traces the revival of the Ni‘matullāhī Sufi order in Iran in the late eighteenth century. The fact that two of its foremost figures, Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh and Nūr ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1796 and 1797 respectively), developed the idea that the spiritual leader (*quṭb*) of the order was at the same time considered to be the “special deputy” of the hidden imam, may, on the one hand, be interpreted as a

form of “Shiitization” of Iranian mysticism. On the other hand, however, it posed a serious challenge to the Shiite *uṣūlī* clergy who claimed, in their entirety, collective deputyship of the Mahdī. The ‘*ulamā*’ reacted accordingly, and by 1800 all Nī matullāhī leaders were killed; the order could survive only by resorting to *taqīyya* and refraining from openly challenging the authority of the Shiite clergy. Sajjad H. Rizvi (“*Hikma Muta’āliya* in Qajar Iran: Hājj Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī and the School of Mullā Ṣadrā”, pp. 51–70) deals with the jurist and mystic Sabzavārī (d. 1873) and his two main works *Asrār al-ḥikam* and *Sharḥ-i manzūma*, by which he continued and transmitted the heritage of Mullā Ṣadrā to posterity. Moreover, he had a large number of disciples – among whom Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī and Akhūnd Khurāsānī are certainly the most important – who also left their mark in this regard. Robert Gleave’s article (“Continuity and originality in Shi’i thought: the relationship between the *Akhbārīyya* and the *Maktab-i Tafkīk*”, pp. 71–92) focuses on a hitherto largely neglected school of thought, the hermeneutical school of the *Maktab-i Tafkīk* established by Mīrzā Mahdī Iṣfahānī (d. 1946). They ascribe exclusive importance to Quran and *ḥadīth* in gaining knowledge, and insist that revelation and human concepts are separate (hence their name); this led them to be seen as the natural heirs to the *akhbārī* movement which was subdued by the *uṣūlīs* in the nineteenth century. Building on his immense knowledge of the *akhbārīyya*, Gleave examines the similarities and differences between the two schools with regard to two topics: the role of reason (*aql*) as a source of religious knowledge and the respective conceptions of language and Quranic interpretation.

The second part of the book, on jurisprudence, opens with Sabrina Mervin’s article on “La quête du savoir à Najaf. Les études religieuses chez les chiites imāmītes de la fin du 19^e siècle à 1960” (pp. 95–112), in which she describes the traditional system of studies at the religious seminary (*ḥawza*) in Najaf. This mode of learning and its sources survived well into modern times, occasional calls for reform notwithstanding. The article as such is not new; it is a revised version of an item that first appeared in *Studia Islamica* 81, 1995, 165–85. Shahram Pazouki (“*Fiqh* et soufisme à la période qajare: quelques notes sur l’œuvre juridique des maîtres nī matullāhī gunābādī”, pp. 113–27) turns to another offshoot of the Nī matullāhī Sufī order, the Gunābādī branch. Their shaykhs combined their mysticism with jurisprudence of a decidedly *uṣūlī* type, which made them probably less prone to being persecuted by the clergy than other orders. The compatibility of Sufism and *uṣūlī* rationalism is demonstrated by several fatwas issued by their founding figures, Sulṭān ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1909) and his son and successor, Nūr ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1918), on the topics of prohibition of slavery, polygamy, divorce and the consumption of opium.

The final part, on polemics and politics, consists of three articles. The first, by Sajida Sultana Alvi (“Sunni Ulama’s discourses on Shi’ism in northern India during the 18th and 19th centuries: an overview”, pp. 131–53) is devoted to a number of sectarian treatises composed by four north Indian Sunni scholars and triggered, according to the author, by the increasing power of Shiites in the area, especially by the establishment of the Shiite kingdom of Avadh. In particular, the article focuses on Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1623), Qāḍī Thanā’ Allāh Pānīpatī (d. 1810), Shāh Valī Allāh (d. 1762) and the latter’s son Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 1824). The book of the last-mentioned, *Tuḥfa-yi ithnā ‘ashariyya*, probably had the most lasting effect and even served as ammunition in sectarian struggles in the twentieth century. Finally, there are two contributions on theorists of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. Denis Hermann (“Système parlementaire et consultation selon Thiqat al-Islām-i Tabrīzī: légitimation religieuse et justification historique”, pp. 155–70) deals with the views of the leader of the Tabriz branch of the Shaykhīs, Thiqat

al-Islām-i Tabrīzī, executed by the Russians in 1911. He was one of the most ardent supporters of the constitutional movement, justifying the parliamentary system and the practice of consultation (*shūrā*) mainly on religious and historical grounds by invoking the role model of the prophet. Also ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Lārī (d. 1923/24) came out in defence of constitutionalism and parliament against the monarchy which was, for him, tantamount to autocracy and suppression. He, however, makes an important qualification, as Mohammad Baqer Vosuqi (“Remarques sur la pensée politique de l’ayatollah Lārī durant le mouvement constitutionnel”, pp. 171–80) shows: any form of constitutional government is legitimate only under the final supervision of the Shiite clergy, among whom he accords a particular role to the “just religious judge”. Vosuqi waits until the very last lines of his article to drive his point home: this was one of the many roads that led to Khomeini’s political theory of the “Guardianship of the Jurisconsult” (*Vilāyat-i faqīh*) and to the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

All in all, the book is carefully edited; the number of misprints and errors is negligible. Unfortunately, however, there are neither indexes nor any bibliography, so that making connections between the articles and finding references is sometimes a little cumbersome. Nevertheless, the present volume offers a number of fine articles that testify to a most vibrant and lively part of Shiite intellectual history.

Rainer Brunner

DAVID NICOLLE:

Late Mamlūk Military Equipment: Travaux et Études de la Mission Archéologique Syro-Française Citadelle de Damas (1999–2006) vol. III. 396 pp. Damascus: Presses de ifpo, 2011. \$68. ISBN 978 2 35159 045 4. doi:10.1017/S0041977X12000195

Great interest has been generated by the excavations and investigative works on the citadel of Damascus undertaken in the years 1999–2006 by a Syrian–French archaeological mission under the auspices of the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums and the Institut Français du Proche Orient. Some seven volumes are projected to result from this scholarly investigation, of which this, volume III, is the first to appear. What it catalogues and analyses is some wholly astonishing material found in the eastern end of a building in the south-west of the citadel. The finds consist largely of military material of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggesting that this building was used as an armoury in late Mamluk and perhaps early Ottoman times. The actual excavation was conducted by J.-B. Gardiol, who discovered most of the material in a light-well which had been covered by joists, and in the beaten earth floor. The discoveries had been sealed away from light and damp, and this enabled cloth and other materials to survive. In this volume the finds are catalogued and discussed by David Nicolle, whose knowledge of Middle Eastern military equipment is unrivalled. As befits a collection of such importance the book has been superbly produced, although it is a pity there is no index. However, there are almost 200 fine illustrations, mostly colour photographs. Some of these are of comparable material discovered elsewhere. Nicolle has chosen to divide the finds into seven categories which are contained in chapters 2–8 as follows: 2. Armour; 3. Soft armour; 4. Hardened leather and laminated armour; 5. Horse armour; 6. Archery; 7. Firearms; 8. Daggers and miscellaneous items. Each