she also notes, existed in pre-Islamic Arabia, too, although the concept of moral excellence was not entirely the same as in Islam. The Quran furthermore accords the families, close kin (*dhawī l-qurbā*), and descendants of prophets a special status of purity that implied privileges, including that of succession to leadership, as well as obligations and restrictions. This status rested, like the status of prophets, on divine election, not on popular preference. ʿAlī and his early supporters certainly must have argued on the basis of his personal merits, but these inevitably included his close kinship and association with the Prophet.

Similarly inadequate is the author's treatment of the origins of the Khawārij, the third major faction of Muslims that arose during the age of the *salaf*. Their opposition to the arbitration of the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya was not "curious" (p. 53), but soundly based on Quran 49: 9 (not 12: 67). ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, who was delegated by ʿAlī to debate with them, was clearly unable to invalidate their arguments. The eventual failure of the arbitration also proved them right in their political judgement. Nor were the majority of the Khawārij blood-thirsty fanatics, as their adversaries liked to portray them.

There are unfortunately numerous factual errors in the account of Islamic history, such as that Muḥammad formed the alliance known as *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* (p. 2), that the caliph ʿUmar appointed the Persian Salmān al-Fārisī governor of Persia (p. 123), and that the Ḥanafī legal school has become prevalent throughout the Islamic world (pp. 102–05).

The second part of the book, which contrasts the thought of hard-line Islamists and Sunni modernists, is more informative and generally reliable. At times, however, it turns to unscholarly polemic against the Islamists, whom the author in the end charges with having "betrayed the legacy of the earliest Muslims in their nihilistic quest for political power" (p. 199). Thus she insinuates that the term *al-ḥākimiyya al-ʿulyā*, employed by Sayyid Quṭb as signifying God's supreme sovereignty and judgeship, was derived from the slogan of the early Khawārij that "judgement belongs only to God" (pp. 156, 184). Is it not more reasonable to assume that it was derived from the quranic affirmation that God is *aḥkam al-ḥākimīn*, the wisest of judges, and similar texts? One may well disagree with Sayyid Quṭb as to what the supreme sovereignty of God may imply in practical terms, but to question that God is the creator, supreme law-giver and ultimate judge of the universe and mankind evidently amounts to denying the Quran and Islam as well as the Bible, Judaism and Christianity.

Wilferd Madelung

MICHAEL BONNER:
Jihad in Islamic History.
xviii, 197 pp. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004. £14.95. ISBN 0 691 12574 0.

For understandable reasons, recent events have encouraged renewed interest in the idea and practice of *jihād*. In the news media and the popular press, the term has become ubiquitous. Not surprisingly, it is often misunderstood. *Jihād* can mean many different things in Arabic, yet non-specialists generally take it to mean simply "holy war". Stripped of its many nuances, the Islamic ideal of *jihād* becomes an unproblematic and self-evident explanation for acts of

violence such as those inflicted by the terrorists of 11 September 2001. This is unfortunate, and also unnecessary, since several scholars of Islamic history have produced books on the topic of *jihād*, books informed by the most recent scholarship but also accessible to a larger audience. One of these, the book under review, was first published in French in 2004, as *Le jihad: origines, interprétations, combats*. In the present English edition, Bonner cites David Cook's *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, 2005), which covers much of the same ground.

Despite their similarities, Bonner's book is different to Cook's in several ways. Both authors have established their scholarly reputations through studies of early Islamic history and thought; nonetheless, Cook devotes considerably more of his book to recent events, and in particular to "contemporary *jihad* theory" and "globalist radical Islam". Bonner has intentionally limited his discussion of such topics (p. 157). As compensation, however, the reader is offered valuable contextualization: for example, an important chapter on "martyrdom", in which Bonner draws on his extensive knowledge of both early Islam and the historical setting and religious traditions from which Islam emerged to demonstrate how martyrdom both "connects Islam to the other monotheistic traditions and sets it apart from them" (p. 72). The reader is left to infer how this discussion relates to and informs our understanding of suicide bombings and the like in the contemporary world – although of course it does not and cannot fully explain them. *Understanding Jihad* provided a comprehensive narrative survey of the origins and evolution of the doctrine of *jihād*. On the whole this probably makes it a more serviceable introduction to the subject for many general readers. On the other hand, *Jihad in Islamic History* in some ways accomplishes even more. Bonner's book is more than an introduction to the idea and practice of *jihād*. It systematically surveys the sources for the reconstruction of early Islamic history, including the *ḥadīth* and *maghāzī* literature. Even more importantly, it provides cursory but insightful accounts of scholarly controversies over the reliability and proper use of that literature, and in the process introduces the reader to the work of Julius Wellhausen, Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, Montgomery Watt, John Wansbrough, Patricia Crone, Robert Hoyland and others. Such a list, including as it does the names of some of the most important Western historians of Islam over the last century, suggests the target audience of this book: advanced undergraduates and beginning graduate students, as well as other well-informed general readers seeking an introduction not just to *jihād* but to the critical apparatus of Islamic studies.

Bonner frames the basic question in this way: in narratives of Islamic origins, the "transition from Mecca to Medina, from the encounter with the divine to fighting and statehood", is central. Why, he asks, "should the discovery of God, self, and community be linked so indissolubly to the waging of war? … How does this combination then maintain such attraction over so many centuries and ranging so far beyond the original Arabian environment in which Islam first arose?" (p. 119). The answer is to be found in the ensuing survey of the practice of *jihād* from the Umayyads through the Ottomans and beyond. Bonner does not fall back on generalizations about the violent character of an abstract, unchanging "Islam", as many popular writers still unfortunately do; his approach is relentlessly historical. Nonetheless, his survey argues clearly that *jihād* has been central to the self-understanding of most political entities operating within the Islamic tradition. This has been true not just of the winners, but of the losers as well. "As soon as we find opposition movements expressing themselves, in Islamic terms, against the Islamic

leadership of their day, they do this in the language of jihad''. Indeed, ''they do this so much that we might even define the earliest jihad as warfare against the enemies of God'' (p. 127). Of course, for many Muslims, including but not exclusively Sufi mystics, the concept of *jihād* has come to include not just combat but inner spiritual struggle; the fully-developed Sunni tradition has frequently labelled that inner spiritual struggle ''the greater *jihād*'', so as to stress its priority over mere fighting. Bonner on several occasions (pp. 14, 22) affirms that this internalized interpretation of *jihād* is consistent with, even in some at least latent sense present in, the Quran. But this seems little more than a polite nod to Muslims who want to stress the more irenic tendencies within and interpretations of their tradition. As he himself casually concedes, and as his historical analysis lays bare, ''at least for Sunni Muslims, armed struggle has most often been at the heart of the matter'' (p. 79). In this respect, the subject of *jihād* demonstrates how the reconstruction of Islamic history by Western scholars such as Bonner, informed as it is by the best modern critical tools, comes surprisingly close to replicating the understanding of contemporary Islamist radicals who insist on the centrality of armed, physical combat to their definition of ''Islam''.

Jonathan P. Berkey

JONATHAN BROWN:
The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon.
(Islam History and Civilization: Studies and Texts.) xxii, 431 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007. €129. ISBN 978 90 04 15839 9.

It is refreshing – even for those of us engaged in the debate – to read a study on ḥadīth that does not focus on their authenticity. In fact, by addressing the canonization of al-Bukhārī's *Saḥīḥ* and Muslim's *Saḥīḥ* (the *Saḥīḥayn*), which stand second only to the Quran itself in Sunni Islam, Jonathan Brown answers far more practical and intriguing questions. For some Muslims, to question the authenticity of the *Saḥīḥayn*, and for some even one of their thousands of ḥadīths, is tantamount to heresy. What Brown demonstrates so convincingly is that this status was never a foregone conclusion and it took centuries to achieve. Tracing how these two collections of ḥadīths were singled out from the many similar collections, and how they came to be accepted by each of the four competing schools of law of Sunni Islam, is useful enough, but Brown also does so with reference to the insights of canon studies in general.

In his first few chapters Brown provides useful introductions to canon studies, canonicity and their applicability to the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*; and to the background and lives of al-Bukharī and Muslim. Given their later status, the lacklustre, unenthusiastic, and at times hostile reception of their books during their lifetimes and immediately after their deaths can seem very surprising. Al-Bukhārī, in particular, was lambasted by ''über-Sunnis'' for believing that the *lafẓ* of the Quran was created. As Brown points out, ''canonization is not the product of the an author's intention, but rather of a community's reception of texts'' (p. 36). Yet the initial reception of these two ḥadīth scholars was one of suspicion, for their works seemed to challenge the tradition of transmitting ḥadīths through ''living *isnād*s'' which had hitherto served as the main connection to the Prophet and as his authoritative legacy.