

bany: State University of New York Press, 1990. Pp. xvi + 248. Cloth, \$54.50; paper, \$17.95.

THE HISTORY OF AL-TABARI. VOLUME XXIII: THE ZENITH OF THE MARWANID HOUSE: THE LAST YEARS OF 'ABD AL-MALIK AND THE CALIPHATE OF AL-WALID, A.D. 700-715/A.H. 81-96. Translated and edited by Martin Hinds. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. Pp. xv + 254. Cloth, \$49.50; paper, \$19.95.

Enough volumes of the Tabari translation project have appeared recently as to cover, among other things, almost all of the history of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750). This Umayyad sequence includes two of the volumes under review here (19 and 23), while volume 15 is essential for understanding events immediately preceding (the Umayyads themselves considered their rule to have begun with the caliphate of 'Uthman). All three volumes provide good translations with reasonably complete annotation.

Volume 15, on the reign of 'Uthman, shows Tabari at his best. His sources (principally Sayf, Mada'ini, and Waqidi) relate their stories with great skill, while Tabari's own work of choosing and editing is, as R. S. Humphreys shows, artful and deliberate. All this raises difficult historiographical problems. In the foreword to this translation Humphreys, who has discussed the sources for medieval Islamic history in his *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (2nd ed., Princeton, 1991) expands upon some well-known pages of Marshall Hodgson to identify a complicated program on Tabari's part: "The naive reader sees a sympathetic and even laudatory portrayal of a rightly guided caliph ['Uthman]; the critical reader must confront ambiguity, internal contradiction, and the impossibility of reaching a definitive judgment." Some will disagree over the reasons attributed to Tabari for doing this and for his predilection for the controversial Sayf b. 'Umar. But this foreword is interesting, and the narrative itself quite compelling, as it rolls on toward the tragedy of 'Uthman's murder and the ensuing civil war.

Volume 19, covering the reign of Yazid I, will interest students of religion because here the dominating event is the other great martyrdom of early Islam, that of al-Husayn ibn 'Ali at Karbala'. In his foreword, I. K. A. Howard discusses Tabari's principle sources for this event: Hisham b. Muhammad al-Kalbi transmitting Abu Mikhnaf, and a Shi'ite version purported to have originated with the fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 732). Tabari has omitted other versions, while selectively shaping the material which he did include. Howard's discussion of these problems, based on his own extensive earlier research, is a fine example of the interest in early historiography that has recently been increasing and that is also evident in the recent work of Humphreys.

Volume 23, which includes the end of the reign of 'Abd al-Malik and all of that of al-Walid, will be of less interest to students of religion as such, but highly useful to anyone interested in

Umayyad history, and in particular the expansion of Islam into Central Asia. For some strange reason this book, published in 1990, contains no mention of the fact that Martin Hinds died in 1988. But the accuracy and elegance of the translation, together with the learning and intelligence of the notes, all show what a misfortune Hinds's premature death has been for Islamic studies.

Michael Bonner
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285

THE QUR'AN AND ITS INTERPRETERS, VOLUME II: THE HOUSE OF 'IMRAN. By Mahmoud M. Ayoub. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. Pp. x + 433. N.p.

Following up on his initial (1984) offering in what promises to be a multi-volume project, the author continues to do scholars, teachers, and students alike a marvelous service. Volume I summarized the main issues in thirteen works of Qur'an commentary (*tafsir*), working through groups of related verses in suras 1 and 2; the present volume uses the same method to cover the lengthy third chapter of the Qur'an. Most sources are classical, but Ayoub also includes more recent material representing a wide range of exegetical methods. Ayoub synthesizes each commentator's views on the verses in question, providing occasional passages translated directly. More of the latter would have been most desirable; but the book is very well done and will be a useful resource for Islamicists, for courses on Islamic religious thought, and also for specialists in other exegetical traditions who wish to broaden their horizons.

John Renard
St. Louis University
St. Louis, MO 63108

THE SUFI PATH OF KNOWLEDGE: IBN AL-'ARABI'S METAPHYSICS OF IMAGINATION. By William C. Chittick. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. Pp. xxii + 478. Paper, \$24.95.

As influential as Ibn al-'Arabi has been for centuries across all Islamdom, access to his thought has been possible only for specialists—until Chittick's superb contribution. In seven chapters, with twenty thematic sub-sections, Chittick leads the reader on a progressive journey upward through Ibn al-'Arabi's richly imaginative spiritual cosmos. Most important are the hundreds of short translated selections, with commentary, of the Shaykh's enormous master work, *The Meccan Openings*. The material remains quite opaque in places, and one cannot read this author jauntily. Still, Chittick has on the whole succeeded in putting a major work of Arabic mystical theology within reach of Islamicists, historians of religion, and more advanced students of Islamic religious texts.

John Renard
St. Louis University
St. Louis, MO 63108

THE HIDDEN GOVERNMENT: RITUAL, CLIENTALISM, AND LEGITIMATION IN NORTHERN EGYPT. By Edward B. Reeves. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990. N.p.

This work defines the role of religion in the legitimation of political structures and, in particular, the inequality involved in the exchange of power. In contention with previous scholarship, epitomized by that of Ernest Gellner, which argues that patronage is less prevalent in the tribal organization of Muslim societies, Reeves shows that social organization in the Egyptian city of Tanta is based on a form of clientalism reinforced by ritual. For Reeves, ritual dramatizes the difference between performers and audience to legitimate the unequal access of the performers to the use of power resources.

Although Reeve's work is based on a case-study of the clientalism surrounding the veneration of *ṣūfī* saints in Tanta, his analysis and conclusions have wider relevance, both for the study of saint cults and for theories of ritual. The bulk of this work (11-134) is an outline of the saint cult in Tanta, detailing the authorization of saints through miracle stories (*karāmāt*) and the legitimation of that authority of saints through the performance of votive rites (*ziyārāt*) and commemorative festivals. This section culminates in a discussion of the festival (*mīlīd*) as a ritual performance centered upon the interaction of clients and patrons in which pilgrims exchange gifts of food and hospitality for the blessings (*barākāt*) of the saints. Using the Turners' model of pilgrimage as *communitas*, Reeves argues that it is this patron-client interaction, built upon and reinforcing the unequal statuses of the participants, that governs the solidarity of the community.

An important contribution to the study of religion not only on account of its conception of the political instrumentality of ritual, but as well for its use of social and political theorists who usually go unheeded by students of religion.

Brannon M. Wheeler
Earlham College
Richmond, IN 47374

THE CITY OF THE MOON GOD: RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF HARRAN. By Tamara M. Green. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 114, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992. Pp. vii + 232. \$63.00.

A careful work, presenting a wide array of historical texts, dealing with old and new arguments and theories. Offering no startling, new conclusions, Green chides Chwolson for uncritical use of Muslim accounts, and shows that the Muslims' own interests determined what they found at Harran: Mainly ancient esoterica related to Hermetic traditions, or Greek materials for undergirding Mu'tazilite rationalist philosophy. The "Brethren of Purity" on the fringes of Shi'ite *ghulat* (extremism) had their own agenda in aligning themselves with Harran.