

kings was surely amply inspired by eclectic forms of Judaism, many of which would have probably seemed acceptable to the rabbinic authorities. Gajda demonstrates the coexistence of scriptural traditions (especially Judaism) and ancient pagan cults in the private sphere even after the Ḥimyaritic royal house's conversion, convincingly concluding that the shift was less abrupt than previously thought. The Ḥimyarite kings thus converted to a deliberately blurred monotheism, which made use of different names to indicate the monotheistic god in order to reinforce the unity of their South Arabian kingdom.

On the whole, *Islam and Its Past* offers important contributions to our understanding of the rise of Islam. Chapters two and three present innovative approaches to the study of the Quran and its relationship with the scriptural tradition. We might consider both chapters as the natural continuation of Abraham Geiger's experimental reading of the Quran. Chapters four and six, written by two of the most revolutionary students of the Quran, are groundbreaking and exciting. Nevertheless, their authors' arguments are based on traditional Muslim sources, which they themselves ferociously attacked in the 1970s; there is a desperate need for archaeological confirmation. Chapters one and five have a wider scope and provide instructive readings for those approaching the Quranic field for the first time. Finally, the final two chapters are intriguing, though in different ways. The erudition of chapter seven's author is undeniable, while chapter eight is relatively concise but has the merit of emphasizing the need for comparing and contrasting the archaeological remains of South Arabia with the relevant portions of the Quran.

Overall, the book is thought-provoking and sheds light on different aspects of current Quranic research. The general impression is that the field is booming at present, but that there are still many approaches that need to be investigated if we are to achieve a more rounded understanding of the Quran and early Islam.

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The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sinā, Suhrawardī, Shahrazūrī, and Beyond. By L. W. C. VAN LIT. Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Apocalypticism and Eschatology, vol. 2. Edinburgh: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. viii + 278. \$110, £75.

Given the clear description of the bodily resurrection during afterlife in the Quran on the one hand, and the prevailing idea of the sole survival of the soul in philosophy on the other, Muslim philosophers had to either renounce their religious beliefs or abandon their philosophical convictions. However, a solution for these seemingly incompatible views was elaborated in the Ishrāqī school. Its first explicit formulation, namely, “world of suspended images,” was related to al-Suhrawardī's acceptance of another world, different from the bodily world. After al-Suhrawardī, it found a more mature expression in the notion of “world of image” (*‘alām al-mithāl*), coined by his disciple al-Shahrazūrī. However, before al-Suhrawardī, Ibn Sinā had already posed a kind of preliminary basis for this idea—the possibility for souls to perceive images in the hereafter, thanks to a link with celestial bodies. The intention of L. W. C. van Lit's book under review is to highlight the crucial steps in the development of this theory, as well as significant elements of its reception in the later tradition.

In the introduction (chapter one), van Lit claims that the main focus of his book is on the notion of *‘alām al-mithāl*, its genesis, and its reception. He insists that he gives priority to al-Suhrawardī (and his commentators), although he had just before (rightly) criticized Henry Corbin (and others after him) for having used the expression *‘alām al-mithāl* in their discussion of al-Suhrawardī's thought. This is somewhat confusing, especially given the book's title, which seems to place al-Suhrawardī—and the expression—on the same level as Ibn Sinā and al-Shahrazūrī. The introduction offers a valuable survey of contemporary scholarship on al-Suhrawardī and discusses several methodological issues. Van Lit

explains the—for his study crucial—distinction between a “close reading” (related to one source) and a “distant reading” (connecting different texts—from F. Moretti’s *Distant Reading* [London, 2013]). Finally, he indicates that he will pay no attention to variants in the quoted texts, which “can be shown to be mistaken in more than one place” (p. 18). If so, why not offer the correct reading?

The second chapter opens with a valuable basic outline of Ibn Sīnā’s view on the use of imagination in the hereafter by the imperfect souls (a well-known doctrine since the seminal study of J. R. Michot, *La destinée de l’homme selon Avicenne* [Louvain, 1986]). Although van Lit is inclined to believe that this view is original with Ibn Sīnā, he points to al-Kindī’s *al-Qawl fī l-naḥs* and al-Fārābī’s *Ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* as possible sources. But in the former the accent is on the gradual purification of the soul and in the latter on two types of knowledge, i.e., demonstrative and imaginative—not from an eschatological perspective, however, but in the specific context of the relationship between philosophy and religion. All this is far removed from Ibn Sīnā’s doctrine. In the second part of the chapter, van Lit quickly surveys the—for the large part, negative—reception of Ibn Sīnā’s idea in post-Avicennan thinkers with an impressive list of both Sunni and Shii authors. In my view, for such major thinkers as, e.g., al-Ghazālī or Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the information provided is too limited to allow for a proper evaluation; for example, the quoted passage of al-Ghazālī’s *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (p. 29) is an almost verbatim Arabic translation of Ibn Sīnā’s Persian *Dānish-nāma* (van Lit seems to completely ignore the close link that exists between the two works). In the last part of the chapter, van Lit discusses al-Suhrawardī’s acceptance of Ibn Sīnā’s idea in two of his early works, *al-Lamaḥāt* and *Partaw-nāma*, evolving from a simple mention in the former to an acceptance in the latter. In his somewhat later *al-Talwihāt*, as van Lit explains, al-Suhrawardī more actively engages with the idea. Insofar as this part of the chapter deals with al-Suhrawardī, it could have been put in the following chapter, which might have been more natural since that chapter continues to describe the further evolution of his thought. It must be noted that the very notion of “world of image” is completely absent in Ibn Sīnā’s thought, as well as in the three cited works of al-Suhrawardī.

In the third chapter van Lit shows how in *Hikmat al-ishrāq* al-Suhrawardī goes a step further than in *al-Talwihāt*, by moving from “sites of imagination” to “objects of imagination,” or, in al-Suhrawardī’s own words, “suspended images.” Van Lit emphasizes that al-Suhrawardī fully accepts the existence of the “world of suspended images” as an independent world. For van Lit it is clear that al-Suhrawardī thinks of “suspended images” as an ontological category, especially given his mention of “four worlds” (even though, as van Lit recognizes, one finds in the whole of *Hikmat al-ishrāq* only a single reference to this). Van Lit consequently is intent on determining as precisely as possible the ontological nature of “suspended images,” indicating on the one hand that they have characteristics in common with both bodies and intellects but in the end are neither, and on the other hand that they are much more like bodies. This latter qualification is especially questionable because al-Suhrawardī specifies that “subsistent images” and even “abstract things” can function as “suspended images.” While van Lit’s identification of the expression *‘alām miqdārī* (“magnitudinous world,” mentioned in al-Suhrawardī’s *al-Mashāriʿ*) as another term for suspended images would seem to be correct, the context is not eschatological, as one would expect and as he himself recognizes, but a discussion of the unicity of the world. In addition, al-Suhrawardī presents it as a statement of the “Ancients.” Unfortunately, van Lit does not attempt to identify these, although al-Shahrazūrī mentions Hermes, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Plato explicitly by name. It is a pity that van Lit does not refer to this here, but only much later (pp. 110–11) discusses al-Shahrazūrī’s “illustrative list” and qualifies it as a (most likely) “rhetorical device.” Furthermore, van Lit shows how al-Suhrawardī, contrary to Ibn Sīnā, succeeded in really explaining why a soul can connect to a celestial body, namely, by his doctrine of “knowledge by presence.” Van Lit observes that *mushāhada* (“experience”) has precedence for al-Suhrawardī over intellectual argumentation. Unfortunately, on the very same page, van Lit uses the same translation “experience” for the Arabic technical term *tajriba*. To avoid ambiguity it would have been better to translate *mushāhada* with “direct testimony” (or, “direct experience”). Finally, van Lit points to different possible sources of inspiration for al-Suhrawardī’s idea of “suspended images,” highlighting in particular Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (most significantly, with regard to the topic of self-awareness), who was already (at least partially) inspired by Ibn Sīnā. At the end of the chapter, van Lit admits that many aspects of al-Suhrawardī’s

view on suspended images remain unclear and even puzzling. Since van Lit is well aware of the complex and intriguing nature of al-Suhrawardī's doctrine, it is curious that none of this was described when actually presenting the doctrine. Given that the notion of "world of image" is absent in al-Suhrawardī, it plays no role in this chapter either.

Chapter four is devoted to al-Shahrazūrī, probably al-Suhrawardī's most enthusiastic follower. Van Lit notes that al-Shahrazūrī freely uses the latter's source text. Based on a comparison between a passage in al-Shahrazūrī's commentary on *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and one in his *Rasā'il al-shajara*, van Lit sees serious evidence for the latter predating the former insofar as its wording is a more verbatim rendering of al-Suhrawardī's *al-Mashāri'*. But in his later discussion of metempsychosis (p. 108), van Lit states that Shahrazūrī had only in the *Rasā'il al-shajara* full control over the composition, suggesting thus that it is a later work. Van Lit then examines al-Shahrazūrī's proof for the existence of another world, as well as the central passage in which the very notion of "world of image" is expressed (only here is the reader finally given an essential use for this notion). Van Lit stresses that the proof is based on an elimination strategy by considering the object that is perceived. Since images cannot be part of our sensory world (and for al-Shahrazūrī, from all evidence, in neither the world of soul nor the world of intellect), they must exist in a fourth world. To substantiate this view van Lit quotes, in English translation, a passage common to both the commentary on the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and the metaphysical part of *Rasā'il al-shajara*. Most interestingly, he notes that the passage appears no longer in an eschatological context in the latter work, but in the part on ontology. Van Lit detects here—and I believe he is right to do so—a determination on behalf of al-Shahrazūrī to allow a wider ontologization of the world of image. As to the crucial passage in which al-Shahrazūrī presents his "world of image" concept, van Lit quotes more extensively, but now in English translation, the very same passage he had used before to determine the chronological order between the commentary and the *Rasā'il*, which had its ultimate source in al-Suhrawardī's *al-Mashāri'* (with the expression *'alām miqdārī*), as well as two paraphrases of the same passages, one present in the the *Rasā'il*, the other in the commentary on al-Suhrawardī's *al-Talwīḥāt*. Surprisingly he comments (p. 96): "Why Shahrazūrī chose to base this passage on a relatively insignificant snippet from Suhrawardī's *al-Mashāri'* is unclear to me." If indeed relatively insignificant, one wonders whether this or these rephrasing(s) are where al-Shahrazūrī expresses his idea of "world of image." In fact, the central term is *'alām miqdārī* and a serious detailed examination of this notion is needed to evaluate al-Suhrawardī's passage in *al-Mashāri'* and its significance in al-Shahrazūrī's thought. Moreover, van Lit fails to explain why the two paraphrased versions are included in a discussion on the void whereas the two more literal quotes figure in a metaphysical context (is this due to a doctrinal evolution?). Also in need of further clarification is whether al-Shahrazūrī adopts a three- or a fourfold division of the cosmos, especially given the absence of any explicit reference to a "world of the soul." Finally, the degree to which there exists a similarity between our sensible world and the world of image is not clear. Insofar as in the world of image accidents are substances and space becomes a fluid concept, as van Lit emphasizes, there seems to exist little room for similarity.

In the fifth chapter, van Lit presents a detailed survey of the reception of al-Suhrawardī's idea of suspended images. Quite naturally, the technical notion of "world of image" has only a marginal mention. Among the many authors discussed, I mention al-Tūdḥī, al-Abḥarī, Ibn Kammūna (all thirteenth century); Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, al-Taftāzānīs, and the anonymous author of *al-Muthul al-ʿaqliyya al-aflātūniyya* (fourteenth century); "the cautious commentators from Shiraz" (p. 124), viz., Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, Najm al-Dīn al-Nayrīzī, and Muḥammad Sharīf Niẓām al-Dīn al-Harawī (sixteenth century); and, finally, Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1635). Van Lit offers a wide range of attitudes, from outright rejection to full acceptance. Questions abound. Why was Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī included since he "simply incorporates Shahrazūrī's commentary" (p. 118), offering no personal interpretation? Inclusion of *Muthul al-ʿaqliyya al-aflātūniyya* is also problematic, even if it does show on occasion elements of direct inspiration by al-Suhrawardī. As to the commentators from Shiraz, they are revealed to be indifferent to, even critical of al-Suhrawardī's notion of "suspended images"; al-Harawī is not a member of the Shiraz school and, moreover, is indebted to Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. Mullā Ṣadrā

meanwhile is more in debt to al-Shahrazūri than (directly) to al-Suhrawardī, and hence one wonders why he does not appear in the sixth chapter, where he fits better.

In that chapter, devoted to the reception of al-Shahrazūri's idea of the "world of image," van Lit reuses once again the passage in which al-Shahrazūri (in close connection with al-Suhrawardī) highlights the existence of a "magnitudinous world," as already affirmed by the "Ancients." I will only comment on a few points:

(1) Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī is shown to have copied in two works al-Shahrazūri's paraphrase of al-Suhrawardī's *Ḥikma* without acknowledgment. It is noteworthy that van Lit does not indicate in Quṭb al-Dīn's version the omission of *wa-l-ʿaqli* after the affirmation that the magnitudinous world is different from the sensible world. This is all the more striking given that al-Suhrawardī stresses that the magnitudinous world is different from intellect and soul. Unless there is an error in the edition, the omission is not insignificant, since it suggests that the magnitudinous world's difference from the sensible world deserves to be stressed more explicitly than its difference from the intelligible world. Also significant is the replacement of "(two cities) among the cities of the world of image" by "(two) great (cities)." Van Lit considers the qualification "great" to be a simple addition. However, earlier in his text (al-Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, ed. A. Nourani and M. Mohaghegh [Tehran, 2001], 491,17), one finds "the world of image and imagination described as "great world." It seems more appropriate therefore to view "great" as a conscious replacement for "world of image."

(2) In his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1390) copies Quṭb al-Dīn's wording of the passage. According to van Lit, al-Taftāzānī moved the final words, *yahdhū ḥadhwa al-ʿalam al-ḥissi*, to the beginning. In fact, al-Taftāzānī's first line (*huwa . . . al-ḥissi*) is verbatim copied from another line (al-Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, 491,17–18). What follows (*fī dawām . . . al-ʿalam al-ʿaqli*) is also present in the anonymous *al-Muthul al-ʿaqliyya al-aflātūniyya* (ed. A. Badawi, 2nd ed. [Kuwait/Beirut, n.d.], 85,16–17), in a passage that, according to R. Arnzen (*Platonische Ideen in der arabischen Philosophie: Texte und Materialien zur Begriffsgeschichte von ṣuwar aflātūniyya und muthul aflātūniyya* [Berlin, 2011], 302 n. 150), corresponds exactly with Quṭb al-Dīn's *Risāla* (unfortunately, I had no access to it). Thus, everything indicates that al-Taftāzānī offers a patchwork of various affirmations that one finds in Quṭb al-Dīn.

(3) In a similar vein as al-Taftāzānī, Najm al-Dīn al-Nayrīzī (d. ca. 1536) combines elements in his *Miṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ fī kashf ḥaqāʾiq al-alwāḥ* that are taken not only from al-Shahrazūri's *Rasāʾil al-shajara* (physical part), as van Lit indicates, but also from his commentary on al-Suhrawardī's *al-Talwihāt*. This is evident immediately at the beginning of al-Nayrīzī's text, when he refers to "Aristotle and his followers," a reference absent in the *Rasāʾil* but present in the commentary, albeit worded slightly differently ("the first teacher" instead of "Aristotle"). Moreover, the distinction emphasized by al-Nayrīzī between the subtlety and coarseness of each of the four worlds is undeniably inspired by the wording of al-Shahrazūri's commentary—more precisely, the qualification of the world as having two horizons—and is therefore not as original as van Lit suggests.

In his conclusion (chapter seven), van Lit points to two important absences in his historical survey. The first is the study of the (innovative) development of the idea of the world of image in the commentatorial tradition on Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī (on which van Lit will devote later research). The second concerns the use of the technical term *ʿalām al-mithāl* by Ibn al-ʿArabī. Van Lit insists that it is unlikely that he and al-Suhrawardī knew each other's work. Even if one agrees with this, it is regrettable that no attention is paid to what might be common (on a general plane) between the two authors, especially since in the later tradition one detects now and then authors who have taken elements from both (but one wonders how they dealt with what appeared—at least after al-Shahrazūri—to be an identical expression, and whether this played any role in their using both systems). Astonishing, however, is van Lit's affirmation (p. 187) that "[Suhrawardī and Ibn al-ʿArabī] share a technical term, *ʿalām al-mithāl*," given his (already noted) sharp criticism of Corbin (and others after him) for their continuous use of that very term when discussing al-Suhrawardī.

Let me conclude by saying that this book contains valuable insights and deals with an impressive list of authors, starting with Ibn Sīnā up to almost the present day, as well as a wide range of texts

(some only in manuscript), from a wide range of regions in the Islamic world. Nevertheless, it is clear that more precision and at times correction were needed. But, above all, and most unfortunately, the very title—especially the use of the technical expression “world of image,” which is only adduced in a limited way—and the actual structure of the work are open to question.

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Sibawayhi's Principles: Arabic Grammar and Law in Early Islamic Thought. By MICHAEL G. CARTER. Research in Arabic and Islamic Studies, vol. 5. Atlanta: LOCKWOOD, 2016. Pp. xi + 273. \$49.95 (paper).

Sibawayhi (d. 180/796) is arguably the real founder of Arabic grammar. He is considered to be the first to have laid the principal foundations of the theory of Arabic grammar and can be regarded as one of the most influential linguists of all time. Inspired by his two great teachers Yūnus and Khalīl, he has been credited with providing the basic analytical tools, technical terms, and theoretical framework for Arabic grammar. His book *al-Kitāb* is believed to be the oldest authentic book on Arabic grammar and his perception of the grammatical structure of Arabic is still shaping its theory and determining approaches to traditional Arabic linguistic studies. Despite the relatively great number of studies hitherto conducted on the emergence of Arabic grammar, however, it is still difficult to find a reliable and precise historical account of its formative stage.

The volume under review, Michael Carter's 1968 PhD thesis “Sibawayhi's Principles of Grammatical Analysis,” is a serious attempt to discuss the early history of Arabic grammar and the surrounding environment in which it evolved. In particular, it presents a thorough description and analysis of the historical and intellectual status of Sibawayhi and his role in the development of Arabic grammar independent of an alleged Greek influence. Throughout his work, Carter explicitly and implicitly invites researchers to do justice to Sibawayhi by correcting the misrepresentation of the *Kitāb* to which a number of previous studies have contributed a great deal.

It is not surprising, therefore, that one of Carter's aims here is to prove that the science of Arabic grammar was developed on its own. Basing his arguments on the similarity between the technical terms of law and those of grammar and on mutual contacts between Muslim jurists and grammarians, he insists that Arabic grammar was evolved in a purely Arab environment. This claim has perpetually been a bone of contention between some researchers who adhere to this view, such as B. G. Weiss, G. Weil, W. Diem, G. Troupeau, J. Owens, and G. Bohas, and others who argue for Greek and other foreign influence, such as W. Fischer, D. H. Hasse, A. Merx, F. Rundgren, J. Danecki, V. Law, C. H. M. Versteegh, and R. Talmon (pp. 36–37, 61; see A. Marogy, *Kitāb Sibawayhi* [Leiden: Brill, 2010], 2–3).

Carter, whose name is strongly associated with Sibawayhi, believes that Sibawayhi's work was critically misrepresented and undermined by fabricated stories about the origins of Arabic grammar. Many classical and modern works associate its initial development with Abū al-Aswad al-Duʿalī or with his master ʿAlī bin Abī Ṭālib. Furthermore, some of them attribute a book titled *Muqaddima* to Khalaf al-Aḥmar. It is interesting, therefore, to learn from Carter that those accounts “are unreliable” and that Khalaf al-Aḥmar's book “is certainly spurious” (p. 27), as it is claimed to be written on Chinese paper which was unavailable to Muslims at that time. Furthermore, the facts that al-Duʿalī's surviving poetry shows no interest in grammar and that Sibawayhi referred to him as a poet and never as a grammarian confirm Aḥmad Amīn's statement that the entire story “is nothing but a ‘fairy tale’” (pp. 1–2). It stands to reason, therefore, that Carter seeks to provide an accurate representation of Sibawayhi's work by revealing “the various ways in which Sibawayhi's grammar differs from what is generally regarded as typical Arabic grammar” (p. ix). In spite of his accepting J. Fück's view that the *Kitāb* is “a reactionary work” to his rival grammarians' views, he believes that Sibawayhi is “a genuine innovator” and the