

discrete methodologies must be appreciated in order to pursue Achaemenid history and historiography effectively.

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*Recognition in the Arabic Narrative Tradition: Discovery, Deliverance and Delusion.* By PHILIP F. KENNEDY. Edinburgh Studies in Classical Arabic Literature. Edinburgh: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. xii + 356. \$130, £80.

Northrop Frye borrowed from William Blake his title *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* to emphasize the point that one of the features of “Western Civilization” is that the Bible, its images and metaphors, its rhythms, its worldview, its spirit, circulates throughout and forms the very basis of the literary culture and *Gedankenwelt* of Christendom. While it has always been acknowledged that the Quran functions, perhaps even more intensely, in its milieu and for its audience in precisely the same way, scholars have been slow to apply the kinds of literary methodologies—or their cognates—that Frye used to make his point. This volume goes a good distance in demonstrating the truth of the Frygian insight as applied to the Quran and in a language understood by those most needful of the lesson. (A few previous attempts are mentioned in the bibliography.) It is thus a most welcome contribution to the study, analysis, and explication of Islamicate culture, Arabic literature, the Quran, and Islam.

The volume begins, naturally enough, with the Quran, prefaced by a few salient remarks vis-à-vis the appositeness of using Aristotle’s category of ἀναγνώρισις, or recognition, for the study of such an obviously different literary culture—or is it? The first three chapters (pp. 16–186) are deeply contemplated explorations of the incomparable *sūrat Yūsuf* (12). Chapter one (“Cognitive Reading”—one takes this to mean “reading that focuses on occasions of recognition in the text”), based on the superb translation of Alan Jones, takes the reader through the various stages of this remarkable “tale” with an eye to locating the manner in which anagnorisis occurs and functions along its various stages. There are many instances of recognition beyond the emblematic recognition of Joseph by his dastardly brothers, “positive,” “negative,” and in between. The reader has no doubt at the end that anagnorisis, in its Quranic garb (!), was every bit as important for the author and audience of the Quran as it was for Aristotle, who in *Poetics* singled it out—most famously by reference to the tale of the sad but wiser Oedipus Rex—as one of the hallmarks of successful literature. It is allowed that this should come as no surprise inasmuch as the self-avowed vocation, *the* central preoccupation of the Quran, is, after all, revelation, one for which Islam as such sees itself the servant. The key Quranic terms—*tanzīl*, *ta’wīl*, *ḥaqq*, *bayān*, *kashf*—in addition to all of the passages asking the “reader” to contemplate, to understand, to know, to perceive, help to underscore the importance of the Quran’s central concern with the epic journey from ignorance to knowledge and awareness, or as frequently, appositely, and refreshingly put here: enlightenment. (Scholars of Islam have traditionally been hesitant to use the E word when discussing Islam.) The figure of anagnorisis in the Quran, so profusely celebrated and artistically construed in Q 12, provides simultaneously the invaluable solace that things are not always what they seem and (if less consoling) that just because things happen to be very unusual at the moment does not mean they are not real.

The second chapter explores the way in which the revelations of Joseph, both of his identity to his unwitting brothers, Pharaoh, Zulaykha, Potiphar, et al., and of what came about through interpreting various dreams (his own, his fellow prisoners’, and Pharaoh’s), were a deft allusion to and *figura* for the prophetic, targumic, pastoral, and administrative role of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh. This topic has been treated in earlier studies by Anthony Johns, John Macdonald, M. S. Stern, and others, but Philip Kennedy’s exploration adds much by centering less on the Quran than on the biographical (*sīra*) and exegetical (*tafsīr*) literatures. The result is much more consolidated evidence of the centrality of the Joseph story for Islam and Muslims—a case of recognition recognizing itself. On this centrality, it may

be worth suggesting, especially in light of Mustansir Mir's brilliant demonstration of the chiasmic structure of the Joseph sura, that its position in the Quran may be an authorial allusion to its status as one of several possible chiasmic centers of the Quran itself. (See below the quotation from Wahb b. Munabbih.) The sura's themes of love, beauty, and knowledge or enlightenment braided together (and contrasted with a similar braid of suffering, betrayal, and persecution) may be something of an anticipation of Keats's anagnoristic or revelatory "truth is beauty and beauty is truth." Certainly, as is shown in the third chapter, it served the mystic 'Aṭṭār very well in his *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*. The literary synergy of these elements illuminates and enhances quite exquisitely the romance-cum-epic élan of the Quranic story of Joseph and similarly enhances and expands the function and range of Arabic literature itself.

Chapter three, "Joseph and His Avatars," moves forward in literary history to notice how Joseph's importance for Islam, the Quran, and the biography of the Prophet remains very much a generative icon for subsequent Arabic literatures. The author follows Joseph through a wide and enriching itinerary involving numerous separate instances of his appearance: (1) a story of a troubled conversion to Islam from Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *al-Iqd al-farīd*; (2) the architectural frieze of the remarkable *Madrasat al-firdaws* in Aleppo; (3) a story collected by Louis Cheikho in which mistaken identity along with certain lexical borrowings from the Joseph sura are woven into the drama, which leads ultimately to Josephian reconciliation and forgiveness; (4) a story from al-Raḥīq al-Nadīm's *Quṭb al-surūr* about the musician Ma'bad; (5) from the *Maqāma khamriyya* by Ibn Nāḥiyya; (6) the aforementioned *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, and, finally, "The Romance of Ghānim b. Ayyūb" of the *Arabian Nights*. One is very much in Kennedy's debt for the quantum of light shed upon the Arabic literary tradition with regard to its love affair with Joseph, although these masters of the literary language cannot be sure how much Joseph himself would approve. This itself bespeaks a profound confidence on the part of the various authors and storytellers—in short, "the tradition"—in the unassailable truths of the Quran, Islam's place in the world, and their own unshakable sense of home in the culture and civilization. And the beautiful translations of the excerpts here and elsewhere throughout the book are well worth the price of admission.

Chapter four, "Intertextuality and Reading," focuses on the myth of deliverance in al-Tanūkhī's *al-Faraj ba'd al-shidda* (Deliverance after distress), a theme very much a part of the Joseph sura. This chapter discusses numerous anecdotes that are seen, through increasing levels of complexity, to speak of this basic theme, to demonstrate the role of recognition in the process or moment of deliverance (another word for salvation), to entertain by the picaresque charm of many of the characters, and to point to "the connection between reading and recognition." Kennedy explains, "this subsists between the players within a story but also reaches out towards the story's readership which sees, just as the players do, the connections that make recognition a process of gleaning the qualities that bind people together in an evolving and unspoken social contract of providential goodness" (p. 189). It seems that Joseph and his story are the emblem of such contracted goodness. Though not suggested, this may be seen as a possible clue to the deep structure of some future theory of Quranic anagnorisis. One thinks here of the master narrative centered on the Day of the Covenant, *yawm alastu* or *yawm al-mithāq*, mentioned at Q 7:172. It could be argued that all of the other recognition episodes of the Quran may be thought to have as their main object this compelling vision of a pre-eternal utopia (cf. *lā-makān*) of harmony and peace which the Quran urges its readers and hearers to call to mind at every possible opportunity. To recognize Joseph, then, is also to be brought *nostos*-like back to the original homeland of the covenant on the day when all humans unhesitatingly confessed their servitude to God in response to his question: "Am I not your Lord?"—a re-cognition of the highest, most ancient, and most startling (*badī'*) order. The reunion of the family of Jacob is thus a synecdochic emblem of that primal unity. Such helps us understand the statement of Wahb: "God would never send any prophet without telling him the story of Yūsuf, just as he told it to our Prophet Muḥammad" (quoted in *EI2* "Yūsuf").

As in the previous chapters, much is offered to and much is expected from the reader in chapter five, "Imposture and Allusion in the Picaresque *Maqāma*." Kennedy guides us through a literally enchanting exploration of the picaresque Abū Zayd and attendant resonances with the Joseph story and, indeed, all prophets (p. 270), for whom he seems to function as a shadow self (*nabiyy munakkas*, if you will). When Abū Zayd compared himself to the mother of Moses in connection with the story of Pharaoh and Moses, his adopted son, Kennedy writes (p. 269):

Although the stories have something in common, there could hardly be more bathos than in the sheer contrast between Abū Zayd's somewhat comic story of deluded paternity side-by-side with that of the Pharaoh. It is not just that the picaresque peddle stories of delusion, but the picaresque can feed on the authority of other stories, purveying allusions held in words, atavistic images and patterns of events.

Because there are space constraints, a brief word about the appendix "Anagnorisis in Arabic *Falsafah*" (pp. 318–27), in which Kennedy summarizes pertinent discussions from Aristotle, Mattā ibn Yūnus, Ibn Sīnā, and Averroes: It might have been interesting to visit some of the cognate literature issuing from a more explicitly Shi'ī cultural milieu inasmuch as recognition (viz., of the hidden Imam) may be thought to bear a much richer "sacramental charge" and therefore generate thought in distinctive ways. We know Kennedy is mindful of this since he announced it in the introduction, but to stop in this relatively brief setting with Averroes seems somewhat surprising. After all, in the Shi'ī tradition, the suffering and hiddenness of the Imam, his "nonrecognition" (*inkār*, a frequent Shi'ī technical term), stands in for all the friends of God (prophets, messengers, and imams), none more than al-Ḥusayn (for *h-s-n*, see below) himself. Thus, a look at more specifically Shi'ī *falsafa* likely would have been handsomely repaid.

Kennedy has given us so much with this anagnoristic (an acceptable adjective?), illuminating, and informative book—so beautifully written and conceived—that it seems churlish to mention what may be construed as flaws. The book is beautifully edited and there are very few typographical lapses. Early on (p. 20), however, we do encounter *aḍʿāf ahlām* instead of the *aḍghāth ahlām* ("jumbled dreams," "tangled nightmares") of Q 12:44. Also, it would have strengthened the argument of chapter two to mention that the Prophet himself had been accused by his enemies of such oneiric dyspepsia (viz., at Q 21:5), where the same term is used, further drawing a typological connection between Joseph and Muḥammad, especially in their shared and divinely ordained ability to derive meaning from apparent chaos or nonsense. In this connection, it would have been very useful to supply an index of Quranic verses as part of the apparatus. On p. 256, there is a word missing from "And glory to Him whose command the earth and heavens shall arise!" And, in chapter two especially, there are large amounts of transliterated but untranslated Arabic, which might pose an obstacle to readers with a comparative literature perspective.

The hadith tell us that God created *ḥusn* (< *h-s-n* "beauty," multifariously construed) in one hundred parts and gave to Joseph ninety-nine. Joseph and his peripeteias tell its story, whether moral, physical, spiritual, narratological, romantic, emotional, or whatever other beauty there may be. It is conveyed by its structure and content; thus, it is *aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ* (Q 12:3, the Most Beautiful of Stories) and, to continue the analogy with Aristotle's "thought thinking itself," it is an account of "beauty beauty-ing itself." Beautiful is the way in which Jacob's sight is restored, the way the brothers are made to swallow their evil deeds, the way they are led to morality, the way Zulaykha steals the heart of Joseph, the way he resists, how the family is reunited, and on and on. Thus, when *ṣabr jamīl*, one of the key epithets of the sura, is translated as "decent patience," something essential is missed. All of the beauty of the sura is intimately connected and the sura wants it to be known.

That Jacob does not mourn Joseph as he does in Genesis (p. 22) should not be mistaken to suggest that Jacob is not overwhelmed and damaged by grief. A Jacob whose sight is washed away by tears (Q 12:84)—for Benjamin, but ultimately Joseph and Benjamin are typologically the same—would indicate as much. Jacob's unexpressed grief ("I make my complaint only to God," Q 12:86) is all the more painful for being just that and sharpens the tragedy of his separation from his beloved Joseph.

Two words are used a lot: transfiguration and synecdoche, sometimes when more precise terminology would help make the point at hand. Jesus underwent transfiguration and glowed to his disciples a divine light. Judah was not transfigured but rather rehabilitated. Joseph was not transfigured; if anything was transfigured, it was the vision (not the moral anatomy) of his brothers, who were finally led to recognize him for who he had (always) been. With synecdoche, it seems that typological figuration, or even symbol, is frequently more to the point.

The brilliant discussion of "Good News! (*yā bushrā*)" at Q 12:19 (pp. 155–56) would have been even more persuasive had the other two instances of the decidedly two-edged root *b-sh-r* been taken

into account, so that the irony of the Joseph sura was more fully drawn out. (Irony is indeed a vehicle of anagnorisis.) At Q 12:31, Joseph's identity is (temporarily) further muddled (the more to set up the eventual master recognition scene) in one of the more powerful representations of (as it happens, false) recognition in the sura. This is when the ladies attending Zulaykha's salon are so bedazzled by Joseph's beauty that they falter, slicing their hands instead of the oranges they were peeling, and exclaim: "This is no man (*bashar*), rather a noble angel (*malak karīm*)." At Q 12:96, "the [anonymous] bearer of good news (*bashīr*)" brought Joseph's shirt to the languishing Jacob and, according to Joseph's earlier instructions, laid it upon his face that his sight be restored.

Vision is useful in the act of recognition, but it is not the only sense that can be used. In the several discussions of the verb *ʿarafa*, most frequently in tandem with its opposite and the other half of the distinctive "minimal pair" of Islamic language, *maʿrūf* and *munkar*, much of great value is learned about the various forms of the root and its basic relevance to the spirit and form of Quranic anagnorisis. One derivative of the root, however, is never mentioned, namely, *ʿarf* "scent." Though it does not occur in the Quran, it may be thought to waft into the story of Joseph on the wings of the word for scent that is used: *riḥ* at Q 12:94. The inevitable connection between knowledge and enlightenment and the "prophetic sense" of smell would thus be all the more emphasized.

One is mightily tempted to see Abū Zayd, the picaresque hero of the *maqāmāt* genre, as a personification—Kennedy would possibly prefer, synecdoche—for the wily, shape shifting, deceitful, truthful, complex, simple, simultaneously veiling and unveiling, sympathetic and hostile intellectual *organon* known as Arabic grammar. After all, his famous "son," the hapless, ubiquitous, and long-suffering Zayd of grammatical explication, is possibly the one most needful of deliverance from such unusually cruel pilpulistic manipulation (see p. 249). This striking and delightful recognition is a shining testament to the scholarship, knowledge, acumen, oceanic reading, and story-telling ability of the author; to the nature of Arabic and, as it happens, the centrality of the Quran to all literary and cultural endeavor pursued in the Islamic world; to an overactive readerly imagination on the part of this reviewer; or to a combination of all four. Whatever the case may be, it comes from this tremendous book, to which justice is not done here. *Uva uvam videndo varia fit*.

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*L'Ésotérisme shi'ite: Ses racines et ses prolongements / Shi'i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*. Edited by M. A. AMIR-MOEZZI, M. DE CILLIS, D. DE SMET, and O. MIR-KASIMOV. Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes, sciences religieuses, vol. 177. Turnhout, Belgium: BREPOLS, 2016. Pp. v + 870. €95 (paper).

This most welcome volume, brought to dazzling fruition by the leading scholar of Ithnā ʿasharī ("Twelver") Shiʿism, offers the student of both Shiʿi and Sunni Islam a veritable cornucopia of riches concerning a topic still too little recognized and explored, particularly in English-speaking scholarly circles. It provides much new material destined to disturb our comfortable, not to say stale, notions of how the dynamics of communal identities have worked and continue to work themselves out in the case of Islam, a tradition for which it has long been accepted that the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" simply do not apply, but for which no reasonable alternate approach has gained universal traction. Marshall Hodgson's brilliant model of "styles of piety" has inspired two generations of Islamicists, yet seems for the most part to have remained something of an esoteric insight all on its own; those who share it congregate in something of a "spiritual and anonymous church." Further, this collection's topics and methods of exploration will also illumine problems of belief and doctrine with regard to sources and settings. How Sunni Islam is in some sense the creation of Shiʿism—and vice versa—and how their mutual study in contemporary scholarship is a non-negotiable desideratum are issues that receive much suggestive exposition in this book, though, it should be hastily added, this is