complex fashion. Perhaps her most prominent contribution to the question of the
Qur'an's 'sources' is her attention to the Psalms: she argues that *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*
(Q. 55) draws on Psalm 136, and that *Sūrat al-Nabaʾ* (Q. 78) draws on Psalm 104.

These representative studies provide an accessible overview of Angelika Neuwirth's
major contributions to study of the Qur'an, and they will allow scholars to respond to
and expand upon her work in a productive fashion. The translations are excellent and
read very well in English; initially undertaken by other translators, they have all been
reviewed by the author. For 'idhā-series', referring to the series of protases of a
conditional sentence characteristic of one of the main oracular forms in the Qur'an
(and Bell has 'idhā-passages'), I would suggest 'conditions precedent' as a better term
because they lead up to, and are signs of, the apocalypse, Resurrection, or Judgment.
'Oath clusters' would be better as 'series of oaths', because they are an ordered
sequence, not an indiscriminate collection. Errata are very few, and include the
following: p. 63 *abāʾ* > *ābāʾ*; p. 64 word > world; p. 69 Hebrew *bayt* > *bayit*;
p. 79 *'l-ṣaliḥūn* > *'l-ṣāliḥūn*; p. 81 Psalms 104 > Psalm 104; p. 107 *ghuzzāt* >
ghuzāt; p. 111 *wa-inna … wa-inna …* > *wa-innā … wa-innā …*; p. 120 ʿ*asr* >
ʿ*aṣr*; p. 127 I swear not by … I swear not by … > Forsooth! I swear by … I swear by
…; p. 145 *wa hadha'l-balad al-amīn* > *wa-hādha'l-baladi'l-amīn*; p. 146 *wa
dhakkara …* > *wa-dhakara*; p. 316 *anta waliyyuna …* (Q 7:155) > [not translated
in the English]; p. 345 *yanbaghi* > *yanbaghī*; p. 371 Hebrew *nabhi* > Hebrew *nevi*.

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The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'an: Volume One (Chapters 1–35).
By Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. Translated by Professor Ḥamid Algar, Dr Michael
Schub, and Mr Ayman Abdel Ḥaleem. Reviewed by Professor Osman S.A. Ismaʿīl
al-Bīlī. Reading: Muḥammad bin Hamad Al-Thani Center for Muslim Contribution to
Civilization in Association with Garnet Publishing, 2011. Pp. 320, HB £60.00,
PB £22.00. ISBN 978-1-85964-241-2.

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) was a formidable scholar, and his *[Kitāb] al-Itqān
fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* is one of his most important works. Al-Suyūṭī included his *Itqān* in
a list of his fifteen 'best' works, which he notes in his autobiography, *al-Taḥadduth
bi-niʿmat Allāh*.[1] This is the first translation of the text into English, or, as far as I am
aware, into any European language. The publication of this part of the *Itqān* marks an
important development in the study of the Qur'an and *tafsīr*. The volume now
published is one of a series, and covers chapters 1–35. It includes the sections on the

revelation of the Qur'an (§1–8), *asbāb al-nuzūl* (§9–15), the collection of the Qur'an and variant readings (§16–27), and recitation (§28–35). This will, no doubt, become of great use to anyone working on the Qur'an or in *tafsīr*.

Al-Bīlī's introduction is followed by al-Suyūṭī's own introduction to the *Itqān* (pp. xix–xxxiii), rather than including it as part of al-Suyūṭī's actual text (which, of course, it is), and giving it its own page numbers. Al-Suyūṭī provides a survey of contemporary scholars who had written on the Qur'anic sciences in recent years, and discusses two works written by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kāfījī (d. 875/1474–5) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 824/1421). It was these two works that led al-Suyūṭī to write his own early work on the Qur'anic sciences, *al-Taḥbīr fī ʿulūm al-tafsīr* ('The Elegant Book on the Sciences of Exegesis'), written in 872/1467–8. He gives details of its contents, which included 102 chapters (pp. xxi–xxvi). However, despite its apparent comprehensiveness, al-Suyūṭī subsequently came across Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī's (d. 794/1392) *[K.] al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*. Al-Suyūṭī, not one noted for giving praise, writes: 'I rejoiced to make the acquaintance of this book and I praised God greatly …' (p. xxviii). Nevertheless he saw fit to arrange 'its subject matter in a way more suitable than that of the Burhān' (p. xxviii), and the *Itqān* was born. The *Itqān* is, as many scholars have noted, based on al-Zarkashī's *Burhān*,[2] however, although he certainly uses it as an urtext, he adds vast amounts of other knowledge to the text of the *Burhān*, from a wide range of different sources, which he lists on pp. xxxii–xxxiii.[3]

The first eight sections of the *Itqān* deal with the revelation of the Qur'an itself (§1–8; pp. 1–53). Although related to the discipline of *asbāb al-nuzūl* and to the chronology of the Qur'an, these chapters have a slightly different emphasis. Al-Suyūṭī is not interested in the *reasons* why the suras and verses were revealed or in their chronology, but in the *moments* or *places* in which they were revealed taken on a general level. There is, throughout these opening chapters, a sense that the time and place in which a verse or sura was revealed has some bearing on the revelation itself.

In Chapter 1, al-Suyūṭī discusses the Meccan and Medinan suras. This has a long precedent in Muslim study of the Qur'an, as, in many circumstances, such distinctions ease any issues of abrogation (*naskh*). Reading al-Suyūṭī's *Itqān*, however, shows the complexity of such distinctions. Al-Suyūṭī argues logically that a sura can only be one of four categories: (i) entirely Meccan, (ii) entirely Medinan, (iii) partially Meccan and partially Medinan, or (iv) neither Meccan nor Medinan (p. 2). The second chapter explores 'Verses Revealed while the Prophet was In Residence and Verses Revealed while he was Travelling' (pp. 25–30). According to al-Suyūṭī 'the verses while he was in residence are numerous' (p. 25); that is, being 'in residence' is taken as the default position, and verses which were revealed 'whilst travelling' are enumerated.

It is important to read these verses in relation to the preceding chapter in which the suras are divided into Meccan and Medinan; this chapter is a similar list of 'exceptions' (cf. pp. 14–21). Chapter 3 lists 'Verses revealed in the Daytime and Verses revealed in the Nighttime' (pp. 31–34). Chapter 4 examines verses revealed in the summer and winter (pp. 35–36); Chapter 5, verses revealed in bed or while the Prophet was sleeping (pp. 37–38); and Chapter 6, those revealed in heaven (p. 39). The final two chapters in this opening section address the question of the chronology of the Qur'an. Some of this data has already been met in Chapter 1 (pp. 3–7). These two chapters, 'The First Parts of the Qurʾān to be Revealed' (pp. 41–48) and 'The Last Parts of the Qurʾān to be Revealed' (pp. 49–53), do not just list chronologies, but also begin to explore some of the theological implications of why some verses were revealed before others.

The main focus of the next section is *asbāb al-nuzūl* (§9–15; pp. 55–89), with Chapter 9 (pp. 55–70) dealing with the topic specifically. This section should become required reading for university courses examining this area of the Qur'anic sciences, as al-Suyūṭī provides a good overview of the purpose of *asbāb al-nuzūl* along with a number of examples of *asbāb al-nuzūl* being used in practice. This section includes some further short chapters. Chapter 10 (pp. 71–73) examines the interesting case of companions making statements that were then subsequently revealed as part of the Qur'an. Chapter 11 (pp. 75–76) looks at verses revealed more than once, and al-Suyūṭī states that the main reason this may happen is that a new situation may have arisen to which a previously revealed verse was still appropriate. Chapter 12 (pp. 77–79) deals with verses revealed before any ordinance or law was given. The clearest example is the case of references to *zakāt* in Meccan suras, which was not incumbent on the community until after the Hijra. The short Chapter 13 (p. 81) states that suras were revealed in successive segments (*mufarraqan*). Chapter 14 (pp. 83–85) lists verses sent down with angels, this is part of the *faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* material. Chapter 15 (pp. 87–89) gives lists of verses also revealed to earlier prophets.

The next thematic section (§16–27) is perhaps one of the most useful for courses in Qur'anic Studies as it provides some helpful overviews of debates about the Qur'an in early Islam. As with the chapter on *asbāb al-nuzūl*, al-Suyūṭī's chapter on the manner of the revelation of the Qur'an (§16; pp. 91–115) provides a very good overview of Muslim understandings of the process of revelation. The chapter includes a discussion of the differences between *inzāl* and *waḥy* (pp. 98–104), and the place of the seven *aḥruf* (pp. 104–115; see also later chapters). The following chapter on 'The Names of the Qurʾān and of the *Sūrah*s' (§17; pp. 117–135) is mainly of background interest to why the suras were named as they are. Chapter 18 (pp. 137–153) provides a summary of Muslim accounts of the different stages in the Qur'an's collection, codification, and canonisation, and should be very useful for courses on the history of the Qur'anic text. This is followed by a chapter enumerating the number of suras, verses, words, and

letters (§19; pp. 155–167). The *Itqān* then moves on to the related subject of the Qur'an and its narrators, i.e. the process by which the Qur'anic text was preserved, and the consequences of this (i.e. the *qirāʾāt*). Chapter 20 (pp. 169–175) examines the Qur'anic memorisers; Chapter 21 (pp. 177–179) discusses the *isnād*s of Qur'an recitations and principles for examining them; Chapters 22–27 are grouped together in this translation (pp. 181–199) and discuss the recitations, and which are reliable and unreliable.

The chapters concerning the recitation of the Qur'an (§28–35) flow on from the section on the *qirāʾāt*. They may not seem to be particularly relevant to the study of the Qur'an, but many of the chapters reveal some interesting views on the Qur'an and its interpretation, as well as views regarding the Qur'an as a material object, and as a focus of ritual devotion. These are aspects of the Qur'an that are often passed over, particularly in western approaches to the Qur'an, emerging out of historical-critical study and/or the study of exegesis, where such matters are not of direct concern.

Chapter 28 (pp. 201–220) examines where one should or should not pause when reciting the Qur'an, while chapter 29 (pp. 221–223) discusses the similar issue of 'verbal assimilation', i.e. cases in which a verb could or could not apply to two different subjects. The remaining chapters have less interest for those looking at the interpretation of the Qur'an, as they are devoted to issues in the pronunciation of the recitation: Chapter 30 (pp. 225–231) looks at the use of *imāla* (the change in the pronunciation of the *a*-vowels); Chapter 31 (pp. 235–239) looks at assimilation (*idghām*), expression (*iẓhār*), lenition (*ikhfāʾ*), and metathesis (*iqlāb*); Chapter 32 (pp. 241–246) examines lengthening (*madd*) and shortening (*qaṣr*) vowels; and Chapter 33 (pp. 247–249) discusses the pronunciation of *hamza*. The final two chapters in the volume, 34 (pp. 251–262) and 35 (pp. 263–286), explore the etiquette of Qur'anic recitation (§35), and how recitation should be done (§34). Having devoted some time to precise rules concerning recitation, al-Suyūṭī turns to more general principles. It is here that al-Suyūṭī describes Qur'an recitation as an act of devotion. This is an area of Qur'anic Studies that is often ignored, but the spirituality of the Qur'an as an 'object' and the spiritual power that the Qur'an has are intrinsic to the interpretation of the divine Word and are inseparable from its interpretation.

The translation has been undertaken by a team of three translators: Ḥamid Algar (§1–14), Michael Schub[4] (§15–32 and the last part of §35), and Ayman Abdel Ḥaleem (§32–35), and reviewed by Osman S.A. al-Bīlī. The translation is based on the edition by Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1387/1967), and 'reference to earlier editions was also made' (p. xvii). Evidence in the endnotes (pp. 287–294), from Schub and Abdel Ḥaleem, suggests that manuscripts were also used, as some notes

refer to a 'Ms T', but there is no information provided anywhere in the book as to which manuscripts were used, where they came from, and when they were copied. The endnotes also include abbreviations which hint at something of an *apparatus criticus*, some of which I have been able to decipher (no list of abbreviations is given, nor any bibliography): 'Ib' is presumably the 1967 Ibrāhīm edition; 'MBS' is, I assume, Michael B. Schub; and it took me some time to establish that 'Zb' refers to al-Zakhashī's *Burhān*. The translation is good, on the whole. It is a little loose in places, but many of the changes do not make a difference to the meaning of the text itself. These are only minor criticisms and there is always a tension between trying to reflect the original Arabic text and trying to make any English intelligible and read fluently.

In many cases it would have been helpful had the translators included some Arabic terms in brackets; the addition of Arabic terms often makes things much clearer; for example, in the statement that 'the first and last of these various possible interpretations are the soundest' (p. 43), one might expect 'soundness' to be a translation of *ṣaḥīḥ*, but the text actually reads *aḥsan*; and there is, of course, an important difference between *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan*, and the reader needs to know what is being used in the source language. In other cases, an Arabic term is used without explanation; for example, the text refers to 'the days of *tashriq*' (p. 30); many will not know what days these are (11–13 Dhū'l-Ḥijja), and such specific terminology needs to be explained for the average reader, either in the text or in a note. The translators do add helpful explanatory phrases in places, and these are found more often in the sections translated by Michael Schub and Ayman Abdel Ḥaleem. These are often necessary, but it would have been more helpful had the translators marked their additions more often, more systematically, and more clearly (perhaps in square brackets) so that the reader could see what has been added and what is in the original text.

It should be stressed that some passages of the *Itqān* are extremely difficult to translate into English, as al-Suyūṭī (and other authors that he cites) often use technical terms that have no equivalent in English, as well as because of al-Suyūṭī's occasionally terse style. Ayman Abdel Ḥaleem is faced with some of the hardest passages, as his sections include much technical linguistic terminology. Take for example this passage:

> *Imāla* may be an *a* vowel coloured towards *e*, and often an *alif* coloured towards a *yaʾ*. The latter is the essential. It is called *al-idjaᶜ* (adding an *a* sound to a consonant), *al-bath* (the name given to a *dad* to distinguish it from a *zaʾ* when both are pronounced alike, in the Arabic dialects and in Persian and Turkish), and *al-kasr* (adding a short *i* vowel); these latter are infrequent, as they occur between words.

> It is also called *al-taqlīl* (possession of a quality to a degree
> between the two extremes, Greek: *metrion ti*), *al-talṭīf* (attenuation),
> and *bayna-bayna* (intermediate pronunciation). There are two types,
> *shadīda* (strong) and *mutawṣṣiṭa* (sic) (medium), both of which are
> permitted in recitation. In the intense type complete metathesis is
> avoided as well as velarization and the medium type between the
> middle *a* vowel and the strong *imāla*. (p. 226)

This is certainly a valiant attempt at translating the text, and Abdel Ḥaleem keeps
fairly close to the original. However some of the explanations may have been better
suited in the endnotes, and, even with the explanations given in brackets, this passage
still takes a few re-readings before being intelligible (but that is due to al-Suyūṭī's
opaque style and the specificity of the technical terms). Using contemporary technical
terms for 'complete metathesis' (*al-qalb al-khāliṣ*) and 'velarization' (*al-ishbāgh
al-mubāligh*; lit.: 'exaggerated saturation') is particularly helpful in this section
on phonetics. I have given this example to show the complexity of some of the
language in al-Suyūṭī's *Itqān*, and the translators are to be commended for handling
it well.

However, the translation is marred by the transliteration system, which is unusual,
inconsistent, often haphazard, and frequently wrong. This is extremely irritating,
particularly for anyone with knowledge of Arabic, which one assumes is the main
target audience for the volume. For example, '*ḥ*' is sometimes dotted, but sometimes
left simply as '*h*'. Occasionally this can cause problems, for example, the reference to
'*al-bath*' (p. 226) could be any number of combinations, but is the relatively obscure
al-baṭḥ. Likewise, *hamza* and *ʿayn* are marked in some places, but not in others.
Michael Schub often uses the transliteration system used in some Modern Standard
Arabic courses, with long vowels marked with 'aa', 'ii', and 'uu', and *ḍād*, *ṣād*, *ṭāʾ*,
and *ẓāʾ* been transliterated with D, S, T, and Z (e.g. *iDaafa*). The main concern,
however, is that a number of authors' names etc. have been transliterated incorrectly,
for example: Ibn Ḥibbān is given as Ibn Habbān throughout, Ibn al-Ḍurays as Ibn
al-Darīs, al-Ājurrī as al-Ājarī, al-Bazzār as al-Bazzāz (this is particularly strange); and
the book even includes an incorrect sura name—*Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn* (Q. 63) is given
as *Sūrat al-Mujahidin* (p. 29). The misspellings of names are of concern, as they make
the work much harder to use: al-Suyūṭī summarises other authors' views, and gives
references to other works, clearly with the implication that if a more detailed analysis
was wanted, a reader should consult these works. This is made much more difficult if
the names are spelt incorrectly. Other more significant and glaring errors can be found,
for example, the index conflates the Qurʾanic reader Abū Maʿbad ʿAbd Allāh b.
Kathīr al-Dārānī al-Makkī (d. 120/737–8) with the Mamlūk exegete ʿImād al-Dīn
Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar b. Kathīr (d. 774/1373) (p. 297). This is not acceptable at all.
Al-Suyūṭī cites lots of different works and *ḥadīth* transmitters so it is understandable

that some errors would be encountered (the translators and copyeditors are only human), but there seem to be such a significant number of errors as to warrant severe concern.

The *Itqān* has often been passed over in university courses because it has not been available in translation, despite much of it being particularly useful in courses on the Qur'an (especially the sections on *asbāb al-nuzūl*, and the collection of the Qur'an), and Islamic Studies more generally. The translators have managed to present an acceptable translation, albeit a little loose in places, but any looseness in translation is often necessary given al-Suyūṭī's style. It is, however, a little sad to see a work of such importance being marred by glaring mistakes in editing and proofreading, that will make it incredibly difficult to use in a university setting. There are also a number of other editorial choices that have been made (such as not including sura numbers) that have made this translation extremely difficult to use. My instinct is that most people using the translation will need to have a copy of the Arabic to hand. I sincerely hope that if future volumes of this translation make it to print, these errors and inconsistencies are reduced to a minimum. It would seem to be something of a disservice to al-Suyūṭī himself not to treat the work with a bit more care and consideration. To have done so will probably deny the *Itqān* its valuable place in Islamic Studies, for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

However, notwithstanding these problems, the editors and translators are to be highly commended for even contemplating a translation of al-Suyūṭī's *Itqān*: its style is terse, its language is often opaque, and its structure is complex. It is such an important work for those working in Qur'anic Studies, the study of *tafsīr*, and Islamic Studies more broadly, that many will find this translation of great benefit, particularly as Islamic Studies is now broadening out into Religious Studies, with many working in the field with little or no knowledge of Arabic. Al-Suyūṭī also highlights a number of issues and authors in his *Itqān* that have received relatively little attention in the field, and this translation should encourage the further development of Qur'anic and *tafsīr* Studies.

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NOTES

1 E.M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

2 K.E. Nolin, *The Itqān and its Sources* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1968); see also Claude Gilliot, art. 'Exegesis of the Qurʾān: Classical and Medieval' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*.

3 See also S.R. Burge, 'Evidence of Self-Editing in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *Taḥbīr* and *Itqān*: A Comparison of his Chapters on *Asbāb al-nuzūl*' in Antonella Ghersetti (ed.), *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Papers from the First Conference of the School of Mamluk Studies* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

4 Strangely given in error as 'Michael Chop' on p. xvii.

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Prophecy and Power: Muhammad and the Qur'an in the Light of Comparison. By Marilyn Robinson Waldman. Edited by Bruce B. Lawrence with Lindsay Jones and Robert M. Baum. Comparative Islamic Studies Series. Sheffield, UK and Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2012. Pp. 195 + xii. HB £55, PB £19.99. ISBN HB 978-1845539870 / PB 978-1781790304.

The publication of *Power and Prophecy* appears some fifteen years after Marilyn Robinson Waldman's death in 1996. The manuscript the book is based on is described by Lindsay Jones in the Postscript as 'an unfinished conversation' Waldman was having with her students and colleagues, and this needs to be taken into account when reading the book which Jones highlights as 'still very rough-hewn' (p. 165).

Power and Prophecy opens with a short preface by Bruce B. Lawrence outlining Waldman's academic interest in comparative religion, the concerns of the book, and her method. The Preface is followed by a prologue in which Waldman herself elaborates on these points. One of her main concerns was the application of the comparative approach to the study of the concept of prophecy—'prophecy' here being used by Waldman to denote both the office and utterances of a prophet; this is, she explains later on, how the term is commonly used in American English, even though the term 'prophethood' exists which distinguishes the office of a prophet from his or her utterances (p. 9). Waldman explains that she intends to 'use the taken-for-granted category of prophecy to question the category of prophecy itself, in fact to question all categorical comparison' (p. 1). This 'taken-for-granted category', which Waldman elaborates on in Chapter 1 (see below), falls short, she argues, when applied to the Islamic notion of prophecy. *Power and Prophecy* therefore illustrates the difficulties of offering a clear-cut definition of prophecy by investigating the Islamic notion of it in a comparative way. The aspect of power plays a crucial role in this endeavour as emerging conceptions of prophecy are always involved in a struggle for legitimacy and authority. Waldman's study could therefore very well be read parallel to Max Weber's (1864–1920) much earlier observations about ways of legitimising authority and rule and as a case in point.[1]

Besides the Preface and the Prologue, the book consists of four chapters, followed by Jones' postscript, a list of Waldman's works, a bibliography, and an index of terms and names.