

One of the long-standing issues in Quran Studies is what to make of the many biblical and post-biblical Jewish and Christian textual allusions. A whole chapter is devoted to this topic. Sinai argues that the biblical influence was mediated by an oral context, which, however, did not involve any significant direct engagement with biblical texts (pp. 141–42). An insightful feature of Sinai's analysis is his observation that, while making use of extensive Jewish and Christian influences, the Quran tends to adapt them to its own "overarching theological concerns" (p. 147), in which earlier materials are "reworked in a selective and discriminating manner" (p. 150).

The climax of Sinai's whole presentation is the final part in which he explores the Quran's evolving theological emphases, first within the Meccan suras and then within the Medinan suras. These two chapters together form perhaps the best available introduction to the theology of the Quran. Sinai begins by describing the theology of the early Meccan eschatological proclamations, including the role of "signs," both historical and cosmic, as pointers to the proclamation. He then traces the polemical tensions that emerge in the later Meccan suras. Sinai's account of the theological transition from Mecca to Medina draws on seminal work by David Marshal and Walid Saleh. An apparent delay of divine punishment, of which there had been many prophetic warnings, causes stress to Muḥammad and his community in late Meccan suras; it is finally resolved in the Medinan suras through believers' violence against disbelievers. Sinai finds convincing precedents for the emergence of the Quran's "militant piety" (p. 195) in contemporary militant expressions of Christianity. The complicated relationship between the quranic community and Jewish believers, including the elaboration of the Quran's legal stipulations, is given particular attention in the final chapter, which concludes with a description of the emergence of Muḥammad as the "prophet of God," whose status has, by the end of the quranic recitations, acquired "unique salvific importance" (p. 209).

Sinai's introduction to the current state of historical-critical research into the Quran is a tour de force that amply achieves its stated goal of equipping readers with the tools to engage with the Muslim scripture. Not only will this historical-critical introduction help graduate students—and professors as well—to find their way around what is a complicated and highly contested field, it will also shape the field by laying out a comprehensive research agenda for the future.

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*Traditional Yemeni Scholarship amidst Political Turmoil and War: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. al-Muḥahhar al-Manṣūr (1915–2016) and His Personal Library.* By SABINE SCHMIDTKE. Series Islamo-Arabica, vol. 1. Cordoba: CORDOBA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. 213 + 87 (Ar.), illus. €40.

Interest in Zaydi texts has been evident for over a century, starting with Rudolf Strohmann's "Die Literatur der Zaiditen" (*Der Islam* 1 [1910]: 354–68; 2 [1911]: 49–78) and Cornelius van Arendonk's *De opkomst van het zaidietische imamaat in Yemen* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1919). One of the major scholars analyzing Zaydi Islam today is Wilferd Madelung, especially in *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965). Nevertheless, the one-thousand-year history of the Zaydi sect in Yemen has received relatively little attention by most scholars of Islamic law and theology, despite an abundance of published texts and extant manuscripts. Of the latter, it is estimated that there are between 40,000 to 100,000 in Yemen (with another 10,000 in European libraries), many in mosque libraries, most notably the Great Mosque in Sanaa, but also major private collections. One of the Yemeni private collections of manuscripts is the personal library of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Manṣūr, who died in 2016. This manuscript library is now documented and analyzed by Sabine Schmidtke, with eighty-seven color plates of manuscript pages. There is an extensive bibliography (pp. 147–69) and indices of authors, book titles, and placenames. This volume is a welcome addition to a growing interest in Zaydi Islam by historians and anthropologists.

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Manṣūr was a Yemeni *sayyid* who lived to the rare age of 101. His genealogy included the renowned Zaydi imam al-Manṣūr bi-llāh al-Qāsim (d. 1029/1620), who founded

a major dynasty in Yemen's north, and several noted Yemeni scholars. Schmidtke provides first a detailed biography (pp. 19–50), which includes his teachers and his work during the reigns of both imams Yahyā and Aḥmad, as well as after the 1962 revolution in the north. During the 1960s he served as Minister of Justice and later Minister of Religious Endowments in the new republic. After the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1990, he helped found the Zaydi political party *Hizb al-Ḥaqq*. Among his writings is a major collection of poems with biographical details. The second chapter (pp. 51–59) describes the number of manuscripts in al-Manṣūr's library, including a handlist of 136 individual titles (of at least 295 codices) compiled by 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥibshī in 1978. Schmidtke notes that this personal library "is counted among the most prestigious private collections of manuscripts in Yemen" (p. 51). Some of the manuscripts were microfilmed by an Egyptian expedition in 1951–52. In 1973 Robert W. Stookey also visited the library and collected sixteen reels of microfilm for 139 codices, currently housed in the Perry-Castañeda Library of the University of Texas and in the Markaz al-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth al-Yamaniyya (Yemen Center for Studies and Research) in Sanaa. A more recent digital collection, made in 2000, is part of the Zaydi Manuscript Tradition (ZMT) project with digital access available through the website <http://projects.ias.edu/zmt/>.

Chapter three (pp. 61–114) presents a survey of the growth of al-Manṣūr's library, with a focus on purchase notes and ownership statements, stemming from 1935 to 1986. The bulk of the chapter details more than sixty-five individual codices, noting the authors, titles, colophons, and known history of ownership. For example, the text listed as ZMT 01337 (p. 105) has two works. One is an incomplete edition of *Kitāb al-Shāfi* of the Zaydi imam al-Manṣūr bi-llāh 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamza (d. 614/1217). This was written in Zafar in central Yemen in 611/1214; a published version appeared in Sanaa in 1986. The second work is *al-Durr al-manthūr fī faḍā'il al-imām al-Manṣūr*, which praises the author of the first text, by Muḥyī l-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Walīd al-Qurāshī (d. 623/1226). It was purchased in 1406h (1985 or 1986) from the estate of a certain al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad of Dhū Jibla in the southern highlands.

This manuscript collection, which is now available online for study, is particularly valuable because it represents a Yemeni cultural tradition in which manuscripts continued to be copied and read after some were already available in print, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the Islamic world (p. 116). While many of the texts deal with religious topics—*'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, *tafsīr*, hadith, *kalām*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *al-farā'id wa-l-mawārith*, and Sufism—there are also examples of literature, language, grammar, and history. The corpus of texts is especially rich in writings of former Zaydi imams, from al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq Yahyā (d. 298/911) to Aḥmad b. Yahyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn (d. 1962). There are multiple works from Imām al-Mahdī li-Dīn Allāh Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1436f.), especially his religious text *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār*. While most of the texts deal with Zaydi views, there are also copies of texts from outside Yemen, e.g., *Silāḥ al-mu'min* of the Damascene scholar Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429) is found in a copy from 1283/1867. Among other non-Yemeni works are those by 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad al-Tha'labī (d. 429/1039), Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), al-Faḍl b. Abī l-Sa'd al-'Uṣayfirī (fl. seventh/thirteenth century), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449). In his extensive analysis of religious texts in daily use in Yemen, Brinkley Messick (*Shariah Scripts: A Historical Anthropology*, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 2018) analyzes the relevance of a number of the texts present in this collection.

The volume under review results from ZMT, based at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study—where Schmidtke is a member of the faculty—in coordination with the virtual reading room of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library in Minnesota ([https://www.ias.edu/digital-scholarship/zaydi\\_manuscript\\_tradition](https://www.ias.edu/digital-scholarship/zaydi_manuscript_tradition)). This project serves as a comprehensive research guide to collections of Zaydi manuscripts worldwide; its focus on providing digital access is especially valuable because of the information given about each manuscript (unlike manuscripts, including some Yemeni works, that are available online in various library and private sources as pdfs with no information on provenance or analysis). More information on Yemeni manuscripts can be found in *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition*, ed. David Hollenberg et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

There is an urgent need to preserve Zaydi manuscripts, given the major conflict that has engulfed Yemen. A number of heritage sites and mosques have been bombed since 2015, including the millennium-old mosque of Imām al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq in Sada. It is not known how other individual and mosque

libraries have fared, or how many manuscripts are being smuggled out of Yemen or sold to foreign buyers due to the insecurity of the conflict. The publication of *Traditional Yemeni Scholarship amidst Political Turmoil and War*, which is reasonably priced, and the broader scope of ZMT deserve praise and should serve as a model for preservation and access to other manuscript traditions.

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*A Tale of Two Stories: Customary Marriage and Paternity. A Discourse Analysis of a Scandal in Egypt.*

By BJÖRN BENTLAGE. Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 333. Berlin: KLAUS SCHWARZ, 2017. Pp. 337. €49.80.

This publication, “an almost unchanged version” of Bentlage’s doctoral thesis (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2016) (p. 8), focuses on a personal status dispute that caused a public storm in Egypt in the years 2005–2006 because it involved a celebrity and sex. Briefly, the plaintiff, Hind al-Ḥinnāwī, at the time a twenty-seven-year-old designer, the daughter of university professors, demanded a paternity test of the defendant, Aḥmad al-Fishāwī, a twenty-four-year-old popular actor, the son of two famous cinema artists, for her daughter of fifteen months, Lina. Hind argued that Lina was the fruit of an unofficial marriage (*zawāj ʿurfi*) with Aḥmad. Aḥmad counterclaimed that he had never met Hind, who was unable to provide a marriage contract and had only one witness who allegedly attended the marriage ceremony. In February 2005 the al-Khalifa Family Court in Cairo sent the litigants (and Lina) to undergo DNA testing. Public pressure on Aḥmad to recognize Lina as his daughter intensified. In March 2005 Aḥmad acknowledged his affair with Hind but continued to deny a marriage between them; in April he refused to undergo the test. As there was no way under Egyptian law to force him to carry it out, in late January 2006 the court turned down Hind’s lawsuit on the grounds that paternity could not be established without evidence of the existence of wedlock. This decision generated a heated public debate concerning unofficial marriages and legal vs. biological paternity, involving inter alia members of Parliament and medical and legal experts, including the chief mufti of Egypt. Hind appealed the decision to the Family Court of Appeal, which in late May 2006 reversed the decision of the lower court and affirmed Aḥmad’s paternity of Lina, on the grounds that in paternity cases the care for the welfare of the child requires probative leniency. The court stated that the hearsay testimony about cohabitation between Hind and Aḥmad and the one witness to the marriage were sufficient to establish wedlock. Although the verdict was a personal win for Hind, it was a setback for the call for the adoption of biological paternity in Egypt.

The Hind and Aḥmad case has been studied before based mainly on media reports (a summary of prior research appears on pp. 10–15). Unlike those studies, which “sought to interpret the case in terms of innovation and reform, including some overblown statements about the importance of the case” (p. 318), Bentlage came to see the case “as part of a pattern instead of an outstanding event” (p. 15). He therefore attempts “to demonstrate the relevance of journalism for a structural perspective of law and seeks to contextualize the affair about Hind and Aḥmad accordingly” (p. 22). As an analysis of both the legal aspects and the journalistic treatment of the case, the study wants to appeal to students of Arab and Islamic law, sociology, and the Arab media (p. 25).

The first of the two stories referred to in the title of the work is the legal one, as related by the relevant legal texts. It is analyzed as a “special discourse” (following Foucault’s categories of discourse), which Bentlage defines as a mode of producing and reproducing interconnected texts, i.e., “dispersed statements which appear in different places, which have been formed according to the same pattern or rule-system and which can therefore be attributed to one and the same [special] discourse and constitute its objects” (p. 47). The second story relates to the media coverage of the case, analyzed as an “interdiscourse” (following Jürgen Link’s work) connecting “disparate special discourses and bridges between the spheres of elementary and special discourse,” whose role is “to provide the linguistic means by