

during the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties (twelfth to thirteenth centuries) provides a rare chance to take a closer look at the medieval Chinese storytelling tradition (pp. xvi–xvii). Although there have been studies and translations of medieval Chinese stories, most of them are selective. Inglis’s translation of a complete collection gives readers a taste of medieval Chinese stories in their original “package.”

Pieces of evidence point to the hypothesis that *The Drunken Man’s Talk* is a sourcebook for storytellers. One of these is the division of the slim collection (about 146 entries in total) into twenty thematic categories, a characteristic that sets it apart from the genre of *biji* (miscellaneous writings, “notebooks”) popular during that time. While a scholar-official’s *biji* were commonly compiled for reading, the categories of Luo Ye’s collection might have enabled storytellers to quickly locate a source story for their performance. Most of the themes are related to romantic affairs, but a significant number of them are jokes. Another characteristic that suggests this collection is a sourcebook for storytellers is that its language facilitates storytelling. For example, whenever Luo Ye made modifications when copying a story from the earlier Tang dynasty anecdotal collection, *Record of the Northern Ward* (Beili zhi), the language of the story was adjusted toward being more suitable for oral storytelling.

Regarding the translation, the idiomatic and “old-fashioned” English contributes to an immersive reading experience. The gem of Inglis’s fine renditions is decidedly his translations of poems, which constitute almost a third of all the entries in the collection. Inglis’s polished poetic renditions not only capture the meanings of the poems and their literary tone, but also subtly convey their rhymes. This is best demonstrated in chapter 10 (pp. 65–70), which entirely consists of poems. However, a minor incongruity remains when reading the translation side by side with the original. Although the language of Luo Ye’s collection is classical Chinese, a language of the educated elite, the original Chinese text gives the impression that it is catering to the vernacular storytelling market. (This may or may not be connected to the fact that no biographical information can be found about Luo Ye in any extant record, indicating he might never have passed any literary exams.) The elegant English of Inglis’s translation, on the other hand, gives the slightly different impression that these stories were written in a highly refined language by a scholar-official who was well trained in literary writing.

Compared to the fine renditions of stories and poems, translations of the titles seem a little less polished and occasionally inaccurate. Taking the titles for chapters 9 and 10 as an example, the term *yanhua* (literally, “flowers in the mist”) as a literary metaphor is commonly used by Tang and Song writers to refer to courtesans or female entertainers. Inglis’s choice of using “ladies, women” for *yanhua* may lead readers to spend some time trying to make sense of why the poems

and stories in these sections are so concerned with situations unusual for ordinary women. For English readers who are not familiar with medieval Chinese conventions of depicting courtesans the loss of this connotation could result in a very different reading experience.

Lastly, I want to highlight Inglis’s notes accompanying the translation. Because of the poorly preserved original copy, and notwithstanding the aid from modern annotated Chinese editions, the translation of *The Drunken Man’s Talk* also presents thorny textual problems to be solved. Inglis’s notes, together with his introduction, not only facilitate reading the stories, but also provide a good starting point for further academic inquiries. There is one point regarding the textual history I would like to add: the existence of a possibly earlier collection with the same title, attributed to an author named Jin Yingzhi 金盈之 (fl. 1126). The relation between the two collections, which partly overlap, awaits further research. Brief introductions under some chapter titles in the notes section introduce important concepts or note the textual history of certain passages. Since these introductions offer decisive clues for the understanding of a stories, they would have deserved to be moved to the main text. Inglis’s rendition of *The Drunken Man’s Talk* is a pleasant and enlightening read and highly recommended to anyone interested in medieval Chinese short stories.

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*The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762: Ṭālibīs and Early ‘Abbāsīs in Conflict.* By AMIKAM ELAD. Islamic History and Civilization, vol. 118. Leiden: BRILL, 2016. Pp. xi + 527. \$245, €176.

When the Abbasids came to power in 750, they defeated the Umayyads with a revolutionary call for the return of the caliphate to the family of the Prophet Muḥammad, *āl Muḥammad*, from where, they argued, the legitimate leader of the Muslim community must come. The family was broadly defined to include all of the Banū Hāshim, the wider clan of both the Abbasid and Ṭālibid branches of the family. Once an Abbasid candidate had been enthroned, many supporters of the movement claimed to have expected that “the chosen one from the Family of Muḥammad” (*al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*) would be a closer relative of the Prophet than an Abbasid—such as a Ṭālibid or, even more narrowly, an ‘Alid, an actual descendant of Muḥammad’s through his daughter Fāṭima and his cousin ‘Alī.

A more serious challenge to Abbasid authority came only a few years after the revolution, early in the reign of the second caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754–775). Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī,

known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (the Pure Soul), rose up in Medina in 145/762f., while his brother Ibrāhīm revolted in Basra shortly after. These uprisings were a watershed in the history of the Hashimite family. As the fourth/tenth-century historian al-Mas'ūdī put it: “It caused a split between the descendants of al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and the family of Abū Ṭālib; prior to this, their cause was one.”

Amikam Elad has now presented a most thorough study—the result of some ten years of meticulous research—of the first part of the uprisings, the rebellion led by al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in Medina. As Elad says at the beginning of the book, this rebellion was more important for its questioning of Abbasid authority than for its military might (Ibrāhīm's revolt in Basra was probably the more serious military threat). He shows that this questioning of Abbasid authority was considerable: the rebellion was supported not only by a number of Ṭālibids, but also by many other notable Arab families, as well as several important scholars of the period. Elad's approach is to give an extremely thorough analysis of the accounts of the rebellion, based on an examination of all of the source material available on CDs and databases. Elad has been a pioneer in using these digital resources, and the result is an impressive amount of detail on all aspects of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh's dealings and relations. One comes away from reading this book with a sense of real insight into the complex human, political, and religious connections of Ṭālibids and Abbasids (or Ṭālibīs and ʿAbbāsīs, as Elad calls them), and early Muslim society more generally.

The study is divided into two parts, the first, consisting of six chapters, called “Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh in Historical Context” and the second—three chapters—“The Social, Ethnic, Political, and Religious Character of the Revolt.” It concludes with three appendices: (1) “Attitudes of the ʿUlamāʾ towards the Rebellion”; (2) “Transmitters and Transmissions of the Historical Events of the Revolt”; and (3) “The Struggle for Legitimization between the Ḥasanīs and the Ḥusaynīs as Reflected Mainly in Imāmī Literature.” Elad has unearthed a huge amount of prosopographical data, and part one starts off with Muḥammad's biography, including information on his mother, siblings, wives, and children. There is a detailed discussion of the reports whether Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh was considered the *mahdī*, and thus the legitimate leader of the community, before the Abbasid revolution. As is typical for the study as a whole, Elad gives a very nuanced picture, and places much emphasis on where certain traditions come from, if they are considered to be pro-Ṭālibid/ʿAlid/Ḥasanid or pro-Abbasid, and who transmitted them. The result of this careful review is that the answers are not always as clear as one might wish; but such ambiguity is an accurate reflection of our sources. Among the most interesting sections is chapter five, which deals with the curious correspondence between al-Manṣūr and al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (pp. 171–93). Elad does not provide a defini-

tive answer with regard to authenticity, or indeed the main arguments for claims to legitimacy as found in the letters, but he introduces a number of little-known or related sources. Part one concludes with a chapter on the Abbasid military responses to the rebellion, ending with a discussion of the reports of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's killing and the Abbasid reactions to it.

Part two gives a detailed analysis of those involved in the rebellion. The genealogical charts at the end of the book (pp. 466–77) are very helpful to visualize the complexity of associations, as they clearly indicate supporters and opponents of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. What is striking is that virtually all important Arab families of the period were in some way involved in the rebellion, but their members often supported different sides. One good example is the Zubayrid family, from which a fair number of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's most distinguished adherents as well as some opponents stemmed (pp. 323–36; chart XII, p. 477). Among the main conclusions of the book is the finding that support for the rebellion was not uniform; indeed, even among the Ṭālibid family there was probably less support than is generally assumed. Elad places much emphasis on where a report was recorded and who transmitted it, thus giving a sense of the different versions of events preserved in the sources. The third appendix in particular opens up some interesting avenues for further research, as Elad clearly shows that there are some unexplored questions regarding relationships and conflicts within the Ṭālibid family.

Overall, Elad's thorough study is an excellent contribution to the small group of recent publications on the history of Prophet Muḥammad's family. It leaves one hoping that he will now turn his interest and efforts to Ibrāhīm's rebellion, as the changing nature of Ṭālibid–Abbasid relations in the early Abbasid period probably needs to be seen in light of both of these uprisings.

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*Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim: A Literary Banquet.* By EMILY SELOVE. Edinburgh Studies in Classical Arabic Literature. Edinburgh: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. x + 200. \$120, £70.

The unrestrained *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim*, apparently compiled at the beginning of the eleventh century by the otherwise unknown Abū l-Muṭahhar al-Azdī, has attracted the attention of scholars of Arabic literature ever since Adam Mez's 1902 edition of the unique manuscript, today preserved in the British Library (Add. 19, 913). Emily Selove's 2012 UCLA dissertation, supervised by Michael Cooperson, is the first book-length study devoted to it. It is, to say the least, a challenging study of an Arabic text that itself presents numerous challenges, not only on account of the rare and