

their beards cut off, which provokes David to go to war (in which Uriah is killed). Thus, in the biblical tradition there is a case where a provocation leads to war, and in the Zayd story there is a case where a provocation leads to war. This is not uncommon in war. Both Uriah and Zayd had wives desired by their commanders—does that make the revenge motive more comparable?

Powers's argument is that the Muslim community constructed its "foundation narrative" on models from the Bible that were well known to the community. Thus, the story of Zayd is a compilation of disparate elements taken from the biblical tradition. They do not convey a historical truth, but are constructed with the prime objective of removing Zayd as a potential competitor for Abū Bakr as caliph or, even worse, as a possible *nabī*. The first was a political threat, the second a theological threat. The stories of Zayd losing his status as Muḥammad's adoptive son and of his death in 8*h*, as well as the Quranic verses all stem from this need. God sent Zayd to Arabia "to facilitate the process whereby Muḥammad became the Last Prophet," Powers concludes.

Quranic revisionism such as this is often seen as a flight of fancy—how can we prove that the established history, documented in so many early texts, is untrue. Powers is not necessarily interested in "how it really was," however, but in how the story was constructed (and why)—intertextuality. Nevertheless, story and history must have some points of contact, and this does raise some queries. If the argument is that Zayd is a complete fiction, why was he invented in the first place? No Zayd, no problem: Muḥammad had no sons and no potential heirs. If a historical Zayd really was Muḥammad's adoptive son, why not simply let Muḥammad un-adopt him, which we learn was a simple enough process? If necessary, by divine decree, given that verses could be added to the Quran at will. Why was it necessary to abolish the institution of adoption completely? If we follow Powers's argument, adoption did actually exist for a while after the Prophet's death. So what happened to all the other adopted children who suddenly became fatherless and disinherited when these new Quranic verses miraculously appeared? Was there no murmur of dissent, or were such protests also successfully erased from the collective memory? And if Zayd was a real challenger to Abū Bakr, why is there no historical memory of that, no *shī'at Zayd*? This belongs to "actual history," which Powers may claim we can never know, but the issue of how memory is preserved and what elements can and cannot be completely erased is a relevant one.

The biblical precedents were also presented in a chapter of *Muḥammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men*. But *Zayd* is not just an abbreviated version of the earlier work. The presentation and focus are different and many of the story elements are elaborated in greater detail. In *Zayd*, there is no mention of the disputed *kalāla* issue that was central to the former book. Both works can thus be read independently of the other. *Zayd* is also an easy read, much of it a straightforward narrative of Zayd's story and those of the biblical-Judaic tradition. Like the longer work, however, it is a thorough, erudite, and thought-provoking exploration of an alternative way to see early Islamic historiography. It may not convince readers who want more definite proof of tampering with the Quranic text, but it does show that there was a large store of themes and motifs that could have influenced the body of "sacred myths" that went into the *sīra* and other later sources. Powers's way of arguing "whom does the story benefit" is certainly stimulating and should force us to question how much of the early history may have been manipulated, how exactly, and to what end.

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The Archetypal Sunni Scholar: Law, Theology, and Mysticism in the Synthesis of al-Bājūrī. By AARON SPEVACK. Albany, NY: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS, 2014. Pp. viii + 212. \$80.

What does an archetypal Sunni scholar look like? This question is explored in Aaron Spevack's comprehensive biography and intellectual portrait of Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (d. 1860), the prolific Shāfi'ī jurist, Ash'arī theologian, and member of the Naqshbandī mystical order, who may be considered one

of the last Muslim scholars whose intellectual production was unaffected by reform efforts associated with modernity, and who embodies the ideals of the premodern Islamic education. Spevack not only delineates the archetypal scholar in the Islamic tradition, but also engages debates over the alleged decline of Islamic intellectual thought after the classical period, the closure of the gate of *ijtihād*, the anti-rationalist tendencies of post-Ghazālian Muslim scholarship, and the stagnation of the ulema as a force in society prior to the reformist wave of the modern period.

The book is divided into five chapters, bracketed by an introduction and conclusion. Chapter one offers a thorough presentation of al-Bājūrī's life and scholarship, impressively showing the breadth and depth of this nineteenth-century scholar and long-time rector of al-Azhar. The meticulous list of al-Bājūrī's works situates his scholarly activities within the Islamic tradition. In chapter two Spevack sketches out in detail his argument for the contours of the archetypal scholar. Fundamental for defining the archetype of a Sunni scholar are, as argued, the three scholarly traditions of law (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*). Spevack calls engaging in these three dimensions of Islamic intellectual thought the Gabrielian paradigm (pp. 4–5, 38–48), going back to a hadith in which the angel Gabriel comes to the Prophet and his Companions in human form to explain that the religion of Islam consists of *islām*, *īmān*, and *ihsān*—practice, belief, and spirituality. Spevack argues that combining these three elements in the pursuit of law, theology, and mysticism became the normative model for Muslim scholars for over a thousand years, of which al-Bājūrī is a prime exemplar. Chapter three further fleshes out the interconnectedness between al-Bājūrī and his intellectual predecessors in theology, law, and Sufism, mapping networks of thought that span from al-Shīrāzī (d. ca. 1083) to al-Sanūsī (d. 1490) to later scholars like the Egyptian Mālikī al-Laḡānī (d. 1631). This chapter presents a rich biographical picture of the scholars al-Bājūrī engaged, particularly in his commentaries. While Spevack diligently maps the connections between these earlier scholars and al-Bājūrī by looking at where and how the latter quoted or referred to them, it seems odd, with the author's admission that al-Bājūrī did not explicitly reference Ibn Taymiyya or the views of the Atharīs in general, to include Ibn Taymiyya in this type of intellectual heritage. Exploring a connection that is absent in al-Bājūrī's work only because Ibn Taymiyya presents "the primary challenge to al-Bājūrī's legacy" (p. 90) seems driven by Ibn Taymiyya's importance in the contemporary period rather than his impact on al-Bājūrī's scholarly formation.

Chapter four delves into the content of al-Bājūrī's scholarship, testing whether teacher-student relationships as well as intellectual networks actually translate into a commonality of thought. Spevack's analysis of al-Bājūrī's stance on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, *madhhab* affiliation, the goals and methods of the mystical path, the permissibility of studying and practicing logic (*manṭiq*), and theological speculation (*kalām*) demonstrates that al-Bājūrī built upon prior scholars' views, often adding and improving their arguments. At the same time, however, he was not shy in diverging from established opinions, either by siding with a minority opinion or pronouncing his own, independent position.

Although this reviewer would have welcomed a more in-depth study of the content of al-Bājūrī's scholarship in the fields of law, theology, and mysticism, Spevack nevertheless succeeds in debunking the myth of intellectual decline. His account shows the vibrant discussions and original contributions that Muslim scholarship brought forth in the post-classical period. Joining recent voices led by Khaled El-Rouayheb and Haim Gerber, he traces the continuous development of the religious and rational sciences that took place in the commentary and gloss literature typical after the thirteenth century that was derided by Schacht and others as derivative and unoriginal. Doing so, Spevack pointedly draws out the wide array of scholarly opinions acceptable in the post-classical period. He shows the existence of a spectrum of agreement and disagreement, of *ijmāʿ* and *ikhtilāf*, whether in law, theology or the practice of Sufism. The options open to scholars on the *ijmāʿ-ikhtilāf* spectrum facilitated the holding of views different from their predecessors and enabled the continuous practice of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*), even if mainly in the form of justifying the preponderance of one position over another. Sunni orthodoxy was thus not narrowly defined but allowed for a large variety of views existing simultaneously, though at any point in time one might be the preferred opinion relied upon by a majority of scholars.

This book does have some shortcomings, however. The level of sophistication presumed for the reader is inconsistent, which raises the question of audience for this book. The first two chapters work very nicely as introductions for the student, who is given an overview of what it meant to be a Muslim

scholar in the premodern period studying the traditional *madrassa* curriculum and feeling part of the inherited intellectual tradition. For the reader who is past the novice stage, Spevack's presentation at times insufficiently engages the scholarly literature on the subject and is uncritical toward the information stated in the texts perused for his study. Hence, his narrative of the development of the schools of law omits discussion of the surrounding debates or of the complexity of the processes involved, while the detail that Abū Shujā', an eleventh/twelfth-century author of a Shāfi'ī primer on law, lived 160 years, according to traditional accounts (p. 82), could have been demystified with a note. Other sections, in particular chapter four on al-Bājūrī's thought, are aimed at a reader who has had extensive exposure to intellectual debates in theology—on the nature of God and the concept of unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), say—in order to follow and appreciate al-Bājūrī's contributions to these topics. Some translated passages as well only make sense to a reader with knowledge of Arabic (e.g., pp. 28, 40).

Assessing the intellectual contribution of a particular scholar to a field based on his commentary on a work is rife with pitfalls. Commentators draw upon previous commentaries, often without acknowledging all their sources. Unless one compares all extant commentaries—sometimes a mighty undertaking—one might easily attribute elements to the wrong commentator. Spevack has credited al-Bājūrī with “substantial additions” to Ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī's (d. 1512) commentary on *Matn Abī Shujā'* in the section on animal sacrifice upon a child's birth (*'aqīqa*) (pp. 28–29), when in fact the additional points on grammar, hadith criticism, and condemnation of pre-Islamic practice already show up verbatim in al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī's (d. 1570) commentary on this text. Admittedly, such misattribution is hard to avoid, and Spevack does pay attention to the difficulty of determining al-Bājūrī's voice, yet in this way the intellectual portrait of al-Bājūrī that is painted somewhat overestimates his contribution. In this instance, al-Bājūrī may only have revived an existing discourse or altered the focus of the discussion by including comments that al-Barmāwī, his acknowledged model for the commentary, left out.

Furthermore, one could ask whether the archetypal scholar is defined by his knowledge of only law, theology, and mysticism, or could there be more to what was considered “typical” in the education of the *'ālim* of the premodern period? I would argue that a certain level of accomplishment in *adab* was just as important, by which I do not mean the ability to reach the poetic creativity of Abū Tammām or al-Mutanabbī but the possession of a more than cursory acquaintance with the prosaic and poetic traditions of Arabo-Islamic civilization. A thorough familiarity with *adab* as an academic field was necessary for understanding and debating hadith, Quran, and in general the textual tradition of Islam. The ever-present use of verse in all types of scholarly writings bears evidence that being an *adīb* was an integral aspect of one's scholarly persona. We find this type of literary production in most of the scholars whom Spevack holds up as archetypes—al-Rāzī, al-Suyūṭī, al-Sanūsī, and others. Al-Bājūrī himself is no exception: his commentary on al-Busayrī's *al-Burda* (Poem of the Mantle) speaks to his knowledge of the genre.

Lastly, the book's transliteration of Arabic is too often faulty. Disregarding what could be excused as typos and occasional mistakes made by any scholar, the consistent misuse of the Arabic *tashdīd* is regrettable, e.g., *mu'tammad* for *mu'tamad*, *mustaḥab* for *mustaḥabb*, *aṣaḥ* for *aṣaḥḥ*, *maḥaba* for *maḥabba*. These snafus detract from the otherwise well-rounded presentation of al-Bājūrī as an archetypal scholar working in the intellectual tradition of his predecessors, yet molding and contributing to it according to his own interpretation and his own historical context.

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Al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fī l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār* (The Marvelous Chronicles: Biographies and Events). Edited by SHMUEL MOREH. Max Schloessinger Memorial Series, Texts, vol. 9. 5 vols. Jerusalem: HEBREW UNIVERSITY, 2013. Pp. 2,780. \$525.

Al-Jabartī's history of Egypt, a chronicle that covers the eighteenth century, the French expedition of Napoleon (1798–1801), and the early years of the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī (1805–1848), up to 1821,