Read rightly, this book can be a stimulating book for those concerned with contemporary understandings of Islamic legal history, and particularly for those engaged with the construction of contemporary Muslim theology and law. It is not a book for historians, but then, why should every book be?

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L'imamat et l'occultation selon l'imamisme: Étude bibliographique et histoire des textes. By Hassan Ansari. Islamic History and Civilization, vol. 134. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Pp. xx + 310 + 268 (Ar.). $245, €204.

Here is a gem of a contribution to the field of Twelver Shiʿi studies! Hassan Ansari has set out to document the evolution of the concepts of the imamate and the occultation across a range of early Imami Shiʿi sources and in the process to gather the relevant passages from these works into one volume. The result is some three hundred pages of identification of and background on the authors of these sources and the works themselves and nearly three hundred more pages of citations from many of those same works.

The French-language portion of the text comprises a preface, a brief introductory overview of both the imamate and the occultation, and two chapters. In the discussion of the imamate (pp. 1–5), Ansari briefly examines the Shiʿi understanding of its necessity and of there being an Imam to explicate the revelation and "la Loi et l'interprétation spirituelle du Livre" (p. 3). The absence of the Twelfth and last Imam from the community, from 260/874, generated a rationalist Muʿtazili-style explication of the need for a clerical hierarchy and for the lay obligation to follow directions set by these clerics (p. 4). As to the occultation itself (pp. 6–11), Ansari reminds the reader of the crisis facing the community from the time of the eleventh Imam and his passing without an apparent heir, of the departure of many believers for other sects, but also of the evolution of the understanding of the Twelfth Imam as both *qāʾim* and *mahdī*. With the onset of the greater occultation from 329/941, works on the occultation took two directions, one involving the gathering of hadith on the subject and the other a more theological discourse. The latter was eventually dominated by such rationalist theologians as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) who, doubling as jurists, asserted their authority as the Imam's representatives during the latter's prolonged absence.

The meat of the volume consists of the two chapters. Chapter one is divided into two sections. In the first (pp. 12–42), Ansari notes the major works on the imamate produced by the very earliest scholars of the Qum school of traditionists. He then discusses such later scholars as ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Mūsā b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 329/941), the father of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn Bābawayh, known also as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), as well as their works in these areas and their associates. These include Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), who compiled *al-Kāfī*. (*Al-Kāfī* was the first of the "four books" of the Imams' narrations compiled in the immediate aftermath of the onset of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam; Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Faqīh* was the second of these.) The section ends with a coverage of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, al-Kātib al-Nuʿmanī (d. 360/971), who compiled a volume of the Imams' narrations, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, which dealt with issues relating to the problem of the Imam's absence.

The second section of chapter one (pp. 43–119) reviews major Twelver authors who worked across the later years of the fourth/tenth century, up to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), the compiler of *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār*, the third and fourth of the four books of the Imams' narrations, and author of works in many other disciplines of the emerging Twelver Shiʿi religious sciences. In this section Ansari discusses some nineteen scholars whose works addressed the imamate and the occultation. Some are well known—Ibn Bābawayh (eight), Shaykh al-Ṭūsī himself, the last of the nineteen, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (fourteen) and al-Murtaḍā's younger brother al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī (d. 406/1015) (seventeen)—but, constituting one of the very important contributions of this work to the field, many

of the others less so, of whose works only titles remain. These include Ibn al-Juḥām, al-Ṣafwānī, Ibn Ḥamza al-Marʿashī, Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī, Ibn ʿAyyāsh al-Jawharī, Ibn Nūḥ al-Sīrāfī, and al-Karājikī. Ansari has combed the Twelver biographical literature and other sources to tell us something about these figures. As such he takes the first, essential steps in the "rediscovery" of such scholars and the reconstruction of Shiʿi intellectual life of this key period of its history.

Thus, Muḥammad b ʿAbbās al-Bazzāz, known as Ibn al-Juḥām (pp. 45–46), was a contemporary of both al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh. He studied with key Twelver scholars but also followed the teachings of contemporary Sunnis, and wrote on law, hadith, and quranic sciences. Citations from one of his works survive in the work of the tenth/sixteenth-century scholar Sharaf al-Dīn al-Astarābādī. Only the titles of two others are known. By contrast, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Karājikī (d. 449/1057) (pp. 109–14), of whose works some are in fact extant, is revealed as something of a polymath, with expertise in theology, law, hadith, grammar, philology, astronomy/astrology, medicine, mathematics, and genealogy. Western scholars' attention on the community in this period has focused on Baghdad and points further east, but al-Karājikī spent most of his life in Syria. He also studied in Mecca and can be placed in Mayyafariqin, Diyarbakr, Cairo, and Baghdad. He was *au fait* with some of the works of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), the Ismaili scholar of Fatimid Egypt, of whom he was critical. Likewise, he also critiqued the Muʿtazili scholar Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044). Although al-Karājikī is better known than Ibn al-Juḥām, and though his *Kanz al-fawāʾid* is among his works that have survived, he remains understudied in the West.

Chapter two (pp. 120–247) is devoted to what Ansari calls the identification and "reconstitution" of key texts on the imamate and occultation. This chapter is divided into fourteen sections that identify key authors and their works—again via careful consideration of contemporary as well as later sources—and addresses in greater detail more than twenty "authored" works beginning in the second/eighth century. Of particular note again are works and authors—and in the process their "associates"—that have received relatively less, if any, attention in the extant secondary sources.

Lesser-known figures whose careers and contributions are singled out include ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām (d. 172/788), ʿĪsā b. al-Mustafād, al-Rayyān b. al-Ṣalt, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Khashshāb, and ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, a nephew of Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī. Useful "asides" are frequent. Al-Khashshāb is ascribed a work refuting the Wāqifī Shiʿa in Ansari's list of the key texts in that genre (pp. 174–80). The Qāʾimiyya, associated with the seventh Imam, Mūsā b. Jaʿfar (d. 183/799, is discussed (pp. 186–89) before works in this genre are listed. Works in the prophecies (*malāḥim*) tradition receive similar attention followed by a list of some thirty works in the genre (pp. 191–99). A section on works on occultation (pp. 216–24) includes a list of works on the subject in the third/ninth century, both prior to and after the onset of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam; Ansari also discusses a work composed by Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaḍīb al-Rāzī that was a key source for al-Ṭūsī's later well-known volume on the subject. Another section (pp. 229–35) examines the "lesser" (*mineure*) occultation, that period in which the Imam was still accessible to the community through a succession of four "representatives" (*sufarā*, sg. *safīr*, or *wukalā*, sg. *wakīl*), and discusses three texts on the *wukalā* composed in the fourth/tenth century.

The chapter ends with a section (pp. 235–47) on the *ghulāt* ("extremists" or "exaggerators") among the Shiʿa, listing twenty-two texts composed as early as the third/ninth century through the mid-fifth/eleventh century and discussing two of them. One, in the *ghuluww* genre, was attributed to al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (d. 145/762); the second was a refutation of the *ghulāt* composed by the sixth imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765).

Concluding remarks, an extensive bibliography, an index, and a list of the Imams conclude the French-language portion of the volume (pp. 248–309).

As if all this was not enough, Ansari then sets himself the task of reconstituting some portions of twenty works based on fragments found in later texts. For each he cites the source and the pages on which these extracts can be found. These include works by ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām, ʿĪsā b. al-Mustafād, al-Rayyān b. al-Ṣalt, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Khashshāb, ʿAllān al-Kulaynī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaḍīb al-Rāzī, and works on *malāḥim*, the *qāʾim*, the *ghayba*, the *wukalā* of the last Imam, and the *ghulāt*. In this reconstitution process he has researched a solid range of works, including *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*

of al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī (d. 290/903), *al-Kāfī*, Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Khiṣāl*, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, *ʿIlāl*, *al-Amālī*, as well as al-Mufīd's *al-Irshād*, al-Ṭūsī's work on the *ghayba*, and *Biḥār al-anwār* of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), among others. Ansari is rightly cautious (p. 310) about accepting all these passages as absolutely authentic, but he certainly has mined the material to considerable effect.

All told, this volume constitutes a major achievement—and a major contribution to the field of Twelver Shiʿi studies. Since the field's inception in 1968 with the Strasbourg conference (T. Fahd, ed., *Le shiʿisme imāmite: Colloque de Strasbourg, 6–9 mai 1968* [Paris, 1970]), Western-language study of the premodern period—usually understood as ending with Safawid Iran (1501–1722)—has centered on the careers and contributions of the same handful of Twelver scholars. These few scholars, most of the now dominant Uṣūlī "persuasion," are well known precisely because, in the seventeenth century, in Iran especially, multiple, highly charged, spiritual polemics encouraged the production of numerous manuscript copies of their works that were the bases for editions published later in the last century, especially since 1979. Based on continued recourse to the work of that handful of Twelver scholars, the trajectory of Twelver Shiʿi discourse from those early years to today is too often in the West, explicitly or not, portrayed in a teleological fashion.

Ansari's excellent contribution reminds the field of figures and their works from the very earliest years of Shiʿi history that were lost along the way. Their careers, contributions, and their influence in their own times, let alone later, have long deserved more consideration. The same holds true for many figures from later periods of Shiʿi history. Ansari is to be greatly thanked for what amounts to a wake-up call not to forget them.

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Prostitution in the Eastern Mediterranean World: The Economics of Sex in the Late Antique and Medieval Middle East. By Gary Leiser. London: I.B. Tauris, 2017. Pp. xv + 332. $52.50, £35.

The trade in sex work is a subject of both topical and perennial interest, as demonstrated by the chronological range of Gary Leiser's latest contribution. The range of this work is not limited to mere chronology, however—it unifies in one volume diverse sources on prostitution from numerous eras, geographic locations, and languages, in some cases for the very first time. Leiser has brought his expertise on medieval Islamic literature to bear upon the subject matter, but he does not limit himself to medieval Islamic sources, presenting the most comprehensive (and comprehensible) portrait of the subject matter to date.

The subtitle of his work promises us a treatise on the "economics of sex in the late antique and medieval Middle East," but its scope is actually much more modest, concerning depictions of female sex workers in literature from this region. From the outset, it must be said that the latter theme is far more practical than any foray into the dismal science, and therefore offers considerably more potential than the former, as Leiser's sources provide precious little fodder for that mill. As a consequence, his pronouncements on economics are suggestive and more than a little speculative, although to be fair to the author this is primarily a reflection on the deficiencies of the available sources (deficiencies that he readily acknowledges).

Departing from the broad promises of the work's title, Leiser defines prostitution rather narrowly as "the frequent and indiscriminate sale by women of their sexual favors to men" (p. xiii). He offers this as a "simple definition," but by adopting it we necessarily neglect many aspects of the broader phenomenon of sex work in antiquity, as Leiser has. In particular, it grants women agency where such agency might not always have been present, excluding sexual slavery and other forms of sexual exploitation, such as the sale by men (or for that matter, other women) of women's sexual favors to men. He briefly acknowledges the existence of such prostitutes on pp. 44–45, before concluding that "in Late Antiquity