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Decolonising Islamic Intellectual History: Perspectives from Shi'i Thought

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ABSTRACT

Historians are in the business of engaging with actualities but also with possibilities, thinking and experiencing what we can be, what we may discern, and what we can sense and whence we come to understandings of the past. Just as the past may entail a number of actual and possible worlds that conform to our constructions, whether indexical or evaluative, similarly the possibilities of the future are 'pluriversal', multiple, interdependent, and 'globalising'.

KEYWORDS

Decolonisation;
acknowledging; primarily;
decoloniality

Historians are in the business of engaging with actualities but also with possibilities, thinking and experiencing what we can be, what we may discern, and what we can sense and whence we come to understandings of the past. Just as the past may entail a number of actual and possible worlds that conform to our constructions, whether indexical or evaluative, similarly the possibilities of the future are 'pluriversal', multiple, interdependent, and 'globalising'.¹ Any project towards a global intellectual history necessarily requires a decolonial turn. We prefer the term decoloniality to decolonisation, partly acknowledging that the latter term can be highly contested and may mean different things to different users of the term. For us, decolonisation is a historical and political process primarily and often was and is conducted within a colonialist framework of modernity, capitalism, progress and growth, predicated on a rather Enlightenment conception of humanism.² Decoloniality, on the other hand, is about ontology and epistemology – how we are and how we think authentically, with a clear critical notion of history itself, without falling back on essentialist notions of cultural traditions and ways of being, or even reverting to nativism.³ It can present 'local' definitions of the human.⁴ Coloniality 'used in recent scholarship indicates the epistemic dominance of western and Eurocentric modernity, including its suppression of methodological critiques and alternate modes of thought'.⁵ It is a regime of power that survives formal historical and colonial governance and continues to reproduce Eurocentrism, an idea of Europe, and privileged notions of race.⁶ Decoloniality is a non-linear movement towards possibilities of modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living in the plural that are other than those complicit (without necessarily entirely overcoming)

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coloniality.⁷ As such, it proposes forms of relationality and interdependence that contest the totalising, epistemic claims and power of modernity and its abstract universals that set up hierarchical binaries: mind and matter, science and magic, reason and superstition, orality and literacy, male and female, and modernity and tradition among other major concepts. Significantly, it is a process.

Coloniality in the practice of intellectual history sometimes is expressed through the notion of the irreducible rationality of agents (which recalls the irrationality of others), other times through the reduction or particularisation of the contexts of texts, and others again through forms of historicism.⁸ Decoloniality sets aside relativism in favour of relationality. In these opening remarks, we want to consider how we approach two elements of the title of the journal within this context: the global, and the intellectual, and then consider how we rethink Islamic intellectual history. We then proceed to identify some central themes that emerge in the articles that we think may exemplify that decolonial turn.

The 'global' in the title would not be fit for purpose if it merely attempted to universalise the methodology or indeed the case studies of a Eurocentric history, even if it drew upon the 'minority reports' of the European traditions.⁹ Rather, the global ought to indicate a pluralisation – or perhaps to use a decolonial term 'pluriversalising' – of methodologies as well as case studies considered on their own term in order to produce an intellectual history that may speak to other contexts. Similarly, what is global should not be conditioned by modernity and thus in that sense it is not about 'modern intellectual history'.¹⁰ A common humanity and the possibility of a common human language should not be dismissed as romantic humanism. What we offer in these essays are studies for colleagues working with different data that ought to speak to their concerns and may even allow them to reflect on their praxis.

The very notion of 'intellectual history' in itself would therefore need to provide a theoretical framework and approach that arose out of the data that we are considering. At the same time, a global intellectual history that privileges the global south without acknowledging the ways in which we are connected through acts of alienation, displacement, and entanglement would not do justice to a proper alternative approach that does not wish to impose another hegemony of thought and praxis. We cannot consider African or Asian intellectual histories as utterly other to our understanding of European intellectual history.¹¹ Nor should we exoticise them as intellectual in 'another way', emphasising orality in opposition to literacy, mysticism in opposition to philosophy, particularity over universality, or the spirit over matter.

The intellectual or the philosophical may be a critical even sceptical endeavour and can lead to a rather narrow sense of philosophy as a particular heritage of argumentation, dismissing more intuitive, mystical, and even narratological modes of presenting rationales. We tend to think that philosophy – or what Justin Smith calls *philosophia* – originates with the Greeks and constitutes a culturally specific mode of philosophising that we have universalised because of the self-referentiality of the European tradition that remains rooted in the particularity of Eurocentrism. Our analytic tradition has no doubt been misled by Hegel's dismissal of the non-European in his famous *Philosophy of World History* in which, somewhat ironically, Chinese and Indian philosophy were dismissed as tending to mysticism; philosophy properly 'begins in Greece' as Hegel put it.¹² By placing any consideration of Africa and Asia at the end of the introduction to the

History of Philosophy, he sought to clarify that the idea of philosophy was absolute but exclusive and did not embrace 'barbarisms'; even Jewish and Islamic philosophy did not constitute 'philosophy proper' tainted by those barbarisms despite sharing the common heritage of European thought and indeed influencing it.¹³ The oblivion of the East was coupled with a political dismissal; philosophy, for Hegel, could only arise in the *polis* and be articulated by a citizen bearing political freedoms (which does rather beg the question).¹⁴ The development of our modern conception of philosophy and its teleology of the Greeks to Kant and Hegel owes much to the colonial and racist contexts whence it emerged. If we use the history of philosophy to re-affirm a canon, then in effect through our selection and exclusions, we are perpetuating the notion of philosophy as a peculiarly European phenomenon.¹⁵ More recently, this teleology has resulted in notions of the ultimate victory of liberalism at the end of history – an extension of the coloniality of power in philosophy.¹⁶ It is this history of philosophy, which requires de-colonising, and the recent trends towards global and comparative philosophies are playing a major role in doing so – and as Richard Rorty once said, canon formation is not the main reason why we might wish to do the history of philosophy. This is also precisely why some prefer the notion of cross-cultural instead of comparative philosophy, rejecting the mere juxtaposition of texts in which there is an assumed dominance of the conceptual framework of the analytic tradition, in favour of conversation and not interrogation of texts, communication with a recognition of distance.¹⁷ This conversation needs to work across traditions and embedded in tradition so that one is not applying an analytic reading of Mādhyāmaka but bringing the latter tradition in conversation with the former. As Jay Garfield puts it,

Traditions make understanding possible. But this possibility is achieved through occlusion. When we understand a text, we exploit its anaphoric relation to its predecessors, as well as our background of cultural prejudices. These considerations apply mutatis mutandis to conversational interactions. Locating a text as an object of analysis involves making salient particular features of that text while suppressing others, privileging certain intertextual relationships over others, and selecting among commentarial traditions. Interrogating a text is always interrogation with interest. A decontextualized text is impossible to read; a decontextualized interchange is impossible to follow, just because of the essentially intertextual character of any text. But all of this means that in selecting, and in foregrounding, we unavoidably select against, and background. Understanding hence involves, as part of its very structure, blindness.¹⁸

Within this context, Islamic intellectual history is about the practice of texts and readings. Some of the articles constitute intellectual history in the form of the history of philosophy, albeit at times with a broader definition of philosophy than the Anglo-American analytic tradition. The analytic tradition tends to narrowly define issues in philosophy based on Eurocentric assumptions such as naturalism, materialism, empiricism, and forms of scientism. Apart from some areas of philosophy of religion, arguments for the existence of God, the nature of miracles, revelation, and especially eschatology are usually considered to be non-philosophical. Eschatology is a rare concern in European philosophy among some circles of continental thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Jacob Taubès, Jacques Derrida, and even Hent de Vries.¹⁹

Recent forays into Islamic intellectual history have to an extent followed a decolonial turn – except when it comes to the very notion of the Islamic intellectual traditions.²⁰

These are defined either too strictly in a historical sense or with respect to their periodisation, or too narrowly focusing far too much on a somewhat presentist notion of the Sunni Muslim past that fails to consider the internal diversities of the Islamic traditions. In our collection here, we very deliberately range across differential ideas of temporality and location – especially insofar as the messianic and the eschatological acknowledges a different regime of temporality – and across the Shi‘i modalities of the Islamic intellectual traditions that are often neglected or squeezed in the category of the ‘Islamic’ that is all too often lacking in inclusivity.

In the articles of this collection, there are two major themes present. The first is the notion of identity and identification both within Shi‘i circles and beyond. What this allows us to do is to consider the question of the claims, affiliation, and ownerships of multiple Islamic intellectual and theological traditions by Shi‘i intellectuals and place them within a broader contested space of what it means to be Islamic. Abdulsater begins by examining how the (proto-)Sunni littérateur and theologian al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869) portrayed the Shi‘i Imāmī community (*Rāfiḍah*) in terms of both its theological views and its social practices. In addition to their early date and unique beauty, Jāḥiẓ’s texts are unparalleled records of doctrinal debates and sociological insights. What emerges from his writings on the *Rāfiḍah* is an image of a community of simple-minded fanatics. On the one hand, the Shi‘ah adhere to anthropomorphic and deterministic beliefs and are blind followers of authority. On the other hand, they are passionate believers who strongly stand in solidarity with one another. This, for Jāḥiẓ, explains their coalition with the superficial traditionalists against the rationalist Mu‘tazilah. This is an important early outsider’s perspective on the thorny issue of the early Shi‘i community’s complicated relationship with both the legacy of traditional reports from the Imams as well as the use of rationality modes of theological presentation that were becoming dominant in ‘Abbasid Baghdad. It was common in early Mu‘tazilī oriented texts – one thinks also of *Kitāb al-intiṣār* of al-Khayyāt – to associate the early Shi‘ah with forms of scripturalist traditionalism.²¹ But this stark juxtaposition of tradition and reason already reflects an analytical paradigm taken from colonialist epistemology. The study of early Islamic theology is far too enough seen from the view of the later majority. Abdulsater shows how a particular perspective allows us to glimpse an internal development.

Ali takes up this important issue of the relationship between the Mu‘tazilah and the Shi‘ah. According to the most widely accepted (orientalist) view, the Shi‘ah and the Mu‘tazilah were originally poles apart. Subsequently, proselytes physically transported Mu‘tazilī theology to Shi‘i circles where it was adopted by the Banū Nawbakht among others among the ‘Abbasid elites. The basic problem with this explanation is that intellectual developments remain disconnected from wider social and political realities, which obscures the illocutionary force of texts and distorts their significance. Ali follows the context for the identification and then takes the case study of two critical texts that demonstrate an evolution and parallel development of Imāmī theology in this period: Ibn Bābawayh’s *I‘tiqādāt al-imāmiyyah* and al-Mufid’s *Taṣḥīḥ i‘tiqādāt al-imāmiyyah*. When historicised properly, a detailed comparison of these creeds suggests a more nuanced understanding of the Shi‘i turn toward rationalism. Once again, we note that the juxtaposition of reason and scripture as stark opposites is problematic as a number of recent studies have shown.²²

Asatryan continues the theme of identity and identification but instead of considering the realm of beliefs, he looks at the construction of heresy that characterised the image of the 'extreme Shi'ah' or the *ghulāt*. Accusations of sexual perversion, of defying both the statutes of man and the laws of the almighty, have since Antiquity been a staple of heresiographic discourse. They had pride of place in Muslim heresiology as well, which charged many a heretical sect with engaging in group sex, incest, wine-drinking, as well as the shunning of the obligatory rituals such as prayer and pilgrimage. One group has fared particularly badly at the hands of Muslim heresiographers – the so-called Shi'i 'extremists' (*ghulāt*), who lived in Iraq in the eighth to ninth centuries. Scholarship has mostly taken a simplistic approach to accounts about their alleged antinomianism, by either rejecting them as hostile propaganda or, more frequently, by accepting them wholesale as accurate. All the while, the historical, polemical contexts in which such accusations were made have been ignored. This article evaluates within a broad historical context two bodies of evidence pertaining to the Ghulāt's alleged antinomianism: the heresiographical accusations on the one hand, and the Ghulāt's own writings – which both refute and partially confirm such accusations – on the other. Asatryan contends that while the most hair-raising accusations are nothing by hostile polemics, others did indeed reflect the Ghulāt's actual beliefs and practices. The article concludes by examining the cultural meanings which antinomianism had among the Ghulāt – namely, as boundary markers and tools for identity construction. Once again assumptions of normativity and heterodoxy play a role in the study of these groups, both from the perspective of the rising Sunni normativity of the classical period as well as the emergence of a sober Twelver Shi'ism.

The second major theme beyond the question of what is Shi'i and what do we mean in a historical context by Islamic is the extension of that into elements of thought including noetics, eschatology, and the ultimate sense of the term philosophy. Alexandrin examines how apocalyptic imaginaries establish borderlines as it reconsiders the manners in which the Ismaili missionary and philosopher Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's discussions of the End Time resisted the messianic sovereignties implicit in tenth-century Fāṭimid Ismaili thought, in particular, as he introduces a Qā'im-ology without specific reference to the Ismaili *imām*. The apocalyptic imaginary and the aesthetics and anaesthesia of the destruction and violence of the End Time, passes through his theory of the *barzakh*, where the *barzakh*, as an intermediary borderline, is correlated to the cyclical resurrection of the soul and the perfection of the human form (*ba'th*). In its normalisation of messianism and its displacement from the End Time with a focus on the construction of the person, one views a potentially interesting interlocutor for elements of recent continental thought on messianism and allows us to expand our sense of the scope of the philosophical.

Andani takes forward this theme of the philosophical by examining the quranic revelation theology of al-Mu'ayyad fī l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1078), the highest-ranking Fatimid missionary and Ismaili philosophical theologian of his era. He argues that al-Mu'ayyad expounds a uniquely Shi'i Ismaili model of Qur'anic revelation and prophetic inspiration by creatively engaging key themes in Sunni thought. Thus, revelation constitutes levels of the manifestation of divine speech in a Neoplatonic scheme of emanation and relates the importance of the symbolic Arabic Qur'an to the role of the Imam as a living expression

of revelation. The Qur'an and the Imam therefore mediate through the hermeneutics of *ta'wil* in the reversion of the human soul to its origins.

Melvin-Koushki provides us with a comparative case study of two Twelver Shi'i lettrists, who together became two of the most important occultist authorities of the high Safavid period: al-Ḥāfiẓ Rajab al-Bursī (d. after 1410) and Maḥmūd Dihdār Shīrāzī (fl. 1576). It brings us back to a critical theme of how one might define and distinguish the 'Shi'i'. He shows how both authors' primary point of scholarly reference was the New Brethren of Purity network of imperial Timurid and Ottoman Neopythagoreanizing occultists radiating from late Mamluk Cairo, capital of the lettrist renaissance to which they were consciously heir. To correct such colonialist elisions and imbalances in the account of intellectual history, we must forswear the persistent scientific-*cum*-religionist dogma that vanishes lettrism and other mainstream occult sciences into the wastebasket, apolitical category that is 'mysticism', thus exiling much of Safavid intellection from early modern history of philosophy, of science and of empire. For al-Bursī, taking a page from his contemporaries the New Brethren, is the first Shi'i author to draw directly on Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) and Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. btw. 1225–33) both, the two foremost Sunni lettrists of the later Islamicate scholarly tradition, representing lettrist theory and lettrist praxis respectively; and Dihdār – the most prolific Persian author on practical Būnian lettrism of the sixteenth century, and hence immediate inspiration for the al-Bursī cult of the next – provides us an invaluable window onto how Safavid philosophy was actually imperially, occult-scientifically practiced, as well as the evolution of the Western grimoire tradition as a whole.

The final article resumes the question of the philosophical. Bdaoui concludes with the earlier theme of identity by engaging the perceived union and harmony between *faith* and *reason* in the worldview of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr al-Dashtakī (d. 1542), arguably the most significant – but little-known to modern scholarship – Shi'i intellectual and polymath of the late medieval era. Not only does he show how the Shiraz Circle established the basis of the later 'so-called School of Isfahan', he also intimates the recovery and dissemination of a rigorous Shi'i Avicennism that lasted into the modern period. In doing so, Bdaoui brings attention to how late medieval Shi'i thinkers conceptualised their own intellectual identity and how they set in place a way of seeing and problematising the world and the cosmos while faithfully retracing the steps of the Shi'i Imams, the paragons of philosophic religion and poles of all things intellectual.

Thus, we have the elements here of some exciting new directions in Islamic intellectual history focused on the Shi'i but with a clear view to the global: how do we negotiate notions of identity and identification, what is the scope of the rational and the religious, ought we not displace common binaries of the spiritual and the material, the rational and the irrational, and should we not take seriously the claims of thinkers to ownership and proclamation of their traditions? We hope that the collection will demonstrate ways in which we can take particular case studies to speak to the global and the pluriversal and help to usher in a serious turn in our epistemology and praxis.

Finally, a brief note on the Sunni-centricity of Islamic studies is in order. Despite the *very* early provenance and wide circulation of several (and, broadly speaking, culturally significant) Shi'i canons and texts, which are nothing short of a treasure-trove of early Muslim religiosity and literature – passed down along the generations over the course of many centuries – Shi'i intellectual locutions and learned expressions are yet

another facet of Shi'ism that has escaped the attention of Islam specialists. The absence of dedicated studies on Shi'i texts and intellectual traditions, by and large, is a poignant reminder that for a long while, and arguably until the present, orientalists and their modern-day successors proffered uncritical rehashing of the dominant narrative that positioned Sunnism as the normative and orthodox voice of Islam. The Shi'i scholarly texts went largely unnoticed – or, when they were read, they were not taken seriously as representative of a significant Muslim religious tendency. Nineteenth and twentieth century orientalists inherited and accepted as true the early heresiographical and triumphalist accounts of medieval Muslim authorities. Some looked askance at Shi'ism, bracketed as it were as heretical and tendentious religion. With the rise of the *Islamwissenschaft* thanks to Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921), Shi'ism was seen as spinoff, like Christianity in relation to Judaism. Goldziher said as much in his *Die Fortschritte der Islam-Wissenschaft in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten*. No doubt, the intellectual ostracisation of Shi'ism in the academy persists hitherto. Medieval Muslim and orientalist accounts converged on the same perspective: Shi'ism was seen as theologically repugnant tendency, a socio-politically sectarian movement, and an intellectual contrarian antithetical to Islam.

In western scholarship, inspired by the model of Goldziher, Shi'ism was regarded as little representative of Islam, dismissed as a Persian religiosity and late ancient Neoplatonist spinoff.²³ For a long while, orientalists fronted Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy as normative Islam. The major turn came after 1968, following the now-famous *Colloque de Strasbourg on Le Shi'isme Imāmīte*. Shi'ism was studied on its own terms now, its sources were read directly, not through secondary Sunni citations and exogenous analytic tools. Since then, studies on Shi'ism have picked up pace, but they still lag considerably behind in the Sunni-centric Islamic studies.²⁴

When it comes to textual studies, the manuscript evidence creates the impression that the major Shi'i works, such as the *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*, for example,²⁵ were popular among Shi'i Muslim across the ages in the medieval and modern periods. The transmission of such works attests to wide circulations in societies where Shi'i Islam was practiced in large numbers. A study of the transmission and historicity of significant Shi'i canons will no doubt reveal significant information about Shi'i learning culture and the prominence of intellectual modes of being in everyday life. It will furthermore help us understand the great efforts exerted by Shi'i scholars to preserve and maintain the tradition during the many epochs of turbulence with which the community had to contend over the centuries. This includes several tumultuous periods of social and political upheavals that saw Shi'i leaders imprisoned, exiled, marginalised, and executed by local and regional authorities.²⁶ A study on the preservation and transmission of texts that stand out as palpable Shi'i identity markers, in spite of the vastitudes faced by the Shi'i communities, makes the historical question even more interesting, than, say, the preservation and transmission of a thoroughlygoingly Sunni text such as the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, which was passed on from one generation to another by a community of scholars, unhindered by the political elite, unopposed by social institutions, and hardly condemned by religious authorities. It is indeed the case that in medieval times, Shi'i scholarly communities did not enjoy the same social, economic, and political privilege of their Sunni counterparts.²⁷ Being a Shi'i in a Sunni-dominated learning environment – and concomitantly hostile scholarly culture – was not without challenges, not least of

which was the difficulty in circulating and transmitting Shi'i teachings, as was the case, for example, in the Umayyad and sometimes 'Abbasid periods.

Properly applied, decolonial Islamic studies ought to address the big elephant in the room: the Sunni privilege in modern Islamic studies. The labours of modern academics to address the methodological biases, structural impediments, and ideologically charged *modus operandi* of the modern academy, are sophisticated and radical to a large extent. Yet, it seems, the quest to offer correctives and to push for inclusion, rarely if ever extends to the question of Shi'i Islam. While today the norm is to cast aspersions – and rightly so – on the interpretive workings and hermeneutical approaches of orientalist of old and new, many folks in Islamic studies, however, have yet confront the privilege Sunni Islam enjoys in the academy.

Notes

1. The ontology of the late David Lewis in his *On the Plurality of Worlds* comes to mind as well as the ontological politics of Arturo Escobar in his *Designs for the Pluriverse* and *Pluriversal Politics*.
2. For a somewhat Marxian and modernist critique of decolonisation based on debates in African(a) philosophy, see Táíwò, *Africa must be Modern*, and idem, *Against Decolonisation*, as well as Hull (ed), *Debating African Philosophy*. Enlightenment conception of humanism is famously associated with the 'cosmopolitanism' of Kant in his *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (1784).
3. For a critique of the colonialist notion of history, see Satia, *Time's Monster*, and on the myth of progress, Allen, *The End of Progress*. On nativist abuses of decolonisation for example in the Indian context, see Nigam, "Decolonizing Thought – Beyond Indian/Hindu Exceptionalism" and Truschke, "Hindutva's Dangerous Rewriting of History".
4. Mayra Rivera, "Embodied Counterpoetics: Sylvia Wynter on Religion and Race", in Yountae and Craig (eds), *Beyond Man*, 57–85, and Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom".
5. Eleanor Craig and An Yountae, "Introduction", to Yountae and Craig (eds), *Beyond Man*, 3.
6. Eleanor Craig and An Yountae, "Introduction", to Yountae and Craig (eds), *Beyond Man*, 4.
7. Mignolo and Walsh, *On Decoloniality*, 81.
8. On these, see Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding" and LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 14–5.
9. For a classic caveat on the global within the category of (intellectual) history, see Subrahmanyam, "Global Intellectual History beyond Hegel and Marx," 126–37. Decoloniality does of course draw upon minority traditions within Western metaphysics; for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty uses Heidegger and Derrida among others in his *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* in search of minority histories, subjectivity, and imagining and translating life-worlds, and Wael Hallaq draws upon Guénon in his *Restating Orientalism*, critiquing modernist epistemology in pursuit of an ethical turn.
10. Moyn and Sartori, "Approaches to Global Intellectual History," 16–8.
11. See Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, and idem, *Out of the Dark Night*.
12. Hegel, *Lectures in Philosophy of World History 1829/30*, 26a in *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, Hamburg, 1983, VI, 347, cited in Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy*, 113; Bernasconi, "With What must the History of Philosophy Begin?"; Halbfass, *India and Europe*, 84–99.
13. Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy*, 113–25.
14. Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy*, 123. One is also minded here to think of the political programme of Larry Siedentrop in his *Inventing the Individual*, in which the reason of the liberal West is contrasted by the absence of reason, even hostility towards it, of Islam.

15. Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy*, 1.
16. Siedentrop, *Inventing the Individual* and Fukuyama, *The End of History*.
17. Garfield, *Empty Words*, 231–35.
18. *Ibid.*, 238.
19. Khatib, “The Messianic Without Messianism,” 1–17; Stimilli, “Jacob Taubès,” 68–81.
20. For example, Mustafa, “Innovation in Premodern Islam,” 1–41; Iqbal, “Reprising Islamic Political Theology,” 525–42.
21. Al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-intiṣār*, 108–23, 127–32, 134–42; van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, 369–463.
22. Sander, *Zwischen Charisma und Ratio*; Warner, *The Words of the Imams*.
23. While Goldziher rejected the claim that Shi‘ism is a spin off from Iranian religion, he did not, however, rule out the Iranian influences on Shi‘i law, for example, claiming as he did that the severity of Shi‘i law imbibed the spirit of harshness towards the non-Shi‘i from Zoroastrian purity laws. He wrote:

Wenn wir auch die Annahme, als sei das Schi‘itentum in seiner Entstehung als Frucht der Einwirkung iranischer Einflüsse auf den arabischen Islam zu betrachten, als irrig zurückweisen mußten, so können wir dennoch die religiöse Härte gegen Andersgläubige für persische Einflüsse beanspruchen, die in der historischen Ausbildung der Ideen des Schiitentums sekundär zur Geltung gekommen sind. Dasebenerwähnte Verhalten des schiitischen Gesetzes gegen Andersgläubige bringt uns unwillkürlich die in persischen Religionsschriften festgelegten, bei den heutigen Zoroastriern wohl auch zumeist obsoleten alten Regeln in Erinnerung, als deren islamischen Nachklang wir sie betrachten können: ‘Ein Zoroastrier muß sich mit Nirang reinigen, wenn er einen Nicht-Zoroastrier berührt hat. ‘Ein Zoroastrier darf keine Nahrung gebrauchen, die ein Nicht-Zoroastrier zubereitet hat; auch keine Butter, auch keinen Honig; selbst auf Reisen nicht’. (See Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, 245)

24. More recent contributions here include the monumental studies of Marshall Hodgson, Wilferd Madelung, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Hossein Modarressi, among others. Amir-Moezzi stands out, however, as the most vocal critic of the Sunni-normativity in early Islamic studies. In his writings on the matter, Amir-Moezzi labours hard to correct the historiographical misgivings of modern Islamicists, especially in his studies of the tumultuous period that is early Islam. For example, in his *Le Coran silencieux et le Coran parlant*, Amir-Moezzi goes on to argue that the Sunni narratives of early Islam are as biased and tendentious as those of Shi‘ism. So why should academics privilege one over the other if both are equally biased? He further argues that in some instances, however, Shi‘i sources could more useful, where the Shi‘i perspective offers the view of a vanquished minority un beholden to caliphal dictates. See Amir-Moezzi, “The Silent Qur’an and the Speaking Qur’an,” 158f.
25. On the history, transmission, and theology of the *Ṣaḥīfah*, see Bdaiwi, *A Catalogue of Safavid and Qajar-era Manuscripts*.
26. See Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men*, 68–91.
27. This is what Brown calls the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* Network. See Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 99–153. On the transmission of Sunni hadith across the medieval period, see Davidson, *Carrying the Tradition*.

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