

(*mubawwab*) and lexica (*mujannas*; pp. 46 f.). Rather, one has to place it within the wider context of Islamic scholarship in order fully to understand its significance since lexicography evolved around the study of the Quran (p. 2) and possibly owes the introduction of *isnād* to the study of hadith (p. 23). Although closely linked to the study of grammar, it is clear from the beginning that it is the lexicographer's task to explain the meaning of lexical items, as grammarians do not even explain the meaning of rare lexical items they use to illustrate their arguments (p. 60) and a quite striking difference between lexicography and grammar, as exemplified by the works of al-Khalīl and his student Sībawayhi, is that there are 428 references to hadith in al-Khalīl's *Kitāb al-'ayn*, while there are only seven or eight references in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* (p. 30), and grammarians were stricter with regard to which poets to cite (p. 35).

In a balanced and comprehensive study like this, the author also discusses well-known shortcomings of Arabic lexicography: the lack of criteria for the authenticity and correctness of cited lexical items (for amusing anecdotes about linguistic fabrication see pp. 24–7); disagreements about the meaning of a lexical item resulting in it having several meanings (pp. 78 f.); the absence of a template determining the patterns to be included and the order followed which resulted in some lexical gaps (p. 412); the high degree of dependence on earlier lexicographers (pp. 153, 169, 349 ff.) which might explain why, for example, fifty of the words used by al-Jāhīz (d. 255/869) are not found in dictionaries; or specific meanings of certain words (pp. 412 f.), as well as obscurities like circularity or the use of *shawāhid* that do not elucidate the meaning of lexical items which reflect the absence of standard criteria for unambiguous lexical definition (p. 414).

By relying on Bedouin informants (up to the fourth/tenth century, p. 31) and focusing more on strange, rare or even obsolete (*gharīb*) words including *addād* (contronyms or autoantonyms like English sanction or oversight) injustice was done to words commonly used in spoken or literary Arabic and to literary and scientific neologisms (p. 409). Yet lexicography did not only preserve what was considered to be the correct usage of words and systematized the available linguistic data (p. 6) but it also documented Bedouin culture and poetry which would otherwise have been lost (p. 313). Offering as complete a history of the Arabic lexicographical tradition as available sources allow at present, Baalbaki has once again achieved great things by producing what will surely become a standard reference work for scholars and students alike.

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AHMED EL SHAMSY:

The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History.

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Ahmed El Shamsy's book, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*, is a successful effort to locate Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī's (d. 204/820) written corpus in both its intellectual and social contexts. Over the past several years, El Shamsy has made major contributions to the study of Islamic law by arguing persuasively for the authenticity of the *Umm* and *Risāla* of al-Shāfi'ī, and discovering the *Mukhtaṣar*

of al-Shāfi'ī's senior disciple, Abū Ya'qūb al-Buwayṭī (d. 231/846), which had long been assumed lost. This careful reading of the *Umm* has led El Shamsy to classify al-Shāfi'ī's project as the "canonization" not of specific texts, but rather the prophetic hadith, as one of two sacred sources for Islamic law. This canonization established textual sources for jurisprudence and, more significantly, endeavoured to delegitimize the existing normative authority of the regional legal traditions of Medina and Iraq. It "embodied a radical individualism" of jurists engaging with texts, who rapidly became "a community of interpretation that defined itself in terms of shared hermeneutic stances vis à vis the canon of sacred sources" (p. 6) or, in other words, a *madhhab*.

While the claim that al-Shāfi'ī argued for the elevation of prophetic hadith to the status of revelation is widely agreed upon among Islamicists, El Shamsy's book breaks new ground by classifying this project as one of canonization, exploring the historical events in Egypt during the emergence of the Shāfi'ī school, examining carefully how al-Shāfi'ī's earliest students engaged with his writings in such a way as to establish the paradigm of the *madhhab*, and tracing the influence of al-Shāfi'ī's legal theory on scholars over the century after it was written. El Shamsy devotes two chapters (4 and 5) to the frequently ignored social history of Egypt during the third/ninth century, when the local Arab Mālikī aristocracy was threatened by the social mobility of local freed clients and 'Abbāsīd ambitions for centralization under Ḥanafī judges. He argues that the zealous executor of the inquisition (*miḥna*) in Egypt, Ibn Abī al-Layth (judge from 205–237/820–851), was primarily interested in promoting Ḥanafī judges at the expense of Mālikī and Shāfi'ī scholars, which explains his targetting of al-Buwayṭī, who died imprisoned in Baghdad in 231/846. The survival and success of the Shāfi'ī school, in El Shamsy's account, has much to do with the autonomous Ṭulūnids, who supported the tolerant Ḥanafī judge Bakkār b. Qutayba (judge from 860–884), honoured Rabī' b. Sulaymān (d. 270/884), who was the primary transmitter of al-Shāfi'ī's written corpus, and even appointed the first Shāfi'ī judge in Egypt.

El Shamsy's identification of third/ninth and early fourth/tenth-century scholars who engaged with al-Shāfi'ī's legal theory is an important corrective to Wael Hallaq's claim, in his 1993 *IJMES* article, "Was al-Shafi'i the master architect of Islamic jurisprudence?", that the *Risāla* was "thoroughly ignored" (p. 590) during the third/ninth century. (Curiously, this article is nowhere cited in El Shamsy's book.) Of particular importance is his demonstration of its impact on the methodological introductions of the Quran commentaries of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), as well as the discovery of a fragment of a Mālikī refutation of al-Shāfi'ī that al-Rabī' included in his transmission of the *Umm* (p. 209).

As can be gleaned from the title of his book, El Shamsy seeks to argue that al-Shāfi'ī did not merely found the *madhhab* bearing his name, but actually provided the theoretical underpinnings for all Islamic jurisprudence by "initiating the process of canonization" and developing "the first explicit theorization of revelation as divine communication encapsulated in the textual form of the Quran and its auxiliary, prophetic Hadith" (p. 5). The second step of this process was the acceptance of this theory by other Sunni jurists. El Shamsy restates this thesis somewhat more tenuously in his conclusion, where he describes the canonization process as "an attempt to extricate tradition from revelation, to delegitimize the former as the primary mediator of the revealed message and to extricate the latter as a fixed, clearly demarcated category" (p. 223).

There are a couple of issues El Shamsy does not address that complicate his broader arguments. First, even if al-Shāfi'ī did canonize or elevate prophetic

Hadith to the status of revealed source, there is a limited pool of Hadiths that are of use to a jurist. (For example, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī only includes 1,235 legal Hadiths in his popular collection, *Bulūgh al-marām*.) The stubborn fact remains that the overwhelming majority of rulings in Islamic law are not based on the revealed sources, which means “tradition” and personal opinions have always been of tremendous significance. Second, it is unclear how much of an impact al-Shāfiʿī’s elevation of Hadith had on the actual positions of the Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools of law, which, to this day, valorize the *Muwattaʿ* of Mālik and *Mudawwana* of Sahnūn among the former, and thousands of opinions ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf, and al-Shaybanī preserved in a host of books, among the latter. Had al-Shāfiʿī had a truly “transformative” (p. 220) impact on these two schools, we would not have expected Ibn Ḥazm’s (d. 456/1064) sustained critique, throughout his *Muḥallā*, of all four Sunni *madhāhib*’s deviations from the clear teachings of the canonical Hadith collections. Indeed, it may be that the Zāhiriīs were the most faithful jurists to al-Shāfiʿī’s canonization project, since they alone insisted upon grounding all Islamic law on the twin revealed sources of Islam.

These criticisms of El Shamsy’s assessment of the significance of Hadith in Muslim jurisprudence in no way detract from the high quality of *The Canonization of Islamic Law*. It is very well-written, draws on an impressive array of Arabic texts, and is the best available guide to al-Shāfiʿī’s legal-theoretical writings, in large part because it engages the arguments expressed in both the *Risāla* and the *Umm*. In short, it is essential reading for all students and scholars of Islamic law.

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DARYOUSH MOHAMMAD POOR:

Authority without Territory: The Aga Khan Development Network and the Ismaili Imamate.

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Poor sets out to examine the development of the institutions of the Nizari Ismaili imamate in the time of the present Imam, Aga Khan IV, the forty-ninth hereditary Imam. He focuses in particular on the development of the Aga Khan Development Network. The heart of the book begins with a discussion of the Nizari Ismaili Imamate and the issue of authority in a Muslim and a Shii context. The issue is first of all examined up to the mid-twentieth century, after which Poor moves to the key development, the institutionalization of the Imamate in the second half of the twentieth century. “The person of the Imam”, he declares, “is transcended [sic] into the institution and his authority is the very source giving legitimacy to the organizations that function to ensure that the Imam has the necessary means to perform his job”. There follows an examination of Ismaili leadership, the development of a constitution for the community for Aga Khan III, and the remarkable leadership of Aga Khan IV, who has made it clear that his faith is designed not just for spiritual matters but also to be realized by action on earth, first in the service of his community but also for the good of all mankind. Here, interestingly, he echoes the ethos of the worldwide movement of Islamic reform of the past two