

a staggering amount of contemporary commentaries, he describes in detail the networks Markino was involved in, including journalists, art critics, specialists of Japanese and Asian art, notably the discerning Laurence Binyon, as well as collectors of Japanese art.

The author, who is a historian of early twentieth-century British political thought and history, also devotes much attention to Markino's writings, written in an idiosyncratic English, which deal with a wide range of topics, ranging from the English and Japanese theater, women's suffrage, current events in the Far East as well as observations on Asian art and Western Post-Impressionism. The book aims to redress the injustice done to this artist by the neglect into which he fell after his death. This begs the question how important Markino really was in the history of art. Although his work was no doubt pleasing, it was not really innovative. In pictorial terms he combined some techniques redolent of *bun-jinga* and *ukiyo-e* with specific techniques he had learned in Western art schools. He adroitly used them to depict landscapes, cityscapes or backgrounds that were suffused in fog, an effect redolent of innumerable landscapes in the Oriental tradition. He thus struck a sensitive cord with a particular niche of amateurs and the public. But the attraction was transitory. One may wonder whether his adoption of Japanese painting techniques was entirely inspired by a genuine penchant for the tradition, and not at least partly chosen as an expedient to mediate his recognition in the Edwardian art scene, which insisted on seeing him as typically Japanese, sometimes much to his ire. The meaning of his career may be greater from the perspective of cultural history than that of art history. What emerges is the picture of a Japanese who eagerly aspired to identify with Western culture. He walked a thin line between catering to the British Orientalist taste, which insisted on seeing a typical Japaneseness in everything he did, and his earnest wish to be assimilated to a culture he immensely and naïvely admired. Like so many of his contemporaries, artists and writers, such as Shimazaki Tōson, Takamura Kōtarō, and Kaneko Mitsuharu, he had a great admiration for the West, and sought his artistic fortune in the West. Whereas many of these adventurous men ended up leading a bohemian life in misery and oblivion and could only escape their plight by returning to Japan, Markino was relatively successful and managed to make a modest name for himself in London.

Whether he really contributed to a better cross-cultural understanding is questionable, but if he did it was more by his lecturing and writing than by his paintings and drawings. Just to give one example, in the eighth chapter of *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, devoted to the Japanese ethic of "clearing one's name", Ruth Benedict refers to Markino's autobiography, in particular the incident when one day he confided to an American missionary his intention to go to America. To his unspeakable disappointment the missionary and his wife sneered at him, incredulous as they were about the intention of a penniless provincial lad to go to America to become an artist. This incident became the defining moment of his life. Having been humiliated so deeply, the only way to clear his name was indeed to travel to the United States and become an artist. Markino's essays and articles often deal with contrasting Japanese and Western attitudes and values, and are redolent of what we nowadays would call *Nihonjinron*.

This study, which includes over 150 examples of Markino's art, all in full color, and which is complemented with an extensive bibliography and an index, is a worthy addition to Brill's series on Japanese visual culture and lives up to the publisher's ambition to present full-color scholarly editions to the scholarly community.

Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet. Edited by Kazuo Morimoto. New Horizons in Islamic Studies.

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Reviewed by Gabriele vom Bruck, SOAS

E-mail gb19@soas.ac.uk

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In somewhat unconventional fashion, in the introduction to his edited volume on the putative descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*sayyids*, *sharifs* [*ashraff*]) Kazuo Morimoto sets the scene by referring firstly to the Iranian film maker Abbas Kiarostami's *Close-Up*, in which a woman pleads with a judge to consider her son's membership of the Prophet's House when sentencing him, and secondly by referring to a contemporary Iraqi *Naqib al-Ashraf* (Head of the Prophet's descendants) who, following Saddam Husayn's capture in 2003, declared his claim to be a *sayyid* to be false. Reflections on the meaning and implications of genealogical closeness to the Prophet are a prominent theme in most of the book's thirteen chapters, which are assembled into three parts, dealing with the ways Muslim scholars have discussed the status and privileges of the Prophet's descendants (Part 1) and their situation in the Middle East and beyond (Parts 2 and 3). Rather than merely presenting a collection of case studies, the volume is concerned to deal with central questions about the *sayyids'* identity and what membership of the Prophet's lineage has meant in a number of diverse Muslim societies, covering the period from around the ninth century onwards. As noted by the editor, "missing until recently ... was a serious attempt to establish a coherent understanding of sayyids and sharifs as a whole through a synthesis of different local manifestations" (p. 3). It is laudable that several chapters deal with the sharifian phenomenon in places remote from the Middle Eastern heartlands such as Granada, Central Asia, Indonesia and India. The first five chapters deal with trans-regional themes such as dream accounts found in books on the merits of the Prophet's kin whose rationale is to advise readers to conduct themselves respectfully towards the *sayyids* for the sake of their ancestor (Morimoto). Roy Mottahedeh discusses interpretations of the Qur'anic verse 41 of Sura VIII, al-Anfal, commonly referred to as the "verse of *khums* (one-fifth)", noting that there has been much debate about who falls into the category of the Prophet's relatives. Abu Hanifa argued that after the Prophet's demise the *khums* must be divided into three, with only his poor relatives profiting, whereas Ahmad b. Hanbal insisted that his share was to benefit the Muslim community.

Focusing on the 'Alawi-Ishadi dispute on the *sayyids'* status that took place in Southeast Asia (1914–1934), Yamaguchi Motoki widens the discussion by taking into account the contributions made by outsiders of the Hadhrami community in Southeast Asia and of the Hadhramaut. For example, the suggestion made by a Lebanese student of Muhammad 'Abduh, Shakib Arslan (d. 1946), that the title *sayyid* be extended to non-*sayyids* "who have mastery" (*siyada*) (p. 60) was accepted by the 'Alawis – a surprising move in light of 'Umar al-'Attas's earlier assertion that the *sayyids* had an exclusive right to the title. Motoki concludes that any privileges enjoyed by the Hadhrami *sayyids* in Southeast Asia came to be seen as a tradition that had no Islamic rationale. Such levelling tendencies are also reported from eighteenth-century Central Asia. Devin DeWeese highlights the life of Sharaf Ata, a saintly figure whose father was a descendant of the Caliph Abu Bakr, showing that claims to descent from one of the first three caliphs or from prominent shaykhs of the medieval period had as much prestige as 'Alid descent.

The period between the eighth and twelfth centuries tells a different story. Against the background of the development of *madhhab*-transcending "Alidism", a process during which the 'Alids came to be perceived as deserving a special status (a perception they helped to promote), Teresa Bernheimer explores marriage rules and patterns regarding their women (*shara'if*, sg. *sharifa*), a subject dealt with by several contributors (Motoki, DeWeese, Hoffman, Kazuhiro). As boundaries between *sayyids* and non-*sayyids* were drawn which in some places became manifested in state doctrine, the *shara'if* were increasingly obliged to marry within their own ranks. As Bernheimer explains, this marriage pattern reflected the emerging "First Family of Islam" (p. 76) as well as changes in the notions of the status of the family within the social hierarchy of Muslim medieval society. She contends that restrictions in 'Alid women's marriage options were not legally established. However, of the early Imams of the Yemeni Zaydi-Shi'i School some ruled that descent was a prerequisite for the *kafa'a* (equivalence of spouses). The *ahl al-madhab* listed both piety and descent as requirements.

As argued by Bernheimer, the establishment and spread of the *niqaba* or headship of the ‘Alids serves as another example of the institutionalization of their elevated status. Based on an analysis of Ottoman *naqib al-ashraf* registers which scrutinized claims to Prophetic descent and listed entitlements, Rüya Kiliç explains that although this assessment was based on patrilineal criteria, the maternal line was also accepted as evidence of *sayyid* descent. Indeed as in Morocco, the children of a *sharif* whose father was not a *sharif* were able to adopt their mother’s status – a privilege that granted them tax exemptions and access to hardship funds, but also served to significantly increase their numbers. Writing about Egypt and Syria under Ottoman rule, Michael Winter shows that unlike the *ashraf* who rioted and fought against anyone who stood against them – Bedouin, Janissaries, Napoleon – the *nuqaba* (sg. *naqib*) remained aloof for they held desirable positions as part of the ruling establishment. It is equally noteworthy that the *niqaba*, which was often held by members of the Prophet’s House, took root in eighteenth-century Egyptian religious life via Sufism. In her study of the Islamic kingdom of Granada in the late fifteenth century, Mercedes García-Arenal also shows that “sharifism” was connected mainly to Sufi lodges.

There were of course internal divisions among the Prophet’s descendants, but generally their illustrious status inevitably contributed to or created social hierarchies – another feature dealt with in several chapters, most notably in Arthur Buehler’s on medieval India. Postulating an affinity between Muslim stratification and the Hindu caste system, the author provocatively suggests that the first Muslims who came to India looked at Hindu low castes through the lens of the Brahmins. Following those castes’ conversion to Islam, these attitudes persisted and divisions between the Muslim nobility (*ashraf*) and the *ajlaf* (Indian converts/“commoners”) manifested themselves. The category of *ashraf* comprised the *sayyids* (the highest status group) as well as others such as the Shaykhs who trace descent to the Companions. All claimed to have been foreign-born or descendants of non-South Asian Muslims. Towards the end of Mughal rule in 1858 a process of “ashrafization” was under way whereby “common” Muslims sought upward mobility by becoming *ashraf* in order to “bask in the shadows of Sayyid-ship” (p. 232). According to the author this process, which has been unique to South Asia, is to be understood with reference to the notion of purity which according to the Qur’an sets “prophets’ families” apart from other Muslims (p. 242) and of course had been prevalent in India for centuries. (However, the author could not find any reference to this notion in his source material.) Buehler argues that the distinction between *sayyids* and “common Muslims” became a distinction between the *ashraf* and the *ajlaf*, such that the *ashraf qua* foreign-born Muslims were able to claim membership of the category of “pure ones” (p. 242). Just why the *sayyids* would accept such a potential dilution of their status remains an open question.

Valerie Hoffman’s chapter deals with (predominantly) Hadhrami immigration to the Swahili coast of East Africa during the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. The Hadhramis made up the majority of ‘*ulama*, many of whom were *sayyids*. In this multi-ethnic environment, the *shurafa*’ (locally called *masharif*) enjoyed special respect until the rise of African nationalist movements in the twentieth century, in the course of which the veneration of the Prophet and his descendants was denounced as heresy. Much of the data echo similar Islamic (often anti-Sufi) reform movements elsewhere in North Africa and the Arab world. Young African men who studied in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan brought back reformist ideas. In a polemic treatise on the life of Imam ‘Ali, Shaykh Muhammad Kasim Mazrui, the Chief Kadhi of Kenya, challenged the status of the *masharif* by questioning beliefs in their *baraka* and their powers of intercession, and by accusing them of abusing their privileged status and of making false claims to sharifian descent. After Kenya and Zanzibar became independent in the 1960s, Egyptian and Saudi scholars took over from Hadhrami ones, and sharifian or Arab descent no longer carried any weight. Arab entrepreneurs who have returned in recent years have failed to emphasize their descent status.

Whereas Hoffman identifies the Egyptian journal *al-Manar* as one of the factors that contributed to undermining the *sayyids*’ status, Arai Kazuhiro explores the “commodification of the *sayyids*” (p. 250)

via the Indonesian magazine *alKisah*. Owned by Harun Musawa, an “Arab Indonesian” *sayyid*, the magazine focuses on features such as the Qur’an, the sahaba and Sufis. It places great emphasis on religious personalities of *sayyid* descent, and tends to corroborate the *sayyids’* claim that their ancestors introduced Islam to the region, a view which is contested by others. Figures related to the Dar al-Mustafa in Tarim (Hadhramaut), where many Southeast Asian students are taught, receive particularly prominent treatment. The author considers the magazine to be a vehicle for *sayyid* self-promotion. Unfortunately, he has not carried out audience-oriented research – hence the question posed by him “what makes the *sayyids* marketable?” (p. 263) remains unanswered.

While there are many fine historical and anthropological studies of the Prophet’s descendants, there has not been a compilation of the kind presented here. The only exception is an issue of *Oriente Moderno* (*The Role of the Sadat/Ašraf in Muslim History and Civilization* [1999]), edited by Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti (who presents a proposal for a historical atlas on the ‘Alids in the volume under review). Morimoto’s volume makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the status and identity of those who have provided charismatic leadership across the Muslim world for over a millennium, and there is much original data and many hypotheses, which are likely to stir stimulating debate. Taken together, the chapters provide a highly informed overview of some key features of those who throughout the history of Islam have often enjoyed exceptional symbolic capital, but have also faced persecution. The book privileges those in high positions over those who had only a rudimentary education and pursued “low” professions, and were often classed with “ordinary” Muslims. Few authors pay attention to internal divisions within specific sharifian status groups which tend to be rather heterogeneous. Several show that *madhhab*-related identities are not always emphasized, and that special sympathy for the *sayyids* is by no means limited to Shi’is. Most chapters tend to take the notion of sharifian charisma for granted without interrogating it in the context of their rich data. Thus questions as to why the mystique of descent has survived into the twenty-first century and still enchants the believers remain valid. An afterword contextualizing some of the common themes and analytical strands would have been useful and aided the editor’s goal of establishing a “Sayyido-Sharifology” (p. 4), a rather undesirable neologism. In light of the use of an array of terms such as ‘Alids, Talibids, Hashimites and Husaynids, a glossary would have been in order. The transliteration is inconsistent throughout the volume, and it is unclear why the plural of *sayyid* is anglicized while that of *sharif* is either an Arabic (*ashraf/shurafa’*) or an anglicized one (*sharifs*) (ditto *naqibs/nuqaba’ al-ashraf/naqib al-ashraf*). However, these shortcomings should not deflect attention from a volume providing excellent interpretation of texts produced by Muslim scholars and analysis of the social and political circumstances in which the Prophet’s offspring have lived their lives.

The Silk Road: A New History. By Valerie Hansen.

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Reviewed by Masaharu Arakawa, Osaka University

E-mail arkw@let.osaka-u.ac.jp

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In this book the author explores several important cities along the Silk Road, which traversed Central Asia and China, and surveys their history during the first millennium of the Common Era. A distinctive feature of this book is that, in geographical terms, its coverage is limited to the area extending from Samarkand in Sogdiana in the west to Chang’an, the largest city along the Silk Road, in the east, and it excludes Iran and regions further to the west. However, the cities taken up for consideration are all localities where important historical materials have been discovered.