Borrut Antoine (éd.), *Écriture de l'histoire et processus de canonisation dans les premiers siècles de l'islam.*

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This homage to Alfred-Louis de Prémare (1930-2006), edited by Antoine Borrut, brings together 10 contributions (7 in French, 3 in English) addressing topics integral to the late scholar's work. This thoughtful collection includes papers focusing on the Qur'ān and its canonization, historical studies of areas outside the Arab core lands, and discussions of the relationship between writing, myth, and history. These papers capture the breadth of Alfred-Louis de Prémare's scholarly interest and coalesce nicely together.

The volume begins with Borrut's brief biographical sketch of Alfred-Louis de Prémare, followed by Borrut's introduction, wherein he presents the overall themes of the collection as well as a precis on Alfred-Louis de Prémare's work and its significance. The introduction is also a summary of Borrut's own understanding of the emergence of historical writing in Islam, which draws upon de Prémare's work.

In the first of the subsequent contributions, Claude Gilliot describes parallels in both content and structure between the Qurʾān and earlier scriptures to suggest that the Qurʾān served as an Arabic lectionary. Portions of the text were used liturgically as psalms, while other portions offered exegesis and interpretation of earlier, non-Arabic scriptures. Gilliot's argument meshes nicely with de Prémare's work and offers insights into the origins of the Qurʾān and into the religious milieu of pre-Islamic Mecca.

Next, Frédéric Imbert examines Arabic epigraphy and graffiti to find evidence of religious expression in the early Islamic period. The oldest dateable graffiti, from 23 and 24 AH, include no religious content. While other early examples do invoke the divine, they do not include the standard *šahāda* or the *basmala* that become ubiquitous in later times. In fact, the earliest dateable mention of Muḥammad in the graffiti is from 121 AH. Imbert is careful not to draw too strong a conclusion from the lack of prophetic, or specifically Islamic references. However, his work adds weight to Fred Donner's suggestion that a generic Believers movement preceded the establishment of a separate Islamic faith.

Donner himself describes a transition toward a more specifically Islamic faith in his discussion of the increasingly Qur'ān-focused rhetoric of the Umayyad period. He argues that rhetorical vocabulary became more religious as the community transformed from Believers to Muslims under the Umayyads. He points to Umayyad preference for the title *ḫalīfa* to *amīr al-mu'minīn*, the emergence of the term *dār al-ḥarb*, and the refinement of terms like *ǧihād* and *fitna* as evidence of a shift toward a more Qurʾānic basis for legitimacy. His treatment of each of these terms is somewhat cursory and each of them merits a long article of its own.

The next four contributions turn away from the Qurʾān and address geographic peripheries and the construction of biographies of historical actors. Christian Julien Robin compares an impressive variety of sources on the fate of the church at Ẓafār in Yemen in 522 CE. In some accounts, the church is burned, while in others it is converted to a synagogue. Robin describes the difficulty created by contradictory details in three surviving inscriptions (two probably by the same author!). Robin then offers a careful reading of texts in Syriac and Greek, showing their interplay. Using the inscriptions and the texts in concert, Robin concludes that the latest text may actually be the most accurate. This finding has interesting historiographical implications for those who begin from the premise that early texts are better.

Next, Étienne de La Vaissière shows that Arab chroniclers, including al-Ṭabarī and al-Madaʾinī, drew upon information from Chinese and Soghdian sources to describe events in central Asia. Two examples, one addressing the conquest of the Ferghana valley in 722 CE and another including details of the surrender of Samarqand in 712 CE, are quite convincing. However, an examination of more than two examples is necessary to determine whether these are anomalies.

Viviane Comerro takes on the daunting task of examining Ibn ʿAbbās as an historical figure. After contrasting his image as a religious scholar and as a political actor, Comerro analyzes Ibn ʿAbbās' treatment in the anonymous *Aḫbār al-dawla al-ʿAbbāsiyya*. Here Ibn ʿAbbās appears as an advocate for the Banū Hāšim arguing largely on genealogical lines, rather than extolling the religious superiority of the Prophet's extended family. Comerro considers the contrast between myth and history in descriptions of figures such as Ibn ʿAbbās and concludes that the *Aḫbār al-dawla* contains elements of both. A more complete analysis of Ibn ʿAbbās as an historical figure would require more diverse sources and a thorough examination of the biographical literature.

Gabriel Martinez-Gros offers an intriguing analysis of the treatment of the Andalusian rebel/apostate/bandit Ibn Ḥafsūn (d. 917 CE). He begins by contrasting the descriptions of Ibn Ḥafsūn in the

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works of José Antonio Conde and Reinhart Dozy, showing how they projected their contemporary concerns onto Ibn Ḥafsūn, portraying him as a bandit and as a popular Andalusian hero respectively. This insight into the ideological predilections of European scholars is revealing. However, Martinez-Gros then looks at the Arabic sources themselves through the same skeptical lens, concluding that Ibn Ḥafsūn's non-Arab, convert status made him an avatar for the Iranian backers of the ʿAbbāsid usurpers in the eyes of the increasingly assertive Umayyads in Cordova. Martinez-Gros shows that modern and medieval writers entangle myth and history in similar ways.

The final three contributions return to questions of canonization. Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau presents a complex and intriguing argument that the Qurʾān is essentially a self-canonizing text. In contrast to most other scriptures, the Qurʾān proclaims itself to be a fixed text. It describes its own process of revelation and defends itself against both earlier scriptures and charges of falsification. Boisliveau argues that the Qurʾān presents itself as divine revelation, then describes itself as a book, or scripture, and finally confronts earlier, inferior scriptures. In a nuanced argument, Boisliveau asserts that the Qurʾān claimed its own canonization before the text itself was collected and static. In this respect, she makes her position partially compatible with the analyses of John Wansbrough, Angelika Neuwirth, and de Prémare, who all argue for a later canonization. However, Boisliveau still claims that the text itself was likely the product of a single person and was merely collected by others.

Rather than discussing the codification of a single text, Jonathan Brown examines how a particular text, the *Sunan* of Ibn Māǧah, was added to the canon of reliable *ḥadīṯ* collections. He illustrates that Ibn Māǧah was a late addition to the canon and that *ḥadīṯ* scholars have always shown some skepticism about its reliability. He then considers why the work of a local scholar from Qazwīn was elevated to the company of Buḫārī and Muslim. Brown argues that Ibn Māǧah's *ḥadīṯ*s were sufficiently useful to allow to overlook issues of authenticity. While Brown's view perhaps seems cynical, it is not incompatible with the suspension of criteria for including important transmitters (such as al-Zuhrī) in the other collections. More examples of Ibn Māǧah's utility would strengthen Brown's argument considerably.

The final selection, from Jens Scheiner, looks at *ḥadīṯ* manuals describing proper behavior and practices for students and *muḥaddiṯ*s. Scheiner convincingly shows that the work of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Šahrazūrī (d. 643/1245) drew heavily upon the earlier work of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166). Scheiner describes parallels between the texts, the topics they treat, and their organization. He also connects the emergence of such works to the trend toward canonization of the *ḥadīṯ* collections and the growth of *adab* literature and guides in other fields. While Scheiner's work is only tangentially related to de Prémare's, it offers an important discussion of the establishment of normative scholarly practice among *muḥaddiṯ*s.

In this collection, Borrut has succeeded in gathering a variety of works that pay tribute to the broad influence of Alfred-Louis de Prémare's work. Despite their apparently disparate topics and their brevity, these papers touch upon issues to which de Prémare devoted his attention and illustrate how his work affected scholarship on a broad array of subjects.

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