

emerged during the Arab uprisings and the contested political process that resulted in the ultimately unsuccessful National Dialogue Conference of 2014. It is worth keeping in mind that the Southern Movement (al-Hirak) and countless civilian activists, who were so critical to the protests of 2011, were among the many parties either marginalized by the conference or disappointed in its outcomes. Neither of these constituencies fit comfortably in the analytical triad of tribe/state/religion, and it is worth asking, therefore, if there are not better lessons to be drawn from this historical comparison.

Nonetheless, Orkaby has succeeded in producing a well-researched study that pushes us to think more carefully about whether the Yemen Civil War, and possibly any civil war, can be considered solely within a national framework. If the current war in Yemen is any indication, the answer would have to be in the negative.

DAVID S. POWERS, *Zayd*, *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2014). Pp. 192. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780812246179

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doi:10.1017/S0020743819000825

David Powers' *Zayd* is a kind of short sequel to his magisterial—and controversial—monograph *Muhammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Philadelphia Press, 2009), rearticulating the major insights of Part II of the previous book. In both, Powers argues that the main narratives about Muhammad's son Zayd—which center on Muhammad's adoption and repudiation of Zayd and his subsequent marriage to Zayd's ex-wife Zaynab bint Jahsh—are literary fabrications that provide a fictitious context to several verses canonized in Sura 33 of the Qur'an; these verses serve to establish that the Prophet was without a direct heir (either a biological or an adopted son), as adumbrated in the eponymous verse 40, “*mā kāna Muḥammadun abā aḥādīn min rijālikum*” (Muhammad is not the father of any of your men). Powers also avers that these verses are themselves fabrications as well, having been interpolated into the canonical *musḥaf* well after the time of the Prophet. The narratives about Zayd thus provided an exegetical and historical framework in which the import of these fabricated verses would be properly understood by the intended audience, the Muslim community of the later Umayyad period. Powers infers that it was the emergence of numerous challengers to caliphal hegemony who claimed legitimacy based either on descent or the continuation of prophecy (or both) that necessitated this intervention into both scripture and sacred history; the accounts of Zayd, his family, and their interactions with the Prophet Muhammad served to enhance the function of the relevant verses from Sura 33 as the basis for the doctrine of the “finality of prophecy” (*khatm al-nubuwwa*), particularly the famous reference to Muhammad as *khātim al-nabiyīn* or “Seal of the Prophets” in the latter part of 33:40.

In *Muhammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men*, Powers's argument about Zayd and the pericope establishing Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets was integrated into a larger treatment in which he also presented his much-contested hypothesis about Qur'anic inheritance law, centering on the obscure word *kalāla* (interpreted either as an intestate individual or collateral relations, with the latter usually favored by exegetes)

in Q. 4:12 and 176; Powers holds this term to have been invented after the death of the Prophet and inserted into Qur'an manuscripts in Umayyad times, replacing the word *kalla* (daughter-in-law). In contrast, the distinguishing feature of the present monograph is that it focuses closer attention on the Islamic historical accounts pertaining to the figure of Zayd, his wife Zaynab bint Jahsh, his son Usama, and other figures associated with major events in Zayd's life, which culminated in his martyrdom with two other prominent Companions at the battle of Mu'ta in 629 CE. By specifically focusing on these narratives here in *Zayd*, Powers is able to devote much more attention to the pervasive phenomenon of biblical intertextuality that he suggests shaped those narratives.

In Chapter 1, the introduction to the book, Powers discusses the explicit reference to Zayd and the unnamed wife "he no longer wanted" whom God gave in marriage to the Prophet instead in Q 33:37; he also takes note of the surprisingly slight information about Zayd preserved in the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), the main recension of which was famously edited—or expurgated—by Ibn Hisham (d. 833). The *Sīra* as extant in Ibn Hisham's recension acknowledges Zayd as the *mawlā* of Muhammad (without really elaborating on what that means) and mentions his son Usama, but generally omits references to his wife Zaynab, their divorce, her subsequent relationship with the Prophet, or the Prophet's repudiation of Zayd as his adoptive son and heir—or, for that matter, to Zayd ever having that status in the first place. (Powers actually asserts that the *Sīra* as extant completely ignores these episodes, which is an overstatement.) Thus, as Powers points out, the *Sīra* barely addresses any of the questions raised by Q 33:37. Powers believes that Ibn Ishaq's portrayal of Zayd was likely originally much richer and more detailed, but we can now only discern the full account as it circulated in early Islamic times by mining traditions now scattered across numerous works from a variety of genres and periods.

The subsequent four chapters of the book all follow a consistent pattern. In each, Powers explores in detail the major contours of the biographies of Zayd, Zaynab, and Usama, as well as the historical accounts pertaining to the Battle of Mu'ta; by drawing on a variety of sources, Powers is able to offer us a wealth of information about these individuals and events that substantially enriches the bare outline provided by the *Sīra*. He then proceeds to examine narratives he adduces as parallels from biblical and parabiblical tradition, discussing various aspects of their relationship to the Islamic narratives about Zayd and the others. The strong implication here (a premise made explicit only in the conclusion) is that the Islamic narratives are directly modeled on these biblical and parabiblical parallels; in Powers's view, unnamed traditionists engaged and reshaped these precursor narratives in subtle and discerning ways, exploiting them as templates for (or at least resonant subtexts to) the biographical accounts about Zayd and the others.

To dispense with my strongest criticism at the outset: to this reviewer, the most conspicuous flaw in Powers's book is structural, in that the introduction lacks any substantial remarks pertaining to the author's method and approach, or even disclosure of the work's main thesis. As noted above, the subsequent chapters follow a predictable pattern, but we are generally left to guess at Powers's understanding of the precise relationship between the Islamic and biblical and parabiblical narratives he so meticulously arranges into schematic order. Naturally, for readers familiar with the 2009 monograph, Powers's perspective, presuppositions, and *modus operandi* here in *Zayd* will be perfectly transparent. However, those unfamiliar with it may be confused until the book's conclusion, when Powers finally lays his cards on the table. Only the most perceptive reader will grasp

the implication that the apparent dependence of the Islamic narratives about Zayd et al. on biblical and parabiblical precursors is due (in Powers's estimation) to their intentional construction and deployment to support the agenda of first presenting Zayd and his son as plausible claimants of leadership of the community and then unambiguously disqualifying them from such claims. Powers only fully discloses his thinking on these matters at the end of the book, which may prove frustrating to some.

Even in the end, Powers does not really do enough to explain or justify his approach to a reader uncommitted to his presuppositions or methodology. Due to the omission of the *kalāla* argument, *Zayd* is far less technical than *Muhammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men*, and so is hypothetically more accessible; however, in order to fulfill its potential to expose an important aspect of Powers's work on Qur'anic and early Islamic material to a broader audience of nonspecialists, it might have been advisable to frontload a clearer explanation of his methods and conclusion in the introduction. Not all readers will understand (or accept) the topological approach to Islamic historiography he adopts here, in which historical accounts are understood primarily as evocative and ideologically loaded literary constructions rather than veracious records of actual events. That said, if one shares his commitment to such an approach—pioneered by Albrecht Noth and utilized with great success in previous studies by scholars such as Uri Rubin, Fred Donner, and Tayeb El-Hibri—many aspects of Powers's examination of the apparent modeling of the Zayd narratives on biblical and parabiblical precursors will appear convincing and provocative.

Thus, Powers's suggestion that Zayd's early history deliberately echoes the biblical story of Joseph is compelling; both figures reflect the theme of the young man providentially delivered to an important position by means of a journey through hardship and bondage to the realization of a celebrated destiny as the intimate, surrogate, and even heir of a great man. The parallel even seems to be signaled by their names, as both seem to mean "increase," curiously enough. Powers's approach to these narratives requires that we accept that such literary symmetries are imperfect and partial; otherwise, we would have to reckon with the indigestible implication that the relevant narratives about Zayd position Muhammad as a latter-day Pharaoh. Granted, other narratives about Zayd present a more palatable portrayal of Muhammad, for example those that construct an implicit symmetry between him and Abraham as types of the father obliged by divine will to disown a son, yet stridently continuing to assert their love for their repudiated heir, be it Zayd or Ishmael.

Similarly compelling are the parallels between the episode of Muhammad, Zayd, and Zaynab and the famous story of David, Uriah, and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel, previously explored by Ze'ev Maghen. As the former are depicted in the *tafsīr* literature and other sources, their resemblances to the latter are striking; these similarities carry over into the depiction of Zayd's death in battle at Mu'ta, not far from the town of Rabba where, as depicted in the biblical account, Uriah was killed in battle against the Ammonites. Yet other symmetries become evident when we contemplate the accounts of the subsequent death of Zayd's son Usama during the ruthless campaign against the town of Ubna instigated as revenge for the death of Zayd, which strongly echo the biblical depictions of Joshua's equally ruthless campaign against Midian.

Readers will be extremely divided over Powers's argument that the narratives about Zayd and Usama were deliberately tailored to provide context for a sequence of forged verses in Surat al-Ahzab (33), which seek to establish that Muhammad had once had adoptive heirs but repudiated them on the basis of a Qur'anic revelation. It is surely

true that the high Umayyad period is the key period during which many classical doctrinal positions first began to coalesce. But it is wholly unclear why it was necessary for the anonymous agents of Umayyad legitimacy to construct such a convoluted family history for the Prophet to achieve the political and theological purpose Powers ascribes to them. He holds that five verses in *Surat al-Ahzab* were fabricated, corresponding to discrete stages in that history: verse 36 forced Zaynab to comply with Muhammad's arrangement of her marriage to Zayd; after their divorce, verse 37 lubricated her subsequent marriage to Muhammad himself by stipulating that such marriage was licit because her ex-husband was Muhammad's adopted and not biological son; verse 40 rendered that judgment moot in establishing Muhammad's special status as the heirless Seal of the Prophets; and verses 4–5 at the beginning of the sura did the same by abolishing adoption entirely. The conjectured relationship of these purportedly invented verses to the likewise purportedly invented narrative set pieces that provide the context for their revelation is clear enough, but what is unclear is why this was all necessary to demonstrate that Muhammad could not be claimed to have either biological or adoptive heirs. We might propose that Zayd and Usama were authentic historical figures whose claims based on adoption held traction for some parties in early Islam, thus necessitating the creation of these verses to disqualify them; but the clear implication of Powers's analysis is that *all* of the narratives concerning Zayd and the others are literary set pieces. If the point was simply establishing Muhammad as sonless, surely our anonymous Umayyad fabricators could have taken a less winding road to get there. (For example, if verses 4–5 deliver the coup de grace annulling the possibility of succession through adoptive heirs once and for all, why was this single verse not sufficient to achieve the conjectured ideological goal in the first place?)

This is to say nothing of the more acute objections that may be raised against Powers's assertion of forged and interpolated verses in the Umayyad *textus receptus* of the Qur'an. Powers is not the first scholar to suggest that post-prophetic incursions into the canonical *mushaf* occurred, although the current consensus seems to militate against this, especially given the recent emphasis on the numerous early witnesses to the canonical Qur'anic text that seem to date almost as far back as the time of the Prophet himself (or apparently even earlier, in the case of the so-called "Birmingham Qur'an"). As already noted, that in this case the intrusion is so inchoate—not to mention lacking corroboration in extant early witnesses to the Qur'anic text—may prevent many readers from accepting Powers's thesis as plausible. Moreover, a reader uncommitted to Powers's method of literary analysis may very well see his meticulous cataloging of biblical and parabiblical precursors simply as parallelomania run totally amok.

JOHN MCHUGO, *A Concise History of Sunnis & Shi'is* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017). Pp. 347. \$89.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781626165861

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 doi:10.1017/S0020743819000837

John McHugo's *A Concise History of Sunnis & Shi'is* surveys the historical development of Sunni and Shi'i identities from the 7th-century lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad to the present, approximately 2013, providing students and non-specialists with one clear