

*The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure.* By Holger Michael Zellentin. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. Pp. xxv + 287. \$40.69.

In recent years it has become commonplace for scholars to consider the rise and first flowering of Islam as a phenomenon of late antiquity. This change in historiographical perspective principally entails studying Islamic origins in reference to the history and religious culture of the circumambient communities on the periphery and within the purview of the Arabic-speaking communities of the Near East in the seventh century CE, rather than confining their attention to the immediate, inner Arabian cultural circumstances of the new religion's appearance. Inevitably, the shift in historiographical perspective has promoted a search for influences on the Islamic prophet and his scripture from outside Arabia proper. Prominent among the earlier communities present both within and on the Arabian periphery were the Jews and the Christians and their associated groups. While surviving seventh-century texts from these communities are often silent about then-burgeoning Islam, today's scholars of Islam's late antique origins can often discern the Qur'ān's lively interaction with these earlier religious traditions. Zellentin's study provides an excellent example of an informative and hitherto overlooked case in point.

While researchers have been busily uncovering the Qur'ān's reminiscences of Jewish and Christian biblical and apocryphal traditions, they have paid little attention to the legal culture that is so central to Islam. Z.'s very welcome contribution to the study of the Qur'ān's late antique legal background lies in his discovery that the Arabic scripture's articulation of food laws and purity regulations in particular echoes formulations of earlier, largely Jewish-Christian traditions, with which the early Christian legal text, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, had been closely engaged. The *Didascalia* circulated widely in early Christian communities, including in the territories of the Syriac-speaking churches on the Arabian periphery. Against this background, Z.'s discernment of the correlations between the Arabic expressions of the Qur'ān's legal culture and those of the earlier traditions begs further explanation. What do the discernible similarities and dissimilarities in legal matters he brings to the fore mean for the study of Islamic origins and Islam's distinctiveness from concurrent religious traditions, Judaism and Christianity in particular?

Z. addresses these broader concerns insightfully, taking the proposals of other scholars carefully and fairly into account along the way. The problem facing Qur'ān scholars in regard to this scripture's recollections of earlier biblical traditions and other Jewish or Christian lore lies in knowing what interpretive construction to put on the correlative evidence. A recurrent tendency has been to postulate the continuing presence in the Arabic-speaking milieu in the early seventh century CE of Jewish or Christian sectarian groups known to have flourished in earlier times and to have espoused views found expressed in language similar to that found in the Qur'ān's Arabic diction. Nowadays it has become almost conventional in this connection to propose the view that one or other "Jewish-Christian" community, such as the ancient Nazarenes, Ebionites, or Elkasites, were present in Arabia, and that they exercised a decisive influence on Muḥammad and the Qur'ān. Z. addresses this problem in

connection with the evidence he brings to it from his demonstration of the rootedness of the Qur'ān's legal culture in late antique thought and practice as disclosed by his discernment of parallel passages in the Qur'ān and the *Didascalía Apostolorum*.

I agree with Z. that the currency in the seventh century CE of either texts or teachings deemed to be "Jewish-Christian" in character is not sufficient evidence for postulating the existence of formally "Jewish-Christian" communities in Arabia at the time of Muḥammad just because similarities in concept and expression appear also in the Qur'ān. Rather, this evidence suggests that the pertinent texts, such as the *Didascalía* and others, like the "Pseudo-Clementine" corpus, simply continued to be of interest and importance to the wider Christian communities of late antiquity. Nevertheless, Z. speaks of Jewish-Christian legal culture as a point of departure for the Qur'ān. And sometimes this premise leads him to implausible conclusions. For example, inspired by what he thinks would be a pleasing parallelism between the Qur'ān's presentation of Jewish religious authorities (*aḥbār*) and Christianity's authoritative voices (*ruhbān*), Z. proposes to understand the Arabic term *ruhbān* to mean "bishops" rather than "monks," as the term has been and continues to be understood among Arabic speakers. He points to the etymological associations of the root consonants of the term with fear and awe, as in the expression "God fearers." The problem is that in no Christian tradition have bishops as a class been so characterized, while monks, whose voices were often in late antiquity heard with more authority than those of bishops, were widely esteemed precisely for their fear of God. What is more, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (6.38) the late antique historian Sozomen (d. 450 CE), originally from Palestine, recalled that the Saracens of his time "shared in the faith of Christ by intercourse with the priests and monks," just as the Qur'ān has it!

Sidney H. Griffith

The Catholic University of America, Washington

*Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History.* By John W. O'Malley. Jesuit Studies: Modernity through the Prism of Jesuit History I. Boston: Brill, 2013. Pp. xiii + 312. \$182.

This volume collects 15 essays published by O'Malley over nearly a quarter century (1984–2008). The present chapters originally appeared in a variety of venues: articles in scholarly journals, introductions to conference proceedings and fine arts books, chapters in collections on spirituality, popular periodicals, and a presidential address. Assembled within a single volume, this diverse array of material is now readily accessible to scholars, both veterans and students. Moreover, thanks to updated bibliography and a detailed index (commissioned especially for this publication), topics can be traced for continuity and change over two decades of O'M.'s scholarly development.

The work is arranged thematically. Beginning with a historiographical survey of how the Jesuits have been interpreted for over four centuries, the initial three chapters offer an overview of the Society of Jesus and various dimensions of its mission