

The second half of the book is organized thematically, and showcases European Renaissance encounters with the Qur'ān, global dissemination of the Qur'ān, and personal copies of the Qur'ān. S. showcases Qur'ān manuscripts owned or produced by European scholars, including Robert of Ketton's twelfth-century Latin translation and Renaissance critical editions noting textual variants. His misleading overemphasis on the sympathy with which many of these scholars approached the Qur'ān creates a contrast with the next section. There, he provides the fascinating backstory to how some of the Bodleian's Qur'ān manuscripts came to Oxford: "plunder in piracy and war" (89), or through former officers in British colonies (e.g., 126–27). This section's vignettes provide a fascinating window into the past few centuries of Islamic history. The final section, on believers' personal copies of the Qur'ān, includes talismans and even an undershirt with the Qur'ān written on it to ward off harm in battle.

S. excellently analyzes how details of decoration and calligraphy relate to Islamic theology and the believer's personal encounter with revelation. I would have liked to see more examples of contemporary Qur'āns. While S. includes an appendix of recommended reading, it would be more useful for scholars if it had a bibliography for each manuscript. This book is aimed at the general reader, but is also of interest to scholars, and would also be a useful supplementary text for courses in art history, book history, or Islamic studies.

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*Islamic Theological Themes: A Primary Source Reader.* Edited by John Renard. Oakland, CA: University of California, 2014. Pp. xviii + 461. \$39.95.

In this volume Renard brings together English translations of a diverse range of Islamic texts—beginning with the Qur'ān—concerned with God and God's nature. Some of these texts have been previously translated and published (of these many were languishing in older monographs where they were largely forgotten). Other texts have been translated and published here for the first time; R. has translated a number of these and arranged for the translation of others (by Omid Ghaemmaghami, Valerie Hoffman, Sachiko Murata, David Thomas, and David Vishanoff). The texts are organized not by chronology but in five categories roughly reflecting traditional Islamic sciences: the Science of Interpretation (Qur'ān and hadith); the Science of Community (polemics and creeds); the Science of Divine Unity (discussions of God's nature); the Science of Hearts (mysticism and spirituality); and the Science of Character (ethics and morality). At the end of the volume is a useful table presenting basic information on all of the texts translated in the work (although it does not include bibliographic references to editions in the original language), along with useful indices.

R.'s work is unprecedented. Other readers of Islamic sources are focused on texts from certain periods (classical or contemporary). R.'s is the first reader to focus on the theological tradition in particular. It will thus be of considerable use for courses on

Islam or on comparative religion. This volume also makes a very particular contribution. When thinking about theology and Islam, academic scholars have tended to focus on the particular Islamic science known as *kalam*, a science composed principally of rational refutations of doctrinal positions ascribed to competing religions or schools of thoughts. R., who accompanies his translations with brief commentary, provides for us a broader perspective with which to view Islamic thought about God. He rightly includes the Qur'ān as a work deeply concerned with God's nature, and he shows through his selection of texts that Muslims working in other fields, from exegesis to spirituality, reflected on the divine in diverse ways. R.'s work is also noteworthy for the diversity of ideological perspectives (including Shi'ites, Hanbalites, Mu'tazilites, philosophers, and Sufis) and original languages (Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Malay, Javanese, and Chinese) represented.

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*Understanding Śaṅkara: Essays by Richard De Smet.* Edited by Ivo Coelho, SDB. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2013. Pp. xii + 525. \$44.99.

Richard De Smet, SJ (1916–1997), a Belgian by birth and a direct student of Joseph Maréchal, lived and taught in India from 1946 until his death. Trained in the Jesuit “Calcutta School” of indological studies, De Smet established himself from the 1950s onward as a pioneer in the philosophical and theological encounter of Hindu and Christian thought. He was perhaps the leading Christian indologist/philosopher in India in the 20th century. His main area of expertise was non-dualist (advaita) Vedanta, especially as articulated by Śaṅkara (ca. seventh century CE), who is the most renowned and most controversial thinker in Hindu history. De Smet, a Thomist, not only established unexpected parallels between Śaṅkara and Aquinas in their ontology and method, but he also recognized the value of reinterpreting Christian teaching in non-dualistic terms. Coelho, De Smet's student and friend and the leading authority on De Smet today, traces De Smet's growing appreciation of Śaṅkara and non-dualistic thought in a superb introductory essay to this volume as well as in the chronological arrangement of twenty-eight of De Smet's most important essays on Śaṅkara's advaita teaching and its relation to Christian doctrine.

This is the second book of De Smet's essays edited by Coelho. The first volume, *Brahman and Person: Essays by Richard De Smet* (2010), focused on concepts of personhood, divine and human. This second volume is the more useful of the two books for introducing the reader to De Smet's wide-ranging interests as well as to his two most significant contributions to the Hindu–Christian encounter, which are, according to Coelho, the affirmation of Śaṅkara as an ontological realist instead of a world-denying illusionist as well as of De Smet's assertion that the supreme reality for Śaṅkara was eminently personal rather than impersonal.