

essential reference work for any study on Nursi for readers who have no access to the literature in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic, and who cannot read the significant secondary literature in modern Turkish.

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Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Vaduz, Lichtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2006-2008. HC 12+2 vols., pp. 6752 + 171 in 12 vols., plus 833 pages (containing *takhrīj* and bibliography) in two volumes. ISBN 978-3-908153-00-9

This superbly produced, large format, 12+2 volume edition of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (164-241/780-855) raises to new heights the already exceptional bar of quality set by Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation's previously published set of primary hadith texts.¹ Printed in two colors on off-white matte-finish paper with liberal margins separating the main text from hadith numbering (on both left and right sides) and variants (at bottom, in maroon), in readable, custom-designed font,² and handsomely bound using a gold and blind-embossed motif inspired by the celebrated Sultan Oljeitū Qurʾān preserved in the Egyptian National Library, this edition of the *Musnad* is a feast for the eyes. The text was prepared by consulting thirty-eight manuscripts and printed editions, many of them rare and read by the narrators of the *Musnad*, sixteen of which texts have never been consulted before for any printed edition of the work (p. 1), and all of which are described in some detail in the introductory pages (pp. 80-152). The handwritten manuscripts consulted by the team of scholars who prepared this edition under the guidance of living hadith scholars include those of Ḥanbal b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Raṣāfī al-Mukabbir (d. 604/1204), Yūsuf b. Khalīl al-Dimashqī (d. 648/1250), and ʿAbd al-Laṭīf b. ʿAbd al-Munʿam al-Ḥarānī (d. 672/1273). An additional hand-written manuscript was later obtained from Maktaba Fayḍ Allāh, Turkey, but the researchers could only benefit from it for *musnad al-nisāʾ*.

On the basis of this rare collection of manuscripts, the researchers found that “there were more than one hundred Hadith missing from one single place

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1. For previous publications, see <http://www.tradigital.de/downloads/sumna-project-broschure.pdf>.
 2. The font is based on the 1932 King Fuʾād Edition of the Qurʾān, generally acclaimed as the apogee of Arabic typography, with at least a thousand additional characters to enhance the text's readability and beauty.

in the *Musnad*, all of which had been left out from previously printed editions, including the best of them (those by Shaykh al-Arnaʿūṭī and his team and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī); these are Hadith numbers 24,396 to 24,505 of the current edition...In addition, ten Hadith each from two other places were missing; these are: (i) from the *Musnad* of Abī Saʿīd al-Khudrī, from hadith number 11,245 to 11,254; and (ii) from the *Musnad* of Ibn ‘Abbās, from hadith number 3038 to 3047” (pp. 1-2).

Unlike standard academic practice and much like the previous publications of Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, the team of scholars employed by the Foundation to prepare this wonderful edition remains anonymous; the publication bears no name, not even of a general editor. This is a great injustice to the nameless persons who we are told spent over three years reconstructing the text from different manuscripts, noting variants in detail, and double-checking each and every name which appears in the chain of narrators. The absence of their names is especially highlighted by the presence of the names of thirteen renowned scholars of Hadith, Islamic studies, and Arabic language who reviewed, commented upon and endorsed the labors of the anonymous researchers.

The introductory pages further include a brief biographical note on Imām Aḥmad, providing details of his travels for acquiring knowledge *riḥla*, his teachers and students, his courageous stand during the *miḥna* (the infamous inquisition of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn [169-218/786-833], who was forcing scholars to admit that the Qurʾān was created rather than uncreated), a list of his works containing 27 published and 20 unpublished texts, and a brief note on his death on Friday, 12 Rabīʿ al-Awwal (or, according to another report, 12 Rabīʿ al-Akhar) 241 AH, and his burial, which was attended by a multitude (one million men and 60,000 women) filling the streets of Baghdad and accompanying him to his resting place.

The two separate volumes presenting 800 pages of *takhrīj* and bibliography, will be useful for readers who do not have access to or do not like using computer-based search engines. In these volumes, all Hadith found in the *Musnad* have been correlated to the six major hadith collections—that is, the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the four *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasāʿī, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah—and Mālik’s *Muwattaʿa*?. This critical edition, containing 28,295 numbered hadiths in 6751 pages, should serve the scholarly community for years to come.

A note on the publisher:

The Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, a non-profit academic organization, was founded in 1989 in the unlikely location of Vaduz, capital of the Duchy of Liechtenstein, a doubly land-locked alpine sovereign state in Central Europe consisting of Schellenberg and Vaduz, with an area just over 160 km²

and a population of approximately 35,000. Since its inception, the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation has launched six major projects: (i) The Sunna Project and its associated online component, the *ihsan* Network; (ii) The Islamic Manuscript Association; (iii) The Dār al-Kutub Project, for the preservation, conservation and curation of the Egyptian National Library's estimated 60,000 manuscripts, and working with the National Library to establish it as a regional leader in collection care and management; (iv) *Editio Electrum*, which is the Foundation's design studio, providing support to the Foundation's efforts to revive the traditional arts of the Islamic book; and (v) the Islamic Art Network, which provides a number of important resources for Islamic art and architectural historians including an online digital photo archive, prepared with the support and permission of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, that contains over 10,000 images of the Islamic architectural monuments of Cairo; and (vi) *Onetradition*, which is the imprint dedicated to the Foundation's publications of spiritual and metaphysical writings from all major religious traditions. For details of these projects, see <http://www.thesaurus-islamicus.org/index.htm>. The Foundation has offices in Cairo, at the University of Cambridge, England, and in Stuttgart, Germany.

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Sonja Brentjes. *Travellers from Europe in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, 16th-17th Centuries: Seeking, Transforming, Discarding Knowledge.* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate/Variorum, 2010. xxx+320 pp, ISBN 978-1-4094-0533-7, HC.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, Muslims have been consistently characterized as ill-suited for science because of an inherent deficiency regarding rational enquiry. This disability is presumed to be embedded deep in their race, religion, languages, and cultures. In some articulations, it has been said that there is something inherently wrong with Islam and Muslims such that they are not, were never and will never be genuine heirs to scientific knowledge, whether of the ancient Greeks or modern Western science. This verdict was passed in absentia; the accused were not offered a chance to defend themselves, as it was abundantly clear to the prosecution (*à la* Karl Marx) that they cannot represent themselves but must be represented—an adage which is not without truth in this case, for had they been asked to defend themselves in the nineteenth century,