The Karbala Story and Early Shiʻite Identity

Edinburgh Studies in Classical Islamic History and Culture Series Editor: Carole Hillenbrand

A particular feature of medieval Islamic civilization was its wide horizons. The Muslims fell heir not only to the Graeco-Roman world of the Mediterranean, but also to that of the ancient Near East, to the empires of Assyria, Babylon and the Persians; and beyond that, they were in frequent contact with India and China to the east and with black Africa to the south. This intellectual openness can be sensed in many inter-related fields of Muslim thought, and it impacted powerfully on trade and on the networks that made it possible. Books in this series reflect this openness and cover a wide range of topics, periods and geographical areas.

Titles in the series include:

The Body in Arabic Love Poetry: The 'Udhri Tradition' Jokha Alharthi

Owning Books and Preserving Documents in Medieval Jerusalem: The Library of Burhan al-Din Said Aljoumani and Konrad Hirschler

Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine

Zohar Amar and Efraim Lev

The Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo, 1261–1517: Out of the Shadows

Mustafa Banister

Christian Monastic Life in Early Islam

Bradley Bowman

Queens, Concubines and Eunuchs in Medieval Islam Taef El-Azhari

Islamic Political Thought in the Mamluk Period Mohamad El Merheb

The Kharijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition: Heroes

and Villains Hannah-Lena Hagemann

Between Rebels and Rulers in the Early Islamicate World: Power, Contention and Identity

Edited by Hannah-Lena Hagemann and Alasdair Grant

Classical Islam: Collected Essays Carole Hillenbrand

Islam and the Crusades: Collected Essays
Carole Hillenbrand

The Medieval Turks: Collected Essays Carole Hillenbrand

Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library – The Ashrafiya Library Catalogue Konrad Hirschler

A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture: The Library of Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī Konrad Hirschler

The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt: State and Society, 1173–1325 Nathan Hofer

Defining Anthropomorphism: The Challenge of Islamic Traditionalism Livnat Holtzman

The Karbala Story and Early Shi'ite Identity
Torsten Hylén

Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the Jami' al-Tawarikh Stefan Kamola

Lyrics of Life: Saʻdi on Love, Cosmopolitanism and Care of the Self

Fatemeh Keshavarz

Art, Allegory and The Rise of Shiism In Iran, 1487–1565 Chad Kia

The Administration of Justice in Medieval Egypt: From the 7th to the 12th Century Yaacov Lev

Zoroastrians in Early Islamic History: Accommodation and Memory

Andrew D. Magnusson

A History of Herat: Fro Chingiz Khan to Tamerlane Shivan Mahendrarajah

The Queen of Sheba's Gift: A History of the True Balsam of Matarea Marcus Milwright

Islam, Christianity and the Realms of the Miraculous: A Comparative Exploration Ian Richard Netton

The Poetics of Spiritual Instruction: Farid al-Din 'Attar and Persian Sufi Didacticism Austin O'Malley

Sacred Place and Sacred Time in the Medieval Islamic Middle East: An Historical Perspective Daniella Talmon-Heller

Conquered Populations in Early Islam: Non-Arabs, Slaves and the Sons of Slave Mothers Elizabeth Urban

Medieval Syria and the Onset of the Crusades: The Political World of Bilad al-Sham, 1050–1128 James Wilson

edinburghuniversitypress.com/series/escihc

The Karbala Story and Early Shi'ite Identity

Torsten Hylén

Edinburgh University Press is one of the leading university presses in the UK. Publishing new research in the arts and humanities, EUP connects people and ideas to inspire creative thinking, open new perspectives and shape the world we live in. For more information, visit www.edinburghuniversitypress.com.

We are committed to making research available to a wide audience and are pleased to be publishing Platinum Open Access editions of the ebooks in this series.

© Torsten Hylén 2025, under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence



Cover image: Detail from a reverse painting on glass; from Kazerouni and Salahshour, *Reverse Painting*, 108 / Al-Ḥusayn and his baby son at Karbala

Cover design: www.paulsmithdesign.com

Edinburgh University Press Ltd 13 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh EH1 1LT

Typeset in 11/15 Adobe Garamond by Cheshire Typesetting Ltd, Cuddington, Cheshire Printed and bound in the UK using 100% renewable electricity by CPI Group (UK) Ltd

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 3995 2205 2 (hardback) ISBN 978 1 3995 2207 6 (webready PDF) ISBN 978 1 3995 2208 3 (epub)

The right of Torsten Hylén to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 (SI No. 2498).



This book is printed using paper from well-managed forests, recycling and other controlled sources