

# BOOK CONVERSATION

Arabo-Islamica

Traditional Yemeni Scholarship  
amidst Political Turmoil and War

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl  
b. al-Muṭahhar al-Manṣūr (1915-2016)  
and His Personal Library

Sabine Schmidtke



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The volume evolved as a side product of the “Zaydi Manuscript Tradition” (ZMT) project, a collaborative undertaking by the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), Princeton, in partnership with the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) at Saint John’s University, Collegeville, Minnesota, which aims at bringing together the widely dispersed Zaydī manuscript culture in its entirety in a single repository. It focusses on Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Manṣūr (1915-2016), one of the most prominent scholars, bureaucrats, and politicians of twentieth-century Yemen, and his private collection of manuscripts. Based on his ijāza (“licence to transmit”), his own writings, and other documentary materials, as well as his collection of manuscripts and the many handwritten comments and notes added by al-Manṣūr, the book discusses his biography and intellectual milieu and provides insights into the manuscript culture of twentieth-century Yemen. Taken together, the volume contributes to the study of twentieth-century Yemen’s intellectual and social history, and it immediately relates to recent work of historical anthropologists specializing in Yemen.



## SALVAGING THE ZAYDI MANUSCRIPT TRADITION: The Fate of Private and Family Libraries in 20th Century Yemen

**A Conversation with Sabine Schmidtke**  
Professor, School of Historical Studies

Professor Schmidtke provides insight into the rich holdings of private and public manuscript libraries in Yemen by focusing on one of the most prominent scholars, bureaucrats, and politicians of twentieth-century Yemen and his private collection of manuscripts.

**Tuesday, December 4 | 5:00 p.m.**

**WHITE-LEVY ROOM | Institute for Advanced Study**

*The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition (ZMT) is collaborative endeavour by IAS and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library at Saint John’s University. The ZMT has targeted 25,000 codices for inclusion in the initiative.*