

# The Beginnings of Shī'ī Studies in Germany

Rudolf Strothmann and His Correspondence  
with Carl Heinrich Becker, Ignaz Goldziher,  
Eugenio Griffini, and Cornelis van Arendonk,  
1910 through 1926

SABINE SCHMIDTKE

Rudolf Strothmann (b. 1877, d. 1960) played a pioneering role in the scholarly exploration of Shī'ī Islam in Western, especially German, scholarship. Between 1910 and 1923, he published many pathbreaking studies on the Zaydiyya, consulting primarily the recently purchased collections of Yemeni Zaydī manuscripts in Berlin. At the same time, and to the extent that this was possible in view of the lack of relevant sources in Germany and the rest of Europe, Strothmann began to delve into Twelver Shī'ī literature, an endeavor that culminated in his 1926 monograph, *Die Zwölfer-Schī'a: Zwei religionsgeschichtliche Charakterbilder aus der Mongolenzeit*, a portrait of the two prominent seventh- and thirteenth-century Imāmī scholars Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and Raḍī al-Dīn 'Alī b. Mūsā Ibn Ṭawūs (d. 664/1266). Later in his life, Strothmann primarily focused on various strands of Ismā'īlism. His rich published work testifies to his erudition and versatility and continues to form an important point of departure for scholars working on different aspects of Shī'ism in the early twenty-first century. In addition, Strothmann's use of the manuscript treasures in the Berlin State Library between 1908 and 1926 reflects his evolution as a scholar over those years. This study examines the earlier decades of Strothmann's life and his development as a theologian and a scholar of Semitic languages and Islamic culture. Moreover, it sheds light on his scholarly work during the 1910s through his correspondence with Carl Heinrich Becker, Ignaz Goldziher, Eugenio Griffini, and Cornelis van Arendonk, of which an annotated edition is provided.

Sabine Schmidtke is professor of Islamic intellectual history in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey.

ISBN 978-1-60618-121-8



9 781606 181218

Transactions of the American  
Philosophical Society  
Volume 112, Part 1

## The Beginnings of Shī'ī Studies in Germany

SCHMIDTKE

Trans. Am. Phil. Soc.  
Vol. 112, Pt. 1

# The Beginnings of Shī'ī Studies in Germany

Rudolf Strothmann and His Correspondence  
with Carl Heinrich Becker, Ignaz Goldziher,  
Eugenio Griffini, and Cornelis van Arendonk,  
1910 through 1926

SABINE SCHMIDTKE

American Philosophical Society Press  
Philadelphia