

IAS | Friends Talk

INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

Salvaging the Rational Heritage of Islam: The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition Project

Friday, October 13
5:30 p.m.
Dilworth Room

A wine and cheese reception will follow



The world heritage of Islamic literature in its entirety is an extraordinarily rich one. Moreover, the manuscript tradition continued longer in the Middle East than anywhere else and only a fraction of the Islamic literary heritage is available by now in print. At the same time, attempts to reduce the intellectually rich and diverse Islamic literary heritage to a bare minimum abound and increase. Limiting the canon of allegedly authentic Islamic literature to what encapsulates a particular brand of Islam is a strategy that is characteristic of Wahhabism, Salafism, jihadism, and their respective proponents. Whatever goes against this interpretation of Islam is classified as “heretical” and banned from distribution. Moreover, libraries holding books that are seen as containing deviant views are targeted for destruction in an attempt to allegedly “purge” Islam. Preserving this vulnerable heritage and making it accessible to a wider audience is therefore of imminent significance. The talk will focus on efforts to salvage the literary heritage of the Zaydi community in Yemen, past and present.

This talk is open to the Institute community.

Reservations requested

www.ias.edu/events/friends-talk-schmidtke

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Sabine Schmidtke

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Sabine Schmidtke is a scholar of Islamic intellectual history whose pioneering research has transformed perspectives on the interrelations and connections among different strands of intellectual inquiry, across time, place, religions, and philosophical schools. She has played a central role in the exploration of heretofore unedited and unknown theological and philosophical writings. After serving as a diplomat in the German Foreign Office for eight years, Schmidtke became Founding Director of the department of Intellectual History of the Islamicate World at the Free University of Berlin. She was appointed Professor of Islamic Intellectual History at the Institute for Advanced Study in 2014.

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