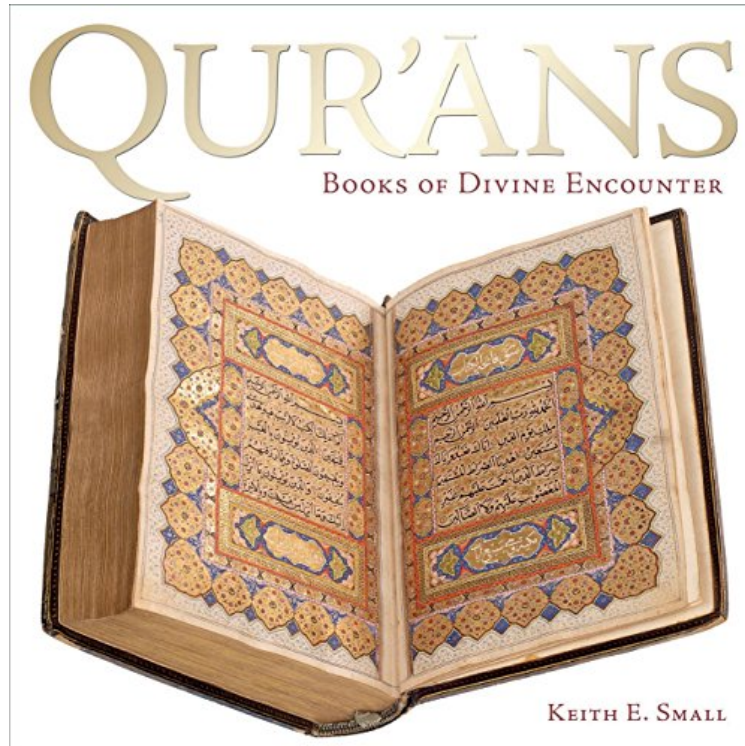


Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter

Keith E. Small

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Keith E. Small : Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful visual tourBy D. BrubakerThis is a book that Dr. Small, a leading Oxford researcher of Qur'an manuscripts, was asked to write for placement in the Oxford Bodleian Library Bookstore, to give readers a general sense of the progression of the Qur'an through the various periods of its history as a written object while also showcasing many of the remarkable Qur'an manuscripts in the collections of the Bodleian Library.Small's previous book, "Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts," is scholarly and systematic, and I've also reviewed it here on ."Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter," is something quite different. It is a simple and beautiful introduction to the progression of the Qur'an through its manuscript (and one textile) history for non-academics. In it, Small presents these objects with emphasis upon their style, utility, and beauty as works of art and exemplars of their respective time periods. He touches upon the ways they were produced, the development of the textual features, geometry, illuminations, and materials, as well as some of the ways written Qur'ans have been understood and used by ordinary Muslims over the centuries. Its full color photographs of manuscripts are beautiful, and the selection of Qur'ans, while not exhaustive (it was not intended to be so), is balanced and logical. And of course, even though this book was not written for graduate students, its author is an expert and the book is thus an intelligent introduction for lay people wishing to explore the world of Qur'an manuscripts a bit further.One important scholar in our area recently gave "Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter" praise while also making a few justified (but non-fatal) criticisms of a nature that will not in any way touch upon the book's general usefulness. This is what

scholars do to keep each other sharp and is nothing unusual. I work as an academic with Qur'an manuscripts myself and move among the other academics in this field. I will conclude this review with mention of another respected senior scholar in our field who commented to me recently that he loves this book and has found it excellent for use with students. I agree with him and will be doing the same. First, know that this is not a textbook as such, but then please don't hesitate to buy it. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Misleading Product By Dr. Jon Mills Very disappointing and misleading in the product description. Rather than a scholarly comparison of different variations of Qur'ans over the centuries, including how the texts, translations, meanings, and interpretations vary and were derived, it is merely a picture book with very little description of the pictures (mainly 1 page of a text or manuscript per photo). I would have never bought this if I knew it was a coffee table book with Islamic art inscribed on the inside pages of various extant manuscripts.

With *Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter*, Keith E. Small has written a rich visual history of the Qur'an focused on more than fifty manuscripts in the collection of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. One of the oldest and finest collections of Qur'an in the English-speaking world, it includes treasures from parchment pages from Islam's earliest centuries to a highly adorned copy of the Qur'an that once belonged to Tipu Sultan, the eighteenth-century ruler of the Islamic Kingdom of Mysore. Beginning with a brief introduction, Small takes readers through the Qur'an's origins. The book then follows the development of the Qur'an chronologically and geographically, treating in each chapter the themes of textual development, divine presence, and political and religious identity. A wealth of full-color illustrations facilitates an examination of the artistic legacy of the Qur'an, including the beautiful calligraphy that became the foundation of Islamic visual culture for centuries to come. A lavishly illustrated historical overview, *Qur'ans: Books of Divine Encounter* brings together in one volume a magnificent range of Qur'ans, bearing singular insight into these beautiful and significant sacred texts.

"Small presents a beautiful array of Qur'an manuscripts from different periods and with different technical and aesthetic qualities. This work offers readers an extraordinary introduction to the ways in which Muslims have preserved and ornamented their scripture through the centuries."