



Interpreting al-Tha'labi's Tales of the Prophets: Temptation, Responsibility and Loss (Routledge Studies in the Qur'an)

Marianna Klar

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Al-Tha'labi was a renowned Qur'anic scholar of the fifth/eleventh century, and his 'Ara'is al-majalis is arguably the finest and most widely consulted example of the Islamic *qisas al-anbiya*' genre.

Drawing on primary Arabic sources, Klar applies modern critical methods in order to explore the nature of al-Tha'labi's 'Ara'is al-majalis within its historical and literary context, and thereby produces a compelling examination of the stories of Noah, Job, Saul and David as portrayed in the key historiographical and folkloric texts of the medieval Islamic period. Via a close analysis of the relevant narratives, the book considers a number of universal aspects of the human condition as they are displayed in these tales, from first a religious, then a familial, and finally a social perspective. Touching upon the benefits and limitations of the application of biblical studies and literary motifs to Islamic materials, the book investigates the possibilities of interpretation raised by a primarily psychoanalytical reading of the tales of the four individuals in question. As such, this text will be of great interest to scholars of the biblical prophets, Qur'anic studies, Islamic historiography, folklore and literary criticism.

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