
Devin Stewart. *Polemics and patronage in Safavid Iran: The debate on Friday prayer during the reign of Shah Tahmasb*

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Devin Stewart. « Polemics and patronage in Safavid Iran: The debate on Friday prayer during the reign of Shah Tahmasb ». *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 72, 3, 2009, p. 425-457.

- 1 Devin Stewart has written a very illuminating article on the theological and doctrinal landscape of Safavid Iran during the 16th century. The topic of theologians arriving from Jabal 'Amal to work in Iran has been a central focus of Safavid Shiite studies since Stewart, Newman, Ja'farian and others started publishing works on it in the 1990s. Although we understand that such narratives of orthodoxy are located squarely in the 16th century, the idea of an Arab-imposed interpretation of Twelver Shiism speaks volumes in Iran's current religious and political landscape. This aside, Stewart is mainly interested in analyzing the content and impact of several major treatises by Shiite jurists (*faqih*s) on the issue of Friday prayer and its permissibility in a nominally Shiite state: Zayn al-Din 'Amili's *Treatise on Friday Prayer* (*Risala fi salat al-jum'a*, 962/1555); Husain b. 'Abd al-Shamad's *Treatise on the Obligatory Status of Friday Prayer* (*Risala fi wujub salat al-jum'a*, 963/1556); Hasan b. 'Ali al-Karaki's *Object of Desire* (*al-Bulgha fi bayan i'tibar idhn al-imam fi shar'iyat salat al-jum'a*, 1559); Sayyid Husain b. al-Hasan b. Ja'far al-Karaki's *al-Lum'a fi amr salat al-jum'a*, 1559); and Husain b. 'Abd al-Samad's *al-'Iqd al-Husaini* (1563). Most of these sources have been published in one form or another. Sayyid Husain al-Karaki's *al-Lum'a fi amr salat al-jum'a* is analyzed using a Mashhad manuscript. Stewart investigates how these scholars debated the issue

of Friday prayer and whether the presence of a *mujtahid* was required or even permissible. Stewart's work here, as in other endeavors of his, is painstaking and industrious. This article makes an extremely valuable contribution to Twelver Shiite studies in Safavid Iran.

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