Ottomans and Others: Gryphons from the Heart

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Ottoman World

Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought by Hüseyin Yılmaz [Princeton University Press, 9780691174808]

The medieval theory of the caliphate, epitomized by the Abbasids (750–1258), was the construct of jurists who conceived it as a contractual leadership of the Muslim community in succession to the Prophet Muhammed's political authority. In this book, Hüseyin Yilmaz traces how a new conception of the caliphate emerged under the Ottomans, who redefined the caliph as at once a ruler, a spiritual guide, and a lawmaker corresponding to the prophet's three natures.

Challenging conventional narratives that portray the Ottoman caliphate as a fading relic of medieval Islamic law, Yilmaz offers a novel interpretation of authority, sovereignty, and imperial ideology by examining how Ottoman political discourse led to the mystification of Muslim political ideals and redefined the caliphate. He illuminates how Ottoman Sufis reimagined the caliphate as a manifestation and extension of cosmic divine governance. The Ottoman Empire arose in Western Anatolia and the Balkans, where charismatic Sufi leaders were perceived to be God's deputies on earth. Yilmaz traces how Ottoman rulers, in alliance with an increasingly powerful Sufi establishment, continuously refashioned and legitimated their rule through mystical imageries of authority, and how the caliphate itself reemerged as a moral paradigm that shaped early modern Muslim empires.

A masterful work of scholarship, Caliphate Redefined is the first comprehensive study of premodern Ottoman political thought to offer an extensive analysis of a wealth of previously unstudied texts in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish.

Excerpt: The Ottomans and the Caliphate

With the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the historical caliphate, embodied by the Abbasid Empire, formally ended with traumatic consequences that, in response, facilitated the rise of a new wave of self-reflection, exploration, and experimentation in all segments of Islamicate societies. In the absence of the imperial caliphate, along with the rise of independent regional Muslim dynasties from the fourteenth century onwards, the idea of the caliphate, reinterpreted in response to profound changes taking place in the broader Muslim community, regained its prominence in Islamic political discourse, and, with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, became the linchpin of imperial ideology in the sixteenth century. Modern studies on the question of Muslim rulership repeatedly assume that the historical caliphate, as conceived by Muslim jurists during the Abbasid period (c. 750-1258), continued to define both the concept and the institution in subsequent political thought and praxis. This assumption confines the theoretical construction of the caliphate to jurisprudence, overlooks the impact of later historical experiences,

and disregards the formative influence of broader intellectual traditions in framing the caliphate as both an institution and an ideal. The post-Abbasid caliphate, or the making of the non-Arab caliph in the Ottoman case, was reconstructed in the language of Sufism infused with indigenous traditions of rulership and shaped by defining historical experiences, rather than through the juristic canon of medieval universalism. In sixteenth-century political discourse, the Ottoman caliph was a mystic, in the sense that he was a friend and deputy of God on Earth, with sway over both temporal and spiritual realms. The House of Osman was God's chosen dynasty commissioned to serve divinely assigned purposes, and the Ottoman rulership was the seal of the caliphate to last until the end of times.

In the sixteenth century, continuous Ottoman expansionism in all directions entailed that the Ottomans counter and appropriate the legitimating apparatus of their opponents, most notably the Habsburgs, the Safavids, and the Mamluks, which helped introduce the belief in the uniqueness of the Ottoman dynasty into the mainstream of political thinking. Through mythologizing the origins of the Ottoman state, esoteric interpretations of religious texts, and prophesies of the great spiritual men, the ruling elite perceived the Ottoman dynasty as the chosen one. Further, the triumphalist mood of the age, invigorated by seemingly incessant victories, made statesmen and intellectuals see achievements in the arts, architecture, literature, and government as further signs of Ottoman exceptionalism. In political geography, early sixteenth century Eurasia witnessed the emergence of confessional empires with claims of universal rulership that engaged in a stiff competition for ideological ascendancy. The Sufi-minded theorists of rulership, unchecked by the limits of authority set in juristic and bureaucratic traditions, provided a useful repository of symbolism and imagery to claim the superiority of the Ottoman caliphate. The discourse on the caliphate included an extensive engagement with theories of government expounded in various disciplines and literary genres in the context of Islamic learned traditions. The full corpus of mainstream political theory was widely available to Ottoman statesmen, who appear to have been staunch collectors of such texts and patrons of scholars on statecraft. The discourse reflects competing visions of rulership, languages, concepts,

norms, imageries, and styles articulated in an increasingly Islamic but versatile and vernacularizing Ottoman culture. Jurists, Sufis, and bureaucrats contested rival notions of authority and sought to formulate an imperial image that best represented their own ideological imprints, confessional convictions, group interests, and cultural idioms.

Despite their accommodating approach to rulership, jurists per se in the Ottoman Empire ceased to be the leading exponents of the theory of the caliphate because of both theoretical and practical problems they could never definitively resolve. One was the juristic fixation with the historical caliphate as a successorship to Muhammed through an established lineage from his tribe, the Quraysh, a ruling that manifestly stood at odds with that of the Ottoman dynasty. Second, although a few jurists radically altered the theory of the caliphate, the canonical formulation of the caliphate proved impervious to the demands of coercive power or even captivating esoteric visions, and remained unchanged in all the juristic and theological textbooks taught in Ottoman madrasas, creating an unresolved tension between formal Islamic training and individual opinions. This cognitive dissonance created an irreparable rift between jurists who pursued academic careers in the Ottoman madrasas and remained loyal to the medieval ideal and those who pursued legal careers in the imperial judicial administration and tended to be pragmatic by accommodating divergent political realities. Because of this rift, the leading jurists either abstained from writing on the question of the caliphate in normative juristic language or resorted to the mystical philosophy of prominent Sufi intellectuals, such as Ibn Arabi, to reconfigure the caliphate outside the disciplinary confines of Islamic jurisprudence.

Relatively unbound by juristic doctrines, the Sufis offered a radically new understanding of the caliphate that better suited the legitimation needs of a rising Muslim empire. As Sufi orders and their leaders became increasingly involved in public life, their notions and imageries of authority permeated into dynastic visions of authority. Almost all the books on rulership that were taught to dynastic heirs between 1400 and 1600 as part of their training in statecraft were written by prominent Sufi authors. Tutors for princes were mostly renowned

Sufis or Sufi-minded scholars whose teaching centered on esoteric, spiritual, and moral interpretations of rulership. Princes had little training in jurisprudence but were deeply exposed to mystical visions of rulership. The close association between the Ottoman ruling elite and prominent Sufi orders turned Sufism into the principal medium of formulating Ottoman dynastic legitimacy and inculcating a sultanic image as a spiritual leader. The Ottoman court countered the political challenges posed by powerful Sufi orders by adopting mystical visions of authority, and by depicting the Ottoman ruler as a caliph who conforms to Sufistic expectations.

In his study of kingship and sainthood in early modern Iran, Central Asia, and India, Azfar Moin perceptively noted that "the scriptural notions of the messiah (Mahdi) and the renewer (mujaddid), the mystical cencepts of the pole or (qutb) and the perfect individual (insan-i kamil), and the kingly notions of divine effulgence (farr-i izadi) and the lord of conjunction (Sahib Qiran) all referred to human agents who could usher in and maintain the just religiopolitical order of a particular historica era." One may easily add to this mosaic of imageries a long list of other notions and concepts that originated from various learned and indigineous traditions including those constructed with dawla (fortune), kūt (fortune), khātam (seal), ghaws (succor), mazhar (manifestation), zill (shadow), and āya (evidence). Granted that each term retained its peculiar meanings in specific contexts and usages, in various strands of Ottoman political thought, it was the caliphate that served as the anchor concept into which all these otherwise little related notions of human distinction could harmoniously be assimilated as its descriptive markers.

The caliphate, in both concept and practice, could tie the historical with the utopian, the temporal with the spiritual, the individual with the communal, and the object with the subject. It could be equally meaningful in philosophical, juristic, and Sufistic discourses, and utilized for conversation among different disciplines, world views, and social structures. Whether simply considered as "succession" of authority in historical practice or the very act of "creation" of human beings per Sufi cosmology, the term's defining qualities remain to be "representation" and "performance." As one

Arabic text in the sixteenth century formulated, khilāfa does not materialize unless the mustakhlaf (successor) fully reflects the mustakhlif (succeeded).

Namely, however it was conceived, the caliphate was always contingent on something else, having no significance without the signifier, no status without what it stands for, or no existence without what it manifests. The very etymology, semantics, scriptural sanction, and historical applications of the term made it inherently suitable and infinetly flexible for political speculation and craftmenship.

In Ottoman practice, envisioning the caliphate as a comprehensive cosmological position that encompasses both temporal and spiritual realms was embroidered in discursive narratives constructed by dynastic apologists and enigmatic letterists as well as mainstream scholars through literary articulation, artistic representation, and occultic revelations. This caliphal myth, as part of the central theme of the imperial ideology, entailed that the House of Osman was commissioned to rule as the "Great Caliphate" of the end of times foretold in the Qur'an, prophesied by Prophet Muhammed, envisioned by saints, and proven by discernible manifestations of divine providence. The caliphate as such was closely tied to an eschatology drawn from indigenous traditions and Abrahamic teachings conveyed via Islamic sources. The Ottoman caliphate, turned into a powerful foundational myth that was enhanced by a syncretic amalgamation of popular imageries and formal teachings of Islamic disciplines, then became the defining mantra of Ottoman imperial ideology continuously adapted to new political configurations and confessional manifestations, and reworked until the end of the empire.

The Caliphate in the Age of Süleyman

This study examines the mystification of the caliphate from its post-Abbasid origins to the late sixteenth century by privileging the age of Süleyman the Lawgiver (r. 1520-1566) for a more detailed analysis during which the caliphate turned into a patently Sufistic concept. In explaining the rise of Sufi tariqas in the late medieval Islamicate world, Marshall Hodgson briefly but perceptively hinted at the newly forming mystical notion of the caliphate:

> The ulama never ceased to think of the ideal unity of Islam in terms of a khalifa, a

Caliph ruling a human empire. The Sufis made much of a very different sort of khalifa, the human being who as perfected microcosm is the final end of, and holds limitless sway over, the world of nature and men together. He is a Muslim, and exercises his power largely upon and through Muslims (the Abdal); but there is a recognized place under his care for the believers in every faith however crude, not only peoples of the Book as in the historical Caliphate, but outright pagans. The kings who come and go are but the servants of such a saint, as many beloved anecdotes make clear; no Caliph had such power over his governors as the Sufi shayhks, and especially the supreme shaykh, the Qutb of any given time, had over the earth's rulers.

But Hodgson's signpost was largely overlooked in subsequent studies. The impact of Sufism on political thought, however, has been getting increasingly more attention in Islamic studies in the past few decades. Among others, Cornell Fleischer, Kathryn Babayan, Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, and Azfar Moin masterfully demonstrated how rulers of the post-caliphate Islamicate world ffrom Morocco to India constructed colorful visions of rulership by decorating themselves with mystical imageries and posing themselves as caliphs, lords of conjunction, renewers of religion, Mahdis, and saints. These studies treat the politicization of Sufism or mystification of politics within the larger framework of Islamic eschatology, messianism, millenarianism, and revivalism. While this study complements previous scholarship and furthers the inquiry, it parts ways in several directions. First, it focuses on the idea of the caliphate and treats messianic visions only to the extent they are related to it. Second, while taking the broader cultural and social context into consideration, this study mainly examines the political literature in all its diverse strains. Third, it tells the post-Abbasid story of the caliphate as a process of negotiation between Sufi groups and the Ottoman ruling establishment. Finally, it traces and explains the trajectory and transformation of the core vocabulary of political thought in Ottoman experience, or the rise of the Ottoman vernacular in political discourse.

The caliphate, in its various conceptions and manifestations, became more pronounced during the age of Süleyman as displayed in the extensive political corpus, royal titles, artistic representations, and public displays. More, Süleyman appeared in Ottoman thought as the personification of the supreme universal leader of the Muslim community whose image was made to fit various notions of leadership theorized in different Islamic disciplines and proclivities. The age of Süleyman is by far the most extensively studied period in both academic as well as popular historiography because it is considered a pivotal era of Ottoman history, if not of the entire early modern world. No other period of Ottoman history has attracted such a degree of interest. Süleyman has been the subject of more biographies than all other Ottoman sultans combined to quench the thirst for understanding this archetypical ruler, ranging from the crude Orientalist inquiries into the mystique of oriental rulership to contemporary infatuation with Süleymanic enlightenment. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, more than twenty memorializing epic biographies with the title Süleymānnāme (the Book of Süleyman) were composed. At the height of his power, Süleyman was arguably the most commonly recognized universal ruler across Eurasia, from Sumatra to France. It is no surprise that his contemporaries called him with such titles as the second Solomon and Mahdi. As reflected in his more common epithet, "lawgiver" (kānūnī), Süleyman was commonly perceived to be an epoch-making sultan both in Ottoman memory as well as in modern historiography.

In this study, the Süleymanic age refers to the period that roughly corresponds to the tenth century of the Islamic calendar. It is marked by the ascendance of a new imperial elite that started to take form after the conquest of Constantinople, thrived under his reign, and carried his classicizing legacy after his death. Süleyman's birth coincided with the beginning of the tenth century, which lent an added excitement to the brewing millenarianism of the period. The age of Süleyman thus conveniently corresponds to the millennial century of Islam, which also loosely syncs with the sixteenth century. Süleyman's mark was already evident before his succession and remained afresh long after his death. Neither Süleyman's succession nor his death caused any major disruption in administrative continuity. Although Süleyman was enthroned in 1520, he appeared on the Ottoman

dynastic scene before 1512 during the succession struggle of his father, Selim I. By playing a crucial role in his father's takeover of the throne, Süleyman secured his own succession as the crown prince. As the sole heir to the throne, the only such case in all of Ottoman history, he himself was well aware of his uniqueness, and his contemporaries were keen to highlight this exception as a sign of his chosenness. When he succeeded to the throne at the age of twenty-five on the sudden death of his father, he continued to rule along with the statesmen and ulema promoted by Selim I, most notably Grand Vizier Piri Pasa (d. 1532) and Sheikh ul Islam Zenbilli Ali Cemali Efendi (d. 1525). When he died in 1566, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasa (d. 1579) and Sheikh ul Islam Ebussuud (d. 1574), two major figures of his later reign, remained in office until Selim II's death in 1574. Major intellectual figures of his reign such as Ibn Kemal (d. 1534), Tasköprizade Ahmed (d. 1561), Celalzade Mustafa (d. 1567), and Birgivi Mehmed (d. 1573), had a defining impact on later Ottoman thought.

The intellectual landmarks of the political thought of Süleymanic age are Idris-i Bidlisi (d. 1520), who wrote his treatise on political philosophy, Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhī in Persian, and Kinalizade Ali (d. 1572), the author of what came to be the Ottoman canon in ethical philosophy, Ahlāk-i Alāʾī. During this time, Ottoman intellectuals displayed a burgeoning interest in writing on various aspects of rulership and government. After a long tradition of political writings in the form of translations and reworkings of previous works, as well as a few original compositions since the rise of the Ottomans, Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhī appeared to be the first major attempt at an elaborate theory of rulership following the reconfiguration of the Ottoman polity from an ambitious frontier state into a universal empire under the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II. Perceived by later generations as one of the major legacies of the Süleymanic age, despite the considerable debt it owes to previously formulated theories of ethics, Ahlāk-i Alāʾī was written with a claim to surpass all other works on the same subject and conceived to be an exposition of Ottoman moral, social, and political ideals of the period. The period between Bidlisi and Kinalizade was a flourishing era of intellectual vigor, creativity, and

curiosity among Ottoman men and women of learning.

The age of Süleyman is best known in historical memory, modern scholarship, and popular imagination for its classicizing legacy in arts, literature, learning, lawmaking, and institutionalization. Yet, in originality and future effects, political thought was no less spectacular than any other achievement of the era. The most conspicuous development of this period was the emergence of an extensive corpus of political literature across various genres and disciplines with an unprecedented range of dissemination. Juristic, philosophical, ethical, sufistic, and theological views were expressed in the conventions of their respective disciplines or in the synthetic genre of mirrors for princes. The sheer number of political texts in circulation alone attests to the emergence of a broad-based interest among the reading public on questions of rulership. Accompanying this surge of interest was the gradual broadening of the field of political thought. Increased contact of Ottoman men of learning with the non-Ottoman body of political writings led them to deal with issues and questions that had not appeared in pre-sixteenth century Ottoman political literature. al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya, for example, a field that developed during the Mamluk period, came to the attention of Ottoman scholars only toward the middle of the sixteenth century, after the conquest of Egypt. Similarly, the question of bayt al-māl or public treasury, a topic not included in previous Ottoman political writings, became an important issue in this period, largely because of the influence of the Mamluk tradition of political writing. In addition, the Ottoman experience in government posed new questions to address in the political literature. Kānūn, for example, in the sense of law, had never made its way into political theory before this period, because no pre-Ottoman polity had such a highly developed legal system characterized by kānūn.

This broadening of the spectrum of political writings did not bring all conventional issues of previous political corpus into the Ottoman context. On the contrary, except for a few issues, most of the common questions that had busied pre-Ottoman authors on rulership did not resonate among the Ottoman audience and were simply ignored.

The question of required qualifications for the caliphate or imamate, for example, which preoccupied jurists and theologians for so long, fell from favor in this period, even though the Ottoman sultan always implied his superiority over all other Muslim rulers. The broader field of political thought in this period was exposed more to influences from the Turkic and Persianate east than from the Arab south. For practical reasons, Ottoman authors found political teachings formulated in the East more relevant because of the affinity of the Ottoman political system with its Eastern counterparts. This influence was facilitated by a constant influx to the Ottoman realm of eastern scholars, bureaucrats, and literati, who carried political ideas and conventions along with them. Despite the full incorporation of the Arab south, Ottoman political thought remained to be articulated mainly on the cultural plane of what Shahab Ahmed called the Balkans-to-Bengal complex.

Although the Ottoman authors of this period wrote on a variety of subjects in different genres, the Sufistic language dominated the overall discourse on rulership. Besides the mystics who wrote on government, most scholars writing on the subject were either themselves affiliated with a Sufi order or were well versed in mystical teachings. Most works on rulership and ethics are imbued with teachings, imageries, and vocabulary of mostly Turko-Persianate Sufism. Advice literature, in particular, was largely under the spell of, in Dabashi's words, Persianate literary humanism. The ritualistic terminology of Ottoman Sufism was largely Persian because of the popularity of Persian works on the subject as well as the dissemination of Sufi orders that originated in the East. The Sufi world view that captivated Ottoman intellectuals naturally shaped the mode of thinking and the language of writing on rulership. Among others, works of Attar (d. c. 1221), Sa'di (d. c. 1291), and Rumi (d. 1273), as repositories of Sufi wisdom on government, were among the shortlist of classics of which any rank and file Ottoman intellectual was expected to have mastered.

Yet, despite the continued prestige of Arabic in normative thought and of Persian in literature, Turkish established itself as the primary language of political discourse in this period. Although the combined number of works compiled in Arabic and Persian was still much higher than those in Turkish,

only Turkish texts reached a wide circulation. A large number of translations produced in this period demonstrate the existence of a growing readership in Turkish that turned this language into the principal medium of political discourse. The availability of a large number of classical works on rulership in Turkish certainly facilitated its rise as a language of choice in writing on rulership. The spread of political texts in Turkish texts and the upsurge of interest in reading on the subject were two developments that fed each other. In terms of terminological richness, conceptual sophistication, and literary and artistic potentialities, Turkish became a more convenient language for expressing political views. While Arabic and Persian stood relatively apart, Ottoman Turkish evolved in full engagement with both languages and their cultural backdrop.

For the learned who were typically well versed in three languages, Turkish evolved to become the only venue where diverse traditions represented in Persian and Arabic could be amalgamated into a single medium of expression.

The Caliphate as a Moral Paradigm

In the age of Süleyman, the general tenor of political writing was set by the moralist tendency that had dominated political discourse since the rise of independent rulers in the eleventh century against the overarching rule of the Abbasid caliphate. During the high caliphate of the ninth and tenth centuries, the main quest of juristic political thought was to establish the normative form of life. Regardless of disciplinary interests and priorities, the dominating theme of political discourse was defining the best qualified candidate to lead the Muslim community. The holy grail of political theory during the formative age of Islamic thought was to define the most perfect ruler to lead the community in the right direction towards its ideals with less regard to moral technologies of reforming the ruler-in-charge.

principles of governance, whereas theological writings were limited to the proper definition of imamate in response to alternative claims of authority. Philosophical works, in the main, treated the political as part of their search for the best form of human association that leads to the attainment of a higher with the decline of the central caliphate and the rise of independent rulers, the discrepancy between classical juristic

theory and political practice widened. As best illustrated in a burst of mirror for prince's literature, moralism replaced idealism as the central theme of political discourse. This fledgling breed of political literature, which ultimately originated from the writings of Ibn al-Muqaffa in the eighth century but was overshadowed by the juristic discourse, shifted the focus from the qualifications of the universal caliph to the moral recuperation of the ruler in office, and from the uncompromising but abstract shar`ī principles of governance to specific instructions to turn existing administration into an efficient but just one. Because instating the best qualified candidate to the universal leadership of the Muslim community remained an unrealized utopia, the moralist tendency that aimed to turn the ruler in office into the best possible one found widespread appeal among statesmen, jurists, philosophers, and Sufis alike. Despite this shift of focus toward specific principles of rulership, the medieval fixation that the best governance could only be undertaken by the best of people survived as a noble ideal in political writing.

Guided by the moralist-pietistic tendency, most Ottoman authors pursued to improve the quality of rulership while totally disregarding its form. Ideal rulership was to be achieved not by finding the best form of political authority but by improving the moral quality of ruler and his aides in government. Thus the defining element of rulership was not its institutional sophistication but the human agent at the helm. Those moralists commonly defined rulership, in the generic sense, as the mere acquisition of sufficient executive power to rule. This ordinary rulership transforms into true rulership only when the ruler achieves personal sophistication in morality, spirituality, and piety. False rulership, also dubbed as worldly, material, and temporal, was most commonly labelled as sūrī (in appearance) and regarded as an imperfect form of rulership that should be turned into a superior one. True rulership, characterized by such designations as ma`nawī (in meaning), rahmānī (manifesting God's mercy), and rabbānī (manifesting God's lordship), extends its authority over both the material and spiritual realms as a result of the ruler's moral perfection. Morally conscious authors with these convictions did not pay much attention to the institutional features of government or the principles of governance but simply extended the teachings

of ethics, piety, and Sufism into the realm of rulership. With their focus on the human agent as the benchmark of true rulership, there was virtually no difference between reforming an individual initiate in a Sufi tract and a ruler in power. For Sufi moralists, the Qur'anic concept of the caliphate, not the historical one, provided the perfect model, a moral paradigm for the perfection of rulership. The historical caliphate, as a legal and social construct, was the political embodiment of the Muslim community's collective responsibility to uphold and execute Islamic law and services. The Qur'anic caliphate, in Sufi idiom, was the fulfillment of the very purpose of creation par excellence, the materialization of God's representation on Earth through human being's manifestation of the divine by adopting God's attributes (ahlākullāh) as his morality

The Rumi Character of Political Writing

The scope of this study is limited to Rumi expositions of political thought that include Ottoman authors who either dedicated their works to the sultan or lived in the core provinces of Asia Minor and the Balkans, excluding other parts of the empire. Many authors who wrote on the subject from the Arab provinces, such as al-Hamawi (d. 1529), are excluded from the study. Although the practices of past rulers, as recounted in mirrors for princes, continued to inspire political writings, moralists and kānūn-conscious bureaucrats alike increasingly idealized the Ottoman precedence in government as a benchmark for good governance and a penultimate objective of perfect rulership. These Ottomanists perceived their own achievements in state building to be on a par with the greatest accomplishments of the past that filled their imaginations from histories, epics, and legends. While still greatly revering such past idols as Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BCE), Khosrow Anushirvan (r. 531-579), Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809), and others, they illustrated their teachings more and more with anecdotes and aphorisms attributed to the past Ottoman sultans, statesmen, scholars, and Sufis. For them, government and rulership reached its unsurpassable perfection in the realm of Rum under the Ottoman dynasty, just as the Rumis perfected human potential in character refinement, morality, and creativity.

A flurry of conquests in all directions in the early sixteenth century turned a large number of learned

men living in these regions into Ottoman subjects within a generation. But the self-perception and cultural identity of the Ottoman elite did not extend to include every subject of the Ottoman sultan, establishment, only a few of them were included in biographical dictionaries composed by Ottoman scholars. Ottoman authors, intellectuals, scholars, literati, and a variety of other designations that are constructed with the adjective "Ottoman" refer to a cultural identity and perception, not an ethnic, political, or geographical one. The adjective "Ottoman," in a strictly political sense, referred to the entire imperial establishment, territory, and subject population. In a sociocultural sense, however, it referred to ehl-i Rūm, namely, the people living in Asia Minor and the Balkans, whose primary medium of communication was Turkish. Biographical dictionaries written in this period, most notably those of Tasköprizade, Sehi, Latifi, and Asik Çelebi, included in their works, scholars, Sufis, and poets who were deemed to be Ottoman, or ehl-i Rūm, excluding their counterparts outside Asia Minor and the Balkans. In an increasingly diverse and cosmopolitan social fabric, the Ottoman elite differentiated themselves from the rest of the sultan's subjects by their Rumi especially those who fell under Ottoman authority in Arabic-speaking lands. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire was at the same time the extension of the universal authority of the Rumis. Ancient centers of Islamic culture and learning with their distinct institutions and cultural traits preserved their autonomy after the conquest. Numerous madrasas in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, for example, were not integrated into the central and hierarchical Ottoman system of learning. Although an increasing number of Arabic-speaking scholars and bureaucrats entered into service in various branches of the ruling identity.

The age of Süleyman was also the time when the Rumi elite increasingly added their own voice into the broader tradition of political thought. Geographical expansion and increasing contacts with the outside world sparked new curiosities and interests that turned the learned more inquisitive about non-Ottoman cultural repositories. The unification of the central lands of the Islamic world had by itself transformed the Ottoman ruling elite from being distant recipients of the cultural heritage of this region to its inheritors, protectors, and promoters. Increased mobility of scholars and

circulation of classical works opened new venues for Ottoman men of learning to become acquainted with political ideas that found expression before their time or outside their former cultural geography. During the age of Süleyman, for the first time in their history, Ottoman men of learning became fully exposed to the vast corpus of political writings produced before them outside the Rum. Ottoman readers and authors on rulership became fully integrated to diverse traditions of political writing in Arabic and Persian. The Ottoman court and institutions of learning were exceptionally resourceful on the subject. A contemporary witness and the author of a political treatise, Tasköprizade, praised the reigning Süleyman for his unmatched investment in library building and book collecting. He observed that these libraries provided all kinds of books, religious or nonreligious (shar`ī wa ghayr shar`ī), in Arabic or Persian, to the extent that there was no book one could not find there."

In addition, the expansion of learning institutions and bureaucracy created more appetite for reading and writing on political theory that turned the question of rulership into a staple of Ottoman public discourse. Struggles for succession among princes, factional rivalries in government, voices of dissent in society, competition among social groups to gain the favor of the sultan or to influence his policies, and clashes with neighboring dynasties turned various political questions into public matters. Ottoman political writings before this period were dominated by translations of some of the well-known classics of political works in Arabic and Persian. While the translation activity continues with accelerating speed and diversified interests, during the age of Süleyman Ottoman men of learning from different walks of life grew more confident and began to compose their own works on the subject. This fast growing politica literature was accompanied by a large body of official documents that came to be produced en masse and became increasingly laden with political ideas, Law codes, sultanic decrees, inscriptions, correspondence with other states legal opinions issued by the leading ulema and official chronicles, in addition to the specific reasons for their compilation, served as media to express political views. Further, histories, poetical works, biographical dictionaries, and hagiographies were charged with contemporary ideals, interests, and sensiblities regarding rulership

and government. In the age of Süleyman, writing on rulership and government, once the preserve of a small group of leading men of learning and statesmen, became part of a public discourse where ordinary scribes, obscure mystics, low-ranking provincial commanders, and poets with no training in statecraft could write on political matters. Although most of the political corpus was still dedicated to the sultan or the grand vizier, they ceased to be the sole addressees of political writings. Tasköprizade, in his encyclopedia of sciences, explained why ordinary people needed to learn about governance:

> The science of governance (ilm al-siyāsa) is the body of knowledge that concerns state (mulk) and executive power (saltana), condition of dignitaries and subjects, and the welfare of cities. This is a science which rulers need first, and then other people. Because a human being is by nature social. It is a religious obligation that a person resides in a virtuous city, migrates from an unvirtuous one, knows how the residents of the virtuous city can benefit from him, and how he can benefit from them.

As profusely illustrated in dynastic epics and histories, the imprint of the Rum in political theory was often marked by Ottoman exceptionalism that articulated the Rumi style in government based on laws, wisdom, and principles of perfect rulership. Writing within the confines of conventional genres, scholars such as Kinallzade and Celalzade, despite their unflinching conviction about the greatness of the Ottoman state and society, were still reserved in incorporating the Ottoman experience into political theory. Their works, still reflecting the timeless wisdom of good morality and governance envisioned in non-Ottoman cultural and political contexts, were not suitable to express political views with specific relevance to the realities of the Süleymanic age. In the face of such inherent constrictions, the rising Ottoman consciousness that introduced the Ottoman experience into political theory brought about the genesis of a completely new type of political writing, the epitome of which was Lütfi Pasa's Āsafnāme. Despite its innovative approach to the question of governance, Āsafnāme owed as much to pre-Ottoman traditions of political writing as to the genius of its author and the unique Ottoman experience in government. Writing around the same time, the anonymous

author of Mesālihü'l-Müslimin achieved a complete break with traditional forms of political writing and conventional ideas by dissociating political theory from the ruler and his morality and replacing them with state and law as primary objects of political reasoning. This new breed of works that increasingly dominated the crowded scene of Ottoman political discourse from the mid-sixteenth century onward was marked by a focus on contemporary issues of Ottoman rulership and government. Authors who wrote in this vein were mostly statesmen or officials who employed an empirical method of analysis, a critical perspective from their observations, and a terminological framework drawn from the current administrative language.

The prescriptive exaltation of the Ottoman experience brought about an extensive reshuffling of ideals, visions, symbols, and theories pertaining to rulership and governance that had a lasting impact on the way the Ottoman ruling elite viewed their ruler, government, and society. This paradigmatic watershed in the course of Ottoman political thought was no less original than any other spectacular achievements of the Süleymanic age. The pursuit of moralism in government that dominated the political theory gave way to legalism that evaluated rulership by its conformance to the now archetyped Ottoman model of government rather than moral excellence. The observance of customs and sultanic laws became the touchstone of measuring the quality of government that was previously gauged on the basis of ethical norms, piety, and juristic prescriptions. The caliphate in this model was envisioned as a cosmic rank between Man and God, attained in the spiritual sphere, with the implication of a comprehensive authority over both temporal and spiritual planes as conventional conceptions of rulership in mainstream political theories became increasingly infused with esoteric teachings of Sufism. The focus of political analysis shifted from the personality of the ruler to the existing government and its institutions. From this perspective, institutional aspects of government and procedural practices mattered more than the personality of the ruler or his direct control of day-to-day affairs of state.

This development gradually led Ottoman authors to envision the state as the primary object of analysis

and an entity separate from the household of the sultan or the dynasty. Unlike previous conceptions that once reigned supreme in political theory, in the new paradigm, the grand vizier replaced the sultan as the center of government. The sultan was then conceived to be a distant but a legitimating figure for the dynasty while the grand vizier was promoted to the position of actual ruler of the Ottoman state. Consequently, in contrast to the moralistic, idealistic, personality oriented, and sultan-centric paradigm of the broader political literature, this realist and empirical approach to the question of rulership promoted such ideas as "government by law" and "institutional continuity of the state" as primary objectives of rulership. While the Ottoman sultan was exalted to have the same comprehensive authority as the prophets, poles (qutbs), rightly guided caliphs, and the Mahdi, the Rumi ruling elite, in turn, attached themselves to the Ottoman state as much as to the ruler and assumed exclusive authority to rule the government by reconfiguring the state as a rational institution that operates per prescribed laws and procedures under the management of properly trained statesmen. In the post-Süleymanic era, the state increasingly detached from the sultan's household, and such questions as the independence of high bureaucrats within their respective spheres of authority became common problems to deal with in political theory.

Outline of the Book

This book details the post-Abbasid trajectory of the caliphate and its Sufistic reconstruction in five chapters. Chapter 1 examines the Ottoman political discourse from its origins in the early fifteenth century to the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Views on the caliphate were expressed through a diversified corpus of works on government and rulership across various genres and disciplines accompanied by a broad-based interest in engaging with issues related to government among the Ottoman readership. This diverse body of political literature, written in different languages and genres, was produced by an equally diverse group of authors from various backgrounds, including statesmen, jurists, and Sufis. Along with the expansion of the public sphere in sixteenth century social life, not only did ordinary folks come to be more interested in matters of government but new

questions and sensibilities were introduced to the sphere of the political as well. The conventional form of political discourse that was largely confined to providing advice for rulership by a select few gave way to presenting views on all aspects of government by people from different walks of life.

In the early fifteenth century, the Timurid invasion of Anatolia created an existential crisis that led the early Ottomans to engage intensively in studying rulership and statecraft as part of the reconstruction of the Ottoman state. The little-educated early Ottomans and their ruling entourage sought to remodel their new state on the example of the Timurids, whose cultural florescence in Central Asia was more luminescent than any other center of classical Islamic civilization. More than a dozen classical texts on Islamic political thought were translated to serve as handbooks for statecraft and envision the Ottoman ruler in a way that suits the expectations of learned Islam. This humanistic enterprise was coupled with extensive translation activity through which almost all the canonical works of Islamic political theory in Arabic and Persian were either rendered into Turkish or reworked to serve new purposes.

By analyzing authors, texts, audiences, and specific issues raised, Chapter 1 lays out the full scope of the Ottoman discourse on rulership and its impact on state and society. A key problem discussed in this chapter is the question of intended media to convey political ideas. In the context of the sixteenth century, proponents of different visions of rulership expressed their ideas via three principal languages that emerged in this period. The administrative language of the bureaucrats was empirically drawn from the very Ottoman experience in statecraft and therefore exclusively belonged to its specific context. The juristic language was part of the standard Islamic law and enabled one to speak for and engage with the universal legal imperative of the broader ulema network. The esoteric and symbolic language of Sufism was an encrypted medium of communication and always purported to have contained hidden messages intelligible only to the properly trained.

Chapter 2 deals with the formative period of Ottoman political thought from the formal end of the Seljuk state at the turn of the fourteenth century to the Egyptian campaign of 1517. It argues that

political ideals and imageries inculcated from the Ottomans' own historical experience, appropriation of Arabic, and the Persian corpora on Islamic political theory; and its exposure to indigenous practices of authority constituted an integral part of state formation and ruling ideology that redefined rulership in general, and the caliphate in particular. Having been founded at the western fringes of the Islamicate society in the midst of nominally converted Turkish-speaking nomadic populations, the Ottomans at large were only gradually exposed to learned traditions of High Islam. Popular spiritual orders of autonomous frontier dervishes who imagined rulers in the image of their shaykhs played a crucial role in the process whereby the Ottoman elite acquainted themselves with Islamic notions of rulership. Two foundational epics of the Ottoman Empire, Halīlnāme and Iskendernāme, were composed in this period. These narratives were among the first Turkish texts that defined the Ottoman state in Islamic terms and portrayed the Ottoman ruler as caliph. Translation of political texts and composition of frontier epics gradually transformed Turkish, which was continuously despised by the learned as a profane language of illiterate nomads with no alphabet, into one of the three principal languages of Islamic learning and culture.

A steady influx of émigrés into Ottoman territories, mostly mystics who fled political turmoil in the Persianate east, continuously furnished the Ottoman elite with Sufistic imageries of authority. Transmission of Islamic knowledge was expedited by deliberate policies of fifteenth-century rulers who sought to attract prominent Sufis, jurists, poets, and artists with exceptional favors and privileges. Among them were a number of scholars who specialized in statecraft and played critical roles in the process of empire building. With the conquest of Arabic-speaking lands in 1516-1517, which entailed the acquisition of a vast juristic literature on government, the Ottoman appropriation of the full corpus of Islamic political thought was complete. By inheriting the scholarly establishment and cultural repositories of Syria and Egypt, the Ottomans also fully incorporated the legitimation apparatus, iconography, and ideological manifestations of the Mamluk dynasty, including the title of "the Custodian of the two Noble Sanctuaries." Having unified the central lands of Islamic civilization, the Ottomans appropriated all the symbols and material representations of preceding Muslim empires while commanding the largest and the most versatile contingent of scholars to craft an imperial ideology based on the caliphate.

Chapter 3 examines the innovative panoply of views on the nature of political authority, and visions of the sultanate as its form of embodiment. Virtually every author writing on rulership felt it necessary first to address the question of what political authority really was, its raison d'être and status among humanity, how it was acquired or lost, the nature of the ruler and his morality, and historical models of rulership. No author doubted the consensusconfirmed view that the sultanate was the highest rank a human being could attain, but they took divergent paths in defining its nature, scope, and entangled boundaries. A common attitude was to reconcile between various historical and theoretical models of political authority including philosopher-kingship, prophethood, and imamate by defining them in ways compatible with their own visions of rulership. Elaborating on a particular vision of rulership almost always involved an explanation of human nature, human beings' existential status, and the purpose of life. There is a strong correlation between one's perception of human nature and vision of ideal rulership.

The practical application of this ontological consideration was worked out through three principal theories of acquiring rulership. By largely disregarding qualifications formulated in medieval Islamic sources, Sufis, bureaucrats, and jurists argued whether rulership was attained by grace, merit, or executive power. The prevailing view, however, purported that it was a grace from God (ni`met). It was a grace for humankind for which all should be grateful, as without political authority chaos and anarchy would prevail in the world, and people of different dispositions, interests, and talents would be unable to cooperate. It was a grace for the ruler because it placed him at the highest position among humankind, in the line of the prophets and the rightly guided caliphs and offered him the opportunity to become the governor of both the material and the spiritual realms at once. Undergirding these arguments were different perceptions of human nature, both as individuals and social bodies. For Sufis, for

example, a human being is inherently related to and is a reflection of God through his nature and therefore created to be His deputy on Earth. Every individual is considered to be a political being and, by nature, qualified to be His caliph. Such a perception made virtually every Sufi saint a potential claimant for universal caliphate as shown by many high-profile uprisings by rebel mystics who challenged the legitimacy of the Ottoman ruler.

This Sufistic conception of the caliphate was qualitatively different than its medieval construction as it represents an epistemological break with the juristic imperative of High Islam. Sufi-minded authors engaged in a phenomenological undertaking in order to cultivate imageries of rulership drawn from an esoteric interpretation of Islamic ontology that led to the invention of an all-encompassing notion of political authority equated with the caliphate. This notion of the caliphate was illustrated through archetyping based on the Sufi cosmology. The absolute model for the caliph was God Himself, his attributes and relation to His creation. This conception was not simply an imitation of God's government on Earth but referred to a condition of being entrusted with God's very government. Prophets with executive power, including Adam, Moses, Solomon, and Muhammed, were portrayed as perfect role models in practicing the human extension of God's government. Historical figures drawn from past empires whose grandeur and mission the Ottomans were purported to have inherited—such as the Persian Ardashir, the Greek Alexander, and the Abbasid Harun al-Rashid—were cited as ideal models of how prophetic government is exercised by fallible human agents. As such, the Ottoman caliphate came to be spiritually envisioned, theologically sanctioned, and historically established.

Chapter 4 continues to examine the views on the nature of authority in Islam, diverse visions of the caliphate and its relation to sultanate as a political regime, and portrayals of the perfect ruler through archetype-building and reinterpretation of Islamic history. At the core of this discourse was the question of prophethood that came to be widely contested in the post-Abbasid Muslim society, namely, who was Prophet Muhammed, who inherited his position, and in what capacity? The

emergence of Turko-Mongolian dynasties whose Islamic credentials were at best questionable, the decline of the power of the jurists, and the spread of Sufi orders in response to spiritual anxieties of fragmented Muslim society enabled the Sufis to resolve this question in their favor. It was consensual among Ottoman Sufis to argue that the Prophet had three distinct natures: spiritual (wilāya), political (saltana), and prophecy (nubuwwa), where the latter two emanate from the first one. In this configuration, the jurists, as inheritors of Muhammed's prophecy, and rulers, as claimants for his political nature, were obliged to submit to the spiritual authority, namely the perfect human being among the Sufis whose identity was disclosed only to the worthy.

The juristic conception of the caliphate formulated by medieval jurists was, in theory, a contractual relationship between the ruler and the Muslim community, provided that an elaborate set of conditions—including the ruler's descent from the tribe of the Prophet—are met. Being a non-Arab dynasty, the Ottoman authority could hardly be legitimized in the form of a caliphate on the basis of the juristic canon. The fragmentation of the post-Abbasid unity of Muslim polity and society had irreversibly compromised the universality of Muslim rulership. For the medieval caliphate, it was the jurists who formulated the script for the political ecumene, exercising a near monopoly for religious justification by establishing the standard of law across the ecumenic cosmopolitanism of the Abbasid Empire. In the post-Abbasid world, this role was overtaken by the Sufis whose esoteric and syncretic teachings let them profoundly reinterpret the concept of the caliphate by dissociating it from its historicist justifications and juristic normativism. While the Ottoman historians successfully docked their dynastic lineage to the historical caliphate, the juristic conception was confined to the scholarly study of legal texts in Ottoman madrasas. The juristic/historical caliphate was a successorship to Muhammed (khalīfat Rasūl Allāh) in his political capacity through a sanctioned physical lineage. The Sufi-minded proponents of the Ottoman dynasty, however, envisioned the caliph to be God's unmediated deputy (khalīfat Allāh) and attributed to the Ottoman ruler the same spiritual qualities and powers accorded to the axis mundi (qutb), the invisible perfect human being to whom God entrusts

the management of His whole creation in Sufi cosmology.

Chapter 5 analyzes the mystification of the Ottoman caliphate and the apocalyptic-messianic reconstruction of imperial ideology in the context of the long Ottoman-Safavid conflict of the sixteenth century. Current studies in the main treat the Ottoman-Safavid conflict as no more than a sectarian conflict between two expanding Muslim empires. The Ottomans, however, perceived it as an apocalyptic conflict between primordial forces of faith and disbelief, often expressed in manicheistic dichotomies. Being one of the most aggressively fought religious wars in Islamic history, it profoundly altered both Sunni and Shiite conceptions of history and rulership. The Safavids, being at once a Turkoman chieftainship, a Shiite dynasty, and a Sufi order, were better endowed with esoteric image-making skills than the Ottomans, whose juristic and theological arguments against heresy were, simply, by definition nullified. Despite the Ottoman military might that overwhelmed the Safavids in multiple battles, the Safavid-Shiite call resonated much more strongly among the vast Turkoman diaspora from Central Asia to the Balkans, particularly among popular mystical orders of the countryside. In response, the Ottomans renewed their weakened alliances with prominent Sufi orders and rehabilitated discredited Sufi figures with controversial teachings. Ibn Arabi, for example, perhaps the most potent of medieval mystics whose extensive corpus of writings provide an endless repository of possibilities for alternative interpretations, quickly rose to the status of a patron saint for the Ottoman establishment. Endowed with the teachings of Ibn Arabi, or the Greatest Shaykh, as now commonly called, it was Sufis who fought at the forefront of an intensive ideological warfare against the Safavids. The principal goal of this undertaking was to invalidate the Safavid claims for spiritual authority and propagate the Ottoman sultan as a Sufi-caliph, or even the awaited Mahdi of the end of times.

Sufi-minded Ottoman historians reconstructed Islamic history in which both the Ottomans and the Safavids were identified as the parties of the same perennial conflict since the creation of Adam. In the final chapter of this struggle, the Ottomans and the Safavids—both ethnically Turkic dynasties—were identified as the Romans and the Persians in

allusion to the well-known Qur'anic prophecy that the former would defeat the latter. Perception of the Safavids as the perfect other for Islam was not mere war propaganda. The conquest of Constantinople, reportedly prophesized by Prophet Muhammed, and the approach of the end of the first millennium of the Islamic calendar had already sparked apocalyptic anxieties. Astrologers, geomancers, divinators, and occult specialists who were long discredited by the Sunni scholarly establishment now became respectable figures of religious and political discourse. Even the mainstream jurists and Sufis openly engaged in the practice of prognostication. Occultic practices, long performed by enigmatic esotericists, now turned into sought after mainstream arts with which the learned began to be increasingly endowed. Believing in their own divine mission, a series of Ottoman rulers provided patronage to a large contingent of such scholars who continuously occupied themselves with revealing prophecies; unearthing God's hidden messages; and deciphering meanings behind names, numbers, heavenly conjunctions, and the like. Through the endeavors of high-profile jurists and mainstream Sufis, this esoteric epistemology was fully reconciled with the formal teachings of Islam and became an important component of political imagery and imperial ideology.

To counter the Safavid propaganda, Sufi-minded scholars first fabricated a noble lineage by infusing Abrahamic, Persian, and Turko-Mongolian traditions of origination that not only tied the Ottoman dynasty to prestigious empires of antiquity but also Islamized its lineage and portrayed it as divinely ordained to rule. Second, they put Islamic sources to a new scrutiny to discover divine revelations regarding the Ottomans, which resulted in constructing an elaborate eschatology in which the Ottomans were specifically foretold to rule. Third, the Ottoman rulership was depicted to be the seal of the caliphate; that is, there would not be any other Muslim authority until the end of times. Süleyman I was often compared to his namesake, King Solomon, and found mightier than the latter, for in fighting the war of the end of times he was endowed with unique qualities by divine providence. One of the most interesting texts of the entire Islamic corpus on political prognostication was written in this period by a prominent Sufi, Ibn

Isa Saruhani. This was an elaborate future history of the Ottomans from 1516, the year it was composed, until 2028 CE, the year it was believed the world would end. For generations, the text was continuously updated to refresh the Ottoman myth as God's chosen and final caliphate by validating Ibn Isa's prognostication. This and similar undertakings produced a new genre of political writing that exclusively narrated the unique qualities of the House of Osman and its Islamic credentials. First conceived and drafted by Idris-i Bidlisi in his chronicle, this account was continuously updated and expanded at critical junctures and served as the basis of imperial ideology with constitutional import until the very end of the empire.

[Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire](#) by Abdurrahman Atçıl [Cambridge University Press, 9781107177161]

During the early Ottoman period (1300-1453), scholars in the empire carefully kept their distance from the ruling class. This changed with the capture of Constantinople. From 1453 onwards, the Ottoman government co-opted large groups of scholars, usually over a thousand at a time, and employed them in a hierarchical bureaucracy to fulfill educational, legal and administrative tasks. Abdurrahman Atçıl explores the factors that brought about this gradual transformation of scholars into scholar-bureaucrats, including the deliberate legal, bureaucratic and architectural actions of the Ottoman sultans and their representatives, scholars' own participation in shaping the rules governing their status and careers, and domestic and international events beyond the control of either group.

Excerpt: This book aims to open a window onto the successive turns and reconfigurations in Ottoman ideology and governance during the early modern period. To this end, it explores the changing roles and attitudes of Sunni scholars (ulema) in Ottoman lands from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century. How did the Ottomans adapt to the volatile global and regional, ideological and political conditions that shaped their world during this period? What functions did scholars serve in the Ottoman polity at different moments within this larger time? Did scholars help the Ottomans sustain their power? Did scholars exercise authority independently of the government? What policies did the Ottomans adopt in order to coopt scholars? How did the roles and positions of scholars in the Ottoman polity change?

The Ottomans ascended to the political stage by establishing a small principality in Bithynia, in northwestern Anatolia, at the turn of the fourteenth century. The early Ottoman political enterprise can be seen as a product of the conditions and limits set by the advance of the Chinggisid Mongols into the Islamic world. It functioned on the fringes of Anatolia and the Balkans and vied with several principalities to fill the power vacuum created by the collapse of the centralized Seljuk administration under Mongol attack. Its military power to a great extent depended on nomadic warriors, who moved westward to the frontiers in greater numbers after the arrival of the Mongols. Its rulers tried to legitimize their power by using a variety of Mongol and Islamic ideas — a feature of post-Mongol polities in the Islamic world.

The Ottoman political enterprise appears to have transformed from a post-Mongol principality into an early modern empire beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century. The conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul), the time-honored capital of the Roman (later, Byzantine) Empire, in 1453 appears as a milestone that properly marked the beginning of the transformation. This astonishing success underlined the military edge the Ottomans enjoyed over their rivals. Their advantage increased with the growing use of firearms in field and siege battles, a technology that marginalized nomadic warriors? The Ottomans continued to extend their territories in the east and west after the conquest until the end of the sixteenth century, moving at differing paces during various periods and sometimes facing setbacks. Having brought Istanbul under their control and established rule over diverse geographies and peoples, the Ottomans gradually adopted an imperial identity and began to assert a universalist ideology. Related to this new imperial identity were efforts to establish a legal-bureaucratic administration, which would increase the center's power by facilitating its control of the provinces.

Bureaucratization was a particular global phenomenon of the early modern period. Imperial states at that time set out to recruit an army of civil officials to supplement their military control over the provinces. These officials usually had legal

knowledge and expertise by virtue of which they could fulfill administrative, judicial, financial, and scribal duties. They reported directly to the central government and augmented its power in the provinces. For example, in France and Spain, graduates of the burgeoning universities (lieutenants and corregidors, respectively) filled bureaucratic ranks and participated in administering the centralized states. In England, notables were appointed as justices of the peace in their respective localities and reported to the central government. In Mughal India, Muslim and Hindu officials, who were fit into the mansabdari system, worked to realize the financial and legal goals of the central government in the provinces.' Along lines similar to these bureaucratization efforts, beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century, the Ottomans coopted into the imperial administration a sizable group of scholars who had trained in madrasas and had acquired the legal expertise and competence to fulfill various bureaucratic tasks. These scholars constituted a civil bureaucracy under the control of the central government and fulfilled legal, financial, scribal, diplomatic, and educational tasks.

From the perspective of earlier Islamic history, the bureaucratization of scholars in the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period appears to have been unprecedented. Generally speaking, in medieval Islamic society — where religious knowledge, law, and politics were hardly separable — scholars commanded special prestige and respect. Their specialized knowledge of the scriptural sources (the Qur'an and the Sunna) and the interpretation of these sources distinguished them from others and gave them the authority to define the beliefs and acts enjoined by Islam, They transmitted their knowledge in informal gatherings or in the structured environment of madrasas. They also articulated religious and legal rules (sharia) and at times provided private nonbinding religio-legal guidance by acting as jurists (muftis) In addition, the legal and bureaucratic capabilities of scholars made them indispensable to the ruling authorities: they were appointed as judges (kadis), judges of equity courts (mazalim), market inspectors (muhtesibs), and so on.

Scholars, however, did not constitute a closed group or a social or professional class. Any member of society could acquire the status of scholar if he or she dedicated his or her time to learning the relevant texts and methods. The certificates (icazet; lit., "permission") given by teachers verified the qualifications of individual scholars. These certificates had no connection with the rulers and did not necessarily bring official rights. Most often, scholars maintained an ordinary life and could not be easily recognized on the basis of their external trappings.

In Islamic societies, scholars embodied a moral authority that was separate and independent from the political authority. By virtue of their knowledge, scholars had the right to define most of the religious and legal rules of the society. The wielders of political authority therefore could not interfere in scholarly matters unless they acquired the knowledge and skills of a scholar. The sensibilities of Muslim society undergirded scholars' authority and checked rulers, preventing them from encroaching on the scholars' sphere of expertise. Further, scholars usually valued their distance from the ruling class. In different periods and in different parts of the Islamic world, individual scholars established close relationships with rulers, serving, for instance, in madrasas established by the reigning rulers and acting as judges or advisers. But scholars' ethos prevented their becoming too closely enmeshed with the ruling class. Consorting with political authorities was thought to compromise the integrity of individual scholars.

This broad-stroked depiction of scholars in medieval Islamic society does not seem to correspond, however, with the positions and perspectives of scholars in the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period. From the second half of the fifteenth century onward, the relationship of scholars with the sultans was not the reluctant service of a few individuals. Instead, a multitude of scholars accepted employment from the government. Some scholars spent their entire lives in careers within the imperial administration, where they were promoted up through the hierarchy and had their rights protected by laws, regulations, and precedent. As a result, scholars as a group became increasingly affiliated with the government through an institutional bond. They acquired the status of askeri, associated with the ruling class. They also came to constitute a professional class, developed an esprit de corps, and began to underline their distinction from

nonbureaucratic scholars. As a corollary to all of these developments, these scholars began to see their relationship with the government as valuable instead of as compromising.

The following pages present the story of this transformation in the position and attitudes of scholars in the Ottoman Empire from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century. I explore the contingencies and particular characteristics involved in scholars' integration into the Ottoman administration, paying due attention to historical, legal, internal, regional, and global factors.

Scholar-Bureaucrats

As the foregoing discussion indicates, policies that were implemented beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century resulted in the rise of a professional group of scholars in Ottoman government service. I refer to them as scholar-bureaucrats to underline their distinctiveness.

Scholar-bureaucrats received education on the Qur'an and the Sunna and the traditional knowledge derived from them. They served as professors, judges, or jurists. In other words, they acquired the traditional qualifications of and fulfilled the usual functions of scholars. Thus, there is nothing wrong in calling them scholars. At the same time, however, scholar-bureaucrats became affiliated with the Ottoman government through an institutional framework that was protected by laws and by established precedents. They pursued a lifetime career, accepting regular promotions to progressively better hierarchically organized positions. As legal experts, they fulfilled judicial, scribal, financial, and military tasks for the Ottoman government. This framework was not temporary but well established and durable, making it possible for a large group of men in every generation to professionally affiliate with the Ottoman government. Insofar as the nature of the relationship of these scholars with the government was concerned, they differed from their predecessors and contemporary nonbureaucratic scholars. As such, they appeared to be bureaucrats.

An alternative concept in discussing the history of scholars in the Ottoman Empire is the ilmiye (Ottoman learned establishment). This term refers to the separate bureaucratic hierarchical structure of scholars that developed after the division in the Ottoman bureaucracy and the creation of a separate hierarchy for scholar-bureaucrats toward the middle of the sixteenth century. Once the ilmiye appeared, it existed side by side with the kalemiye hierarchy of financial and scribal officials.[17] Thus, using the term ilmiye when discussing the developments that took place before the sixteenth century runs the risk of projecting this differentiated bureaucratic structure backward in time, when in fact no such division existed before the mid-sixteenth century.

One might consider using the terms judiciary and jurists to refer to the group of scholar-bureaucrats in government service. It is true that they were legal experts and could fulfill almost all functions related to the law within and outside the empire's courtrooms. Quite a few scholar-bureaucrats spent all or a substantial part of their careers serving as judges or appointed jurists. But not all of the scholar-bureaucrats undertook judicial or jurisprudential functions; there were many who served as professors or as financial or chancellery officials. Thus, these two terms cannot encompass the entire group of scholar-bureaucrats. In addition, in the case of jurist, this title did not necessarily depend on government appointment, so the category may also include scholars who were not scholar-bureaucrats.

Considering all of these factors, the term scholar-bureaucrats possesses three advantages for the purposes of this study: (1) it allows precision, in that it refers to all the members of the group studied here and excludes others who are not of central importance in this context; (2) it gives an idea about their qualifications, jobs, and mode of affiliation; and (3) it is flexible enough to be used when discussing scholars who served in official government positions from the second half of the fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth.

Sources

Not many written sources from the period attest the history of scholars in Ottoman lands during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Researchers have necessarily made do with the occasional notes in Ibn Battuta's (d. 1368/69) Tubfa al-Nuzzar about the scholars he met during his travels in Anatolia,[19] several endowment deeds

for madrasas, a few official documents, and scattered biographical or autobiographical notes about scholars in various sources. The architectural evidence, however, of surviving madrasas and other buildings can inform educated guesses about investment in educational institutions and about the attitude of rulers toward scholars and scholarly institutions during these years.

From the second half of the fifteenth century, in contrast, a significant number of written sources about scholars remain extant. The histories of the Ottoman dynasty, the production of which started in the last decades of the fifteenth century, included notes related to scholars in the Ottoman realm. In addition, quite a few imperial decrees, endowment deeds, and official documents of various types, which might include information about scholars from this time, have been preserved. Furthermore, the architectural evidence in most cases can supplement and confirm the written sources.

Beginning in the first decades of the sixteenth century, a flurry of official documents and registers providing information about scholars was produced. Some of these are introduced or analyzed for the first time in this book. It seems that from the 1540s onward, regular day registers (ruznamçe) recording new initiates to government service (novices/mülaztm) and others recording appointments and promotions were introduced and kept in the office of the chief judge (kadtasker) of Rumeli. The abundance of official documents from the sixteenth century, including regular registers, makes it easier to corroborate the information gleaned from the historical accounts, as well as from other written sources and architectural evidence.

During the sixteenth century, a new type of source for the history of scholars in the Ottoman realm appeared. In Al-Shaqa'iq al-Nu`maniyya fi `Ulama al-Dawla al-`Uthmaniyya, Ahmed Tasköprizade (d. 1561) adopted the genre of biographical dictionary to write the history of scholars and Sufis in Ottoman lands in Arabic. He collected information about the scholars and Sufis who lived in, passed through, or died in the Ottoman realm from the beginning of the Ottoman enterprise until his completion of Al-Shaqa'iq in 1558 and recorded their lives using written sources, orally transmitted reports, his personal memories, and the memories of his friends and relatives. As Al-

Shaqa'iq includes a great deal of information about scholars that cannot be acquired from any other written or unwritten sources, it is probably the most significant source available attesting the history of scholars during the period covered in this book, 13001600. Nonetheless, one must not overlook the fact that writing in Istanbul in the middle of the sixteenth century, Tasköprizade reflected some of the interests of scholars in the Ottoman center and tended to project the realities of his century backward in Al-Shaqa'iq.

Al-Shaqa'iq quickly became popular among the reading public in the Ottoman realm. Several scholars abridged it, and others translated it into Turkish.32 Mecdi Mehmed's (d. 1590/91) translation, Hada'iq al-Shaqa'iq, later came to be considered the most successful of all the translations.33 Scholars such as Asik Çelebi (d. 1572) and Ali bin Bali (d. 1584), who was also known as Ali Minik, wrote continuations (dhayl) to Al-Shaqa'iq in Arabic. These continuations include the biographies of scholars and Sufis who died after 1558. During the early seventeenth century, Nevizade Atayi (d. 1636) wrote a Turkish continuation to Al-Shaqa'iq, incorporating the biographical information contained in its earlier Arabic continuations. During the sixteenth century, in addition to Al-Shaqa'iq, its translations, and continuations, other important biographical dictionaries were also written, recording the lives of poets and Hanafi scholars — from Abu Hanifa to Ottoman times.36 These biographical dictionaries at times provide information about scholars that is not available in any other sources.

The Structure of This Study

This book has three parts, each of which deals with a distinct period in the history of scholars and scholarly institutions in Ottoman lands, as well as with the relationship of both with the Ottoman government. The first chapter of each part discusses the pertinent political and ideological conditions, setting the stage for a discussion of the standing and attitudes of scholars in each period.

Part I covers the early Ottoman period (1300-1453), tackling in Chapter 1 the political and ideological transformation in Anatolia after the advance of the Mongols in the thirteenth century and discussing how the Ottomans worked through

the opportunities and limits of the time. Chapter 2 explores Ottoman efforts to attract scholars to their realm and the variety of relationships that obtained between scholars and the Ottoman government.

Part II focuses on the formative period of the hierarchy of scholarbureaucrats (1453-1530). Chapter 3 investigates the transformation of the Ottoman political enterprise from a post-Mongol principality into an early modern empire. I discuss the effective and symbolic significance of the conquest of Istanbul and the prominent turning points during the reigns of Mehmed II (1444-46 and 1451-81), Bayezid II (1481-1512), and Selim I (1512-20) and during the first decade of Süleyman's rule. Chapter 4 is dedicated to examining Mehmed II's architectural and legal policies and the role of scholar-bureaucrats in imperial administration and their attitude toward the government during his reign. Exploring the developments related to scholarbureaucrats during 1481-1530, Chapter 5 then draws attention to the increasing importance of scholar-bureaucrats in the formation of political and ideological discourse, as well as their growing self-awareness as a privileged professional class during the same period.

Part III deals with the period of the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy's consolidation (1530-1600). Chapter 6 underlines the shift in managing the Ottoman imperial enterprise and the growing emphasis on internal consolidation at the expense of territorial expansion, beginning in the 1530s. The increase in the number of civil and military officials in the center and provinces, the vigorous activity of population surveys for military and tax purposes, the introduction of new bureaucratic procedures, the concentration of the dynastic family in Istanbul, the formation of new rules, and the regulation and codification of laws are discussed as elements of the new emphasis on administrative efficiency. The remaining Chapters (710), thematically organized, investigate various aspects of the development of the scholarly-bureaucratic class during the period 15301600. Chapter 7 addresses the increasing power of dignitary scholarbureaucrats (mevali) in the administration of the hierarchy and general imperial governance. Chapter 8 details the proliferation of positions in which scholar-bureaucrats could serve through the

construction of new madrasas, the incorporation of old ones into the hierarchy, and the extension of the centralized judicial administration. This chapter also points out the growing concern of administrators, madrasa founders, architects, and scholar-bureaucrats with defining the rank of each position within the hierarchy. Chapter 9 takes up the issue of professional differentiation between scholar-bureaucrats and explores knowledge, professional competence, patronage, and economic means as factors affecting the success of individual scholar-bureaucrats in professional life. Chapter 10 deals with the four different career paths scholar-bureaucrats could follow.

In the Conclusion, I summarize this book's findings and outline the development of the bureaucratization of scholars, before discussing the implications of this bureaucratization for some prominent themes of the early modern period. Finally, I present the lines of inquiry that future studies on related topics might follow.

Conclusion

[Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire](#) represents the findings of research on the formation of a civil bureaucracy, its development, and its growing sophistication in the Ottoman Empire through an examination of changes in the relationship of scholars with the dynasty and its enterprise of state formation during the early modern period.

In the tumultuous political and ideological environment of post-Mongol Anatolia, the Ottomans needed the services of scholars to develop a sophisticated administration and to augment their legitimacy. The early Ottomans had no indigenous scholars in their realm, because the Ottoman polity originated and developed in formerly Christian territories. For this, beginning in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans invited prominent scholars to visit their lands and encouraged them to stay. Simultaneously, they began to build madrasas in which these educated men could teach and train other scholars. As specialists of law, scholars provided the Ottomans with knowledge of statecraft and fulfilled essential governmental tasks. They served as viziers, bureaucrats, professors, judges, jurists, and in other capacities. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, scholars were in high demand throughout the Islamic

world. A plethora of political units built on the ashes of the Mongol system wanted to acquire the services of scholars. Scholars were aware of this situation and did not feel obliged to remain loyal to any particular political group. For this reason, the Ottomans had difficulty retaining scholars in their service, and many insouciantly left Ottoman territories to receive the patronage of other rulers.

The conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453 can be taken as a watershed moment for Ottoman power, ideology, and governance that is usually characterized as a transition from principality to empire. After the conquest, the Ottomans' advantages over their competitors accumulated such that they incorporated into their territory several Muslim and non-Muslim political units in Anatolia and the Balkans, one after another. Parallel to this territorial expansion was the vigorous program of state formation and gradual development of a large civil-bureaucratic apparatus (in addition to military cadres) that would implement orders from the Ottoman central government. In addition, as the new rulers of the centuries-old imperial capital, Istanbul, the Ottomans began to fashion an imperial identity and articulate universalist claims.

In connection with this state formation and imperial vision, the Ottoman central government began to adopt policies that aimed to bring scholars on board. Traditionally perceiving themselves as the independent holders of moral authority in Islamic society, scholars up to this point had tended to remain aloof from the ruling class. Given this situation, the government tried to ensure scholars' loyalty and dedication to the Ottoman enterprise by increasing their dependence on it. To this end, the number of positions in which scholars could serve under government control was systematically increased. Ottoman sultans, other members of the dynastic family, and statesmen constructed many madrasas of various sizes in different parts of the empire. The central government directly controlled appointments to most of these newly built schools. In addition, the government attempted to decrease the number of scholarly positions that were free from its interference and to marginalize them. For example, the government brought under its control the professorships of many madrasas built in the preOttoman period and of others founded during the Ottoman period but intended to be free from

government intrusion by virtue of stipulations in their endowment deeds (vakfiye). As a result of these shifts, more and more scholars began to expect appointments from the government.

Another device that facilitated the cooptation of scholars was the government's organization of all the positions under its control in a hierarchy. Madrasas were stratified according to factors such as founder, size, and location. In addition, judgeships, jurist positions, chief judgeships, and financial and scribal appointments were linked to the different steps in this hierarchy of madrasas. Thus, a scholar who accepted employment from the government would pursue a lifetime career with regular advancements and increases in pay and prestige. He would attain high positions toward the end of his career, according to his merit and connections. By promulgating a law code (kanunname) in which the hierarchical rules were recorded, Mehmed II intended to show that the scholarly system was not temporary and did not depend on the discretion of any one person, including himself.

The incipient Ottoman scholarly system did not instantaneously or smoothly take root. The gradual affiliation of scholars with the government was a development that was perhaps unprecedented in Islamic history. As opposed to earlier examples of the relationship between scholars and rulers, the Ottoman system did not represent a tacit agreement of cooperation between scholars and rulers. Neither did it follow the model of a ruler coopting several scholars by assigning them places as companions in the royal court. Rather, the Ottomans provided for the affiliation of a large number of scholars (e.g., during the early sixteenth century, roughly 1500-2000 scholars at a time) with the central government. They made arrangements for an abstract institutional form, delimited by laws and regulations, that constituted the link between scholars and the government. Throughout this study, the term scholar-bureaucrat has been used to refer to the scholars in government service with the intention to draw attention to the distinctive nature of the relationship of these scholars with the government.

In the face of this significant development, both scholar-bureaucrats and rulers at times appeared mistrustful of what such a system would lead to. Scholar-bureaucrats did not want to lose their

integrity, while sultans were fearful of developing a system that lay beyond their immediate control. For this reason, many scholar-bureaucrats considered government service a burden and felt the urge to assert their independence. On the other hand, sultans and their agents occasionally improvised new hierarchical rules or breached existing ones.

During the 1530s, under external and internal pressures, the Ottomans realigned their administration and ideology to more closely reflect the political reality. The wars with the Habsburgs in the west and those with the Safavids in the east had not brought any significant territorial gains for the Ottomans for many years, and the futility of efforts to eliminate these two enemies had become clear. What is more, the control of the central government over a significant part of the imperial domain was only nominal; whenever there was a rebellion or enemy encroachment, these territories easily fell out of imperial control. In such a situation, although the Ottomans continued their universalist claims discursively, they undertook actions that would help stabilize borders as well as achieve internal consolidation by increasing the central government's control. For this, peace treaties with the Habsburgs and the Safavids were signed. Most of the empire's provinces were then surveyed to determine their population and to assess their economic and military resources. A greater number of military and civil officials were recruited in the center and employed to oversee imperial interests throughout the empire.

This augmented administrative centralization after 1530 had repercussions for the positions of scholar-bureaucrats in the empire. First of all, the bureaucratic expansion was accompanied by bureaucratic specialization: financial and scribal offices were assigned more and more to officials who had received specialized training. As a result, scholarbureaucrats stopped serving in these positions. Second, the central government brought under its control a greater number of educational and judicial offices, such as professorships, judgeships, and jurist positions. Thus, the increased number of scholar-bureaucrats (denied access to positions in the financial and scribal offices) became professionally specialized in educational and judicial offices, and they came to constitute a bureaucratic hierarchy of their own, known as the

ilmiye. Finally, the expansion, sophistication, and division of the bureaucracy occurred alongside the development of well-defined rules governing the appointments and promotions of bureaucrats, as well as their duties and powers. The heads of the government, including the sultan, hardly ever attempted to breach these rules. Hence, the stages of professional life for scholar-bureaucrats became ever more predictable.

Related to these changes in Ottoman ideology and administration after 1530 was the transformation in the attitude of the scholar-bureaucrats toward the Ottoman imperial enterprise. By then, affiliation with the imperial administration had a history and had become routine. Given the strong legal guarantees and precedents for their regular professional advancement, most scholar-bureaucrats did not question the propriety of their affiliations. In addition, scholar-bureaucrats now had their own bureaucratic hierarchy, which largely functioned according to impersonal rules. They probably felt that they had their own autonomous sphere within the imperial system, that their scholarly integrity and independence were not harmed, and that they could transform Ottoman ideology and law from within according to their own ideals. Thus, scholar-bureaucrats increasingly saw the Ottoman enterprise as a blessing and dedicated themselves to its advancement, attempting to strengthen their own positions in it.

Implications for Ottoman Historical Studies

To begin with, the conception and periodization of Ottoman history according to the decline paradigm dominated Ottoman studies for most of the twentieth century. According to this model, the period from the beginning of the Ottoman enterprise until the late sixteenth century was conceived as a period of gradual ascendance, while the following period until the end of the empire in the early twentieth century was a period of slow but inevitable decline.[1] Within this periodization, during the period of ascendance, scholar-bureaucrats appeared as constituting a significant administrative branch that developed and implemented increasingly sophisticated principles while contributing to the advancement of imperial power and prestige. On the other hand, beginning in the late sixteenth century, this

paradigm sees scholar-bureaucrats as degenerated: bribery, nepotism, favoritism, and the sale of offices grew rampant among their ranks; scholarly creativity ended; and incompetents filled scholarly offices. Thus, in this view, scholar-bureaucrats played a significant part in the decline of the empire?

Revisionist scholarship has challenged the decline paradigm by showing that its proponents relied less on facts than on the perceptions of the authors of advice books from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (known as nasihatname literature) regarding what had happened. Contemporaries were not disinterested observers, nor did they have the cognitive distance from the events or the intellectual tools necessary for rigorous historical analysis. Thus, one need not necessarily blindly accept their judgment when evaluating this period.

This study confirms the revisionist scholarship and adds details to its insights. Authors such as Mustafa Ali and those who drafted the imperial decree of 1598 commented on the state of scholar-bureaucrats and argued that the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic system had deteriorated. They cited the "infiltration of outsiders" (who, as explained in Chapter 7, were those who received government employment without having the status of a novice, mülazemet) as one of the main causes of degeneration among scholar-bureaucrats. On this issue, the current study presents significant findings. The legitimate means of admission to the hierarchy showed variety in the early sixteenth century. As discussed in Chapter S, scholars without the status of novice constituted the majority of scholar-bureaucrats around 1523. However, as shown in Part III of this book, after 1530, dignitary scholar-bureaucrats (mevali) gradually increased their control over admissions to the hierarchy and allowed only those who had attained the status of novice to receive appointments to government service. It then became possible for contemporary administrators and observers to pinpoint only a few scholars in government service who had never had novice status and to blame them for what they perceived as degeneration and decline. In other words, regarding the so-called infiltration of outsiders, there was in fact progress in the hierarchy on this point, not a reversal, during the

period when the writers of advice works were active.

Considering that compared with the earlier period, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were not necessarily distinguished by diminishing standards, Ottomanists of the revisionist school have tended to present the developments during this period as change and transformation instead of decline. Recently, Baki Tezcan offered a new conceptualization and periodization of Ottoman history, paying specific attention to this transformative period. He suggested that from 1580 onward, the Ottoman Empire transformed so thoroughly that it is possible to conceive of it as a different political unit: the Second Ottoman Empire. Two distinguishing features of this new unit were the expansion of the political nation and the limitation of the absolute authority of the sultan. The janissary corps became the conduit for the inclusion of new members in the political nation. Carpenters, butchers, bakers, and others who were otherwise considered commoners (reaya) bought their way into the janissary corps and hence into the privileged askeri class. Thus, they had a chance to influence developments in the empire. The jurists' law (sharia) and scholar-bureaucrats began to play a greater role in the regulation of public affairs and provided legitimacy for limiting the sultan's authority.

My study indicates the existence of developments analogous to what Tezcan identified as characteristic of the Second Ottoman Empire throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I have shown that acquiring the status of askeri by entering the hierarchy of scholar-bureaucrats was a path open to nearly anyone during the period. Men of Muslim or non-Muslim origin, from different ethnicities and various geographies, could become part of the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy by acquiring the necessary skills and associating with dignitaries. In addition, during the period 1453-1600, the hierarchy of scholar-bureaucrats developed and acquired increasingly sophisticated rules. The professional career paths of individual scholar-bureaucrats could be foreseen with considerable precision. The regulations that made this possible did not always start from the top and move down, from the sultan to his subjects. True, Mehmed II's law code played a critical role in the formation of the hierarchy; however, many rules

were unwritten. Sultans, founders of madrasas, architects, administrators of the hierarchy, and job seekers all participated in the development of these unwritten binding rules with their actions, demands, and rejections. Did the sultan have the power to break these rules? Theoretically, yes. But in practice, sultans and their representatives could enforce decisions contradicting these rules only with difficulty. They also would not want to risk appearing to be law-breaking sultans. Moreover, scholar-bureaucrats until the end of the sixteenth century do not appear to have been simple instruments legitimating and augmenting the power of the sultans. Rather, as representatives of the Islamic tradition and legal experts, they spoke with a discrete authority and frequently participated in the formation of public discourse. Although they did not have the means to independently curb the power of the sultan, they could authorize and provide legitimacy for forces within the dynastic family or outside it that emerged in opposition to the sultan.

Every piece of research is necessarily limited in scope, though it should raise questions and open space for additional exploration. Several research topics closely related to the subject at hand but that are not examined in this book constitute promising areas for further research. One of the perennial Ottoman historiographical debates is about the nature of the Ottoman legal system. Generally speaking, opinions on this issue can be divided into three groups: (1) The Ottoman legal system was secular. The sultan's will and his right of legislation, which had origins in the Turco-Mongol tradition, dominated it. The Islamic legal tradition or sharia was allowed to regulate the sphere of private law independently but did not have any such role in public law. (2) The Islamic legal tradition defined the essential characteristics of the Ottoman legal system. The sultan's will and Turco-Mongol ideas performed as much as the Islamic legal trdition allowed. (3) The Islamic legal tradition and Turco-Mongol practices constituted two distinct entities within the Ottoman system. They occasionally clashed, but Ottoman sultans and chief jurists (seyhülislams) exerted efforts to reconcile them so that these two legal structures cooperatively formed the Ottoman legal system.

It appears to me that the proponents of all three of these distinct opinions assume an unbridgeable gap between the historical proponents of the Islamic legal tradition and the sultan's legislative right, namely, scholars versus the ruling class. For them, the sultan's independent legislative right entailed the frailty of scholars and their status as instruments of the sultan. Similarly, the ascendance of sharia signified the domination of scholars at the expense of the sultan. Any reconciliation of these two systems in turn entailed cooperation between these two groups. But the argument of this book — that scholar-bureaucrats fulfilled functions at every level of the Ottoman administration and government — allows one to revise the assumption that there was a clear distinction between scholars and rulers, thus shedding new light on conceptions of the Ottoman legal system. Instead of looking at and speaking about this issue using the concepts of domination and cooperation, scholars can focus on ways that sultans, scholar-bureaucrats, and other representatives of sultans (all together constituting the elite) observed the legal landscape from the same perspective and shaped the legal system.

Another area rich for exploration is the relationship between scholars outside the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy and the imperial administration. Scholar-bureaucrats (i.e., government-affiliated scholars) did not comprise all the scholars in the Ottoman realm in any given period; there were always many nonbureaucratic scholars who did not (or could not) become part of the administration in Anatolia, the Balkans, and especially the Arab lands. Guy Burak's study attends to scholar-bureaucrats and nonbureaucratic scholars from Syria. He investigates the differences between these scholars from Syria and scholar-bureaucrats from Anatolia and the Balkans in terms of the ways each group understood the history, doctrine, and authoritative texts of the Hanafi legal school. In a recent article, Helen Pfeifer examined the interaction between scholar-bureaucrats of Rumi origin (Anatolia and the Balkans) and nonbureaucratic scholars of Damascus. However, the topic of nonbureaucratic scholars, in not only the Arab lands but also other regions of the empire, warrants additional studies exploring how these survived independently from the government and how they perceived Ottoman sovereignty and the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy.

[Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire](#) tells the story of scholar-bureaucrats —

their hierarchy, positions, and attitudes — until the end of the sixteenth century. One wonders what happened afterward. Baki Tezcan's opinion about the critical role of scholar-bureaucrats in the Second Ottoman Empire has just been mentioned; Madeline Zilfi's work, as well as Denise Klein's book, have significantly contributed to current knowledge about the existence (or lack thereof) of an aristocratic monopoly on the hierarchy and about various issues related to socioreligious movements during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, further studies about scholar-bureaucrats after 1600 are needed. For example, one promising area of inquiry would be to explore the reasons behind why the government expanded the scholarly bureaucracy and continued appointing judges from the center after 1600, at a time when tax collection was decentralizing and the government was appointingfewer and fewer financial officials from the capital. In addition, the changing roles of scholar-bureaucrats in the empire, the shifts in their attitudes, and relationships in distinct periods after 1600 are topics worth further investigation. In short, there is still much to be learned about scholars during 1300-1600 and beyond this period, and further research can build on the groundwork laid here in order to continue clarifying the place of scholars in the larger workings of an imperial society and administration that was a formidable player in the early modern landscape.

[The World in a Book: Al-Nuwayri and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition](#) by Elias Muhanna [Princeton University Press, 9780691175560]

Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri was a fourteenth-century Egyptian polymath and the author of one of the greatest encyclopedias of the medieval Islamic world—a thirty-one-volume work entitled The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition. A storehouse of knowledge, this enormous book brought together materials on nearly every conceivable subject, from cosmology, zoology, and botany to philosophy, poetry, ethics, statecraft, and history. Composed in Cairo during the golden age of Islamic encyclopedic activity, the Ultimate Ambition was one of hundreds of large-scale compendia, literary anthologies, dictionaries, and chronicles produced at this time—an effort that was instrumental in organizing the archive of medieval Islamic thought.

In the first study of this landmark work in a European language, Elias Muhanna explores its structure and contents, sources and influences, and reception and impact in the Islamic world and Europe. He sheds new light on the rise of encyclopedic literature in the learned cities of the Mamluk Empire and situates this intellectual movement alongside other encyclopedic traditions in the ancient, medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment periods. He also uncovers al-Nuwayri's world: a scene of bustling colleges, imperial chanceries, crowded libraries, and religious politics.

Based on award-winning scholarship, [The World in a Book](#) opens up new areas in the comparative study of encyclopedic production and the transmission of knowledge.

Excerpt: This is a small Book about a very large book, composed in the early fourteenth century by an Egyptian bureaucrat and scholar named Shihāb al-Din Abmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayri. After a high-flying career in the financial administration of the Mamluk Empire, al-Nuwayri retired to a quiet life of study in Cairo, devoting his remaining years to a project of literary self-edification. This took the form of a compendium of universal knowledge entitled The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition (Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab). Containing over two million words in thirty-one volumes, the Ultimate Ambition was a work of enormous scope, arranged into five principal divisions: (i) the cosmos, comprising the earth, heavens, stars, planets, and meteorological phenomena; (ii) the human being, containing material on hundreds of subjects including physiology, genealogy, poetry, women, music, wine, amusements and pastimes, political rule, and chancery affairs; (iii) the animal world; (iv) the plant world; and (v) a universal history, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing all the way through the events of al-Nuwayri's life. Perusing the Ultimate Ambition's pages, one comes across such varied topics as the substance of clouds; the innate dispositions of the inhabitants of different climes; poetry about every part of the human body; descriptions of scores of animals, birds, flowers, and trees; qualities and characteristics of good rulers and their advisors; administrative minutiae concerning promissory notes, joint partnerships,

commercial enterprises, loans, gifts, donations, charity, transfers of property, and much more.

Why did al-Nuwayrī compose this work? What disciplines did it encompass and what models, sources, and working methods informed its composition? How was it received by al-Nuwayri's contemporaries as well as by later readers in the Islamic world and Europe? These are the principal questions of this book. Through a study of al-Nuwayri's work, I aim to shed light on a tradition of Arabic encyclopedism—of which the Ultimate Ambition was one of the most ambitious exemplars—that witnessed its fullest flowering in Egypt and Syria during the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. The contents, methods of cross-referencing and synthesis, and internal architecture exhibited in this book reveal much about the sources of authoritative knowledge available to al-Nuwayri and to other large-scale compilers at this time, while the reconstruction of his social and professional environment offers us a glimpse into the world of the Mamluk civilian elite, an educated class of religious scholars, government bureaucrats, and litterateurs who were the main producers and consumers of this literature.

By virtue of its multifaceted character, al-Nuwayri's compendium has been exploited by readers in different ways in the course of its history. The manuscript record shows that it was copied for several centuries after al-Nuwayri's death; other compilers quoted liberally from it and historians used it as a source for their own chronicles. In Europe, the Ultimate Ambition be came known as early as the seventeenth century, when several manuscripts found their way to Leiden and Paris. The first complete edition of the text was begun in Egypt in 1923 by Ahmad Zaki Pasha and completed in the 1960s, but its final volumes were only published in 1997. In more recent times, historians of the Mamluk Empire have drawn upon the Ultimate Ambition because of al-Nuwayri's extensive treatment of the events of his own lifetime. With few exceptions, the work has been approached instrumentally, as a source for other scholarly projects rather than an object of inquiry in and of itself.

My interest in the Ultimate Ambition has been motivated from the outset by a curiosity about why this time and place in Islamic history witnessed an explosion of compilatory texts: dictionaries,

manuals, onomastica, anthologies, and compendia of all shapes and sizes. In earlier decades, such texts were generally seen as tokens of intellectual stultification and a lack of originality—the baroque sputterings of a civilization content to collect and compile the writings of earlier centuries. In recent years, the growth of scholarship on late medieval Islamic history has led to a recognition of the important role played by compilers like al-Nuwayri, whose works served as the primary custodians of the Islamic tradition in the early modern period and remain among the most important interpreters of that tradition for modern scholarship and Islamic thought.

Still, the motivations and working methods underlying this movement remain little understood, as are the ways that the Mamluk compilers positioned themselves vis-à-vis the archive they were assembling. I take up this subject in chapter 1 in the course of situating al-Nuwayri and his text within the landscape of encyclopedic production around the turn of the fourteenth century. As a bureaucrat, scholar, and aspiring litterateur who traveled all around the empire and held various administrative offices, al-Nuwayri's biography reflects many of the forces that shaped cultural attitudes towards large-scale compilation at this time. What it does not seem to reflect at all is a fear of civilizational catastrophe brought on by the Mongol conquests, which was long thought to be a principal cause for encyclopedic production in the Mamluk Empire. While the trope of the encyclopedia as a defender and guarantor of civilizational heritage is certainly widely attested in Renaissance and Enlightenment intellectual history, I propose that it did not motivate the Mamluk compilers to write their books.

Rather, encyclopedists such as al-Nuwayri were moved by other factors entirely, chief among them the feeling of an overcrowding of authoritative knowledge in Cairo and Damascus, the great school cities of the empire. The explosion of investment in higher education and the changing migration patterns of scholars in West and Central Asia had a transformative impact on the sociology of scholarship at this time, making new texts available for study and prompting the formation of new genres and knowledge practices. In chapter 2, I present a bird's-eye view of al-Nuwayri's work— its internal arrangement, structural divisions, and

overall composition—comparing it to other Mamluk encyclopedic texts as well as earlier exemplars within the adab tradition. What emerges from this panoramic view of the work is a sense of how dramatically it brought together compositional elements from different genres—the classical literary anthology, the chronicle, the cosmographical compendium, and the scribal manual—and fashioned something altogether new by combining them. This generic hybridity was not unique to the Ultimate Ambition; I argue that the processes of summary, concatenation, and expansion on display in al-Nuwayri's work can be seen as productive of a diverse range of encyclopedic forms in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.

In chapter 3, I explore the influence of the scholarly milieu on encyclopedic compilation. The cities of the Mamluk Empire were flourishing centers of learning: in the mid-fourteenth century, there were nearly one hundred colleges in Damascus, while, a century later, Cairo could boast of seventy colleges operating on its famous Bayn al-Qasrayn street alone. As scholars have shown, these institutions of learning produced and consumed an astonishing range and quantity of books. Again, al-Nuwayri is an ideal guide to this world, as he was a resident overseer of two important scholarly institutions, the Nasiriyya Madrasa and the Mansūrī Hospital. I address the eclectic range of subjects being taught in this environment at this time and the challenges that this eclecticism posed for reconciling diverse authorities in all-encompassing encyclopedic works. After a discussion of al-Nuwayri's principal sources, I conclude by discussing the epistemological ecumenism of the Ultimate Ambition: the ways in which al-Nuwayri managed diverse and often contradictory truth claims.

Having explored the world of scholarly institutions, I turn to the parallel world of imperial institutions, chanceries, and financial bureaus in chapter 4. Insofar as many Mamluk compilers served as clerks in the administrative nervous system of the empire, they were particularly attuned to the processes of centralization and consolidation that transformed the politics of their time. Extensive portions of Ultimate Ambition were written with such an audience in mind, and serve as a kind of testament to the connections between encyclopedism and the imperial state, as observed in other historical contexts by scholars such as Trevor Murphy, Jason König, Greg Woolf, and Timothy Whitmarsh. I consider the differences between scholarly and administrative knowledge, which reflect not merely a distinction in subject matter but a different epistemological valence and standard of corroboration.

In chapters, I address the strategies of collation, edition, and source management used to produce large compilations in the Mamluk period. What working methods did copyists use to assemble multivolume manuscripts? How did one distinguish one's own copies of authoritative texts from those of other copyists? What kind of training was necessary to become a successful copyist? Al-Nuwayri's Ultimate Ambition offers us an ideal opportunity to consider these questions, as several autograph volumes of the text have been preserved, which allow us to reconstruct its composition history, shedding light on the mechanics of encyclopedic compilation in a world before print. Furthermore, al-Nuwayri addresses the education and practice of the copyist in his enormous discussion of secretaryship, which lies at the heart of the Ultimate Ambition and in certain ways is its raison d'être.

My book concludes with a discussion of the Islamic and European reception of al-Nuwayri's compendium. Which of his contemporaries read this work and cited it? What portions of it were of greatest interest to European orientalists? Focusing primarily on the Dutch reception, I explore the engagements with the Ultimate Ambition by such figures as Jacobus Golius, Johannes Heyman, Albert Schultens, and others, which set the stage for the modern edition and publication of the book by Abmad Zakī Pāshā in the twentieth century.

[Sea of the Caliphs: The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic World](#) by Christophe Picard and Nicholas Elliott [Princeton University Press, 9780674660465]

"How could I allow my soldiers to sail on this disloyal and cruel sea?" These words, attributed to the most powerful caliph of medieval Islam, Umar Ibn al-Khattab (634–644), have led to a misunderstanding in the West about the importance of the Mediterranean to early Islam. This body of water, known in Late Antiquity as the Sea of the Romans, was critical to establishing the kingdom of

the caliphs and for introducing the new religion to Europe and Africa. Over time, it also became a pathway to commercial and political dominion, indispensable to the prosperity and influence of the Islamic world. Sea of the Caliphs returns Muslim sailors to their place of prominence in the history of the Islamic caliphate.

As early as the seventh century, Muslim sailors competed with Greek and Latin seamen for control of this far-flung route of passage. Christophe Picard recreates these adventures as they were communicated to admiring Muslims by their rulers. After the Arab conquest of southern Europe and North Africa, Muslims began to speak of the Mediterranean in their strategic visions, business practices, and notions of nature and the state. Jurists and ideologues conceived of the sea as a conduit for jihad, even as Muslims' maritime trade with Latin, Byzantine, and Berber societies increased.

In the thirteenth century, Christian powers took over Mediterranean trade routes, but by that time a Muslim identity that operated both within and in opposition to Europe had been shaped by encounters across the sea of the caliphs.

Excerpt: The Medieval Mediterranean and Islamic Memory

I am but one of you; my profession is the sea, and to that I owe my fame. I will be with you against any enemy who comes from the sea. —Admiral Muhammad b. Maymun, addressing the people of Almeria, ca. 1147

Many arabic texts of the Middle Ages relate the fame of celebrated sailors—admirals (sahib al-bahr) and "leaders [ra'is] of sailors"—acquired on the waters of the Mediterranean. The remarks attributed to one of the most glorious of these sailors, Muhammad b. Maymun, an admiral of the Almoravid, then Almohad fleets, as well as a member of a family originally from Denia that produced five admirals who served Islam, show the extent to which the profession had gained prestige and recognition in the port cities of Islam, as well as in Constantinople, Venice, Pisa, Genoa, and Barcelona. As early as the period of the Medina caliphate, the figure of 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Jasi, the man who led fifty maritime campaigns and the first Muslim martyr to win glory at the head of the caliph's fleet by landing in Cyprus in the middle of

the seventh century, occupies an important place in the collective memory passed down by the historians of Baghdad. Several Abbasid admirals were similarly honored. Among them, the two commanders of the caliphal squadrons based in Tarsus in Cilicia and Tripoli of Lebanon, Damian and Leo, became famous in 904 after pillaging Thessaloniki. Their Greek origins, which made them "renegades," as well as the obscure background of Ahmad al-Siqilli, who defeated the Portuguese admiral Fuas Roupinho in 1181, showed the advantages of assimilating all those who joined Islam, no matter their origins, by serving the caliph.

Other admirals, such as the Banu Kalbi, in the service of the Fatimids; the Banu L-Rumahis, favorites of the Umayyad caliphs of Cordoba; and the Banu Maymun, admirals of the Almoravids and Almohads, but also Ghanim b. Mardanish, one of the sons of the emir of Murcia, who had joined the Almohads in 1172, and even one of the members of the caliphal dynasty, 'Abd Allah b. Ishaq al-Jami', were often from high-ranking clans and families, a sign of the prestige attached to the position. Some maritime lives were even recounted in narratives honoring the heroes who fought the Christians at sea. Thus the eleventh-century emirs of Denia, al-Mujahid and his son 'Ali, distinguished themselves by their commitment to jihad on the sea: they undertook the conquest of Sardinia, an initiative doomed to failure, but which brought them immortality through the Arabic chronicles. During the Almoravid collapse in 1147, 'Ali b. Maymun, nephew of the admiral of Almeria, turned Cadiz, then a mere anchorage, into the capital of his principality. These glorious deeds recalled those found throughout the accounts of the heroes of the Arab conquest celebrated for having pushed back the boundaries of the Dar al-Islam.

The Mediterranean of the Arabic texts was thus distinguished, among the seas of Islam, as the place where the caliph's jihad was accomplished, even if the caliph did not participate in person. The presence of the Prophet's successor on the Basileus's border between Cappadocia and Syria was enough to associate all the regions, both land and maritime, with jihad. As a space of war, the Sea of the Romans had become the vast and terrifying stage for the display of Islamic universality under the guidance of the caliph. The Mediterranean embodied the ultimate hostile space for the

believer, which therefore also became the sea of the martyr, the conquest of which was to be achieved with the taking of Constantinople and Rome and would precede the beginning of the time of salvation. Consequently, the saga of the great sailors of Islam, who represented the caliph at sea, singled out the Mediterranean among the seas of the Dar al-Islam as the only maritime space of caliphal jihad. This is a far cry from the Latin pragmatism attributed to Benedetto Zaccaria, the great Genoese admiral who defeated the Pisans at the Battle of Meloria in 1284 and a shrewd businessman who embodied the Genoese spirit: Ianuensis ergo Mercator, "a Genoese, therefore a merchant."

Nonetheless, when 'Ali b. Maymun turned Cadiz into a real port city and launched razzias against the coasts of Galicia, he fully intended to make a financial profit from his maritime activity. The Muslims always considered Islamization, war on the land and maritime borders, and commercial profits as part of a single movement combining the spirit of conquest, resistance to Christian attacks, and profitable business dealings. As of 634, the first Arabs of the Mediterranean certainly did not associate the Arab conquest with an economic disaster but rather viewed it as a way of expanding and enriching nascent Islam. In a later era, the idea of profit held by Louis IX (1226-1270) was probably closer to Saladin's than that of the doges of Venice as they prepared for the muda season, when the convoy of Venetian ships left to trade in the Mediterranean. Thus, the barrier between Muslims and Byzantines on the one hand and the Latins of the Italian, Provençal, and Catalan ports on the other was not so much the product of a mental gulf separating "pre-capitalists" seeking markets and conquerors seeking martyrdom, insofar as Islam, like Byzantium, was able to develop the tools of a Mediterranean commerce, while the Latins also practiced abnegation in taking up the cross to deliver the tomb of Christ.

According to Fernand Braudel and Jacques Le Goff, the gulf between the two worlds was due to the ability of the maritime republics of Italy and the Crown of Aragon to organize a structure favoring the business of merchants, thanks, above all, to their capacity to mobilize capital for a world commerce and to use maritime resources to create the means to take financial and technical risks.' This was accompanied by a new state of mind, ultimately supported by the church, which was the only force capable of creating the conditions for the kind of capitalism that would appear on the shores of the North Sea in the modern era. Perhaps this turn of mind made the Capetian palace on the Île de la Cite as foreign to the ways of thinking of Italy and Barcelona as those of Medina Azahara? During the same long time span of the medieval Mediterranean, the Jewish merchants of the Geniza and the rich Muslim families of Seville who ran large agricultural estates were prosperous, even adventurous, businessmen who financed commercial networks whose model was found in the ports of the Indian Ocean, the seat of a civilization that had reached China while basically wielding the same tools as merchants at the Champagne fairs. The length of maritime commitments and the ability to insure against commercial risk, through both maritime insurance and the invention of sustainable commercial practices through improvements in shipbuilding, made the difference in the long time span of the Middle Ages, tipping the scales in favor of the great maritime cities of the Latin world, in a prelude to the development of capitalism on the North Sea.

Ultimately, successive caliphs imposed an Islamic Mediterranean through the prism of the values disseminated through the texts and maps they commissioned in large quantities from the best men of letters of the Islamic world, even if it meant remodeling and erasing the memory of their predecessors. Perhaps this explains why most historians of a triumphant Latin Europe long stayed away from a medieval Mediterranean that spoke in three voices?

Despite the fact that Islam remained the only universality he recognized, al-Idrisi, a Muslim Arab who lived in the middle of a formerly Greek, then Islamic, land that became Latin in 1063, was convinced he lived in the heart of the ecumene, not because his homeland of Sicily was under Norman and Christian control but because in the twelfth century it was a prosperous world born of the admittedly violent cohabitation of three great civilizations, visible in places such as the palatial chapel of the Norman kings. In his unrivaled descriptions of innumerable communities, such as Sicily's fishing villages and their timeless fishing

techniques,3 this Muslim in the service of the Norman king reveals the richness of this world in its totality, no longer from the perspective of the kingdom or the caliphate but from that of the villager, the fisherman, or the sailor. More than war, whose damaging effects on Ifriqiya are described in his work, al-Idrisi renders a complex Mediterranean civilization, in which prosperity constantly existed side by side with the disasters of violence and destruction. The Sicilian geographer's map and its commentary are the peak of the art of Arab geography, discipline born in Baghdad, which for a time was alone in its constant task of discovering and measuring the Mediterranean.

One generation later, Ibn Jubayr left us the account of his first journe) (1184-1185) to the East in the form of a travel journal (rihla) in which he expresses his doubts and hopes regarding the confrontation between the two universalisms. The Mediterranean Sea he describes was now Christian. During his trip to the Hejaz, which was initially a pilgrimage, he searched for the places from which Islam's salvation could spring. He first found hope in the original land of Islam, that of the Companions of the Prophet and the first conquerors, located between Cairo, Mecca Medina, and Damascus. His spirits were lifted even higher when he saw Saladin coming out of the Syrian capital at the head of his troops or his way to fight the crusaders at Shaizar. Later, he would find hope foi the reconquest of lost territory in the Almohad caliph al-Mansur and his fleet.

In the writings of many authors, such as al-Harawi (d. 1215), the Mediterranean and its Muslim territories come alive not as a space reconfigured by a nostalgic memory but as an Islamic territory to be reconquered spurred on by new forces, new `asabiyya, or solidarity based on kinship, according to Ibn Khaldun, which should be inspired by the example the first Arabs.

Ibn Khaldun took this logic to its natural conclusion in his masterpiece, The Book of Examples. He has the period of Muslim domination over the Mediterranean coincide with the period of the region's Fatimid and Umayyad caliphates in the tenth century. He assigns the sea the roh of a border, controlled by the most powerful rulers in Islam, whether caliphs or sultans, not as an end unto itself but as a prelude to other conquests, under the guidance of the most virtuous princes and

conquering tribal forces driven by the spirit of Islam. When Ibn Khaldun met Tamerlane in the capital of Syria, he gave him a signed copy of his book, thinking he had found the Muslim sovereign able to subject the world—including the Christian world and its seas—to Islam. Like his peers, he was not looking for a particular place in the Islamic world from which the conquest would be launched but rather for an army and its guide, who would be able to revive the conquering spirit of their Arab ancestors. The lost Mediterranean had not become a place of useless nostalgia but an area to be taken back from the Christians thanks to the spirit of Islam.

Finally, the Mediterranean has a singular place in the rihla of Ibn Battuta (1304-ca. 1377), but not in the way one would expect from a Maghrebi and native of Tangier.6 In this redistribution of the world's spatial hierarchy, it is the new spaces, the lands and seas of expansion and Islamization that most attracted the Moroccan traveler's attention: India and its oceanic extension, the steppes of Central Asia, the Mali of Mansa Suleyman (1335-1358), and the southeast of Africa between Mogadishu and Kilwa are presented as models of government, some of which were still poorly integrated but prosperous and filled with hope for Islam's future. For Ibn Battuta, the sea that embodies Islam's maritime space is no longer his own but instead the Red Sea, and more specifically the maritime route of the pilgrimage to Jeddah, Islam's maritime center stretching from Rabat to Delhi.

Paradoxically, a "peaceful" sea like the Indian Ocean, a sea of the Arabs, that is, a sea without enemies of Islam, could not become the caliph's sea. One has to wait for another era—the period of the ascendancy of the Egyptian caliphate and sultanates or that of the Rasulid dynasty of Aden (1229-1454)—for maritime commerce to become an instrument of the display of sultanate domination over Arab seas? Under the authority of the caliphs of Baghdad, only the Sea of the Romans—in other words, the enemy sea—could be the stage on which caliphal jihad was displayed, bringing together every form of expansion, whether through religious conversion or military and commercial means, despite the fact that neither the caliphs of the conquest, nor the Abbasids and Umayyads, nor even the Fatimids and Almohads ever "straddled"

the sea of caliphs, other than to cross the Strait of Gibraltar.

The Ottoman 'Wild West': The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries by Nikolay Antov [Cambridge University Press, 9781107182639]

In the late fifteenth century, the north-eastern Balkans were under-populated and under-institutionalized. Yet, by the end of the following century, the regions of Deliorman and Gerlovo were home to one of the largest Muslim populations in southeast Europe. Nikolay Antov sheds fresh light on the mechanics of Islamization along the Ottoman frontier and presents an instructive case study of the 'indigenization' of Islam - the process through which Islam, in its diverse doctrinal and socio-cultural manifestations, became part of a distinct regional landscape. Simultaneously, Antov uses a wide array of administrative, narrative-literary, and legal sources, exploring the perspectives of both the imperial center and regional actors in urban, rural, and nomadic settings, to trace the transformation of the Ottoman polity from a frontier principality into a centralized empire. Contributing to the further understanding of Balkan Islam, state formation and empire building, this unique text will appeal to those studying Ottoman, Balkan, and Islamic world history.

Excerpt: The present study explores the formation of the Muslim community in the regions of Deliorman and Gerlovo (and adjacent areas) in the northeastern Balkans (modern northeastern Bulgaria) from the late fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries. In the late fifteenth century, Gerlovo, a small mountain valley region on the northern edges of the central-eastern Balkan range, and Deliorman (lit. "Wild Forest," mod. Ludogorie),' a much larger, hilly, wooded plateau to the north of Gerlovo, were underpopulated and underinstitutionalized (the presence of the rising Ottoman state being minimal), but by the end of the following century the areas were densely populated, with Muslims constituting a solid majority. The two regions came to be firmly incorporated into the Ottoman territorialadministrative framework, in which three urban centers, two well-established and one emerging, served as strongholds of Ottoman provincial authority through which the imperial center in Istanbul projected its power.

The Ottoman central state had a particular interest in asserting its control in the region. From the late fifteenth through the mid-sixteenth centuries the area's countryside witnessed an influx of large groups of mostly semi-nomadic (Muslim) Turcomans and heterodox dervishes; the dervishes usually serving the semi-nomadic Turcomans as spiritual guides and generally harboring attitudes of opposition toward the centralizing Ottoman state. Some of these migrants came fromThrace and the eastern Rhodope Mountains, to which their forefathers had come from Anatolia in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Others migrated directly from Anatolia, in the context of the evolving Ottoman-Safavid conflict, being either forcibly deported to the Balkans or fleeing from Selim I's (r. 1512-20) and Süleyman I's (r. 1520-66) persecutions of "heterodox" and largely semi-nomadic Turcomans as perceived sympathizers, on Ottoman soil, of the newly founded (Shi`i) Safavid Empire of Iran. While largely depopulated as of the late fifteenth century, Deliorman had a history of sheltering all kinds of religio-political dissidents — it was from there that Sheykh Bedreddin, the great Ottoman religious rebel and reformer, incited his revolt against the dynasty in 1416.

Thus, as Deliorman and Gerlovo's countryside was being repopulated by groups potentially not quite amenable to the centralizing drive of the rising, sedentary, and increasingly self-consciously Sunni, Ottoman imperial bureaucratic regime, the Ottoman state undertook to encourage the growth of urban centers to strengthen its control over what was theretofore an internal Ottoman "no man's land." The most decisive development in this respect was the foundation of the city of Hezargrad (mod. Razgrad) in 1533 by the mighty grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, who provided for the town's rapid growth through the establishment of a richly endowed pious foundation (Ar. waqf; Tr. vakif) which would finance the construction and maintenance of a congregational mosque, a madrasa, a soup kitchen, and other typical Ottoman (and Islamic) urban institutions that would turn the new city into a stronghold of Ottoman Sunni "orthodoxy." Soon after its foundation, Hezargrad was made the center of a newly carved-out provincial district and equipped with a judge and the appropriate military-administrative personnel. Concurrently, Shumnu (also Sumnu, mod. Shumen) — a medieval Bulgarian fortress town to

the southeast of Hezargrad which had been captured by the Ottomans in 1388-9 and destroyed by the crusaders of Varna in 1444 — was rebuilt and developed into an Ottoman provincial district center. By 1579, Eski Cuma (mod. Târgovishte), to the west of Hezargrad and Shumnu, had emerged as a new Ottoman provincial district center, to be recognized as a town by the Ottoman authorities in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Supporting urban development was not the only tool that the Ottoman central state utilized to bring the area under its control. Employing judicious, flexible, and accomodationist taxation policies, the state encouraged the gradual sedentarization and agrarianization of the incoming Turcoman semi-nomads and dervishes (and their immediate descendants). Most notably, it initially accorded them favorable tax exemptions and related privileges based on their status as semi-nomads and/ or dervishes, which would gradually be withdrawn in the course of the sixteenth century. Thus, while at the turn of the century most of the Muslim residents in the countryside enjoyed one or another "special taxation status," by 1579 the overwhelming majority of rural Muslims had been "tamed" and "disciplined," having been converted to regular, sedentary, and mostly agriculturalist re`aya (tax-paying subjects), with dervishes settled in convents and (supposedly) praying for the well-being of the dynasty. Similar policies applied to rural Christians; significant numbers of Christians from the area or brought in from elsewhere (usually with no previous permanent residence) were likewise gradually tied to the land.

The present work is thus essentially a double case study. On the one hand, it explores the formation of one of the most numerous, compact (and in this case, Turkish-speaking) Muslim communities in the Balkans; one characterized, moreover, by a very significant "heterodox," non-Sunni element — the Alevi-Bektashis of today. It can thus be compared to other significant Muslim communities that developed elsewhere in the peninsula, such as those in Thrace, the Rhodope Mountains, Albania, and Bosnia. Arguing for a nuanced view of the formation of these communities, the present study emphasizes the importance of regional differentiation, as each of these communities followed separate trajectories that make the

search for a common model precarious. In this regard, it explores the interplay between Turcoman colonization, conversion to Islam, the articulation of confessional identities, and Ottoman policies of centralization and regional development in the formation of the Muslim community in Deliorman and Gerlovo.

No less importantly, the present work is a regional case study of "the process of imperial construction'" whereby from the mid-fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries the Ottoman polity made the definitive transition from a frontier principality to a centralized bureaucratic empire. In the process, groups that had played paramount roles in the rise of the Ottoman frontier principality, such as Ottoman frontier-lord families, semi-nomadic Turcoman warriors, and non-Sharia-minded dervishes, came to be gradually displaced and marginalized by the emerging imperial regime's development of its institutional instrumentarium, which came to rely upon regular army units more tightly answerable to the center, a new military-administrative service class of largely kul/slave origin, a rapidly developing professional palace bureaucracy, and the rising ulema (Ar. ulama) class of medrese (Ar. madrasa)-trained religious scholars who endorsed scriptural, Sharia-minded Islam and would staff the Ottoman judiciary and educational system. The semi-nomadic Turcomans and "heterodox" dervishes in Deliorman and Gerlovo who were "tamed" by the late sixteenth century were very much descendants of those original "masters of the frontier zone" who had made formative contributions to the success of the Ottoman frontier principality, having acted as members of a power-sharing partnership with the early Ottoman dynasty. The study thus aims to demonstrate how this "process of imperial construction" played out in a distant province, highlighting also the changing balance between the "wanderers" and the "settlers" — Le. the itinerants and the (semi-) nomads and the sedentarists, respectively — in the decisive favor of the latter, the triumph of the cereal/agricultural economy over pastoral nomadism, and the relationship between confessional/religious identity and imperial policy.

Both dimensions of the book as a case study — the rise of the Ottoman imperial centralized state and the formation of a regional Muslim community in the

northeastern Balkans — may be situated in the wider Islamic world and Eurasian context. The past several decades have witnessed the articulation of conceptualizations of "early modern Eurasia" as a distinct zone, from Western Europe to East Asia, whose historical development from c. 1450 to c. 1800 represented a global moment in world history and was characterized by a number of "unifying features," be they "parallelisms" or causally linked "interconnections." Linking local or regional, contingent events and processes to macrohistorical themes within the framework of evolving paradigms such as "integrative history" and "connected histories," scholars such as Joseph Fletcher, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Jerry Bentley, and Victor Lieberman have elaborated upon a number of such unifying features: "a sustained movement from local fragmentation to political consolidation" that entailed a "drive towards centralization and the growth of coercive state apparatuses," imperial expansion and the reformulation of ideas of universal sovereignty within the context of heightened apocalyptic and millenarian sensibilities (especially c. 1450—c. 1600), religious revival and reformations, large-scale migrations and overall population growth (c. 1450—c. 1550), rural unrest and the growth of regional cities, intensified exploitation of natural environments, technological diffusions and global cultural exchanges, and a generally "quickening tempo of history."

Within the same interpretive framework, Charles Parker has highlighted the process of globalization of universal religious systems, especially Christianity and Islam.6 The early modern period witnessed the Islamic world's significant expansion along its frontier zones, which entailed the formation of distinct new regional Islamic cultures. Beyond the confines of the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, the formation of the Muslim community in early modern Ottoman Deliorman and Gerlovo may thus be productively compared to similar processes in other areas across early modern Eurasia such as Bengal and the lands of the Golden Horde.' By providing a focused, regional perspective, the study aims to offer valuable insights on "the indigenization of Islam" — the process by which Islam, in its diverse doctrinal and socio-cultural manifestations, became part and parcel of a regional landscape; in this case, that of the Balkans.

Geographical Scope

The present study's geographical scope is largely defined by the use of Ottoman tax registers that constitute the main source base for exploring demographic and socio-economic change. The area studied is a part of the northeastern Balkans that included the Ottoman districts (kazas) of Chernovi (mod. Cherven, Ruse province) and Shumnu in the eastern part of the Ottoman province (sancak/liva) of Nigbolu (mod. Nikopol) as of the first decades of the sixteenth century,8 thus containing most of the historical-geographic region of Deliorman as well as Gerlovo (Ott. Gerilova) in its entirety.

This area thus stretches from the Danube River — roughly between modern Ruse (Ott. Rus, Rusçuk) and Tutrakan in the northwest to the Balkan range in the southeast — just to the south of modern Târgovishte and Shumen. At the northwestern end, along the Danube, lies a several kilometer-wide strip of flat land. Moving to the southeast, the larger part of the area studied is dominated by Deliorman — the hilly and wooded plateau roughly delineated by the Danube to the northwest, the Ruse-Varna line to the southwest, and the relatively arid steppe-like plain of Dobrudja to the east.9 With an average altitude of 300m, but reaching 485m, Deliorman, like the rest of the area under discussion, enjoys considerable yearly precipitation (around 550-600mm per year); however, due to its karst limestone and loess base, its aboveground water resources are limited, small creeks and rivers often losing their way in the loess sediments. This lack, at least in the pre-modern era, demanded the digging of wells and tapping of karst springs to ensure a satisfactory water supply. Until the nineteenth century most of Deliorman was covered by oak, ash, elm, and maple trees."

To the south of Deliorman rises the Shumen plateau as well as the hilly area around Târgovishte. The southernmost part of the area under discussion is occupied by Gerlovo — a hilly, fertile valley on the northern edges of the central-eastern Balkan range, formed by the Golyama Kamchiya (Ticha) River and a number of small tributaries. With an altitude of 250-400m and a temperate continental climate, it is differentiated from Deliorman mainly by its much richer aboveground water resources.

Thus delineated, the region under investigation roughly covers the modern Bulgarian provinces of Ruse, Razgrad, Shumen, and Târgovishte, as well as a portion of the modern Bulgarian province of Silistra (Ott. Silistre). A small part of Deliorman remains left out in the neighboring Ottoman province of Silistre. While the area described above is the main focus of the present study, frequent references will be made to other parts of the eastern Balkans, above all Thrace and Dobrudja, as they relate to both the demographic and religio-cultural aspects of early modern Deliorman and Gerlovo's development.

Early Modern Ottoman Deliorman and Gerlovo in the Scholarly Literature

The formation of the Muslim community in early modern Ottoman Deliorman and Gerlovo, like that of those in the eastern Balkans in general, remains little-researched. A few late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century demographic/ethnographic studies written by Bulgarian scholars who lacked the relevant training and access to Ottoman sources attempted to explain why northeastern Bulgaria was predominantly populated by Turks at the time of the proclamation of the Bulgarian principality in 1878. In an unfinished article, M. Drinov, relying mostly on Western narrative sources, traced the demographic development of northeastern Bulgaria up to- the mid-sixteenth century, arguing that until the late fifteenth century the region was still largely populated by Christian Bulgarians, while for the sixteenth century he analyzed Bulgarian accounts of forced Islamization and ethnic assimilation now proven to be spurious. Other similar works do not throw much light on the history of the region, except in pointing to some interesting oral traditions."

The first Ottomanist to advance a hypothesis about the origins of Deliorman's heterodox Muslim population — usually referred to as Kizilbas (as well as Alevi-Bektashi) today — for which the region has been well known in the modern age, was Franz Babinger — one of the founding fathers of Ottoman studies. He claimed, without adequate substantiation, that the Kizilbas in Bulgaria, Deliorman included, were descendants of adherents of the "Safaviyya" (Ger. "Sefewijje"), which he seems to have conceptualized in the narrower sense of adherents of the Safavid order, but which could also be understood more broadly in the sense of

sympathizers of the newly established Safavid regime in Iran (1501) who had fled from Anatolia in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in the sixteenth century.[16] There the issue long rested, but later research on the revolt of Sheykh Bedreddin in the early fifteenth century and the letters of the judge of Sofia, Sheykh Bali Efendi, to the grand vizier and the sultan in the 1540s, which point to the presence of adherents of Bedreddin's movement in Deliorman, has induced some scholars to assume that the heterodox population in the area largely had its origins in that movement, and not in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. In the past few decades this view has been expressed in specialized studies as well as in general histories of the Ottoman Empire.[19] Most recently, Nevena Gramatikova, in several fine works devoted to the history of the heterodox Muslim communities in Bulgaria, emphasized the importance of the heterodox collectivity of the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba (d. 1478) and his successors — the sixteenth-century saints Akyazili Baba and Demir Baba (the latter being the great sixteenth-century regional saint of Deliorman) — for the formation of the heterodox Muslim communities in the eastern and specifically the northeastern Balkans. Gramatikova also places the development of heterodox Muslim communities in the eastern Balkans in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict and notes that these communities were in all probability augmented by the migration of Safavid sympathizers onto Ottoman Anatolian soil into the Balkans in the sixteenth century (which, in turn, affected these communities' nature).

However, none of the studies referred to above has specifically focused on Deliorman and Gerlovo, neither has any of them utilized a diverse enough spectrum of sources, including Ottoman administrative sources (especially tax registers), to provide a more detailed picture of the relevant processes of demographic, socio-economic, and religious change in the countryside. As for urban growth, one study of considerable scholarly value is Machiel Kiel's article, which briefly sketches Hezargrad's rise in the sixteenth century as a center of "orthodox" Sunni Islamic culture, as opposed to rural surroundings already populated by large "heterodox" groups.

Overview of the Sources

The present study utilizes a wide array of mostly Ottoman sources which may be divided typologically into administrative, narrative, and legal.

By far, the most important body of Ottoman administrative sources is a series of tapu tahrir tax registers (tapu tahrir defterleri) for the area under discussion.24 Compiled in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, these registers survey tax-revenue sources, including land and agricultural produce in the countryside and taxable urban properties and enterprises (e.g. town markets, artisanal shops, or public bath-houses). They can be detailed (mufassal) or synoptic (icmal). Detailed registers include the names of taxpayers (adult Muslim and non-Muslim males — married household heads or bachelors — but also those of non-Muslim, usually Christian, widows registered as household heads) as well as a detailed breakdown of tax-revenue amounts for each settlement. Taxpayers, together with their families, were defined as re'aya (lit. "flock"), and were registered separately by religious affiliation and by specific local community when relevant (e.g. a Muslim or Christian neighborhood in a town, but also nomadic or semi-nomadic groups). Some re'aya had special (privileged) taxation status usually related to some specific duties they performed (e.g. auxiliary military personnel of semi-nomadic provenance, mountain-pass guards, rice cultivators who acted as suppliers for the state, etc.).

Synoptic registers usually contain only summary household and bachelor numbers as well as the total tax amounts assigned for each settlement. Most of the land was defined as state-controlled (miri) and tax revenue accruing from it was apportioned into small, medium, and larg revenue grants assigned in lieu of a salary to state functionaries, usu ally defined as the ruling askeri class (lit. the "military" class, but which included bureaucrats and members of the learned hierarchy). The mos numerous, small benefices (timars) were usually assigned to members o the provincial sipahi cavalry, fortress garrison members, and low-leve administrative and judiciary personnel; mid-sized benefices (ze amets) to mid-ranking provincial military commanders; and large benefices (has pl. havass) belonged to the sultan, members of the dynasty, high state dignitaries, and provincial governors. Apart from

miri lands, these registers include pious endowment (evkaf) properties (with the respective taxpayers, the accrued tax revenue, and the beneficiaries of the endow ment) as well as freehold properties (mülk, pl. emlak). While many such registers included properties of all three kinds (miri, evkaf, and emlak) some covered only miri lands with their respective revenue grants (often referred to as timar tahrir defterleri) or only covered pious endowment and freehold properties (referred to as evkaf ve emlak tahrir defterleri).

Related to these registers are provincial law codes (sancak kanunname leri), usually included in tax registers, which not only reflect the normative aspects of taxation and various socio-economic activities, but also may contain references to forced deportations and migrations of Turcomar nomads from Anatolia to the Balkans in the sixteenth century. To these sources, one should add pious endowment charters (vakfiyes) as wel as "registers of important affairs" containing outgoing imperial order. (mühimme defterleri).

As for narrative sources, the study utilizes a variety of works of Ottomar historiography: chronicles of the Ottoman dynasty (Tevarih-iAl-i Osman) and narratives of specific military campaigns and heroic deeds (gazavatnameler), as well as the account of the famous seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi. Hagiographic accounts (vitae, velayetnameler, menakibnameler) of heterodox Muslim saints, especially those of Otman Baba and Demir Baba, are utilized to explore the nature of them respective saintly cults and the values and worldviews of the respective hagiographic communities, but also to offer an alternative perspective on historical events and processes.

Lastly, the study utilizes Ottoman fatwa (Tr. fetva) collections, especially those of early modern Ottoman seyhülislams (the heads of the Ottoman judicial/religious hierarchy), which highlight important aspects of the process of conversion to Islam as well as the development of confessional identities. In addition to Ottoman sources, the study makes use of some Byzantine, Slavic, and Western chronicles and travel accounts.

Apart from the basic division into administrative, narrative/literary, and legal, at least two other divisions among sources could be made. First, from the perspective of authorial provenance, one may

distinguish between sources that were products of the state and/or clearly endorsed the dynastic and state perspective, as opposed to sources emanating from non-state actors, who could be individuals or groups that espoused varied and changing attitudes toward the evolving Ottoman dynastic project. Thus, Ottoman administrative documents and dynasty-centered chronicles would fall in the former category, while hagiographic accounts of heterodox saints and sources of non-Ottoman provenance in the latter.

In addition, sources could be divided into those that shed light above all on administrative, demographic, and socio-economic change (mostly Ottoman administrative sources) and religio-cultural and sociocultural developments (narrative/literary sources, as well as fatwa collections).

This study seeks to integrate in a balanced way the major aspects of demographic and socio-economic change on the one hand and religiopolitical and cultural developments on the other, but also to bring together the perspectives of the imperial center and those of non-state actors, thus exploring the interplay between the global and the local, the imperial and the regional, as well as the urban and the rural.

The book consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an expanded introduction that provides a brief overview of Ottoman history through the sixteenth century and discusses theoretical and comparative aspects of the Ottoman transformation from a frontier principality to a centralized bureaucratic empire, together with a historiographical analysis of the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans. Chapter 2 analyzes the broader aspects of Turcoman colonization in the Ottoman Balkans through the early sixteenth century and also contains case studies of the lives of two prominent Balkan Muslim heterodox saints from the mid-fourteenth through the fifteenth century — Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kizil Deli) and Otman Baba — based largely on their respective hagiographical accounts. Chapter 3 discusses the pre-Ottoman and early Ottoman northeastern Balkans (through the fifteenth century). Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the demographic and socio-economic development of Deliorman, Gerlovo, and adjacent areas in the rural countryside and the urban centers, respectively. Chapter 6 analyzes select aspects of religion,

culture, and authority in Deliorman and Gerlovo, largely through the lenses of Demir Baba's vita. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of two major conceptual and historiographic issues — conversion of Islam and confessionalization — within the regional context of the present study.

[Islam and its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qur'an](#) by Carol Bakhos and Michael Cook [Oxford Studies in the Abrahamic Religions, Oxford University Press, 9780198748496]

[Islam and Its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qur'an](#) brings together scholars from various disciplines and fields to consider Islamic revelation, with particular focus on the Qur'an. The collection provides a wide-ranging survey of the development and current state of Qur'anic studies in the Western academy. It shows how interest in the field has recently grown, how the ways in which it is cultivated have changed, how it has ramified, and how difficult it now is for any one scholar to keep abreast of it. Chapters explore the milieu in which the Meccan component of the Qur'an made its appearance. The general question is what we can say about that milieu by combining a careful reading of the relevant parts of the Qur'an with what we know about the religious trends of Late Antiquity in Arabia and elsewhere. More specifically, the issue is what we can learn in this way about the manner in which the "polytheists" of the Qur'an related to the Jewish and Christian traditions: were they Godfearers in the sense familiar from the study of ancient Judaism? It looks at the Qur'an as a text of Late Antiquity--not just considering those features of it that could be seen as normal in that context, but also identifying what is innovative about it against the Late Antique background. Here the focus is on the "believers" rather than the "polytheists." The volume also engages in different ways with notions of monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia. This collection provides a broad survey of what has been happening in the field and concrete illustrations of some of the more innovative lines of research that have recently been pursued.

Excerpt: This volume has its origin in a conference held at the UCLA G. E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies in October 2013. The theme of the conference was `Islam and its Past: Jahiliyya and Late Antiquity in the Qur'an and Tradition', and the occasion for it was the conferment of the

Levi della Vida Award on Patricia Crone. It was a happy occasion for all, despite the fact that at the time the honoree was already ill with terminal cancer and died less than two years later. In preparing the volume for publication we have retained the title of the conference, but have modified the subtitle to reflect the content of the volume more precisely.

This volume is not, however, a publication of all and only the talks given at that conference. Of the six talks given there, four appear here in a revised form, namely those of Joseph Witztum, Patricia Crone, Gerald Hawting, and Michael Cook. At the same time four articles that were not presented at the conference are included as chapters in this volume, namely those of Devin Stewart, Nicolai Sinai, Angelika Neuwirth, and Iwona Gajda.

All the chapters in this volume are concerned directly or indirectly with the Islamic revelation, and for the most part this means the Qur'an.

In his `Reflections on the State of the Art in Western Qur'anic Studies' (Chapter 1), Devin Stewart provides a wide-ranging survey of the development and current state of qur'anic studies in the Western academy. He shows how interest in the field has recently grown, how the ways in which it is cultivated have changed, how it has ramified, and how difficult it now is for any one scholar to keep abreast of it. This survey is placed first in the volume not only because it can serve outsiders as a coherent introduction to the field as a whole, but also because it can draw the attention of specialists at work in one valley to what is currently going on in other valleys.

The next two contributions are research articles that aptly illustrate two of the trends in the scholarship surveyed by Stewart. In `Processes of Literary Growth and Editorial Expansion in Two Medinan Surahs' (Chapter 2), Nicolai Sinai reconstructs the redactional history of the opening passages of Q 5, dealing with dietary prohibitions and the performance of ablution before prayer, and Q 9, concerning warfare against the Associators' (mushrikūn). Sinai thus devotes his chapter to what one might call the internal archaeology of the text. If we start from the Qur'an as we have it in our hands, how far and by what means can we convincingly reconstruct the earlier history of the text? What makes for a definite inference, a

plausible inference, and an inference so vague as not to be worth making? The chapter sets out guidelines and criteria for research of this kind, and applies them to the study of the particular passages from the Qur'an referred to above. Given that such methods were developed in scholarship on the text of the Bible as much as a century-and-a-half ago, and have since been applied well beyond the point of exhaustion in that field, one might have thought that specialists on the Qur'an would already have done most of what can be done with them. Mercifully for the next generation of scholars, Sinai's chapter shows that in the study of the Qur'an the point of exhaustion for such methods still lies far in the future.

In "0 Believers, Be Not as Those Who Hurt Moses": Q 33:69 and its Exegesis' (Chapter 3), Joseph Witztum, by contrast, probes what one might call the external archaeology of the text. If we start from a knowledge of the content of the Bible as refracted in Jewish and Christian tradition down to the eve of the rise of Islam, what can we do to better understand what the Qur'an is saying, what it is not saying, and what it is doing in saying or not saying it? Given that the relevant sources in Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Greek were mostly published long ago, and that a quorum of scholars of earlier generations were able to use these and the Islamic sources conjointly, one might again have expected the point of exhaustion to have been reached some time ago. Here again Witztum's chapter, with its focus on one particular puzzle in one particular verse, shows that we are still a very long way from the point of exhaustion. This too is a pleasant discovery, and good news for the next generation.

The two chapters that follow are concerned less with what is going on inside the Qur'an and more with situating it in a wider field. Patricia Crone's chapter, `Pagan Arabs as God-fearers' (Chapter 4), is part of an exploration of the milieu in which the Meccan component of the Qur'an made its appearance. The general question is what we can say about that milieu by combining a careful reading of the relevant parts of the Qur'an with what we know about the religious trends of Late Antiquity in Arabia and elsewhere. More specifically, the issue is what we can learn in this way about the manner in which the `polytheists' of the Qur'an related to the Jewish and Christian

traditions: were they Godfearers in the sense familiar from the study of ancient Judaism? Angelika Neuwirth's chapter, `Locating the Qur'an and Early Islam in the "Epistemic Space" of Late Antiquity' (Chapter 5), is a broader approach to the questions that arise if we resolutely consider the Qur'an as a text of Late Antiquity—not just looking at those features of it that could be seen as normal in that context, but also identifying what is innovative about it against the Late Antique background. Here the focus is on the `believers' rather than the `polytheists'. In particular, the chapter is a call for a broader and more sustained focus on the variety of typological strategies creatively employed by the Qur'an in putting material drawn from the Bible at the service of the community of believers.

The last three chapters do not have the Qur'an as their prime focus, though the first two certainly have something to say about it, and the last has implications for it. The three chapters engage in different ways with notions of monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia. In 'Were There Prophets in the Jahiliyya?' (Chapter 6) Gerald Hawting brings together Islamic traditions about prophets in Arabia in the generations immediately preceding Muhammad, and analyses the conflicting ideological pressures that may lie behind these reports. Michael Cook's `Early Medieval Christian and Muslim Attitudes to Pagan Law: A Comparison' (Chapter 7) compares and contrasts medieval Christian and Islamic ideas about the acceptability or otherwise of pagan law under the monotheist dispensation, and again seeks to identify the motivations involved.

Finally, in `Remarks on Monotheism in Ancient South Arabia' (Chapter 8), Iwona Gajda discusses a pre-Islamic Arabian monotheism that is attested epigraphically, and thus known to us independently of the Islamic tradition. Its relevance to the understanding of the formation of Islam derives not least from this independence: as in the case of Sozomen's account of the Saracens who .returned to the observance of the Hebrew customs and laws, we do not have to ask ourselves whether we are looking at a phenomenon of real life or an artifact of Islamic thought.

We live in a time when the study of the Qur'an has been making a remarkable comeback after spending a generation on the back-burner. This volume will give the interested reader a broad survey of what has been happening in the field and concrete illustrations of some of the more innovative lines of research that have recently been pursued. Our only regret is that Patricia Crone, whose substantial contribution to this efflorescence is represented in this volume, is no longer here to see its completion. —Carol Bakhos and Michael Cook

[Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs: Politics and Authority from Cordoba to Cairo and Baghdad](#) by Ali Humayun Akhtar [Cambridge University Press, 9781107182011]

What was the relationship between government and religion in Middle Eastern history? In a world of caliphs, sultans, and judges, who exercised political and religious authority? In this book, Ali Humayun Akhtar investigates debates about leadership that involved ruling circles and scholars of jurisprudence and theology. At the heart of this story is a medieval rivalry between three caliphates: the Umayyads of Cordoba, the Fatimids of Cairo, and the Abbasids of Baghdad. In a fascinating revival of Late Antique Hellenism, Aristotelian and Platonic notions of wisdom became a key component of how these caliphs debated their authority as political leaders. By tracing how these political debates impacted the theological and jurisprudential scholars and their own conception of communal guidance, Akhtar offers a new picture of premodern political authority and the connections between Western and Islamic civilizations. It will be of use to students and specialists of the premodern and modern Middle East.

Excerpt: Politics, Law, and Authority in the Abbasid and Fatimid Eras

What was the relationship between government and religion in Middle Eastern and North African history? In a world of caliphs, sultans, and judges, who exercised political and religious authority? This book investigates debates about leadership that involved ruling circles and scholars Culamā') of jurisprudence and theology from medieval Cordoba to Cairo and Baghdad. At the heart of this story is a historical rivalry between three caliphates: the Umayyads of Cordoba, the Fatimids of Cairo, and the Abbasids of Baghdad. In a fascinating revival of late antique Hellenism, Aristotelian and Platonic notions of wisdom became

a key component of how caliphs articulated their authority as political leaders. By tracing how these political debates impacted the scholars (`ulamā') and their own conception of communal guidance, this book offers a new picture of two key phenomena central to world history: the interplay between ruling political authority and scholarly religious authority that distinguished the Middle East and North Africa from medieval Europe, and the enduring legacy of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic political theory, psychology, and ethics in the Middle East and North Africa prior to the European Renaissance (ca. 1300s-1600s) The Judiciary and Islamic Intellectual Culture in the Early Centuries The scholars (`ulamā) and their changing relationship with both the wider populace and the ruling circles of caliphs and courtiers are at the center of this book's two main questions: First, in what ways did Hellenistic thought of the late antique Middle East find a place in the politics, theology, and ethics of the Islamic period? Second, what was the relationship between models of political and religious authority in the early Islamic-era Middle East, where urban scholars (`ulamā') and not ruling circles dominated religious authority? The scholars were a broad group who overlapped with other influential figures in the cities of the Middle East and North Africa. Their social influence and expertise in a growing set of scripture-related sciences — such as scriptural exegesis, hadith science, jurisprudence (fiqh) including commercial law, language theory, ethics, and speculative theology (kalām) — meant that their legacies intertwined with those of the most famous tradespeople, astronomers, Aristotelian logicians, and saintly mystics. In the medieval or classical Islamic era prior to the arrival of the early modern Ottomans, judges Ibn Rushd (Averroes 595 A.H./1198 C.E.) in Almohad Cordoba and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) in Abbasid-Seljuk Baghdad represented examples of the more politically influential and polymathic figures within the wider urban scholarly networks.

Ibn Rushd was memorialized in Renaissance-era Europe as the Aristotelian philosopher Averroes who inspired the rise of Latin Averroism. His writings on philosophy and religion, despite emerging from an Islamic intellectual milieu, influenced the writings of the monumental Catholic philosopher and theologian San Tommaso d'Aquino

of Sicily (St. Thomas Aquinas d. 1274). In his own historical context, however, Ibn Rushd was one of the scholars of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam, the chief judge of Almohad Cordoba, a Graeco-Arabic philosopher (faylasūf), a physician, and an influential scientist in the history of astronomy, physics, medicine, and mathematics.' al-Ghazālī, likewise remembered in Europe as the philosopher Algazel, was in his own historical context one of the scholars of the Shāfi`ī school of jurisprudence, a central figure in the introduction of Aristotelian-Avicennan modal logic in both jurisprudence and speculative theology (Ash`arism), and notably for Part II of this book, an early philosophical mystic (Sufi metaphysician). As administrative judges and polymathic scholars, both Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazālī represented a phenomenon found in both the Abbasid and the early modern Ottoman eras, in which scholars played an increasingly influential role in multiple aspects of the social, political, economic, and intellectual life of the cities of the Middle East and North Africa.

The history of scholars such as Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazālī offers a lens for investigating the elusive and changing relationship between medieval political authority and religious authority precisely because the scholars' diverse activities extended into the realms of both governing administrative circles and the general urban populace. This fluid relationship between ruling circles and scholars, and the sometimes contentious dialogues they had about communal leadership, has been studied largely in the context of the judiciary.

In the early centuries of Islamic history, particularly after the rise of the Umayyad caliphate in 661 in formerly Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Damascus, the scholars of Islam rose to a powerful leadership position in the urban societies of the Middle East. In a trend analogous to the rise of rabbis in rabbinic Judaism in the ancient Middle East, the scholars developed a reputation in the eyes of local Muslims and urban ruling circles for their expertise in the application of particular modes of knowledge, including Islamic ethics. This expertise in the ability to apply sound reasoning in scripture-related ethical, legal, and theological matters became the basis of a degree of religious authority that ultimately demarcated the changing contours of the

ruling circles' own authority. The scholars did not interpret the claims to a caliphate made by the Umayyad dynasty (r. 661-750 in Damascus) or the following Abbasid dynasty (r. 750/1258 in Baghdad, r. 1261-1517 in Cairo) as a claim to being the final or even primary authority on juridical and theological affairs. Rather, they recognized these caliphs as politically and religiously uniting figures in a manner that might be compared to the way Western Europeans viewed the Holy Roman Emperor, who was seen as a ruler among rulers with the privilege of representing the political unity of the Roman Catholic world west of Greek Orthodox centers. The caliph, whose political power was counterbalanced by the power of ministers (viziers) and regional military governors (sultans, emirs), stood officially at the head of a hierarchy of these political administrators and inherited the privilege of offering an investiture of authority to local governing circles, from the emirs of Cordoba to the sultans of Persia and India. There were aspects of continuity in this political framework with the first caliphate in Medina (r. 632-660). The first four caliphs (Abū Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmān, 'Ali), who were among the Companions (sahāba) of the Prophet Muhammad (d. 11/632) and who therefore knew him personally, governed in consultation with various individuals recognized for their knowledge of legal matters and various customs, including the practices (sunan) of the Prophet.' The Prophet's wife `Ā'isha is notable in this regard as a major authority on these early practices. The growing body of scholars grew partly out of these early circles of learned figures, particularly those with formal knowledge of the traditions of the Prophet (hadith). The faith of the general populace in these traditions meant that the scholars of Islam came to exercise significant religious authority during the caliphal eras of the Umayyads in Damascus, the Abbasids in Baghdad, and the Andalusi Umayyads of Cordoba. From an administrative perspective, with the expansion of the judiciary as a formal system of administrative courts oriented around the scholars' expanding jurisprudential sciences, the judiciary's institutions increasingly became a historical site of negotiation or dialogue between ruling circles and scholars about communal leadership. What made the judiciary a somewhat contested site of authority, one in which ruling political authority and scholarly religious authority were often counterbalancing forces, was the fact that individual scholars reacted to its historical development in different ways, particularly in the earliest centuries.

Most early specialists of jurisprudence within the growing body of scholars earned their livelihood from other skills, numbering amongmerchants, copiers of manuscripts, textile manufacturers, and tradespeople in a variety of occupations illustrative of their deep ties with local communities in the cities and towns of the Middle East and North Africa.6 That is, the scholars' growing expertise in fields such as lexicography and Islamic ethics was not an inherently salaried pursuit. In terms of harmonizing paid careers with polymathic intellectual pursuits, the financial situation of the early scholars paralleled that of the early astronomers and philosophers. Some of the most influential figures in the history of medicine and surgery were also philosophers and astronomers, which meant that many astronomers saw patients when not reading Aristotelian-Neoplatonic writings on the nature of the cosmos. In the case of the scholars' harmonization of paid careers and intellectual pursuits, the push to professionalize the geographically wide networks of scholars as full-time paid jurists and judges in a growing administrative system of courts was partly the aspiration of centralizing ruling circles. Ruling circles may have drawn on a mix of early Islamic and pre-Islamic administrative practices in this process. As far as how scholars reacted to and participated in the administrative development of the judiciary, some scholars resisted appointments to administrative positions as judges, protective of what they perceived as the independence of their knowledge and authority.' Other scholars, however, were more willing to take on official judicial appointments, even in the early centuries.

Significantly, even after the proliferation of administrative courts of justice and later theological colleges, which came to be funded largely by charitable endowments (awqāf), the scholars largely held onto their intellectual dominance in the justice system because of the epistemic authority they held at a popular leve1.10 What supports this conclusion is the vast surviving body of non-binding legal opinions (fatāwā) from the writings of early scholars, which are illustrative of how scholars were available locally to offer a variety of answers to

questions dealing with the most mundane of family matters and the mediation of neighborhood disputes.11 The general populace's informal accessibility to the scholars, who issued these non-binding juridical opinions in their capacity as specialists of jurisprudence, continued to develop hand in hand with the scholars' more formal presence in these administrative courts as both judges and advisers to judges. Court-appointed judges, who were typically scholars themselves, often drew directly on the growing body of non-binding legal opinions that were specific to what became the most influential schools of jurisprudence in early Sunni circles: the Hanafi, Shāfi`ī, Mālikī, and Hanbalī schools of thought, and for a long period particularly in al-Andalus, the Awzā`ī and Zāhirī schools of thought. In some cities and periods, these judges drew directly on the opinion of a sitting juris consul (mufti) for a specialized legal matter.

To be sure, the scholars' role in the judiciary did not necessarily limit the rulers' ability to mete out justice directly. On the one hand, the scholars' epistemic authority in many cases dictated how even a caliph who attempted to impose an unpopular legal ruling against the wishes of the scholars risked running afoul with urban Muslim populations who looked to those scholars as ethical mediators of local disputes. On the other hand, in the historical development of the judiciary, the scholars and their opinions did not dominate all aspects of these courts given key limitations of jurisdiction in the governance of public space, security, and order. The mazālim courts and the jurisdiction of market inspectors (muhtasib) in public space offer illustrative examples.

Specifically, beyond the early limitations of interference in the Christian and Jewish clergy's internal communal affairs, the Muslim scholars' religious authority in the judiciary was additionally limited or perhaps counterbalanced by a court structure known as the mazālim. The mazālim courts were a type of court system in which rulers and not scholars administered justice directly. The jurisdiction of a ruling figure in these courts had theoretical parallels with the way the market inspectors, who were political administrators, oversaw financial and social practices in the public marketplaces. On the one hand, the mazālim courts

and the role of the market inspectors illustrate the extent to which some legal jurisdictions were shaped directly by ruling circles. On the other hand, the respective roles of a ruler in the mazālim courts and a market inspector became partly embedded in the way the scholars themselves theorized, or more likely accommodated retroactively, the historical role of governing circles in administering justice and maintaining security and order in a slowly expanding public sphere.12 Notably, this scholarly theorization of the role of ruling circles in maintaining security and order occurred long before the bureaucratic nation-state made deep inroads of direct governance into a vastly expanded public sphere. In this context of the scholars' theorization of ruling governance in empire, it is notable that the scholars also identified and recognized aspects of other legal systems that already existed in the central lands of the Middle East. These legal systems include the laws and customs of the previously mentioned Christian and Jewish clergy, who held onto semiautonomous legal jurisdictions within their own Middle Eastern communities. In sum, the image of these distinctions in legal systems and legal jurisdictions in the medieval Middle East, from courts with a scholarly mufti and the ruling mazālim courts to the semi-independent legal realm of the Christian clergy, offers a picture of Muslim scholars who constituted a significant part of premodern religious authority, but whose authority and power was contested or perhaps counterbalanced within the judiciary by ruling political authority and non-Muslim religious authority.

Against the backdrop of this historical development of the judiciary and the rise of the scholars, what deserves more attention in current research is how this interplay between the rulers' political authority and the Muslim scholars' religious authority continued to develop not only inside, but also outside the judiciary's institutions. In the current study, the multifaceted realm of Islamic intellectual culture, and specifically written debates on philosophy and theology, is of particular concern. Alongside the vast corpus of surviving writings on jurisprudence, legal theory, language theory, ethics, and other fields in the expanding scholarly sciences, the scholars' writings on philosophy and theology have also survived. These latter works offer overlooked evidence of the way models of

ruling political leadership and scholarly religious leadership developed in tandem within a larger dialogue over the intellectual underpinnings of communal guidance. By the tenth century, distinct trends in Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines were becoming an increasingly common and openly acknowledged part of how ruling circles and scholars debated and articulated conceptions of sound knowledge, communal guidance, and leadership. One controversial example of an influential political model that drew on Graeco-Arabic theories of cosmology is the tenth-century Fatimid caliphate, which was founded by political reformers within a subgroup of Ismā`īlī Shiism. As discussed in the next section of this introduction, by the time the Fatimids founded Cairo in the late tenth century on the site of Fustāt, Fatimid ruling circles had begun to project to their neighbors in Abbasid Baghdad and Cordoba a unique representation of the Ismā`īlī Shiite caliph as a semi-messianic (mandi) Platonizing guide to salvation. The Fatimids thus challenged not only the ruling political authority of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad, but also the scholarly religious authority of the networks of predominantly Sunni scholars and rising Imāmī (Twelver) Shiite scholars.

The Fatimid Ismā`īlī theologians' embrace of Graeco-Arabic cosmological doctrines in their conceptions of communal guidance was not an isolated phenomenon. In the same early centuries of the Islamic-era Middle East, although the Sunni scholars rejected the Fatimid caliphate's Platonizing conception of political and religious leadership, the scholars had already been in the process of expanding their sciences and conceptions of scholarly religious authority in ways that engaged the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic theories of the Graeco-Arabic philosophers. Specifically, many scholars of the Qur'an and hadith who studied sciences such as lexicography were also interested in the theological value of Graeco-Arabic philosophy's analysis in logical reasoning, doctrines in psychology on the soul and the intellect, and theories of cosmology about the underlying elements of the world and the agency of God in it. That is, from Cordoba to Baghdad, the early Sunni scholars were part of an intersection of diverse intellectual networks that included, most notably for this book, the following: dedicated hadith specialists among the scholars (`ulamā'), writers of

Arabic-language commentaries on Aristotle (Aristūtālīs) and Plato (Aflātūn) among the Baghdad Peripatetics (mashshā'iyyūn), and writers of a specifically Islamic metaphysics among the speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) interested in both hadith and Graeco-Arabic philosophy, each group intermingling with the next and influencing each other's works. In the case of the Cordovan scholars Ibn Masarra (d. 319/ 931) and Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064), discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, their writings illustrate how the polymathic learning of a scholar who studied hadith in the tenth and eleventh centuries often included an education in Aristotelian-Neoplatonic doctrines related to scriptural topics, from discussions of human intellect and sense perception to the underlying mechanisms of causality. That is, the example of early Sunni scholars interested in philosophy shows that in addition to studying scriptural texts, jurisprudence, ethics, and other expanding Islamic sciences, a scholar in early Sunnism might also engage the tools of Aristotelian logical reasoning or Neoplatonic conceptions of the soul and intellect in order to investigate more deeply the various scriptural references to the world's natural phenomena, the afterlife, and what lies beyond the visible realm both within and beyond the human mind.

With a focus on these changing modes of knowledge and authority that were part of both ruling and scholarly conceptions of communal leadership, the heart of this book offers an investigation of the following two-part hypothesis: First, in the multi-religious, scripture-valuing urban societies of the medieval Middle East and North Africa, where Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines were in various levels of circulation among the general populace of urban Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities, debates within ruling circles and scholarly networks about sound leadership of the growing Muslim populace played out not only in a negotiation over the expanding judiciary, but also in a theological dialogue about Graeco-Arabic psychological and cosmological doctrines that had widely recognized implications for conceptions of personal virtue and communal ethics. Second, the joint participation of ruling circles and the scholars in this dialogue, which occurred through both oral and textual mechanisms such as the patronage of books, was an intertwined

and contested activity illustrative of how the ruling political leadership and scholarly religious leadership shaped each other's historical development in a dialectic of authority that constituted neither a ruling political orthodoxy nor a scholarly clerical orthodoxy. The parallel rise of philosopher-governors among the caliphs together with philosophical theologians and philosophical Sufis among the scholars offers a window into this interaction of political and religious leadership.

Given this overview of the judiciary as a site of the rulers' and scholars' dialogue over leadership, and against the backdrop of an Islamic intellectual culture that was an additional site of ruling and scholarly debates about leadership, the remainder of this historical introduction will turn more closely to the following questions: Why did specific Graeco-Arabic doctrines in logical reasoning, psychology, and cosmology become part of the ways that early Abbasid-era Sunni-majority scholars and Muslim ruling circles articulated theories about the authority to guide and lead the early community? A key point that runs through the rest of this introduction is that among Abbasid-era rulers and scholars, conceptions of sound knowledge and leadership engaged not only sacred text, but also the enduring legacy of late antique Hellenistic cosmology, which permeated the popular material and visual culture of the early Islamic-era Middle East.

The Scholars (`ulamā) and the Graeco-Arabic Philosophers

The scholars (`ulamā) were analyzed in the previous section as an urban social network with influential scripture-related knowledge in sciences such as jurisprudence, legal theory, language theory, and ethics. Coinciding with the bibliophile Abbasid caliphs' support for the translation of Hellenistic philosophy and science in Baghdad, and in a move reminiscent of the Middle East's late antique Christian clergy and Jewish rabbis' activities, some of the Muslim scholars began to engage Aristotelian-Neoplatonic philosophy in its Graeco-Arabic form when debating two questions: What did it mean to be one of the Muslim scholars, and what modes of knowledge were relevant and

sound when providing spiritual and theological guidance to the faithful Muslim populace? In the eyes of large swaths of early scholars in Sunnism, it was not inherently problematic to draw on the curriculum of late antique Aristotelian-Neoplatonic philosophy and science in the investigation of scripture-oriented theological questions about the cosmos, God's agency in that cosmos, and the mechanisms of the human intellect and soul as referenced in scripture. The study of particular sciences in the Graeco-Arabic philosophical curriculum was of particular interest to early scholars because it included not only the widely practiced medical sciences, but also natural sciences such as astronomy, which had perhaps the clearest religious significance both for ritual and theological matters. From the perspective of ritual, the nature of the daily prayer and the fasting month of Ramadan encouraged a precise awareness of solar patterns, lunar movement, and geographical direction. From the perspective of scriptural exegesis and theology, astronomy offered the possibility of exploring further the omnipresent astronomical references found throughout the Qur'an that described the nature of the cosmos and the agency of God in it. These questions were at the heart of the early Mu`tazilī and Ash`ari speculative theologians' (mutakallimūn) investigations of the nature and underlying elements of the created cosmos as experienced by mankind and as described in scripture. The fact that scholars of hadīth began to participate in these discussions, and the fact that both hadīth scholars and specialists in speculative theology began to engage the writings of the Baghdad Peripatetics, meant that for many scholars, aspects of the late antique Aristotelian-Neoplatonic curriculum of philosophy were key to what it meant to be one of the scholars of Islam by the tenth and eleventh centuries. To be sure, these developments were debated internally among the scholars, and Chapters 1 and 2 highlight how these debates even erupted politically in the tenth century. However, by the time the Timurids and Ottomans rose to power at the end of the European medieval era, the scholars of Islam had come to incorporate into the Islamic sciences a wide variety of disciplines transmitted in Arabic and Persian from the late antique philosophical curriculum. In what illustrates the longevity of these developments, fourteenth-century scholar Nizām al-Din al-Nīsabūri even

declared the study of astronomy morally recommended (mandūb) as a kind of religious virtue, while the most influential jurisprudential college in fifteenth-centuryTimurid Samarkand incorporated an observatory to enrich the Islamic sciences' curriculum.

In an additional avenue for an early scholarly bridge between Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theological writing, the early philosophers among the Baghdad Peripatetics also described the ancient philosophical tradition as one with roots in the wisdom of prophetic figures such as Luqmān and Idris, the latter whom some early philosophers identified with the ancient sage Hermes.'8 The identification of Hermes with the prophet Idris became commonplace by the ninth century in what further contextualizes the various angles of early scholarly interest in Graeco-Arabic philosophy. In late antique Hellenistic philosophical writing, Hermes appears to have been a marginal figure in contrast with the towering legacies of philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato. However, early Graeco-Arabic philosophers emphasized the description of Hermes as having achieved an intellectual ascent to the higher world, a goal that was of paramount importance to mystical piety in early Islamic mysticism. In the lens of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic and specifically Plotinian cosmology and psychology, which was central to the writings of the Baghdad Peripatetics, Hermes' intellectual ascent was understood as the ascent of the human soul toward a greater Universal Soul, of which the Neoplatonic human soul was a part. Plotinus (d. 270), who was born in Graeco-Roman Egypt and who was one of the most influential Platonic philosophers after Plato and Aristotle, understood the human intellect and soul to be connected to a greater Universal Intellect and Universal Soul that were spaceless and outside of time. In late antique Plotinian psychology and cosmology, the underlying principles of the cosmos included One, Intellect, and Soul. al-Fārābī interpreted this cosmology according to Ptolemaic astronomy in a revised theory on the celestial emanation of these principles through the world's ensouled cognizant spinning planets, identified by some Graeco-Arabic philosophers as planets with angels.19 This emanation, according to Neoplatonic cosmology, proceeds logically down to the sublunary world of man. From this perspective, Hermes's intellectual

ascent was the human soul's rediscovery of this primordial spiritual realm. The early philosophical emphasis on Hermes as having achieved an intellectual ascent to the higher world encouraged the claim among some particularly influential early Graeco-Arabic philosophers that the ancient Hermes, identified increasingly with the prophet Idrīs, was the most accomplished of the ancient sages. This picture of Hermes-Idrīs was one of the various links that bridged Graeco-Arabic philosophical writing with both theological and mystical writing among the early scholars of Islam. Two influential figures in transmitting this early understanding of Hermes-Idrīs more widely are of particular significance, as their legacies illustrate the process through which the intersection of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and theological writing became more widespread. The first is the philosophical Sufi Shihāb al-DinYahyā al-Suhrawardi (d. ca. 1190-2), and the second is the group of early anonymous writers of the highly influential and widely circulated Epistles of the Pure Brethren.

The first figure, Shihāb al-Din Yahyā al-Suhrawardi, was the founder of a school of Sufi metaphysics that brought together philosophically oriented theological writing with theories on mystical experience. His school of thought, known as Illuminationism (Hikmat al-Ishrâq), offered a Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) critique of aspects of Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) formal and material logic, al-Suhrawardi's legacy represents the culmination of a process, highlighted in Part II of this book, in which scholars who were interested in Islamic mysticism increasingly and deliberately drew on Neoplatonic-Avicennan philosophical doctrines and, in some cases, represented figures like Hermes, Plato, and the ancient Hellenistic philosophers as pre-Islamic proto-Sufi figures. The second group, the Brethren of Purity, was an anonymous philosophical coterie in early Abbasid Iraq who wrote and transmitted the Epistles of the Pure Brethren. The Epistles were a set of popularly circulated philosophical works that were influential in the development of Platonizing theological writing in both Sunnism and Shiism, particularly among Sunni mystics and Ismā`īli Shiite theologians. The wide scholarly and popular appeal of the Epistles of the Pure Brethren is well documented in early Islamic history, and while later

Ismā`īlī theologians took a particular interest in their writings and actively adopted their legacy, the Brethren's original theological affiliation remains uncertain given their eclectic interests and intentional anonymity. Though some of their strongest critics were found in Sunni scholarly circles, the writings were in fact absorbed very quickly by both early Sunni and Ismā`īlī Shiite theological circles, both having picked and chosen which sections they found sound and valuable. Current research has left the question open of the Brethren of Purity's original theological affiliation in what illustrates how the Epistles' eclectic mix of Graeco-Arabic philosophy, Islamic theology, and mysticism in their diverse discussions of the mind and the cosmos had wide appeal in early Islamic history. The legacies of al-Suhrawardi and the Pure Brethren together underline the point that in sum, from the perspective of the predominantly Sunni scholars interested in Graeco-Arabic philosophy's relevance to their own education and conception of communal guidance, multiple avenues existed for a theological engagement with philosophical doctrines in psychology and cosmology.

By the twelfth century, against this backdrop of various links connecting Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theological writing, two intertwining trends emerged outside the realm of jurisprudence in the absorption of Graeco-Arabic philosophy into the scholarly sciences. The first was the incorporation of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic into Islamic theology's methodology, a development that paralleled the use of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic in Islamic jurisprudence. The second was the looser incorporation of conclusions in Neoplatonic-Avicennan psychology and cosmology into Islamic mystical writing, resulting in the rise of a more philosophically oriented Sufi metaphysics akin to the writings of Shihāb al-Din al-Suhrawardi. What follows is a look at both scholarly trends, which became increasingly intertwined, and the enduring critique leveled by some scholars against both developments.

Scholars as Philosophical Theologians and Philosophical Sufis

From the perspective of the theological dimensions of a scholar's polymathic knowledge and guidance of the general Muslim populace, later forms of speculative theology in Sunnism after the eleventh century increasingly intersected with Graeco-Arabic philosophy in the formulation of dedicated philosophical theologies. This development was centered not only in the Middle East and North Africa, but also in Central Asia. That is, the scholars' scripture-based understanding of the mechanisms of the world, God's agency, and the process of deepening one's spirituality increasingly absorbed and reinterpreted doctrines of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in Aristotelian logical reasoning, Neoplatonic conceptions of the mind, and Neoplatonic understandings of the body and soul. In the case of what became the predominant Ash`ari school of theology that emerged from the earlier Mu`tazilī approach, later Ash`arism after the twelfth century became increasingly oriented around Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) methods of logical reasoning with additional engagement of select aspects of Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) psychology and cosmology. On the one hand, the picture of an increasingly philosophical dimension of scholarly theological knowledge is not the picture of scholars encouraging the general Muslim populace to draw on Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) logical reasoning in the formulation of basic creedal beliefs. On the other hand, evidence suggests that large segments of the urban Muslim populace came to understand the scholars' original role of mediating disputes, offering guidance in ethics, and clarifying doctrinal questions, as a role increasingly connected to logic-oriented (mantiq) reasoning in the tradition of Aristotle and Avicenna. What supports this picture is a combination of the following: the wide circulation of scholarly texts that include logical treatises and short creedal works with theoretically complex conclusions, the enduringly large social networks of urban scholars even after the rise of colleges, the public dimension of the later scholars' occupational activities as increasingly full-time paid professional scholars educated in publicly funded legal-theological colleges of prominence, and the text-oriented careers of much of the urban general populace. The general urban populace in the medieval Middle East and North Africa included teachers, civil servants, accountants, hobbyist scientists, friends of scholars, and writers of belle-lettres. The most recent analyses of Middle Eastern social history and Arabic writerly culture show that the

general urban populace in the ninth and tenth centuries was educated in a manner that cultivated a strong value for the practical importance of books, reading, and various forms of written and oral knowledge in an intellectual milieu from which the scholars themselves emerged.

In contrast with this philosophical turn in Islamic theological writing, and against the backdrop of Middle Eastern Christian Christological debates that had grown highly philosophical in both the late antique and early Islamic eras, some Muslim scholars unsurprisingly articulated concerns about the integration of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic theories into an otherwise simple and straightforward doctrinal system oriented around the basic belief in "No God but God" Who created the cosmos. Scholars asked whether the average individual's sacred belief system might misunderstand basic theological precepts if complex theoretical discussions were taught in the context of scriptural hermeneutics, creedal belief, and spiritual reflection. Examples of these more complex theological discussions that became increasingly philosophical include theories on the relationship between divine agency (qudra) and divine knowledge, the connection between divine knowledge and the divine attributes (sifāt), the relationship of the attributes with the Beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-husnā), and other fine points of doctrinal belief drawing on scriptural references. Among the scholars, the early critics of speculative theology in either its simpler or more philosophical forms were a diverse group. They included the With-compiler Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), the defender of the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic corpus and Cordovan judge Ibn Rushd (Averroes d. 595/1198), and even the later Platonizing Sufi metaphysician Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), all of whom articulated some criticism over the potential misguidance of the general populace following the proliferation of more complex and often contested theoretical approaches to theological ideas. In this concern, however, these scholars moved against the prevailing tide of history that saw the Sunni scholarly discipline of theology, particularly later Asharī theology, take on more philosophical approaches to articulating doctrinal beliefs, with conclusions that were ultimately transmitted to the general populace through various intertwining channels such as al-Ghazālī's treatises. By the

thirteenth century, Sunni scholars increasingly tended toward conclusions in psychological and cosmological doctrines found in the philosophical neo-Asharī and Māturīdī schools of theology, which showed continuity with trends in the early and once prominent eleventh-century Andalusi Zāhirī school discussed in Chapter 2. Ibn Hazm, who systematized a local Andalusi form of Zāhirī theological writing, formulated a pioneering epistemology in this regard. Several decades before al-Ghazālī articulated his logic-oriented nominalist critique of Neoplatonism in later Asharī theology, Ibn Hazm called for the absorption of Aristotelian logic in Islamic theological writing to the exclusion of Neoplatonic cosmological conclusions.

Even after this widespread intersection of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology in Sunnism, however, the question of whether this development was epistemically sound continued to be discussed by influential scholars well into the Ottoman period. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who lived in the last decades of the Abbasid-Mamlūk period as the Ottomans were coming to power, was famous among the later critics. Had even the most judicious philosophical theologians absorbed philosophy into Islamic thought too uncritically? Were the revised applications of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic really able to avoid Neoplatonic-Avicennan conclusions in Plotinian cosmology and psychology? Despite his admiration for aspects of philosophy's logical tools, Ibn Taymiyya's fourteenth-century position on the place of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in Islamic theology echoed significant aspects of Ibn Hazm's pre-Ghazālian nominalist critique of Neoplatonism discussed in Chapter 2. Ibn Taymiyya broke with Ibn Hazm and al-Ghazālī, however, as these earlier scholars

embraced a reformed approach to Graeco-Arabic philosophy as part of Islamic theology. In systematizing this project, both Ibn Hazm and al-Ghazālī built on the work of some early Graeco-Arabic philosophers who already questioned a wholesale acceptance of the AristotelianNeoplatonic corpus into an Islamic theological worldview. al-Kindī (d. 260/873), whom al-Fārābī (d. 235/850) and Avicenna (d. 428/1037) represented as more a theologian than a true Peripatetic philosopher, offers an illustrative example. al-Kindi was influential among later

philosophers such as al -Amid (d. 381/992) and objected to the philosophical doctrine on the pre-eternity of the world. In formulating a philosophical argument for the divine creation of the world out of nothing (ex nihilo) in time, which would break with Aristotelian- Neoplatonic doctrine and agree with scriptural cosmology's references to God's creation of the world ex nihilo, even al-Kindī did not need to create a philosophical solution from scratch. Christian philosophers and philosophical theologians of the late antique Middle East, who were writing in Aramaic and Arabic in the early Islamic-era Middle East, were long at work formulating philosophical positions that were in agreement with the cosmological tenets of biblical texts. For example, al-Kindī had at his disposal the logical arguments of pre-Islamic Christian philosophers such as John Philoponus, and he was likewise in conversation with contemporary Muslim speculative theologians such as the Mu`tazilīs and their early Ash`arī successors who were already at work extracting a system of metaphysics of the world from the scriptural text. Ibn Hazm's philosophical theology, discussed in Chapter 2, represents one example of the way al-Kindī's synthesis of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology anticipated or found an audience among the growing numbers of philosophically minded Muslim scholars who simultaneously studied Aristotelian logic for both jurisprudence and theology and also questioned key conclusions in Neoplatonic psychology and cosmology. Where Platonizing trends in psychology and cosmology found an additional place in scholarly writing was in the language of Sufi metaphysics, which came to intersect very strongly with Islamic theology after the twelfth century.

Sufi metaphysics, like philosophical theology, was likewise formulated and transmitted within the circles of the scholars, specifically among mystics like the Hanafi scholar Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d. ca 380/990) and the Shāfi`ī scholar Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulami (d. 412/1021). Remarkably, the figure in Sunnism popularly associated with a more enduring absorption of Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) logic into scholarly jurisprudence and theology was the same figure associated with the more widespread absorption of Sufi metaphysics into the scholarly sciences — namely, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). In the decades and centuries following

the popularization of mysticism in ninth-century Iraq, scholars who were interested in an experiential dimension of theological truths began to articulate theories of metaphysics that amounted to what might be called today a kind of mystical theology. al-Ghazālī's short Niche of the Lights foreshadowed the extent to which works of Sufi metaphysics written by scholars were to become increasingly oriented around Neoplatonic-Avicennan conceptions of psychology and cosmology. These works, whether short mystical treatises or longer volumes of metaphysics, were not oriented around the Baghdad Peripatetics' harmonizing of Aristotle with Plato, nor were they oriented around the philosophical theologians' attempt to formulate a systematic scripture-based logic-oriented representation of the world's mechanisms and God's agency. Rather, among the more primary goals of these mystical treatises and volumes was to articulate to mystical aspirants how to attain, through spiritual contemplation and ritual, a form of experiential knowledge (ma`rifa, kashf, dhawq) of the spiritual realm, and additionally how to articulate one's mystical experience scrupulously. Given this distinction between the Sufis' intellectual goals and those of the Baghdad Peripatetics and philosophical theologians, the interest in Graeco-Arabic philosophy among Sufi metaphysics seems, at first glance, perplexing. What makes this interest in philosophy among Sufi metaphysicians confusing is the history of Sufis criticizing the philosophers' deductive methodology and championing a more inductive and mystical epistemology, a criticism matched by the philosophers' own representation of some Sufis and theologians as pseudo-philosophers.

There are two possible explanations why these Sufi metaphysicians took on an explicit interest in Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) or rather Platonizing conceptions of the mind, body, soul, and universe to an extent that employed select aspects of Neoplatonic language and imagery. First, these Sufis interested in Neoplatonic-Avicennan conceptions of the mind, such as al-Ghazālī himself, often numbered among the same scholars who were writing works of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic-oriented philosophical theology. Second, as mentioned, Sufis made their own claim on Hellenistic philosophy through an alternative genealogy in which the Sufis and not the Peripatetic philosophers inherited the knowledge of

ancient philosophers like Socrates and Hermes, or rather Hermes-Idrīs.37 The previously mentioned founder of Illuminationism, Shihāb al-DinYahyā al-Suhrawardi (d. ca. 1190-2), provides an illustrative example of a Sufi whose mystical metaphysics offered a Neoplatonic-Avicennan critique of aspects of formal and material Aristotelian-Avicennan logic.38 In the case of philosophically oriented Sufis like him, who increasingly emerged from the circles of the scholars, they often identified their Sufi metaphysics neither as the scholarly discipline of "speculative theology" nor the contemporary study of Graeco-Arabic "philosophy" (falsafa), but rather "wisdom" (hikma). In what makes the exact meaning of the term hikma dependent on time and place, philosophers like al-Fārābī (d. 235/850), Ibn Sina (d. 428/ 1037), and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) used the term "wisdom" (hikma) interchangeably with the term "philosophy" (falsafa) of the Peripatetic (mashshā'i) Aristotelian-Neoplatonic commentary tradition. For many Sufis, the term hikma became synonymous with Sufi metaphysics, with pre-Islamic philosophers such as Empedocles represented in later Sufi texts as influences on early mystics like Dhū l-Nūn al-Misri (d. 245/859) and his student Sahl al-Tustari (d. 238/896). As seen in Chapter 4, for example, the scholar and Sufi Ibn Barrajān (d. 536/1141) of Seville represented hikma as his own mystical approach to cosmological conclusions attained erroneously by the philosophers. Ibn Barrajān's use of hikma in this way very closely anticipated Ibn `Arabī's (d. 638/1240) critical assessment of Ibn Rushd's (Averroes d. 595/1198) deductive methodology and likewise echoed the writings of his Cordovan predecessor Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931). As discussed in Chapter 1, Ibn Masarra claimed the philosophers (falāsifa) arrived successfully at key theological truths when discussing the Universal Intellect and Soul while simultaneously criticizing the philosophers' use of imprecise language.

Despite the fact that Sufi metaphysics developed among mystics within scholarly circles, some scholars offered enduring critiques of the mystics and Sufi metaphysics in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Significantly, these criticisms were often less centrally oriented around their approach to philosophical doctrines and more oriented around their use of esoteric scriptural hermeneutics.

Scholars pointed to the potential dangers of how the mystics, much like the Ismā`īlīs, integrated interpretations of theological beliefs and ritual in an "interior" (bātin) category of scriptural meaning that in some cases departed significantly from the corresponding "exterior" (zāhir) level of meaning. Though mystics pointed to the parallel importance of these interior and exterior meanings, critics highlighted controversial cases where "interior" meanings appeared to compromise traditional creedal doctrines and ritual obligations. The resulting controversy was the Islamic version of an antinomianism (ibāhiyya) debate, which saw some critics misrepresent mystical approaches to esoteric scriptural hermeneutics. From the critics' perspective, the discovery of deeper meanings of theological belief and ritual was not itself problematic, as it was commonplace in Qur'an commentary. Where criticism emerged was in cases when the distinction between "interior" meanings and "exterior" meanings was so great that the resulting dichotomy resembled the esoteric hermeneutics of the Ismā`īlī Shiite theologians. That is, Sufi metaphysics, despite being systematized within Sunni scholarly circles, had become entangled in the writings of critics with the controversy over Ismā`īlī theology because of a shared history of interest in esoteric scriptural hermeneutics. In what brings the political dimensions of this controversy into clearer focus, esoteric scriptural hermeneutics formed the basis of the Fatimid Ismā`i1ī movement's claim to the caliphate in tenth-century North Africa, which explains the rise of the epithet "esotericists" (bātiniyya) to describe the Fatimid caliphate and the Ismā`īlīs more broadly. By the fourteenth century, the scholar Ibn Taymiyya applied the Ismā`īlī epithet "esotericists" to both the philosophers and the Sufis in a critique that included special criticism of al-Ghazālī, whom medieval and modern historians identify as a key figure in the rise among the scholars of philosophical theology and philosophically oriented Sufi metaphysics. Ironically, al-Ghazālī was the author of the Scandals of the Esotericists, a work written under political patronage that praised the Abbasid caliphate and criticized the rivaling Fatimid caliphate. That this work included its own criticism of the Fatimid caliphate's political use of Graeco-Arabic philosophy, and that it was written under a caliphate in Baghdad that once sponsored the

translation of Hellenistic works into Arabic, reflects the extent to which scholarly debates about philosophy's value in communal guidance and leadership were heavily impacted by caliphal politics.

Caliphs as Bibliophile Patrons of Philosophy and Platonizing Guides

As discussed in the last section, the intellectual milieu of the multireligious Hellenistic Middle East contextualizes the way early Sunni scholars found a place for Graeco-Arabic philosophy in conceptions of their own knowledge and role as communal guides. From the perspective of politics and its impact on religion, this development was also a function of the rise of caliphal courts in Damascus and Cairo that financially supported the translation and transmission of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and science.43 The rise of what might be called philosophical caliphs occurred especially in the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad and the rivaling Fatimid Ismāīlī caliphate of Cairo, even as their respective approaches contrasted significantly. The early decades of the Abbasid period (r. 750-1258 in Baghdad, r. 1261-1517 in Cairo) saw the rise of a caliph, namely al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-833), who claimed to have spoken with Aristotle in a famously recounted dream. This period saw the politically backed and socially supported absorption of late antique Hellenistic thought in early Islamic intellectual and visual culture, an absorption that was part of a wider Greek-Arabic, Aramaic-Arabic, and Pahlavi-Arabic translation movement centered in Baghdad. In continuity with the pre-Islamic Sassanian monarchs who welcomed philosophers and physicians fleeing the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empire for the Persian city of Gundishapur, the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad likewise cultivated a model of authority akin to a kind of bibliophile philosopher-governor. The rise of the Abbasids' neighbors in tenth-century Cairo, the rivaling Fatimid caliphate (r. 909-1171), also saw the absorption of Graeco-Arabic philosophy into ruling political culture, but the model of authority the Fatimids projected was a controversial one in the eyes of the predominantly Sunni scholarly networks. In contrast with the Abbasid model, where the caliph was an administrative and imperial uniting figure, the

Fatimids conceived of their caliph as a semi-messianic (mandi) Platonizing guide, complete with an elusive political lore that stirred vivid imaginations around the Islamic world for centuries.

As mentioned, the Fatimid caliphate (r. 909-1171) emerged in North Africa from a movement not in the predominantly Sunni manifestation of Islam, but in a subset of early Shiism, specifically early Ismā ilism. The early history of the Ismāilī movement in the ninth century is vague because of the loss of early texts, and it is largely known based on representations of its origins written both by later Ismāilī theologians and by critics of Ismāilism. By the formative ninth century, the other main subset of Shiism, the Imāmī (Twelver) form of Shiism dominant in present-day Iran, had already adopted a politically conciliatory position within the Sunni political and religious establishment of the Abbasid caliphate. Twelver Shiism's political position was so conciliatory in recognizing the Sunni Abbasid caliphate that the reigning "protectorate" dynasty of military emirs in Abbasid Baghdad who ruled coterminously with the caliph was an Imāmī Shiite military dynasty — namely, the Būyid or Buwayhid emirs (r. 9451055).4' While the successor Seljuk sultans of Baghdad (r. 1055-1258) represented themselves as restorers of Sunni authority within the Abbasid caliphate during the sultanate ofToghril (r. 1040-1063), the Būyids' earlier military reign throughout Iraq and Iran had already been partially accommodated in political theory by the Sunni scholarly establishment of Iraq. The arrangement of a reigning emir or sultan in Baghdad who ruled concomitantly with a caliph in Baghdad became embedded in the later Sunni scholars' formally elaborated distinctions between the nature of the caliph's leadership and the sultan's or emir's leadership. These theories were articulated formally by figures such as the jurist and political theorist al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) and the polymath scholar al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), chief judge under the coterminous rule of the Abbasid caliphs and Seljuk sultans.

What made the rise of a rival Fatimid Ismā`ī

the caliph associated with the dream abou Aristotle, Sunni scholars from the era of the politically backed Greek Arabic translation movement were already familiar with the idea that ruling political administration could draw on Graeco-Arabic philosophy in the formation of political culture and articulation of political leadership Hówever, it was particularly the messianic dimension of the Fatimids conception of a philosophical caliph that attracted special criticism in it representation of the caliph as claiming more religious authority than an: of the previous caliphs of Baghdad, Damascus, or Medina. The Fatimid conception of the caliph was even the source of the Qarmati Ismā`īlīs unwillingness to join the Fatimid Ismā`īlī movement. Still, the more basis notion of the caliph as a philosopher-governor was not a new one, as in had a place in both Abbasid and Fatimid political culture despite thrse distinctions in approach. What is particularly significant in this concept' tandem development in Abbasid and Fatimid political culture, however is how one came to impact the other. Specifically, the Fatimids' model o a Platonizing Ismā`īlī caliphate seems to have had an impact on how the Abbasid caliphate revised and backpedaled its political connection with Graeco-Arabic philosophy.

While the early Abbasid caliphate in the era of Ma'mūn (r. 813-833 was originally a source of patronage of a wide spectrum of Graeco Arabic philosophical books and ideas, a pattern that made the caliph ate a bibliophile center of global knowledge, the later Abbasid caliph ate in the era of al-Mustazhir (r. 1094-1118) moved toward sifting ou problematic political and theological manifestations of Graeco-Arabic philosophy. At the center of the Abbasid caliphate's critique, which can be located in the realm of a new set of court-commissioned books, was a disapproving representation of the Ismā`īlīs' conception of the Ismā`īlī caliph and his inner circles as Platonizing guides who claimed to facilitate a kind of spiritual enlightenment among the general populace. More specifically, in response to both the Fatimid Ismā`īlīs and the breakoff Nizārī Ismā`īlīs led by Hasan-i Sabbāh (d. 518/1124) of the famous Hashīshiyya, the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustazhir (r. 1094-1118) commissioned chief judge al-Ghazālī to write a short theological treatise called the

Scandals of the Esotericists that criticized Ismā`īlī politics and theology. The treatise condemned in particular the way the Ismâ`īlīs used philosophical doctrines in psychology and cosmology as the basis of a claim to communal leadership and guidance. Interestingly, as Chapter 3 discusses, three of the doctrines in cosmology that al-Ghazālī criticized in Ismā`īlī philosophical theology were the same three that he selected for special condemnation against the Graeco-Arabic philosophers in the form of a fatwā in the Incoherence of the Philosophers. These doctrines were specifically the philosophical notion of the pre-eternity of the world, the nature of God's knowledge of the universals and particulars, and the nature of human resurrection in terms of body and soul.[52] The Incoherence, in turn, played an important role in laying out more enduring contours of Sunni scholarly distinctions between theologically sound and unsound absorptions of Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines. Scholarly works like the Scandals of the Esotericists and the Incoherence of the Philosophers shaped the parallel development of an Aristotelian-Avicennan logic-oriented form of Islamic theology (later Ash`arism) and a more loosely Platonizing form of Islamic mysticism (Sufi metaphysics), both of which became central dimensions of what it meant to be a Sunni scholarly guide of the community after the eleventh century. One of the key arguments of Part I of this book is that earlier sets of writings in al-Andalus, controversial rise of the Fatimids as a semi-messianic Platonizing political movement.

The examples of Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/ 1111) criticizing the Fatimids' Platonizing political theology within their respective investigations of Neoplatonic cosmology's role in the Sunni scholarly sciences points to a key pattern illustrated in this book. Just as the Abbasid—Fatimid rivalry in political models had an impact on Abbasid conceptions of ruling political authority, it likewise had an impact on how the predominantly Sunni networks of scholars articulated the contours of their own scholarly knowledge and religious authority as communal guides. In particular, the Abbasid—Fatimid political rivalry helped shape a tenth- and eleventh-century scholarly conversation about which aspects of Graeco-Arabic philosophical knowledge were relevant parts of what it meant to be a theological guide of the Muslims within the general multi-religious populace.

As Part I shows, the impact of this conversation on the scholars was twofold. First, Sunni scholars cultivated a lasting place for Aristotelian logic to the exclusion of specific Neoplatonic conclusions in the most influential methodologies of Islamic theology. Second, the scholars cultivated an enduring space in Sufi metaphysics for revised interpretations of Neoplatonic doctrines in psychology and cosmology. That is, the history of the scholars embracing AristotelianAvicennan logic-oriented forms of philosophical theology and more loosely Platonizing forms of Sufi metaphysics in their debates about what it meant to be a Sunni scholarly guide of the community's belief, which was discussed in the first part of this introduction, was shaped partly by the political contingencies of this Abbasid-Fatimid rivalry and its competing philosophical conceptions of political leadership. This dialectical relationship between conceptions of ruling political authority and scholarly religious authority can be located in two key textual phenomena traced in this book. First, scholarly theological debates about the contours of sound belief and ritual were often articulated in writing with an explicit awareness of how specific positions were used controversially in contemporary politics, especially in Fatimid politics. Second, the texts in which these ideas were elaborated were often entangled with ruling attempts to sponsor or alternatively marginalize specific groups of scholars and works. At the highest level of the Abbasid-Fatimid rivalry, this attempt to sponsor specific scholarly circles developed into competing patterns of patronage for the Sunni theological-juridical colleges of Iraq and the originally Ismāīlī al-Azhar college of Cairo. Ironically, scholarly circles maintained a degree of intellectual independence despite this patronage, though the scholars' conception of their own role as communal guides developed in dialogue with continuing political developments.

A Fluid Dialectic of Authority between Rulers and Scholars

In sum, the historical picture of authority illustrated in this book is still the familiar image of scholarly networks constituting the core of religious authority in the medieval Middle East and North Africa, whose authority in jurisprudence was extensive yet limited by the legal jurisdiction of political ruling

circles and the communal boundaries of Jewish and Christian communities. What is new in this book's analysis is an illustration of how the knowledge and epistemology that undergirded the scholars' own communal leadership as doctrinal guides changed in response to the ideological underpinnings of various political models of leadership, which scholars debated and deemed either legitimate or illegitimate conceptions of political leadership. The trajectory of the rulers' and scholars' respective embrace of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in political culture and the scholarly sciences, and the scholars' growing distinction between the value of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic and shortcomings of Neoplatonic-Avicennan psychology and cosmology, represent one of the most significant consequences of this dialogue of authority, one that ultimately impacted Latin Europe's nominalist critique of Neoplatonism and the discussions of the Scientific Revolution.

At the center of the analysis of politics and religion in this book, in sum, is evidence in Arabic from philosophical treatises, works of heresiography, bio-bibliographical dictionaries, court chronicles, and mystical exegesis that have rarely been seen by Western audiences. The Arabic manuscripts from the archival libraries of present-day Turkey in particular have not been widely read even in the original Arabic, as the manuscripts have only recently begun to be edited after centuries of remaining in Ottoman libraries alongside a variety of unpublished Andalusian manuscripts. These manuscripts arrived in Anatolia with the slow exodus of both Muslim and Jewish Andalusi intellectual circles before the transfer of the last Andalusi domain, Nasrid Granada, to the Crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1492. Drawing on this evidence, this book begins with an analysis of how the rise of the Fatimid caliphate, which rivaled the Andalusī Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba and the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, brought about a complex negotiation over religious leadership and political power in the tenth-century Middle East and North Africa…

The story told in the six chapters of this book has traced the historical relationship between government and religion in the pre-modern Middle East and North Africa. At the heart of this story has been an elusive interplay of political and religious authority that involved rival ruling administrations

as well as the wider scholarly networks (`ulamā') of Islam. Since the seventh century C.E., these groups have debated an enduring question that has been answered differently across time and geography: in the post-prophetic era, what constituted sound models of political leadership and communal guidance of the general faithful populace?

By bridging analysis of the judiciary with an investigation of widely circulating philosophical and theological writings, this study adds the following new perspective to the historical picture of how ruling circles and the scholars ('ulamā') answered this question: While the scholars indeed represented much of pre-modern Islamic religious authority through their semi-independent dominance of the judiciary and through their powerful social role as urban mediators and guides of faith and ethics, the way they conceived of their role as communal guides was significantly informed by their assessment of contemporary political models of leadership. That is, despite their dominance over ruling circles in the judiciary, the scholars' (`ulamā') textual articulations of what constituted sound theological knowledge and valid forms of communal guidance in belief and ethics reflected a keen awareness of the intellectual underpinnings of contemporary political movements, especially those movements they sought to distance themselves from. What is understated in the most recent research is this historical agency of political actors that impacted, often without intention, scholarly conceptions of sound theological knowledge and valid guidance and authority.

In the case study examined in this book, eleventh- and twelfth-century scholars (Varna') active in the Andalusī Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba and Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad disapproved of the rival Fatimid caliphate in Cairo (r. 909 — 1171) and its controversial image 238 of the ruler as a semi-messianic (mandi) and Platonic philosopher-governor endowed with a special intellect. The scholars' disapproval of the Fatimid caliph occurred despite their acceptance of the earlier Abbasid caliphs' own Hellenistic model of political culture, reflected in the politically backed translation of Greek, Aramaic, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit works of learning to Arabic beginning in the eighth century C.E. With the spread of proselytizing Fatimid theologians westward and eastward to al-Andalus and Iraq, the majority-Sunni scholars' growing

alarm over the Fatimid caliphate's political power deepened their self-scrutiny over the way some fellow scholars, such as the Cordovan Ibn Masarra (d. 331/931), played an additional role in their communities as philosophical sages (hukamā').The once innocuous social and religious phenomenon of scholars as philosophical sages, guiding the spiritual and intellectual ascent of their followers, suddenly became a phenomenon that was politically and religiously contentious with the rise of the Platonizing Fatimid philosopher-caliphs and their itinerant supporters.

By the twelfth century, in an intellectual synthesis epitomized by al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) embrace of early Abbasid-era philosophical writings, and likewise foreshadowed by the philosophical reputations of his Sunni predecessors Ibn Masarra (d. 331/931) and Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064), the increasingly multifaceted scholars of the Middle East and North Africa largely came to the following conclusion about how to define their own role as guides of communal belief: On one level, as Sufi metaphysicians, the scholars could soundly assimilate early Neoplatonic-Avicennan doctrines on the ascent of the soul and intellect into the language they used to articulate and instruct mystical experience, and they could do so without sanctioning the specific theory of intellectual ascent used in later Fatimid political culture. On another level, as logicians, and as nuanced critics of various Platonizing Islamic theologies such as those of Ibn Masarra and the Fatimids, the scholars could soundly assimilate Aristotelian-Avicennan logic and its syllogistic tools into their knowledge of jurisprudence and theology without uncritically accepting the entirety of logic's Platonizing and seemingly dualist conclusions about the nature of the world and the human mind. That is, in a notable reflection of their political and geographical context, and in an expansion of their early social role, the increasingly polymathic scholars (Varna') of the Middle East and North Africa after the twelfth century increasingly embraced two additional roles, often simultaneously: (1) the role of Neoplatonic-Avicennan Sufi metaphysicians, who were increasingly active in Sufi lodges (zāwiya, tekke, khāngāh) in the early modern period, and (2) the role of Aristotelian-Avicennan neo-Ash`arī theologians, who were active in endowed colleges of jurisprudence (filth) and theology (kalām). That

the nominalist critique of Plato's realism emerged in Arabic in this period in the writings of the Zāhirī scholar Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) and the Shāfii scholar al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), long before its wider transmission in Latin Europe, speaks to the extent that the modern border between Western and Middle Eastern historiographies overlooks a shared geographical and intellectual context dating back to the medieval world, and even further, to the world of late antiquity.

From the perspective of sources, this book has shed new light on this fluid interplay of political and religious authority by situating legal opinions and juridical institutions in the larger context of court chronicles, biographical dictionaries, mystical treatises, doxographical works, philosophical books, and theological treatises. When brought together with the history of scholarly legal opinions, these philosophical and theological sources add certain precision to the historian's picture of a dynamic interplay between the political authority of ruling circles and the religious authority of the scholars Culamā'). What this book suggests in place of modern allusions to a pre-modern scholarly "orthodoxy" or orthodoxies, then, is the identification of broad trends in the scholars' juridical practices and theological beliefs that were fluid and highly contextual according to geography, time period, and most significantly in this book, political culture.

In sum, the goal of this book has been to facilitate more sound analyses of the historical relationship between government and religion in the Middle East and North Africa. What this book offers future researchèrs is an illustration of a key investigative paradigm: Political and religious affairs in the Middle East and North Africa are not simply illustrative of enduring theories of communal leadership and sacred beliefs. Rather, the rapidly changing political and religious landscape of the region tells a much more complex story of how geography, geopolitics, local customs, and economics have impacted and continue to impact the way these theories and beliefs are put into practice.

Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings edited by Klaas Spronk, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman [Studia Semitica Neerlandica, Brill, 9789004343306]

Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings offers a new perspective on Judaism, Christianity and Islam as religions of the book by showing that there is an intricate web of relations between the texts of these three religious traditions.

Contents

Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings by Klaas Spronk and Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman

What unites Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that they are religions of the book. And their holy books are related, too. The Christian Bible can be seen as an extension of the Hebrew Tanakh, and the Qurʾan as the fully revised version of both predecessors. Anyone familiar on the field of the interpretation of these holy texts will realize that describing the relation between these holy books in this way is a vast simplification. The problematic relation between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in past and present times seems to indicate that there is more that divides than unites these religions. The

motivation behind the present volume is not to give in to the present tendency of emphasizing the differences. On the contrary, in many different ways the following contributions will show that there is in an intricate web of relations between the texts of these three religious traditions. This not only concerns the holy books themselves, but we also see on other levels how the different readings and interpretations intermingle and influence each other. Studying the multifaceted history of the way Hebrew texts were read and interpreted in so many different contexts may contribute to a better understanding of the complicated relation between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

These studies are attributed to Dineke Houtman on the occasion of her retirement as professor at the Protestant Theological University in Amsterdam. In her academic career she always attempted to build bridges between the religious communities. She is a specialist on the fields of the relationship between Mishnah and Tosefta, of the Targum, and of the history of the relationship between Jews and Christians from the Middle Ages until today. Most contributions in the volume touch upon these matters, but it will also become clear that there are more interesting aspects of the use and interpretation of Hebrew texts in all kinds of context.

Hebrew Texts in Jewish Surroundings

Part 1 of this volume is devoted to the use of Hebrew texts in Jewish literature. Johannes C. de Moor, studies the phenomenon of 'fallen angels who repented' in Jewish literature. He notes many parallels between the names of the angels and evil Canaanite deities like Horan. From Ugaritic texts we learn that these deities could repent and change their evil nature. De Moor shows that in the Hebrew Bible, parabiblical literature, Targums and medieval incantations this subjection of the evil powers to the supreme god is further elaborated, so that some evil demons could become beneficent angels.

Klaas Spronk presents a new intertextual approach to the story of Jephthah and his daughter. Inspired by traditional Jewish exegesis he reads it in relation to a number of other Biblical stories, especially the story of Saul willing to sacrifice his son Jonathan. It can be demonstrated that already within its canonical context in Tanakh the story of

Jephthah can be read as an example of a bad leader, prefiguring king Saul in a number of ways.

Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman follows the text of Hannah's Song (1 Sam 2:1– 10) in several Jewish recensions. It appears that the reader receives various images of the same God and diverse messages of what he/she is supposed to learn from this song. For example, the Greek version encourages the reader to act with righteousness, while the Aramaic version stresses God's intervention in history and eschatology. Special attention is given to the two women in this Song: the barren woman and the one with many children. The context determines how these two figures are being interpreted.

Lieve Teugels shows how in the midrash, specifically in Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael and Mekhilta de-rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a parable is used to explain Pharaoh and his servants' change of heart in Exodus 10 and 14. The parable features a slave who has to eat a rotten fish and undergoes other humiliations because of the mistake of buying that fish in the first place. It is also found in the later Pesikta de-Rav Kahana and Tanchuma Buber. From the journey of this particular mashal we can learn about the processes and techniques with which parables were adapted and re-used in the course of the history of rabbinic literature.

Tamar Kadari considers Sarah's beauty as reflected in rabbinic sources, including the Genesis Apocryphon discovered in the Qumran caves, with a more general discussion of the rabbis' approach to the idea of beauty. The sages appear to use a diverse set of techniques to convey the experience of beauty's intensity. They established a ranking of the four most beautiful women since the dawn of human history. They based their criteria for evaluating beauty on the appearance of the first woman on earth, the 'icon of Eve.' Real beauty will radiate out on its surroundings by invoking images of light and illumination, relating it to the figure of God, the epitome of perfect beauty.

Geert W. Lorein studies the way David's strengths and weaknesses are represented in the Targum of the Psalms, in order to find out whether the trend in late Old Testament theology idealizing the figure of David is also followed in the Targums. He concludes that, although David is represented many times as a stronger and more spiritual person, the opposite happens so often that it clear that the Targum has remained quite faithful to the Masoretic text. Apparently the Targumists have not given in to the tendency to represent the patriarchs (including David) as without sin or the historical David as completely messianic.

F.J. Hoogewoud pays attention to an important aspect of the Buber/Rosenzweig Bible translation: the phenomenon of its new 'colometric' presentation of the text. He relates it to some similar efforts in the field of New Testament studies in the same period. Although both Buber and Rosenzweig seem to claim that it was Buber who 'invented' the new presentation, colometric presentations of New Testament texts in Greek and in German had already been published by Eduard Norden, Roland Schütz and Roman Woerner.

Cees Houtman presents an overview of Dutch Jewish educational literature on the biblical history in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, noting many parallels with earlier similar works by Dutch Protestants. Apparently these were imitated. The character of the educational literature is illustrated by analyzing the way in which it deals with five 'uncomfortable' biblical texts. Texts on sexual abberations were usually amended or left out, but massacres were pictured overtly and without embarrassment. Jewish and Protestant interpreters dealt with these texts in a similar way. A remarkable difference is that orthodox Protestant authors in particular do not spare the patriarchs Noah and Abraham.

Hebrew Texts in Muslim and Christian Surroundings

Using the example of the story of David and Bathsheba Marcel Poorthuis studies the Jewish influences upon early Islamic writers and upon Islamic hermeneutics in general. He shows that the generally accepted idea that the Islamic perspective of David rejected en bloc Jewish stories including the Biblical scriptures, fails to do justice to the profound influence of the Isrāʾīliyyāt, in which David's actions are strongly defended. It was the chasm between these Rabbinical apologetics and Scripture itself, which eventually caused the rejection of the highly critical Biblical portrayal of David in Islam. The rise of a more rigorously inner-Qurʾānic hermeneutics could not

prevent the massive and lasting influence of the Isrāʾīliyyāt about David in Islam.

Wout van Bekkum explores he religious or liturgical poetry Elazar ben Jacob of Baghdad, who was not only a prolific composer of devotional and social Hebrewverse, but also a Sufi-oriented mystic, a Hebrew grammarian, and probably a zealous student of Neoplatonic astrology and philosophy. Special attention is paid to a manuscript from Warsaw, containing a Sefer širim ʿAttiqim, a 'Book of Ancient Songs', compiled by Ephraim Deinard. It lists ten compositions ascribed to Elazar of Baghdad, with five of them unknown and not catalogued.

Andreas Lehnardt pays attention to the fact that many Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of Rabbinic literature have been preserved in medieval bindings of books, registers and notarial files. In recent years several hundreds of these Hebrew binding fragments have been discovered in European libraries and archives. Through this unintended recycling Jewish tradition is kept-up in Christian hands. Lehnardt analyzes and translates a newly identified fragment with a text from Midrash Bereshit Rabbah, discovered in the University and State library of Jena. The fragment appears to be an important witness for famous midrashim, among them a dialogue between Matrona and Rabbi Yose, and the narrative on Diocletian and the rabbis in Paneas.

Hans-Martin Kirn puts the question whether we have to see Martin Luther as a precursor of modern antisemitism in a wider perspective. It was only from the 1870s that Luther's late writings against the Jews began to attract antisemites of all colours, including Lutherans, who eagerly used them to legitimize their propaganda. Kirn makes a distinction between anti-Judaism as a primarily theologically motivated concept of defining Jews as 'the religious Other' and antisemitism in its different forms. With regard to Martin Luther he notes a dramatic change of practical attitudes toward Jews and Judaism from the early to the late Luther. His more negative attitude towards the Jews at the end of life is related to Luther's apocalyptic thinking, which became more and more radical and extended to different opponents.

Harry Sysling studies the influence of Margit Rosenstock-Huessy on the Gritlianum and on Franz

Rosenzweig's The Star ofRedemption. He describes the relationship between Rosenzweig and the wife of his best friend, Eugen Rosenstock, between 1917 and 1922. Special attention is paid to a text Rosenzweig composed not long before he started writing down The Star of Redemption: a small dialogue between body and soul, the Gritlianum, a work he explicitly named after Gritli Rosenstock.

Gert van Klinken gives a detailed description of the Druze community in Palestine in the twentieth century, with special attention to the local leader ʿAbd Allāh Salman Saleh Khayr and his role in selling land for Nes Ammim. It is an appropriate contribution to this volume dedicated to Dineke Houtman who devoted so much passion and energy to the ongoing discussions about Israel and Palestine. Usually these discussion are hampered by a lack of knowledge of the complex history of the peoples living there together in the first half of the previous century.

Hebrew Texts in Jewish and Christian Surroundings

Eric Ottenheijm studies the parable of finding pearls in Matthew 13:45–46 against the background of rabbinic literature. He notes that the association of costliness evoked by the reference of the pearl in Jesus' parable of the merchant is decisive to understand the behaviour of the merchant, who sells everything he had in order to purchase a very particular pearl. In comparison, the rabbinic 'Bildwelt' of pearls covers a broad range of metaphorical/allegorical meanings. There appears to be only one association with pearls that very probably was operative among Matthew's readership as well: the overarching and non-standardized market value of pearls. In Matthew's editorial framing of Jesus' parables the objective is the Kingdom of Heaven. The rhetorical function of the pearl is to direct the reader's attention to ultimate values and concomitant choices. As such, the parable sheds light on the ideal behaviour of the disciples of Matthew's community, who, like the merchant, have to leave everything for the Kingdom of God.

Pieter W. van der Horst introduces the reader to what is probably the first Jewish-Christian dialogue after Justin Martyr, the Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus, a Greek text written around 400 ce, most probably in Egypt. It can be seen as a good

example of the debate that has been going on between the two religions for centuries. Zacchaeus rejects any form of christological interpretation of the Old Testament. The text shows how difficult it was for Christians to prevent themselves from being accused of polytheism.

Leon Mock offers a comparing exegetical study of Genesis 22:5 as it is interpreted in Cyril's Fifth Festal Letter and in Babylonian Talmud and Genesis Rab-bah 56:1–2. According to Mock the exegetic developments in both religions can be seen as complementing each other. The exegetical encounter is an expression of the mutual relations between both religions in certain periods, for worse or the good. Cyril appears to be less anti-Judaic in his Festal Letter than in his Glaphyrorum in Genesim, where he considered the ass as a symbol for the Jews. Moreover, he maintains the hope that the Jews will accept the Christian way of reading the Bible and will believe in Jesus. From the Rabbinic side this is mirrored by Rabbi Abbahu's positive view on non-Jewish slaves who will in the eschaton have a part in the World to Come and the resurrection.

Michael C. Mulder reflects on the Jewish and Christian approaches to the command in Deuteronomy 21:18–21 to stone a rebellious son. The two reading traditions have much in common: the manner in which the passage is regarded as an example, as a mirror for bringing up children, in jurisprudence, and in the importance of a sound relationship with God. One formal point of agreement is the understanding that interpretation can never be regarded as closed, since any interpretation of ours is never able to fully contain the voice of the Most High.

Simon Schoon discusses the question whether the Noachide laws are a viable option as an alternative for full conversion to Judaism. He notes that in the course of time this concept to regulate the conduct towards and relations with Gentiles underwent many transformations. In modern times, some Jewish organizations have taken up the challenge to attract, in a much more active way, individual non-Jews in order for them to accept the Noachide commandments as a way of life and even establish Noachide communities. Schoon sympathizes with Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the uk, who prefers, at least in the public and political domain, to speak about 'the ways of peace', instead of proclaiming the Noachide commandments. The ways of peace's originality lies in their inclusivity, that is, they do not need a specific Noachide organization.

Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings

Magda Misset-van de Weg describes the reception history of the story of the meeting between Solomon and the queen of Sheba, with special attention to the way this story was taken up in the New Testament. The article documents that the queen of Sheba is one of the few women who features in the sacred texts and the traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is noted that in the gospels of Matthew and Luke the reference to and interpretation of the imaginative episode is scanty, with both the name of the queen and her mission deviating significantly from the text in 1 Kings. Matthew and Mark may have been inspired by wisdom traditions in which wisdom and judgment form a pair to put the queen, who matched Solomon in wisdom, in a position of future judgment.

Reading the Bible in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations [Routledge Reading the Bible in Islamic Context Series, Routledge, 9781138093577]

In the current political and social climate, there is increasing demand for a deeper understanding of Muslims, the Qur'an and Islam, as well as a keen demand among Muslim scholars to explore ways of engaging with Christians theologically, culturally, and socially.

Reading the Bible in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations explores the ways in which an awareness of Islam and the Qur'an can change the way in which the Bible is read. The contributors come from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds, bring various levels of commitment to the Qur'an and the Bible as Scripture, and often have significantly different perspectives. The first section of the book contains chapters that compare the report of an event in the Bible with a report of the same event in the Qur'an. The second section addresses Muslim readings of the Bible and biblical tradition and looks at how Muslims might regard the Bible - Can they recognise it as Scripture? If so, what does that mean, and how does it relate to the Qur'an as Scripture? Similarly, how might Christian

readers regard the Qur'an? The final section explores different analogies for understanding the Bible in relation to the Qur'an. The book concludes with a reflection upon the particular challenges that await Muslim scholars who seek to respond to Jewish and Christian understandings of the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

A pioneering venture into intertextual reading, this book has important implications for relationships between Christians and Muslims. It will be of significant value to scholars of both Biblical and Qur'anic Studies, as well as any Muslim seeking to deepen their understanding of the Bible, and any Christian looking to transform the way in which they read the Bible.

Excerpt: You have in your hands an exciting new work which richly rewards the reader. But please do not read this book if you are looking for a simple guide to what to think. This work invites you to reflect on a range of complex and sometimes sensitive issues. It is a pioneering attempt to engage a variety of voices on the question of reading the Bible in Islamic context. There is a great deal of theological work on the Bible in a variety of contexts, but rarely with Islam and Muslims as the context in view. There is also much work on Islam and Muslims, but only occasionally with the Bible in view. This book represents a series of detailed experiments conducted to help to change that situation. It was born from a conference held in Oxford in September 2015, which I attended, and where I had the privilege to meet an amazing array of people, from a wide range of different nationalities and backgrounds. The energy and enthusiasm of those presenting work at the conference was clear for all to see as they explored this new and exciting ground.

You will find in these pages a variety of approaches, including comparisons and contrasts, an attempt to combine, different narratives, and reflections on what any differences and similarities mean. All of these approaches are anchored in specific examples, not based on broad generalisations. Questions will be raised, such as whether David sinned (an issue with implications for Muslim views of prophets), why the biblical Ruth might be parallel to the qur'anic Queen of Sheba, and why the Bible presents a culture shock to most Muslim readers.

Mutual understanding, of course, does not require mutual agreement. Likewise, readers are unlikely to agree with every contribution, but each chapter will stimulate further thought on what is involved in reading the Bible in the context of Muslim scripture, faith and people. Of course, it is not always comfortable to be involved in such exploration, either for the writer or for those around them. The final reflection explores this tension between exploration of unfamiliar terrain and the attachment of believers to their own convictions.

I have spent over twenty years in the formal study and teaching of Islam and Christian—Muslim relations. This has involved exploring how a faith which is not my own — in this case Islam — relates to, differs from and intersects with, my own Christian beliefs. So I am excited to see such a new and valuable contribution which does something different. While many works explore the Bible and the Qur'an in order to shed light on the Qur'an, and others mine the rich resources of historical encounters, this book seeks to look at the Bible with Muslim contexts squarely in view. Why does this matter? While understanding one scripture and its history of interpretation can be a daunting task, to try to understand two is yet more of a challenge. Yet it is a challenge only growing in importance as people live alongside one another and share their beliefs, their physical territory and their views with one another. This book is a really important step in the development of biblical interpretation, and in opening up an entirely new way of approaching the subject, it provides a stimulus to others to follow where it leads — and beyond. I am delighted to recommend it to you. Martin Whittingham, May 2017

[Reading the Bible in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations](#) aims to explore the ways in which an awareness of Islam and the Qur'an can change the way in which the Bible is read.

The first chapter in this collection, by Ida Glaser, functions as an introduction to the whole volume. Chapter 1 introduces the concept of reading the Bible in the context of Islam and David Tracey's model of conversation, recognition and analogy as a way of understanding them. Glaser then summarises the argument of each of the chapters and relates them to each other according to this model. The chapters in this volume are presented in

three sections according to the model proposed by Glaser.

Part I: Intertextual conversations

This first section contains five chapters that compare the report of an event in the Bible with a report of the same event in the Qur'an. In the first of these, George Bristow compares an evangelical Christian reading of Genesis 12-16 with a Turkish Muslim reading of a number of Abraham narratives in the Qur'an. In the second, Shirin Shafaie employs a narrative analysis of voice and characterisation to explore how the focus and interests of the Joseph narrative of Genesis 37-50 are quite distinct from those of Surah Yusuf. In the third, Ali Makhlabi and Larry Ciccarelli form a Muslim—Christian partnership to review how the doctrine of `isma (the sinless nature of the prophets) has impacted the way in which Muslims have approached the story of David and the ewe lamb. In the fourth, Carol Walker employs rhetorical analysis to understand how the story of King David and the ewe lamb functions within its biblical setting of the Books of Samuel and then how the different telling of this story functions in its qur'anic setting in Surah Sād. The fifth and final chapter of this section by Mohammad Ghandehari and Mohsen Feyzbakhsh argues that many of the lacunae in the accounts of Aaron and the golden calf that are found in Exodus 32, Surah 7 and Surah 20 can be resolved when the three accounts are read in relation to each other.

Part II: Questions about texts

The second section contains five chapters that address Muslim readings of the Bible and biblical tradition. First, Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor and Jaffary Awang recount the historical development of a Muslim method of reading the Bible. In this approach, the Qur'an is used as a means to evaluate the places in which the biblical text provides a genuine revelation, the places in which it provides an uncertain guide to truth and the places in which it, in its present corrupt form, opposes the truth. Second, Nazirudin Mohd Nasir examines this Muslim approach to the Bible as exemplified by the nineteenth-century Muslim Indian scholar Hamiduddin Farahi in his analysis of the Hebrew text of Genesis 22 and expresses some

reservations in regard to it as a method of understanding the text of the Bible. Third, Daniel Crowther observes how seven different features of the form and the content of the Bible scandalise Muslim readers. In each case, Crowther finds that the feature that causes the scandal illuminates the very different identity and function of the Bible as scripture vis-à-vis the Qur'an. Fourth, Martin O'Kane and Talha Bhamji survey different Muslim treatments of Abraham's sacrifice of his son on Mount Moriah. O'Kane and Bhamji argue that, although the relationship between the text of the Bible and the text of the Qur'an is uncertain, both the qur'anic text and subsequent Muslim traditions are an important chapter in the reception history of the text of Genesis 22. Fifth and finally, Ali Aghaei considers the evolution of the Islamic tradition relating to the cow of the sons of Israel as found in Q2:67-74. Through a detailed analysis of nine different traditions reported in al-Tabarī, Aghaei observes how Muslim tradition developed in interaction with the biblical text and biblical tradition.

Part III: Analogical explorations

The chapters in the third section explore different analogies to understand the Bible in relation to the Qur'an. Dwight Swanson compares and contrasts the cultic concepts of purity and impurity as found in, first, the Hebrew Bible, second, the New Testament and, third, the Qur'an. Georgina Jardim observes that whilst the account of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in the Qur'an follows a different trajectory to the account in the Bible, the biblical account of Ruth the Moabitess shares a similar theme (the female outsider) and a similar outcome (a declaration of faith and allegiance). Michael Lodahl finds that the new perspective on Paul (as a rabbinic follower of Christ) provides us with a fresh opportunity to compare biblical and qur'anic opinion in regard to creation, idolatry and human nature. Andy Warren-Rothlin finds a close analogy in the way in which human metaphors and human figures of speech are used in both the Bible and the Qur'an to describe divine realities. Warren then compares and contrasts the different ways in which different translators have handled these different `anthropotheisms.' And finally, Daniel Madigan uses a Jewish reading of the Gospel of John to reconsider. the Christian understanding of the

divinity and pre-existence of Jesus. By means of this reconsideration, Madigan reviews afresh the points of contact between Christian conceptions of Jesus Christ as the Word of God and Muslim conceptions of the Qur'an as the pre-existent Word of God.

Concluding reflection

The last chapter of the collection by Shabbir Akhtar reflects upon the particular challenges that await Muslim scholars who seek to respond to Jewish and Christian understandings of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. In his opinion, Muslims must choose between three approaches: a Muslim method of understanding the Bible through the Qur'an (as laid out by Razali et al.), a God-focused form of agnosticism, or a suspension of belief for the purposes of academic study. According to Akhtar, each one of these three approaches comes with its own share of problems and challenges, and there is no easy, or obvious, choice.

Biblical interpretation in Islamic context: Particular experiments, general tasks and signposts for the future by Ida Glaser

[Reading the Bible in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations](#) represents a step in a pioneering venture: we are trying to find out what is involved in serious engagement of the Bible with Islamic thought and with Muslim people, and thence to learn to interpret the Bible 'in conversation with' Islam. It is a venture in which Muslims and Christians travel side by side,' although with different perspectives and different agendas. For both Muslims and Christians, this is much more than an academic venture: it has consequences for life and faith.

For Christians, faithful reading of the Bible is essential to faithful living in any context. There can be no obedience to Scripture without reflection on how it relates to the situation of the readers. That necessarily involves reflection on the world in which the readers live; and Muslim people are part of that world.

Muslim readings of the Bible are of necessity 'in Islamic context'. The Muslim scholars writing in this volume suggest a range of motivations for reading the Bible: it can aid the interpretation of the Qur'an; it can be a source of godly wisdom; and it

can help in the development of interfaith relations and intercultural understanding in today's world.

This introductory chapter represents a Christian's analysis: in writing it, I have been thinking about how the various contributions relate to the hermeneutical adventure that I envisioned and on which we have been working together; and I finish the chapter with some thoughts relating to my own concern about faithful Christian reading of the Bible. The final chapter represents a Muslim's reflections: Shabbir Akhtar, my colleague and co-series editor, considers what might be involved in faithful Muslim reading of the Bible in the light of his own reading journey.

There can be no single method for encompassing all the complexities of the Bible and of Islamic contexts. The Biblical Interpretation in Islamic Context project has been influenced by F. X. Clooney's insistence that the enterprise of reading a Christian text in the context of any other faith and its texts should proceed through `studiously and stubbornly particular' experiments. That is, general methodologies are not to be produced at the outset in order to read the texts: rather, they are to be discerned through trying out different ways of reading particular texts in the context of other particular texts within their own contexts. The project can, then, be seen as encouraging `particular experiments'. By observing the whole range, we can discern emerging patterns.

[Reading the Bible in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations](#) represents an important part of the process. We produced it by hosting a conference (in Oxford, September 2015) that invited papers relevant to `biblical interpretation in Islamic context'. The editorial team then worked with selected authors and with each other to develop the papers (that is, chapters). In keeping with the experimental approach, we aim not to impose methodology on contributors, but to allow methodology to emerge from a range of particular readings. We trust that the results will stimulate yet more particular experiments, and hence lead to deeper and wider establishment of the venture.

This chapter offers a brief exploration of the question of what might be involved in reading the Bible in Islamic context, a look at the contributors and their tools, and then a consideration of the tasks that they have set themselves and the insights

and issues that have resulted. The `tasks' — that I have called intertextual conversations', `questions about the texts' and `analogical explorations' — give the basis for the organisation of the volume.

`Islamic context': what might it mean?

What do we mean by `biblical interpretation in Islamic context'? Such is the variety of Muslim people that we might even ask whether it makes sense to speak of Islam as 'a context'. If we define Islam as 'what Muslims believe' or 'how Muslims live', it might be better to speak of a variety of 'Islams'. So, then, what might we mean by `Islamic context', and in what ways might 'the context of Islam' be a special case in contextualised reading?

The most obvious answer is that `Islamic contexts' are characterised by the importance of the Qur'an within them. It is the Qur'an's relationship to the Bible that makes Islamic contexts a unique challenge and opportunity for the biblical interpreter. It is not, then, surprising that nearly all the papers submitted to our conference focussed on reading the Bible alongside the Qur'an, and this is reflected in the subtitle of the present volume.

An important corollary is that the hermeneutical question is not just how one might read the Bible: it is also how one might read the Qur'an. A variety of ways of reading the one can be combined with a variety of ways of reading the other and this multiplies possibilities. Further, Muslims and Christians are likely to bring different considerations to the interpretation of the two texts. The reading of the

Scripture of another tradition, and of a Scripture that is often seen as in competition with one's own Scripture, is an important underlying issue to our whole venture that it is dealt with in Shabbir Akhtar's contribution (Chapter 17).

Arguably, the uniqueness of Islamic contexts for Bible reading lies in the fact that the Qur'an, unlike the scriptures of other world religions, includes extensive

material related to the Bible. It refers to the Torah, the Psalms, the Prophets and the Gospels, and includes treatments of characters and themes that are found in the Bible. It also includes material that relates to Jews and to Christians, who are characterised as `People of the Book'; and 'The Book' is likely to be an allusion to the Jewish and

Christian Scriptures.' It sees itself as a continuation from biblical revelation, but it is a different kind of book than any biblical book!'

There are, then, several considerations that are expected to characterise the venture:

- Consideration of the similarities and differences between biblical and qur'anic ideas of revelation and of the nature of Scripture. For example, the Qur'an's view of itself as direct divine dictation highlights, by comparison, the varied human voices of the Bible. Biblical interpretation in Islamic context is likely, then, to provoke reflection on the nature and origin of the biblical text in question. Further, the range of Christian views of what the Bible is, may be put into conversation both with Islamic views of what the Bible ought to be, and with Islamic responses to the actual phenomena of the Bible.
- Consideration of the Qur'an's treatment of characters and stories that are found in the Bible. Most of the increasing literature on comparative reading of the Bible and the Qur'an is more concerned with understanding the Qur'an than with interpreting the Bible.' Some literature takes this further, asking what the comparative reading does for mutual understanding as, for example, believers read their scriptures together after the manner of 'Scriptural Reasoning'. It is acknowledged that such reading challenges Jewish and Christian readers of the Bible and can open fresh understandings of their own texts: in this volume and in the series which it inaugurates, we are seeking to focus on those fresh understandings. Of every comparative reading, we ask, 'How might this affect biblical interpretation — by Muslims as well as by other readers?'
- Consideration of qur'anic themes. There are common themes that have different places within the two Scriptures, apparently common themes that have different meanings, and unique features of each. Any of these may provoke the Bible reader into paying attention to neglected aspects of the text. For example, both the

Qur'an and the Bible deal with laws about inheritance. In the Qur'an, they are precise and are used in current legal decisions.' In the Bible, they are seldom read, the legal details being generally seen as inapplicable, perhaps on the basis of Jesus' discussion about inheritance in Luke 12:13-21. In Islamic contexts, not least in the case of conversion between faiths, it may be important to re-visit the biblical material.

- Consideration of the range of Muslim readings of the Qur'an. Non-Muslim focus on comparative and historical studies of the Qur'an may neglect engagement with tafsir or other Muslim discourse. For a reading of the Bible to be in `conversation' not only with texts but also with persons, we require engagement at least with the qur'anic interpretation of the particular dialogue partners. For a thorough reading, engagement with the wider tradition of interpretation is needed.

To complicate matters, there is a long history of Muslims and Christians using the Bible in relation to one another, and we are all writing at particular points in time and in contexts affected by that history. An `Islamic context' is not only characterised by the centrality of the Qur'an, but also by the centrality of Muhammad. The historical reason for the inclusion of so much material about Jews and Christians in the Qur'an is that Muhammad had many encounters with them. Most of these were friendly, but some were not. There were some difficult and even violent incidents relating to the Jews; and there were some polemical discussions with Christians. Further, the Qur'an arguably reflects something of the fusion between Christianity and power in the Byzantine Empire, as well as with the monastic Christianity of desert areas. This is the context for the Qur'an's own interaction with the Bible. On the one hand, it sees itself as confirming and perfecting the previous scriptures, and it refers extensively to them. On the other hand, it accuses Jews and Christians of misunderstanding, disobeying and miscommunicating their books.

It is not, then, surprising, that there is a long history of Muslim writings about the Bible. Many of these are polemical, attacking either the biblical text or Christian and Jewish interpretations of it.' However,

there are also more positive works, which use biblical material to assist commentary on the Qur'an,' or which see the Bible as a source for material that affirms Islam and predicts the coming of Muhammad. There are very few that seek to understand the Bible as it is understood by Christians or by Jews.

The Bible has also been important to Christian thinking about Islam and about Muslims since the seventh century: some of the earliest Christian reflections on the Arab conquests seek a biblical framework — typically, through an understanding of the Arabs as descendants of Ishmael or through identifying Muslim conquerors with apocalyptic powers." There are readings that shock twenty-first-century Christians, not least the use of the Cross during the period of the Crusades. There are also readings that offer rich resources, such as those represented by the history of translation of the Bible into Arabic. For both Christian and Muslim readers, historical study can both indicate the reasons for received interpretations and applications of the texts and challenge those interpretations and applications. Our points in time and our perceptions of our histories affect the choices and approaches in our particular reading experiments.

We are now ready to examine the other chapters themselves. We have described our venture in terms of a series of `experiments' from which patterns can emerge that will facilitate further study: we continue the analogy by beginning with a section that might be titled `apparatus'. The `apparatus' for reading is the readers and the skills and academic disciplines which they bring to their tasks.

Who is reading? People and their tools

It is often observed that knowledge has dimensions that depend on the knower; and the interpretation of texts is dependent on the readers as well as on the texts themselves. Our conference attracted a range of people, each bringing one or more traditions of reading texts to their reading experiments. Each writes in their own context and on the basis of their own experience.

Most obviously, there are writers from Muslim and from Christian backgrounds, who bring various

levels of commitment to the Qur'an and the Bible as Scripture, who have various understandings of the natures of their texts, and who represent various traditions of interpreting them. It is also obvious that some are male and some are female, and that they represent a variety of social and geographical contexts. To complicate matters, there are chapters that have more than one author — in two cases, a Muslim and a Christian writing together. Such aspects of the writers' identities affect their interests and their purposes in writing, as well as their approaches to both the Bible and the Qur'an.

Equally important is another aspect of reader variety: our authors have been trained in a variety of academic disciplines. All are currently working in areas relating to scriptural interpretation, and the reader will readily discern consequent approaches in their chapters. For example, O'Kane uses the methods and approaches of the reception history of the Bible, and Wan Razali, Mohd Noor and Awang use tools drawn from classical Islamic thought.

Further, many of our contributors were trained in another academic discipline before entering formal scriptural studies. We will not pause to speculate on how prior experience of moving across disciplines might form a basis for the crossdisciplinary venture of biblical interpretation in Islamic context. Rather, we will note that people bring some of the tools from their previous disciplines into our venture. In some cases, the tools are explicit. For example, Shirin Shafaie brings the tools of narrative analysis used in her doctoral research on war narratives, and Andy Warren-Rothlin brings linguistic tools from his discipline of translation studies. In other cases, the tools are not discussed, but we can easily discern their influence. For example, Shabbir Akhtar brings analytical tools from his philosophical training, and I, as a physicist, not only see our whole enterprise in terms of a series of experiments, but have also structured this chapter accordingly.

Tasks, questions and the organisation of this volume

The analysis above implies that there are many tasks before the scholar who wishes to take the Qur'an into account as they read the Bible. Many of our contributors focussed on the task of reading

part of the Bible alongside its qur'anic parallel. Several focussed on the more methodological question of how Muslims might approach the Bible, or of how the Qur'an might be related to the history of biblical interpretation. Others developed discussions around themes of interest on the Muslim—Christian interface. We have organised this book around such tasks.

The organisation has been influenced by an analytical framework of 'conversation, recognition, analogy', which has been the basis for my own work. The formulation reflects David Tracy's thought about the reading of classic texts. Tracy sees the reading progressing through a `conversation' between the classic and the reader's world, `recognition' of relevant commonalities in those two worlds, and then the development of `analogy' that builds on the commonalities with full awareness of the difference between the two worlds.

In the case of biblical interpretation in Islamic context, the `classic' to be read is the Bible, and the `conversation, recognition, analogy' proceeds not only between the classic and the reader, but also between the world of the Bible and the world of Islam, not least the world of the Qur'an. This complicates matters. In particular, `conversations' between the Bible and the Qur'an rapidly indicate difference between the natures of the texts, so the question of how far and in what way the reader can `recognise' both books arises. This is the context of difference within which analogies between the books can be developed, and then put into further `conversation' with the worlds of the readers.

So, then, Part I comprises `conversations' that our authors have set up between biblical and qur'anic texts. The chapters explore commonalities and differences in various ways, and an implicit process of `recognition' and `analogy' can often be discerned.

Part II focusses on questions about the nature of the texts that arise out of the intertextual conversations. We might say that these are questions about `recognition' that are peculiar to Islamic contexts. First, how should Muslims regard the Bible? Can they recognise it as Scripture? If so, what does that mean, and how does it relate to the Qur'an as Scripture? Second, how might Christian readers regard the Qur'an? Can they recognise it, and the inter¬pretative tradition to which it gives rise, as in

some way continuous with the Bible and with Jewish and Christian discourse?

Part III includes chapters that explore themes that we might call `analogies' — concepts such as Word, Sign, Idolatry, Unity and Purity which are shared themes in the Qur'an and the Bible, but appear in different contexts and are understood in different ways.

Not all the chapters fit neatly into this framework, and several deal, at least implicitly, with all the above tasks. The following analysis aims to use insights from the chapters to develop signposts for the ongoing journey into biblical interpretation in Islamic context.

Part 1: Intertextual conversations

- `Abraham in narrative worldviews: reflections on doing comparative theology through Christian—Muslim conversation in Turkey' by George Bristow
- `Toward inter-theological hermeneutics: a case study in reading between the Joseph stories' by Shirin Shafaie
- 'The "sin" of David in the light of Islamic thought' by Ali Makhlabi and Larry Ciccarelli
- `David and the single ewe lamb: tracking conversation between two texts (2 Samuel 12:3 and Q38:23) when they are read in their canonical contexts' by Carol M. Walker
- `Facing mirrors: the intertwined golden calf story' by Mohammad Ghandehari and Mohsen Feyzbakhsh

The intertextual `conversations' in these five chapters offer insights into the Qur'an as well as into the biblical texts studied: they all also contribute to our whole venture by raising important questions about content and theology, about method, about the nature of Scripture, and about the relationship between the Qur'an and the Bible.

There are two chapters by Christian authors, two by Muslim authors, and one that is a Muslim—Christian collaboration. Each has its own methodological approach: it is interesting to observe that the chapters with Muslim authors focus sharply on the particular narratives compared, while the chapters with Christian authors consider the narratives within their wider canonical contexts. Each chapter recognises both similarity and difference between the biblical and qur'anic material chosen, but they have different ways of dealing with this.

The first two chapters use contrasting strategies to identify significant difference in narratives which are often seen as common ground between Muslims and Christians: those of Abraham and of Joseph. The first looks at the narratives as embedded in the total worldviews of the Qur'an and the Bible, and the second perceives the wider theological agendas through close analysis of the particular texts.

George Bristow presents his comparative narrative analysis of the Abraham stories in the context of an analysis of the worldviews of the Bible (as perceived through his own evangelical tradition) and of the Qur'an (as perceived by the Turkish Muslims with whom he is in conversation). He sees the overall contrast of the Qur'an's prophetic history and the Bible's redemption history echoed in the shared parts of the Abrahamic narrative, as well as in the selections made by the Qur'an from the story of Abraham. His method enables him to put the whole of the biblical Abraham narrative into conversation with the whole of the qur'anic Abraham narrative, including the pericopes that are unique to each as well as the few that are shared. His reading highlights difference in what is often regarded as a common starting point for interfaith relations, and thus questions the value of the category Abrahamic Religion' as a common denominator. However, he reports having found unexpected harmony as well as unexpected dissonance, and concludes that the understanding of difference through the comparative reading of the narratives is as important for interfaith relationships as is the recognition of commonalities.

Shirin Shafaie looks at the narrative strategy within the biblical and qur'anic tellings of the apparently similar story of Joseph and demonstrates that the two tellings have different purposes and theological functions. She identifies two related issues that will recur in other chapters: first, Genesis and the Qur'an have different views of the nature of prophecy and, second, Islamic tradition has read the qur'anic accounts through the lens of the doctrine of `isma. Irma, often translated as `infallibility', means that prophets are preserved

from sin. They are not perfect, in that they can make mistakes, but they would never rebel against God. How far, we might ask, do the different views of prophecy echo the differences in biblical and qur'anic worldviews proposed by Bristow? Instead, Shafaie chooses to exam¬ine the concept of 'isma and to ask how far it is true to the qur'anic narratives. She concludes that received interpretations might not be faithful to the texts, which enables her to read the texts as cooperating rather than conflicting, their different perspectives giving a multidimensional view of Joseph and his story.

One of the places where the question of `isma emerges most acutely is in the context of the biblical accounts of David, which are often cited in Islamic polemic as proof of biblical corruption. Larry Ciccarelli and Ali Makhlabi build on a longstanding Muslim—Christian collaboration to examine the perceived problem: that of the sinfulness of David, as God's chosen prophet and leader, in his treatment of Bathsheba and her husband. Their approach is to study how Muslim commentators have dealt with the problem, noting that Muslim concerns about the sinfulness of such an important character as David are, to some extent, shared by Jewish commentators. They identify a range of treatments, some of which are re-interpretations of the biblical version rather than rejections of it. They also note an interesting difference between Sunni and Shia commentators, seeing a political determinant in the latters' greater insistence on `isma: Shias believe that their imams (leaders) as well as the prophets are infallible, so are the more concerned that the great leader of Israel should have been sinless. Ciccarelli and Makhlabi see their collaboration as fruitful for both Muslim and Christian readers of the Bible, as it challenges the presuppositions of both in a way that opens the text afresh to both.

While Ciccarelli and Makhlabi look at their chosen David narrative in the context of later discussion of a particular problem in it, Carol Walker places her study of part of that same narrative in the context of a wider study of the structures of the biblical books of Samuel and of Surah Sād (Q38) in which it appears. She sees the biblical parable of the ewe lamb as a highly significant part of Samuel's dealing with issues of power, humility, covenant and social justice: in contrast, it appears in Surah

Sād as one of a series of examples of people who turn to God in repentance and receive forgiveness. While the narratives have. different purposes in their contexts, she recognises that David's repentance and forgiveness follow the parable in the Bible and that the themes of Samuel are, if sometimes in different ways, also qur'anic concerns. She recognises other shared themes which she relates to contemporary issues: that of the temptations faced by political leaders and the importance of leaders being under, and not above, the law.

The various `intertextual conversations' thus far indicate a measure of 'recognition' of how the worlds of the text might match with the various worlds of the readers as well as of how the biblical and qur'anic texts might match. Mohammad Ghandehari and Mohsen Feyzbakhsh offer a different sort of experiment. Rather than comparing the biblical and qur' anic accounts of the `golden calf', they read the two stories as complementary. The differences between the stories are not, then, problems, but indicate complementary sources of information that need to be integrated. They achieve this through considering Jewish discussion of the issues which are also noted by Christian commentators: the related problems of Aaron as the high priest being also the person who led Israel into major idolatry, and of the leniency of his punishment. The Qur'an is seen as resolving the problems, but in a way that requires reference to the biblical account for a full understanding.

Ghandehari and Feyzbakhsh follow a trajectory that contrasts sharply with Bristow, with whose chapter we began this part. Where Bristow's study points towards irreconcilable differences between the Abrahamic faiths, they see their method as a way of `reconciling Abrahamic Scriptures'. Together, they raise the sorts of questions about Muslim and Christian understandings of texts that will be explored in Part II.

Ghandehari and Feyzbakhsh are Muslims, and Bristow is an evangelical Christian. Their contrasting approaches are consonant with a tendency that can be observed throughout this book for Muslim authors to handle apparent differences as problems to be solved or as ways of adding to their understanding of the Qur'an, while Christian authors tend to accept difference as indicating

irreducible differences between the biblical and the qur'anic worlds. How far, we might ask, is this related to the fact that, while the Qur'an requires Muslims to accept the Torah (at least in its original form) to be God-given, there is no biblical requirement for Christians to have any particular expectation of the Qur'an?

Ghandehari and Feyzbakhsh's questions are not Bristow's questions. The latter is interested in how the narratives fit into and reflect the grand narratives of the scriptures in which they are situated. The former are interested in understanding the detailed events referred to within the particular narratives, and do not refer to their contexts and purposes. How far, we might ask, does this reflect the differing functions of narratives within the Bible and the Qur'an, and the consequent different ways in which such narratives have been handled in their respective traditions?

Bristow's chapter provokes further questions that point towards Part III. It is the only one so far that deals in any way with the New Testament. The differing details in the biblical and qur'anic narratives are seen as pointing towards different resolutions of tensions in the Genesis texts in the Qur'an and the New Testament, and therefore towards fundamentally different worldviews. How far, we might ask, do the other Christians implicitly read the Old Testament from the perspective of a New Testament worldview? What might be learnt by comparing how the New Testament and the Qur'an respectively deal with other questions raised by other Old Testament texts? And how far are the tensions dealt with in both the New Testament and the Qur'an those raised in prior Jewish discussions? In short, the questions are not just about the relationship between the Qur'an and the Bible, but about the relationships between the Hebrew Bible, the New Testa¬ment and the Qur'an.

Part II: Questions about the texts

- The fourth source: Isrā'iliyyāt and the use of the Bible in Muslim scholarship' by Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor and Jaffary Awang
- `Constrained by scriptural polemics: Hamiduddin Farahi on the Akedah' by Nazirudin Mohd Nasir

- 'The culture shock of the Bible' by Daniel J. Crowther
- `Islamic tradition and the reception history of the Bible' by Martin O'Kane and Talha Bhamji
- The morphology of the narrative exegesis of the Qur'an: The case of the cow of the Banū Isrā'īl (Q2:67-74)' by S. Ali Aghaei

On the one hand, the Qur'an claims continuity with biblical revelation: on the other hand, the biblical books are significantly different from the Qur'an in their form, variety and content. This raises acute questions for Muslim readers as to how far can they recognise the extant biblical books as those referred to in the Qur'an, and hence how far and in what ways they can learn from the Bible. For the Christian reader, there is the corresponding challenge of asking how far and in what ways the Qur'an and Islamic tradition can be recognised as continuous with the Bible; and hence how far and in what ways they can be useful in biblical interpretation. The chapters in this part are relevant to these questions.

We begin with a discussion from within the worldview of Sunni Islam of the Shāfi'ī school of law which raises important and widespread questions about how far Muslims should read the Bible. Wan Mohd Fazrul Wan Razali, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor and Jaffary Awang use the classical category of Isrā'iliyyāt—Jewish and Christian material, which includes the Bible. Their main conceptual tool is wibdah al-din, the unity of all genuine religion. This is not, they point out, a pluralistic idea, and neither does it suggest that Islam is in any way derived from other faiths. Rather, it is the view that all prophets brought the same religion: Islam. This is an Islamic lens through which the Bible is to be read; and it implies that the Bible is expected to have the same message, if not necessarily the same form, as the Qur'an. Wan Razali, Mohd Noor and Awang do not attempt to apply their findings to any actual readings of the Bible, but what is implicit in their chapter is the fact that there is a disjunction between this expectation and what the Bible actually is. Their sources indicate that there are parts of the Bible that can be accepted, parts that must be rejected, and parts that are neutral in that the Qur'an neither affirms nor refutes them. The question for Muslim scholars is how they discern

what should be recognised and what should be rejected.

On such a basis, readers are likely to approach the Bible with a spectrum of agendas, from enhancing understanding of the Qur'an to refuting the Bible. The question for our `biblical interpretation in Islamic context' venture is how far there is space between these two ends for Muslims seriously to read the Bible in its own right, and to appreciate it as Christian and Jewish Scripture. Or might there be an alternative spectrum?

Nazirudin Mohd Nasir's chapter opens a discussion on these questions as he interrogates a particular nineteenth-century treatment of the Akedah sacrifice of Genesis 22 and Q37:99-111: that of Hamiduddin Farahi. Farahi differs from most of his predecessors in that he deals directly with the Bible and can read Hebrew. Mohd Nasir notes that, while Farahi uses some of the same methods in interpreting the Bible as he does in interpreting the Qur'an, his agenda is polemical. He is using the Qur'an as his hermeneutical key to the Bible, with the purpose of finding tabrif— corruption of the biblical texts.

Mohd Nasir questions this agenda on the basis of two contexts for reading: the wider textual context of Q37: 99-111 within the Qur'an, and the social and political context of the reader. In the former context, he points out that the qur'anic text is, in fact, open to interpretation that does not conflict with the Bible and, indeed, that some early Muslim readings were actually in agreement with the Bible and used the Bible in order to augment the brief qur' anic narrative. Further, he argues that this particular text should discourage Muslims from polemics. All this opens the possibility of serious reading of the Bible with spiritual as well as informational gain. Whether and how this is done, however, depends on how open the social context is to interfaith relations and to new ideas."

Danny Crowther proposes a refreshing model for dealing with acute difference: he re-formulates the problem in terms of culture. He offers an analysis of the disjunction between Muslim expectations of scripture and the phenomena of the Bible — in particular, its human voice, variety of genre, textual and canonical history in addition to the sinfulness of prophets explored in the above discussions about 'isma. The Muslim experience of this he describes as

`culture shock', and he suggests that models of moving across cultures might help Muslim readers to engage seriously with the Bible. His argument is that the observations Muslims make about the form and content of the Bible reveal how different it is to the Qur'an. Attention to their questions can help Christians better understand the way in which the Bible functions as the Word of God.

This is an example of finding a way forward through a seeming impasse by asking a new question, a pattern which will be seen in several of the chapters in Part III. In this case, the question moves from how far the Bible can be recognised as a Scripture within the concept of wibdah al-din (unity of faith) to the question of how a Muslim reader might learn to appreciate the world of the Bible. I will pick up the important corollary, the question of how Christians understand the Bible in conversation with Muslim `culture shock', in the final part of this chapter.

The next two chapters are case studies that consider the relationship between the Bible and the Qur'an and subsequent Islamic tradition. Both argue that the Qur'an and its traditional interpretation can be viewed through the lens of recep¬tion history of the Bible.

Martin O'Kane and Talha Bhamji argue that Islamic traditions not only can but also should be seen as part of the reception history of the Bible. Indeed, they suggest, reception history is incomplete without consideration of Islamic sources. They recognise that this will not be straightforward, in that the traditions seldom deal directly with the Bible, and some include polemical refutations of parts of the Bible. However, they find plenty of material in both the Qur'an and later Islamic discussion that enters and extends Jewish and Christian discussion of the actual texts. Their exploration of Ishmael and Esau in Jewish, Christian and Islamic tradition indicates a commonality of concerns that are addressed and resolved in different ways according not only to religious beliefs but also to ethnic and political contexts.

Ali Aghaei demonstrates the reception and elaboration of Islamic tradition that relates to the Bible through a detailed case study of the development of Islamic exegesis of the Qur'an. He chooses one of the Qur'an's most perplexing allusions to the Bible: the 'Cow of Banū Isrā'īl' in

Q2:67-74. This appears not to refer to any single biblical text, but rather to allude to two different texts (Numbers 19:1-19, where a cow is burnt and its ashes are used for purity, and Deuteronomy 21:1-9, where a cow is killed in order to deal with bloodguilt in the case of an unsolved murder). The developing early discussions appear to get progressively further from those texts; but the investigation indicates that some of them reflect Jewish discourse related to an application of the legal prescription in Deuteronomy 21 and, from the tenth century onwards, there are examples of direct references to the biblical passage. Ali demonstrates that Islamic understandings of Surah 2:67-74 are dependent on the Isrā'iliyyāt and concludes that they should be treated as part of the reception history of the Bible.

Part III: Analogical exlorations

- 'The place of purity in faith' by Dwight Swanson
- `Biblical Ruth as a qur'anic Queen of Sheba: scriptural narratives of foreigner assent' by Georgina L. Jardim
- `Reading Paul on idolatry (Romans 1:18-32) alongside the Qur'an: a theol-ogy of divine signs' by Michael Lodahl
- `Indirection in biblical and qur'anic discourses, and in Bible translation in Islamic contexts' by Andy Warren-Rothlin
- 'The Gospel of John as a structure for Muslim—Christian understanding' by Daniel A. Madigan

All the chapters in this book note similarities between the Qur'an and the Bible, and all recognise that these similarities occur in different scriptural, historical and theological contexts. A fruitful way of handling this similarity-in-difference is the category of `analogy'. An analogy chooses a similarity, but in a way that reminds the reader that things that appear similar are not necessarily the same and that they may function differently in their different contexts. There is always some choice in identifying analogies: the choices are not so much `right' or `wrong' as more or less fruitful.

We begin with the chapter that explores a deliberately chosen analogical theme: Dwight Swanson's chapter on purity. In terms of our

`analogical' model, we can see Swanson as setting out the three overlapping circles of Torah, Gospel and Qur'an on the subject. His approach is to see `purity' in the context of the overall narratives of the relevant texts, which means that the model can offer analogical insights into the relationship between the scriptures as well as into the particular ideas of purity which they contain.

Having set out the system, and started to explore what is in the overlaps and what is unique to each scripture, Swanson raises an agenda for further study. This includes historical questions about the relationships between the three scriptures, questions about biblical and qur'anic treatments of key themes and words (such as `covenant' and `holiness'), and questions about how Jews, Christians and Muslims have developed practices in response to the texts. All this leads to challenges for Christian readers of the Bible: have Western Christians in particular missed important aspects of their scriptures?

In Georgina Jardim's chapter, analogy between a biblical and a qur'anic character emerges unexpectedly from an intertextual conversation about an obviously shared character. It demonstrates that fruitful analogies might not be those found in the most obviously parallel texts.

The initial intertextual conversation was about the Queen of Sheba, and it was developed in the context of a 'Holy Book Club' where Christian and Muslim women meet to read the Qur'an and the Bible using a `Scriptural Reasoning' model. It indicated a crucial difference between the two accounts: the Qur'an emphasises the foreign queen's conversion from paganism to the One God, while the Bible leaves the question of her conversion open. This led Jardim to ask where and how the Bible might deal with the conversion of a foreign woman. That is, she sought a biblical analogy to this aspect of the Queen of Sheba as portrayed in the Qur'an. She turned to Ruth, and offers us a fascinating re-reading of Ruth with the questions raised by the initial Queen of Sheba conversation in mind. Taking Ruth as a biblical analogy to the qur'anic Queen of Sheba produced fruitful and contextually relevant insights.

The above two analogies emerged from comparative intertextual conversations. In our next three chapters, concepts that can be described as

`analogical' are used to discuss key theological questions that often emerge in discussions between Christians and Muslims. The questions have to do with human propensity to sin, with the transcendence of God, and with the nature of revelation. The theological differences between Muslims and Christians on these issues underlie difference on the nature of scripture, and they will inform my Christian reflection in the last part of this chapter.

Michael Lodahl offers a reading of Romans 1 that deals with the question of the human propensity to sin: a perennial area of disagreement between Muslims and Christians which underlies, on the one hand, questions about how sin can be dealt with and, on the other hand, questions about the doctrine of `isma that features so strongly in this volume. Typically, a Muslim says that humans are born in a state of fitra, that is, in a state of innocence in which Islam is natural to them, and a Western Christian will say that, since Adam, humans have been born `fallen', that is, not in the original state in which God made humanity. This is why, Christians say, not even prophets can be sinless, and guidance cannot be sufficient.

Lodahl's approach points a way forward that can shed fresh light both on this stale-mated debate and on biblical texts: he identifies a fresh question, which can be shared by Muslims and Christians, and he chooses an analogical concept that enables a fresh reading of the texts with that question in mind. Central to the process is dealing with a passage in its own historical as well as textual context, and thus of dealing with its purpose as well as with its content.

He begins by asking what questions lie behind Romans 1. This leads to the question of the possibility of the knowledge of the One God outside the covenant (that is, through creation): the major question about human nature is, then, why people should prefer idolatry to the worship of that God. The next step is to identify a qur'anic analogy as a hermeneutical key: God's signs in creation as evidence of the Creator. This frequent qur'anic idea, he suggests, `resonates' with Paul's assertion about the knowability of God in Romans 2:19-20. Romans and the Qur'an agree that many human beings choose to ignore the evidence of the signs and that the result is service of the creatures rather than the Creator. The shared question is,

then, 'Why do people reject God's signs?' It opens a reading of Romans and a discussion about human nature that might challenge Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Questions relating to divine transcendence arise in Andy Warren-Rothlin's context of Bible translation, as he explores anthropotheism (describing God in human terms) and apophasis (describing God through negative statements): there is an underlying question of how human language relates to the divine being. The presenting questions for both Muslims and Christians are, first, how far anthropotheism might compromise the difference between Creator and creature and, second, how far human language can describe God. The history of Muslim ways of dealing with such questions sharpens the issues for Bible translators in Islamic contexts.

Warren-Rothlin notes Muslim commentators' concern to ensure that qur'anic anthropomorphisms do not detract from God's transcendent otherness. Parallel concerns are traced in the history of Jewish and, to a lesser extent, Christian dealings with the Bible. He concludes that, on the one hand, most scholars today would see anthropotheisms as linguistic phenomena, merely raising potential communication problems. On the other hand, there have been times when anthropotheisms have been theologically interpreted. In the case of apophasis, he suggests that translation choices may be made that take deliberate account of Islamic language that so often describes God in negative rather than in positive terms. What he calls the `intertwining' of theology and translation is evident.

However, it is also evident that there are some differences in the Bible's and the Qur'an's uses of human language to describe God: the apparently common concerns could, I suggest, fruitfully be seen in terms of analogy rather than simple similarity. The issues are different for Muslims and for Christians, because their understandings of how God relates to humans and to language are different.

This brings us to the theological heart of debates between Christians and Muslims: the relationship between God and God's Word. What is `God's Word', and how can we understand God as having a Word without infringing divine transcendence? Dan Madigan addresses this issue through a

reading of John's Gospel that offers the possibility of moving from standard debates towards mutual understand¬ing. He develops the analogy between Jesus as God's Word and the Qur'an as God's Word. However, he leaves open the question that haunts this whole volume: how, then, do we understand the Bible?

Like Lodahl, Madigan opens up the text by identifying questions that are shared by Muslims and Christians, in this case how God's Self relates to God's Word, and how that Word enters the created world — in the Qur'an or in the Messiah. Madigan takes these questions to the prologue of John's Gospel and uses the results as a key to reading the rest of the Gospel, developing conversation with the world of the Qur'an and with Muslim readers throughout. This opens fresh understandings of the text for Christian as well as for Muslim readers: it is a pointer towards the fruitfulness of the conversation with Islamic context in developing Christian readings of biblical texts.

Madigan has no expectation that this will lead to Muslim—Christian agreement. Rather, his approach aims to help Muslims to understand Christian belief, and it results in clarifying difference as well as similarity. Like biblical and qur'anic concepts of purity, like the biblical Ruth and the qur'anic Queen of Sheba, like questions about sin and purity, and like scriptural anthropomorphisms, the concept of the Word has a different place within Islamic thinking than it has within Christian thinking: the concepts are not the same, but analogous. Returning to Danny Crowther's proposals, we might say that the method of recognising analogous concepts and questions offers a way of moving from initial `culture shock' through engagement with the texts towards appreciation of the new culture, and even towards the possibility of learning from it and finding a sense of belonging.

Shabbir Akhtar's final chapter is an example of a Muslim reader who has so persevered through the `culture shock' that he is able to study one of the most controversial books in the Bible for a Muslim reader: Galatians. Akhtar's careful putting of this letter into conversation with the Qur'an and Islamic thinking both develops mutual understanding and offers fresh insight to both Christian and Muslim readers.

Three methods for a Muslim reading of the Bible by Shabbir Akhtar

One central problem has long troubled me and continues to do so until today: what should I do with those parts of the Bible that, given my acceptance of the Qur'an's authority, I am duty-bound to reject as false? The enduring stalemate between biblical and qur'anic claims is theologically puzzling. This puzzle cannot be solved since it involves the undiscoverable motives of an infinite and mysterious supreme being. And yet, for me, as a Muslim, this very question motivates the whole project of biblical interpretation in various Islamic (normatively faithful) and Muslim (descriptively faithful) contexts. I cannot speculate about the motives of the other Muslim contributors to this volume.

I shall address the above opening question as a Muslim believer who is also a philosopher of religions. I see no reason to concede any division of labour here: my scholarship and the insights it affords me are an organic part of my life and conduct, not merely a contribution to my rather haphazard academic career. In these combined capacities of scholar and believer, I identify three methods of reading the scriptures of another faith.

Although virtually all the contributors to this volume are people of faith, Christian and Muslim, few if any write in an openly confessional style. As scholars working in ways that respect the constraints of Western academic inquiry, they typically bracket their own private religious commitment. Indeed, it is often hard to discern or deduce the level of commitment to their own religious faith merely from reading their papers. This is less true of some of the Muslim contributors. However, no-one here, Muslim or Christian, writes with the kind of robustly faithful commitment one finds in the works of self-professing theologians of either faith when their audience is comprised of only or mainly their fellow believers.

I have arranged the three methods in order of decreasing levels of Islamic faith commitment, starting with the most zealously committed one. The first method differs from the other two in that, for its practitioners, its intellectual pedigree is divine, not human, since it can be traced to a revealed and therefore supremely authoritative source, the Qur'an. The Islamic scripture is normatively

interpreted by the tradition of Muslim exegesis as condemning the (alleged) corruption and amplification of a divine original, a simple if not rather stereotypical affirmation of an uncompromisingly Abrahamic monotheism, found even earlier in the ministries of Noah and indeed Adam, the first man and first prophet.

In our second method, we acknowledge an enduring deadlock among the Semitic trio. I locate a recognition of this stalemate in the Qur'an itself (see Q2:145-8) along with a proposed religious solution suitable only to an age of revelation (see Q3:61). I shall argue that this method is, in effect, an agnostic/ religious analogue of a secular method that arose, independently, much later in the Western academy. In this latter wholly secular version, which understandably has no basis in any scripture, practitioners restrict themselves to a descriptive stance which brackets assessment of the truth of competing religious truth-claims.

I progress to the final method, an evolution of the attitudes implicit in the second. One can achieve a more objective assessment of an alien scripture by consciously suspending, albeit temporarily and solely for academic purposes, one's routine faithful endorsement of the comprehensive authority of one's own scripture. I have recently used this method to write an experimental commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians, a preface to my wider exploration of the New Testament.

Method 1— The biblical rival is a later corruption of a divinely revealed original

An originally revealed and error-free `Bible' — the Qur'an never uses this word — has been altered or misinterpreted to avoid acknowledging the supremacy and finality of Islam and its formidable prophet. The view is grounded in an interpre¬tation of some qur'anic verses. The verbal noun tahrīf (conjugated transitively as yuharrifúna-hu, at Q2:75) has excited much speculation in the past and continues to do so. Did Jews and Christians alter their text, conceal it or at least willfully misinterpret it?

As the earliest method of interfaith interaction between Islam and Christianity, first found in the Qur'an itself, it is, naturally, popular among devout Muslims. This method is not a scholarly innovation of Muslim thinkers who encountered Christian scriptures. Some version or other of it finds a revealed warrant in the Qur'an. Sincere Muslim thinkers are religiously obliged to accept this view even though the attempt to find proofs of Muhammad's prophethood being predicted in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament is problematic at best and quite unconvincing except to devotees. Such biblical verses can be made to bear a range of interpretations, each appealing to one or other of the various contending parties. The content of these verses is elastic and therefore plastic to human desire. It is a puzzling feature of God's dealings with us, a point that I make at greater length when discussing the second method.

This does not stop Muslim apologists from mining the Bible for clues to Muhammad's apostleship just as Christians, with far more plausibility, look for clues to the ministry of Jesus in the verses of Isaiah. The Christian quest is more reasonable since Jesus belonged to the tradition of monotheism and prophecy under scrutiny. By contrast, Muhammad arose in a culture where the monotheism of Islam emerged as a result of a civil war among pagan Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. The Qur'an mentions Abraham as the builder of the Ka`ba and thus links Muhammad's Meccan predecessors with Hebrew monotheism — but this claim is controversial in the double sense that its historical veracity is disputed by Islam's detractors and, moreover, the interpretation of its significance, if the claim is proven true, would in any case persist as an additional source of intractable disharmony.

Let me evaluate this classical and normatively influential Islamic method of engagement with the Bible. It must appear to even sympathetic Christian readers that the Qur'an misunderstands the orthodox contents of the Trinity and confuses it with tri-theism. The Qur'an directly orders Christians to desist from identifying the Messiah Jesus with God and from tri-theism (see Q4:171-2 and 5:72) and, moreover, often rejects the Christian dogma of Jesus as the Son of God, while condemning Arabian polytheism which venerated the daughters of God (see, for example, Q25:2-3; 19:88-93; 112). Such beliefs were to be rejected as straightforwardly idolatrous. We read a didactic dialogue between God and Jesus, on the day of resurrection, where Jesus is harshly interrogated about encouraging people to take him and his

mother as gods in addition to the one true God, Allah (see Q5:116-120). Muslims often put Christians on the defensive in interfaith conferences when they ask the Christian participants to prove that they are indeed monotheists. The accusation is that the Trinity is a disguised form of tri-theism, that Christians are indeed guilty of shirk (pagan associationism), the one irremissible sin in Islam. That would be a harsh verdict.

A more charitable view is the one I adopt in my commentary on the letter to the Galatian churches. I argue that Paul's Christological monotheism preserves the unity of God. There is only one God, as Paul knew well, being a Jew who recited the Shema ` Yisra'ēl (Deuteronomy 6:4) daily. However, Paul identified Christ with God — though not exhaustively so. There is naturally more to the Godhead than Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Method 2 — Deadlocks multiply: respect for agnosticism grows

The second position is agnostic in procedure, though not in content.' We acknowledge deadlock and enduring stalemate among the three members of the rather dysfunctional Abrahamic family. This is a faithfully committed version of what is also a standard secular method. The secular stance processes and assesses the significance of the phenomenological approach whose practitioners choose to restrict themselves, for academic purposes, to descriptive and sociological stances. They bracket any comment on ultimate truth, authority or veracity of any religious truth-claims. This method, marked by studied neutrality, is the bedrock of modern comparative religious studies. It is not normally entertained by Christians and Muslims since they see themselves as theologians — defenders of their faiths — and not as philosophers of faith. I see myself as a believing philosopher of Islam, indeed as a student of comparative philosophies of religions.

Surprisingly, a form of the agnostic position is found in the Qur'an itself. In Q2:145-8, the Qur'an acknowledges, in the aftermath of the change of the direction of prayer (qibla) from Jerusalem to the Meccan haram, that Jews and Christians do not accept each other's doctrines and rituals and that they both reject the Muslim view just as Muslims are

now instructed to reject their previous affiliation. Elsewhere too, the Qur'an admits that human differences will endure until the next world: you shall dispute in front of your Lord, until the day of resurrection. This is no incidental emphasis but a persistent one. Thus, only a post-mortem eschatological verification shall enable us to break this deadlock. In the meantime, the Qur'an shifts the focus towards achieving an interim ethical consensus. Thus, its command to all monotheists is to vie with one another in the pursuit and performance of charitable and honourable deeds.

The Qur'an also contains an invitation to a prayer duel (mubāhala; based on Q3:61), hardly a method we can today use in a secular age. This intriguing method was perhaps already used in Arabia, to decide the claims of the devotees of competing members of the pagan pantheon. The Qur'an islamicizes it in its invitation to Christian detractors of Muhammad to let God decide the matter by a spectacular display of his power from heaven. Indeed, the Jews of Medina are invited to ask God to kill them on the spot so that they can immediately join God in heaven. This verse is in response to the Jewish claim that God is their friend alone and that they have privileged access to Paradise. The Qur'an predicts, quite predictably, that Jews will decline this offer (see Q62:6-8).

The mubāhala was invoked by the pagans against Muhammad's claim to be a warner threatening divine punishment. In Q8:30-35, revealed in the aftermath of the decisive battle of Badr, we read of the Meccan disbelievers' plans to evict Muhammad from Mecca and even assassinate him. At the time of this revelation in A.H. 2, the city and the Sacred Mosque are still in pagan hands. After dismissing the Prophet's claim to bring a divine revelation, they pray, addressing the one God (Allah) and, ironically, plead thus: if the revelation is indeed the truth from you, then we request you to 'rain down on us stones from the sky or (at least) bring us a painful punishment (from/on the earth)' (Q8:32).

The divine response (Q8:33-34) is surprisingly gentle, declining to take up the pagans on their offer. It seems to be out of God's respect for Muhammad's presence among the pagans. Let me translate the relevant verses:

But Allah would not punish them while you (Muhammad) are among them. Nor would He (Allah) punish them while they seek forgiveness. However, why should God not punish them (i.e. he has every right and just cause to do so) seeing that they obstruct (people) from the Sacred Mosque (al-masjid al-haram) when they are not (fit to be) its guardians? Its true custodians are none other than the righteous but most of them (disbelievers) do not know.

A similar claim is found in another Medinan revelation about the same dilemma: God could have rained down a shower of stones on those who reject him and killed them (Q48:25). It is a surprisingly weak response since God could, if he willed, single out the disbelievers for death in a mixed crowd of believers and disbelievers. Some cynic might say that it is a shame that God does not do this regularly in our complex world where good and evil people must live in close proximity, where darkness hath fellowship with light.

I predict that the deadlocks between faith and atheism, and between the three Abrahamic faiths, will endure into the indefinite future, unless there is a successful war of total annihilation of, let us say, Islam and Judaism — the former at the hands of `Christian' super-powers, the latter as a natural result of age and decline, a gradual leakage from the vessel of faith. Or, let us suppose that God decides to perform a dramatic miracle to disambiguate our currently ambivalent situation. Then, we would see the triumph of a single monotheism, though the perversity of the members of the losing party of errant monotheists might prevent them from conceding defeat. Barring such grandiose possibilities, which are nonetheless conceivable and even possible, equally intelligent and arguably equally sincere people shall continue to hold an immense range of opposed religious opinions.

Method 3 — Suspension of belief

I used this third method requiring suspension of faith when confronted by a practical dilemma in my life as an activist. As part of my 'jihad' during the Muslim campaign, conducted in 1989-1992, against the ideas of Salman Rushdie, I had sought a dispensation, from the local Muslim authorities in Bradford, to enable me to read The Satanic Verses — but solely for educational purposes.' It absolved me of any sin incurred during a perusal of its

sustained blasphemous contents. The principle I espoused was that while most Muslims have not and need not read such a work, those who consider themselves qualified to debate the matter must do so. The case of the rest of the believers is like that of a judge who is not required to witness a murder in order to pass a sentence. Evidence from others, especially eye-witnesses, suffices.

There is precedent here: permission for this type of suspended (mu' allaq) stance and for intermittent (muwaqqaf) commitment can be granted by Muslim jurists, in all schools of law, including the Hanafī one to which I belong. One must be dealing with certain circumscribed situations, provided it does not materially affect the faith of the investigator. It is based on the broader principle of necessity or duress (durūra) where there is some pragmatic as opposed to principled compulsion requiring the temporary suspension of clear legal requirements, including dietary laws. These latter can be broken with impunity by the starving Muslim with no access to permissible foods. I call this a suspension, though the choice of word can be reasonably questioned by the pedants.

This final method effectively postpones judgment long enough to treat the rival seriously, that is, on its own terms. This attitude, in a totally different context, is found in an early Islamic movement, the Murji'ites, those who postpone judgment on the sinful believer's status as believer rather than abruptly declare the tafir (excommunication) which their opponents, the Kharijite (expellers), proposed. Ultimately, of course, the Muslim believer must go to the Qur'an for the final judgment. But he or she need not go to the Qur'an for an empirically detailed analysis of Christian faith and denominational diversity. The believer is, in effect, avoiding short-circuiting inquiry into an alien faith by deferring judgment, awaiting some verdict independent of the Qur'an. Admittedly, the believer already knows, on the religiously accepted authority of the Qur'an, what he or she is religiously obliged to believe.

In my current work, I have applied this third method. While writing an Islamic commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians4 (and, more broadly, while investigating the New Testament, in general, including the Gospels) I have felt morally obliged, in the interests of intellectual honesty and religious

integrity, to adopt and develop this stance of suspension. It enables me to inculcate intellectual patience as I read a seminal Christian text such as Paul's letter to his Galatian disciples. I attempt to suspend my own Islamic belief long enough to comment on Paul's epistle and on the accretions of the devoutly Christian tradition of commentary that ambushes its margins.

I comment on both the Pauline text and on normative Christian uses of it. Nonetheless, I do so from within the very centre of my Qur'an-directed framework of thought and therefore, even to sympathetic Christian assessors and critics of my work, it must appear that I move rather effortlessly from relatively courteous and open-minded remarks to rather judgmental if not polemical ones, sometimes within the space of a single paragraph! But I have tried to understand first the faith I seek to critique later. It is sympathetic understanding achieved via suspension of my faith — followed by a return to the commitment I have suspended temporarily. The net result is that I have avoided slandering 'the people of the Gospel' (ahl al-in]īl, uniquely at Q5:47). I do not offer a caricature of Christian doctrine and morals before critiquing both from an Islamic angle. That would be hardly an original achievement. Thus, for example, it is slander to suggest that Christians think a saved believer can behave as he or she wishes, sinning casually since salvation has been assured. Rather, the motto, put in colloquial terms, is: `Christ will save — but you must behave!' Again, it is easy for non-Christians to mock and to deliberately and maliciously misrepresent Christian dogmas, given their inherent complexity.

To illustrate these points, I will mention some special challenges posed by my attempt to read, understand, interpret and appropriate the message of Galatians. The project was undertaken from both an agnostic stance, insofar as that is possible, only for me to return, both within the textual commentary and in the final assessment, to my strictly orthodox (qur'anic) commitment. The initial obstacle was that the literary genre of epistle is foreign to Muslim ideas of scripture. The Qur'an is not written as a letter and, more importantly, the Qur'an does not imply that earlier revelations, including al-injīl (the Gospel), al-tawrāt (the Torah) and al-zabūr (the Psalms) were, in part or whole, in an epistolary format. The idea of a letter of

admonition, even one written from prison, is found in Muslim cultures and literatures but it is not associated with sacred writing.

The other hurdles were more substantive. The Qur'an, in my view, provides neither resource nor encouragement for doing theology. Instead, along with the Prophet's traditions, it contains what I call an `ergatology,' a doctrine of virtuous and wicked actions. This doctrine is about the place of the holy law as a comprehensive guide to conduct, covering matters of law, ethics and etiquette. It scandalizes Muslims to think that a revealed religion can dispense with the law. They see it, as I do, as a regression to a mythological stage of history. No doubt, it would be slander to suggest that the law has no place in Christianity. Paul explains what he sees as the true role of the Jewish law — helping us to identify sin, know that we are condemned and yet know also that we cannot fulfill the rigorous demands of the law, no matter who much we strive.

If a Muslim reads Galatians synoptically with other Pauline letters, especially Romans, and with the Gospels, he or she is bound to be struck by the fact that Christianity is a daringly innovative solution to a Jewish anxiety about the difficulty of fulfilling the law. The Christian suggestion is that one must invoke an external rescue by a gracious saviour, along with a radical transformation in human nature — and indeed supplement both with the radical initiative of a new understanding of the divine nature enshrined in the Incarnation. Hence, the Christian use of the Jewish ideal of the messiah whose advent will herald a new phase of history. Christians have held, without adequate evidence, in my view, that the Jewish scriptures predict the advent of the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, there is no adequate reason for the assumption that only one man, one Jew called Jesus, had fulfilled the law perfectly and blamelessly. As for the Qur'an, it concurs with Christians that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel but says nothing about his advent being predicted in the Jewish scriptures (Torah and Psalms). The Qur'an does not see Jesus as a universal messiah. The crucial limitation in the qur'anic view is that it offers no explanation of the messianic title, its meaning and significance in salvation history, as understood by Christians and Jews. This is partly owing to the fact that the Qur'an rejects the two-

tier salvation scheme of Israel first, then the (Gentile) nations.

Let me conclude here by mentioning my conclusions as these relate to our modern situation in the secular world. The key reason that Christianity is not equipped any longer to confront an aggressively secular humanism is that this requires the bulwark of an independent law — one transcending state law and indeed above state law in a conflict. Christians have, especially since the Reformation, come to regard the law as merely temporal, secular and therefore inferior to the religious gifts of grace and truth (see John 1:17).

Secular humanism, understood as an autonomous worldview with atheistic foundations rather than as a liberal political ideology compatible with religious faith, could only have emerged out of a dispensation divested of sacred law, thus giving us a faith concerned solely with the things of God, a faith that had, as a matter of dogma and principle, vacated the secular realm. Once armed with a holy law, a religious faith can confront and compete successfully both with political secularism and with secularism as it expanded to become a comprehensive ideology underpinning an autonomous atheistic humanism. As a postscript, I would add that medieval Catholicism and Islam, in their origins and essential genius and genesis, would never have permitted the emergence of the totalitarian secularism that now engulfs the Western world. Rabbinic Judaism, despite having a sacred law, might not succeed in this ambition since it lacks the will to be universal, to proselytize and acquire an empire, whether worldly or spiritual.

I shall now leave aside these Galatian and New Testament particulars to return to a further consideration of the third method. Even the temporary suspension of one's own dogmatic belief can never be total or complete. It might be operative only initially or partially or intermittently. In this way, its duration is determined by its motivation: it resembles the Cartesian method of professional scepticism, adopted solely for the sake of conducting the project of purely academic inquiry. One tries to — pretends to — doubt everything that one can coherently doubt. One even attempts to doubt the existence of an external world or the presence of other sentient beings with minds. But some beliefs are sufficiently axiomatic, indeed foundational, that one cannot,

assuming one is sane, coherently, let alone reasonably, suspend one's belief in their truth. Analogously, for many committed religious believers, the suggestion of a suspension of one's deepest convictions about God would be anathema. During my decade-long tenure as a professor of philosophy and religious studies in an American university, I recall asking my Christian students, taking an advanced level course on the New Testament, to suspend their Christian faith for a mere three hours on every Thursday evening for one semester. All of them refused to comply with my request, some citing parental authorization for their stance.

This method, then, needs to be defended in the face of religious scruples, whether Christian or Muslim,. Muslims may reasonably object that if I suspend my faith as a Muslim, during the research, then the resulting research does not issue in an Islamic perspective on Christianity — but rather reflects merely the independent views of an uncommitted `Muslim' who has suspended his faith in Islam! Let me answer, at last in part, this valid objection. While I am religiously obliged to respect the authority of the Qur'an's judgments on Christianity, I do not go to the Qur'an for a detailed knowledge of the empirical diversity and histori¬cally conditioned variety of denominational Christian faith. Igo to the Qur'an only for a final judgment on the truth of the doctrines of normative Christianity. This procedure therefore opens up space for the kind of research I do.

The objection is that the results of one's research are not a Muslim reading of the Bible but rather an agnostic reading of the Bible — by a Muslim. I can, at best, defend only partly my chosen method against such a plausible charge. My method prevents any short-circuiting of critical inquiry, any premature dismissal of a rival claim. It does so long enough for me to produce a body of scholarship which might, once it has appeared, still be judged defective, undeniably unsatisfactory and limited. The problem is created by the unnegotiable and unavoidable fact that Muslim views of the Bible are, for Muslims, constrained by the self-asserted and freely chosen authority of the Qur'an. This is no different from the analogous truth that, for committed Christians, their Bible dictates the range of biblically permissible views of the Qur'an. Thus, the Qur'an must appear as morally misguided in its

teachings, and doctrinally deficient if not outright false in all essentials aspects, attaining to some truth, occasionally and coincidentally, like any preacher who, in preaching the Word of God, must get a few things right simply in virtue of his office, not his own claims to inspiration and authority.

This third method does not merely require one to show scholarly courtesy or a display of open-mindedness. For that attitude can conceal a false courtesy, a pretence that one is a genuine seeker and the quest has not ended. One has to actually suspend one's belief in certain relevant ways to enable an inquiry whose conclusions are not pre-determined or foreclosed. The interest in the rival must not be merely utilitarian and pragmatic while merely parading as a genuine quest for free inquiry. What scope can there be for free inquiry if God has already entrusted one with the whole truth, via revelation? There are certainly no specifically qur'anic resources for encouraging Western-style free inquiry into matters of religion.

Again, simply hiding one's commitment is different from suspending it. The suspension model is used precisely to avoid the technique of simply concealing one's own opinions, a popular method of teaching respectfully world faiths, an agnostic way of presenting faiths whose truth and inspiration one personally rejects. Hiding one's faith commitment, while teaching world religions, is seen as evasive and, in the case of a member of a visible and easily recognized minority, impossible. This hermeneutic invites suspicion. Many university teachers teach as agnostics — or as sociologists of religions — but their students usually discern their real opinions. They can either find out, through the Internet entries and websites if their teacher is well-known, or they can discern it by listening closely to the hidden subtext of certain comments made inside the dynamics of a classroom. Students often want to know the professor's real (as opposed to professed) opinions in order to write essays that reflect the professor's views. They do this to curry favour with the professor in order to get a better grade or at least to avoid being penalized by unfair professors who, despite their professions of fairness and academic objectivity, cannot tolerate genuinely dissident opinion, especially on matters of faith in an increasingly polarized world.

Let me give my own example as a university professor. I taught comparative religious studies in an Islamic university in Malaysia for about four years in the early 1990s and then, after 9/11, I taught the same topic for nearly a decade in a secular American university where most of my students were devout Christians. In both cases, despite my best attempts, students had no difficulty finding out my real views, often because they had read one or more of my more activist non-academic works. They simply did not believe me when I tried to play the Devil's advocate or offer a survey of varied opinions as fairly as possible, sometimes too fairly. In any case, students do not really believe that anyone can genuinely suspend their commitment in matters of such ultimate moment. Thus, the ritual of open disclosure at the beginning of the semester followed by an attempt to teach agnostically for the rest of the semester virtually always terminates in a tense climax of suspicion.

My Muslim students in Malaysia felt that I was presenting the case for Judaism and Christianity, and sometimes for secular humanism, with such force and clarity, that I was not really a Muslim believer. Some suspected that I was a crypto-Christian, even pro-Jewish. My American students, on the other hand, heard everything I said as coming from a Muslim. While my non-Muslim colleagues could conceal their true religious beliefs, for pedagogical purposes, I could not. It was widely recognized that a white professor with a Christian-sounding name need not be a Christian. He or she might have been a Buddhist. My attempts to be fair and balanced in my assessment of various world faiths, especially Christianity, only increased my students' suspicion, spoken and unspoken, that I was really a closet extremist — perhaps even, as one female doctoral student put it, quite seriously, a clever member of a sleeper cell of al-Qaeda operating in Virginia. Such suspicion was widespread; after all, immigration officers also entertained similar doubts about many Muslim writers and academics based in America.

The hermeneutic, then, that begins by declaring one's own commitments and presuppositions and admits that these are inescapable is better than any pretence to complete neutrality or total objectivity. One can be self-aware and confess one's stance so long as this confession does not prevent one from a patiently conducted rational scrutiny and assessment of a rival set of claims. This

is certainly superior to a simple juxtaposition of sacred texts — and an attempt to treat all as equally authoritative for any given reader.

Autobiographical postscript and final assessment

Let me record my progress as a Muslim who is a philosopher of religions. I started by judging biblical Christianity by Islamic standards. The result was my The Light in the Enlightenment' in which I argued that many Christians had made a wrong move in trying to accommodate secular humanist objections to the biblical outlook (rather than confronting secular options and discarding them as false). I defended Soren Kierkegaard's stance that much biblical exegesis was dishonest and devious: it sought to soften the existential impact of biblical imperatives and thus, I concluded, agreeing with Kierkegaard, that such tactical concessions and the liberties of thought that accompanied them had together effectively reduced the keen-bladed impact of the demands and commands of Christian discipleship.

I began then by using the faith-based (first) method, then rapidly progressed to the view that Islam might benefit from a measure of agnostic self-doubt. I used only this agnostic (second) method unless I was answering committed critics of Islam — when I would revert to the first method, albeit a courteous and gentle version of it. For the past five years or so, I have employed the third (suspension) model. In my view, only this third approach has any valid purchase here. It may bear some fruit in its season. In any case, only by their fruits can the three methods be justly judged.

Which of the three methods is the most defensible or fruitful? Can the methods be used simultaneously? All the methods have different weaknesses, none being perfect. It is harder to make any valid generalizations about their respective strengths since their appeal depends more on the extraneous religious beliefs entertained than on any intellectual merit inherent in each method. Thus, the faithbased method is suitable for the madrasa, but not for the secular academy and certainly not for doing interfaith theology. Free inquiry, entirely unfettered by qur'anic strictures, is impossible. In my judgement, based on my engagement in interfaith work in many locales worldwide, only the more sceptical

and agnostic methods are suitable for the accompanying political purpose of building bridges to link the two rival faiths, an enterprise that should ideally be supported by the findings of supporting academic research in interfaith theology.

The second method defers final judgement and awaits the outcome of an eschatology that delivers a post-mortem verification of the truths of one particular faith and finally disabuses the others of their illusions. We effectively abandon the task of resolving life's problems during our lives on earth. The faith-based approach of method cannot cope with the full measure of the autonomous integrity of the New Testament as rival scripture. The fully committed Muslim must certainly end, if not begin, by dispossessing the Christian rival of his or her rich heritage of faith. It is the inevitable burden of one's own zeal that one cannot always appreciate the other's zeal. Fanaticism is only other people's passion.

My defense and espousal of the second position, which entails respect for agnosticism, has long been seen by virtually all Muslims as tantamount to atheism. The conviction here is that the historical event of the Qur'an's revelation has broken any deadlock between the Semitic trio — and demonstrated the ultimate truth of Islam. I contended that it remains theologically puzzling that the post-qur'anic universe contains conflicts, both internal to faiths and among them. Surely, a new miracle from God, intended for the modern age, would disambiguate our scandalously ambivalent condition in which God is silent, dramatic miracles no longer seem to happen, and external nature continues to sustain equally well both adequate secular naturalistic and theistic interpretations. The Qur'an claims that its revelation has broken such deadlocks for all sincere seekers after truth (see Q2:213). Only the perverse, including the disbelievers among the People of the Book, reject the signs and evidences of God as offered in human and external nature, society and sacred history and particularly in the finality of the Arabic Qur'an, seen by Muslims as the verbatim speech of God, an inimitable miracle of reason and speech, 'the last testament.'

Why then, to return to our final method, do we need a dramatic suspension of commitment? I admit that this attitude privileges intellectual inquiry over devotional conviction — but only temporarily and

in the limited context of academic work. This method is the most promising since one seeks to understand the rival on its own terms. Only after that does one critique it from the viewpoint of one's own commitment to a rival scripture's truth, integrity and authority. The point of understanding the rival on terms indigenous and domestic to that faith is to avoid the accusation that one is dealing merely in polemic, in shallow combativeness and debate-style point-scoring. There is plenty of that in both Muslim and Christian popular literature, especially available on the increasingly ubiquitous internet.

The third method differs from the second only in that it is an active version of the agnostic stance, requiring a courageous commitment to adopt a stance that actively though temporarily suspends, even contradicts, faith. If one suspends, for long enough, one's belief in the comprehensive authority of one's own scripture, this concession enables objective research of the alien scripture.

In studying dispassionately the scripture of another faith, one must cultivate, in addition to equipping oneself with the appropriate scholarly and linguistic apparatus, sympathetic attitudes that enable one to understand the related rival on its own terms and, simultaneously, an ability to acknowledge how one's own faith, Islam in my case, appears to others. Both qualities are rarely found even alone in a scholar, let alone in combination.

Many Christian scholars are quite capable of teaching and researching in an agnostic way and are, therefore, able to mentally encompass how their faith appears to non-Christians far better than Muslims can visualize how their Islam appears to non-Muslims. Christians, unlike Muslims, at seminary are trained in both confessional and secular disciplines of inquiry. Moreover, and related to this fact, we note that Christianity has had to endure, throughout its history, challenges from many quarters, especially an aggressive secular sector, and done so for longer than any other extant faith. Christians have not ignored these challenges but sought to engage them, though unsuccessfully in the case of the secular pretender, sometimes in Marxist dress. Christians have failed to answer the challenge of Islam.

Muslims have failed to cultivate even the agnostic attitude, let alone accept a suspension paradigm. Many would retort with some justification that the

fate of post-Enlightenment Christianity, at least as it dealt with its ideological enemies, should serve as a salutary warning to Muslims. If one engages with the secular pretender on secular terms, one is bound to lose in this anti-religious age. It is wiser, the Muslims would say, to ignore or else confront the non-Muslim opponents rather than to seek to engage them sympathetically, let alone to accommodate their criticisms. Thus, a wise indifference to the intellectual subtleties is a safeguard against defeat. Ignorance is Strength, as the Party in Orwell's dystopia *1984* preaches.

Awhad al-Dīn Kirmānī and the Controversy of the Sufi Gaze by Lloyd Ridgeon [Routledge Sufi Series, Routledge, 9781138057135]

Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 1238) was one of the greatest and most colourful Persian Sufis of the medieval period; he was celebrated in his own lifetime by a large number of like-minded followers and other Sufi masters. And yet his form of Sufism was the subject of much discussion within the Islamic world, as it elicited responses ranging from praise and commendation to reproach and contempt for his Sufi practices within a generation of his death.

Awhad al-Dīn Kirmānī and the Controversy of the Sufi Gaze assesses the few comments written about Kirmānī by his contemporaries, and also provides a translation from his Persian hagiography, which was written in the generation after his death. The controversy centres on Kirmānī's penchant for gazing at, and dancing with, beautiful young boys. This anonymous hagiography presents a series of anecdotes that portray Kirmānī's "virtues". The book provides an investigation into Kirmānī the individual, but the story has significance that extends much further. The controversy of his form of Sufism occurred at a crucial time in the evolution of Sufi piety and theology. The research herein situates Kirmānī within this critical period, and assesses the various perspectives taken by his contemporaries and near contemporaries. Such views reveal much about the dynamics and developments of Sufism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Sufi orders (ṭurūq, s. ṭarīqa) began to emerge, and which gave individual Sufis a much more structured and

ordered method of engaging in piety, and of presenting the Sufi tradition to society at large.

As the first attempt in a Western language to appreciate the significant contribution that Kirmānī made to the medieval Persian Sufi tradition, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Sufi Studies, as well as those interested in Middle Eastern History.

Excerpt: Awhad al-Din Kirimānī (d. 1238) was one of the greatest and most colourful Persian Sufis of the medieval period; he was celebrated in his own lifetime by a large number of like-minded followers and other Sufi masters, and his popularity most likely contributed to his appointment by the `Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad to the directorship of probably the most prestigious convent in the capital city. And yet his form of Sufism was the subject of much discussion within the Islamic world, as it elicited responses ranging from praise and commendation to reproach and contempt within a generation of his death.

Generally associated with a penchant for gazing at beautiful, moon-faced boys, enigmatic and contentious Kirmānī certainly was. But aside from weighing the scattered references about him in sources from his own time, historians are faced with a dilemma that such sources are relatively few in number. Fortunately, there is an anonymous hagiography, which presents a series of anecdotes, or chapters, that portray Kirmānī's "virtues". This research then, is composed of analytical chapters that assess the few comments written about Kirmānī by his contemporaries, and subsequently it provides a translation from this Persian hagiography, which was written in the generation after his death. In effect, an attempt is made to get as close to Kirmānī as possible and provide the first attempt in a Western language to appreciate the significant contribution that he made to the medieval Persian Sufi tradition.

The analysis in this book provides an investigation into Kirmānī the individual, but the story has significance that extends much further. The controversy of his form of Sufism occurred at a crucial time in the evolution of Sufi piety and theology. The research herein situates Kirmānī within this critical period, and it assesses the various perspectives taken by his contemporaries and near

contemporaries. Such views reveal much about the dynamics and developments of Sufism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Sufi orders (turūq, s. tarīqa) began to emerge, and which gave individual Sufis a much more structured and ordered method of engaging in piety, and of presenting the Sufi tradition to society at large.

It is surprising that in spite of the fame and reputation that Kirmānī earned during his lifetime and in the subsequent centuries of Islamic history, he has received scant attention from both Western scholars and from researchers within the Persianate world. The reluctance amongst scholars East and West to investigate the life and Sufi practice of Kirmānī may be related to the belief (mentioned above) that he was too attracted to the "deviant" practice of gazing at beautiful young boys, which misses his Sufi understanding of the act of witnessing God through corporeal manifestations of beauty. Certainly the pre-modern and modern periods have foregrounded a certain understanding of both gender and sexuality that has frowned on what it perceives as "corruptions", and of those connections and Sufi beliefs that pervert the balance of "normative" sexuality. Moreover, the reticence of scholars to engage with Kirmānī may also be attributed to his relative lack of literary productivity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Western and Eastern scholars have gorged themselves on the medieval Sufi literary masterpieces of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and Ibn 'Arabi, and rightly so, as the works of such masters deserve minute literary and theological scrutiny. However, such activity has certainly cast a long shadow over their contemporaries, who were often just as illustrious in their own way. Kirmānī's literary outputs were certainly different to those of Rūmī and Ibn 'Arabi; he neither composed any prose work to elucidate his own world-view, nor did he leave any long mathnawī or collection of ghazals as did his illustrious Persian contemporary. He did, however, compose a large number of quatrains, although it is difficult to verify which quatrains amongst this large corpus were actually penned by him.

[Note: The only work that has been preserved until today and seems to have been composed by Kirmānī is a collection of quatrains. (I use the word "seems" deliberately, for just as the number of

Khayyāmic quatrains snowballed in the years after his death, the same phenomenon may also have occurred in those attributed to Kirmānī). See Diwān-i ruba `iyāt-i Awhad al-Din Kirmānī, ed. Ahmad Abū Mahbūb (Tehran: Stiffish, 1987). The quatrains appear in a manuscript from the Ayasofya collection (Istanbul) that is composed of several other `irfānī texts. It was not authorised by the poet himself, as the "editor" states that Kirmanī's writings were scattered here and there, so the task was to assemble them into a coherent form. Thus, the "editor" collected 1,724 quatrains and placed them within twelve subject headings. (Chapter 1: On Unity, Praise of God and Remembrance and a Eulogy of the Prophet and his Followers; Chapter 2: On the Sharī `a; Chapter 3: On Sufism and the Inner States; Chapter 4: On Purity, Cleansing the Self and Renouncing Lust; Chapter 5: On Good Works and Whatever is Included in a Good Name; Chapter 6: On Love and Witnessing; Chapter 7: On the Approved Qualities; Chapter 8: On Ugly Qualities; Chapter 9: On Journeying and Departing; Chapter 10: On Spring, Wine and Samā ; Chapter 11: On Ecstatic Words [tāmāt]; and Chapter 12: On the Last Wills and the Grief for the Departed, on fanā' and baqā' and Mystical States). See Diwān-i ruba `iyāt-i Awhad al-Din Kirmānī, ed. Ahmad Abū Mahbūb (Tehran: Stiffish, 1987). This Dīwān was republished in 1996 by Wafā'ī with a long introduction (that covered topics such as Buddhism and the rise of Sufism) that was mainly derivative of earlier sources. See Ahwāl wa āsār-i Awhad al-Dīn IHāmid b. Abi al-Fakhr Kirmānī, ed. Muhammad Wafā'ī (Tehran: Mā, 1375/1996). The main interest of Wafā'ī's publication was the inclusion of a mathnawi titled Misbāh al-arwāh (which has been attributed to Kirmānī, although this attribution is generally considered to be incorrect).]

Although it is extremely difficult to assess. Kirmānī's life and impact on Sufism through his quatrains, it is fortunate that a hagiography (mentioned above) was written soon after his death. A single copy of this manuscript was. edited and published by Badī` al-Zamān Furūzānfar in 1969 in the Persian Texts Series under the general editorship of Ehsan Yarshater. [Note: The manuscript, written in black ink, is kept in the Ayasophia Library in Istanbul (referenced as Nafispasha 1199). I am

exceedingly grateful to Dr Bruno de Nicola, who provided me with a digital copy of the whole manuscript.] The title of this edition is Manāqib-i Awhad al-Din IIāmid Ibn abī'l-Fakhr Kirmānī. Furūzānfar included an informative historical introduction to this edition but did he not investigate the controversy that surrounded Kirmānī. The English translation that forms the second part of this book has utilised both the manuscript in Ayasofya, and also Furūzānfar's edition.

Aside from Furūzānfar's introduction, the only other Persian work of any real value for investigating Kirmānī's life and context is the discussion by Bāstānī-Pārīzī, in his introduction to Mahbūb's edition of Kirmānī's quatrains.' There has been very little research in English on Kirmānī, although his name appears regularly, though sporadically, in many of the academic surveys written by Western scholars about other Sufis of the period. The most extensive non-Persian study is Mikail Bayram's Turkish work on the topic, which investigates Kirmānī's life, teachings and students, and his work relies heavily on the aforementioned hagiography.

The work herein is the first study in any European language about Kirmānī and the controversy surrounding him. But as mentioned above, the significance of this monograph lies not just in an investigation of Kirmānī, but in what the controversy reveals about Sufism in this period. In order to understand the context of Sufism in the thirteenth century, Chapter 1 examines its salient features in this period with reference to five of the major individual Sufis or Sufi groups who lived around Kirmānī's lifetime. In this way, it is possible to see how Kirmānī fitted or differed from the various strands of Islamic piety that have been labelled "Sufi". This first chapter outlines several features that had brought Sufism to the forefront of Islam as a religion and its relationship with theology, society and politics. Many of the reasons for this development positioned the Sufi movement ideally for the establishment of institutionalised frameworks that have become known as orders (or brotherhoods). The creation of these orders provided some kind of central core of practice and belief that offered a degree of unity to the various strands of Islamic piety. It is to be speculated that Kirmānī, and the practice associated with him, were

amongst the reasons why many felt the need to create these frameworks to establish "normative" regulations and rules for Sufi activity and belief.

The attraction to the Sufi movement brought with it certain challenges that faced all Sufis in the thirteenth century. How was it possible to preserve this popularity and maintain the pristine spirituality of the tradition? Did Sufis attempt to remain aloof from the more populist elements of society who wished to derive benefit from the tradition without necessarily paying attention to its demanding rituals and regulations? What exactly was the relationship between Sufism and the laws enshrined within the sharī`a? What were the implications for Sufis of this new-found popularity in the political context? And how did Sufis understand, manage and regulate the expectations that others had of them? All of these kinds of questions have a direct relevance to the study of Kirmānī, whose own life and form of Sufism make such questions so pertinent.

Having outlined the similarities and differences amongst various Sufi groups and individuals, and also highlighted a number of important issues of a sociopolitical nature, Chapters 2 and 3 focus specifically upon Kirmānī himself, and his "rise and fall". Chapter 2 assesses the hagiography written about Kirmānī, and Chapter 3 looks at the criticisms levelled against him by his contemporaries. The Chapter 4 expands on Chapters 2 and 3 by investigating the broader antipathy within the Islamic world for the practice of shāhid bāzī (or gazing at beautiful forms). This is done by assessing the criticisms of shāhid bāzī included in the Talbīs Iblīs of the well-known thirteenth-century Hanbalī scholar, Ibn Jawzi, who was a contemporary of Kirmānī (and is frequently considered a fierce critic of the Sufi tradition). His methodological approach makes it a simple task to see if there is a correlation between the evils that he enumerates, with the practice of shāhid bāzī that appear in Kirmānī's hagiography. While the criticisms from Sufis post-Kirmānī need to be considered with considerable scepticism, Ibn Jawzi's perspectives clearly demonstrate that there were practices within the Sufi tradition that for many were theologically and morally problematic. Kirmānī's hagiography does not dispel these fears and reservations completely, but it does seem likely

that an attempt was been made to sanitise Kirmānī's practice.

Whilst this is a story of an individual Sufi, the way that he has been considered by his co-Sufis says much about the nature of Sufism itself during this period. It suggests that from the twelfth—fourteenth century Persianate Sufism was in a state of flux; there was no single, fixed, essentialised form of Sufism. There were forms of Sufism that appeared normative and enjoyed great popularity because they were endorsed by political figures and appear to have had a mass following, but there were also varieties of Sufism that constantly probed beyond "acceptable" boundaries, as was the case, perhaps, with Kirmānī's worship of beauty (jamāl parastī). This situation, it is suggested, assisted in the ultimate formation of Sufi brotherhoods. But the case must not be overstated, for there were other reasons that contributed to the formation of the orders during this period, including the need to provide some kind of order and societal regulation in the wake of the cataclysmic Mongol invasions of the Middle East, and the emergence of Qalandar Sufis at the same time, an increasing desire by political powers to associate with the tradition, and the establishment of groups of "young men" (or associations known as futuwwa in Arabic, and javānmardi), which appear to have pre-dated the Sufi structural changes in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. However, the variety of Sufisms that emerged in the thirteenth century is breathtaking, and this surely resulted in the momentum for the necessity for regulation and control.

The Part II of this book allows a lost voice from the thirteenth century, clearly sympathetic to Kirmānī, to propagate the message that the great master himself advanced. Part II is a translation of the aforementioned anonymous hagiography. The hagiography is quite typical of the genre of medieval Persian hagiographies, and as such may be constructively read alongside similar works that glorify Sufi masters, including Abu Sa`īd or Rūmī. Inevitably, much is lost with time, and the context is not always easy to appreciate. I have provided some assistance by adding some explanatory notes after my translation of the hagiography.

The importance of these analytical chapters and the translation of the hagiography lies in the

attempt not only to flesh out the controversy surrounding one of the greatest, but hitherto understudied Persian Sufis, and the specific ritual of "gazing at beautiful forms", but also to connect this controversy within the larger historical development of Sufism. Moreover, this research provides readers with a unique insight into thirteenth-century Persian Sufism with the first translation into a European language of the Virtues of Awhad al-Dīn Kirmānī. Hagiographical materials can provide a wealth of historical information, if they are mined carefully and thoroughly. They should certainly not be dismissed as fabrications of a vivid imagination. Whilst caution is necessary if looking for precise historical "truths", such material certainly reflects particular mindsets and reveals the kinds of expectations, preconceptions, prejudices and values that were held by and about Sufis of the time.

Awhad al-Din Kirmānī is regarded as one of the most colourful characters in Persian Sufi history, whose reputation has been largely tainted by both non-Sufis and Sufis. Despite this, some maintain that Kirmānī must have been a "chaste" Sufi. But the significance of the controversy surrounding Kirmānī's supposed practice of shāhid bāzī is greater than the story of the rise and fall of a single individual, entertaining, enlightening and moving, as it is. The controversy needs to be understood within the context of the thirteenth century in the Islamic world where Kirmānī lived, and to ask whether the controversy was symptomatic of conditions already prevalent in the tradition, or whether it represented an innovation within Sufism. The answer should contribute to our understanding about the nature and development of Sufism at this time.

In Chapter 1, it was argued that Sufism in Kirmānī's lifetime exhibited remarkable diversity in terms of practice and belief. Such diversity was possible simply because "charismatic" Sufis were able to enjoy the benefits offered to them by the patronage of political and military leaders. Beliefs in the spiritual leadership of some Sufis (walāyat) only served to promote the "legitimacy" of the claims to authority amongst some of the Sufis, which no doubt contributed to political and wealthy individuals bestowing patronage upon them. Moreover, the development of khānaqāhs must have provided such Sufis with space in which they enjoyed the privacy to engage in their preferred

forms of practice. In Kirmānī's case, the practice was shāhid bāzī and samā`, as set out in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, which was legitimised with certain Sufi ontological perspectives that many of the non-Sufi scholars found problematic. Chapter 3 outlined the most significant opposition to Kirmānī from three Sufis. An investigation into this opposition is intriguing, as there is no explicit reference to shāhid bāzī and samā` in any of them. The criticisms of Shams-i Tabrizi appear to be more related to a form of spiritual rivalry with Kirmānī, in addition to the ecstastic/ sober natures of the individuals concerned. The criticism from Rūmī may be understood as more related to shāhid bāzī, however, caution must be observed, as his famous "Kashki kardi va gudhashti" were words penned by Aflaki, the early fourteenth century hagiographer of the nascent Mevlevi order. There is no evidence, other than in Aflākī, that Rūmī uttered these words. To put it simply, was Aflākī seeking to denigrate any potential rival to the pre-eminence of the Mevlevi order? And the third criticism came from Suhrawardi, as reported by Simnānī, who died almost 100 years after Kirmānī. And like Aflākī, Simnānī had a particular form of Sufism that he wished to promote, namely a form of Kubrawi Sufism that rejected the "theo-monism"2 of Ibn 'Arabi who is known to have been an intimate of Kirmānī. Moreover, it is only supposition that the "innovation" that Simnānī has Suhrawardi mention, is in some way related to shāhid bāzī and samā`.

If Shams' criticisms are discounted, it seems that the dislike for Kirmānī may be related to the attempt to promote certain forms of Sufism, which by the end the thirteenth century and beginning of the fourteenth century were being advanced by the Sufi orders. The reasons for the establishment of the Sufi orders, largely in the period after the death of Kirmānī are not exactly clear. However, it is clear that the Mevelvi order, for example, and the Suhrawardiyya order (and the Kubrawiyya) began to spread in the generation or so after the death of their eponymous founders. Given the relative short passage of time since their inception, it is possible that supporters of these orders wanted to emphasise the individual personality of the association and denigrate any rival or opposition. Kirmānī was unable to respond to the criticism, and

history has not preserved any defence of him, save the apologetic remarks of Jāmī.

Not one specific order appears to have coalesced around Kirmānī's form of Sufism, even though the hagiography provides evidence of the features that became common amongst the orders from the fourteenth century. These have been summarised by Knysh, and include features such as a spiritual genealogy, conditions and rituals relating to admission into the order (such as the shaving of head hair) and absolute obedience to the shaykh, instructions about the dhikr, instructions relating to seclusion, and rules and regulations about communal life. Many of these features appear in the hagiography, although they are not presented in a systematic fashion. However, after reading the Manāqib it is evident that Kirmānī's from of Sufism could quite easily have developed into an order. So, for example, the Manāqib details Kirmānī's spiritual heritage which connects him with the illustrious Sufi, Abū'l Najib Suhrawardi. The Manāqib also includes many anecdotes in which mention is made of individuals entering Sufism through Kirmānī's instruction, and their heads are shaved and are taught the dhikr-i talqīn or initiatory dhikr. There are also anecdotes that demonstrate Kirmānī's particular rules for communal life within the khānaqāh, such as his rules of eating before performance of the samā` (which was in contrast to other Sufis),' or his order for his followers to have their own individual candles,' and his habit of asking after followers about their experiences in khalvat.

It is unclear whether Kirmānī or the author of the Manāqib considered these efforts as a conscious attempt to establish a Sufi order. There is an indication that Kirmānī's humility did not endorse such a possibility. One of the first stories concludes with the author of the Manāqib stating that Kirmānī did not issue "letters of permission" which were used by other Sufi shaykhs to verify that their aspiring dervishes had reached a sufficient level of knowledge to teach their texts. This would have been one way to promote one's Sufi message, or a Sufi order. But, it seems that an order did not emerge after Kirmānī. A number of reasons may help to explain this. The first possibility is that he did not leave behind a sufficiently recognised

literary or philosophical or pedagogical legacy, such as those of Rūmī, Ibn 'Arabi or Suhrawardi. All of the later had orders emerge (although in the case of Ibn 'Arabi there was no formal order), the members of which celebrated their written works. Second, it is possible to point to many of the "successful" orders being those which were given some direction by the family members of the eponymous founder, or at least his close disciples. This does not seem to have been true for Kirmānī, who died in Baghdad. Kirmānī's son seems to have resided elsewhere, and so he was unable to establish a shrine or place of visitation for Kirmānī, where such an order might have taken root. Third, Baghdad already had its fair share of eminent Sufis whose spiritual legacy was shaped into the form of an order, including 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī and Suhrawardi, so perhaps there simply was not sufficient space for yet another. The three reasons for the establishment should not be considered necessary for the creation of an order, as it is possible to point to other orders, such as the Qalandariyya, which had none of the above-mentioned points. And the fact that a Kirmaniyya order did not take root should not suggest that Kirmānī and his form of Sufism was of little significance in the history of Sufism. It is to be speculated that the practice of shāhid bāzī and samā` (along with seclusion) were amongst the practices that made Kirmānī's form of Sufism so distinct. Some Sufis (and also non-Sufis — as argued in Chapter 4) considered this problematic. It is to be speculated whether this was yet another form of Sufi diversity that was pushing the boundary of what should be considered an acceptable face of Sufism. Chapter 1 illustrated the great diversity in forms of Sufism and, for example, how different Sufis adopted various perspectives in relation to ādāb and sharī`a. Was it the case that the seemingly ever-expanding diversity of Sufism during this period, to which Kirmānī contributed, was a contributory factor in the establishment of Sufi orders? Was it as a result of the controversy over practices such as shāhid bāzī (licit or illicit), the antinomian ways of the Qalandar Sufis, and the mystic-philosophical speculative ideas of Ibn 'Arabi, to mention a few, that made many Sufis realise that self-regulation and control was necessary in order for the Sufi movement to represent something meaningful to

Muslims? Was it recognized by many Sufis that the sheer diversity of the thirteenth-century Sufi movements had the potential to spiral out of control and leave the Sufi movement without a recognizable core? It is perhaps here that it is possible to find one of the major significant historical contributions to Kirmānī's hagiography. Aside from revealing the deep-rooted spiritual and pious leanings of the community, it demonstrates certain social and political tensions within the Sufi movement itself and also at large. It demonstrates how wide-ranging were the controversies of the age, which included specific issues, such as times for eating, to more encompassing problems (who could participate in Sufi gatherings which touches on gender and also the possibility of widening the Sufi gates for the masses), and it also reflects on issues relating to inter-religious perspectives, demonstrating an unquestioning acceptance of the superiority of Islam during a period when the political hegemony of Islam was being severely questioned. The hagiography then, is a genre that offers much to historians, and while there is a need to sceptical about the historical veracity of such literature, read carefully, such works yield much important information by which it is possible to reconstruct the history of the tradition from which they emerged.

Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture by Meena Sharify-Funk and William Rory Dickson [Routledge, 9781138687288]

What is Sufism? Contemporary views vary tremendously, even among Sufis themselves. Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture brings to light the religious frameworks that shape the views of Sufism's friends, adversaries, admirers, and detractors and, in the process, helps readers better understand the diversity of contemporary Sufism, the pressures and cultural openings to which it responds, and the many divergent opinions about contemporary Sufism's relationship to Islam. The three main themes: piety, politics, and popular culture are explored in relation to the Islamic and Western contexts that shape them, as well as to the historical conditions that frame contemporary debates. This book is split into three parts:

- Sufism and anti-Sufism in contemporary contexts;
- Contemporary Sufism in the West: Poetic influences and popular manifestations;
- Gendering Sufism: Tradition and transformation.

This book will fascinate anyone interested in the challenges of contemporary Sufism as well as its relationship to Islam, gender, and the West. It offers an ideal starting point from which undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers and lecturers can explore Sufism today.

Excerpt: The kaleidoscopic diversity of Sufism's contemporary expressions defies easy definition. Sufism today is a lucrative resource for tourism and an embattled quest for a sense of the sacred that transcends boundaries of religion, ethnicity, and gender. Sufism can be discovered as a popular form of poetry in Western bookstores, on smartphone apps, and in pithy quotations on social media, or it can be excavated in the history of Islamic anti-colonial resistance movements. Contemporary views, from inside and outside of Sufism, vary tremendously. On the one hand, Sufism is often a form of universal spirituality that is in harmony with diverse cultural outlooks and personal aspirations. On the other hand, Sufism has been, and continues to be, highly contested as an expression of Islam. Muslim attitudes vary from strong affirmation of Sufism as the heart of Islamic faith and piety to the negation of Sufism as a form of infidelity. As a result of these highly divergent readings of Sufism, complex dynamics are unfolding simultaneously. Classical Sufi poets such as Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) and Shamsuddin Hafiz (d. 1390) have attained iconic status in spiritual and literary circles of North America and Europe, even as radical Muslim political groups denounce formerly mainstream forms of devotional spirituality as saint worship and destroy Sufi shrines in South Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Turkey, like many other contexts, illustrates the contested nature of contemporary Sufism. For instance, many urban Muslim professionals in Turkey are rediscovering Sufism as an alternative to both conventional secularism and traditionally patriarchal forms of religious practice. Meanwhile, visitors to Turkey often return home with tokens of Sufism, such as little statuettes of Sufi "whirling

dervishes." There is a certain irony in Sufism's popularity as a symbol of Turkish culture, as Sufi orders remain officially banned in the country, a carryover of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's (d. 1938) sweeping secularization of Ottoman society. Sufi orders were integral to the Ottoman imperial state and military structures, in addition to the empire's cultural and intellectual traditions. Hence, Sufism was something that Ataturk believed needed to be abandoned and even repressed for Turkey's modernization to be effective. Nevertheless, Sufism has been recognized by Turkish officials as a popular cultural heritage that acts as a ready source of tourism income, making the whirling dervish a contemporary Turkish icon. Sufis continue to operate in Turkey, though they often register as cultural organizations or centers of religious dialogue to avoid the legal problems associated with the official ban on Sufi orders.

Just as Turkish Sufis are associated in the popular imagination with dance — colloquially described as "whirling" or "turning," — so too has dance been a key signifier of contemporary Sufism in a host of other contexts ranging from America to Pakistan. In the San Francisco Bay Area countercultural scene of the late 1960s, Sufis were readily associated with a troupe of "Sufi dancers" and a "Sufi choir" that performed widely in the region. Led by "spiritual teacher of the hippies" Samuel Lewis (d. 1971) — or "Sufi Sam" as his young followers called him — the Sufi "Dances of Universal Peace" were something of a fixture in the Bay Area. Sufi dancers and singers, utilizing chants from a variety of religious traditions (including some of the Arabic Names of God or asma' al-husna), performed at Grateful Dead concerts and were featured in the psychedelic—spiritual scene that characterized so much of the Bay Area youth culture during that era. Some scholars have noted the contrast between the Sufi dancers of the 1960s and more orthodox Muslim Sufis. And yet the eclectic dancing of Sufi Sam's followers finds some parallels with similar phenomena in Muslim-majority contexts, such as the weekly dance known as the dhamaal at the shrine of Lal Shabaz Qalandar (d. 1275) in Sindh, Pakistan.

For centuries, the dhamaal has welcomed all, and the shrine courtyard where the ritual takes place is a space where identities of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion coalesce: women and men,

Muslim and Hindu, all whirl together to the growing intensity of the drum. In a time of reactionary extremes, such spaces seem to draw the hatred of those tied to a monolithic vision of religion and identity. Tragically, the shrine was struck by an ISIS suicide bomber in February 2017. The attack killed many men, women, and children, illustrating the danger Sufis and their spaces face in many Muslim-majority settings, which are fraught with sectarian tension, outside military intervention, and reactionary militancy. Such incidents further highlight the violence so often associated with anti-Sufi movements.

It is not only anti-Sufi movements that threaten Sufism: arguably the structural changes wrought by modernity itself make the disappearance of certain Sufi expressions an almost foregone conclusion. Lal Shabaz Qalandar, for example, is named after the wandering Sufi mendicants known as Qalandars from the classical era — Sufis who reject social conventions and respectability. The Qalandars frequently contravened orthodox sensibilities while maintaining that their wandering and ascetic lifestyle represented a deeper expression of the soul's utter intoxication with God. The integration of traditional landscapes into the systems of the modern economy has often meant the disappearance of wandering dervishes like the Qalandars; highways, suburbs, and shopping malls seem to offer less space for such lifestyles than the forest paths and villages of agrarian economies. Their stories told to local children are replaced by satellite television and social media, while their traditional wisdom and healing are replaced by popular televised preachers and modern medical systems.

Dance has proven to be an enduring expression of Sufi teachings in its varied geographies and temporalities, and yet contemporary Sufism is not limited to embodied forms of dynamic meditation and celebration. Sufism has also been at the heart of Islamic movements that were formed to offer military resistance to European invasions throughout Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia during the 19th century. The colonial projects of the British and French empires have had a significant impact on the history of Muslim societies and hence Sufism, including its contemporary forms, cannot be understood apart from this impact. Surprising traces of this colonial-era legacy of European

invasion and Sufi military resistance can be found in the American Midwest, in Iowa. There, we find the town of Elkader, the only town in America named after an Arab and a Sufi.

'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri (d. 1883) was a Sufi leader and head of the Algerian military resistance against the French invasion of the 1830s. He rose to global fame due to his remarkable success on the battlefield, despite being significantly out-gunned by the modern French military, in addition to his qualities of chivalry and generosity. He was ever willing to engage in prisoner exchanges and truces, and ensured the humane treatment of French captives. 'Abd al-Qadir became a hero not only to Algerians and Muslims but even to Americans, who read about his exploits in popular magazines, and who shared a cultural memory of their own fight against a European empire with the American Revolution. After his French capture and exile to Damascus, however, 'Abd al-Qadir's fame truly came into its own. Anti-Christian riots broke out, and 'Abd al-Qadir requested French arms to help protect local Christians, working to safely channel thousands to safety. When he died, The New York Times lamented the loss of "one of the foremost of the few great men of the century." Considering his popularity among Americans, it is perhaps not surprising that an American town was named after 'Abd al-Qadir. His legacy, as in all of these other examples, brings us to the crossroads of contemporary Sufism and its many complexities.

What is the relationship of Sufism to colonization, and to the residue of colonialism in contemporary times? What are the interpretative debates over Sufism and Islamic authenticity, and to what extent have they changed in modern contexts? What are the varied understandings of universalism within Sufi traditions? How has the contemporary practice of Sufism been shaped by the rise of anti-Sufi movements among Muslims? What are some ways in which non-Muslims have encountered and understood Sufi traditions through texts? What sense can be made of Western cultural reactions to Sufi texts, particularly in the form of poetry, from Hafiz in the 18th century to Omar Khayyam (d. 1131) in the 19th century and Rumi in the present day? How is contemporary Sufism gendered? How does this gendering manifest both continuity with and the transformation of past traditions surrounding spiritually authoritative female Sufis,

and reflect understandings of metaphysical realities?

Emerging as a variety of Muslim ascetic, devotional, and esoteric practices in the 9th and 10th centuries, Sufism is often described as Islamic mysticism or spirituality. Traced to teachings given by the Prophet Muhammad to his closest companions, including the hidden meaning of the Qur'an, Sufism first took shape in small circles of seekers. These circles gradually developed into larger communities, in places such as Khorasan and Baghdad. Later, Sufism took more formal expression through an expanding system of orders, saints, and shrines, together with literature of mystical philosophy and poetry, that would define the classical Islamic tradition and shape medieval Muslim empires. However, Sufism's centrality during the classical period of Islamic history stands in marked contrast to its current ambiguous (and in many contexts, fraught) place within the larger contemporary Islamic paradigm.

"Contemporary" can mean either of the same time or of the current time. We use the term here to refer to Sufism today, in the 21st century, but also in reference to the contemporary or modern period, which for the purposes of this book we consider as beginning in the mid-18th century. This was a time when European powers began their expansion into central Islamic lands, inaugurating a new era in Islamic history, one that was marked by Muslim engagement with and responses to new European-derived modes of economy, state, science, and technology. It is our contention that the contemporary cannot be adequately grasped without an understanding of how current trajectories have their roots in past developments that continue to reverberate in our own time. Contemporary Sufism, then, is defined by a) its perpetuation of classical Sufi principles and practices, and b) its vernacularization of these principles and practices in light of contemporary contexts and historical circumstances.

The structure of this book

The book begins by providing a genealogical overview of the production of knowledge on contemporary Sufism. We offer a survey of the field as reflected in the English-language scholarship, produced largely in Europe and more recently in North America. Following this

introductory overview, the work is divided into three main sections, which are thematic in nature. Although we could have selected a variety of dynamics shaping the contemporary expressions of Sufism, we have chosen three that have been formative to the global transformations taking place in Sufism today.

First, we consider Sufism's relationship to Islam and the development of anti-Sufi interpretive movements. Western observers frequently find themselves befuddled by intra-Muslim tensions and conflicts. This section explains one of the most important tensions that is currently playing out in Muslim societies: the contestation over Islamic authenticity by pro- and anti-Sufi Muslims. This section further unpacks the historical forces that set the stage for the current debate, focusing on the rise of a variety of movements that oppose Sufism, to varying degrees, including the 19th-century Salafiyya in the Middle East. The focus then shifts toward Islam's most sustained and influential anti-Sufi theology, Wahhabism.

The second section of the book explores the relationship between Sufism and the West. It first situates the backdrop of the European encounter with Sufism during the colonial period, especially as Europeans were attracted to Persian poetic traditions and to devotional practices such as those of the whirling dervishes. These initial European encounters with Sufism resulted in the perception that it did not originate from Islam but rather found its genesis in Judeo-Christian, Hindu, and even Buddhist spiritualities. Early European scholars of Sufism, later known as Orientalists, created an enduring legacy that is critical to contemporary understandings of Sufism in the West, especially as its presence in popular culture continues to grow.

The third and final section looks at the interpretive debates over gender and the questions of female authority in Sufi and Islamic communities. After briefly outlining different roles of women within traditional Sufi cultures, this section explores the ways in which the subject of women's spiritual leadership within Islamic communities is being engaged and contested in present contexts. Testimonies from four present-day female Sufi leaders provide a vehicle for reflecting on contemporary Sufi thought, culture, and practice, and illuminate how classical metaphysical principles

are being understood in relation to issues such as the role of women in Sufi communities.

Before considering the three themes that structure the main text, in Chapter 1, we situate the field of contemporary Sufism in historical context by mapping the knowledge production on Sufism in the West, academic and otherwise. After highlighting premodern European encounters with Sufi texts and traditions, we turn to focus on the Orientalist framing of Sufism, which would have a lasting impact on Western impressions of and engagements with Sufi literature and practice. In general, Orientalist scholars would, through translation and commentary, create a base of knowledge on Sufism in European languages filtered through a Romantic and perennialist framework, fostering a broader sense of Sufism as a wisdom transcending religion and Islam. This largely de-Islamicized Sufism would then act as a resource for later Western artists, interpreters, and Sufi teachers. By the mid-20th century, however, scholars began to revise earlier theories, with increasing connections between Sufism and its Islamic sources facilitated by greater access to Sufi texts and traditions. It was during this period that Islamic and Sufi studies matured as a developed discipline of study, with its base in the West shifting somewhat from Europe to North America — first, with the proliferation of area studies and, later, religious studies departments. The final decades of the 20th century would witness a pivot in scholarship as social scientific paradigms helped to usher in a focus on studying lived Sufism, as opposed to an almost exclusive textual focus inherited from Orientalist traditions. Despite a number of mid-20th century scholars predicting Sufism's decline within the conditions of modernity, Sufi orders and groups have demonstrated resilience in modern, globalizing contexts. This has meant that contemporary Sufism has drawn concerted scholarly attention in recent decades.

Part I Sufism and anti-Sufism in contemporary contexts

Chapter 2 explores the historical roots of one of the most visible theological debates playing out in the contemporary world. This debate is fundamentally a contest between two sorts of Islam — one grounded in Sufism, and the other vehemently opposed to Sufism as a corrosive heresy. The contest between Sufi and anti-Sufi

Muslims is playing out in almost every Muslim-majority society and local Muslim community, the outcome of which is shaping the future of Islam. Although the majority of medieval Muslim jurists and theologians affirmed Sufism's orthodoxy, there were notable opponents of Sufism in the premodern period. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), in particular, believed that philosophical Sufism was an extra-Islamic contagion weakening Islamic civilization from within. Ibn Taymiyya's views remained on the margins of Islamic thought for centuries, though they were revived in 18th century Arabia by the reformer Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1798). Ibn'`Abd al-Wahhab took the trajectories of Ibn Taymiyya's anti-Sufism further than Ibn Taymiyya had, condemning Sufi Muslims as apostates who should be fought and killed by his followers, who he believed were the only true Muslims on earth. Labeled "Wahhabis" by other Muslims, this initially violent movement would be domesticated and consolidated in Eastern Arabia, laying the groundwork for a new sort of Islam, one with an unprecedented opposition to Sufism. Wahhabism would have an influence far beyond the borders of Arabia, eventually coinciding with and in some cases amplifying the theology of influential South Asian Islamic movements, including the Deobandi and Ahl-i Hadith, and the Salafiyya movement in the Middle East. The collapse of traditional forms of religious authority during the colonial period facilitated the spread ofWahhabi Islam, and its derivatives, globally. Simultaneously, the disintegration of Muslim empires that were closely intertwined with Sufism left Sufis without a base of material or political support, and vulnerable to attack. These developments then set the stage for the current contest between Sufis and anti-Sufis over the nature of Islamic theology, practice, authority, and authenticity.

With the historical background of the current Sufi/anti-Sufi conflict in place, Chapter 3 begins with the global proliferation of Wahhabi thought and activism in the 20th century. This development was sponsored by the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi—Wahhabi religious establishment used the influx of petro-dollars to fund the export of Wahhabi missionaries, scholarship, and literature around the world. Muslim communities found themselves inundated with a new version of Islam, radically critiquing Islam's classical formations, and Sufism in particular, as deviant.

Branding themselves "Salafis" in reference to Islam's first generations, Wahhabi scholars and their works have radically marginalized Sufism in contemporary Islamic discourse, with Sufi teachings, practices, and sites coming under concerted attack. The now frequent destruction of Sufi shrines, whether in Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, or Syria, by Salafi—Jihadi groups, is an outgrowth of the spread of Wahhabism globally. Sufi-oriented Muslims have responded by reasserting Sufism's centrality to Islamic theology and practice. In North America, for example, popular Sufi Muslim authorities such as HamzaYusuf, Hisham Kabbani, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Omid Safi all oppose the well-funded efforts of Salafi organizations to rewrite Sufism out of Islamic history and thought, though each comes from different intellectual backgrounds, ranging from traditionalist to reformist or progressive.

Part II Contemporary Sufism in the West: Poetic influences and popular manifestations

Just as Muslims were questioning Sufism's place in Islam, European colonialists were situating Sufism as a phenomenon outside of Islam, a perspective that would further influence anti-Sufi movements. According to these early colonialists, the poetic tradition of love-intoxication that Sufi poets such as Rumi metaphorically evoked were not Islamic in nature but rather set apart from Islam. Islam was thought to be too legalistic to foster such mystical illuminations. It also meant that Persian literary traditions were privileged as being Sufi, while Arabic and Turkish Sufi literary traditions were often discounted. Both Johann Wolfgang Goethe's (d. 1832) and Ralph Waldo Emerson's (d. 1882) enthusiasm for the Sufi poetry of Hafiz are exemplary here. It is Hafiz's understanding of Sufism as a universal phenomenon that influenced Goethe, the German philosopher, poet, and diplomat, and his masterwork, the West-östlicher Divan (West-Eastern Divan). This universal understanding of Sufism would then spread to America through the works of Emerson, the poet who led the Transcendentalist movement in the middle of the 19th century. It was such spiritual and philosophical tendencies that were already percolating in America that led to the reception of

the South Asian Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan (d. 1927) and his ministry to the West. This chapter, then, situates how colonial encounters with Sufism through travel and poetry have resulted in popular perceptions of Sufism as solely outside of the theological or legalistic traditions of Islam, in many ways setting an historical precedent to the contemporary popularization of Sufism and the Rumi phenomenon in the 21st century.

The seeds of Western interest in Sufism were planted in the colonial era, and led to the iconic status of historical Sufi personalities such as Hafiz, Sa'di of Shiraz (d. 1292), and Khayyam in the West today. Rumi's fame has skyrocketed in North America because of publications, endorsements, and the commodification of Rumi poetry, which has manifested widely in popular and material cultures. The popularization of Rumi in the West raises philosophical queries on the nature of Sufism. Is Sufism an esoteric system deeply dependent upon Islamic theology and law and/or is it an ever-transforming, fluid reality that is based on a fundamental principle of universalism? Correspondingly, is the popular material culture surrounding Sufism in the contemporary West antithetical to classical Sufism that denudes Sufism and thus Islam of its true nature? Regardless of how one answers these questions, such diverse productions of Sufism have nonetheless struck a chord in Western cultural contexts, and have generated interest in classical Sufis and their philosophical understandings, particularly in more universalist expressions.

Part III Gendering Sufism: Tradition and transformation

The question of Sufism's legitimacy is not only unfolding with the proliferation of figures like Rumi in popular culture in the West. It has also emerged in terms of the relationship between Sufism and women's roles. Some premodern Islamic discourses have marginalized women as deficient in intellect and religion, and relegated most women to the private sphere. As a result, Sufi women did not typically occupy public leadership roles in the more institutionalized forms of Sufi practice. However, a wide range of Muslim women have been recognized as saints or inspirational figures.The veneration of Sufi female saints can be found throughout Islamic history. Rabi`a al-Adawiyya (d. 801), sometimes described as the first Muslim saint,

played a profound role in infusing Sufi spirituality with an ethos of self-abandonment through love for God. Sufism offered women opportunities for religious status and influence that transcended social and cultural limitations, with some even considered to be "men" in their spiritual accomplishment. Chapter 6 explores the philosophical and metaphysical discourses underlying diverse views of women and the feminine in Islam. It further explores diverse examples of female Sufi personalities, from classical through to colonial periods, considering the ways in which their legacies inform contemporary Sufi practice and thought.

Drawing upon the rare testimony of four contemporary female Sufi leaders, Chapter 7 explores their definitions of Sufism, their understandings of the teacher—student relationship (murshid—murid) as connected to their own unique experiences of training within particular orders, and their personal reflections on their responsibilities as female leaders of Sufi orders in contemporary contexts. These particular leaders — two from Istanbul, Turkey, and two from America — were chosen, as they represent a spectrum of approaches to Sufism and a variety of classical Sufi lineages and orders (i.e., Mevlevi, Inayati [as connected to the Chishti], and Jerrahi).They also come from a diverse array of cultural contexts. Through their varied experiences of leadership, they are actively shaping contemporary Sufi traditions in local and global realities. Even though these leaders are not meant to comprise a comprehensive overview of gender and Sufism, they offer fascinating insights into traditional Sufi concepts, practices, and questions of authority and authenticity within Sufism.

Having navigated the terrain of contemporary Sufism, in the final chapter, Chapter 8, we conclude by offering summaries of what was discussed in each of the three sections and their significant conclusions, especially as they pertain to the outlook of contemporary Islamic thought and identity. We also explore the concept of "complementary contradictions" as a way to understand patterns of connections within the emerging field of contemporary Sufism. This chapter further situates the limitations of our research and makes recommendations for future studies and further directions for research.

Recognizing the contested nature of Sufism, in terms of authority, authenticity, and gender, this study brings to light the historical, interpretative, and conceptual frameworks that shape the views of Sufism's friends and adversaries, admirers and detractors. In the process, we seek to help readers better understand the diversity of Sufism, the pressures and cultural openings to which Sufism has responded in modern times, and the many divergent opinions about contemporary Sufism's relationship to Islam. In what follows, we illustrate the varied dynamics that contemporary Sufis encounter, using localized examples to bring to light global issues. Before considering these issues, particularly in terms of anti-Sufism, popular culture, and gender, we begin by offering a historical overview of the production of knowledge on Sufism as it has developed in the West. In considering the various kinds of literature produced in the English language on Sufism, we contextualize this work by mapping the broader academic and popular discourses from which it emerges. The following chapter, then, consciously though not comprehensively, points to the kaleidoscopic diversity of writings on Sufism, which together constitute the literary manifestations of contemporary Sufism in English-speaking contexts.

Key findings of chapters

Chapter 1 situates this work within the broader history of knowledge production on Sufism that has taken place in Western contexts, both academic and otherwise. We began by providing an historical outline of European encounters with Sufi texts and traditions, focusing on the formative role played by Western forms of knowledge on Sufism that developed during the early colonial period (late 18th and early 19th centuries). It was during this period that Western study of the East crystalized as an intellectual discipline (and broader cultural phenomenon) known as Orientalism.The Orientalist framing of Sufism tended to filter it through a Western perennialist lens, largely separating Sufism from Islam.This separation, rooted in racialized theories of mysticism and the limited number of Persian texts to which early Orientalists had access, would help foster a broaderWestern embrace of Sufism as a perennial wisdom transcending religion and Islam, allowing a de-Islamicized Sufism to find a place in Western spiritualities, art, and literature. By the

early 20th century, however, scholars like Nicholson and Massignon, with greater access to Sufi sources, revised earlier theories of Sufism and acknowledged its Islamic origins and character. During this period, we also saw the development of lineages of Sufi practice in the West. Just as early academic treatments of Sufism were shaped by perennialism, so too were the first forms of Sufi practice: whether we think of Inayat Khan's Theosophically framed universal Sufism or Guénon's Traditionalist understanding of Sufism as the esoteric aspect of Islam, Western Sufism tended to be premised on a conception of universal truth shared across religious traditions. Academically, Islamic and Sufi Studies took shape in the mid-20th century, shifting to North America with the establishment of area studies departments and later religious studies departments, a trajectory represented in part by Schimmel. The later 20th century would see a turn in scholarship to studying lived Sufism, as opposed to an exclusive textual focus, one inherited from Orientalist approaches. It is out of this turn that the field of contemporary Sufism emerges, which then set the scholarly backdrop to situate the three broader themes addressed by the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, we offered a genealogical overview of the roots of one of the most profound and far-reaching developments within the historical Islamic tradition. The rise of anti-Sufi movements in almost every Muslim context within the past 200 years has set off a global debate among Muslims concerning the place of Sufism within Islam. This has largely resulted in an historically unprecedented marginal-ization of Sufi modes of thought, practice, scriptural interpretation, and religious association. Although unprecedented in its scope, anti-Sufism has been a significant aspect of the Sunni Islamic tradition since its coalescence in the 10th and 11th centuries. Followers of Ibn Hanbal perpetuated a suspicion of esoteric readings of the Qur'an, innovative rituals of remembrance, and theologies of love, intimacy, and the omnipresence of God. The anti-Sufi elements of Hanbali thought were brought together acutely in the 14th century by Ibn Taymiyya, who directed many of his polemics toward the school of Ibn al-`Arabi, which had come to represent for Ibn Taymiyya a pernicious, transgressive force threatening the coherence of Islamic doctrine.

Combining a suspicion of interpretive pluralism, non-Arabs, and un-Islamic contaminations, Ibn Taymiyya created a body of work that would be resurrected and amplified in the 18th century by the progenitor of contemporary anti-Sufism: Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Unlike any prior thinker, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab sought not to reform or limit Sufism, but to erase it completely from Islam. The Wahhabi movement presented an exclusivist, puritan Islam devoid of poetry, philosophy, and most significantly and vehemently, Sufism. Tones of Wahhabi anti-Sufism were picked up by Salafi reformers like `Abduh and more strongly Rida. Their use of print technology and international networking helped spread and normalize Wahhabi theological critiques of Sufism, alongside their own suggestions

Chapter 3 built upon this historical overview by delving deeper into the ways in which anti-Sufism contrasts with Sufi modes of theology, scriptural interpretation, pedagogy, and religious practice, and breaking down these opposing "grammars" of religiosity as the underlying structure of this debate over Sufism within contemporary Islam. Following this, we offered an account of how the grammar of anti-Sufi Islam was mobilized as part of a global movement to change the face of contemporary Muslim thought and practice. The British—Saudi alliance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries allowed for the Wahhabi tradition to gain political traction within Islam's heartland in Arabia, and the discovery of oil in the 20th century allowed for Wahhabism to be not only consolidated within Arabia but also promoted and disseminated throughout the world.This spread of anti-Sufi Islam in places like Nigeria,Yemen, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Europe and North America has put Sufis on the defensive in the 20th century. This defensive footing and marginalization has been one of the most significant dynamics of contemporary Sufism, affecting its presentation and practice globally.

Contemporary dislocations inspire a search for a singular, authentic, stable Islam, and Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn `abd al-Wahhab's promotion of just such a variety of Islam has a timely appeal. This, combined with the financial resources in the Gulf needed to promote such a perspective, means that supply and demand correspond, and hence the spread of a monolithic, Arabic-oriented Islam as

the only real or authentic version. This allows for little in the way of diversity, contradiction, or ambivalence, and little room for Sufism — whether expressed in Arabic, Persian, or any other language. Sufism is seen as the quintessential "other" to this pure Islam, something inevitably local and cultural in manifestation, disconnected from the textual tradition. Public and private backing, supported by oil wealth, has further propelled anti-Sufi sentiments. In their most extreme manifestations, anti-Sufi sentiments have been expressed in the destruction of Sufi shrines by Islamist jihadi movements, such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Just as Sufism was being pushed from the center of Islamic societies to their margins, it was gaining momentum as a non-Islamic tradition among non-Muslims. Chapter 4 captures this historical engagement with Sufis, especially through encounters with textual and lived traditions by non-Muslims, many of whom were Orientalists. Though early historical interactions prior to Orientalism were also highlighted, including those of Llull and travelers to the Ottoman lands, the era of the most systematic engagement with Sufis was signaled by Jones, whose engagement with Sufism was defined by the textual legacy of Persian poets, such as Hafiz.

Orientalists' interest in Sufi poetry (by Jones and Malcolm) captures some of the dynamics of non-Muslim Europeans' relation to Sufism. For instance, figures such as Jones and Clarke found an affinity with the literary and philosophical traditions of Sufism because of its themes of universalism, love, and unity. At the same time, travelogues, such as those of Lane, showcased another trend emerging among these early encounters of Europeans with Sufis, that is, the exoticization of Sufis for ascetic practices which garnered them labels such as "howling dervishes."

These early representations of Sufis permeated the broader imaginary of European culture which was then influential in the literary and artistic productions of the era, especially of the Romantic movement. Exemplary here are the figures of Hammer-Purgstall and Goethe. Both figures were dynamically inspired by Hafiz's poetry, thus indicating, as was the case with Jones, that the

reception of the literary traditions of Sufism by non-Muslims did not simply transform Sufism in the West but also transformed Western interpreters of it. Eventually, these same literary traditions made their way to America, further influencing movements such as the Transcendentalists. Figures like Emerson and Whitman were enamored with the works of Hafiz. For instance, Emerson placed Hafiz on par with other writers such as Homer and Milton, and praised him as the prince of Persian poets. In America, poets such as Hafiz, Khayyam, and Rumi were receiving much positive reception in literary and spiritual circles to the extent that clubs were formed; the Omar Khayyam Club even sold chocolates and tobacco, an early example of commercialization of Sufism in the West. The reception of Sufi literary figures by an American audience, just like the European and Orientalist examples, illustrates the role of European and American audiences in not only the reception of Sufism but also its redefinition. This conceptualization of Sufism by non-Muslims took place within a universal framework wherein Sufism was not solely an Islamic tradition but one that existed beyond the confines of Islam. Framed as a universal tradition beyond Islam, Sufism provided a ready source of influence for European and American spiritual and literary movements. Sufism was not only passively received in the West but also actively embodied and transformed by its Western enthusiasts and practitioners. The preeminent example of this active reception and vernacularization of Sufism today is the ever-growing popularization of Rumi in the West.

Chapter 5 contextualized this Western popularization of Rumi as part of the broader trajectory of the historical reception of Sufism by non-Muslims.This chapter examined the expansive popularization of Rumi through film, music, architecture, cafes, social media, and much more, and in so doing it critiqued the perception that the commodification of Rumi in the global West has adulterated Sufism's purity. Instead of this commonly held critique of the popularization of Rumi, this chapter illustrates how, as was historically the case, Sufism was not relegated only to the private mystical experience but permeated public spheres. In the process, it was also commodified and vernacularized in diverse cultural milieus. As such, the example of Rumi's popularity in the West is representative of the historical and sustained role

that Sufi poets (Hafiz, Khayyam, and Sa'di) have played in various contexts, including in the construction of a contemporary plural spiritual landscape in America. Movements like Theosophy and Transcendentalism, in addition to some of their New Age successors, have all engaged with Sufi poetry as a spiritual resource. Thus, the question of Rumi and of Sufism in the West is not simply of whether these manifestations are new, but how they reflect a continuity of translation, transmission, and transformation of Sufi texts, philosophies, and traditions. Still, is that which is being translated and commodified Sufism?

As much of this chapter indicated, the answer to this question is not simple, but captures a complementary contradiction. On the one hand, the proliferation of a de-Islamicized and commercialized Rumi in the West is not Sufism, because Sufism developed in Islamic culture and society, where it grew out of the traditions of the Qur'an and the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, and it developed as a critique of materialism in the formative period of Islam. On the other hand, the message of Sufism and the modes in which it has been transmitted have not been uniform; figures like Ibn al-Arabi, Hafiz, and Rumi embraced a universal paradigm of religious pluralism which was rooted in their interpretation of Islam. It is this language of universality that has drawn Westerners to Rumi, which has led to the commodification of and devotion to Rumi discussed in this chapter. What Rumi's popularization in the West captures are competing discourses of authenticity, especially as they relate to who can authentically claim Rumi (i.e., based on ethnic and religious identities). What is happening, then, with the expression of Rumi poetry through contemporary musical forms like jazz is in many ways a vernacularization of Sufism in the Western context. As the famous early Sufi al-Junayd reputedly said, water takes on the color of its container; Rumi's mystical Persian Islamic poetry has thus been colored by a contemporary Western literary, cultural, and spiritual context. As such, this can be seen as a continuity of the ways in which Sufism has always historically existed in social and economic contexts. From food to architectural spaces, to poetry, music, and dance, Sufis have entered and used these spheres. These shifts in interpreting Sufi poets are part of a broader historical process, which includes Hafiz and

Khayyam. These patterns of transformation raise challenging questions: has the spirit of classical Sufism been saved or lost in the West? How much is the West contributing to or detracting from global Sufism and its preservation? What is your relationship to Sufism when you sit in a Rumi chair, or wear the "Like This" Rumi perfume, or retweet a Rumi poem?

In Chapter 6, we explored women's involvement and leadership in Sufism through examples of how Sufi women throughout history have actualized the classical principles of insan al-kamil (perfected human) and walaya (friendship of God).We began our discussion by describing each principle, noting aspects of both the absence of gender from these concepts and gendered qualities expressed by them. We went on to provide a brief historical overview of Sufi women. This overview observed that while institutions and literature about Sufism tended to amplify men's voices, women actively participated in Sufi culture and practice — albeit, often within the socially sanctioned roles of their times. We then offered short biographies of Sufi female saints and ascetics from the formative period, such as Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, Fatima of Nishapur, Mu'adha al-Adawiyya, Hafsa bint Sirin, and Hukayma or Halima of Damascus; Sufi female teachers, mentors, and poets from the medieval period, including Shams, "Mother of the Poor," Nunaah Fatima bint lbn Muthanna, Lala Aziza of Seksawa, Aishah al-Ba'uniyah, Zaynab bint al-Rifa`i, Fatima bint al-Rifa`i, and Lady Jahanara; and Sufi women who resisted colonial occupation, namely Nana Asma'u and Lalla Zaynab bint Shaykh Muhammad lbn Abi al-Qasim. We concluded that these women illustrate how Sufi ideas about spiritual egalitarianism have also been lived by women who subverted social constraints about gender and became foundational in transmitting Sufism through their leadership and spiritual guidance.

Chapter 7 followed the historical examples presented in the preceding chapter by introducing four contemporary women Sufi leaders and practitioners, from two countries (Turkey and America) and from different lineages: namely, Nur Artiran, Cemalnur Sargut, Fariha Friedrich, and Devi Tide. These women represent public roles that have, in many cases, been historically held by men. By reflecting on the rare personal testimonies that these women shared with us, we examined definitions of Sufism, the relationship between teacher (murshid) and student (murid), and the responsibilities of female leaders in contemporary contexts. These leaders responded to how women have found leadership opportunities while negotiating dynamic cultural currents and schools of thought. They emphasized the importance of living Sufi ideals, coming to know deeper or higher levels of one's spiritual self, aspiring to realize the oneness of being, and believing that Sufism is the path of love. Their insights also suggested that amid changing social landscapes, leadership in Sufi communities remains oriented toward transmitting spiritual blessing (baraka) and seeking unity that transcends dualities between male and female.

Concluding thoughts

Rumi once wrote about a popular Sufi tale of two international teams of artists vying for the title of the best artists in all the land. The story begins with the sultan summoning them to his palace and offering them both walls on which to display their artistic mastery. The first team sets to work, getting a hundred different colors of paint from the king, while the second team insists they need nothing but polishing tools to burnish their wall. Both teams work on their masterpieces, and on the day of revelation, the sultan inspects the first team's wall and is profoundly moved by the kaleidoscope of colors, the likes of which the sultan has never seen before. When it is their time, the second team reveals their wall, and it is simply a mirror reflecting the work of the first team's myriads of colors. The sultan is even more awed at what he sees. Sufis have suggested that this story illustrates some of the most important metaphysical principles underlying Sufi understandings of reality. The one hundred colors given by the sultan can be seen to represent the endless and perpetual multiplicity of existence, the rich variety of manifestation that characterizes our world. The mirror can represent the heart polished by the remembrance of God, a pure reflective surface that, without distortion, reflects the multiplicity and beauty of each form in existence. As the king, however, finds the reflected image superior to the first, Sufis have proposed that the polished heart not only accurately reflects the beauty of multiplicity, but transcends it, seeing the unitary source of beauty of which the multiplicity is a dynamic manifestation.

A number of themes emerge from this popular fable, which can be used to understand the complementary contradictions of contemporary Sufism.The colors and hues of the painting captured in the tale above, and the light which illuminates and reflects onto the burnished mirror, capture the plurality and unicity of contemporary Sufism and its many traditions of piety, politics, and popular culture.The plethora of manifestations of Sufism, whether global or local, offer varied hues of Sufi traditions that have been reflected and refracted over time and space. As seen in different Sufi understandings of reality, this many-ness does not precede or unpin the reality of oneness. Rather, there is an ongoing dynamic of "complementary dimensions of a single reality." The unity of being is intertwined with the perpetual fluctuation and transmutation of an absolute time. This property of time as perpetual transformation is known as taqallub. Thus, the burnishing of the wall, like the polishing of the heart, mirrors the endless Self-disclosures of God that can never be experienced in the same form twice — creating an inevitable unpredictability.

Unpredictability has long been a characteristic and even a valued virtue among Sufis and the larger tradition of Sufism itself. We can think of the teaching tales of Rabi`a, where she surprisingly upstages a renowned ascetic and scholar, or tries to burn down paradise and put out the fires of hell to secure the worship of God for her own sake. Or we can recall al-Hallaj, whose travels, political engagements, and public statements were so unpredictable as to be considered dangerously shocking, warranting his execution in the minds of political and religious authorities threatened by what he might say or do next. Sufism itself is something that, in small and often marginalized teaching circles of 10th-century Khorasan or Baghdad, would not have seemed much of a contender to define the Islamic tradition for almost a millennium thereafter. And yet the medieval period witnessed just this prominence, the effects of which reverberate to the present day. The second painting team's method of burnishing their canvas into a mirror also captures the unpredictability that has characterized Sufism. According to Ibn al-Arabi, God Himself is by definition totally unpredictable, as God's Self-disclosures in the cosmos are never repeated, always being totally new — or contemporary. If the essence of reality is

by definition beyond the human mind's capacity to predict, then the forms that spring from this source will be multiple and dynamic. Sufism too can be thought of in this way, historically, as a tradition with an essence that is by definition unpredictable. Change and diversity appear inherent to the tradition itself, and need not be conceptualized as deviations from a stable, unchanging essence. Rather, the essence by nature is engaged in a perpetual pattern of dynamic disclosure. Put otherwise, humans are constantly acting as the nexus where principles are synthesized with circumstances, leading to ever new syntheses that express the same principles in potentially unlimited forms.

If Sufism, like the cosmos, can be characterized by unpredictability, then past is precedent: just as Sufism has surprised observers and scholars historically, its future manifestations cannot be easily anticipated, and scholars are arguably best situated to address Sufism if receptive to the ways that this living tradition surprises with its dynamism and variety, without thereby failing to perceive the threads of connection and continuity that remain. Contemporary Sufism is a living tradition, constantly vernacularized by its interpreters in ways that reflect the living dynamism of human reality more broadly. As our shared reality is always escaping categorization, academic frames, no matter how sophisticated, will always fall short of capturing the living dynamism of our world, both external and internal. Scholars of Sufism, like scholars of any field, can best respond to this condition by humbly acknowledging the inherent limitations of any analytical framework, pointing to rather than defining, suggesting rather than dictating, the meaning of a phenomenon that escapes a final word.

CONTENTS

Beauty in Sufism: The Teachings of Ruzbihan Baqli by Kazuyo Murata [State University of New York Press, 9781438462783]

Analyzes the place of beauty in the Sufi understanding of God, the world, and the human being through the writings of Sufi scholar and saint Ruzbihan Baqli.

According to Muhammad, "God is beautiful and He loves beauty." Yet, Islam is rarely associated with beauty, and today, a politicized Islam dominates many perceptions. This work tells a forgotten story of beauty in Islam through the writings of celebrated but little-studied Sufi scholar and saint Ruzbihan Baqli (1128–1209). Ruzbihan argued that the pursuit of beauty in the world and in oneself was the goal of Muslim life. One should become beautiful in imitation of God and reclaim the innate human nature created in God's beautiful image. Ruzbihan's theory of beauty is little known, largely because of his convoluted style and eccentric terminology in both Persian and Arabic.

"Murata opens up a vista on Islam that nobody talks about anymore: the Sufi vision of Islam as a religion of love and adoration of beauty. This is a fascinating book and an impressive achievement. I predict that it will remain the central work on the metaphysics of beauty in Sufism for decades to come." — Leonard Lewisohn, Senior Lecturer in Persian, University of Exeter

Excerpt: As Rūzbihān entered the `Atīq mosque through the bazaar, he overheard the following conversation between a woman and her daughter:

> "My dear! I am giving you some advice. Cover your face and don't show it to everyone from the window of beauty—lest someone should fall into temptation because of your beauty! You hear my words—won't you take my advice?"
> When Rūzbihān heard this conversation, he wanted to tell that woman: "Even if you advise her and try to prevent her from showing herself, she won't listen to you or take my advice, because she has beauty, and she won't be at rest with [her] beauty until it is joined by passionate love." —

Muhammad famously proclaimed, "God is beautiful and He loves beauty." In a world, however, where politicized, militant Islam dominates the news, it has become almost counterintuitive to associate beauty with Islam. Some may even wonder if there is any room for it in the religion. Edward Farley, a scholar of Christian theology, argues that this is in fact a common postmodern situation:

> Beauty (the aesthetic) is not among the primary values or deep symbols of postmodern societies.... Certain features of postmodern society...tend to diminish beauty both as an important value and as an interpretive concept. Contributing to the postmodern effacement of beauty is a hermeneutic legacy, a tradition of interpretation, governed by dichotomies between the ethical and the aesthetic, religion (faith) and the aesthetic, and religion (faith) and pleasure. Accordingly, a contemporary aesthetic (or theological aesthetic) that seeks to restore beauty as important to human experience of religious faith faces the deconstructive task of exposing and breaking down these dichotomies. The displacement of the aesthetic by aesthetics (philosophy of the arts) in recent times has contributed to the suppression of beauty in hermeneutics, philosophy and criticism. A contemporary theological aesthetic also works in the setting of a centuries-long marginalization—in some cases suppression—of the aesthetic by Hebraic and Christian iconoclasm, asceticism and legalism.

It is not only theologians who bemoan the banishing of beauty from modern human life. For instance, the

British poet and writer Kathleen Raine expresses this sentiment by way of quoting the poignant words of the Irish poet George William Russell (d. 1935): "One of the very first symptoms of the loss of the soul is the loss of the sense of beauty." A contemporary scholar of aesthetics, Elaine Scarry, published On Beauty and Being Just (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) as a manifesto for protecting beauty from various postmodern attacks and reviving it in contemporary discourse. A more recent attempt at "recovering beauty" can be found in Corinne Saunders et al., The Recovery of Beauty: Arts, Culture, and Medicine (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

It is not the purpose of the present study to reinstate "beauty" at the forefront of Islam, as Farley tries to do for Christianity. It aims, rather, to draw people's attention to a neglected dimension of Islamic thought, a dimension that was current especially among premodern Muslim intellectuals and literary figures. In their way of seeing things, beauty had a central place in the universe and human life. They saw God as beautiful in Himself and as creator of an inherently beautiful world, and they regarded the pursuit of beauty at all levels (e.g., material, ethical, spiritual, and divine) as part and parcel of the life of a good Muslim. My aim is to investigate the significance of beauty in Muslim conception of God, the world, and the human being taking as a case study the works of one prominent and prolific Sufi thinker, Rūzbihān Baqlī (1128-1209), who presented some of the most fully developed discussions on the idea of beauty to be found in Muslim literature.

The questions to be addressed in this study include the following: Why did Rūzbihān talk so much about beauty? What is the significance of beauty for his understanding of God, the world, and the human being? How can God's beauty be contrasted with beauty in His creation—including that of humans, angels, and animals? What role does beauty have in the process of God's creation of the world and human beings? Does beauty have any soteriological significance? What determines the degree of beauty found in a thing or perceived by an individual? Does beauty have any role in the ideal way of life? Does the pursuit of beauty have any practical implications for the daily lives of Muslims? What exactly is the connection between love and beauty? Is there any Qur'ānic foundation for Rūzbihān's discussions of beauty (jamāl, husn, ihsan, etc.)? What key symbols and imagery does he employ in speaking about beauty? Overall, what is the place of beauty in the intelligible structure of Rūzbihān's thought specifically and in the underlying worldview of traditional Muslim thinking generally?

Despite the refined nature of Rūzbihān's theory of beauty, his view on beauty—or for that matter, his thought in general—remains largely unexplored and unknown mostly because of his famously convoluted style. Moreover, even among scholarly publications on love and beauty in Sufism, there is nothing that focuses on the concept of beauty, as most discuss love and treat beauty in passing. This is the first book that is devoted to a systematic analysis of the concept of beauty as such in Sufism and that attempts a reconstruction of the worldview in which Rūzbihān and many other Sufis situate the idea of beauty.

In order to analyze the exact role and significance of beauty in Rūzbihān's thought, the following two steps must be taken: first to decipher his technical terminology and often cryptic and flowery language, and second to undertake a systematic does not refer to a unified historical movement, but functions rather as an ahistorical label for characterizing various authors from different times and places who happen to share a common tendency in thinking, though many of them may well have had historical connections.

Among the authors who frequently spoke about their love for beauty, Rūzbihān is especially worthy of attention. His works contain a substantial amount of discussion of beauty of all sorts, divine, human, and cosmic. Although key passages on the subject are scattered throughout his works, they are held together by an overall worldview and common themes. His discussions of beauty are multidimensional, encompassing the fields of theology, cosmology, cosmogony, anthropology, psychology, and prophetology. His firm training in the religious sciences—such as the Qur'ān, Hadīth, Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, and dogmatic theology (particularly Ash`arism)—adds depth to his discussions while allowing him to approach the notion of beauty from multiple angles.

Rūzbihān's Life

Rūzbihāri s life has been the subject of extensive discussion by several scholars, so I will only present the essentials here. The standard story is that he was born in 1128 in the town of Pasā (also transcribed as Fasā or Basā in Arabic) in the Fārs province in southwestern Persia, near the ancient capitals of Pasargadae and Persepolis. He lived during the Seljuk period under the local Salghurid dynasty, whose capital was Shiraz, where Rūzbihān spent most of his adult life. Hence, he is called "Shīrāzī," though originally he was "Fasā'ī," that is, from Pasā.

Rūzbihān started having visions as early as at age three, and a vision at age fifteen left him in an ecstatic state for a year and a half, leading him to join up with Sufis. Paul Ballanfat argues that Rūzbihān was twenty-three years old when he first moved to Shiraz, where he commenced his formal studies in a Sufi convent established by Sirāj al-Din Mahmūd b. Khalīfa b. `Abd al-Salām b. Ahmad b. Sālba (d. 1165), m whom he is said to have received a khirqa, or a tattered cloak of initiation.

Thereafter, Rūzbihān led an ascetic life at Mount Bamū in the outskirts of Shiraz, where he remained for seven years. Not all the details of his life are clear, but at some point he undertook travels to various regions, such as Iraq, Hijāz (including Mecca), Syria, and possibly Alexandria. When he settled again in Shiraz, he established his own convent at the age of thirty-eight, in 1165. After spending some time in Pasā around 1174,18 he went back to Shiraz and became established as a scholar-preacher in the grand mosque, known as Masjid-i Atīq. He continued to instruct the public and his disciples until his passing in 1209.

Rúzbihân's Works

Rūzbihān is known to have composed at least forty-five works in Arabic and Persian in diverse fields, such as Arabic gram¬mar, Qur'ānic exegesis, Hadīth commentaries, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, dogmatic theology (kalam), and Sufism. The last category has the greatest number of works, thirty-one, some of which are extant in print or in manuscript form, and some of which are lost.20 The present study draws on works from four of these categories, though the perspective in all of these works is Sufi: Qur'ānic exegesis ('Ara 'is al-

bayan ft haqā'iq al-qur'ān), Hadīth commentary (al-Maknūn fī haqā'iq al-kalim al-nabawiyya), dogmatic theology (Masalik al-tawhīd), and Sufism (`Abhar al- `āshiqīn, Mashrab al-arwāh, Ghalatāt al-sālikīn,

Kitab al-ighana, Kashf al-asrar, Lawami ` al-tawhīd, Mantiq al-asrar, Risalat al-quds, Sayr al-arwāh, Sharh-i shathiyyāt). I pay particular attention to works that have not received much scholarly attention, either because they are relatively new publications, were written in Persian rather than Arabic, or were simply too obscure to read. These include `Arā'is al-bayān, which had been available in an Indian lithograph edi¬tion but was newly printed by Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya in Beirut in 2008; al-Maknūn fi haqā'iq al-kalim al-nabazviyya (pub

lished in Iran in 2002); Masalik al-tazvhīd (edited by Ballanfat in 1998; unstudied except for a brief discussion by the editor), `Abhar al- `āshiqīn (two editions by Mu `In and Corbin and by Nūrbakhsh have been available for decades but have received little scholarly attention in the West, perhaps because of the high-flown Persian style), and Mashrab al-arwāh (published in 1973 but little studied until now).

Among these works, perhaps the most systematic in presen¬tation is Mashrab al-arwāh, in which Rūzbihān explains the journey of human spirits from God to the world and back to God through a series of 1,001 stations. Systematic in a different way is his Masalik al-tawhīd, which is his sole extant work in dogmatic theology. He presents key theological terms in a rigid structure following the standard language in kalām. This is in good contrast to the language he uses in his other works, which is rather cryptic, allusive, ambiguous, and literary. His Qur'ān commentary follows a standard structure of tafstr works, which is to say that he cites clusters of verses and com¬ments on them from the first chapter to the last, though it is a thoroughly Sufi work.

Previous Scholarship on Rúzbihàn

Much of the modern scholarship on Rūzbihān in the early twentieth century reflects the secondary interest of scholars working on figures preceding

Rūzbihān. The most prominent example is the work of Louis Massignon, the first Western scholar to pay attention to Rūzbihāri s writings. He tried to reconstruct the lost corpus of the famous Sufi martyr al-Hallāj (d. 920) by salvaging snippets of his sayings quoted by Rūzbihān.22 A few scholars then took an interest in reconstruct¬ing Rūzihāri s life—Vladimir Ivanow (1928),23 followed by Muhammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh (1969)24 and Paul Nwyia (1970).

The first scholar to focus on the content of Rūzbihāri s thought was Henry Corbin, who edited two of Rūzbihāri s Persian works, Abhar al- `āshiqīn (1958)26 and Sharlh-i shathiyyāt (1966). He also devoted half of his major work, En Islam ira¬nien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques, vol. III, Les fidèles d'amour: Shî `isme et soufisme (1972), to a textual analysis of three of Rūzbihān's works, namely Kitab al-ighana, Kashf al-asrar, and Abhar al- `āshiqīn. As suggested by the title of this volume, Les fidèles d'amour, which is Corbin's translation of Abhar al-`āshiqīn (literally, "The Jasmine of Passionate Lovers"), Corbin devoted most of his study to this treatise by Rūzbihān. Forty years after the publication of his book, it remains the most in-depth analysis of Rūzbihāri s overall thought.

Also active around the same time as Corbin was the Turkish scholar Nazif Hoca, who edited two of Rūzbihān's Arabic works, Kashf al-asrar (1971) and Mashrab al-arzvāh (1974). In Iran, Jawād Nūrbakhsh published an improved edition of `Abhar al- āshiqīn based on a newly discovered manuscript. He also published two short Persian treatises by Rūzbihān and the hagiography written by his great-grandson, Sharaf al Dīn Rūzbihān Thānī, which had also been published by Dānishpazhūh.

Annemarie Schimmel was perhaps the first to draw English readers' attention to Rūzbihāri s writings through her works on Persian poetry, even though she never wrote a separate article or book on Rūzbihān himself. Her interest in Rūzbihān was carried on by her former student, Carl Ernst, who became the first major scholar to publish on Rūzbihān in English. His [Ruzbihan Baqlī: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism]

(Richmond: Curzon, 1996) is still the only monograph on him. In it, Ernst focuses on the history of the Rūzbihāniyya order from its formation to its gradual institutionalization, the history of Rūzbihāri s family, and an analysis of the "inner structure of sainthood," in which he mainly treats Rūzbihān's visionary experiences. Ernst's earlier work, [Words of Ecstasy in Sufism] (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), devoted a section to the ecstatic aspect of Rūzbihāri's writings. He also translated Kashf al-asrar in 1997. Firoozeh Papan-Matin recently published a critical edition of [Kashf al-asrār] (Leiden: Brill 2006).

The scholar who has been most prolific in writing about Rūzbihān in recent years is Paul Ballanfat, who has edited a number of Rūzbihāri s Arabic works and translated his visionary diary, Kashf al-asrar, into French. In his long French introduction to the Quatre traités inédits de Rûzbehân Baqlî Shîrâzî, Ballanfat pays close attention to two things: the historical reconstruction of Rūzbihān's biography and an analysis of what he considers to be the key features of Rūzbihān's thought. Ballanfat's attempt at reconstructing Rūzbihāri s life is probably the most extensive among all existing biographical work.

[Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love] by Joseph E. B. Lumbard [SUNY Series in Islam, State University of New York Press, 9781438459646]

Discusses the work of a central, but poorly understood, figure in the development of Persian Sufism, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī.

The teachings of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī changed the course of Persian Sufism forever, paving the way for luminaries such as Rūmī, Aṭṭār, and Ḥāfiẓ. Yet he remains a poorly understood thinker, with many treatises incorrectly attributed to him and conflicting accounts in the historiographical literature. This work provides the first examination of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī and his work in Western scholarly literature. Joseph E. B. Lumbard seeks to ascertain the authenticity of works attributed to this author, trace the development of the dominant trends in the biographical literature, and reconstruct the life and times of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī

with particular attention to his relationship with his more famous brother, Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī. Lumbard's findings revolutionize our understanding of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī's writings, allowing for focus on his central teachings regarding Divine Love and the remembrance of God.

Excerpt: The name al-Ghazālī rings through the annals of Islamic intellectual history. Many who know little about the Islamic tradition have heard of al-Ghazālī, and most whose professional lives are dedicated to the study of Islam, especially its intellectual sciences, have encountered this name in one form or another. For the vast majority, it is the name of Imām Abu Hāmid Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) with which they are familiar. Imām Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī had an enduring influence on philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence that forever changed the course of these disciplines. Muslims of different eras and varying ethnicities have seen in his writings the tools for a revival of the basic piety of Muslim life.' Given the extent of his influence, Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī is arguably the most eminent intellectual in Islamic history. All of the attention received by Imam Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī has, however, overshadowed the contributions of his younger brother, Shaykh Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Ghazālī (d. 517/1123 or 520/1126), who, as an influential Sufi Shaykh and important figure in the early development of Persian Sufi literature, is more renowned for his spiritual attainment and instruction than for his achievements in the religious sciences.

Why Study Ahmad al-Ghazālī?

Ahmad al-Ghazālī's Sawānih (Inspirations) is one of the earliest extant Persian treatises to be written on Sufism, preceded only by the Sharh-i ta`arruf li-madhhab-i taawwuf (Explanation of the Introduction to the Sufi Way) of Ismā`īl b. Muhammad al-Mustamli (d. 434/1042-3), the Kashf al-mahjub (Unveiling of the Veiled) of `Alī b. `Uthmān al-Hujwīrī (d. 465/1073 or 469/1077), and several works of Khwajah `Abdallāh Ansārī (d. 481/1089). There is clear evidence that Sufism was discussed extensively in Persian before these treatises. Many scholars whose native tongue was Persian, such as Abu `Abd ar-Rahmān as-Sulami (d. 412/1021), Abu Sa 'id b. Abi'l-Khayr (d.

440/1049), and Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), were among the most influential Sufis before Ahmad al-Ghazālī. But just as Arabic was at this time the only language in which Islamic law and theology were presented, so too did it dominate the textual presentation of Sufism. It was, however, only a matter of time before the Persians availed themselves of the natural poetic nature of their language to express the subtlest of Islamic teachings. As William Chittick observes, "Persian pulls God's beauty into the world on the wings of angels. Persian poetry, which began its great flowering in the eleventh century, shines forth with this angelic presence." Along with `Abdallāh Ansārī a generation earlier, and his younger contemporaries Sanā'ī of Ghaznah (d. 525/1131), Ahmad b. Mansur as-Sam`ānī (d. 534/1140), author of Rawh al-arwāh fl sharp asmā al-malik al fattāh (The Repose of Spirits Regarding the Exposition of the Names of the Conquering King), and Rashid ad-Din al-Maybudī (fl. sixth/ twelfth century), author of the ten-volume Quran commentary, Kashf al-asrār wa `uddat al-abrār (The Unveiling of Secrets and the Provision of the Pious), Ahmad al-Ghazālī stands at the forefront of the Persian Sufi tradition.

Written in the first decade of the sixth Islamic century, the Sawmih is the first recorded treatise in the history of Islam to present a full metaphysics of love, in which love is seen as the ultimate reality from which all else derives and all that derives from it is seen as an intricate play between lover and beloved, who are themselves laid to naught before love.3 For this reason, Leonard Lewisohn refers to the Sawānih as "the founding text of the School of Love in Sufism and the tradition of love poetry in Persian," and Leili Anvar affirms that the Sawānih is "justly considered as the founding text of the School of Love in Sufism and the tradition of love poetry in Persian." The centrality of love for the Sufi way was in many ways inaugurated a generation before al-Ghazālī in the works of `Abdallāh Ansāri, 42 Chapters (Chihil u du fasl), Intimate Discourses (Munājāt), and Treatise on Love (Mahabbat-nāma). Nonetheless, the manner in which love can also be envisioned as the ultimate origin of all that exists is stated more directly in the Sawānih.6 While the precise origins of this complete metaphysics of love may never be known,

what is clear is that Ahmad al-Ghazālī was among the generation of authors who inaugurated the Persian Sufi literary tradition as we know it today. As such leading scholars of this tradition continue to declare, Ahmad al-Ghazālī is "one of the greatest expositors in Islam of the meaning of love."

Initiatic Influence

In addition to his literary influence, Ahmad al-Ghazālī is said to have received many disciples; among those mentioned are influential political figures such as the Saljūq leader Mughīth ad-Din al-Mahmūd (r. 511-525/1118-1131), who ruled Iraq and western Persia, and his brother Ahmad Sanjar (r. 513-552/1119-1157), who ruled Khurāsān and northern Persia. But Ahmad al-Ghazālī's influence as a Sufi shaykh is more important for the initiatic chains (silsilahs) of the Sufi orders. As regards the initiatic history of Sufism, Shaykh Diyā' ad-Din Abu'n-Najib as-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1186) is his most important disciple.' It is not known just how much contact al-Ghazālī had with as-Suhrawardī, but it appears that al-Ghazālī held him in high regard and appointed him as his representative (khalīfah) while they were together in Isfahān. Abu'n-Najib's most famous disciple is his nephew Aba Hafs `Umar as-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234), author of the famous `Awārif al-ma`ārif (Gifts of the Gnostics), which is employed as a manual of Sufi practice to this day, and the founder of the Suhrawardiyyah Sufi order, which spread throughout the Muslim world.10 The Suhrawardiyyah gave rise to other orders such as the Zayniyyah, which spread throughout the Ottoman Empire among other places and still exists in Turkey. Along with the Chishtiyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, and Qādiriyyah, the Suhrawardiyyah is one of the most influential orders in the history of India and Pakistan." While it has died out in most parts of the Arab world, the Suhrawardiyyah is still active in Iraq and Syria.

Three of Abu'n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī's disciples, Ismā`īl al-Qasri (d. 589/1193), 'Ammar b. Yāsir al-Bidlīsī (d. 582/1186), and Rūzbihān al-Wazzān al-Misri (d. 584/1188), are said to have collaborated in the spiritual development of the

eponymous founder of the Kubrawiyyah Sufi order, Najm ad-Din Kubra (d. 618/1221). This order spread throughout the region of Khwārazm into Persia, Afghanistan, India, and China. The Kubrawiyyah still exists with klu nqāhs in present day Iran, though its influence has diminished substantially. Among the Sufi orders that issued from the Kubrawiyyah are the Firdawsiyyah, the Hamadaniyyah, and the Ya `qūbiyyah, all of which still exist in India, as well as the Dhahabiyyah in Iran.

Among the later luminaries of the Kubrawiyyah are such figures as Najm ad-Din Dāya Rāzī (d. 654/1256), who either revised or extended Kubra's Quran commentary, `Ayn al-hayāt (The Spring of Life), which goes to the seventeenth and eighteenth verses of Sarah 51 (adh-Dhāriyāt) under the title of Bahr al-haqā'iq (The Ocean of Realities). Rāzī also wrote Mirsād al- `ibād min al-mabda' ila'1-ma 'ad (The Path of God's Bondsmen from the Beginning to the Return), an influential Persian Sufi treatise that is still in use both in Iran and India as a guide for Sufi adepts. The `Ayn al-hayāt was. later completed from Sarah 52 (at-Tur) under the title Najm al-Qur'an (The Star of the Quran) by another renowned shaykh of the Kubrawiyyah order," 'Ala' ad-Dawlah as-Simnānī (d. 736/1336), who had many disciples in his kliānqāh outside of Simnan, two hundred kilometers east of Tehran, and is known for opposing Ibn al-`Arabi s doctrine of the oneness of being (wandat al-wujud) and proposing a perspective in which is found the germ of the oneness of witnessing (wandat ashshuhad),18 which later became prevalent among the Mujaddidī branch of the Naqshbandiyyah Sufi order.

Another disciple of Ahmad al-Ghazali who is important for the initiatic history of Sufism is Abu'l-Fadl al-Baghdadi (d. 550/1155). One silsilah of the Ni`matallāhī order founded by Shah Ni`mat Allah Wall (d. 834/1331) comes seven generations through al-Baghdādī. This order has had great influence in Turkey and continues to have new waves of influence in the growing Muslim communities of Europe and America. Although the historical validity of this silsilah cannot be substantiated, it nonetheless demonstrates that later adherents of the Ni `matallāhī order recognized

the spiritual authority of both Ahmad al-Ghazali and al-Baghdādī.

The only silsilah given by Shams ad-Din Aflākī (d. 761 /1360) in his Manaqib al- `ārifīn (The Feats of the Knowers of God) for the Mavlavī Sufi order founded by Jalal ad-Din Rūmī (d. 672/1123) records Ahmad al-Ghazali as the shaykh of Ahmad Khatibi al-Balkhi (d. 516/1123), upon whom he conferred the practice of remembrance (dhikr). Balkhi in turn conferred the dhikr upon Shams al-A'imma as-Sarakhsi (d. 571 /1175), who was the Shaykh of Rūmi s father, Baba ad-Din Walad (d. 628/1231). Burhan ad-Din at-Tirmidhī (d. 638/1240) was then the next Shaykh in this line, and was followed by Jalal ad-Din Rumi. That later followers of the Mavlavī order recognized Ahmad al-Ghazāli s spiritual authority is demonstrated by a passage attributed to Jalal ad-Din Rūmī:

> Imām Muhammad Ghazālī, may God have mercy on him, has dived into the ocean of the universe, attained to a world of dominion, and unfurled the banner of knowledge. The whole world follows him and he has become a scholar of all the worlds. Still ... If he had one iota of love (`ishq) like Ahmad Ghazali, it would have been better, and he would have made known the secret of Muhammadan intimacy the way Ahmad did. In the whole world, there is no teacher, no spiritual guide, and no unifier like love.

Despite the presence of Ahmad al-Ghazālī in Rūmi s silsilah and the respect he is accorded, he does not appear to have been as much of a direct literary influence upon Rūmī as was Hakim Sanā'ī, whose Iladīqat al-haqīqah (Garden of Reality) was the prototype for Rūmi s Mat/mawī. Aflākī reports that Rumi said of the Iladīqat al-haqīqah, "By God this is more binding [than the Quran] because the outer form of the Koran is analogous to yoghurt, whereas these higher contents are its butter and cream." Of the spiritual efficacy of Sanā'ī's writings, Aflākī reports that Rūmī said, "Whoever reads the words of Sanā'ī in absolute earnestness will become cognizant of the secret of the radiance (sana) of our words." Whereas Ahmad al-Ghazali's Sawānih has had an extensive literary influence and he is accorded initiatic influence through

several Sufi orders (turuq), Sanā'ī's influence has come only through his writings.

Literary Influence

Given the importance of Sanā'ī and the still unexamined influence of figures such as Sam`ānī and Maybudī, the importance of Ahmad al-Ghazāli s Sawānih for the history of Persian literature is a matter of debate. Like his younger contemporaries Sam`ānī and Maybudi, he receives almost no mention in either Jan Rypka's History of Iranian Literature or in E.G. Browns A Literary History of Persia. This omission stands in stark contrast to Nasrollah Pourjavadÿ s assertion that "the greatest Iranian Sufis and gnostics after him came under the influence of the special teaching which appeared from his beliefs about love (`ishq) and his manner of expression." Although it might be more accurate to say that Ahmad al-Ghazali was a pivotal figure among a generation of authors that forever changed the course of Persian Sufi literature, he nonetheless forms a crucial link in what some scholars have called "the path of love" or "the school of love." This "school" is not a direct succession of Sufi initiates marked by a definitive spiritual genealogy like the Sufi orders (tarrqahs) discussed above, but rather designates a significant trend within Sufi thought in which all aspects of creation and spiritual aspiration are presented in an allusive imaginal language fired by love for God. As Omid Safi observes, "The Path of Love may be described as a loosely affiliated group of Sufi mystics and poets who throughout the centuries have propagated a highly nuanced teaching focused on passionate love (`ishq)." `Abdallāh Ansārī, Ahmad al Ghazālī, Ahmad Sam'ānī, Hakim Sanā'ī, and Maybudī are among the first to have written in this vein.

The most direct evidence of Ahmad al-Ghazālí s literary influence can be found in the commentaries on the Sawānih written in both Persia and India, as well as the many extant manuscripts of the Sawānih. His theory of love that presents all the stages of the spiritual path as an interplay between love, the lover, and the beloved became central to Persian Sufism in later generations, while his literary style, blending poetry and prose in one seamless narrative, was employed in many later Sufi treatises. Given the degree to which Ahmad

al-Ghazālī's literary style and teachings are reflected in later Sufism, his influence must be reconsidered. It is, however, a subject that can be done justice only through extensive comparative textual analysis of the entire Persian Sufi tradition. Here I will touch on some of the most important traces.

As the goal of al-Ghazālī's writings is to facilitate traveling the spiritual path, his literary influence is intrinsically bound to his perceived spiritual and initiatic influence. All of his extant Persian writings are in fact addressed to his disciples. He never writes as a scholar of love or as a theoretician attempting to dissect love with the rational faculties; rather, his is an attempt to guide and encourage others who are on the path, helping them realize the Ultimate Reality that he considers to be inexpressible. The first traces of Ahmad al Ghazālī's literary influence are found in the works of his disciple `Ayn al-Qudat Hamadānī (d. 526/1131), to whom al-Ghazālī addressed his Persian treatise `Ayniyyah and perhaps nine other letters. Hamadāni s letters and his Tamhīdāt take up many of the same themes expressed in al-Ghazālí s writings, such as the sincerity of Satan, the limitations of religious law, and the all-encompassing nature of Love. In many instances, the Tamhidat can be read as a commentary that expands on the central themes of the Sawānih. In particular, the sixth chapter, "The Reality and States of Love," examines both the written and unexpressed dimensions of al-Ghazālī's teachings. The Tamhīdāt has had an extensive influence on the Persian and Indian Sufi traditions and has been the subject of several commentaries. `Ayn al-Qudāt instructed many students, teaching seven or eight sessions a day, and had many disciples, but he is not recorded in any major silsilahs.

In addition to his influence on 'Ayn al-Qudāt, al-Ghazālī likely had a continued influence on the aforementioned writings of both the Kubrawiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah orders. Among those whom Pourjavady mentions are Abu'n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī and Abu Hafs 'Umar as-Suhrawardi, as well as Najm ad-Din Rāzī. But such influence is not as evident as that which he had on the writings of Farīd ad-Din 'Attar (d. 617/1220) and Fakhr ad-Din 'Irāqī (d. 688/1289). The latter's Lama 'at

(Divine Flashes) is indebted to al-Ghazālī's Sawānih for both its style and content. `Irāqī expresses a subtle metaphysics that gives an intellectual architecture to the question of love in Sufi thought. As `Irāqī writes in the beginning of the Lama 'at, it is intended to be "a few words explaining the levels of love in the tradition of the Sawanih, in tune with the voice of each spiritual state as it passes." Like al-Ghazali, Irāqī bases the entirety of his metaphysical discourse on the idea that "the derivation of the lover and the beloved is from Love,"34 and sees all of reality as an unfolding of Love wherein none but Love is the lover or the beloved. Like al-Ghazālī's Sawānih, Irāqī's Lama 'at is both a work of art and a sublime metaphysical treatise. The Lama 'at continues to be regarded as a treasure of Persian Sufism, and 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī's (d. 833/1477) commentary on it, Ashi "at al-Lama 'at (Rays of the Flashes), is still used as an introductory text for the study of the science of `irfān (recognition) in Iran.

Ahmad al Ghazālī's Dastān-i Murghan (Ar. Risalat at-tayr; The Treatise of the Birds) most likely provided the outline for 'Attar's famous Man fiq at-tayr (The Conference of the Birds). Both works begin with a gathering of the birds, which, despite their differences, recognize their mutual need for a sovereign and set out to find one; for, as the birds say in Dastān-i Murghan, "If the shadow of the King's majesty is not upon our heads, we will not be secure from the enemy." Both works describe a journey of many trials by which the birds find their sovereign, the Simurgh. But being of much greater breadth, Attar's Mantiq at-tayr deals with the theme of spiritual wayfaring in greater detail. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr writes:

> He ['Attar] uses the Ghazzalean theme of suffering through which the birds are finally able to enter the court of the celestial King. But he passes beyond that stage through the highest initiatic station whereby the self becomes annihilated and rises in subsistence in the Self, whereby each bird is able to realize who he is and finally to know him-Self, for did not the Blessed Prophet state, "He who knows himself knows his Lord"? In gaining a vision of the Simurgh, the birds not only encounter the beauty of Her Presence, but also see themselves as they really are,

mirrored in the Self which is the Self of every Self.

Like Rūmī, 'Irāqī and 'Attar are both said to have received initiations that flowed from the initiatic chains attributed to Ahmad al-Ghazāli s disciples. 'Attar was a disciple of Majd ad-Din al-Baghdadi (d. 616/1219), a disciple of Najm ad-Din Kubrā, and `Irāqī was a close disciple of Bahā' ad-Din Zakariyya (d. 659/1262), a disciple of Abu Hafs `Umar as-Suhrawardī.

As Persian was the language of discourse for educated Muslims in India until the colonial period, the influence of the Persian masters of love in the subcontinent has been extensive. Among the many masters who are indebted to Ahmad al-Ghazālī and his pupil `Ayn al-Qudāt are Nizām ad-Din Awliyā (d. 1325), Nair ad-Din Chiragh-i Dihli (d. 757/1356), Burhan ad-Din Gharib (d. 738/1337), Rukn ad-Din Kashani (d. after 738/ 1337), and Gīsū Daraz (d. 825/ 1422),42 the last of whom is reported to have taught the Sawānih and to have compared his own treatise, Ilāzā'ir al-Quds. When the Sufi poet, musician, and scholar Amir Khusraw (d. 1325) catalogued the nine literary styles of his day, the first that he listed was the style of the Sufis, for which he names two varieties. The first variety is that of "the people of gravity and stations," and the second variety is that of "the people of states," for which he gives the works of Ahmad Ghazālī and `Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadani as examples In addition, the Mughal prince Dara Shikuh (d. 1659) states that his treatise Ilaqq numa should explain all of the wisdom from the great writings on the subject, among which he lists the Sawānih, Ibn al-`Arabi s Furs al-hikam and Futuhāt al-Makiyyah, `Irāqi s Lama'āt, and Jāmr s Lawāmi ` and Lawā'ih45 Such references demonstrate the high regard in which the Sawānih was held in the Indian subcontinent. Nonetheless, despite the respect accorded to the Sawānih, the Tamhidat of `Ayn al-Qudāt played a more prominent role in Indian Sufism.

Studies on Ahmad al-Ghazālī

Despite Ahmad al-Ghazālr s extensive influence, little information was available in the scholarly literature until 1979. This oversight was amended by the appearance of three monographs in Persian:

Majm-rāh-ye āthār-i fārsī-ye Ahmad Ghazali (Compendium of the Persian Works of Ahmad Ghazālī) by Ahmad Mujahid, Sultan-i tariqat (The Master of Sufi Paths) by Nasrollah Pourjavady, both in 1979, and Āyāt-i husn va-`ishq (Signs of Beauty and Love) by Hishmatallah Riyādī in 1989. The studies by Mujahid and Pourjavady made solid contributions to the study of Persian Sufism in general and of Ahmad al-Ghazali in particular. Mujahid presented critical editions of all the extant Persian writings attributed to Ahmad al-Ghazali. His extensive introduction documents the majority of the available resources for the life and work of Ahmad al-Ghazālī and thus proves to be an invaluable resource. But Mujahid provides no analysis of either the literary works or of the historical information. For this one must look to Pourjavady, who provides a biography of Ahmad al-Ghazālī and then examines his teachings. Pourjavady's insightful study does not, however, analyze the historical accuracy of the available biographical information, and his examination of Ahmad al-Ghazāli s teachings includes Bahr al-haqīqah (The Ocean of Realities) and Bawariq al-ilmā' fi'r-radd 'ala man yuharrimu's-samā ` bi'l-ijma' (Glimmers of Allusion in Response to Those who Forbid Sufi Music), works whose attribution to Ahmad al-Ghazali has since been disproves. As Pourjavady himself has observed, this significantly undermines the value of the analyses in Sultan-itarīqāt Riyādī's study shows a great appreciation for Ahmad al-Ghazali, but seems to borrow from Mujahid and Pourjavady more than build on them. The works of Mujahid and Pourjavady provide a solid foundation for studies of Ahmad al-Ghazali, and this study is greatly indebted to them.

Ahmad al-Ghazali's introduction to Western audiences came in 1936 through James Robson's translation of Bawariq al-ilrm `, a treatise that defends the use of music in Sufi gatherings and provides guidance for its implementation. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 1, the attribution of this text to Ahmad al-Ghazali is erroneous. Many scholars still believe him to be the author of this work and thus count him among the chief defenders of Sufi music (samā `). The inclusion of this text in his

oeuvre has led to misunderstandings about Ahmad al-Ghazali that persist to this day.

Aside from a minor article by Helmut Ritter in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, it was not until almost forty years later that Ahmad al-Ghazali was reintroduced to Western audiences through the translation of his Sawānih into German by Richard Gramlich. The Sawānih was translated into German a second time by Gisela Wendt two years later. It was then introduced to the English-speaking public through a translation by Nasrollah Pourjavady published in 1986. Ahmad al-Ghazāli s most substantial Arabic treatise, at-Tajrīd fi kalimat at-tawlūd (Abstract Regarding the Expression of Testifying to Unity), was translated into German by Gramlich in 1983 and into French by Muhammad ad-Dahbi in 1995. Only the translations of the Sawānih by Gramlich and Pourjavady provide substantial introductory material, but neither is intended to be comprehensive. Pourjavady also provides a brief insightful commentary for the Sawānih to accompany his translation.

The Goal of this Book

This study provides the first full examination of the life and work of Ahmad al-Ghazālī in any European language. It builds on the foundations established by Mujahid and Pourjavady, but adds to their invaluable contributions by fully ascertaining the authenticity of works attributed to Ahmad al-Ghazālī and critically evaluating the biographical literature regarding him. The first chapter provides an extensive analysis of all extant primary-source material on Ahmad al-Ghazālī. It examines the Arabic and Persian sources for his life and teachings, both the works attributed to him and the writings about him in the extensive Islamic biographical tradition. The authenticity of works attributed to him is examined. Then the biographical traditions are evaluated to see which authors provide new material, which authors borrow from previous authors, what are the dominant ideological trends in the biographical presentation of Ahmad al-Ghazālī, and how these trends change over time, moving from biography to hagiography. Examined in this light, many of the accounts regarding Ahmad al-Ghazālī appear to be hagiographical embellishments that developed over time. When one accounts for the sources,

motivations, and historicity of these accounts, almost one hundred pages of extant biographical material boils down to less than two pages of raw historical data.

Chapter 2 draws on the biographical sources and other primary historical sources to reconstruct the life and times of Ahmad al-Ghazālī in the early Saljuq period. The biographies of Ahmad al-Ghazālī in and of themselves do not provide enough information to thoroughly reconstruct his life. But through an examination of the period in which he lived and references to his brother's life in the biographical literature, we can gain important insights into this period of Saljuq history and the nature of his position within it. This was a period of great intellectual fervor in all of the Islamic sciences. Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī came to be a central figure in several substantial developments in jurisprudence (fiqh) and theology (kalam). His intellectual gifts brought him favor in the court, and he advanced to the highest academic position in the land as the head of the Nizāmiyyah madrasah (college). Ahmad al-Ghazalr also found favor at court. He too was actively engaged in many different aspects of the thriving intellectual culture of the era and also attained a high degree of proficiency in fiqh and kalām. But from an early age, his primary focus was Sufism.

The central focus of Ahmad al-Ghazālī's life and teachings is the Sufi path, and he spent all of his adult life engaged in devotional and spiritual exercises. Nonetheless, this aspect of his teachings has not been discussed in any of the secondary literature devoted to him. Chapter 3 endeavors to reconstruct this practice. Ahmad al-Ghazālī did not provide any explicit Sufi manuals in the manner of some of his spiritual descendants. Nonetheless, his Arabic treatise at-Tajrīd fī kalimat at-tawhid provides an extended discussion that portrays the spiritual path as various stages and degrees of remembrance and discusses the process whereby one becomes ever more immersed in dhikr, remembrance or invocation. For al-Ghazali, as for most Sufis before and after him, dhikr is the central axis of Sufi life and practice. He envisions three way stations for the spiritual traveler: the first is the world of annihilation (fanā') wherein one's blameworthy attributes predominate and one should invoke "No god, but God." The second way

station is the world of attraction (jadhabiyyah) wherein one's praiseworthy attributes predominate and one should invoke the name Allah. In the third way station, the world of possession (qabd), praiseworthy attributes have vanquished blameworthy attributes and one invokes Huwa, Huwa (He, He), subsisting in God alone. This chapter also draws on al-Ghazāli s occasional advice scattered throughout his writings and sessions (majālis), as well as the works of his contemporaries and his spiritual descendants in order to flesh out the nature of his spiritual practice. The majority of his extant writings appear to come from the later period of his life when he was already an established Sufi shaykh, and the biographical tradition provides only vague allusions to his spiritual practice. It is therefore difficult to trace the development of these practices over time. But it is clear that some form of supererogatory spiritual practice played a central role in al-Ghazālr s life from an early age.

The final two chapters turn from the life and practice of Ahmad al-Ghazālī to his central teachings, especially his understanding of love (`ishq). After briefly examining his controversial teachings regarding Satan, Chapter 4, "The Roots of al-Ghazālí s Teachings" provides an in-depth examination of the historical development of the Sufi understanding of love and the place of al-Ghazali's Sawānih within it. A broad examination of the various Sufi teachings regarding love before the Sawānili demonstrates that although traces of Ahmad al-Ghazāli's ideas regarding love can be found in the Sufi tradition preceding him, there is no text before the Sawānili that expresses a full metaphysics of love in which all aspects of creation are presented as manifestations of Love and all phases of spiritual wayfaring are defined in relation to Love.

Chapter 5 delves into the ocean of Ahmad al-Ghazāli's Sawānih. In his writings and sermons, the Shaykh is always aware of the shortcomings inherent in language—because a signifier can never be the same as that which it signifies. This chapter thus begins by examining his attitude toward the medium he must use to convey his message. It first surveys his allusions to the relativity of language in the Sawānih and in the recorded public sessions (majālis) that he held in Baghdad.

Then it discusses his relation to the secular literary tradition, particularly the `udhrī ghazal (longing love) and the khamriyyah (wine) traditions, arguing that, like many Sufis before and after him, Ahmad al-Ghazali borrowed themes from these traditions but transferred them to a Sufi context. This is followed by a brief examination of Ahmad al-Ghazālī's use of Quran, hadith, and poetry as a means to incite his audience to seek love and recognition (`irfān). The last half of the chapter is devoted to a close reading of the teachings of love in the Sawānih. It begins by considering the central terms for Ahmad al-Ghazālī's discussion of love, `ishq, ruh (spirit), qalb (heart), and husn (beauty). Then it examines the stages of spiritual wayfaring whereby the heart is brought to complete maturity until it is immersed in the ocean of love, beyond duality, separation, and union.

The end beyond all ends and the beginning before all beginnings is that which Shaykh Ahmad al-Ghazālī strived to reach his entire life and to which he hoped to help others attain through his writings, sermons, and personal counsel. In the Sawānih he accomplishes this task through an allusive discussion of love, beauty, the spirit, and the heart. In at-Tajrīd fi kalimat at-tawiīd he focuses upon dhikr and its progressive penetration through the heart and the spirit to the inmost core. In his Majālis he enjoins dhikr but concentrates more on recognition (`irfān) as a means of spiritual attainment. These various ways of envisaging the Sufi path do not necessarily represent developments or changes in Ahmad al-Ghazālī s perspective. Rather, they are different ways of expressing the same fundamental understanding of reality and the means of attaining it and of trying to convey some small taste of it to others in order to inspire them to wayfare upon the Sufi path. Like most Sufis of the medieval period, Ahmad al-Ghazali maintained that observance of Shariah was not complete without realization of haqīqah (reality) and that realization of haqīqah must be grounded in observance of Shariah. Unlike his more sober sibling, he left the definition of the particulars of Shariah to others, focusing instead on the haqīqah and the tarīqah through which the haqīqah can be attained. As such, the overall purpose of his extant writings is spiritual guidance.

For over nine hundred years, Ahmad al-Ghazāli s words have been regarded by seekers in the Persianate world, especially Iran and India, as a summons to the spiritual path. In this small way, Ahmad al-Ghazali achieved at least one of his goals. The nature of his writings implies to many Sufi practitioners that he had also attained the other goal—immersion in the reality of Love that fully transcends the duality of lover and beloved. While he employs various modes of expressing Sufi teachings, his unique and lasting contribution lies in the discussion of love in the Sawanih. Were it not for this text, Ahmad al-Ghazāli s contributions to the Sufi tradition might not merit extensive investigation, and he would remain almost completely in the shadow of his older brother. His role as a Sufi Shaykh and his place within several Sufi silsilahs would remain of importance for the study of various Sufi orders. But in the absence of the Sawānih, his place in Sufi silsilahs might also be diminished, since it was often through the teaching of this seminal text that he came to be revered by later generations in the Persianate world. When the Sawānih is taken into consideration, Ahmad al-Ghazali emerges as a highly original thinker, whose teachings regarding love, though mostly condensed within a single brief text, altered the course of Persian Sufi literature.

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the Sawānih marks a new phase in discussions of love within the Sufi tradition. As a result of this new formulation, "Ahmad al-Ghazali is today generally regarded as the " foremost metaphysician of love in the Sufi tradition."' The Sawānih is one of several Persian texts that emerge in the first quarter of the sixth/ twelfth century, the others being the Rawh al-arwāh of Sam 'am Maybudi s Kashf al-asrar, and `Ayn al-Qudāt's Tamhīdāt. Love as the focus of Sufi discourse and the goal of spiritual attainment had existed in various forms expressed by many Sufis before these texts emerged. But the works of Ahmad al-Ghazali, Maybudi, Sam 'am and `Ayn al-Qudāt present Love as the Ultimate Reality from which all else derives and outline the whole of the Sufi path as an intricate play between loverness and belovedness that is eventually subsumed in Love Itself. Several passages in Maybudī's Kashf make it clear that he was familiar with the Sawānih, though as William Chittick has demonstrated,

Maybudi was more directly influenced by `Abdallāh Ansarī and Sam `ānī. Nonetheless, it is likely that Sam `am- was also familiar with the Sawānih even if he does not quote directly from it. The question of the relationship between these texts merits further investigation. At this stage it is clear that together they mark a significant watershed in the development of the Persian Sufi literary tradition, a phase that gave rise to such luminaries as 'Attar, Rūmī, and Hāfīz.

Due to its brevity and the alluring nature of its allusive style, the Sawānih appears to have had a more discernible influence over time than have Rawh al-arwāh and Kashf al-asrar. Regarding the significant impact of Ahmad al-Ghazāli s literary style, Leili Anvar observes, In a deeper sense Ghazālī ... remedies the narrowness of language by transmitting verbal expression into visionary experience. Rather than letting us merely hear about what love is, he makes us behold its various aspects through visual imagery, providing descriptions that resemble what came to be known in later works by Persian poets as 'divine flashes' (Lama 'at). Ghazāli s insistence on this visionary aspect of love, in which the radiance of the Beloved's beauty is the source of inspiration, soon became the founding principle of the tradition of the Persian mystical ghazal, which reached the absolute perfection of its lyrical art.

Given the importance of Ahmad al-Ghazāli s contributions to the history of Persian Sufi literature, a clearer understanding of his corpus has been required for some time. As demonstrated in the first chapter, most of the works attributed to him are most likely not of his pen. For many of these texts, the confusion arises from cataloguing errors resulting from the relative obscurity of Ahmad b. Muhammad at-Tūsī and the similarity of his name and that of Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali. For most texts, this matter is not significant because the texts remained unpublished and no scholars have analyzed them in discussions of Ahmad al-Ghazali. The misattribution of Bawariq al-ilmā' that was perpetuated in Western scholarship by James Robson has, however, resulted in an unfortunate situation wherein the majority of scholarly discussions regarding Ahmad al-Ghazali have centered on the discussions regarding saw' contained in the Bawariq. Removing this dimension

from discussions of Ahmad al-Ghazali allows us to focus more squarely on his actual teachings.

A proper understanding of the parameters of Ahmad al-Ghazālī's corpus and his unique contributions also provides a solid foundation for comparing many aspects of the Ghazālī brothers' teachings, especially those regarding love and dhikr. Some Muslim philosophers such as `Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadani and Ibn Tufayl (d. 581 / 1185-6) maintained that Abu Hamid al-Ghazali had never revealed the full extent of his teachings.' As Ibn Tufayl writes, "I have no doubt that our teacher al-Ghazali was among those who reached this sublime goal and enjoyed the ultimate bliss. Nonetheless, his esoteric books on mysticism have not reached us." Such assertions are supported by Abu Hāmid's own writings, as he sometimes maintains that certain teachings should be "left under the cover of dust until the wayfarers stumble upon it" and that when approaching such teachings in writing "the reins of the pen must be drawn in." In contrast Ahmad al-Ghazali was far less reticent. Like Maybudi and Sam' aril*, he allows that the most sublime truths can be discussed so that wayfarers on the Sufi path might benefit from them. This is apparent in the nature of Ahmad's discourse and in statements such as this previously cited passage:

> Sometimes an earthen vessel or a glass bead is put in the hand of a novice until he becomes a master artisan; but sometimes a precious, shining pearl that the master's hand of knowledge does not dare touch, let alone pierce, is put into his ignorant hand to pierce.

Writing with the intention of placing these teachings within the grasp of wayfarers at all stages along the path, Ahmad al-Ghazali rarely retreats into the calculated discourse of a theologian or a philosopher. Rather, as Eve Feuillebois-Pierunek observes, "Each poem"—one could even say each sentence—"is an expression of a spiritual 'moment,' or sentence carved out of realization of a mystical truth." It is in this vein that Shaykh Abmad al-Ghazali can say of his own writings, "In the hearts of words lie the edges of a sword which cannot be seen except by inner vision (basīrat-i bāfinī)."

Philosophy in the Islamic World edited by Ulrich Rudolph [Handbook of Oriental Studies, Brill, 9789004323162]

A comprehensive reference work covering all figures of the earliest period of philosophy in the Islamic world. Both major and minor thinkers are covered, with details of biography and doctrine as well as detailed lists and summaries of each author's works.

Excerpt: This volume is an English version of a book that originally appeared as Philosophie in der islamischen Welt. Band 1: 8.-i0. Jahrhundert (ed. by Ulrich Rudolph with assistance from Renate Würsch, Basel 2012). Both versions contribute to a wider project whose goal is to chart the history of philosophy in the Islamic world from its beginnings to the present day. As explained in detail in the original preface, four volumes are envisioned, which will follow one another in chronological sequence, stretching from the 8th to the 20th century, offering extensive information on authors from all periods, divided into biography, descriptions of individual works, doctrines, and influence.

It is planned that all four volumes should appear in both German and English. The German version forms part of a series of comprehensive reference works, the Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie (Ueberweg); the English version is intended to reach a wider audience in Europe and beyond, including especially the Islamic world itself. While the German volumes are appearing with the publisher Schwabe, the English series will be published by E. J. Brill, whose series 'Handbuch der Orientalistik' ('Handbook of Oriental Studies') offers an appropriate forum for a project of this all-embracing nature. We are grateful to both publishers for agreeing to this arrangement and for their readiness to cooperate with one another.

The publication of this English translation was made possible by the personal dedication of several people. Rotraud Hansberger expended considerable personal effort to translate the entire book—except where the German version was based on an English original—combining linguistic fluency with a keen sense of judgement and enormous knowledge of the thematic field. Peter Adamson edited and proofread the translation with care and expertise. Peter Tarras and Hanif Amin Beidokhti contributed greatly to the production of the manuscript, tracking down additional information and helping with crucial aspects of the copy-editing process. All three editors have gone

through the entire manuscript and are responsible for the final redaction. The authors of the original German chapters have also been involved in the production of this new version, and have helped with the addition of new references to literature that appeared since 2012. In this respect, the English version actually adds new information and offers an updated picture of the state of research. One section, however, could not be revised by its author, since our cherished colleague Paraskevi Kotzia sadly passed away since the appearance of the German version.

Introduction by Ulrich Rudolph

Stages of the History of Research

When Friedrich Ueberweg wrote the chapter on Arabic philosophers of the Middle Ages' for his Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, there was not much for him to go on in terms of previous work done in the field. This applies to primary texts, of which only a few had been printed, let alone translated into European languages, and to secondary literature alike. Nevertheless the subject matter he was writing about was not new. Shortly before he began his work on the Grundriss, Arabic philosophy, which had not received much scholarly attention up to the middle of the 19th century, had begun to attract discussion. The reason was Ernest Renan's epochal work Averroès et l'averroïsme (1852), which for the first time had directed attention to this subject, and at the same time had led to a certain image of philosophy in the Islamic world being spread universally amongst European scholars and interested readers.

Renan's study discussed Ibn Rušd's life and thought as well as the vast influence he exerted on many Jewish thinkers and the Latin Middle Ages. It led Renan to a series of ground-breaking results which not only moved Latin Averroism into the centre of interest, but attracted attention also to its ArabicIslamic cultural context. Yet he undermined his own project of casting light on the Arabic tradition. His book contained a number of (prejudiced) verdicts which were able to exert all the more influence as they were brilliantly formulated, and pronounced with the apodeictic gesture of the expert. This included his convictions (1) that the Arabs, or rather the Semites in general, had no natural aptitude for philosophy; (2) that their historic `task' had merely consisted in

preserving Greek philosophy and transmitting it to the Latin Middle Ages; and (3) that only `pure, classical' Greece had been able to create philosophy; this was also why philosophy had never been properly understood or further developed before the advent of the Renaissance, which was closely related to antiquity in spirit; by contrast, the Latin and especially the Arabic authors of the Middle Ages had merely 'imitated' it and passed it on; on all this.

Renan's judgements in many respects corresponded to certain expectations current in his day and age; apart from other ideological entanglements they reflected a certain aspect of the 'orientalism' that loomed large in Europe (not only) in the 19th century. One should furthermore grant that his study, despite arguing in a conventional way, also broached unexpected viewpoints which in fact called Renan's own stance into question. Thus we find buried in his book. the proclamation that 'the true philosophical movement' of Islam was to be found in its theological schools. Nevertheless Renan limited scholarship even as he was stimulating it. His pointed rhetorical formulations were essential in the establishment of a one-sided perspective on the philosophy of the Islamic world as the first paradigm of scholarly engagement with the field. According to him, the achievements of the 'Arabic philosophers' were confined to adopting the Greek heritage and passing it on to Latin Europe, leading naturally to the often-quoted conclusion that 'with Averroes' death in 1198, Arabic philosophy lost its last representative, and the Quran was to triumph over independent thought for at least six centuries'.

The basic elements of this paradigm can be traced in numerous accounts published after the middle of the 19th century. To begin with, this applies to Salomon Munk's Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe, which appeared only a few years afterAverroès et l'averroïsme (1859). Munk went far beyond Renan in his engagement with the subject matter, unlocking extensive new source material, and for the first time sketching detailed portraits of individual Jewish and Islamic authors. Nevertheless he, too, took it for granted that 'the last great philosophers flourished in the 12th century'. Resorting to a thesis he had advanced earlier, he suggested as an explanation that philosophy in the Orient had never managed to

recover from the blow dealt to it by the fierce critique of al-Gazali (d. 505/1111).

Ueberweg, who followed Munk's account in many points, arrived at a similar assessment. He, too, had 'Arabic philosophy' ending in the 12th century, again stating the very same reasons: in the East of the Islamic world, its demise was the result of al-Gaza's attacks; in the West, it was the outcome of Ibn Rušd's death and the subsequent Spanish Reconquista (1864).

The same temporal boundaries can be found in numerous 19th century publications in the field of Islamic Studies, at times explicitly, at others mentioned only in passing. However, and this would prove to be of much greater importance for further developments, we also encounter it in the scholarly literature of the early 20th century — despite being, by then, based on much broader textual foundations. Again the year 1200 is on principle accepted as an endpoint. In the first instance, this concerns Tjitze de Boer's Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam (1901), which was widely read, in its German original as well as in an English translation (The History of Philosophy in Islam) released only two years later, in 1903. In the second instance, it applies to Max Horten's account of 'Syriac and Arabic philosophy' (Die syrische und arabische Philosophie), which was published in the eleventh edition of Ueberweg's Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, revised by Bernhard Geyer (1927).

Remarkably, though, it was not just Renan's pointed claim that lived on in these works, but also his doubts concerning it. This emerges in de Boer as well as in Horten: both clearly articulate their misgivings about the very scientific paradigm they follow. At some point, de Boer comments on it in the following words: 'That Gazali has annihilated philosophy in the East, for all time to come, is an assertion frequently repeated but wholly erroneous, and one which evidences neither historical knowledge nor understanding. Philosophy in the East has since his day numbered its teachers and students by hundreds and by thousands'. Horten expressed his doubts in an even more emphatic manner. Before taking up his work on the new edition of the Grundriss, he had published several studies on Islamic authors after al-Gazālī and Ibn Rušd, for instance on Fahr al-Din al-Rāzī (d.

607/1210), Nasīr al-Din al-Tūsī (d. 672/1274) and Mullā Sadrā (d.1050/1640). This may have been the reason why he felt compelled to add the following declaration to his contribution to the Grundriss: 'It is a consequence of the tradition of this Grundriss (lit., 'outline'), that from among the vast abundance of philosophies, i.e. world views, only those are included that are dependent on the Greeks, and that became known to the Latin schoolmen — i.e. only the Greek strand, which to the Orient itself was and remained a foreign body, and as an entire system was rejected, even if its individual concepts were put to use as building blocks within originally Oriental systems. This means that the real essence, and the main component of Oriental philosophy is excluded from this account, while only a comparatively minor, marginal strand within this entire complex is given attention [...] Due to prejudice and lack of comprehension, the old Orientalist school had grown used to the phrase: "after al-Gazālī or after Averroes no philosophy can be found in Islam." They had not the least idea that the true philosophy internal to Islam begins only after 1100!.

The persuasiveness of Horten's own ideas concerning the history of philosophy is not at issue here; his diffuse concepts and his sweeping comparisons were at any rate repeatedly criticized in scholarly literature. What is important in the present context is simply that both he and de Boer early on expressed concerns regarding the prevalent labelling and periodization of philosophy in the Islamic world. Yet the uneasiness manifest in their remarks was to remain without consequence. As mentioned already, neither of the two authors ventured past the magical line apparently drawn by Ibn Rušd's death. Thus de Boer and Horten contributed to disseminating the paradigm they themselves had called into question, and to its treatment as a 'fait accompli'.

It was, therefore, not easy for alternative approaches to gain recognition. This first affected an interpretative model which had been developed in Egypt since the 193os. An independent branch of research into the history of philosophy had established itself there, whose most important and influential representative was — alongside Ahmad Amin (d. 1954), Yūsuf Karam (d. 1959) and Mahmūd al-Hudayrī (d. 1960) — Mustafā 'Abd al-

Rāziq (d. 1947). Following various preparatory studies, he drew up a new conspectus of philosophy within Islamic culture, which he laid out in a widely read study entitled Prolegomena to a History of Islamic Philosophy (Tamhid li-ta'rīh al falsafa al-islāmiyya).

At the core of this account stood the thesis that the concept of philosophy ought to be understood differently in the Islamic world and in Europe: in the Islamic context, it could not be reduced to the tradition that followed Greek role models, but would have to include all forms of reflection that were in any way responsible for laying the foundations of Islamic religion and culture. As a central point in this context, 'Abd al-Rāziq considered Islamic law. It had its theoretical foundation in the science of 'principles of law' (usūl al-fiqh), which he regarded as basis of Islamic philosophy, or rather Islamic thought; this is also why in his account of philosophy, the development of usūl alfiqh was accorded the largest space by far. Only Islamic theology (Wm al-kalām) was able to claim a similarly prominent position in his presentation. To all other traditions, including Greek inspired philosophy (falsafa) and Sufism (tasawwuf), `Abd I-Rāziq by contrast assigned subsidiary roles: they might have shaped or passed on certain elements of Islamic philosophical thought, but were never constitutive for its development as such.

The suggestion to broaden the concept of `philosophy' in the Islamic context in the direction of 'Islamic thought', or 'pensée islamique' (thus the term later used by Arkoun 1973 and other authors arguing in a similar vein) constituted a challenge for European scholarship. It contested the identification of 'philosophy' with 'Greek philosophy', which in older scholarship had been taken for granted. Moreover, shortly after 'Abd al-Rāziq's publications, a further concept of (history of Islamic) philosophy emerged, which again vehemently questioned Renan's old paradigm. It did not come from the pen of an Arabic scholar, but from that of a European author, whose perspective was influenced by a strong affinity with Iran.

This was Henry Corbin, who in 1946 became the director of the Département d'iranologie at the Institut franco-iranien in Tehran. In his early work he had concerned himself mainly with Sihāb al-Din al-Suhrawardi (d. 587/1191). Now, in Tehran, he began to research the later Persian thinkers (13th-19th centuries) on this basis. This was first reflected in a large number of individual studies, many of which made previously unknown authors and texts accessible for the first time, through editions, translations and introductory commentaries. From the very beginning, however, these publications were based on a new overall concept of 'Islamic philosophy'. This concept was presented to a larger audience when Corbin set out his ideas in two detailed and comprehensive works. One of them is the four-volume work En islam iranien, which follows a thread from the beginnings of the Twelver Shia up to the Persian authors of the 19th century; the other work is the shorter, but even more influential Histoire de la philosophie islamique, which was published in several stages, beginning in 1964.

Corbin aimed to provide an entirely new interpretation of philosophy and its history within Islamic culture. In his opinion, the early authors (up to Ibn Rušd), who previously had drawn all scholarly attention to themselves, were merely 'philosophes hellénisants', that is, thinkers that had been completely under the spell of the Greek heritage (with the exception of Ibn Sina). Real 'Islamic philosophy', by contrast, developed its own, unmistakable character, and began to flourish only in the 12th century. The location of this blossoming is, for Corbin, Iran. The distinguishing mark of 'Islamic philosophy' is supposed to consist in its having linked rational cognition, spiritual experience, gnostic insight, and prophetic knowledge to one another. This had been done particularly impressively and successfully by Mullā Sadrā (d. 1050/1640; on him cf. vol. 3), who accordingly was regarded by Corbin as the pinnacle of Islamic philosophy as a whole, or, as he puts it, of 'theosophy' ('theosophy' here rendering the Arabic term hikma ilāhiyya). Even Mullā Sadrā, however, is but one link in a long tradition of philosophico-mystical speculation and 'Oriental wisdom' for Corbin. He lastly describes it as eternal wisdom (sophia perennis), which supposedly harks back to early Islam and even beyond that, to pre-Islamic Iran, with a correspondingly lengthy list of characteristic features. These features in fact have no real historical connection, but Corbin puts them together on the basis that they form a unified

intellectual structure. Amongst other things, they comprise (Twelver) Shiite thought, including the deeper knowledge it attributes to the Imams, al-Suhrawardi's metaphysics of light, which supposedly combined Platonism and old Iranian as well as gnostic wisdom, and the mystical speculations advanced by Ibn 'Arabi.

It is Corbin's great merit to have read the history of philosophy against the grain, moving entire epochs that had long since suffered neglect into the centre of attention. He thus opened up new horizons for scholarship, something that has been duly acknowledged by scholars reacting to his writings. At the same time, however, his outline also posed new problems. First of all, he intentionally applied the concept of 'philosophy' in a rather diffuse manner, distinguishing it neither clearly from theology, nor from mysticism or spirituality, but understanding it instead in the sense of a higher, spiritual-metaphysical wisdom, whose blurry outlines were supposedly characteristic of 'Islamic philosophy'. In addition, he explicitly subscribed to the concept of métahistoire, which allowed him to dissociate ideas from their historical context and to interpret them as archetypal phenomena of the soul. Thus he developed a vision of 'Islam' with highly subjective and selective features. Examples include his ahistorical interpretation of the Shia; its pointed prioritization over the Sunna; the biased assessment of Sunni Sufism, which he regards as an extension of the Shia or as Proto-Shiism; and — more than anything else — the spiritual elevation of Iran. The latter marks Corbin's account as a kind of Orientalism in reverse: whereas Renan and other earlier authors had usually construed a defective 'Orient', inferior and lastly subservient to Europe, in Corbin's works the 'Orient' is hypostasized as an ideal and the true home of the soul.

Notwithstanding such objections, Corbin's approach was fascinating, and it is not surprising that he acquired numerous followers. Among the first was Seyyed Hossein Nasr who had already had a hand in the genesis of the Histoire de la philosophie islamique (1964), and later on contributed significantly to the promulgation of its aims in the English-speaking world. Nasr studied natural sciences and the history of science in the USA, which had a pronounced influence on his early works. In them he attempts to interpret Ibn Sina, al-Suhrawardī and Ibn 'Arabi as three types of Islamic

thinkers that he characterized as 'philosopher-scientist, 'illuminationist, and 'mystic'. In all fundamental questions, however, Nasr acknowledged that he was following Corbin. For him, too, 'Islamic philosophy' is a quest for truth under the guidance of God, uniting rationality, spiritual illumination, and prophetic knowledge in the sense of an 'eternal wisdom'. This quest for truth supposedly developed first and foremost in Iran, finding its ultimate expression in Mullā Sadrā's 'theosophy'. Thus Nasr stressed time and again that this 'theosophy' preserved a form of wisdom which had been lost in Western thought since the Renaissance — delivering what we need to understand as a decided plea for traditional Islamic metaphysics, and against modern, 'Western' civilization.

Besides the paradigm that was developed by Corbin and disseminated by his students (including Nasr), there also have been other new trends of research since the 1950s. Leo Strauss' theoretical approach, for instance, was based on the assumption that within Islamic culture, philosophers were constantly exposed to suspicion and repression on the part of religious orthodoxy; from this he inferred that they had developed a certain literary strategy (or rather a 'political philosophy') in order to hide their true opinions from hostile readers and thus to avoid possible sanctions. Several scholars applied this approach to their interpretations of individual texts; but ultimately it was not able to yield a new overall perspective on the history of philosophy. Therefore we can, at this point, dispense with a more detailed account and evaluation of Strauss' arguments. Here we are primarily interested in the question as to which general framework — if any — should be used in the study of philosophy in the Islamic world. As we have seen, by the 1950s this question had been given three basic answers. One of them took Arabic philosophy to be a continuation of Greek philosophy, up to Ibn Rušd. The second postulated the concept of an 'Islamic thought' ('pensée islamique') that would encompass law, theology, philosophy (in the narrow sense) and mysticism. The third one, linked to Corbin's name, formulated the idea of an 'Islamic philosophy' that was rooted in perennial Oriental wisdom, that united rational speculation with spirituality and prophetic insight, and had found its completion in 16th and 17th century Iran.

This state of the discussion has been reflected in several surveys published since the 1960s. They are too numerous to be listed and introduced individually. However, a number of frequently quoted and widely read publications may nevertheless be mentioned briefly here, in order to indicate how they position themselves in the face of the three historiographical models described above.

The two-volume survey A History of Muslim Philosophy edited by M. M. Sharif in 1963 and 1966 mainly follows the idea of an 'Islamic thought': its aim is to include multiple intellectual traditions within its presentation. For Sharif, these comprise, apart from the 'philosophers' proper, the Quran, the theologians, the Sufis and the political thinkers. Majid Fakhry's A History of Islamic Philosophy (1970), by contrast, distances itself from any integrative historiographical conception. Though containing two brief chapters on Mullā Sadrā, several theologians and Sufis (insofar as they came into immediate contact with philosophical thought) and some more recent intellectual trends (19th and 20th centuries), the focus of Fakhry's work lies entirely on those topics which have traditionally formed the centre of attention, i.e. the string of early philosophers up to and including Ibn Rušd. The short contribution Shlomo Pines wrote for The Cambridge History of Iran (1970) steers a middle course: under the title 'philosophy' he deals with Islamic theology as well as with philosophy up to 1200 (with a brief glance at later authors). 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī's two-volume Histoire de la philosophie en islam (1972) is similar in this respect: its first part introduces the most important theological schools, the second the philosophers up to Ibn Rušd. Michael Marmura's explications concerning 'Islamic philosophy of the Middle Ages' (Die islamische Philosophie des Mittelalters, Marmura 1985 [*41]) again focus only on the well-known philosophical tradition from al-Kindi to Ibn Rušd. Marmura emphasizes, however, that there did exist philosophers after 1200 (basing themselves on the doctrines of the aforementioned authors), and that one ought to separate philosophy from the tradition of 'Islamic religious and theological thought'. By contrast, the two-volume History of Islamic Philosophy edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman in the mid-1990s renews the integrative approach, being

indebted both to the idea of a 'pensée islamique' (reminiscent of Sharif) and to Corbin's conception. The former is evidenced by the extensive chapters on Quran, hadīt, theology, mysticism, and law; the latter by the great weight placed on the topics central to Corbin (Shiism, mysticism, Illuminationism, Iranian tradition), and on the explication of Corbin's hermeneutics.

By the time Nasr's and Leaman's work was published, however, scholarship had already taken a new turn. Since the 198os, several corrections had been made to Corbin's model as well as to the other, older conceptions, eventually ushering in a new paradigm of the historiography of philosophy in the Islamic world. The starting point for this turn was a reappraisal of Ibn Sīnā's thought. Ibn Sina held a special place within the debate, insofar as the question how to position his philosophy in historical as well as conceptual terms was a key element in Corbin's scheme. According to his view, Ibn Sina performed a remarkable U-turn in the course of his life. It supposedly induced him to distance himself from Aristotelian philosophy, and instead to design a mystical-visionary, 'Oriental philosophy', thus becoming the pioneer for all further significant developments within 'Islamic philosophy' — by which Corbin meant al-Suhrawardi's illuminationism and the 'theosophy' of the later Iranian authors. These assumptions, however, were met by increasing criticism in the 1980s. As a precise analysis of Ibn Sīnā's oeuvre was able to show, it is impossible to diagnose a break with the philosophical heritage. Instead it was demonstrated that Ibn Sina mastered the philosophical tradition systematically, and modified it with new ideas, though always — against the assumptions of Corbin and certain medieval authors (e.g. Ibn Tufayl) — holding on to a rational understanding of philosophy that was ultimately based on Aristotle.

These important findings were complemented by a second epochal development in recent scholarship. It consisted in the realization that Ibn Sīnā's very same rational philosophy, with its re-interpretation of the philosophical heritage, was of paramount historical significance, having been studied over centuries by a large number of authors in the Islamic world who had taken it as starting point for their own philosophical reflections. This insight rendered the earlier question, whether Ibn Rušd

had found any readers after 1200, obsolete (even though his writings indeed continued to be read for some time. As it now emerged, engagement with Ibn Rušd was not, after all, the decisive criterion for answering the question whether philosophy continued to exist beyond the 12th century. Instead it was Ibn Sina whose writings on logic, metaphysics and physics constituted the focus of interest from this time onwards. This insight was bound to lead to a new paradigm of research. It ties in with Corbin's ideas insofar as it shares his conviction that philosophy continued to prosper in the Islamic world after 1200. At the same time, however, it distances itself from his conceptual approach, as it does not buy into the idea of limiting philosophy from this point forward to mysticalintuitive speculations on metaphysical topics, but conceives of it, even after 1200, as a rationally-based, argumentative science comprising logic, metaphysics and physics as well as ethics.

This new historiographical approach was evident in Gerhard Endress' section on 'philosophy' within the Grundriss der arabischen Philologie ('outline of Arabic philology') (1992). It includes chapters on topics like 'the development of philosophy as a discipline' ('Die Entwicklung einer philosophischen Disziplin'), 'hermeneutics and logic' ('Hermeneutik und Logik') and 'encyclopedia' ('Enzyklopädie'). Endress' observations do not end with the 12th century, but continue with references to important later authors, up to the 16th or 17th century. The new historiographical paradigm was then presented in an explicitly programmatic fashion by Dimitri Gutas. In a 2002 article, he advocated calling the time from ca. 1100 to 1350 (not, that is, 1200!) the 'golden age of Arabic philosophy', producing at the same time a preliminary outline showing that in Iran, India, and parts of the Ottoman Empire, Ibn Sīnā's works and ideas were likely to have remained influential far into the 18th century. In parallel to these general surveys, new individual studies confirmed the continuation of philosophical activity in the 13th century and later. Noteworthy in particular are a number of publications produced by Sabine Schmidtke (2000), Gerhard Endress (2006), Heidrun Eichner (2007, 2011), Sajjad Rizvi (2009), Khaled El-Rouayheb (2010), Reza Pourjavady (2011), and Firouzeh Saatchian (2011). The overwhelming majority of later authors, however, yet remain to be studied. According to careful estimates, not

even10% of the Arabic texts that were composed between the 13th and the 18th centuries on philosophical topics, and are extant in manuscripts, are available in print. Hence one may well say that the new historiographical paradigm has opened up unexpected and promising avenues for research, which, however, will need to be refined and realized by many further studies.

A similar situation presents itself with regard to philosophy of the Islamic world during the 19th and 20th centuries. It had long been ignored entirely by scholars and had no impact on the discussions of philosophy's possible demise or continuation after 1200. If individual aspects of these developments were taken up at all, this happened within studies that were dedicated not to the history of philosophy as such, but to the history of ideas and the religio-political developments of the last two centuries (most convincingly in Hourani (1962). Initial changes in this respect have, however, already been visible since the 1960s. Chapters that discuss contemporary philosophical thought are found first and foremost in Sharif (1966), but also in Fakhry (1970). The same applies for the history of philosophy edited by Nasr and Leaman (Nasr, Leaman 1996), though the temporal definition of 'modernity' is not consistent across the individual subsections). A proper branch of research into 19th and 20th century philosophy, though, has only begun to establish itself in the 1990s. In many respects this research is still in its infancy. Nevertheless it has already shown a surprising vitality and yielded important results, as is documented for instance by studies published by Anke von Kugelgen (1994), Reza Hajatpour (2002), Ursula Günther (2004), Geert Hendrich (2004), JanPeter Hartung (2004) and Sarhan Dhouib (2011). In addition, there have been several recent publications that chart the history of philosophy in the Islamic world up to the present day.

Principles of Presentation

The circumstances outlined above have several consequences for our series of four volumes which now will appear successively within the framework of this series. On the one hand, they concern temporal boundaries. After all that has been said, the presentation cannot possibly be restricted to

only one epoch, and most certainly not to the period before 1200. It must be chosen in such a way as to do justice to the entire development of philosophy in the Islamic world. This does not mean to say that, given the current state of research, compendia that impose temporal limits on themselves are unjustifiable. Two more recent publications in fact prove the opposite: the Storia della filosofia nell'Islam medievale, which paints a very broad and detailed picture of philosophy up to 1200 (including the lesser known authors), and the Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy (2005), which focuses mainly on the 'big names' up to 1200, but also contains chapters on Ibn 'Arabi and Mullā Sadrā as well as systematic accounts of the different sub-disciplines of philosophy (logic, ethics, politics, etc.). For the Grundriss, however, a restriction to certain epochs or thinkers is out of the question, given that it is its conceptual aspiration to impart an overview of the history of philosophy that is as extensive and detailed as possible. Applied to the Islamic world, this means that its presentation of the subject matter will need to stretch from the beginnings of philosophical activity up to the present time. As far as the current state of research allows, it moreover should include authors that are lesser known or that have not yet been dealt with in general surveys at all.

This objective is subject to one caveat, however. As our overview of the history of research has brought to light, in many areas our knowledge is still rather limited. First of all this applies at the level of philosophical topics, of individual texts and their interpretations, where there is a multitude of open questions to be dealt with (such as inadequate knowledge of the extant manuscripts, a lack of [reliable] editions, uncertain attributions to authors, the lack of proper analysis and contextualization of individual works, etc.). Therefore many results of the research presented here will be preliminary, and will require further verification on the basis of textual material which is not available as yet. With regard to the period beginning with the 13th century, however, our ignorance also applies at the level of authors, and even of entire authorial traditions. It would even be fair to say that the philosophy of the 13th century and later so far has yet to be situated historically, institutionally, or in the sense of a taxonomy of the sciences. Notwithstanding the by now established consensus regarding its continued existence, scholars have not

yet been able to agree on how it should be described, or how it should be seen in its relation to other intellectual traditions. This is not only due to the still ongoing discussion about Corbin's approach. Even those scholars who subscribe to the new paradigm of a continuation of rational philosophy as described at the end of the previous section have not yet established a clear, common view on how autonomous this philosophy would have been, or of its place in the wider context. On such questions, we so far only have several divergent hypotheses, awaiting verification (or falsification) on the basis of the textual material. They stretch from the claim that even after the 13th century, large parts of philosophy can be described as 'mainstream Avicennism', to the assumption that in the long run, philosophy was only able to gain universal acceptance 'at the price of subordinating itself' to other disciplines, to wit, theology, to the thesis that for the period between the 11th and the 19th century, it is in any case not possible to separate philosophy (falsafa) from Islamic theology (kalām), as they are best understood as 'a single hybrid enterprise.

Given these circumstances, it is impossible at this point to attempt an overview or even a classification of the various forms and expressions of philosophy that developed in the Islamic world over a period of many centuries. What we are hoping is rather that the four volumes which will be published within the framework of this series will help to increase our knowledge of the subject matter to an extent that will finally allow us to undertake a first description and (historical, institutional, taxonomical, etc.) contextualization of philosophy in its longue durée. One thing to mention briefly at this point, however, is the theoretical approach on which these volumes on Philosophy in the Islamic World are based. It may already have emerged to some extent in our account of the history of research. Nevertheless its essential elements shall be made explicit here.

Two basic assumptions have been decisive for the conception of the series. One of them concerns the fact that philosophical thought may be articulated in various ways, and will change over time. Even the concept of philosophy itself has a history, in the course of which it has time and again been subject to modifications, if not to far-reaching alterations. For research in European philosophy, this is a

commonplace assumption. Scholars are of course aware of the fact that even Plato and Aristotle understood philosophia in different ways, and since then the concept of philosophy has seen numerous further interpretations in Europe. At least since the 19th century, this has led to a plurality of competing notions. Insights that are commonplace within the European framework, however, are not always transferred to other contexts. When studying non-European philosophical traditions, the scholarly community rather tends towards setting narrower criteria, and demanding a concept of philosophy that is fixed unequivocally, on the basis of almost ahistorical features. This postulate does not, however, correspond to reality. Varying ideas of philosophy can be observed in other regions too, and most certainly in the Islamic world. In order to prove this, one does not even have to point to the major ruptures associated with the 13th and the 19th century respectively; it suffices to read some of the authors introduced in the present first volume more carefully. For they already display considerable differences: Abū Nasr al-Fārābī, the 'Ihwān al-Safā', i.e. the 'Brethren of Purity' of Basra, Abu l-Hasan al-'Āmirī and Abu Sulaymān al-Sigistānī were practicing philosophy at nearly the same time, yet careful scrutiny quickly reveals that they all worked with different concepts of philosophy.

A first basic assumption is therefore the plurality and the internal diversity of the philosophical field. This does not mean that this field lacks unity, or cannot be demarcated from other intellectual traditions. To the contrary, a recognition of this diversity immediately demands that we find a suitably comprehensive definition. Even if philosophy is multifaceted, and even if its concept changes over time, the historian needs to circumscribe the philosophical field as a whole. This brings us to the second leading premise underlying the conception of this series. Like the first, it can be described as a consequence of the history of research: philosophy in the Islamic world is not defined relative to any specific culture. Rather, the same criteria and demarcations used in other areas of the history of philosophy are to be applied here.

This assumption implies a departure from the three older paradigms described above. For neither is philosophy here identified with 'Greek philosophy', as advocated by Renan and many authors after

him; nor is there an assumption of a specifically Islamic concept of philosophy, as demanded by adherents of the 'pensée islamique' as well as by Corbin and his successors.

Within the framework of this series, philosophy is rather understood as a distinct form of rationality which appears everywhere, or may appear everywhere. If one wanted to define its peculiar characteristics, one could say that it consists in a fundamental reflection on the structures of thought and being (that is, of thought as considered in itself and in respect of its representations), as well as structures of action.

This definition in fact corresponds to contemporary conceptions of philosophy. Even though contemporary philosophy focuses mainly on analysing our thought, or rather the language in which our thoughts are expressed, it also recognizes other problems and paths to knowledge. Moreover, even where it primarily aims at analysing our thought, it never shuts out the fact that our thoughts refer both to what is and what ought to be. In addition, it cannot be denied that for many earlier authors, it was natural to search for the laws of thought as well as for the structures of reality, and of the good. This most certainly applies to large parts of the philosophy of the Islamic world. The definition mentioned here has therefore already been adduced more than once in this context, for instance by Paul Wernst, who as early as 1967, in a critical review of the theoretical approaches of Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Corbin, argued for describing philosophy as 'the quest for the general interrelations of thinking and being, whose results can neither be proven by sense perception, nor rely on postulates of a "higher" (e.g. religious or esoteric) kind as their formal presupposition'.

Thus defined, philosophy may, as mentioned before, appear in various forms. It may be expressed in technical terminology, allegories, or symbols; it may discuss individual questions or design entire systems; it may be taught in private settings or within institutional frameworks, and in general may be pursued in various scientific contexts. The only important thing is that it is aware of its premises, and that it always gives reasons for the way in which it proceeds. This, however, happens by way of reflecting on its own procedure, by way of 'thinking about our thoughts',

something we can assume to be a constitutive feature of philosophy, in the Islamic world just as anywhere else.

In order to describe the philosophical tradition in the Islamic world specifically, yet another conceptual clarification is needed. It is connected with a question that has been discussed several times in recent scholarship: whether the subject matter under investigation should be termed 'Arabic philosophy', 'Islamic philosophy', 'Arabic-Islamic philosophy', or something else. These discussions have not yielded a consensus, in part because each of the solutions on offer adequately represents some of the aspects of the issue, while suppressing other aspects, or even putting a wrong complexion on them.

The expression 'Arabic philosophy' emphasizes the linguistic aspect. This is justified insofar as most of the texts under investigation were indeed written in Arabic (which has always retained its position as scientific language of the Islamic world). It furthermore avoids tying the concept of philosophy to any particular religion, thus capturing the fact that philosophical debates were not conducted by Muslims only, but also by Jews, Christians and, it stands to reason, authors of yet other convictions. At the same time, a focus on the Arabic language also presents certain problems. As the philosophical tradition in the Islamic world progressed, its protagonists were increasingly likely to use other languages (Persian, Ottoman, Turkish, Urdu, French, English, etc.) The expression 'Arabic philosophy' therefore also implies a certain conceptual restriction, and it is not surprising that it was frequently used by Renan and other early authors, who regarded the end of philosophy around 1200 as a matter of course.

The term 'Islamic philosophy' avoids this problem, as it allows for all sorts of linguistic affiliations, and indicates that Muslims of any provenance and any era were able to practice philosophy. In turn, however, it generates other difficulties, as it ignores the contributions of Jewish and Christian authors and wrongly suggests that in the Islamic world, the study of philosophy was tied to Islamic religion. Those who had rather avoid such interpretations therefore can only use the term 'Islamic philosophy' in a pragmatic way, where the attribute 'Islamic' is understood as a general imputation which does not refer to a religion but — taken more broadly — to

a certain culture or culturally defined geographic area. A parallel case could for instance be seen in the expression 'Islamic art', which usually subsumes all artistic and architectural artefacts which have been created in Islamic culture.

Such comparisons are not, however, without their own problems. Therefore it has been determined that within the framework of this series, expressions like 'Arabic philosophy' or `Islamic philosophy' (or a combination of both) will be avoided from the outset. Instead, the series title avails itself of the expression `philosophy in the Islamic world', ultimately taking up a suggestion by Louis Gardet and Georges C. Anawati, who long time ago were already advocating the use of the expression 'philosophie en terre d'Islam'. The decision has several conceptual advantages for the project. It allows for the inclusion of philosophical texts in all languages, and independently of the religious affiliation of their authors. Furthermore, it makes it possible to avoid tying philosophy itself to certain religious or cultural conditions. Instead, as described above, it may be understood as an independent reflection on fundamental principles, open to all interested parties. Nevertheless one should be aware of the fact that this appellation, too, has its limitations. This will emerge in particular in the fourth volume of the series, which is concerned with the developments in the 19th and 20th centuries. It will feature, among others, Muslim authors in India or in France, and Marxist authors in Iran or in Turkey. In this context it will become clear in various ways that even the expression 'philosophy in the Islamic world' is no unequivocal term, but always ought to be understood pragmatically, and in relation to its respective context.

Characteristics of the First Volume: Philosophy from the 8th to the 10th Century

Such deliberations largely concern the developments of recent centuries. In the early Islamic era, which forms the topic of the present volume, the situation of philosophy in the Islamic world was very different. As indicated above, we do need to expect various philosophical approaches, manifest on the one hand in the plurality of doctrines and methods which we

encounter in the 9th and 10th century, and on the other hand in the fact that philosophy was already being conceptualized in various ways. Nevertheless the philosophical field as a whole was still quite consistent. In this era, it may be described as a `distinct, continuous, and self-contained school tradition' or as a community with its own epistemic norms. It constituted itself, once the requisite preconditions were in place, in 9th century Iraq, thereafter continuing to spread geographically, gaining increasing influence on the courtly and educated circles of society.

The characteristic features of this school tradition have been outlined several times, and have received an authoritative description by Endress. As he explains in his contribution to the Grundriss der arabischen Philologie, they included a number of features which were characteristic not just for philosophy but for all sciences that were able to hark back to ancient Iltraditions (like arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, medicine, etc.). Among them are the explicit reference to late ancient curricula and Greek models (in philosophy, first and foremost Aristotle), at times supplemented by related points from the Iranian tradition and Indian knowledge; the tremendous interest in translations from the Greek, which usually were produced by Syriac-speaking scholars (often from intermediary Syriac translations); the adoption and further development of certain literary forms and genres of antiquity, as e.g. commentary, treatise, textbook and didactic poem; financial and ideological support through the caliphal and other courts, including their viziers and notables; and, finally, the development of an Arabic technical terminology. The latter quickly turned into a precise and malleable instrument, suitable not only for adequately rendering ancient texts, but also for formulating new concepts and theorems.

Many of these topics have entered the present volume in one form or another. This in particular applies to the late ancient background, the philosophical tradition of the Syriac Christians, and the Graeco-Arabic translation movement. They all receive detailed discussion because they were indispensable preconditions for the development of philosophy in the Islamic world. Philosophy itself then comes to the fore, which is dedicated to Abū Yūsuf al-Kindi (d. after 247/861), who was the first significant philosopher (and polymath) of the

Arabic language. Then follows a long line of authors (Ahmad b. al-Tayyib al-Sarahsī, Abū Zayd al-Balhī, Ibn Farīgūn, Abū l-Hasan al-Amiri, Abu Hayyān al-Tawhīdī, Abu Sulaymān a1-Sigistānī, Abu Ali Miskawayh, and Ibn Hindu) who took over al-Kindi's ideas either entirely or in part, applying them to various scientific contexts, disseminating them as far as Iran. We introduce Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), an original thinker whose ideas, however, seem to have been too eccentric to attract a large following. Next again discusses a number of authors: the so-called Baghdad Aristotelians of the 10th century, whose studies and commentaries mainly focused on Aristotelian logic (Abū Bišr Mattā b.)(ūnus, Yahyā Ibn Adī, `Īsā Ibn Zur`a, Ibn al-I ammār, Ibn al-Samh and Abu l-Farag Ibn al-Tayyib). From their circle arose Abū Nasr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950-951), who used his studies of the Organon in order to safeguard philosophy methodically, and place it on new foundations. Thus he contributed substantially to its emancipation from the applied sciences, while at the same time ensuring that it devloped in new directions, and established itself as the authoritative path to demonstrative knowledge. Another point to consider is that in the mid-loth century, philosophical thought had ceased to be a matter for experts only, but had spread to all sorts of other areas. This is documented by traces in literature, popular ethics, natural science, and in certain religious currents. They are discussed next, marking the philosophy of that era as a broad intellectual tradition embracing various options and possible applications. This also corresponds to its state at the turn of the nth century — immediately, that is, before the emergence of Ibn Sina (d. 428/1037; on him of the second volume in this series), which would permanently change the practice of philosophy in the Islamic world.

The philosophy of the 9th and 10th centuries was already perceived as a distinct tradition sustained by its own scholarly community — by its own protagonists as well as by other contemporary observers. This is evident from the specific linguistic expressions used to refer to it: someone who had a share in it was a faylasūf (borrowed from Greek philosophia, via Syriac pīlōsōpā) and practiced falsafa (an Arabic derivative of faylasūf). Apart from that, one also spoke of hikma (aocpla), which

al-Fārābī understood as the universally valid, demonstrative 'wisdom', and which later was to become the most prevalent name for 'philosophy'. The distinctive position of philosophy can moreover be gleaned from the texts of medieval Arabic historians and historians of science. They separated philosophy from the other disciplines, and described its history, as far as it was known to them, as a continuous journey from its beginnings in Greece up to their own day and age. This explains why certain Arabic authors — bio-bibliographers like Ibn al-Nadim (d. 380/990) or historians of science like Sā`id al-Andalusi (d. 462/1070), Ibn al-Qiftī (d. 646/ 1248) and Ibn Abi Usaybi`a (d. 668/1270) — dealt with the lives and works of the philosophers in works or chapters reserved to them exclusively; which, incidentally, also means that these works are repeatedly referred to in this volume as primary sources for information on the individual philosophers.

These circumstances allow even the present-day historian to separate philosophy in the 9th and loth centuries clearly from other intellectual areas. This first concerns its demarcation from Sufism, i.e. Islamic mysticism. Not many difficulties are attached to this, insofar as it was only at a later date (approximately with Ibn 'Arabi [d. 638/1240]) that mysticism began to engage significantly with philosophical questions. However, even if some of its early representatives, like al-Hakim al-Tirmidī (d. 285/898), already leaned towards conceiving of mysticism as 'wisdom' hikma) or as 'theosophy', this 'wisdom' meant something entirely different from anything that could be found in the works of the philosophers.

Matters are much more complicated with regard to Islamic theology, which was called ilm al-kalām (speculative science, or science of dialectical disputation) or 'ilm usūl al-din (science of the principles of religion). It naturally converged with philosophy on many more topics, which has induced several modern scholars, like Pines and Badawi, to present it as a second, as it were 'inner-Islamic' form of philosophizing. Therefore its case needs more detailed discussion, to explain why the Islamic theology of the 8th to 10th centuries has not been included in the present volume.

Prima facie there are several strong arguments for the inclusion of kalām. This is connected to the fact

that like philosophy, early Islamic theology also developed in an environment that presupposed ancient learning and concepts. In addition, one may regard it as a striking characteristic of the first significant theological school — i.e. the Mu`tazila — that it justified the decisive points of its teaching with sophisticated rational deliberations. In this way the Mu`tazilites designed an epistemology that was essentially based on rational arguments. Similar considerations apply to their ideas concerning the physical structure of the world, which allowed them to present a proof of God's existence 'from the contingency of the world'. They furthermore designed a rationalist ethics, which declares good and bad to be objective standards that do not depend on God, and from this infers the necessity of human free will; on details of Mu`tazilite theory of action. Doubtless these are all philosophically relevant reflections. On the basis of the Stoic division of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics, one could even claim that the Mutazilites had produced a complete philosophical system.

There are, however, weighty arguments that can be mounted against their inclusion. To begin with, the rational arguments of the Mu`tazila, however impressive, never formed the only basis of their teachings. They were always accompanied by justification with reference to the pronouncements of the revelation. The foundations for this were laid down in Mutazilite epistemology: it accepted revelation or religious tradition as an important source of knowledge. This meant that their theological explanations often contained references to the Quran, as emerges clearly in respect of their explications on human free will, which lend themselves nicely to being divided into rational arguments and arguments based on the Quran. Of course, such a procedure is only to be expected. It would have been much more surprising if Islamic theologians had developed their dogmatics without any reference to the Quran. Nevertheless this has an important implication: theological speculation — even that of the Mu`tazila — was never truly free from presuppositions. It always laid claim to formulating orthodox doctrine, and ultimately conceived of itself as interpretation of God's revealed message to those that believed in Him.

This impression is further confirmed by a look at the taxonomy of sciences as it was commonly accepted

in the early Islamic era. It indicates very clearly that philosophy and theology were not regarded as related or comparable disciplines, but were assigned to opposite poles within the system. The usual classifications were based on a dichotomy: sciences like philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and medicine, which had an ancient background, were assigned to one side. Depending on the aspect the thinker wanted to emphasize, they were called 'the ancient sciences' (al-`ulūm al-qadima), 'the sciences of the foreigners' (`ulūm al agam), or 'the rational sciences' (al-`ulūm al aqliyya). On the other side we find e.g. Arabic grammar, theology, jurisprudence, and Quranic exegesis. Their common characteristic consisted in aiming at understanding revelation, and reflecting its consequences for Islamic society. Therefore they were also called 'the Islamic sciences' (a1-`ulūm al-islāmiyya) or 'the religious sciences' (`ulūm al-sarīra), or, later, 'the sciences that are based on traditions and conventions' (al-`ulūm al-nagliyya al-wad`iyya); on classifications of the sciences in general see Endress 2006 [*88]). Philosophy and theology were thus strictly separated. One of them was assigned to reason, the other to revelation, or to the linguistic expression of revelation. This separation corresponded to a communis opinio, which was also shared by the philosophers, as can be observed in striking form in al-Fārābī, who did take theology quite seriously, but insisted that it (including its Mutazilite variant) was merely a discipline for Muslim believers, and could not lay claim to universally valid knowledge.

In addition, there is a third point, which carries particular weight insofar as it brings the 9th and loth century theological protagonists themselves into play, i.e. the very scholars who are under discussion here. What emerges in this respect is that they did not even want to be associated with the philosophers.

In their eyes, philosophy was not a path towards knowledge, but a collection of dubious and misleading claims which were on a par with the doctrines of heretics, if not infidels. The only possible reaction to philosophy that could be expected from a theologian was its refutation. This was undertaken either in polemical works dedicated specifically to the purpose, or within the framework of systematic theological treatises. In those latter works, the authors did not only broach their own positions, but also the opinions of people who did not share their beliefs. In this context they discussed all dubitable arguments (subah) advanced by their opponents, be they Muslim heretics or simply infidels — who, apart from dualists, Jews and Christians, usually also included the philosophers.

It ought to be added, however, that the sources do present us with a problem in this context: a small number of exceptions and some fragments aside, the theological works of the 9th century are lost to us. With regard to this period, one therefore cannot do much more than pointing out that the extant bibliographical lists of the Islamic theologians repeatedly mention refutations of philosophy, or of Aristotle specifically. From the10th century, by contrast, we do possess numerous theological works, in which an acid criticism of philosophy can be easily detected, for instance in texts by Abū l-Hasan al-Ašʽarī (d. 324/935-936) and by Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), who in turn explicitly mentions Muhammad b. Sabīb, a Mu`tazilite author of the 9th century, as his source. In such cases, the chasm that must have existed between philosophy and theology in the 9th and loth centuries becomes glaringly obvious. Good reason perhaps to refrain from obliging the theologians of that time to become part of a history of 'philosophy in the Islamic world'.

Unveiling Sufism: From Manhattan to Mecca by William Rory Dickson and Meena Sharify-Funk [Equinox Publishing, 9781781792445]

In contrast to most introductory texts on Sufism, this work begins not with the historical past, but with the contemporary present. Beginning with Sufism as it is lived today, each chapter further unveils the complexities of Sufism, journeying through a variety of historical, political, and cultural contexts, moving deeper into the past, and closer to the origin and heart of Sufism. This geneological framework will enable the reader to understand the patterns of connection between contemporary manifestations of Sufism and past realities. To ensure that the full range of Sufism's varied expressions is taken into account, each chapter is divided into four sections: Politics and Power, Philosophy and Metaphysics, Arts and Culture, and Overview of Historical

Developments. Dividing chapters into these four broad categories enables the book to highlight some of the ways in which Sufism has influenced Muslim politics, philosophy, art, and culture in each historical period. In each category the relevant issues are illustrated through detailed case studies, whether of a particular Sufi figure, place, artistic expression, or philosophical view. This allows the reader to develop a genuinely three-dimensional appreciation of Sufism, neither reducing it to a private mystical experience divorced from social expression, nor limiting the tradition to historical names and dates.

Excerpt:

> In the market, in the cloister — only God I saw.
> In the valley and on the mountain — only God I saw.
> Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;
> In favour and in fortune — only God I saw.
> In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation,
> In the religion of the Prophet — only God I saw.
> Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance, Qualities nor causes — only God I saw.
> I opened mine eyes and by the light of his face around me In all the eye discovered — only God I saw.
> Like a candle I was melting in his fire: Amidst the flames outflashing — only God I saw.
> Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly,
> But when I looked with God's eyes — only God I saw.
> I passed away into nothingness, I vanished, And lo, I was the All-living — only God I saw.
> (Baba Kuhi in Arberry 1960: 81-82)

The above poem is from one of the oldest collections of Persian Sufi poetry still extant, by Shaykh Abu 'Abdullah Mohammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn `Ubaydallah Bakuya Shirazi (d. 1037), popularly known as Baba Kuhi or "Father of the Mountain". He was born in Shiraz in Southern Iran, the famous city of saints and scholars, poets and philosophers. Shiraz was a city renowned as the

dar al-'ilm, the "House of Knowledge", for it possessed a rich heritage of theologians, Sufis, calligraphers, and scientists.

Hailing from Shiraz, Baba Kuhi travelled far and wide seeking knowledge. He met some of the leading Sufis of his time, even studying under one of the disciples of the famous Sufi martyr of Baghdad, Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922). After years on the road, he returned to his native Shiraz where he took up residence in a cave in a mountain north of the city, now named Baba Kuhi after him. The cave soon became a site for pilgrimage, vigil, and prayer. According to a popular legend (of which there are a number of versions), a young Shams al-Din Hafiz (d. 1326) working as a humble baker, caught a glimpse of an aristocratic girl and fell madly in love with her.

Knowing that she was beyond his reach, yet longing unceasingly, he sought a way out. Hafiz recalled the "promise of Baba Kuhi", that if someone spent 40 nights awake at his tomb on the mountain, the Sufi saint of the mountain would grant that person's wish. Hafiz struggled through 40 gruelling days of work for the bakery, with each night passed in wakefulness at the saint's tomb. Finally, after the 40th night, he encountered the archangel Gabriel. Gabriel asked Hafiz what he desired, and Hafiz, so struck by the angel's beauty, could only think of how much more beautiful God must be, and instead of invoking the girl that had taken his heart, he said that he wanted only God. After returning to town he found himself endowed with the gift of poetry, and was guided toward a Sufi teacher, to whom he would become a disciple for the next 40 years. Thenceforth Hafiz travelled the Sufi path to God and became one of Persia's most celebrated poets, read throughout the Muslim world and later beloved by Western readers.

Until recently, there lived in Baba Kuhi's tomb a local hermit who was himself called Baba Kuhi. The living Baba Kuhi resided in a small room built into the mountain, and would receive pilgrims who would climb the mountain to pay homage to both the original Baba Kuhi and his current representative. Some families would have their children make the rather arduous hike up to Baba Kuhi every Friday morning to bring him food and fruit, the weekly journey being a part of their moral and religious formation. In response, Baba Kuhi would recite from the Qur'ān and from the

poetry of Hafiz. If many visitors arrived at the same time, Baba Kuhi would simply say, "when you have unexpected guests you just add more water to the pot". At times Baba Kuhi would have to keep a low profile to avoid intimidation by local authorities, who were not always friendly to Sufis. Eventually, one cold winter night the last Baba Kuhi passed away, with some speculating that locals had no longer been checking on him or bringing him food as they once did. In recent years the local government has built a shrine complex at the site, and the space has become a more popular destination for those seeking refuge from the bustle of modern urban life. Families with children and the elderly have picnics there; fashionably-dressed youth hold singing and story telling parties; tourists go seeking a beautiful view of Shiraz; while others find solace in prayer.

The story of Baba Kuhi and his tomb atop a small mountain near Shiraz conveys the rich legacy of Sufism within many traditional Islamic societies. Baba Kuhi's poem draws upon a range of imagery to express one of Sufism's central metaphysical claims, that amidst the varied landscapes, systems of belief, fortunes and misfortunes one encounters in the world, only God truly exists, all else having a relative, temporary, and ultimately illusory status. The legend of young Hafiz's vigil at Baba Kuhi's tomb highlights the inestimable significance of tomb-shrines in Muslim societies historically, as sites of seeking, prayer, vigil, spiritual experience, and artistic inspiration. The continuing importance of Baba Kuhi's site shows how until recently, for many Muslims, paying homage to Sufis and making pilgrimage to Sufi shrines was understood to be an integral part of Muslim devotion. The fact that these traditions are in some cases disappearing reflects a shift found in a variety of Muslim contexts, where Sufi traditions are being either forgotten or in some cases actively erased. As the most recent Baba Kuhi had to avoid official harassment, we can see that Sufism is not always something favoured by political elites.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

As illustrated above, Sufism is a multidimensional phenomenon. To introduce Sufism's many dimensions, we have divided each chapter in this work into four thematic sections: (1) Politics and Power, (2) Philosophical Principles and Practices, (3) Arts and Culture, and 4) Overview of Historical Developments. Sufism has informed all levels of Islamic culture and society, and dividing chapters into these four broad categories allows us to highlight some of the ways in which Sufism has influenced Muslim politics, philosophy, metaphysics, art, and culture in each historical period. With each category we illustrate the relevant issues through detailed case studies, whether of a particular Sufi figure, place, artistic expression, or philosophical view. This allows the reader to develop a richly contextualized appreciation of Sufism. We seek to avoid reducing Sufism to a private mystical experience divorced from socio-political expression, and present historitcal figures in dynamic relation to one another and to the major events and movements of an era.

In contrast to most introductory texts on Sufism, we begin not with the historical past, but with the contemporary present. We begin with the diversity of lived Sufism in North America today. We begin with the here and now. Starting with Sufism as it is lived today in North America, with each chapter we unveil the complexities of Sufism as we move deeper through time and space, journeying through a variety of historical, political, and cultural contexts, further delving into the past, and closer to the origin of Sufism. This geneological framework enables the reader to understand the patterns of connection between contemporary manifestations of Sufism and past realities. From the bustling metropolis of twenty-first century Manhattan, we move back to colonial Algeria, through medieval Delhi and Istanbul, back to Baghdad and ultimately Mecca — the birthplace of Islam and its mystical tradition. Of course, there are significant limitations inherent in any summative work, and as it is impossible to provide a comprehensive history of such a rich and varied subject, we have highlighted particular examples to suggest broader patterns. There is a multitude of examples that could have been chosen, though we have selected ones that should offer doorways for the reader to develop a deeper understanding of the subject as a whole.

We use the term "unveiling" in the title of this book with due awareness of the often clichéd manner in which the term has been employed in discussing subjects related to Islam and Muslim women in particular, a usage rooted in Orientalist tropes of

exotification. However, we use the term in a specific sense, invoking the Arabic word kashf. Derived from the tri-lateral root ka-sha-fa, the word kashf can be translated as "unveiling", but has further connotations of searching, bringing to light, disclosing, discovering, exploring, and revealing what is hidden. Within the context of Islam's mystical or contemplative traditions, the word kashf is a technical term referring to mystical knowledge, the knowledge of the unseen that God "unveils" or reveals to the seeker.

Also in this book, we integrate accounts of women's participation in shaping the Sufi tradition historically and today. Feminist scholars have long noted the erasure of women from history, and have struggled to re-write women back into the larger story of humanity. Islamic history is no exception, and the historically critical roles played by women remain in need of attention. In the present text we do not devote a separate chapter to Sufi women, but do address the absence of women in such histories by integrating stories of Sufi women throughout the text, as they naturally arise in discussions of Sufi thought and practice. The contribution of women to Sufism is important and cannot be neglected lest an inadequate treatment of the subject as a whole result. The influence of Sufi metaphysician Ibn al-`Arabi (d. 1240) for example, cannot be adequately discussed without noting his female Sufi teachers, nor can Sufism's theology of love be understood without an appreciation of the great female saint Rabi' a al-`Adawiyya's (d. 801) foundational role in its development. In the current context, there has been a notable rise of female Sufi leaders in both North America (Fariha al-Jerrahi, for example) and in the Middle East (Nur Artiran and Cemalnur Sargut).

In Chapter 1, we explore Sufism in twentieth century and twenty-first century North America. We begin painting a picture of the political climate within which contemporary Sufis operate, in exploring Sufism in post-9/11 Manhattan. Sufis frequently find themselves at the intersection of a variety of political pressures, including growing anti-Muslim sentiment among Americans, and growing anti-Sufi movements among Muslims. We then shift from contemporary politics, to discuss the different interpretive tendencies emerging among Sufi communities in North America, including universalist tendencies that understand Sufism as

something not limited to Islam, to more traditionalist perspectives that assert Sufism's necessary connection to Islamic practices and laws. In order to shed light on Sufism's remarkable influence on North American artists, we look at the thirteenth century Sufi personality, Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), whose immensely popular poetry has inspired a variety of cultural expressions, from restaurants, to visual art, yoga, social activism, dance, and music. We conclude with a brief mapping of Sufism's historical development throughout the twentieth century, charting the lives and influences of Sufi personalities, who would shape distinct trends, including more universalist approaches to Sufism, and those more closely affiliated with Muslim identity and ritual life.

Understanding the contemporary complexity of Sufism's place in North America, and indeed around the world, is possible only if we understand how that place has been shaped by the global power shifts, conflicts, and migrations of the past three centuries, during a period known as the colonial era. The reverberations of this era continue to undergird contemporary patterns, such as the Western fascination with Sufism, and opposition to Sufism among some Muslims. Chapter 2 allows us to make sense of these contemporary dynamics. Politically, Sufis such as Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri (d. 1883) organized military resistance to growing European dominance of the Muslim world. Despite being at the forefront of Islamic resistance and revival movements, Sufis like Ahmad al-`Alawi (d. 1934) were soon facing anti-Sufi reformist movements, having to justify their place within Islam in unprecedented ways. Just as Sufism was being contested among Muslims however, Western literary figures like Johann Wolfgang van Goethe (d. 1832) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (d. 1882) were being drawn to Sufism's rich poetic traditions. The availability of Sufi poetry was in many cases a direct result of the access European colonial officials had to the classical Sufi literary canon. However, their presentation of Sufism largely situated it as something apart from Islam. This separation would have implications for how Sufism was perceived by Muslims and Westerners during this period and ultimately into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The diversity of contemporary Sufism and its dynamism during the colonial era can be traced to

shared roots, which we explore in Chapter 3, considering Sufism's role during the height of the Muslim "Gunpowder" empires between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries: the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties. In terms of politics and power, this chapter delves into the close relations some Sufis had with Muslim dynasties. The Safavid political dynasty itself emerged out of a Sufi order, while Sufi orders were integral to the social and political structures of Ottoman life. In Mughal India, Sufism was closely associated both with efforts to dissolve boundaries between Muslims and Hindus, and with movements to reassert the superiority of Islam and to entrench the boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. In contrast to Sufism's relationship with imperial elites, we discuss the wandering mendicants of Islam, the dervishes, representing a counter-cultural Sufism that rejected social norms and conventions. Regardless of their position in society, Muslims in general during this period congregated in Sufi shrines, seeking the blessings of the saints. The Sufi shrine then brought together all elements of Muslim society, being honoured by imperial courts, venerated by dervishes, and respected as focal points of local devotion. As we illustrate, in contrast to the contemporary period, Sufism during this era was integral to almost every facet of life in Muslim societies, infusing government, commerce, and industry as well as the arts and sciences.

Moving deeper into history, in Chapter 4, we consider those Sufis who integrated Islamic law, theology and philosophy with the aesthetics and practices of Sufism to forge a holistic paradigm in the medieval era. It was between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries that Sufism crystalized as a comprehensive worldview, one that would define Islam for centuries to follow, shaping the culture of Muslim societies and empires. The great synthesizers of Sufi thought, figures such as Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240) and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111), played paramount roles in drawing the outlines of classical Sufism. Some Sufi scholars like al-Ghazali worked within government institutions, seeking to reconcile Sufism with both Islamic jurisprudence and the political powers of his day. Philosophically, Ibn al-`Arabi articulated a metaphysics of oneness alongside a conception of human perfectibility, leading to a cosmology of unity and sainthood. Socially, Sufism was institutionalized during this period as a series of

religious orders, four of which will be explored in this chapter (the Shadhili, Qadiri, Naqshbandi, and Chishti orders), each representing a different cultural region within Islamic civilization. With Sufism's institutionalization in a system of orders, Sufi practices became more codified, with each order developing its own particular forms of devotion, meditation, and contemplation. We see during this time the development of a sound mysticism, as Sufi devotion was integrated with musical traditions, and Sufi chanting coordinated with breath and body, producing spiritual practices of song, dance, and ecstasy.

In Chapter 5, we trace the formation of Sufism in the early period of Islam, from the eighth to the tenth centuries. Islamic spirituality, like law and theology, was being formulated during this period. It was hence subject to conflicts over the nature of God, the Qur'ān, and the ideal Muslim self and society, conflicts that affected all aspects of the emergent Islamic civilization. Proto-Sufis emerge as exponents of the Qur'ān's hidden meaning, rejecters of the newfound wealth and worldly status of early Islamic empires, and proponents of relating to God not simply as a law-giver and lord, but also as an intimate friend and lover. Seminal figures of this era include Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) and Rabi`a the great female Sufi and representative of the path of divine love. Sufis drew controversy for their claims of intimacy and unity with God, most notably culminating in the death of Sufism's famous "martyr of love" al-Hallaj. Also, in this period Sufism began to be understood as a distinctive science within Islam due in large part to the efforts of Sufi biographers like Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1074) to document the principles and practices of Sufism. Sufis would further embrace the structure and themes of pre-Islamic poetry, using its imagery of loss, longing, and the journey to find the beloved, to represent the spiritual search for God.

In Chapter 6, we conclude our journey back through history to consider Sufism's origin during the seventh and eighth centuries. The many principles and practices of Sufism explored in the book can be traced back to the Qur'ān, the revelatory experience of the Prophet Muhammad. To understand the roots of Sufi hermeneutics and concepts such as kashf, we take a closer look at the interpretive approach of Ja`far al-Sadiq, one of Islam's early polymaths and mystics. His suggestion

that kashf revealed deeper layers of meaning in the Qur'ān would shape Sufi approaches to the text thereafter. We further consider those verses of the Qur'ān and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that have shaped later Sufism. Sufi understandings of the Qur'ān were controversial, and their claim to have access to the Qur'ān's deeper meanings was contested by scholars who rejected the possibility of esoteric interpretation. This started a debate that continues to this day among Muslims over how to understand the Qur'ān. We then explore Muhammad's life and spiritual practices, which are exemplary for Sufis, and further consider the Prophet's metaphysical status and meaning for Sufi practitioners. Attention will also be given to Sufi use of Qur'ānic calligraphy to beautify expression of the Divine word, and to the development of Sufi thought about the mystical significance of Arabic letters. Finally, we consider Sufism in the larger world historical context. Although Sufism may not have originated outside of Islam, it has undoubtedly integrated various mystical and philosophical systems prevalent in the Near East. As such, we look at the influence of some of these, including Christian mysticism, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and Zoroastrianism.

DEFINING SUFISM

But what is Sufism? Who is a Sufi? The English word "Sufism" is derived from the Arabic term tasawwuf To define tasawwuf, there is arguably no better place to start than with the first comprehensive treatise on Sufism written in Persian, the Kashf al-Mahjub, or "Unveiling the Mystery". The discussion of Sufism in the work remains paradigmatic, and many contemporary definitions of Sufism refer back to this work. The author 'Ali al-Hujwiri (d. 1073) was renowned for the eloquence of his Persian. In the Kashf al-Hujwiri documents the origin and development of Sufism. He summarizes theories on the etymological origin of the word tasawwuf, relating that some consider the term to be derived from the Arabic word for wool, suf, as early Sufis wore wool as a sign of renunciation. Others say the word comes from safa, meaning purity. Some connect tasawwuf to the Greek word for wisdom, Sophia. Al-Hujwiri however, does not consider any of these theories to be certain, and concludes that no one can determine the origin of the name with any finality. Instead, he proposes a definition of a

Sufi that tells us something about a Sufi's purpose: a Sufi is defined as "he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else". Unlike the English word, which, with the suffix "ism", indicates an ideology or doctrine, tasawwuf is a verbal noun that refers to a process, the process of becoming a Sufi. At its most basic then, Sufism is a process of becoming, or as al-Hujwiri suggests, the process of becoming absorbed in the Beloved or God.

This process of becoming is the culmination of many principles and practices, which early Sufi biographers like al-Hujwiri and al-Qushayri collected and recorded. Some of these include developing a keen sense of etiquette, renouncing attachment to the world, engaging in repentance, refining one's morals and practising virtues, trusting in God, gaining hidden knowledge, and longing for as well as experiencing Divine love. Early Sufi definitions of Sufism often highlight these principles, as the definitions have a pedagogical purpose for Sufi aspirants. For example, Abu-Sa`id ibn Abi al-Khayr (d. 1049) said, "Sufism is this: Whatever you have in your mind — forget it; whatever you have in your hand — give it; whatever is to be your fate —face it!" 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492) relates that, "A seeker went to ask a sage guidance on the Sufi way. The sage counselled, `If you have never trodden the path of love, go away and fall in love, then come back and see us'". According to 'Amr ibn 'Uthman al-Makki (d. 909), "The Sufi acts according to whatever is most fitting to the moment". Paradoxically, Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 874) says that, "the thing we tell of can never be found by seeking, yet only seekers find it". Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd (d. 910) relates that, "Sufism means that God causes you to die to yourself and gives you life in Him", reflecting al-Hujwiri's understanding that "The Sufi is absent from himself and present with God". Historically, this path of moral development, renunciation, knowledge, and love, was traced to the Qur'ān and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Sufis believe that, based on the Qur'ān, the Prophet shared with his closest companions, like 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 661) and Abu Bakr (d. 634), these principles of moral and spiritual transformation. As this transmission of spiritual transformation took place from master to disciple over generations, the various doctrines and practices associated with it became increasingly codified, and the term tasawwuf was developed to

refer to those Muslims who focused on drawing closer to God by practicing these teachings. Once the term tasawwuf had a cultural currency however, those claiming to be Sufis for social status began to emerge. To distinguish genuine Sufis from the imposters, Sufis began to increasingly emphasize the importance of having a silsila or chain of transmission, naming their own master, and the masters before him or her going back to the Prophet. As we will see in the first chapter, this silsila, this chain of transmission of spiritual blessing so central to Sufism, continues to be passed on through generations from master to disciple, even in contemporary Manhattan.

Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam by Shahab Ahmed [Harvard University Press, 9780674047426]

One of the most controversial episodes in the life of the Prophet Muhammad concerns an incident in which he allegedly mistook words suggested by Satan as divine revelation. Known as the Satanic verses, these praises to the pagan deities contradict the Islamic belief that Allah is one and absolute. Muslims today—of all sects—deny that the incident of the Satanic verses took place. But as Shahab Ahmed explains, Muslims did not always hold this view.

Before Orthodoxy wrestles with the question of how religions establish truth—especially religions such as Islam that lack a centralized authority to codify beliefs. Taking the now universally rejected incident of the Satanic verses as a case study in the formation of Islamic orthodoxy, Ahmed shows that early Muslims, circa 632 to 800 CE, held the exact opposite belief. For them, the Satanic verses were an established fact in the history of the Prophet. Ahmed offers a detailed account of the attitudes of Muslims to the Satanic verses in the first two centuries of Islam and traces the chains of transmission in the historical reports known as riwāyah.

Touching directly on the nature of Muhammad's prophetic visions, the interpretation of the Satanic verses incident is a question of profound importance in Islam, one that plays a role in defining the limits of what Muslims may legitimately say and do—issues crucial to understanding the contemporary Islamic world.

Excerpt: How Does Truth Happen?

In olden times, the earth was stationary, and the sun and the sky used to revolve around it. Poets used to say: By night and day the seven heav'ns revolve! And then a person by the name of Galileo came along and began to make the earth revolve around the sun. The priests were very angry that someone had put them in such a spin. By giving due punishment to Galileo, they put a stop to these sorts of movements, but even so they could not stop the world from rotating, and it still goes on moving in the same old way. -IBN-E INSHĀ'

This book was conceived as the first volume of a history of Muslim attitudes to the Satanic verses incident, covering the fourteen hundred years from the beginning of Islam down to the present day. The "Satanic verses incident" is the name given in Western scholarship to what is known in the Islamic tradition as qissat al-gharānīq, "The Story of the Cranes" or "The Story of the Maidens," which narrates the occasion on which the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have mistaken words suggested to him by Satan as being Divine Communication—that is, as being part of the Qur'ān. These Satanic verses praise the pagan deities of the Prophet's tribe and acknowledge their power to intercede with the supreme God. By uttering the Satanic verses, Muhammad thus committed the error of compromising the fundamental theological principle of the Divine Message of which he was Messenger—namely, the absolute and exclusive unicity (taihīd) of the One God, Allāh.

The facticity and historicity of the Satanic verses incident are today (with a few maverick exceptions) universally rejected by Muslims of all sects and interpretative movements—Sunni, Twelver Shī`ī, Ismā`īlī Shī`ī, Ahmadi, Ibādī, Hanafī, Shāfi`ī, Mālikī, Hanbali, Wahhābī, Salafi, Deobandi, Barelvi, and so forth—routinely on pain of heresy (kufr)—that is, on pain of being deemed not a Muslim. The Satanic verses incident is understood as calling into question the integrity of the process of Divine Communication to Muhammad—and thus the integrity of the Text of the Qur'an. The universal rejection of the Satanic verses incident constitutes an instance of contemporary Islamic orthodoxy—that is to say, it is the only truth that a Muslim qua Muslim may legitimately hold on the matter. For the

last two hundred years, to be a Muslim, one should believe that the Satanic verses incident did not take place—that is, the contemporary Muslim should not believe that the Prophet Muhammad recited verses of Satanic suggestion as Divine inspiration. In other words, for modern Muslims, the Satanic verses incident is something entirely unthinkable.

The reason for my writing this book is that, as a straightforward matter of historical fact, this Islamic orthodoxy of the rejection of the facticity of the Satanic verses incident has not always obtained. The fundamental finding of the present volume is that in the first two centuries of Islam, Muslim attitudes to the Satanic verses incident were effectively the direct opposite of what they are today. This volume studies no less than fifty historical reports that narrate the Satanic verses incident and that were transmitted by the first generations of Muslims. This study of the Satanic verses incident in the historical memory of the early Muslim community will demonstrate in detail that the incident constituted an absolutely standard element in the memory of early Muslims of the life of their Prophet. In other words, the early Muslim community believed almost universally that the Satanic verses incident was a true historical fact. As far as the overwhelming majority of the Muslim community in the first two hundred years was concerned, the Messenger of God did indeed, on at least one occasion, mistake words of Satanic suggestion as being of Divine inspiration. For the early Muslims, the Satanic verses incident was something entirely thinkable.

The juxtaposition of these two realities—the fact that the Muslim community in the first two hundred years of Islam pretty much universally believed the Satanic verses incident to be true, while the Muslim community in the last two hundred years of Islam pretty much universally believes the Satanic verses incident to be untrue—calls into being a number of simple but far-reaching historical questions. How was the Satanic verses incident transformed in Muslim consciousness from fact into anathema, from something entirely thinkable into something categorically unthinkable? How did the truth in the historical Muslim community go from being the one thing to the opposite thing? How did this happen? When did this happen? Where did this happen? Why did this happen? At whose hands did this happen? The history of Muslim attitudes to the

Satanic verses incident is thus a case study in a larger question central to the history of all human societies: how does truth happen? These questions will not, however, be answered fully in the present volume, which presents the foundational historical data along with a detailed account of the attitudes of Muslims to the Satanic verses incident in the first two centuries of Islam. [Publisher's note: Author Shahab Ahmed died before writing the anticipated second and third volumes of this work.]

The history of Muslim attitudes to the Satanic verses incident is a history of the formation of a unit of orthodoxy. By orthodoxy, I mean in the first instance any belief, or set of beliefs, including means for arriving at a belief, the proponents of which hold that it is the only valid and correct belief—that is, the only truth, or means for arriving at truth, on that particular matter. However, if we were to stop our definition here, we would not yet have orthodoxy; rather, we have only a claim to orthodoxy from which people may yet dissent. For orthodoxy to obtain as a social fact—that is: for a single truth-claim to establish and maintain itself in society as the sole and exclusive truth—it is necessary, as a practical matter, for the proponents of that truth-claim to be in a position to impose sanction (which need not necessary be legal sanction) upon dissenters. Orthodoxy, in other words, is not merely an intellectual phenomenon: it is also social phenomenon—it is, as Talal Asad has famously said, "not a mere body of opinion, but a distinct relationship—a relationship of power."

The most successful orthodoxies, however, are those for which no sanction need ever be imposed at all—for the simple reason that there are no dissenters. One such example of a supremely successful orthodoxy is the belief, universally held today, that the earth is round—or, strictly speaking, is a geoid. This is a truth-claim for the maintenance of which no sanction need be imposed, for the simple reason that it is a truth-claim from which there are effectively no dissenters (the minuscule Flat Earth Society notwithstanding). That the earth is "round" is universally accepted as true—that the earth is "round" is an orthodoxy.4 Certainly, if someone were to dissent from this truth-claim, it would result in sanction—this might take the form of that person's family and friends doubting his/her soundness of mind, and thus treating him/her differently to how they would treat a "normal"

person; or, if that person happened to be an astrophysicist, in his/her being ostracized and rejected by his/her colleagues, who would no longer regard the person as one of them. In other words, communities and orthodoxies are mutually constitutive: communities are constituted by their adherence to crucial and definitive orthodoxies of their making, and a person's nonadherence to a constitutive orthodoxy has the effect of placing him outside that community of truth. The historical process of the formation of orthodoxy is a process of the historical process of community—of a community of truth.

The process of the historical formation of authoritative truth in the demographically vast and geographically dispersed community of Muslims is particularly interesting since—unlike Christians, for example—Muslims did not develop the institutional equivalent of a Church: that is, an institution whose cadres are expressly invested with the corporate authority and mechanisms for the determination of authoritative truth, and for the constitution of a community in that truth. There is no equivalent in the history of societies of Muslims to the institutional mechanism of a church council that is constituted precisely to determine the constitution of the truth that in turn constitutes the communion of salvation. Rather, what obtains is a loose community of scholars dispersed through a vast geographical space, holding to different, textually constituted legal and theological sects and schools of thought, and living in relationships of ongoing negotiation with political power in a variety of dispensations, on the one hand, and also in relationships of negotiation with other groups and formations of `ulamā', on the other. In such a context, how does a single position come to be universally established as authoritatively true?

Of course, Islam is not the only truth-phenomenon characterized by the absence of a church institution. There is also no church in Judaism. However, the human and historical phenomenon of Islam is distinguished from Judaism (and from Christianity) by the fact that, from its very outset, Islam was an imperial religion the articulation of whose truths took place in a context charged with the demands of imperial power. Second, by virtue of the rapid and prolific geographical expansion of the early Islamic polity, Muslims have from the very outset had to articulate the truth-content of Islam in a demographically and geographically vast, dispersed, and diverse context. The territorial expansion of the Islamic polity began even before the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and within a century the territories of the Umayyad caliphate extended from the African shore of the Atlantic to the River Indus, from Yemen to Transoxania. Muslims never enjoyed the prolonged historical comfort of articulating their formative truths on an insulated local scale, or as minority communities whose formulations were of relatively little consequence for anyone beyond themselves.

Of course, Islam is not alone in being bound up with the constitution of a vast imperial domain: one might readily cite neo-Confucianism in China as a similar imperial phenomenon. However, two differences between Islam and neo-Confucianism are crucial for thinking about the formation of orthodoxy. The first is that whereas neo-Confucianism in China was the constitutive truth of what was, for the bulk of its history, ethnically and linguistically a relatively homogenous space, Islam, in contrast, formed in a prolifically diverse ethnic and linguistic space whose communities were influenced by vastly divergent normative notions of truth. Second, neo-Confucianism was the constitutive truth of what was a territory ruled by at most two, and often by a just a single political dispensation. Islam has been for the overwhelming bulk of its history ruled by a myriad of different polities.

Again: in this diffuse social, structural, and spatial circumstance, how did a single truth-claim come to be established as authoritative and exclusive—especially, a truth-claim that is the opposite of that with which Muslims began? What is the process by which orthodoxy formed among Muslims on the question of the Satanic verses?

Scholarship on the Satanic verses incident in both the Islamic and Western academies has effectively confined itself to the question of whether the incident really took place. This issue, however, is of little interest to me. What I am concerned with is not whether the Satanic verses incident really happened, but whether or not Muslims through history believed it to have happened: if so, why; and if not, why not? To the extent that it is possible to demarcate in broad brushstrokes across such a vast geographical space a time line for the formation of orthodoxy on the Satanic verses, it appears somewhat as follows. In the first two

hundred years of Islam, from about 600 to 800, acceptance of the historicity of the Satanic verses incident was the near-universal position. Over the period from about 800 to 1100, rejection of the incident presents itself more regularly in the literature: in this period it seems that the number of scholars who accept and reject the incident is roughly equal. However, in this period, those rejecting the incident rarely question statedly the orthodoxy of those who accept it: rather, the sentiment seems to be Allāhu a`lam, "God knows best!" In the rough period 1100-1800, rejection of the incident becomes established as the dominant position and those who reject the incident regularly accuse those who accept it of "denying (the Truth)" (kufr)—that is, of unbelief tantamount to heresy. Nonetheless, a number of historically important figures continue to argue in this period for the facticity of the incident, and hold that to believe the incident to be true (as they do) is entirely consonant with Islam.5 Finally, in the period after about 1800, rejection of the incident becomes near universal. In this period, the handful of Muslim scholars who accept the incident both tend not to be recognized as `ulamā' by the mutually acknowledging community of traditionally trained `ulamā, and to have a larger reputation as "unorthodox" (or outright heretical) among Muslims at large.

The question of the formation of Islamic orthodoxy might well be investigated through any number of case studies. However, what makes the Satanic verses incident a particularly (perhaps uniquely) productive case study in the formation of orthodoxy is the fact that implicated in the incident are fundamental questions about the nature of Mubammad's Prophethood and the nature of Divine Revela-tion—that is, the two foundational component elements of Islam—that impinge on and were of concern to scholars engaged in almost every intellectual field in the history of Islam. As such, the incident was treated in a wide range of disciplines and genres across fourteen hundred years: tafsir (Qur'ān exegesis), Hadīth and the sciences of Hadīth transmission, sīrāh-maglaāzī (epic biography of Muhammad), ta'rīkh (history), dalā'il and shamā'il (devotional biography of Muhammad), philosophy, kalām-theology, jurisprudence and legal theory (usūl al-fiqh), Sufism, and, in the modern period in particular,

rebuttals of Christian polemicists and Orientalists of the Western academy. What emerges from this range of treatments of the incident is nothing less than a dizzying interdisciplinary debate conducted by Muslim scholars who approach the questions at hand on the varied basis of different criteria and methods of argumentation developed and employed in different disciplines and fields of knowledge. We have noted, above, the contrast between the first two hundred years and the last two hundred years of Islamic history—between near-universal acceptance of the incident and near-universal rejection. The history of Muslim attitudes to the Satanic verses in the intervening millennium is the history of formation of Islamic orthodoxy on this question. It is a history made complicated by the simultaneous, overlapping, and interacting presence of a number of different and variant trajectories: by the fact of different Muslims in different places and at different times variously accepting and rejecting the incident on the basis of different epistemologies, all of which claimed equally to be fully and legitimately Islamic, while being perfectly aware of other positions and claims.

The rejection of the historicity of the Satanic verses incident that constitutes Islamic orthodoxy today is a position that is founded on rational argumentation. The Satanic verses incident is rejected as untrue on the basis of two epistemological principles, one of which we may call a historiographical principle, and the other a theological principle. These two epistemological principles are the criteria by which Muslims assess the truth-value ofthe claim that Muhammad mistook Satanic suggestion for Divine Communication—they are the principles by which the determination of truth is made. The authority of these two epistemological principles is universally accepted in the Muslim community today: they are, in other words, the epistemological principles of Islamic orthodoxy.

The historiographical principle on the basis of which the Satanic verses incident is rejected as untrue is the fundamental principle of Hadīth methodology. As is well-known, all historical reports (riwāyah) in the early Muslim community take the same textual format—namely, a chain of transmitters to which is appended a narrative body (or matn). A riwāyah thus takes the form so-and-so heard from so-and-so who heard from so-and-so who heard from so-and-

so that the Prophet did such-and-such or said such-and-such. The basic principle of Hadith transmission is that the truth-value of a report is assayed, in the first instance, on the basis of the reputation for veracity and reliability of the individuals in the chain, on knowledge that each person in fact studied with the person from whom he claims to have reported, and finally that the transmission should go back in an unbroken chain to an eyewitness. It is for this evidentiary reason that the chain of transmitters is called the isnād or "support" (for the matn-body). Now, as regards the Satanic verses incident, all but one of the fifty reports that narrate the incident are carried by defective chains of transmission—that is, by isnād-supports that include at least one (if not more) unreliable transmitters, or by chains that are incomplete and do not go back to an eyewitness (interestingly, the sole report that does have a sound and complete, or sahīh, chain has never been noticed or commented upon after its initial fourth-/tenth-century citation—for all practical purposes of historical memory, it had no subsequent existence in the memory of Muslims). Thus, on the basis of the epistemological principle of isnadassessment—a principle that acquired such universal authority that the great scholar Fazlur Rahman straightforwardly termed it "Islamic Methodology in History"—the story of the Satanic verses incident is deemed untrue on evidentiary grounds, and thus did not actually take place as a matter of historical fact.

The theological principle on the basis of which the Satanic verses incident is rejected as untrue is the principle of `ismat al-anbiyā' or the "Protection of Prophets"—meaning God's protection of His Prophets from sin and/or error. Although there is some disagreement among the various sects and schools of thought of Muslims as to the exact portfolio of God's protection of His Prophets, there is universal agreement today that Prophets are protected from the commission of error in the transmission of Divine Communication—else, there would be no guarantee of the integrity and uncorruptedness of the Text of the Qur'an. The principle of `ismat al-anbiyā' is grounded in such Qur'ānic pronouncements—that is, in statements by God Himself—as "Indeed, it is We who have sent down upon you the Remembrance; and We, indeed, are its Guardians,'" "Falsehood does not come to it, neither from between his hands, nor

from behind him,"8 and, of course, the famous passage, "Nor does he speak from his own desire, Indeed, it is nothing other than an inspiration, inspired!"9 Given the logical necessity of the guarantee of the integrity of the process of Divine Communication to Muhammad, as attested by God Himself, the Satanic verses incident is deemed on the basis of the epistemological principle of `ismat al-anbiyā'to be impossible, and thus not to have taken place as a matter of historical fact.

Now, it is simply not possible to accept the authority of either of these two epistemological principles, and simultaneously to accept the historicity of the Satanic verses incident. If one accepts the epistemological principle that reports are assayed on the basis of the isnāds, one cannot accept the Satanic verses incident. Similarly, if one accepts that Prophets are protected by God from the commission of error in the transmission of Divine Communication, one cannot accept the historicity of the Satanic verses incident. Thus, at any moment in history, for any Muslim to have accepted the Satanic verses incident, that Muslim cannot have accepted the authority and applicability of these two epistemological principles of orthodoxy. It means that, at that historical moment, in that place, and for that person, these two truth-making principles were themselves not true: that person must have been operating by some other epistemological principles than those that eventually became epistemological orthodoxy. In other words, the history of the formation of early Islamic orthodoxy is not only also the history of the formation of Islamic epistemology as a history of how something became the truth; it is also the history of the criteria by which truth is constituted. It is the history of the truth, and of its social and intellectual infrastructure.

[Proofs of Prophecy and the Refutation of the Isma'iliyya: The Kitab Ithbat nubuwwat al-nabi by the Zaydi al-Mu'ayyad bi-llah al-Haruni (d. 411/1020)](#) by Eva-Maria Lika [Welten Des Islams - Worlds of Islam - Mondes De L'islam, De Gruyter Mouton, 9783110539769]

Al-Mu'ayyad bi-llah al-Haruni (d. 411/1020) was a representative of the intellectual center of the Zaydiyya in Northern Iran and a student of the leading Muʿtazilite theologians of the time. In his Kitab Ithbat nubuwwat al-nabi he presents a proof

of prophecy of Muḥ�ammad and a refutation of the Isma'ilyya.The present volume explores the historical and intellectual context of the oeuvre and includes a partial critical edition of the text.

Excerpt: The Kitāb Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabi by al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh contains two frames of arguments: a refutation of the Ismā`īliyya and a proof of Muhammad's prophecy. The presentation of the historical background shows that the Ismā`īlīs succeeded not only politically by establishing the Fātimid state in North Africa and the Qarmātī state in Bahrayn; with their missionary propaganda they also successfully converted important regional leaders in Persia and beyond. In Tabaristan, the domain of al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh, by the 4th/10th century, Ismā`īlī influence had grown considerably, and the established religious powers now perceived the increasing Ismā`īlī presence as a dangerous threat. As an act of defence authors of various denominations composed refutations against the Ismā`īliyya in a more or less polemical style, as the overview of anti-Ismā`īlī works demonstrates. In his Kitāb Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabi, al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh refers to four authors of such earlier refutations, whose works are all lost, except for that by Ibn Rizām, which has partly survived through later references. A comparison of these citations shows that Ibn Rizām's refutation is a polemical work that mainly described the alleged origins of Ismā`īlism and the early development of the group. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to another text that served the anti-Ismā`īlī purpose: the Kitāb al-Balāgha. This forgery of an Ismā`īlī text has also been lost, but it did survive in various later citations, with which al-Mu'ayyad seemed to be acquainted. He makes use of such polemical writings and repeats some of the widespread stereotypes about the Ismā`īliyya such as the permission of wine consumption or the omission of prayers, though he does not further develop on these texts.

Instead the Zaydī imam provides a critical statement of important notions of Ismā`īlī theology or what he considers to be Ismā`īlī teachings, including the negation of God, the negation of prophecy, the abolishment of religious law, and the denial of resurrection. In line with his predecessors and colleagues, he identifies the Ismā`īliyya as the new enemies of Islam. In order to underline their heretical character, al-Mu'ayyad equates the Ismā`īliyya with the enemies of Islam in former times: the false prophets Musaylima and Tulayha at the time of Muhammad, the mulhid Ibn al-Muqaffa' of the Umayyad and the beginning of the 'Abbāsid era, and first and foremost the arch-heretic Ibn al-Rāwandī, who was active during 'Abbasid times. The critical books of Ibn al-Rāwandī cited can be read as mirroring the reproaches directed toward the Ismā`īliyya. In the Kitāb al-Tāj, Ibn al-Rāwandī denies the createdness of the world and God the creator. His Kitāb al-Zumurrud is a fundamental attack on prophecy in general and of the prophethood of Muhammad in particular. Finally, the Kitāb al-Dāmigh and the Kitāb al-Farid target the miracle of the inimitability of the Qur'ānic text as evidence for Muhammad. These criticisms correspond in some respects to those kaddressed toward the Ismā`īliyya in the Introduction even if this parlallel is not explicitly drawn by al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh himself. An analysis of the individual criticisms against the background of authentic Ismā`īlī texts indicates that al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh had a clear opinion about the relevant aspects of Ismā`īlī theology and their inherent ability to threaten Islam. A comparison with other refutations of the Ismā`īliyya, in particular Abū 1-Qasim al-Bustī's Min kashf Asrār al-Bātiniyya wa-`Awār madhhabihim, and the anti-Ismā`īlī passages in al-Hakim al-Jishumi's Sharh `Uyūn al-masā'i1 and Ibn al-Malāhimī's Tuhfat al-mutakallimin fi 1-radd 'alā 1 falāsifa as well as his Kitāb al-Mu`tamad ft usūl al-din suggest that these Zaydī—Mu`tazilī thinkers were concerned with similar features of Ismā`īlī theology. Reading between the lines leads to the assumption that the Zaydi imam, in fact, criticised Ismā`īlī concepts for their suprarational character: (1) The notion of God based on the double negation of all characteristics and conceptions and the validity of two opposites is considered as transcending the human realm of language and mental perception. (2) The Ismā`īlī concept of prophets and revelation understood as divine inspiration through direct access to the Intellect is considered to contradict the concept of prophets and revelation based on rational proofs and irrefutable transmission. (3) Finally, the concept

of a religious law, whose inner meanings can be understood only by infallible imams and which cannot be verified on the basis of precise linguisitic analysis, is in contrast with a notion of Scripture that not only provides definite religious instruction for the believer, but also contains the main evidence for the truthfullness of the prophet. Thus, it appears that al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh perceived the suprarational interpretation of these three fundamental Islamic concepts to be intellectual challenges to rational theology and Islam as a rationally justifiable religion. This alone makes the Ithbāt worthy of notice, because it sheds some light on the question why the Ismā`īliyya was considered to be so dangerous. In addition to the quick spread and remarkable political success of the Ismā`īlī movement, viz. it was the Ismā`īlī teachings that taught other Islamic denominations the meaning of fear.

In response to the Ismā`īlī threat, al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh eventually decided not to compose another Radd 'ala l-Ismā`īliyya in the style of the authors cited, but he rather contrasts the Ismā`īlī suprarational doctrines with a thorough rational proof of prophecy: Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabi. The analysis of some exemplarily selected arguments leads to the conclusion that al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh generally did not present original ideas. But rather he availed himself of a standard set of arguments, that has been formulated to some extent in response to the mulhida of the 3rd/9th century, most importantly to Ibn al-Rāwandī. In refutation of his fundamental objections, the prophetological arguments were refined and developed into a set of well-established rational proofs available to anyone with doubts.

Al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh's sources comprise standard works of the Mu`tazilī tradition of kalām texts, which were continued in Zaydī scholarship, as the presentation of the relevant texts suggests. In addition, al-Mu'ayyad uses similar material as contemporary scholars with linguistic expertise, such as the Ash`arī theologian Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, who turned to establishing a linguistic rationale of the i jāz. Al-Mu'ayyad's particular merit lies in his extending the known arguments by discussing additional objections and adding more examples. For this purpose, he utilises the whole historical and linguistic heritage, with which he was well acquainted, as the overview of his oeuvre illustrates. With these rational instruments the Zaydi theologian hopes to deliver a persuasive answer to the doubts raised by the Ismā`īlī propaganda. Al-Mu'ayyad bi-Ilāh's text is thus an important contribution in the history of rational theology and its contention with competing systems of religious thought.

The study suggests that the continuing preoccupation with prophetology by rational theologians of the 4th/10th century was a result of the ideological struggle with Ismā`īlism. In order to further investigate these intersectarian influences, it seems worthwhile to figure out if and in which way Ismā`īlī theology, in particular the teaching of the bātin, provoked or at least fostered the developement of the linguistic rationale of i jāz, that was mainly developed during this century. In this endeavour, the corpus of texts should not be limited on classical polemics and refutations, but include apologetic writings in general. They have to be read with possible intentions of refutation in mind in order to be fruitful for future research on the intellectual relationship between Zaydiyya and Ismā`īliyya.

Bones of Contention: Muslim Shrines in Palestine by Andrew Petersen [Heritage Studies in the Muslim World, 9789811069642]

This pivot sets Muslim shrines within the wider context of Heritage Studies in the Muslim world and considers their role in the articulation of sacred landscapes, their function as sites of cultural memory and their links to different religious traditions. Reviewing the historiography of Muslim shrines paying attention to the different ways these places have been studied, through anthropology, archaeology, history, and religious studies, the text discusses the historical and archaeological evidence for the development of shrines in the region from pre-Islamic times up to the present day. It also assesses the significance of Muslim shrines in the modern Middle East, focusing on the diverse range of opinions and treatments from veneration to destruction, and argues that shrines have a unique social function as a means of direct contact with the past in a region where changing political configurations have often distorted conventional historical narratives.

Excerpt: We begin with a discussion of the books scope and purpose. The first part includes a definition of the term `shrine' as used in the book, followed by a discussion on the origin of shrines in Islam and their place in the modern world. The final part of the chapter provides an outline structure of the remainder of the book.

The land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River has remained one of the most bitterly contested areas of the world for nearly two millennia, and at the heart of the conflict are the sacred places of the three main religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Whilst Christian and Jewish claims to sacred sites are well known outside the region, with the exception of Jerusalem and Hebron, the Muslim shrines are not well known and poorly understood. The principal aim of this book is to understand how Muslim shrines have become integrated into the fabric of Palestinian history and landscape. As a starting point, we can consider the following passage from the book of Joshua:

> And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. (Joshua 24:32)

The above verse has been used by both Jews and Muslims as proof of the authenticity of the shrine of Joseph's Tomb (Qabr Yusuf) outside the West Bank city of Nablus. Whilst the shrine will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 8, the biblical quotation encapsulates three major issues which set Muslim shrines at the heart of many debates in the contemporary Middle East. The first question relates to competing claims between Islamic and Jewish traditions, which both claim custodianship of shrines and, by extension, ownership of the land. The second issue relates to the existence of shrines built over graves—whilst this is a widespread phenomenon in the Muslim world, it is increasingly being called into question by advocates of fundamentalist Islam. The third issue relates to authenticity—and the importance of graves and human remains in the creation of Muslim shrines. To secular observers, the identity of a particular burial place is in many cases open to question, yet graves remain the most powerful and significant feature of most Muslim shrines. This book aims to address these questions and also explore other issues relating to the origins, development and current condition of Muslim shrines, which form a unique aspect of the Palestinian heritage.

Although the book will discuss a wide range of different forms of shrine, it will not include either the Haram in Jerusalem or the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron. This is because both these shrines are exceptional and do not easily relate to the typical shrines of Medieval and Ottoman Palestine. In any case, both Hebron and Jerusalem have been discussed in considerable depth elsewhere, and their inclusion would tend to overshadow the many important issues surrounding the other shrines. In addition to describing the context for the creation and use of the shrines, the book will focus on the architecture and history of the shrines rather than the many and varied ways in which the shrines were used by their local regional communities. This is partly because some of these issues have been examined by a number of publications, including Tewfik Canaan's detailed study, and partly because this requires a more specialised approach grounded in ethnology and anthropology. As a consequence, the book will also not discuss the important role of women in relation to the use, maintenance and veneration of shrines, although there is certainly considerable scope for further research in this area.

Whilst the rest of this book will be firmly focussed on shrines in Palestine, this chapter will discuss a number of general issues of relevance to understanding the historical and cultural contexts of the Muslim shrines. Three main issues will be addressed: (1) the concept and definition of shrines, (2) the development of shrines within Islam and (3) the significance of shrines in the modern world. The final part of the chapter will give an outline of the structure of the book.

CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF SHRINES

Shrines exist in most world religions and, in particular, within Palestine, where each of the three main faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has both major and minor shrines. Although there are many definitions of the word shrine, the continuities between religions demonstrate that there are certain important and recurring characteristics. The term `shrine' derives from the Latin term scrinium, which refers to the box or receptacle holding relics

or other material regarded as sacred. According to Tim Insoll, the term is inadequate for describing the range of locations and features which can be regarded as shrines. Probably the most basic definition of a shrine would be 'a material focus of religious activities'. Although this definition describes a necessary attribute of shrines, it is not a sufficient definition of shrines within a Muslim context. For example, it could be used to describe a mosque or specifically the mihrab within a mosque, which is explicitly not a shrine. Allowing for this exception, a wide variety of locations and objects within the Muslim world can be considered within the general classification of shrines. This is a reflection of the huge geographical range, cultural complexity and religious groupings which can be regarded as part of Muslim civilization.

Although there are examples of religious objects or relics which could be regarded as shrines within Islamic culture, it is the location of the relics which are designated as shrines rather than the objects themselves. Portable or mobile shrines certainly existed amongst the pre-Islamic Arabs who would often carry them into battle. These tribal shrines comprised stone idols carried within wooden boxes which could be carried to different locations and set up within a campsite. It is probably because of this association with idols that portable shrines are such a rare feature of Muslim religious practice. Exceptions to this general aversion might include the portable shrines or tabaqs containing depictions of 'Ali and other imams carried by Shi`as during festivals in the month of Muharram. The mahmal or empty camel litter which accompanied the Hajj annually to Mecca should not be regarded as a shrine despite bearing a superficial resemblance to portable shrines in other cultures and religions. Instead, the mahmal symbolized the authority of the secular ruler who was unable to accompany the Hajj.

For some Muslims there is only one shrine in Islam, which is the Kaaba in Mecca, which comprises a square box-like structure surrounded by a sacred precinct. Other major shrines within Islam which are accepted by the majority of Muslims are the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock has certain similarities with the Kaaba, including its pre-Islamic origins, the presence of a stone or rock at the centre of the shrine (the Kaaba has a black stone hajar aswad embedded in one corner) and the practice of circumambulation or circling the shrine. Certainly, the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount was established early on within the Muslim community, and for the first few years, Jerusalem functioned as the qibla or direction of prayer before it was changed to Mecca. There were even attempts to re-direct the qibla towards Jerusalem during the Umayyad period when Mecca was under the control of Ibn Zubayr. The importance of Jerusalem within Islam is further demonstrated by the construction of the Dome of the Rock by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik' at the relatively early date of 691 AD.

Whilst Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock are fairly unproblematic as Muslim shrines, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina poses a different problem. Certainly, Medina has a central place within Islam as the home of the first Muslim community, the location of Muhammad's house and the first mosque. The problematic part is that when he died, Muhammad was buried within his house—a custom which is not alien to pre-Islamic Arabian culture and can still occasionally be seen today. Although the building was designated as Muhammad's house, it also fulfilled the function of a mosque and was the centre of the nascent Muslim community. Whilst Muslims revered Muhammad as a prophet and as the person to whom the Quran was revealed, he was explicitly only a messenger and was not the focus of the religion. The fact that Muhammad's grave was located within the house/mosque later caused problems for some Muslims, such as Ibn Taymiyya, who was worried that people might inadvertently pray towards Muhammad's grave rather than towards the Kaaba in Mecca. However, for most Muslims, the direction of prayer towards Mecca was well enough established that there would not be a chance of confusing this with Muhammad's grave. Also, Muhammad's pre-eminent position within Islam meant that the location of his grave within the mosque would only enhance the importance of the mosque and the prayer towards Mecca. Muslims would still be able to pay their respects to Muhammad and also follow his teachings in relation to the prayer towards Mecca.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHRINES WITHIN ISLAM

Although shrines do not need to incorporate the tomb of a deceased person, the vast majority of Muslim shrines are associated with graves or presumed burial places of people considered to be exceptional in terms of piety, relationship to the Prophet or other religiously important figures. However, as Thomas Leisten has pointed out, a substantial group of Muslim religious texts, including the Hadith, regards them (Muslim tombs) as distinctly unreligious, pagan and anti-Islamic. The scholars seemed particularly anxious that the tombs should not become shrines; thus the early thirteenth-century Hanbali theologian Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 1223) wrote 'the special treatment of graves by praying by them is similar to the veneration of idols by prostrating oneself before them and wishing to draw near them'. With statements like this, it is very surprising that Muslim shrines were not only built but flourished especially from the twelfth century onwards. There is, in other words, a huge gap between what is stated in religious and legal texts and the surviving architecture of Muslim shrines which are found throughout the Islamic world. It seems, therefore, that the numerous legal rulings and prohibitions were a reaction to the construction of domed buildings over tombs, which the scholars and lawyers were powerless to prevent. In this context, it is worth noticing that although building over graves was explicitly forbidden, it was not described as haram (i.e. forbidden) but rather as makruh (objectionable, disapproved of). One of the biggest problems with the legal prohibitions against funerary architecture was that Muhammad himself was buried within his house, which subsequently developed into one of the principal shrines of the Islamic world.

It can be argued that Muhammad's tomb in Medina is a special case, and certainly it appears that for the first few centuries of Islam there were no other built tombs which developed into shrines. There is, however, some evidence that shrines developed around the graves of members of the Prophet Muhammad's family, although the exact form of these shrines is not known. In particular, the locations of the graves of some of the imams (descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatimah) were known but there is no surviving architectural evidence for these from before the beginning of the tenth century. For example, the twin shrine of the imams al-Hadi and al-`Askari at

Samarra was founded in 944, although it is not clear if anything survives from this period and the earliest inscription within the complex dates from the early thirteenth century. There has been an assumption that the development of shrines connected with Muhammad's family was primarily connected with Shi`ism; however, Bernheimer has shown that they were visited and perhaps developed by Sunni Muslims.

One of the problems is distinguishing between a mausoleum and a shrine. Whilst some mausolea developed into shrines, this was not always the case, and not all shrines were based around tombs. For example, many of the mausoleums in the larger medieval cemeteries, such as that of Bab al-Saghir in Damascus, could be construed as family tombs rather than as shrines. Similarly, large numbers of shrines are either natural sacred features or feature relics, such as footprints of the Prophet. Until recently, the octagonal domed building of Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya at Samarra in Iraq was thought to be an early example of an Islamic mausoleum, as it contained three burials, although these are now interpreted as a later intrusion. Instead, Alastair Northedge has intriguingly suggested that Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya was a fabricated shrine representing the Kaaba created by the caliph as an alternative Hajj destination for his Turkish troops.

The earliest dateable Muslim mausoleum which has survived in more or less its original condition is the tomb of the Samanid Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Ismail, who died at Bukhara in 943 AD. The mausoleum comprises a square room (5.7 x 5.7 m internally) built of fired bricks with a doorway on each of the sides and a decorative arched frieze at roof height which hides the transition to the octagonal transition to the dome. It is perhaps significant that the mausoleum has the same basic proportions and shape associated with the majority of Muslim shrines throughout the world. Whilst it is likely that there were other mausolea of similar date which have not survived, it is apparent that from the tenth century onward, shrines and mausolea began to appear in diverse parts of the world, perhaps indicating a major social or political change within Islamic society. The most obvious change which occurred in the tenth century was the final break-up of the caliphate into disparate political units. Prior to the tenth century, there was at least a theoretical

idea that the Islamic world comprised a unified political and cultural entity—by the eleventh century, the political fragmentation of Islam meant that there were numerous rulers competing for secular authority. By the middle of the twelfth, all provinces of the Muslim world had acquired large numbers of mausoleums which functioned as shrines. There were regional variations in the architecture of these structures; thus Iraq had a series of buildings roofed with muqarnas (conical or honeycomb) shaped domes, whilst in Iran double-shelled domes were developed during the eleventh century along with a series of round tower-shaped tombs. There was also considerable variation in the size of these structures, from the relatively modest Tomb of the Samanids in Bukhara to the immense structure (27 m per side and 38 m high) built over the tomb of the Seljuk ruler Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118-1153 AD) in Merv.

Within Palestine, the earliest shrine for which we have evidence after the Dome of the Rock (built 691 AD) is the Haram at Hebron. According to the writer al-Muqaddasi writing in 985, Muslims built a stone dome over the tomb of Abraham in the latter part of the tenth century. The tombs of the other patriarchs were not included within the domed structure but were included within the sacred enclosure (Haram), which also had a hostel with a bakery and other facilities for pilgrims (Le Strange 1890, 309). As will be demonstrated in the remainder of this book, the real growth in the number of shrines in Palestine occurred directly after the Crusaders had been expelled, starting in the late twelfth century.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHRINES IN THE MODERN WORLD

Unlike many aspects of the medieval and pre-modern world, Muslim shrines continue to have considerable direct relevance in the contemporary world. Although not every shrine is well known, or fully investigated, as a building type shrines continue to attract attention both from scholars and, in recent years, from the news media. Two issues of particular interest are the roles of shrines within the religious political conflict between Palestine and Israel and the increasing fundamentalist rhetoric and, more recently, action against Muslim shrines. Whilst these issues

will be discussed in more detail later in the book, it is worth noting that in both cases, shrines are being used to support particular views of history. In the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict, shrines are often used as territorial markers, with ownership of a shrine used to support ancient claims to land. For example, Israeli extremists regard both the Tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem and the Tomb of Joseph as concrete proof of divinely sanctioned Jewish ownership of the land. Amongst Muslim fundamentalist extremists, shrines are regarded as an innovation within the Islamic tradition and the destruction of structures built over graves is regarded as a return to the purity of early Islam. In both cases the appeal is to an idealised past which ignores other religious traditions and the complexities of historical development embedded in the fabric of the shrines themselves. In order to reject these hard-line views, which are an affront to modern civilised society, it is important that these locations and structures are documented and investigated in a scientific manner which reflects the true nature of the past.

STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK

This book is arranged into three parts: Part I: Introduction, Part II: Types of Shrines, and Part III: Shrines in the Contemporary World. The aim of this approach is both to set the shrines within an historical context and also to show how they remain relevant today.

Part I is divided into three chapters—the present chapter (Chap. 1), Chap. 2, which discusses the Arabic and Islamic historiography, and Chap. 3, which reviews the European and secular literature relating to Palestinian shrines.

Part II is arranged into four chapters, each describing a different form of shrine. The categorization is based on the types of people or groups who developed the shrines in the first place rather than either the architecture or the identity of the personality buried within the shrine. There may be considerable overlap in the categorizations but the idea is to emphasize the different aspects of how shrines were developed and used. The first category (Chap. 4) is shrines built and developed by rulers which, for obvious reasons, tend to be architecturally significant and commemorate major figures. The second category (Chap. 5) considers

the role of Sufism in the creation and maintenance of shrines. One of the principal arguments of this book is that the rise of Sufism coincided with an increase in the number of shrines and was the context within which the cult of saints flourished. The decline of Sufism within Muslim society may also be equated with a decrease in the practice of visiting tombs. The third category (Chap. 6) discusses local tombs which may have been built either by Sufis or by local people and which form the majority of shrines within Palestine. The final category (Chap. 7) discusses those Muslim shrines which are not from the dominant Sunni tradition, demonstrating considerable continuities between different religious traditions.

Part III is divided into three chapters, the first of which (Chap. 8) examines the factors which have led to the destruction and disappearance of many shrines throughout the country. Chapter 9 investigates how shrines can be managed and conserved to provide a future for these important but endangered buildings. The final chapter (Chap. 10) provides an argument for why the shrines are important in the twenty-first century.

Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation by William Rory Dickson [State University of New York Press, 9781438457567]

Offers an overview of Sufism in North America. In this book, William Rory Dickson explores Sufism as a developing tradition in North America, one that exists in diverse and beguiling forms. Sufism's broad-minded traditions of philosophy, poetry, and spiritual practice infused Islamic civilization for centuries and drew the attention of interested Westerners. By the early twentieth century, Sufism was being practiced in North America. Today's North American Sufism can appear either explicitly Islamic or seemingly devoid of Islamic religiosity. Dickson provides indispensable background on Sufism's relation to Islamic orthodoxy and to Western esoteric traditions, and its historical development in North America. The book goes on to chart the directions that North American Sufism is currently taking, directions largely chosen by Sufi leaders. The views of ten North American Sufi leaders are explored in depth and their perspectives on Islam, authority, gender, and tradition are put in conversation with one another. A more detailed picture of North American Sufism emerges, challenging previous scholarly

classifications of Sufi groups, and highlighting Sufism's fluidity, diversity, and dynamism.

"…thoroughly informed and informative." — Midwest Book Review

"Living Sufism in North America is the first book of its kind to bridge the gap between Sufi studies and the study of North American contemporary religious movements. As such, it is a comprehensive, pioneering work of potential interest to a wide array of scholars in the field of contemporary religion." — Patrick Laude, author of Pathways to an Inner Islam: Massignon, Corbin, Guenon, and Schuon

Sufism and American Literary Masters by Mehdi Aminrazavi and Jacob Needleman [SUNY series in Islam, State University of New York Press, 9781438453521]

Explores the influence of Sufism on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers. This book reveals the rich, but generally unknown, influence of Sufism on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literature. The translation of Persian poets such as Hafiz and Sa'di into English and the ongoing popularity of Omar Khayyam offered intriguing new spiritual perspectives to some of the major American literary figures. As editor Mehdi Aminrazavi notes, these Sufi influences have often been subsumed into a notion of "Eastern," chiefly Indian, thought and not acknowledged as having Islamic roots. This work pays considerable attention to two giants of American literature, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, who found much inspiration from the Sufi ideas they encountered. Other canonical figures are also discussed, including Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, along with literary contemporaries who are lesser known today, such as Paschal Beverly Randolph, Thomas Lake Harris, and Lawrence Oliphant.

Excerpt: For centuries, the Western fascination with the East has been the subject of countless books, plays, and movies, particularly after the economic and intellectual effects of colonialism in the early nineteenth century introduced "Oriental" cultures to a sophisticated drawing-room audience. However, Hafiz, Sa`di, Jami, Rumi, and other Sufi masters had a place, however obscure and inaccurately portrayed, in the corpus of English translations long before Oriental themes and settings became a

popular characteristic of nineteenth-century poetry. In fact, Sufi poetry was available to a European audience as early as the sixteenth century: the earliest reference to Persian poetry occurred in English in 1589, when George Puttenham included four anonymous "Oriental" poems in translation in The Arte of English Poesie; translations of Sa`di's Gulistan were available in Latin as early as 1654's Rosarium, translated by the Dutch orientalist Georgius Gentius. From the early seventeenth century onward, Western interest in Persian and Sufi poetry steadily increased, though such interest most often took the form of general references to Persian language and culture and not to specific poets and their works. Such references were already a standard component of the medieval travel narrative, and almost always misidentified the names of Iranian and Arab poets, mystics, and philosophers, accompanied by equally creative spelling variations. Moreover, there was no literary value attached to literal translations, and no effort made to replicate the formal elements of the original poems. Instead, Sufi poetry entered Western literary circles as versified adaptations or imitations. Sa`di's Gulistan, Hafiz's Divan, Omar Khayyam's Ruba`iyyat, as well as Firdawsi's monumental work of Persian epic Shah Nameh, were all available to English audiences in some form by 1790. With their libertarian sentiments and didactic bent, Sufis appealed to an Enlightenment-era mentality that emphasized deism and an ethical rather than doctrinal conception of religion.

By the end of the seventeenth century, references to individual Sufi poets occurred with greater accuracy and specificity. The Travels of Sir John Chardin (1686) in particular was notable for its surprisingly accurate assessment of the basic tenets of Jalal al-Din Rumi's Mathnawi and Mahmud Shabistari's Gulshan-i raz, including Rumi's proofs of the existence of God in man and the emphasis on individual and social tranquility that lay at the heart of Sufism's esoteric teachings. As a result of personal experience with the Sufis of Isfahan and a detailed understanding of the Persian language, Chardin included an unprecedented amount of factual information about Sufism itself, such as an extensive etymology of the term and an explanation of the important differences between Sufism as a mystical order and Sufism as the political basis of the Safavid Dynasty.

Though themes such as the vanity of the world, the analogies between experience in Nature and in love, and the inability of human reason- to explain or address the world's mysteries were not unique to Sufism, they found an eloquence of expression in the ghazals of Hafiz, for instance, that resonated with the nineteenth-century Western world even in translation. Though its traditional themes and images were often exploited for purely aesthetic purposes, Sufi poetry did in fact have a more significant effect on Romantic and Transcendental poetry than simply providing a storehouse of Oriental imagery. The image of "the East" as a place of great wisdom that possessed an esoteric knowledge lacking in the West gained popularity due to its compatibility with the spirit of Romanticism, which saw the essence of Eastern wisdom in the concept of carpe diem. The phrase, meaning "seize the day," was coined by the Roman lyric poet Horace, but emerged as a popular theme in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century love poetry, often as an incitement to a love affair. By the nineteenth century, carpe diem had become an axiom as well as a poetic motif, and invoked a sense profound spirituality intertwined with the very notion of daily existence that should not be confused with the present-day, self-serving connotation of the phrase.

What is remarkable is that the spiritual map of "the East" of nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Europe and America had no geographical location, and all Easterners were allegedly conveying the same message—that of living in the present, accompanied by a lack of concern for the material and a focus on goodness, peace, and love. The fact that there is no such thing as a monolithic East and that the Orient consists of diverse cultures was overshadowed by the interest of European and American literary masters and intellectuals in developing a utopian model inspired by the East. This fascination with the stereotypical image of Eastern cultures may have had something to do with the wounds of post-Civil War American society. As the extent of the inhumanity, cruelty, and tragedy of the Civil War was becoming more and more apparent, the perceived Eastern message of the temporality and fleeting nature of life and the idea of existence being closely connected with suffering was indeed therapeutic and soothing to the traumatized American society. Sufi beliefs in their most simplistic interpretations resonated on the

level of the national consciousness. "Eastern wisdom," with its perceived message of brotherhood and love, transcended boundaries of education and sophistication. In fact, the spirit of universalism was so strong at the time that Islam itself was of little interest to American scholars; it simply served as the context within which Sufi poetry and prose were composed, not the true source of its message. This, of course, was the case for all Eastern spiritual traditions; the fact that they all were saying the same thing bore testament to the universality of the message and the irrelevance of the particularity of the religious doctrines that distributed them. Thus, the giants of American literature emphasized the intricacies of the message of Sa`di, Hafiz, and other Persian Sufi masters but paid little or no attention to the religious tradition to which they belonged. The search was for that which unifies, and the need to discover the common humanity and decency of man made it necessary to break the barriers that religious traditions had imposed upon society.

Exploring other religious and spiritual traditions therefore became the earliest attempt to establish a dialogue among civilizations and create a global village. The corpus of Sufi poetry available in the 1840s was dramatically increased from that available at the turn of the century, and would only increase further as the century continued. By the end of that decade, Persian Sufi poetry had reached Concord, where the Sufi poets found an audience that appreciated them on philosophical and religious as well as literary levels. As a community of writers and intellectuals, the New England writers drew from the same available sources to produce unique written reactions in the forms of poetry, essays, and letters, all manifesting a similar attraction to the Persian-inspired ideals of Sufism. The spiritual landscape of New England spread throughout the rest of America in the form of inspired movements such as Transcendentalism and Perennialism, which stated that the Muslim Sa`di, the Hindu Rabindranath Tagore, and the other masters of "Eastern" wisdom had access to the same Universal Wisdom as Emerson and Whitman.

Sufism became entrenched in the American literary and spiritual scenes in two ways: the scholarly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the popular in the twentieth century. It seems hardly necessary to mention and nearly impossible to overemphasize the importance of Sir William Jones in transmitting Oriental history and literature to the West over the course of his government service in Bengal and Calcutta (1783-1794). The sheer quantity of information that he communicated back to England and America in the records of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the journals Asiatic Researches and Asiatic Miscellany, and in his posthumous collected Works is even more impressive with the knowledge that he was simultaneously serving as a puisne judge and diplomat in the service of the East India Company. Jones was well aware of the exhaustion of neo-Classical poetic themes, images, and forms, and he saw in the poetry of Hafiz a possible infusion of new passion and spiritual awareness, provided the lyrics were free from the beleaguered eighteenth-century diction that characterized previous translations of the Divan. One of Jones's most famous poetic translations was "A Persian Song," based on Hafiz's eighth ghazal and widely circulated in the Annual Register, Gentleman's Magazine, Monthly Review, and Town and Country between 1772 and 1786. He was not the only scholar to bring new translations of Sufi poetry to the West; he was, however, the most prolific and most passionate contributor to the corpus of Sufi materials that was available to poets seeking to represent the Orient at the turn of the nineteenth century. The German influence was gradual but immense, most notably the work of famed orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. He translated Hafiz's complete Divan into German in 1812 and 1813 and sent a copy of these translations to Emerson, who translated them into English (sometimes with such literalness that they maintain the German word order) and distributed them among the Concordians who shared his interest in Sufi poetry.

The first popular American publication to include a poem by Hafiz was The American Museum or Universal Magazine in 1792, which printed, uncredited, "Ode Translated from the Persian of Hafez," one of the poems translated by John Nott in 1787. Though it was preceded by the "Tale of Hafez" included in the first volume of the New York Magazine or Literary Repository (1790), a story which starred two men named Hafez and Saadi, those characters were not intended to represent the poets of Shiraz; they were simply evidence of the

name recognition attributed to symbolic Eastern figures in an imaginative landscape strongly shaped by the Arabian Nights and other popular Oriental materials. Additionally, the Oriental Translation Fund, founded in 1828 as an arm of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, supplied scholarly information to American journals such as the Knickerbocker and the American Monthly Magazine. The society's most valued contributions were translations, though the fund also published memoirs, articles, and other materials of interest to American students of Persian poetry. Limited by different trade routes that bypassed India and the Near East and a complete unfamiliarity with the Persian or Arabic languages, American newspapers printed uncredited or pseudonymous translations, and occasionally complete fabrications, alongside British and French sources such as Sir William Jones and Sir William Ouseley. As in Britain, Hafiz and Sa`di proved to be the two most popular Persian poets, though Edward FitzGerald's 1868 second edition of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam inspired the creation of the Omar Khayyam Club of London and America as well as a circle of "Omarian Poets," including Nathan Haskell Dole and Henry Harman Chamberlin. Also as in Britain, the popularity of Persian poetry inspired a wave of imitations produced by less notable poets who did little more than patch together Oriental tropes and Byronic sentiments.

The popular twentieth-century version of Sufism came through such spiritual masters as Inayat Khan, who came to America in the 1930s from India. From the 1930s to 1950, the Muslim immigration from Lebanon, Syria, and later Palestine further strengthened the Sufi presence in America. The spiritual emphasis of the anti-war movement against the Vietnam War created a market for gurus and spiritual masters to come to America; it is during this period that Sufi centers (zawiyyah in Arabic and khanaqah in Persian) were established in major American cities. In the aftermath of the 1978-79 Iranian revolution, there was a large migration of Iranians to the United States which helped to establish various orders of Persian Sufi tradition. A full survey of the journey of Sufism to America would be a very interesting work, which however goes beyond the scope of this volume.

The political dimension of the response to Eastern philosophy and poetry by the American literary masters of the nineteenth century is also one that must serve as a subject of future inquiry. However, it seems noteworthy that at a time when the spirit of colonialism in Europe and America was heavily characterized by a condescending and even cruel ethnocentrism that declared the "Other" had nothing to offer, distinguished American scholars called attention to the profundity of the spiritual fruits of these civilizations. Perhaps these attempts to revere and respect the wisdom of the so-called inferior races were in part a subtle method of spiritual protest against the colonialists' perspective, comparable to the way in which contrasting the themes of Rumi's poetry of love against Osama Bin Laden's theology of hate toward the West calls to attention the noble aspects of Islam in the present day.

This volume is divided into three parts. Following a chapter on the English Romantics as the background for the American literary master's interest in Sufism, the first section is devoted to a study of different aspects of Ralph Waldo Emerson's relationship with Sufism. The second section explores Walt Whitman's mystical writings and his influences, touching on Emerson and Sufism in the process. Finally, the third section discusses the Sufi influences of other American Transcendentalists, who were also inspired by earlier figures like Emerson.

The first essay, Leonard Lewisohn's "English Romantic and Persian Sufi Poets: The Wellspring of Inspiration for American Transcendentalists," does not concern the Transcendentalists directly, but provides an invaluable introduction to the root themes and images that underlie all poetry written by poets with Neoplatonic influences, including Sufis, Romantics, and Transcendentalists. Like the Romantic poets, the Sufi masters with whom they were acquainted worked with a common set of symbols that Lewisohn describes as "publicly hermetic, so that all writers and readers of Sufi poetry quickly understood its celebrated set of `esoteric signs.'" Part of the aim of these symbols was to introduce the language of human love and physical experience as a counterpoint to the discursive and abstract language upon which mystical poetry relied to describe otherwise indescribable experiences. Well-suited to Romantic temperaments, Hafiz in particular was unmatched in

the Sufi literature for his lyrics on love and wine. Hafiz was particularly revered in India, where Sir William Jones drew most of the material that introduced the West to Eastern culture and literature. Lewisohn traces examples of this and similar themes, including those of mystical death and carpe diem, between the works of British Romantic poets Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake, and Sufi poets Rumi and Hafiz, providing insight into the little-explored relationship between Sufism and the Romantic poets as well as establishing the artistic and thematic framework occupied by the Transcendentalists later on in America.

In the first section, Ralph Waldo Emerson is given the title of "Master" for the seriousness of his commitment to Sufi doctrine, and his pervasive influence on so many other writers. These essays illustrate Emerson's conflicted relationship with exoteric Islam, his serious interest in Persian Sufi masters, and his use of the "Orient" as a framework and vocabulary to align himself with the kind of spiritual universe he yearned for all his life. They also emphasize the crucial role he played in publicizing and popularizing Sufi poetry. Emerson did not publish his first volume of verse until he was 43, but between the ages of 40 and 55 he read and was constantly inspired by the work of Sa`di in particular. He even translated over 700 lines of Persian verses, often from the German, in the free versification tradition of the eighteenth century, often adding rhyme and regularizing rhythm in order to achieve a deliberate poetic sensibility. Silently, he sometimes combined fragments of different ghazals in passages intended for publication, or his own translations with those of von Hammer-Purgstall.

Mansur Ekhtiyar considers these and other aspects of Emerson's background in his essay "Chronological Development of Emerson's Interest in Persian Mysticism," in which he traces the gradual development of Emerson's interest in Eastern thought in general, and in Islamic and Persian mysticism specifically. Beginning with Emerson's college years, Ekhtiyar unravels how Emerson became interested in Hindu and Zoroastrian thought first, and then, through English and German translations of such Persian Sufi poets as Hafiz and Sa`di, came to develop an intense interest in Islamic mysticism. In his Works, the Essays, and the

Journals, Emerson's enthusiasm for the Eastern use of imagery and symbolism is evident, although he consistently struggles with the Islamic sense of fatalism he found in Sufism. Still, the struggle did not prevent him from expounding upon Hafiz's use of "wine" or playing with the notions of solitude and exile.

In the next chapter, Marwan M. Obeidat takes a more analytical approach to the eminent Transcendentalist. Marking Emerson's interest in Oriental thought "as the beginning of interest in comparative religion in America," the author offers an insightful analysis of Emerson's uneasy and conflicted relationship with Islamic mysticism. While Emerson remained intensely interested in Oriental thought to the end, Obeidat shows how the poet's Western mindset still considered the Occidental identity superior; as Emerson himself asserted, "Orientalism is Fatalism, resignation: Occidentalism is Freedom and will." This chapter also suggests that Platonism and Neoplatonism provided a common language with which the American Romantics understood and related to Islamic mysticism.

The following essay, Parvin Loloi's "Emerson and Aspects of Sa`di's Reception in America," primarily concerns the means by which Emerson became acquainted with Sufism and Persian mystical literature, and the poems of Sa`di in particular. Emerson became aware of Sufism when he was only eleven years old, but it was not until he became acquainted with German and French translations that his interest grew and matured into scholarly thought. His preoccupation with these translations both influenced his own transcendentalist sentiments and gave him a preexisting yet flexible linguistic framework to express them. As demonstrated in the autobiographical poem "Saadi" (1842), which Loloi quotes in full, Emerson came to identify Sa'di as the ideal poet, as well as an aspect of himself. In analyzing the poem, Loloi also traces its Romantic elements, including an emphasis on nature and its relation to "divine essence." Loloi affirms the role that Plantonism and Neoplatonism played in interesting the Romantics in Oriental literature. Neoplatonism in particular made it possible for a common discourse and metaphysical language to emerge, as the author explores in the latter part of her essay.

The influence of Hafiz on Emerson is the subject of the next chapter. Farhang Jahanpour's essay, "Emerson on Hafiz and Sa`di: The Narrative of Love and Wine," is divided into four sections. In the first section, Jahanpour traces Emerson's interest in Persian poetry from his exposure as a teenager to the poetry of Sa`di, Hafiz, and Jami, to his more mature encounters with Firdawsi and Sa`di's Gulistan. The second section discusses the German translations that served as guides to Hafiz's difficult esoteric language, and quotes passages from Emerson's Journals in which he expresses sincere appreciation of Hafiz's poetry. The third section focuses on Emerson's own translations; of the approximately 700 lines of Persian poetry he translated into English, about half of them are from the work of Hafiz. Although Emerson's dedication to the translations is unquestioned, his faithfulness to the originals varies; often, he attempted a literal translation, while other times he mixed poems together or elaborated upon them himself. The article ends with a section that traces the echoes of Hafiz's poems in Emerson's writings, both Oriental and involving other subject matter. This section features some of Emerson's own renditions of Hafiz's poems in English and compares them to the original Persian.

Whitman existed in the same cultural milieu that saw Ralph Waldo Emerson embrace Sufi poetry to justify his own belief in self-reliance by reinterpreting Sa`di's didacticism and libertarian sentiments into a doctrine of democracy and self-equality in Nature. Whitman saw evidence of divinity in the most commonplace people and objects, and celebrated the material world as part of the divine Logos and as proof of the underlying humanity in a nation that was increasingly divided by sectional differences. Like Hafiz, Whitman also accepted the ineffability topos that implicitly accompanied all Sufi mystical poetry. The interpretation of Walt Whitman as a mystical poet gained popularity among scholars in the 1960s. "He is the one mystical writer of any consequence America has produced," Karl Shapiro wrote, "the poet of the greatest achievement."

Eastern mysticism in particular seemed to resonate with Whitman, as V. K. Chari and T R. Rajasekharaiah have examined at length using Hindu and Buddhist texts. Based on comparisons between poems and the contents of Whitman's

unpublished journals and notes, Rajasekharaiah concludes persuasively that the poet was in fact well-read on the subject of Vedantic philosophy by the end of his life, though his understanding of Eastern mysticism was likely more intuitive than academic when the first edition of Leaves of Grass was published in 1855.

The next series of essays, grouped under the title "The Disciple: Walt 'Whitman," is meant to acknowledge the idea that the same connection between poet and philosophy holds true of Whitman and Sufism as well. The traditional starting point from which to test this connection is Ralph Waldo Emerson, the main conduit of Sufi poetry into the Transcendentalist literary community. Whitman was an avid reader of Emerson, and would in all likelihood have read the poem "Saadi" when it was published in 1842. Additionally, the influence of Hafiz is quite clear in Emerson's 1848 poem Bacchus, though it is not a direct translation of a Hafiz sonnet. Whitman may also have read the series of "Ethical Scriptures" from the sacred books of the Orient that Emerson and Thoreau published in The Dial in 1842 and 1843, or the translations of several fragments of mystical poetry that Emerson provided The Atlantic Monthly and The Liberty Bell in 1851. Like Emerson, Whitman found his path to Sufism through German translations of Persian poetry, and various Sufi doctrines, such as the annihilation of the Self in God (fana' fi'llah), had a deep effect on his life and work. In the first essay of this section, Mahnaz Ahmad, in "Whitman and Hafiz: Expressions of Universal Love and Tolerance," presents a biographical and analytical study and also illustrates Whitman's own concept of love, as depicted in the character of the "graybeard Sufi" in his poem "A Persian Lesson," alongside Ahmad's own exquisite translations of Hafiz's difficult ghazals.

Massud Farzan continues the study of Whitman in the essay "Whitman and Sufism: Towards 'A Persian Lesson.'" Farzan compares the mystical experiences Whitman evokes in writings such as "Song of Myself," and "A Persian Lesson" to the Sufi concept of ecstasy,. especially as explored in some of Rumi's poetry Whether it is in Sa`di's Gulistan or Rumi's Mathnavi, "argument, abstraction, and getting stuck in logistics are anathema to Whitman and Persian poet-mystics

alike," Farzan states. The chapter continues with a discussion of Whitman and Sufi concepts of the self, wherein the selfish "I" is juxtaposed with the divine "thou," and concludes with the idea of the mystical death of the self and unity with God.

In the next essay, Arthur Versluis discusses other authors in his "'Islamic' Magic and Mysticism of Thomas Lake Harris, Lawrence Oliphant, and Paschal Beverly Randolph." He uses a biographical approach to highlight the similarities between three notable figures involved in both the American Transcendentalist and indigenous esoteric traditions of other religions. Thomas Lake Harris' work reflects aspects of Sufism, even though his direct familiarity with the "Sufi tradition" was nebulous at best. The case of Laurence Oliphant is different, for his travel to the Middle East and Palestine in particular may well have put him in contact with an array of Sufi groups. Oliphant specifically references Druze, whom he calls the "Druse," a splinter Shi'ite group with a strong esoteric orientation. Finally, Versluis compares the experiences of Paschal Beverly Randolph, who also traveled to the Middle East and claimed contact with some of the more esoteric and mystical orders. Versluis questions the legitimacy of some of their teachings, but notes that whether it came in the form of intimate knowledge of esoteric traditions or simply a projection of what they imagined such traditions to entail, the influence of Sufism and its themes on these three figures was considerable.

The next essay, by John D. Yohannan, focuses on a number of specific figures who were primarily disciples of Emerson: Thoreau, Whitman, Longfellow, Lowell, Melville, and Lafcadio Hearn. Each of these figures made a serious literary investment in studying Oriental mysticism, although for some the allure was stronger than for others. Thoreau, for instance, echoed Emerson's identification with Sa`di: "I know, for instance, that Saadi entertained once identically the same thought that I do, and thereafter I can find no essential difference between Saadi and myself. He is not Persian, he is not ancient, he is not strange to me." This more exaggerated assessment stems from Thoreau's limited understanding of Persian poetry. Less well-read than Emerson, he cared about the ideas themselves, not their sources, and it mattered little to him whether the poetry that expressed Sufi wisdom was well-translated or entirely fraudulent.

Nor was he above deliberately misinterpreting Sa`di's aphorisms to suit his own philosophical agenda. Yet, however far from traditional Sufi doctrine, the expansive, subjective philosophy of Sufism allowed for such interpretations on his part, as well as on the parts of other Transcendentalists. Yohannon also examines authors of less renown, including Amos Bronson Alcott, whose interest in Eastern wisdom led him to Sa`di and Firdawsi, and William Rounesville Alger, whose anthology The Poetry of the Orient (1856) served as an invaluable source of information for Walt Whitman, and which indicates the extent of his fascination with Sa`di, Hafiz, and other Persian Sufi masters. Yohannan also mentions Moncure Daniel Conway, a second-generation Transcendentalist who helped establish a link between the American and English devotees of Persian Literature and was instrumental in drawing attention to Omar Khayyam. The rest of the essay is devoted to Longfellow, Lowell, Melville, and Lafcadio Hearn, and shows their indebtedness to Emerson while quoting specific Sufi texts that helped shape their mystical orientation.

The next essay, Philip N. Edmondson's "The Persians of Concord," examines how the city of Concord became the locus of Transcendentalist writers, attracting literary minds such as Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, George William Curtis, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Edmondson also elaborates on how transcendentalism utilized a similar ideology and set of themes similar to that of Romanticism as a preestablished linguistic framework to communicate Muslim mystical concepts.

In the final essay, Mehdi Aminrazavi traces the impact of Omar Khayyam's Ruba`iyyat upon an American audience. Khayyam was a polarizing poet: he was elevated to the level of prophet by some and demoted to that of demon by others. He gained immense popularity among the New England literary circles shortly after the 1859 publication of FitzGerald's exquisite rendition of the Ruba`iyyat. The Omar Khayyam Club of America was formed in 1900 as an opportunity for literary figures to celebrate the great Persian sage, and produced a small school of Omarian poets. Even though Omar Khayyam was not a Sufi in the strictest sense of the word, his Ruba `iyyat were understood to espouse the same esoteric

Eastern wisdom that American audiences perceived in the Sufi mystical poets. Aminrazavi shows the extent of his influence, both among less famous literary figures and more notable authors like Mark Twain, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound.

Mark Twain refers to the "wise old Omar Khayyam" for the first time in 1876, yet his life-long interest in the author of the Ruba`iyyat is well-known. Alan Gribben, in his essay "Bond Slave to FitzGerald's Omar: Mark Twain and the Ruba`iyyat," brings to light this little-known influence of Twain's and provides helpful context for understanding the place the Ruba`iyyat occupied in Twain's personal and poetic life. The sense of rebellion against the cruelty of life in the Ruba`iyyat resonated with Twain in the face of his own hardships. Gribben ends with a selected number of Twain's more burlesque Ruba`iyyat, while the complete version of the poems follows in the next chapter.

The original idea for this volume arose from a discussion with colleagues on the lack of a single volume highlighting the reception of Islamic mysticism by the academy, and the difficulty of accounting for increasing interest in Sufism after the turn of the nineteenth century. While there are many books dealing with the current interest in Sufi literature, particularly in the context of such popular authors as Rumi and Hafiz, there is no notable work on the historical background of Sufism's enthusiastic reception by eminent masters of classical American literature. It is hoped that including a variety of essays that bring together figures of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literary scene in a single volume will make this an important contribution to the understanding of the complex web of ideological similarities that existed between Islamic mysticism and American Transcendentalism. Even without Emerson's background in the terminology and available translations of Persian poetry, the often-contradictory themes of mystical ecstasy, Oriental serenity, the divinely intoxicated intellect, and love for the emancipation of Soul just to name a few of Emerson's favorites—would have appealed to poetic imaginations such as those of Whitman and Thoreau. The use of the language of human love as a cipher for mystical knowledge of the Divine, the revelation of a new moral code as evidence of otherwise ineffable experiences, and the

importance of embracing and transcending the physical world all find eloquent expression in the poetry of Emerson, Whitman, and a multitude of other writers, but they attain even greater clarity when compared to similar philosophical concepts illustrated by the Sufi masters. Today, their interest lives on in the form of continued interest in Sufi poetry and prose, and it is thanks to the works of early masters of American literature that translations of Rumi have remained among the best-selling works of poetry in the last decade in America. Mehdi Aminrazavi, April 2014

A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 1: White American Muslims before 1975 by Patrick D. Bowen [Muslim Minorities, Brill, 9789004299948]

A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 2, The African American Islamic Renaissance, 1920-1975 by Patrick D. Bowen [Muslim Minorities, Brill, 9789004353145]

In A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 1: White American Muslims before 1975, Patrick D. Bowen offers an account of white Muslims and Sufis and the movements they produced between 1800 and 1975 and in A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 2, The African American Islamic Renaissance, 1920-1975 Bowen provides an account of the diverse roots and manifestations of African American Islam as it appeared between 1920 and 1975.

The present book, which is the first academic work to thoroughly examine the history of white American conversion to Islam before 1975, is a study of both the history of the conversions themselves and of the social and religious transformations that led to and shaped the phenomenon of white Americans becoming Muslims. While there have been a handful of books and articles on the most well-known early white American convert, Alexander Russell Webb; a book chapter and a non-scholarly biography on a prominent later female convert, Maryam Jameelah; and one study of white conversion narratives that were written before 1990, research on other pre-1975 converts and on the specific historical changes that led to their emergence and molded their characteristics has been practically nil. The

primary reason for this scholarly silence is that there was little information on the subject available to researchers prior to the twenty-first century. Few early white converts besides Webb had ever been notable enough to earn mention in early scholarly studies of American Islam, and for the most part their impact on the American Muslim community was forgotten after that community went through its significant post-immigration reform transformation starting in the mid-1960s. But today, with growing numbers of old periodicals, books, and government records being made available through interlibrary loan and digitization, and unpublished and rare documents concerning early American Muslims being collected and made public, researchers have been able to uncover much of what was previously hidden, and, as a result, we now have access to a fairly detailed picture of the early history of this important development in the us religious landscape.

The picture that emerges is one that both challenges and refines earlier views. It has become apparent, for instance, that the role that Alexander Webb played in the history of Islam in America has been somewhat distorted in the literature. Given the previous lack of information on early white American converts, it is understandable that the vast majority of scholarly discussions of this group of Muslims have focused on Webb. Nevertheless, this tendency downplays the important activities of other converts before and after Webb, and it frequently ignores the variety of ideological, social, and organizational forces at work in the development of the white American conversion community. Webb and the Muslim convert movement he started, for instance, were intimately connected to a specific nineteenth-century subculture that had a minimal role in the conversions of white Americans in the twentieth century— a fact that can be easily overlooked when no other white converts are discussed. One of the factors contributing to the emphasis on Webb is that there was very little known about Webb's religious transformation in the 1880s. No one has yet uncovered any extant private papers of Webb from the period, and his known writings from the 1880s and earlier reveal little about his thoughts on either Islam or the Theosophical Society—an esoteric religious movement with which he was connected. For the most part, scholars have relied on Webb's accounts from later in his life, most of

which are dated from 1892 through 1896 and only vaguely discuss his conversion and his involvement with alternative religious movements. This has made it very easy to see similarities between Webb and later converts without perceiving the numerous differences. At the same time, there has been minimal research on the Theosophical Society in the US in the early 1880s—which was very different from the Theosophical Society of earlier and later periods—and so far no scholar has convincingly demonstrated what being a us member of the Theosophical Society in the early 1880s actually meant. This has led to the proffering of unclear and even somewhat distorted ideas about Theosophy's own role in the history of conversion to Islam in the us.

The view of Webb and the Theosophical Society that this book takes has been significantly shaped by the contents of a little-known cache of letters and documents in the possession of the Johnson Library and Museum. These materials are from the 1880s and concern the Theosophical Society and related groups, including the specific St. Louis Theosophical 'lodge' of which Webb was one of the few members. Although Webb's name is only mentioned once in these letters, they have nevertheless helped shed a great deal of light on Webb's Theosophy-influenced interest in Islam. As it turns out, Webb's conver-sion took place at the precise time that Islam was most influential in American Theosophy—and the St. Louis Theosophists specifically were, in all likelihood, the Theosophists impacted by Islam the most. Furthermore, by being a member of the St. Louis Theosophical lodge, Webb was connected to some of the most organizationally influential and ideology-shaping American Theosophists at the time—several of whom, like Webb, were involved in the publishing industry. Indeed, Webb's later ability to create an Islamic organization that was very similar to and relied upon the Theosophical Society should not be regarded as a mere 'borrowing' from Theosophy generally: it was a direct outcome of his involvement with the St. Louis group. Webb's particular connection with Theosophy and the history of the development of Theosophy in the us are therefore both of great significance for understanding the first white American Muslim convert movement.

As for converts in the twentieth century, we now have a much clearer understanding of the importance of their contact with Muslim immigrants. The available evidence suggests that by the 1930s, there were hundreds more white American Muslim converts than there had been in Webb's day, and the vast majority had little to no interest in esotericism—these were people whose conversions were the direct results of the growing number of relationships between white Americans and immigrant Muslims. Furthermore, we also now know that almost as soon as immigrant Muslims began to establish religious organizations and create a somewhat stable community, a number of white American converts became leaders in this new us Muslim community—a fact that had previously been almost completely ignored in the literature on Islam in America. These converts helped build the national network of us Muslims that began developing in the interwar period and culminated with creation of the first successful national Muslim umbrella organization, the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (Fia). Then, after the Fia was established in 1952, white converts continued to play important roles in the American Muslim community, serving as early leaders in both the Fia and another important national Sunni organization of the postwar period, the Muslim Students' Association. For these twentieth-century converts, I have relied especially on three types of sources: pre-1975 Islamic periodicals that were popular among immigrants and white converts, several FBI files made during the Second World War when the Bureau was investigating groups and individuals thought to be involved with 'subversive' activities, and interviews with Muslims—both converts and immigrants—who were active in the us Islamic community before 1975.

Perhaps the single most important issue that comes to light in this volume is the fact that these converts were individuals who, by and large, were interested in cultivating peace, justice, and brotherhood. In the early twenty-first century, there has been a growing fear that people who convert to Islam will become violent, anti-Western radicals. Islam itself is generally blamed for this; today many Westerners assume—as they have for centuries—that Islam is a religion that is inherently violent and intolerant of non-Muslims. It may therefore come as a surprise to some readers that

there are no known confirmed instances of religiously-motivated violence perpetrated by white American Muslim converts before 1975. Many, if not most, of the converts studied for this book were in fact both pro-American and deeply concerned with fostering peace on multiple levels: in their own minds and souls, in their homes, in their local communities, in their country, and throughout the world. While the majority of the early white converts primarily used Islam as a tool for cultivating internal and domestic harmony, there were a handful of white Muslim leaders who desired to go beyond this and attempt to facilitate the development of national and international movements and philosophies that would spread brotherhood to all people. Indeed, by embracing and promoting the religion that was often seen as the West's greatest enemy, these converts helped teach Americans that violence and hate were not essential to Islam, and that great progress could be made if Americans and all people lived up to the ideals of tolerance and love.

With this background in mind, the significance of white American conversions to Islam can only be appreciated by acknowledging the deep roots of anti-Islamic sentiment in the culture out of which they emerged, and the deep historical forces that would eventually begin to weaken the strong hold of Islamophobia on Western Christian culture. At the same time, because the history of these conversions is quite complex, involving numerous cultural changes, individual idiosyncrasies, and multiple waves of immigration, it will also be important to have a framework on which to direct this study. The remainder of this introduction, then, provides an introduction to early American Islamophobia and a concept known as 'deterritorialization,' which is at once both an important historical phenomenon and the main theoretical lens through which the history of white American Muslims will be told.

Early Anti-Islamic Sentiment in North America

During the colonial and early independence periods, there was relatively little contact with Muslims who were not enslaved, and most white North Americans understood Islam through a traditional Christian anti-Islamic lens. Generally speaking, early white Americans looked at Islam's teachings as sinful, its prophet as an 'impostor,' and

its followers as violent and oppressive brutes. These views had been inherited from their European forebears and were cultivated and reshaped for the American context.

Anti-Islamic sentiment among Christians has shown a great deal of continuity since its emergence in the Byzantine Empire during the early years of Islam's expansion. Since that time, Christian polemicists have, fairly consistently, attacked the character of the Prophet Muhammad, the legitimacy of the Qur'an, the doctrines of the Islamic faith, the religion's purported methods of converting people, and the morality of common Muslims.1 The more direct antecedents of early American thought concerning Islam were, however, the polemics that developed in Western Europe starting in the twelfth century after Alfonso VI's 1085 conquest of Toledo, the northernmost Islamic stronghold in Western Europe. With Toledo subdued, non-Spanish Christians now had access to the city's impressive libraries, and knowledge of Islam and its texts began to spread. Arabic, the Qur'an, and hadith (traditions of Muhammad and early figures in Islamic history) were soon being studied in several places throughout Europe and polemics against the religion of Muslims were refined, now often being backed up with references to particular sections of Islamic works.

At the same time, battles and growing economic and cultural competition with Muslims began to increase antipathy towards the Muslim people. The Ottoman sack of Constantinople in 1453 had created in Europe a greater fear of Muslim encroachment from the East. In the South, even after the Muslim relinquishment of Granada in 1492, traders who used the Mediterranean were under the constant threat of conflict with North African powers. Meanwhile, those same powers were seen as corroding Europe from the inside: Due to their wealth and allowance of relative social freedom, North African kingdoms were attracting tens of thousands of European Christian 'renegades' who moved to North Africa and often converted to Islam. Even though this phenomenon was not entirely consistent with the old Christian narrative that Islam has mostly been spread 'by the sword,' it was still taken as further evidence of Islam's corruptive nature. Given this context, then, by the time Europeans began colonizing the land that would

become the United States, anti-Islamic sentiment among Europeans was relatively strong.

Although largely separated from events overseas, anti-Islamic sentiment persisted—and in some cases intensified—in colonial North America. Many of the early colonizers were from a Puritan background, which meant they were involved in religious communities that both saw themselves as especially critical of oppressive religious powers and believed that their journey to America was divinely sanctioned. Early colonists therefore sometimes compared the Church of England and Roman Catholicism to Islam, which was considered by Christians to be the penultimate example of an oppressive religion. The Puritan 'pilgrimage' to North America, meanwhile, was perceived as an escape not just from oppressive Christians, but also from Muslims, who, according to leading colonial religious figures like Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, would be wiped out in a coming apocalypse. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the widespread influence of Puritan religion and its notion of American exceptionalism helped to further establish the anti-Islamic current on North American soil.

The traditional European image of Islam for early colonists, however, was not solely shaped by religious polemic; a number of American colonists had encountered Muslims under violent circumstances abroad, which reinforced the commonly-held image of Muslims as blood-thirsty. One of these was famed Jamestown leader John Smith who had, as a young man, fought against Muslims in Hungary and was for a brief time enslaved by Ottoman Turks. Also, by the early 1700s, a few Americans who had personally spent time as captives of 'Barbary' (North African) Muslims had begun writing about their experiences and the harsh treatment they endured. Occasionally, the American captives observed that even the European 'renegade' converts to Islam were similarly subjected to violence. All of this was contributing to the increasingly popular American 'captivity narrative' literary genre, in which non-Christian, dark-skinned 'savages'—usually Native Americans—imprisoned and assaulted innocent white Americans. By linking the image of the Native American with the Muslim, white North Americans were not only legitimizing the dehumanization of and aggression towards both groups, they were

also defining true freedom—a core value in the us American12 identity—as something that could only be produced and protected by white Christian Americans. With there being few voices critical of this anti-Islamic perspective, it is little wonder that, even if a white North American had wanted to convert to Islam during the colonial and early independence periods, he or she would generally have chosen not to do so out of fear of the significant social consequences that would accompany rejecting these pervasive views.

Almost as soon as the nineteenth century commenced, however, the us would see its first white converts to Islam. Although it would take ninety more years for a full-fledged white Muslim convert movement to emerge, and an additional forty years for a truly national network of white converts to begin to develop, by the time the first reports of us Muslim converts appeared in 1803, the country had already entered a major cultural and religious metamorphosis that would eventually lead to the Islamic conversions of thousands of white Americans. American religious culture was now coming under the influence of the complex historical forces of deterritorialization.

Deterritorialization

The fundamental causes of the us' dramatic cultural and religious transformations that ultimately produced thousands of white American Muslims are quite complex. They involve advances in communication, travel, and armament technology, political struggles, the emergence of a variety of new philosophical and religious movements, psychological and identity reconfigurations, and numerous other global cultural developments. Together, these various dynamics comprise the historical phenomenon that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have identified as the 'deterritorialization' of the modern world. By using the notion of deterritorialization, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize the modern era as being fundamentally characterized by its relative lack of traditional boundaries or 'territories'—be they physical, political, cultural, intellectual, spiritual, or psychological. Deterritorialization does not imply, of course, that boundaries no longer exist; indeed, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the modern world is constantly undergoing both deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Nevertheless, reterritorialization is itself shaped by the same globalizing historical processes—such as the emergence of both modern commercial markets and print technology—that are responsible for deterritorialization. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization are therefore, to a great extent, the defining forces of the modern world—and it is the interaction of these two forces that led to the development of the white us American Muslim convert community. Building off of the ideas proposed by Deleuze and Guattari and certain related authors, the present section provides an introduction to the concept and historical foundations of de- and reterritorialization in order to establish a broad theoretical framework that will be helpful for understanding the deep historical causes of (a) Islamophobia loosening its grip on American religious culture and (b) the resulting conversions of tens of thousands of Americans to Islam.

When each of the ancient civilizations fell, they left behind both traces of knowledge that they had gained and remnants of the trade, travel, and raiding networks that they had created. As new civilizations rose, they frequently adopted and built on the older knowledge and networks, increasing the chances for intercultural contact and exchange. Slowly over time, as the networks were strengthened, sciences from one region made it to others, leading to improvements in technical knowledge, which in turn helped the new societies and their networks develop further. By the eighth century an, with the emergence of the Islamic empires, a vast network of peoples had been established—both humans and knowledge could now, potentially, transverse the known 'civilized' world, from China to the northwestern coast of Africa. The world was becoming globalized.

This interconnectivity of people and knowledge had an immense impact on ideas, religions, and identities. In some cases, this impact was fostered by travelers who simply spread religious and philosophical teachings and sects to new regions; travelers could either transmit these ideas and organizations to local teachers, or they could become teachers themselves after settling in the new lands. Sometimes texts alone traveled, and were read and incorporated into the worldviews of discrete communities. Religious concepts and practices were also spread through violence. The

development of global networks meant an increased ability for invaders who followed one religion to conquer people who followed another, and, although the ways in which this affected religions and identities could vary significantly, it almost always had a profound impact. The most infamous style of religious transmission in these situations was forced conversions of whole societies. In these cases, however, the vanquished populations often found ways to retain their traditional religions, either by practicing them secretly or by blending them with the imposed religion. In many instances, the conquerors did not force conversion, but allowed for conversion as a means for the local people—especially those who had formerly been the community's elites—to achieve positions of power in the new societal structures that had been instituted. In such scenarios, the new elites help popularize or legitimize the doctrines and identities of the conquerors for the masses. Lower classes, on the other hand, particularly if their situations were not improving under the new rulers, might develop new ideas, religions, and identities—which often incorporated elements of the rulers' own cultures—that were more focused on opposing or rejecting those in power. In some cases, though, the invaders themselves decided to adopt the religions and identities of the locals.

As these examples suggest, changes in ideas, religions, and identities always occur within, and are usually significantly shaped by, a context of power. Which ideas and identities are imposed, how freely they circulate, how they are transmitted, how they are understood—all of these factors are intimately tied to the forms of power active in a particular historical context. Power, however, is not limited to military strength and social and economic structures. Sometimes knowledge itself, especially in the form of technology, has the power to shape societies beyond political or economic borders. For instance, the spread of a certain armament technology can give multiple societies the tools necessary to successfully defend themselves and conquer others, but often in the process of maximizing the utilization of that technology, a society's political, economic, and cultural structures change. In other words, the mere need or desire to use a certain technology can have the power to reshape the very institutions that regulate day-to-day life. When such reshaping happens—because it often involves micro-level changes that are not

entirely the outcomes of direct use of military or political power—the masses are often unconscious of the transformations taking place; the individual man or woman has no idea that his or her entire ways of thinking and interacting with the world are being transformed not simply by a cultural or political forces, but also by the profound trans-societal impact of the circulation of knowledge and technology.

In the early modern period, the development and spread of armament, long-distance seafaring, and print technologies had this type of profound societal impact, and therefore began fundamentally reshaping religions, identities, and cultures. Gunpowder, a Chinese technology, began traveling westward via cultural transfusion and with the Mongol invasions of the medieval period. By the fifteenth century, its use was becoming widespread throughout Islamic and Christian lands, and, as nations competed to create stronger and deadlier armies, many additional technological developments were being made to improve the use of gunpowder in warfare. Because it was very expensive to both develop modern armament technologies and to produce the large quantities of modern firearms needed to equip big armies, the advantage frequently went to those with greater wealth. The timing of this was fortuitous for Western Europe, as this region was making significant developments in long-distance seafaring technology, which gave that region a significant advantage in the acquisition of wealth.

The ability to transport goods and humans long distances by boat allowed for late medieval and early modern Western European merchants and kingdoms to directly enter commercial markets for which they had previously relied on middlemen. One major result of this was the explosion of the wool market; so much wool was being sold out of Western Europe that the whole system of land management started to be changed in order to increase the number of sheep they could produce. In England, this took the form of the enclosure movement, in which land that was previously left open for communal use by peasants was now closed off and designated as grazing areas for sheep.20 The best land for sheep raising, meanwhile, became increasingly valuable and landowners realized they could make more money by renting or selling this land—with interest, of

course. There was so much wealth to be had by participating in this process—wealth that would be invaluable for developing and producing modern armaments, which were in growing demand as the threat of others acquiring more and more advanced arms spread—that English law, which had previously forbidden profiting from interest, began allowing this, as well as other new laws that favored wealth acquisition. In doing so, the English government had to find a way to bypass the Christian foundations for its laws, and it increasingly looked toward non-Christian (usually Greek) models of law. At the same time, the desire to increase wealth led to the permitting of both de facto and de jure religious freedom to those Christian sectarian communities that were particularly adept at producing wealth.

The wool trade was not the only major source of wealth for Western Europe in the early modern period. Armed with modern weapons, modern boats, and immunity to numerous European diseases, Western Europe reached the Americas and Africa and took what it wanted, while, by and large, rejecting the humanity of the non-Christians of those regions. In pillaging foreign lands, Western Europe was not historically unique or even rare; but, with the particular technological developments it had acquired, its relative strength, and its inability to quickly produce laws and religious movements that might have significantly limited its impact, Western Europe's ability to exploit its power was unprecedented.

The levels of wealth being generated through these activities were also unprecedented—so unprecedented, in fact, that the whole global economy began to change. New companies were constantly springing up with the intention of trying to take for themselves a share of this new influx of wealth, so much so that the traditional, rural, peasant-based social and economic systems were destroyed. Large-scale farming was big business now, and poor tenants were increasingly forced off the land so that enclosures and modern mills could be developed. Western European peasants were now moving in droves to the growing urban centers, where they were largely employed by captilistic companies and in trades created specifically for modern capitalistic production. More and more, merchant ships were being sent to foreign lands for new trading opportunities, while at home industries

expanded in order to buy and sell goods for the increasingly wealthy Europeans.

The impact all of this had on ideas, religions, and identities was tremendous. Modern urbanization, first of all, significantly destabilized traditional cultures and psychologies. Finding a stable life and livelihood in a city was very different from doing so in a rural community. Laborers would have to learn the kinds of skills necessary for commercial employment and be ready to pick up new skills when they needed to find a different job—one's labor skill knowledge, therefore, had to be more flexible and intellectually-based. Extended family networks, meanwhile, were often broken up, and could no longer provide the social, economic, and emotional safety net that they once had, dramatically reshaping the family relationship and identity. At the same time, immigrants to the cities could now join new churches and trade guilds in an attempt to gain social and financial protection, and this meant exposure to new ideas and social networks. The city also brought people into greater contact with the modern printing press, another technology that had made its way to the West from its Chinese birthplace. Books and tracts—which were primarily for spreading religious ideas—were now increasingly popular, literacy rates began to rise, and professions requiring literacy were more and more in demand to help with the new business- and law-based way of life. To survive and thrive in such an environment, urban residents had to develop a highly technical way thinking about their work, their social networks, the religious ideas they encountered, and their own identities. By the end of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare's images of modern, urban people, characterized as independent-thinking individuals, were resonating with English audiences.

Travel was another key factor in the early modern transformation of ideas, religions, and identities. In Western Europe—as well as in North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, and other locations—urbanization meant that modern laborers would be forced to go from city to city and company to company looking for employment. For people whose families had lived in the same town or county for generations, even this relatively local travel had a significant impact on their view of other people and of their own identities, as it exposed them to new ways of life—and the notion

that there could be multiple legitimate ways of life—even within one's own broader culture. For those who were aboard the increasing number of ships voyaging to foreign lands, the exposure to other cultures was obviously even more profound. The diversity of the world's people and their religions and cultures was being observed on unprecedented levels. Old notions about foreigners were not eradicated, but, at the same time, to see in the flesh people who looked and lived very differently caused many to reconsider their own cultures and identities. The growing number of published travelogues containing descriptions of exotic peoples and religions helped bring these impressions to those who could not go overseas themselves.

With the influx of so much new information, the old symbols that had once represented the things people knew in their lives were no longer sufficient for explaining their new world. Symbols, in fact, were increasingly detached from the things they once represented. Wealth, to take a prominent example, is a very modern notion because it represents an idea that is disconnected from its material source. Prior to the early modern period, people rarely thought in terms of 'wealth'; they tended to think of how much of a certain material resource—such as grains, animals, or gold—that they had. But with the enormous influx of goods and currency in the early modern period, there was soon not even enough gold to back up all of the finances that existed on paper; traditional notions of money based on material resources would therefore not be adequate for expressing the amount of one's possessions in a clear way. More and more, people turned to the concept of 'wealth,' an abstraction of one's relative number of resources, and conducted business using this concept.

The development of the concept of wealth represented a broader transformation in the relation between symbols and the material world. In Western Europe's medieval period, symbols were largely seen as a direct link between the material world and God. With relatively little circulation of ideas, the meaning of a symbol— what it represented in the material world—was relatively stable, and, since it was understood that God created all things in the material world, including symbols, it was believed that a symbol

simply represented a material thing that God had created. However, with the influx of new information through travel, books, and the constant development of technical knowledge, and with the increasing desire and ability of people—now armed with literacy and a need to constantly improve their technical knowledge—to manipulate symbols, the meaning of symbols was increasingly detached from its material origins. The notion of a 'dog' for a medieval European, for instance, would be far more limited than it would be for an early modern European who had learned about the huge variety of dog breeds found throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The very symbol or notion of 'dog,' had in fact been disconnected from its original meaning; not only did it no longer represent the same material objects, it was recognized that there could possibly be more undiscovered species that would potentially be classed as 'dog.' Therefore the category should not be closed and the material basis of the symbol of 'dog' was no longer obvious. It was becoming, then, increasingly clear to people that the notion or symbol of 'dog'—and symbols generally—were not God-given but made and manipulated by humans in order to express a concept. The symbol, which is one of the most important building blocks of thoughts, ideas, religions, and cultures, had become radically destabilized. Like people, goods, and money, in the early modern period, symbols themselves began to lose their ties to a single location.

Deleuze and Guattari have introduced the term 'deterritorialization' to help conceptualize this destabilized state of modern people, objects/goods, money, and symbols. More so than the word 'globalization,' deterritorialization particularly emphasizes the fact that boundaries of all types are now much less restrictive. Of course, as has been mentioned, Delueze and Guattari recognized the very modern conditions that created deterritorialization, and that these conditions contain within them forces that will inevitably restrict movement, such as economic inequality and cultural domination. To account for this, they introduced the corollary to deterritorialization: reterritorialization, which is the creation of 'territories' under modern circumstances. These territories can be material, such as when borders are imposed and protected by modern nation states or when a community must deal with its

having limited resources; they can be ideological, such as when ideas about cultural or religious boundaries prevent individuals from exploring certain concepts; and they can be habitual—that is, certain intellectual and physical behaviors can become standard in a community.

Territories can also be economic, in both a monetary and non-monetary sense. The relative freedom of movement of all things produces, essentially, a large number of 'free markets' in which economic factors play important roles in promoting and restricting the movement of any type of good, whether it is material, behavioral, or ideological. This concept of market as territory is particularly important for understanding religious de- and reterritorialization because it reminds us that, even when it comes to religion, humans generally behave in what they believe are 'rational' ways. So, for instance, both consumers and producers of religious 'goods'—ideas, practices, sects, etc.—desire to maximize profit and minimize loss, and will therefore calculate the risk of their decisions. A person who is considering religious conversion will analyze whether their 'purchasing' of this new religious 'good' will give them a greater gain than it will cost them—usually, the 'costs' in this scenario are associated with losing one's social position. For this reason, a person thinking about converting to a non-dominant religion—particularly when there are pre-existing prejudices against that religion—will decide not to because the cost will be too great. There will always be a few isolated outliers, people who convert no matter what the cost. But whole conversion movements—which are essentially the creation of new religious markets—tend to grow from within a preexisting market because the ability of a market to thrive means that it has achieved some degree of social legitimization, so new forms of religion that emerge within such a market will to some extent share that legitimization, which thus reduces the risk of social cost for the consumer.

Religious markets themselves can develop in a number of ways. Perhaps the simplest way is through the intervention of a powerful institution, such as a government or military group that imposes onto a population a religious market, or at least religious market boundaries. The emergence of new religious markets can also be the result, as mentioned earlier, of oppressed populations inventing new forms of religion to resist their oppressors. Religious producers, however, do not need to be oppressed to produce new religions in a free market system. Since, generally, the most successful producers are those who have the greatest desire, knowledge, and resources to supply goods that are in demand, the advantage in religious production usually goes, just as it does in any free market, to those who already possess these in abundance—i.e., the relatively 'wealthy.' So, when demand for certain religious goods increases, those with wealth will tend to be the people who profit most from this emerging market. In fact, on occasion, savy, wealthy producers who have perceived subtle changes in the demands of consumers will intentionally create a whole religious market by investing in a market infrastructure. In the modern period, elements of religious infrastructures can be religious or philosophical publications, supply houses that produce paraphernalia for rituals and clothing worn by religious consumers, and wages for religious leaders. The changes in religious demands, meanwhile, are frequently wrapped up in cultural and psychological currents that are shaped by the impact of de- and reterritorialization. So, for instance, in the modern period there has been a greater demand for religious and philosophical ideas that provide the consumer with justification for capitalistic behavior and the oppression of certain classes; religious producers have responded to this by creating publishing houses and supporting religious leaders that promote such ideas. We also see increased demand for religions and philosophies that address issues related to emotional, social, and intellectual crises experienced by modern people who face alienation as a result of urbanization, immigration, and social change. Hyper-technicalized minds may, for instance, sometimes find little comfort in religions or philosophies that reject science and may seek out religions that embrace it; or, in some cases, contact with new immigrants and social movements destabilizes a consumer's traditional models of the world and forces him or her to seek out new ways of being that better address their current condition. Countless religious producers have responded to this situation; some have even profited from it. The reterritorialization of religion is therefore often the product of the complex

interplay between social change, personal experiences and desires, and the manifold impacts of modern forms of power.

At its core, the present volume argues that as the world has become more globalized, the spread of knowledge and technology has created two opposing but corollary forces: a tendency for vitually all human-related things to attempt to expand and circulate without restriction (deterritorialization) and a tendency for modern forms of boundaries to be imposed (reterritorialization). De and reterritorialization are, therefore, the fundamental modern historical forces that would destabilize the stronghold of traditional European anti-Islamic sentiment in the United States and eventually lead to the emergence of new religious markets through which white us Americans were willing to convert to Islam. This book is both an exploration and explanation of that process.

Outline of the Book

Using the concept of de- and reterritorialization as its broad historical and theoretical foundations, the present book examines how traditional cultural, social, religious, and psychological territories in the us were shattered and then reconfigured in ways that produced white American converts to Islam. Despite this general unity in perspective, however, as will become clear in the proceeding chapters, the history of white us Muslims contains a number of significant disjunctions. To help the reader better perceive and understand the relationships between these disjunctions, this book is divided into two parts, each of which deals with a key, and somewhat unified era in this history and applies the particular scholarly techniques that are most appropriate for examining that era. For example, to understand the trends that connect the nineteenth-century era, which saw few significant convert-related events and lacks a large amount of primary source data concerning the converts themselves, it will be necessary to spend a great deal of time examining non-Islamic esoteric communities and the writings they produced, which gave rise to the Islamic conversion movement that appeared in the 1890s. The second era, on the other hand, witnessed a great deal more Islamic activity and has a much larger pool of Muslim primary sources from which to draw, so more time will be spent examining the history of that era's organizations, activities, and leading figures.

Because of these differences in subjects, sources, and techniques, the pacing and overall styles of the two parts of this book are themselves very different. It is my hope that the reader will find this approach, if nothing else, at least understandable.

Part 1 explores the first era of conversions: that which took place between ca. 1800 and ca. 1910. Here, I argue that while there were many motives for con-version during this period, and while American culture, as it became more and more deterritorialized, was showing increasing sympathy for Islam and Muslims, conversion to Islam only became a notable phenomenon when it was promoted and endorsed by people closely tied with a major reterritorializing current that has been called the 'occult revival.' The American occult revival, which began in the mid-1870s, was an eruption of the creation of organizations focused on studying and practicing esoteric and non-Christian religious teachings. The supporters and leaders of the first American Muslim convert movement—including Alexander Webb himself—were closely tied with the us occult revival, and most likely would not have had any success had they not been connected to it. The occult revival not only gave them a solid pool of recruits, but also provided legitimization, models, and inspiration for creating a non-Christian religious movement that was primarily populated by white Americans from Christian backgrounds.

This book begins, in Chapter 1, with the earliest known white American converts to Islam: the small number of American sailors who embraced Islam while residing in Muslim-majority regions in the early nineteenth century. Some of these converts were captives of North African Muslims during the First Barbary War and were labeled, like their European predecessors, 'renegades' for embracing the religion of the enemy, while other 'renegades' were apparently either deserters or American spies working undercover in Egypt. Very little is known about most of these early converts—or supposed converts—save for one man, George Bethune English. English, interestingly, is also the only one of the early renegades who can be verifiably shown to have been influenced by the deterritorializing liberal religion currents that were gaining popularity in the us in the early nineteenth century. This chapter concludes, then, with a discussion of importance of the emergence of American liberal

religiosity, which by the 1830s was epitomized by Transcendentalism and which produced a space in American religious culture for the serious appreciation of certain religious aspects of Islam. I argue that deterritorialization led to more and more Americans not only traveling to Muslim regions where some converted to Islam, but also to Americans breaking down traditional religious boundaries by publicly criticizing Christianity and identifying with—though not as—Muslims without the fear of being labeled renegades. It should be mentioned here that starting in this chapter I liberally use the words 'orient' and 'oriental.' These terms, which are often understood today as embedded with many negative stereotypes about non-Christian peoples, are generally considered outdated in contemporary scholarly parlance. However, they were used regularly by nineteenth-century converts and Muslim sympathizers to characterize something similar to what we today sometimes refer to as the 'East'; that is, the peoples, cultures, and religions of Asia and North Africa. Although I will sometimes highlight the fact that this is now contested language by enclosing these terms in inverted commas, I retain the use of 'orient' and 'oriental' in order to highlight the distinctiveness of the terms as used in that era as well as the frequency with which they were utilized by converts and sympathizers. The reader will notice that in part 2, with the exception of Chapter 7, which represents a transition from the previous era, these terms are almost never employed.

Before the first liberally-motivated movement for full-fledged converts to Islam could emerge, as Chapter 2 shows, American religious culture would have to undergo yet another deterritorializing/reterritorializing transmutation. This was the emergence of the American occult revival. The American occult revival was a movement that, while it had roots in earlier liberal religious currents like Idealism and Transcendentalism, developed more directly out of spiritualism and early occult organizations in the us and England. Starting around the late 1840s, there was a visible growth in the popular interest in examining what were thought to be supernatural occurrences and powers, particularly in the forms of spirit 'manifestations' and 'mediums.' At least hundreds of thousands of Americans would soon be visiting séances and 'mesmeric' healers, and a few small groups of spiritualists and mesmerists also began attempting to cultivate additional supernatural—or 'occult'—powers through the use of magic mirrors or crystals, hashish, and the other tools of the magician. Interestingly, Muslims and other non-Christian communities were increasingly identified with in these supernatural-focused communities, although exclusive commitment to a non-Christian religion was still frowned upon. However, this would all change in the 1870s. After British Freemason eso-tericists, backed by a shrewd, wealthy businessman, had established—or reter-ritorialized—a stable market for Anglophone occult and non-Christian religious groups, this market was able to immigrate to America, where it was given life in the form of the Theosophical Society (TS), established in 1875. It would only be in the 1880s, however, after the group had found new ambitious promoters, that the Ts would finally be able to achieve true success in the United States. When it did, though, a religious market in which conversion to Islam had the potential to thrive in organizational form had been reterritorialized in the us.

Alexander Russell Webb—the first prominent American convert to Islam— was one of the early participants in the American occult revival. Chapter 3 explores how Webb, the son of a Democratic newspaper publisher, made his religious journey from that of a deterritorialized young mind with little interest in religion to become not just a prominent Muslim convert, but the founder of the first relatively successful American movement for conversion to Islam. In this chapter, I look at the major events in Webb's pre-Islam life, highlighting his tendency for innovation and entrepreneurship. I also show how his background and personality traits were fortuitously fitting for his connecting with one of the most important exponents of the American occult revival: the St. Louis Ts. As one of the early members of the St. Louis Ts, Webb was exposed to the influence of some of the great early leaders of the early American occult revival, particularly Thomas M. Johnson, a prominent Platonist, a high-ranking Theosophist, and the American president for one of the first competitors of Theosophy, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. Johnson, who was a member of the St. Louis Lodge with Webb, did much to encourage the interest in Islam and Sufism in the Ts community. In fact, in March 1887, while Webb was still an active Theosophist, Johnson was responsible for creating

the first American Sufi organization, the 'Sufic Circle.' Although a direct connection between Webb and the Sufic Circle cannot be firmly established, there is little doubt that Webb's Theosophical ties played a major role in his taking an interest in Islam around the same time Johnson created his group. Within months, Webb decided to attempt to go to the East to learn Islam directly from knowledgeable born-Muslims. It was in this de- and reterritorializing context, then, that Webb was molded to become the first true American Muslim convert leader.

Neither Thomas M. Johnson nor Alexander Webb, however, were the first people connected to the early occult revival to decide to organize a group for whites interested in embracing an Islamic identity. Chapter 4 discusses the important religious and cultural current of Islamophilic Freemasonry in England and the us, which, starting in the 1870s, began creating para-Masonic organizations that emphasized Islam. I argue that one of the major motives underlying these groups was a desire to foster world peace, and these Masons— or at least one of the most influential ones—recognized that only through embracing an Islamic identity could they help Western Christians overcome one of their greatest obstacles to achieving that peace: their own prejudice against Islam. Although the most well-known of the Islamophilic Masonic groups—the Shriners—would devolve into a mere parody of orientalist stereotypes, early on, all of these groups appear to have taken their Islamic identities seriously. It is necessary to understand these groups for two reasons: (a) Their motivation for organizing may shed some light on the psychology of white American conversion to Islam generally. (b) Some of the prominent members of these groups became Webb's earliest supporters when he started his own movement.

Chapter 5 turns, finally, to the Islamic movement Webb led starting in 1893. Here, in addition to detailing most of the known events that occurred over the three years that the movement was alive, I show how the creation and growth of this movement was dependent on the occult revival for its American support, publicity, and organization. Webb's movement contained many elements that he had observed in the Theosophical Society and many of the movement's original supporters had direct ties with the occult revival, some being

Islamophilic Masons, others being Theosophists, New Thought followers, or individuals connected to the Rosicrucians. Despite the advantages that these ties with the occult revival brought to Webb's efforts, however, they were not enough to prevent debilitating schisms and the movement's eventual death. In the end, Webb's major failure was his being unable to maintain control of the leading converts who had joined the community.

In Chapter 6, I look at the years following the Islamic movement's collapse to bring to light both its various vestiges and the factors that contributed to its failure. A few Islamic organizations did continue to have a small presence in the years following the collapse of Webb's movement, and at least one group, composed of people Webb possibly knew from his Theosophical days, had a movement called the Order of Sufis, which was probably a revival of Johnson's Sufic Circle. In this chapter, I call attention to the previously unknown fact that one of the leading members of this organization was, like Webb, involved in the French-based occult movement of Martinism—a movement that had ties to Muslims in America and throughout the world— and that it is likely that he connected his Sufi organization to the Martinist Order. This would make the Order of Sufis an early predecessor to the much more popular Martinistinfluenced Sufi movement associated with René Guénon. In this chapter, I also discuss various failed attempts by early twentieth-century immigrant Muslim promoters of Islam, arguing that their failures in converting Americans reflect the fact that they were unable to successfully appeal to the white American population that would be most receptive to conversion: that involved in the occult revival. It seems that to intentionally create religious change in the era before large non-Christian immigration to the us, new ideas had to latch onto preexisting successful reterritorialized markets. I therefore conclude this chapter by examining other turn-of-the-century American movements for Asianmajority religions in order to identify the traits that made some of those movements more successful than those of the Muslims. As it turns out, there were two elements that the more successful movements had that the Muslims'—including Webb's—lacked: an Eastern-born leader with advanced religious training and the ability to incorporate numerous occult revival movements as legitimate components of the religion.

With Chapter 7, I commence part 2 of the book, which looks at conversions between 1910 and 1975. In the twentieth century, the dynamics of white American conversion to Islam changed significantly. As I argue throughout part 2, twentieth-century conversion was characterized by the impact of the deterritorializing current of Muslim immigration to the us and the reterritorializing social bonds the immigrants developed with white Americans. Although some whites who embraced Islamic identities continued to be individuals tied to the esoteric subculture, the vast majority of converts were now average Americans who were not particularly interested in alternative religious views, but became friends and spouses of Muslims simply because they interacted with them in their daily lives. For many, if not most of these converts, embracing Islam was merely a means to improve their relationship or family life—for them, religion itself was not the primary motive of their conversion. For others, though, exposure to Islam through relationships with immigrants gave the future converts unexpected but attractive new options for how to live in the world and cultivate an inner spiritual life. In the nineteenth century, when white Americans sought a new religion to help with personal or spiritual frustrations or with their desire for greater meaning, since the vast majority only knew other Christians, they almost always joined Christian communities. But in the twentieth century, when there was a growing likelihood that an average American had befriended or married a Muslim immigrant, this led to some people considering Islam as a legitimate religious choice. The fact that immigration played a significant role in these conversions also meant that the converts' backgrounds and views on Islam would be largely determined by the backgrounds and views that predominated in the immigrant community at any given period. This situation helps explain the differences between, for example, the backgrounds and views of converts in the 1930s, when most immigrants were working class and had little concern for Pan-Islamic movements, and those of converts in the 1970s, when a large percentage of immigrants were college-educated and many were supportive of Pan-Islamic ideas.

In Chapter 7, I begin by first laying out the general argument that for white American Muslim conversions between 1910 and 1975, Muslim immigration— and not connection to an occult

religious market—was the dominant force shaping the dynamics of conversion. This change in conversion dynamics was not a sudden one, however. During the 1910s and 1920s, as this chapter argues, the most prominent Islam and Sufi convert movements, while they were led by immigrant Muslims, had strong ties to occult currents. Indeed, these movements seem to have been successful precisely because they were non-orthodox Islamic movements that were developed with an awareness and adaptation of Theosophy and other Western occult groups. It is a fascinating fact, for instance, that Rabia Martin, the first white convert of the Sufi leader Inayat Khan, was reportedly, like Webb, a Martinist and taught aspects of Martinism to her white Sufi followers. She may have even belonged to the (possibly) Martinism-connected Order of Sufis. Nevertheless, after the 1920s, the relative impact of occult connections on white American converts to Islam and Sufism decreased dramatically, and the white members of these non-orthodox groups would be relatively quiet through the rest of the interwar period. I should comment here about my use of the terms 'orthodox' and 'non-orthodox,' which I employ on many occasions in this and in subsequent chapters. 'Orthodox' is generally understood as meaning mainstream tradition, but it sometimes implies 'correct' tradition, as if other traditions are somehow 'incorrect.' As I am not a theologian, I do not wish to make such types of normative claims. My use of 'orthodox,' then, is simply as a less cumbersome equivalent to 'mainstream tradition'; whereas 'non-orthodox' is used for 'non-mainstream tradition.'

It was in the late 1920s and 1930s that the immigration—the deterritorialization—of Muslims began to cause a major shift—a major reterritorialization— in white American conversion to Islam. As Chapter 8 shows, the evidence suggests that the principal way through which this happened was marriage. As more and more Muslim immigrants began to settle in the country, the chances increased that some of them—the vast majority of whom were males—would start taking American spouses, and that some of these spouses would convert. Here, I examine the available data and conclude that there were probably at least several hundred marriage-converts, making them the largest group of white Muslim converts in the country. I explain, too, that these converts generally

showed little evidence of being strongly motivated by religious or spiritual urges; creating a family life with little friction was probably their greatest motivator in their embracing of Islam. Nevertheless, there were other individuals who demonstrated a great desire to convert for personal spiritual reasons and to spread Islam. These were, it seems, mostly friends of Muslim immigrants, the most notable of which was Louis Glick, the Chicago-born son of an immigrant Jewish couple. During the interwar period, Glick became the single most active white Muslim convert in the country, establishing a number of Islamic organizations and starting various other Islam-related enterprises, all of which greatly contributed to strengthening the national networks of Muslims. During the war years, as Chapter 9 reveals, Glick continued to play an important role in the uniting of American Muslims, even working closely with the African American Sunnis who were, at the time, establishing their own national Islamic network. Glick, however, was not the only prominent white American Muslim during this period; in fact, it was during the war that two white Muslim women made history with their activities in the name of spreading peace and unity under the banner of Islam. Then, just after the war, white converts began receiving attention for their efforts to bring Muslims closer together—although in some cases these converts were ignored or dismissed by immigrants. In these, as well as in the following chapters, close attention is paid to the development of the immigrant Muslim community, a community for which the details of its pre-1975 history have frequently escaped the gaze of previous historians.

By the late 1940s, the history of Islam in America had entered a new phase as changes in postwar immigration began to produce very new kinds of Islamic leadership and institution-building. For the first time, a relatively large number of highly trained Muslim religious leaders began coming to the country, and they were accompanied by a quickly-growing college student and professional wave of Muslim immigration. Being much better educated, wealthier, and having better connections than the first generation immigrants, these individuals started reshaping the face of Islam in America and were soon befriending and marrying converts of their class. Now, a relatively large number of college-educated white converts began to appear, and some were soon even being put in leadership roles in the new Islamic institutions that were springing up across the country. The result of this change, as Chapter 10 shows, was a transformation of the position of white converts in American Islam.

They now had greater influence in the us Muslim community and they were increasingly influenced by the educated Muslim teachers and international reform movements with which many of the new immigrants were linked.

In the final chapter of this book, I demonstrate that after the passing of the 1965 immigration reforms, the tendencies of the early postwar period now became the dominant trends. Fewer and fewer white converts were associated with the old generations of immigrants, most of whom were working class and primarily concerned with securing their livelihoods in America; white converts increasingly came from the educated middle class and were meeting internationally-minded Muslim students, who now had a significant influence on American converts, exposing to them their many global organizational and intellectual movements, including moderate Pan-Islam. However, converts' lives as Muslims were also being shaped by their own needs and desires. Due to having to negotiate a society undergoing rapid change, white converts tended to be interested in cultivating a new 'way of life.' For many, this meant the sacralization of both their interior and exterior lives through taking on new mental habits, clothing, and behaviors. In addition to these converts, most of whom were tied with Sunni and Shi`i immigrants, there was also a growing population joining the numerous new Sufi communities. By the end of 1974, white American conversion to Islam was a great deal larger, and far more complex—or deterritorialized—than it had been just eighty years earlier. Indeed, the us religious landscape, having undergone numerous deterritorializing and reterritorializing reconfigurations, now looked completely different from how it had appeared when the country first learned about its white Muslim converts in 1803.

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PART 1
The Years 1800–1910

A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 2, The African American Islamic Renaissance, 1920-1975 by Patrick D. Bowen [Muslim Minorities, Brill, 9789004353145]

In A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 2: The African American Islamic Renaissance, 1920-1975 Patrick D. Bowen offers an account of the diverse roots and manifestations of African American Islam as it appeared between 1920 and 1975.

Excerpt: Starting around 1920, certain strands of African American folk culture were blended with orthodox Islamic knowledge, black nationalism, and various forms of esotericism to create a powerful and complex wave of Islamic movements. Over the next fifty-five years, literally hundreds of thousands of African Americans became aware of and interested in the notion that Islam may have been their 'original' religion; tens of thousands went beyond mere interest and embraced Islam outright; and hundreds of black Muslim leaders, writers, and artists took it upon themselves to develop, articulate, and shape the meaning of Islam for the broader African American community. The diversity and abundance of these Islamic currents was so great that the present book refers to the period between 1920 and 1975 as the era of the African American Islamic Renaissance (AAIR).

What distinguishes this volume from previous studies of black Muslims is its in-depth discussions of lesser-known roots, manifestations, and influences of African American Islam. Some of the most popular explanations for the attractiveness of Islam in the black community either focus on the charisma of prominent Muslim figures or look at what are typically framed as the 'political' motivations of the converts. Although both factors undoubtedly contributed to the development of African American Islam, they hardly tell the whole story. In fact, for two decades now, scholars who have recognized the inadequacies of such theories have expressed a vague awareness that the early black Muslim leaders were also drawing on a deep cultural reservoir that resonated with their followers.[2] Nevertheless, so far this has not led to a nuanced appreciation of the multitude of specific African American cultural and religious traditions that became the ideological roots of the AAIR, or of the numerous sociological and historical forces that led to the great diversity in the black Islamic experience. The present volume thus serves as both an analytical corrective and as an updated—though not completely comprehensive—chronicle of African American conversion to Islam before 1975.

Deterritorialization, Reterritorialization, and Religion

In order to make clear the manifold factors that shaped twentieth-century African American Islam, this book situates the AAIR within the theoretical and historical framework of de- and reterritorialization. Deterritorialization, as identified by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is the modern tendency for all human-related things to circulate as if there were no boundaries, a phenomenon that emerged as the outcome of millennia of travel networks, markets, and technology developing across the world. Still, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, even in this era of relative freedom of movement, not everything can move with equal ease. Indeed, numerous restrictions—reterritorializations—have emerged, such as those imposed by political boundaries, access to technology, and cultural biases. De- and reterritorialization, then, are both historical forces and analytical concepts that help identify some of the dominant patterns shaping all elements of human culture in the modern era.

The impacts of de- and reterritorialization on religion have been numerous and complex. For example, through modern travel, communication technology, and the expansion of literacy,

deterritorialization has enabled many to freely learn about, adopt, and develop religious ideas and practices to a degree that was unimaginable in prior eras. Nevertheless, the freedom to convert to a previously little-known religion does not guarantee that all religions will become equally widespread. In fact, it seems to be the case that no matter the relative freedom for religious seeking and expression, there are always reterritorializing restrictions on what is seen as an acceptable religion in a given region at a given time. One of the principal reasons for this is that religions always exist as 'goods' in a market of consumers and producers and, as in any market, the distribution of capital, access to production resources, and the ability to influence the regulation of the market itself all play significant roles in determining what the popular religions will be. Therefore, religions that are endorsed by a state and that are organized in officially-permitted formal institutions tend to be much more publicly prominent than those that do not receive either official endorsement or institutionalization. The latter religions, which have classically been referred to as 'folk' religions, exist at the peripheries of the mainstream modern religious markets. As such, they may sometimes be repressed by the larger society or its government, and they may even have their own small markets within the larger societal markets.

The complexity of a modern religious market can vary significantly from place to place. In monoethnic societies with low class stratification and relative social harmony, there will not generally be great variation in the diversity of the religious goods demanded, and folk markets maybe relatively few or may not face intense repression, particularly when traditional folk religions are incorporated into the dominant, institutionalized religions of that region. But in societies with great ethnic and class diversity, and especially where major tensions exist between social groups, demands for different religious goods will be incredibly diverse, and therefore there can be an abundance of folk markets. Such a situation is made even more extreme in cases like that of North America during the slave era, where, because of the cultural bias of white supremacy, multiple ethnic and religious groups were pushed against their will into the same 'racial' classification, thus forcing people with different religious demands to have to publicly identify with each

other and sometimes with each other's religion, all while privately attempting to retain their traditional religion.

Making matters even more complicated is the fact that oppressed communities, in addition to practicing various ethnic-specific traditional religions and the blended religions that emerge in their mixed ethnic or class groups, also frequently develop what James C. Scott has labeled 'hidden transcripts': folk religious ideas and practices that protest the dominant social system and are intentionally hidden from the gaze of the group doing the oppressing. Because these transcripts are generally not institutionalized, they are especially prone to deterritorialization and can easily morph into different forms even within a single oppressed community. This is especially true when that community is, like that of North American slaves, spread over a large geographical area and is composed of a wide variety of ethnic, religious, social, and experiential influences. Therefore, hidden transcripts, like folk religions generally, can often take on regionally- and ethnically-distinct patterns—what might be called religious 'dialects'—and can emerge in disparate regions simultaneously without direct or obvious influences on each other. Furthermore, because of the desire to keep such transcripts hidden, several tactics are employed to maintain the secrecy of this knowledge, which can result in even greater levels of religious complexity within a market. For example, in order to avoid detection from the dominant society, transcripts that oppose social systems might be transmitted clearly only when oppressed people are in private, but in a public setting they may cloak the transcript in language that can appear to the uninitiated to be perfectly in line with officially-permitted religious teachings, thereby inserting into a mainstream market elements that are opposed to that very market. Or, a transmitter of a hidden transcript may insist that a story is a mere 'tale,' when it is in fact used to communicate a very real perspective on society. Due to these factors, hidden transcripts can move between, and even function simultaneously in, mainstream markets, folk markets, and the small, isolated markets of regions, families, and individuals' social networks.

It should also be recognized that folk traditions can both die and transform into mainstream religious

currents. Conscious awareness of folk traditions, for instance, can be lost with the passing of generations—a reality all the more common for hidden transcripts due to their being placed under heavy camouflage. Therefore, as time goes by, some traditions may disappear except for as vague vestiges, taking the forms of nearly-forgotten secrets, unarticulated thoughts, unconscious or little-understood behaviors, hazy memories, or abstract symbols in one's subconscious. Interestingly, though, on occasion after fading into near obscurity hidden transcripts and folk traditions can be later revived and even institutionalized—that is, reterritorialized—within folk and even mainstream markets. The reasons as to how and why this occurs can vary greatly. It seems, though, that it is often the case that such an event happens when a market, a group of markets, or a whole society has recently undergone a dramatic transformation—a phenomenon that some sociologists refer to as an 'institutional change.'9 In this scenario, there are both religious consumers and producers; the consumers desire older religious goods as, because those goods are familiar to them, they offer a form of cultural orientation to help navigate oneself during a period of instability and alienation, whereas the producers are typically individuals who have mastered the folk traditions and have determined how to make them relevant for the current context. Because institutions can provide those involved with them rewards that are difficult to obtain outside of institutions—such as formally-established cultural legitimacy, abundant resources for capital, and political and legal power—if the new market environment permits the institutionalization of these old traditions, then it is likely that ambitious and savvy producers will indeed institutionalize them. Therefore, given institutional change, even nearly-forgotten hidden transcriptshavethe potential to become reterritorialized into mainstream religious institutions.

One particularAfrican American hidden transcript offers a fascinating study of this hidden transcript-to-institutional religion transformation. Since at least the first half of the nineteenth century, tales about Europeans having used a red flag as a lure to enslave Africans have wafted through black religious and cultural markets, sometimes becoming incorporated into regional or familial folklore, sometimes transforming and blending with different stories, and sometimes finding no consumers at all.10 By the early twentieth century, although throughout the country a significant proportion of ex-slaves still knew different versions of the tale, the folk tradition about the red flag was clearly dying out. However, as will be shown later, before it went completely extinct, an early twentieth-century institutional change in African American culture allowed the tradition to become institutionalized by two religious organizations in the 1920s and 1930s. These groups were thus able to appeal to those individuals who either consciously recognized the tradition or felt a vague familiarity with it due to, probably, a hazy or subconscious awareness of elements of the story. Soon, then, these organizations were incredibly influential, and one in particular would eventually gain enough cultural power to bring about a whole new institutional change. Because the red flag tradition had originally emerged out of the deterritorialization of the African religions that were forced together during slavery, its journey to becoming an influential institutionalized religious concept serves as a clear example of the dynamic changes that religious traditions can undergo in a world of de- and reterritorialization.

The AAIR and the Red Flag

Over the years, a number of academics have observed a general similarity between African American Islamic teachings and the older African American religious tradition, but because they have not been able to convincingly identify the specific religious roots of the AAIR, many of the sociological, historical, and market mechanisms behind the AAIR's development out of pre-twentiethcentury black religion have been missed. Of course, identifying specific religious roots is no easy task, especially in cases involving African American religion. Due to a large part of the black religious tradition having emerged from the blending of African traditions with European Christian traditions, it is often hard to persuasively prove that an influence on a later movement, such as African American Islam, came exclusively from the older African American tradition and not an independent European-based Christian tradition. And if one cannot do this, there will always be a lingering, subtle doubt as to whether the root genuinely came from black culture. On the other

hand, if one can demonstrate that a uniquely African American religious concept or practice was indeed a root, then that root becomes a foundation on which one can build a framework of evidence to reveal other links between the new religion and the older African American tradition.

For the AAIR, the red flag hidden transcript is this foundational root. As it turns out, the red flag tale was one of the rare traditions that was truly unique to African Americans, and, as we will see, the very groups that reterritorialized it in the 1920s and 1930s happened to be the two most popular African American Muslim organizations of the AAIR.11 We therefore have solid ground for comparing other specific black folk traditions with the teachings of the twentieth-century black American Islamic movements. When this is done, it becomes clear that a multitude of distinctly-African American stories, concepts, and practices were indeed incorporated into those groups. Despite the fact that there are very few examples of African American Muslims acknowledging that some of the specific teachings presented as Islamic had previously been non-Muslim folk traditions, in the opinion of this author, the evidence is overwhelming. Indeed, so many black Muslim doctrines show clear parallels with specific African American folk traditions that by recognizing the folk connections of certain central teachings of the Muslims, one can suddenly understand a number of notions and practices whose deeper meanings had previously been virtually impenetrable. From this perspective, then, the AAIR was a renaissance in the sense of a rebirth: African American Muslim groups had given new life to old folk beliefs.

But for those who actually embraced Islam, the AAIR was a different kind of rebirth. One of the distinguishing features of the AAIR is that the vast majority of its Islamic movements asserted that Islam was the religion of African Americans' ancestors in Africa. If 'Islam' is defined as a religion that is nearly identical to what most self-identified Muslims throughout history have practiced, then this claim is not just inaccurate for most African Americans, it is also rather hard to believe, especially if it is presented without any obvious supporting evidence, as it seems to have been during the AAIR. However, if it is recognizedthat AAIR leaders were essentially helping black folk adapt to their recent institutional change by telling them that many of the stories and practices they already knew were actually Islamic, it is much more understandable why these individuals felt that there was indeed good evidence that their ancestors were Muslims. For them, then, the AAIR was the period of the rebirth of their true Islamic heritage—and this, as will be shown, was a central theme of the AAIR.

Still, it is not the case that every Islamic group that used black folk traditions became extremely popular. On the contrary; most did not, and sometimes only certain factions or certain leaders gained large followings. Furthermore, simply knowing that black folk traditions were employed cannot by itself explain why the various teachings of the different Islamic groups of the period each took on distinct traits. To help explicate the many different ways Islam and folk traditions were reterritorialized by black Muslim groups and why some groups became more popular than others, this book makes use of detailed historical and textual analysis as well as a number of sociological theories. As we will see, although the folk traditions of the AAIR are important to recognize, they are only one piece of the puzzle; a great deal of additional information about the mechanisms behind the growth of African American Islam is revealed in the finer points in the biographies and patterns of development of each of the AAIR's several unique Islamic currents.

When all of this information is pieced together, the picture that emerges is one of an African American Islamic Renaissance that was comprised of two distinct eras. The first era, which lasted from ca. 1920 to ca. 1945, was that of the first generation of African American Muslim movements and converts. It was during this period that the notion that African Americans were or could be Muslims first became popular; thousands embraced the religion and at least a half-dozen distinct movements appeared. However, although using folk traditions like the red flag hidden transcript was important for black Islamic groups to be able to win people over, during this era the fundamental reason African Americans were suddenly, on a large scale, so willing to accept the claim that their folk traditions were Islamic was that at the time Islam and Muslims had recently become subjects of great interest in the black community—a phenomenon largely attributable to the religion

being endorsed by the institution-changing black nationalist movement led by Marcus Garvey. By successfully employing the market-shaping tools of mass media; recruiting numerous small social networks; and promoting programs, charismatic leaders, and folk traditions that appealed to the black masses, Garvey's movement deeply transformed African American cultural and religious markets, and in the process promoted and legitimized Islam for African Americans. Garvey's black nationalism thus served as a central pole around which all of the deterritorializing

Islamic currents of the period gravitated and multiplied; and, as a result, no single Islamic movement solidly dominated this era.

The second era, which lasted from roughly the end of the Second World War to the beginning of 1975, was similarly put on solid footing by a single organization that made effective use of mass media; social networks; and appealing programs, charismatic leaders, and folk traditions like the red flag tale. In this period, however, the culture-shaping organization was a Muslim one: the Nation of Islam (noi). The noi and its leading figures—most notably, Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X—legitimized the major themes of African American Islam during this period in a way similar to that of Garvey's movement in the first era. But the America in which the Nation had found itself after World War ii was very different form that in which Garvey had risen, and the noi had developed new tools that helped it thrive when other Islamic and black nationalist groups were failing. Although its teachings were still strongly tied to black folk traditions, the particular traditions that it now emphasized better appealed to the new generation of African Americans. And unlike Garvey's movement, which had found a great deal of its support from church leaders, the noi was tapping into the social networks of black prisoners/ex-convicts, black nationalists, non-noi Muslims, and families. Through these and other efforts, the Nation became a new cultural pole, generating yet another institutional change in black American life, but one that, much more so than the previous era, made Islamic themes—particularly those that had been influenced by or connected to the noi—widely-accepted elements of African American culture. It was in this second era, then,

that Islam reached its fullest reterritorialization in the AAIR.

Limitations and Outline of the Book

To better bring to light the numerous distinct historical, sociological, and thematic currents within the AAIR's different periods, this book is divided into three parts: part 1, which examines African American religion and folk culture before the AAIR; part 2, which examines the first era of the AAIR; and part 3, which examines the AAIR's second era. The reader will note that part 2 is significantly longer than part 3; this is due to the fact that, since it was primarily during the first era that most of the main AAIR movements and concepts originally developed, this part contains the majority of this book's analysis of the teachings, founders, and emergence of the various Islamic organizations. Although several new Islamic groups appeared in the second era, none were as popular as the most influential organizations from the first, and, in fact, their teachings were often derived from those of the first era. Spending extra time to lay a solid historical and analytical base in part 2 will therefore be of great help in explaining the post-1945 developments.

A few words might also be said at this point concerning some of the limitations and unique features of the book. First, the reader should be warned that although this volume makes significant use of sociological theories to help explain many of the patterns that appear to have defined African American Islam, it nevertheless remains primarily a work of history and, because of this, some of the book's larger claims veer beyond strict sociology to the realm of impressionistic generalizing, which is more common to history writing. It is my view that using the tools of both fields has many benefits, particularly in the offering of what I believe is a clearer and more expansive view of the topic at hand, but it may also be somewhat disappointing for those who desire to see a fuller development of the sociological concepts brought up throughout the course of the work.

Another issue that will undoubtedly be of concern to many readers will be the book's lack of significant attention to female Muslims and gender issues in general. This feature is largely the result of two factors: the book's dependence on documentary resources, which for this subject are significantly

malecentered, and its focus on understanding the key forces, movements, and individulas that shaped the spread of Islam in African American culture—not on the ways in which African American Islamic culture developed after it had spread and settled. As we will see, the expansion of African American Islam was indeed dominanted by men; the vast majority of the Islamic organizational leaders, writers, popular speakers, and news makers were men, and men seem to have made up a significant majority of the rank-and-file black Muslims as well. Save for the Moorish Science Temple of America, which had a small number of 'sheikesses' who established and ran their own branches of the movement, most of the AAIR groups did not even allow women to officially run anything more than local auxiliary organizations; in most cases, women were to play a subservient role to the men and were to focus on homemaking and other 'women's' affairs. There were of course a number of fairly prominent female writers, artists, auxiliary leaders, and informal branch and even movement leaders—such as Clara Muhammad, who served as her husband's leading representative for five years in the 1940s for the Nation of Islam—and I suspect women, particularly mothers, played an enormous but as yet undocumented role as transmitters of folk knowledge. However, in the vast majority of cases women were nowhere near as prominent in the public sphere as many of the men who served in similar roles. This reality seems to have been largely a factor of a gender bias within African American Islam, which itself was reflective of a similar gender bias in the broader African American culture and in American culture generally; in fact, as we will see, a major trend in the AAIR linked Islam specifically to deep and widespread traditions regarding masculinity. And because of these patterns, the primary sources themselves do not give great insight into the lives of women in these movements, making the chronicling of their dimension of the AAIR extremely difficult. Women are of course mentioned several times in the book and I cite nearly every existing study concerning pre-1975 African American female Muslims, but at no point is there an in-depth treatment of Muslim women or gender issues.

A third feature that will be noted by many readers is the particular terminology employed in this book. For those familiar with African American Islam, one of the most obvious examples of my terminology is the use of the words 'conversion' and 'convert.' Particularly since the 1970s (as will be discussed in Chapter 15), there has been a popular trend among African American Muslims to refer to their turning to Islam as 'returning' or 'reversion'; for African Americans of that period, this language was generally based on the belief that prior to their enslavement all or at least a significant majority of Africans brought to North America before the nineteenth century identified as Muslims. However, beyond the fact that this idea is not supported by the extant historical evidence, it appears that not every African American who embraced Islam before 1975 believed in this claim; some black Muslims explicitly used the term 'conversion'; and, finally, because 'conversion'/'convert' are the preferred sociological terms for the phenomenon of religious switching, their use helps better link the sociological concepts that will be used here to elucidate the book's subject.

In addition, in order to distinguish between the uniquely African American Islam that emerged in the United States and the various forms of Islam that have been practiced by Muslims throughout the rest of the world and were brought to the us by immigrants, I use the terms 'orthodox Islam' and 'international Muslims.' Despite the fact that the term 'orthodox' sometimes has the connotation of 'right' doctrine—that is, as opposed to a 'wrong' doctrine—in this book I employ the more common understanding of the term, using it to refer to what might be vaguely called the generic, mainstream form of Islam found in most of the world, what is often labeled by Westerners as 'Sunni' Islam. Similarly, the term 'international' is used not to imply that there are no international roots or connections of African American Muslims, but rather that these Muslims were generally either not born in the Americas or were the children of immigrants from Muslim-majority regions. Of course, many have rightly argued that there is no true generic or mainstream form of Islam and, at the same time, all of Islam could be considered international; I hope, though, that the reader will understand the meanings for these terms in this book's particular context. Nevertheless, I still of course encourage those who wish to provide correctives to this volume's terminological and other shortcomings to do so.

With these issues addressed, we can now turn to the outline of the book, which begins, because of the foundational role of black religion for the AAIR, with an overview of some of the key trends in African American religion and culture that emerged prior to the end of the First World War. Two major institutions shaped black religion and culture during this period: slavery and Emancipation. Like the Garvey movement and the NOI later, the impact of both of these institutions was on the level of institutional change; that is, they reterritorialized life for black people who had been participating in many different regional and cultural markets. The emphasis in this chapter, however, is on the two aspects of black religion that are key for understanding the AAIR: the historical development of the increasingly complicated African American folk religiosity and on the presence of Islam in black religious life before 1920. It is argued that the reason Islam did not become a widespread religious identity during this period, despite Muslims accounting for perhaps up to twenty percent of all of enslaved persons brought from Africa to the Americas, is that there was both little demand and, for those who were interested in spreading Islam, relatively poor access to religious markets. In other words, the ways black religious markets had been shaped by slavery and Emancipation were not conducive to conversion to the ideological and organizational forms of Islam that were being presented at the time. Nevertheless, many of the elements that would become part of the later African American Islamic movement were developed during this period, especially numerous folk traditions and hidden transcripts that were being cultivated through the mixing of traditional African religious currents with Christian elements.

Part 2 presents the emergence and spread of Islam in the first era of the AAIR. Starting around the year 1920, we see for the first time the rise of widespread interest in and conversion to Islam. Although there were multiple actors playing a role in this development, my argument in Chapters 2 and 3 is that the single most important party was Marcus Garvey and his massively popular black nationalist movement the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). By the early 1920s, Garvey had successfully reterritorialized African American culture through the use of mass media, offering various beneficial programs

and ideas, and recruiting the leaders and leading institutions of numerous black communities throughout the country. Garvey's impact however went beyond mere culture. Since many of the UNiA's local leaders were connected to the church, Garvey also had a profound influence on religion. Indeed, he can be said to have initiated an institutional change that affected both black cultural life and black religious life. And, because while Garvey was doing this the UNiA was promoting the acceptance of Islam as a legitimate black religious identity, it was Garvey's movement that finally established a real market for Islam to circulate in the black community. Almost immediately after the uNiA endorsed the religion, a number of individuals began trying to exploit this market expansion, and the early 1920s saw several Muslim leaders—most of whom were nonorthodox and could appeal to folk beliefs—winning converts, and almost all of them had either direct or indirect connections to Garvey's movement.

The first major African American-led Islamic movement, however, did not appear until Garvey had been imprisoned. It was in 1925 that Noble Drew Ali, a former folk healer who had probably been raised by a Baptist preacher, brought forth a new Islamic teaching that would rapidly gain several thousand members. It will be shown in Chapters 4 and 5 that Drew Ali's teachings combined the red flag tale and other black folk religious beliefs with high intellectual ideals, white-derived esotericism, and black nationalist concepts. In fact, it does not seem to be a coincidence that Drew Ali's movement began making popular the assertion that African Americans were Muslim 'Moors' precisely when the uNiA was consistently praising and promoting North African Moors in its own newspaper. By so thoroughly connecting with the religious market Garvey had opened up, Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) more fully established Islam as a legitimate identity in African American religious culture and, at the same time, appeared as if it were headed to become the dominant form of African American Islam for all of history. Schisms, however, were emerging and upon Drew Ali's death in 1929 the movement fractured into numerous factions that, although they spread the MSTA further across the country and gained possibly more converts than had Drew Ali during his life, prevented the

development of a united and strong Muslim community.

But the death of Drew Ali had other, greater implications for the history of African American Islam, for it represented a de facto deregulation of the African American Muslim market, and black Islam was suddenly deterritorialized. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the emergence of a post-Drew Ali Islamic movement that would not just thrive in this environment, reterritorializing key elements of African American Islam, but would eventually gain by far the most profound impact on the presence of Islam in African American culture in the twentieth century. Established in the early 1930s by an eccentric immigrant named W.D. Fard, the Nation of Islam taught ideas that seem to have blended black folk traditions, black nationalism, Eastern Islamic teachings, and MSTA concepts along with deep knowledge of history, science, esotericism, various forms of Christian fundamentalism, and a profound desire to resist white racist violence. Particularly when communicated by its leading minister, Elijah Muhammad, himself the son of a Baptist preacher, the Nation's doctrines could speak to a wide variety of African Americans, and the movement seems to have been a relative success in its early years, gaining possibly several thousand followers in Detroit alone, as well as perhaps a few hundred more in Chicago and Milwaukee. Although it shared many similarities with the MSTA, the NOI was distinct in several ways, and its unique traits would prove to shape the movement's trajectory, although by the end of World War ii its fate was not at all clear.

The NOI, nevertheless, was not the only Islamic movement to develop in Drew Ali's wake. As Chapter 8 shows, many new and revived expressions of African American Islam surged forth in the 1930s and 1940s. The diversity of forms of Muslim movements and identities during this period reveals the fact that African American Islam could be reterritorialized in a large number of ways, many of which were completely nonorthodox and often combined the teachings of the MSTA and NOI with other concepts. Despite this diversity, though, black nationalism and folk religion continued to play key roles, reflecting their fundamental reterritorializing positions in the development of African American Islam. This was true, as Chapter 9 explains, even when it came to the early spread of

more orthodox forms of Islam from the 1920s through the 1940s. Several individuals who were either from or had visited orthodox Muslim communities throughout the world successfully promoted 'Sunni' Islam to probably a few hundred African Americans during this era, but they had often done so by appealing to the elements already present in the markets Garvey and the previous Muslims had so thoroughly shaped. Largely because of this fact, by the end of the Second World War, African American orthodox Islam was nearly just as deterritorialized and diverse as African American nonorthodox Islam.

With part 3 the second era of African American conversion to Islam is brought to light. The postwar generation was very different from the previous group of Muslims not only because its converts were far more likely to be urban-born and much less familiar with the old black folk traditions, but also because this era generally was a time of great change for African Americans, who were increasingly taking part in the remolding of American race relations. Fortunately for the Nation of Islam, the circumstances it had found itself in during the 1940s fostered a deep transformation that enabled it to develop tools that would better reach the new generation, thus giving the group far greater influence on African American culture than any other Islamic organization had before. Chapters 10 and 11 describe and explain this remarkable reemergence of the NOI starting in the late 1940s. The incarceration of many of its members that decade put the movement in touch with a population that had not been significantly proselytized to before: prisoners and active criminals. This contact and other changes in the group led to a transmutation in the NOI's programs and approach, which now put greater emphasis on economic black nationalism, the use of mass media, and certain folk themes that were increasingly popular in urban centers—all of which enabled the NOI, now firmly under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, to reach a fairly broad audience. Helping this growth, too, was the relative stagnation and decline of the various non-NOI Islamic movements. Although there were certainly a number of impressive developments in the non-NOI Muslim community, overall the community did not grow significantly, and therefore could not successfully compete with the NOI for the 'consumers' of African American Islam.

With its new prominence, the Nation of Islam also proved to be incredibly fertile religious soil for one Malcolm Little, an ex-convict and son of a Garveyite Baptist preacher. As Malcolm x, he became the NOI's most well-known minister and, after the movement received national attention in 1959, he was rocketed to the position of one of the most prominent, if controversial, speakers on the black experience in America. Chapters 12 and 13 explore how Malcolm X achieved an unprecedented amount of attention for African American Islam, culminating in, if not true mass conversion, true mass influence over American culture. However, upon gaining the national stage, Malcolm began to deviate from the quietest NOI teachings, increasingly calling for African American interreligious unity and revolution. Although his new rhetoric helped the NOI expand to have even greater influence on black culture than it might have had otherwise, philosophical differences between him and other leading members of the movement led to Malcolm, in March 1964, choosing to leave the Nation and embrace orthodox Islam. In so doing, Malcolm unleashed a new torrent of Islamic interpretations and influences, as well as a rapidly spreading current of black nationalist and revolutionary perspectives that were, although ostensibly non-Islamic, often laced with Islamic themes. By the time of Malcolm's assassination in February 1965, the African American religious and cultural markets had become peppered with Islamic elements so thoroughly that the NOI and Malcolm can be said to have brought about yet another institutional change.

Chapters 14 and 15, finally, look at how Islam was reterritorialized in the wake of Malcolm's death. Explicitly Islamic themes had now become incorporated into popular black folk culture, and Malcolm, the NOI, and other Islamic movements had inspired and shaped numerous new non-Muslim cultural dynamics and markets that were themselves shaping—converting—black America. But, just as Drew Ali's death had released a flood of diverse Islamic currents, so too did Malcolm's passing, and a new wave of Islamic movements, leaders, and artistic expressions emerged in the African American community. Interestingly, although several nonorthodox currents developed and were revived by emphasizing their connections with the folk, the period also saw the rise of new forms of orthodox Islam that were significantly influenced by

international Islamic trends, even if the black nationalist and folk roots were still present in their teachings. African American religiosity had thus undergone a dramatic transformation since the slave era; the de- and reterritorializations of its 350 years of North American experience had ultimately created an extremely diverse market of Islamic identities and cultural currents.

In his classic study of the religious lives of the enslaved Africans in the Americas, Albert Raboteau in Slave religion, describes the bondspersons' loss of traditional African religions as the "Death of the Gods." Over twenty years later, the historian of American religions Jon Butler in Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American, referred to the same event as the "African Spiritual Holocaust." Such language—although perhaps overstated from a technical historical perspective—was truly fitting, for the forced deterritorialization from a familiar religious culture was akin to death for so many of the enslaved; it was largely for this reason that their new pastiched, reterritorialized folk tradition was filled with numerous stories about resurrections and Dry Bones. But the black folk's despondency was not to end upon the advent of Emancipation. With the onset of the burdens and horrors of Jim Crow, by the early twentieth century many black folk felt more 'dead' than ever before; even some of their own traditions had taught them that they were cursed to suffer and that they were too inherently ignorant to rise in the white man's world. Their only hope, many felt, was either a spiritual suicide at the hands of the 'little man' or that someone—be it God or a human—would murder the Devil himself and redeem the 'underground nation.'

The leaders of the early African American Islamic movements looked at the black folk's spiritual and emotional condition and determined that their leaders had been guiding the community the wrong way. The best approach for building up the confidence and abilities of a people so poor in spirit was not by condescendingly telling them that they simply had to work harder to adapt to the racist world in which they found themselves with the hope that someday, perhaps after several generations, they might effect enough small changes that they would achieve true equality. Instead, these Muslim leaders pieced together some of the most comforting and inspiring elements of the

black folk's mixed culture and used these to teach that black people were a holypeople who possessed divine knowledge and abilities, that they had a great history in which they could take pride, and that they could find the solution to their problems not outside, but within. African Americans, they insisted, had the power to change their own lives in the here and the now.

At first, Islam was mainly a veneer for many of these leaders' teachings. What they called 'Islam' was primarily a concoction of black folk traditions, black nationalism, Christianity, and white esotericism. Even when the Arabic language, Middle Eastern dress, and the Qur'an were held up as important elements of the religion they were spreading, these were at best superficial components; the true core of their teachings was a religious culture to which black folk were already attuned. On the rare occasions that orthodox Islam was actually taught, even then it was often understood through folk lenses. The reason the idea of Islam was being used was because the religion and its followers across the world—but particularly the North African Moors—had gained the widespread respect and admiration of African Americans in the early 1920s through being endorsed by members of the incredibly influential unia. When Marcus Garvey created the major institutional and market changes that he did after the First World War, several African American Muslim leaders realized that if they could successfully reterritorialize certain inspiring elements of the black nationalist movement with their other teachings, they would have an unprecedented opportunity to transform and uplift black America. It was at this point that the African American Islamic Renaissance was truly born.

After the Second World War, the Nation of Islam adopted some of the very programs and practices that Garvey's movement had used so effectively to unleash a new institutional change, this time giving Islam even more prominence and cultural power than it had had during the era shaped by Garvey. But what occurred in this second period was unexpected: the Muslim movement reached a height of fame and influence that brought it into the world of international politics, and by 1964, Islam had become for many African Americans the primary symbol of the liberation of the oppressed. Then, over the next ten years, as thousands

embraced orthodox Islam, the non-orthodox Nation of Islam firmly established its place as one of the richest and most influential religious organizations in the United States. By the end of the AAIR, political leaders across the country and throughout the world were honoring the movement that had, only a few years earlier, been the object of government persecution. In this final transformation, African American Islam had firmly and permanently planted itself as a fixture in the American religious and cultural landscape—and in doing so the underground black folk religious currents had finally been resurrected.

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Acknowledgements
Abbreviations
Introduction

A succinct and erudite overview of 17th- and 18th-century European scholars and writers who focused on Islamic studies.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a pioneering community of Christian scholars laid the groundwork for the modern Western understanding of Islamic civilization. These men produced the first accurate translation of the Qur'an into a European language, mapped the branches of the Islamic arts and sciences, and wrote Muslim history using Arabic sources. The Republic of Arabic Letters reconstructs this process, revealing the influence of Catholic and Protestant intellectuals on the secular Enlightenment understanding of Islam and its written traditions.

Drawing on Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, and Latin sources, Alexander Bevilacqua's rich intellectual history retraces the routes—both mental and physical—that Christian scholars traveled to acquire, study, and comprehend Arabic manuscripts. The knowledge they generated was deeply indebted to native Muslim traditions, especially Ottoman ones. Eventually the translations, compilations, and histories they produced reached such luminaries as Voltaire and Edward Gibbon, who not only assimilated the factual content of these works but wove their interpretations into the fabric of Enlightenment thought.

The Republic of Arabic Letters shows that the Western effort to learn about Islam and its religious and intellectual traditions issued not from a secular agenda but from the scholarly commitments of a select group of Christians. These authors cast aside inherited views and bequeathed a new understanding of Islam to the modern West.

Excerpt: Around the time of his fifteenth birthday, in 1752, Edward Gibbon wanted to learn Arabic. The year before, he had discovered the Muslim conquests in English and French accounts. Yet his Oxford tutor "discouraged this childish fancy [and] neglected the fair occasion of directing the ardour of a curious mind," as Gibbon, who never took up the language, would recollect. The decision would haunt him in later years, when his great project of charting the decline of the Roman Empire led him beyond the confines of Western history and, via the entanglements of the Eastern Roman Empire, well into Asia and the histories of Muslim peoples. Though he could read sources in both Greek and

Latin, Gibbon could not work autonomously on Islamic history. The ambition and scale of his historical vision outran his linguistic abilities, and he was well-aware of the challenges he faced.

The solution came from the European scholars of Arabic, writers whom Gibbon read and used in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: George Sale, translator of the Qur'an; Simon Ockley, historian of the Arab conquests; Barthélemy d'Herbelot, creator of an encyclopedia of Islamic letters; and others. These authors, who people the footnotes of Gibbon's great work, provided him with the sources he was unable to read himself. They form an Enlightenment, now largely lost from view, in which Europeans learned Arabic and read Islamic manuscripts. This book offers a history of this Arabic-reading Enlightenment.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a transformation in European knowledge of Islam and Islamic traditions. The imprecise and often incorrect body of notions available during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance gradually gave way to a vast and diverse set of translations, insights, and interpretations. At the same time, a new attitude developed toward the peoples and traditions of Islam. No longer seen as deeply alien, Muslims came to be appreciated, not just for their religious piety and military prowess, but also for their music and architecture, their social customs, the heroism of their histories, and even for their poetry and for the beauty of the Qur'an. At this time, Europeans first came to recognize the culture of Muslim lands as a holistic set of religious, intellectual, and literary traditions deserving respect and attention, and as an object of study that would yield intellectual, aesthetic, and even moral enrichment in a variety of fields.

European understandings of Islam changed, then, in two separate ways: on the one hand, Europeans studied a much wider range of sources of the Islamic intellectual tradition than ever before, and, on the other, they began to think and write about Islam with a fair-mindedness that had until then been at best the exception rather than the rule. The two developments, although related, were distinct. Some Europeans improved knowledge of Islam for polemical ends; they studied it in order to refute it more decisively. These were by no means the least influential writers. By contrast, sympathy did not always lead to deeper understanding, for others

misrepresented Islam to make it seem more worthy of Christian esteem. Even so, the two processes—of study and of charitable reinterpretation—were linked. Generally speaking, those Europeans who learned Arabic and wrote about Islamic topics tended to hold a high opinion of Islamic letters, of their importance and originality; they even tended to overestimate the antiquity of Arabic, which increased its significance in their eyes. Together, the tradition of research and the effort at charitable reinterpretation laid the foundations of the modern Western understanding of Islam: many of the translations and interpretations first produced in this period persisted into the twentieth century.

This venture was undertaken only after global commerce brought Europeans into increased contact with the peoples, goods, languages, beliefs, and customs of Asia. This was the era of the chartered trading companies, and many European powers established a commercial presence abroad, not just in the Mediterranean but as far afield as the Coromandel Coast of India or Batavia, on the island of Java. European presence in the entrepôt cities of Istanbul, Izmir, and Aleppo, or in factories and settlements from North Africa to Southeast Asia, generated an increased awareness of the intellectual life of the Islamic city. If the merchants did not for the most part interest themselves in scholarly matters, they provided transportation and accommodation for those who traveled in pursuit of knowledge rather than profit. At the same time, Christian missionary efforts intensified European interactions with Muslim peoples.

The new knowledge of Islam was the product of studies undertaken by both Catholics and Protestants. Whether scholars, clergymen, or members of religious orders, they all participated in a tradition of erudition that originated in the humanist movement of the Renaissance and extended across the European continent and the British Isles (Map r). These men competed fiercely, and disagreed with vehemence, but they never duplicated one another's work, and they could agree across sectarian lines about what constituted good research. They can be called a Republic of Arabic Letters: a working community of scholars of different languages, political affiliations, and traditions of belief. Theirs was a province of the broader European Republic of Letters (a period term), the continental scholarly community whose

origins dated to the time of Erasmus of Rotterdam, with shared rules of conduct and goals.

The translation movement described in this book was grounded in a perception of analogy between Western Christian and Islamic traditions. Analogy was one of the chief intellectual tools that European scholars used to make sense of Islamic history, religion, and letters and to make these intelligible to their readers. In particular, one of their most powerful comparisons was between Muslims and the "good pagans" of classical antiquity. The Christian tradition had, since the time of the Church Fathers, assimilated many aspects of pre-Christian Greco-Roman literature and thought. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the presence of so much classical culture at the heart of the Western tradition seemed to grant scholars permission to study Islamic materials as well. Through an analogy with good paganism, Europeans could validate their new interest in Islamic letters.

European scholars also compared Islam to Christianity and to Judaism. These comparisons were more ancient; they lay at the foundation of the polemical study of Islam in the Middle Ages. Christian writers then had aimed to prove that Islam was not the product of a genuinely inspired revelation but the forgery of an impostor who had confected it from bits and pieces of existing religions. This time around, however, the comparison served a different function: to normalize Islam. Scholars argued that the God of the Qur'an was the same God of the Christian Bible, and Islam came to seem to many a more intellectually sound version of Christianity because it did not require belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. The study of Islam became normatively decontaminated: Muhammad the impostor became Muhammad the legislator.

The scholars involved in the European study of African and Asian languages thought they were expanding the approach of humanism—the scholarly movement that had recovered the classics of Greece and Rome—to new literary traditions. For them, humanism was a universalist movement encompassing all the literary traditions of humankind. This sense of possibility and excitement is captured in some of their writings. In turn, they could and did use their knowledge of Islamic history and letters to reorient their understanding of

their own place in world history, displacing themselves from its center.

One did not have to abandon one's own religious beliefs to take this intellectual step. Whether the European scholars of Arabic were clerics or laymen, they were not radical critics of their religion. They did not seek to overturn Christianity through their study of Islam. That antireligious readers ended up using the new knowledge of Islam to critique organized religion was an unintended consequence of their intellectual output; it had nothing to do with the original impetus for acquiring such knowledge. The Enlightenment understanding of Islam and Islamic culture was developed neither by the famous philosophes nor by the radical underground, but by a broader and less polemical group of researchers, who are the subject of this book: the thinkers who most intensively interacted with the written traditions of Islam.

European scholars aiming to build a new understanding of Islam—for instance, to read the Qur'an as contemporary Muslims did—had to rely on the work of their Muslim counterparts in the areas of grammar, lexicography, commentary, compilation, abridgment, anthology, historiography (historical writing), biography, and more. Thus, many Islamic judgments about what mattered in the Islamic tradition were adopted by European scholars. With a remarkable naiveté, Europeans trusted information in Islamic sources, often taking their claims at face value. As a consequence, their new understanding was constructed with building blocks from the Islamic intellectual tradition.

The new knowledge allowed for an interpretation of Islamic letters as sophisticated as it was unprecedented in European history. This book is an account of this transformation, a new history of Islam and the European Enlightenment. It begins by relating how and why Islamic manuscripts were collected in great number all across Europe in the period beginning around 1600, then moves on to the process by which these manuscripts were spun into knowledge in learned and polite translations, editions, and histories. It considers the study of Islamic religion, first through the translation of the Qur'an published by the Italian Lodovico Marracci in 1698, and then through a broader look at how a new view of Islam emerged from the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth. This new view was grounded both in a richer

philological knowledge and in an effort to do justice to Islam—to extend intellectual charity to it. The investigation then moves to the study of Islamic history and letters broadly by examining the Bibliothèque Orientale, the masterpiece of the Frenchman Barthélemy d'Herbelot, published in Paris in 1697—the first true Western "encyclopedia" of Islamic culture—and then charting how the history of Islamic contributions to human civilization writ large was understood from mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century. Chapter 6 investigates the impact of all of this research on the canonical, secular French and British Enlightenment of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Gibbon. Readers like Voltaire and Gibbon adopted not just the raw materials but also the interpretations of the European scholars of Arabic, and wove them into the fabric of Enlightenment thought.

The argument of this book relies on a combination of what were viewed until very recently as two distinct pursuits: intellectual history, on the one hand, and, on the other, the history of books and of reading. Only the use of this dual approach can reveal how new texts and new information transformed existing systems of knowledge. To the receptive reader, the impact of a new text could be as earth-shattering as that of a personal encounter with new places and peoples. In recent decades, cultural history has tended to consider the eyewitnessing of travelers to have been the most powerful disruption of inherited systems of thought. In contrast, this book reveals the immense transformative power of readerly experiences. The bookish encounters studied here reshaped long-standing Western intellectual traditions and biases.

The legacy of this new knowledge of Islamic history, religion, and letters was mixed. On the one hand, the achievements of European Islamic studies did not prevent the broader European turn to a patronizing view of Islam, as a religion and as a civilization, in the second half of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, these translations and interpretations lived on during the nineteenth-century age of empire. It has been insufficiently recognized that the foundations of the modern Western view of Islam were laid when a more equitable balance of power obtained between Western Christians and Muslims. Nineteenth-century European approaches to Islam had to contend with

these earlier interpretations, for, through continual republication of certain works, such as Simon Ockley's history of the Arab conquests and George Sale's Koran, the Enlightenment understanding of Islam continued to reach new readers even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These visions of Islam, born in a moment of intercultural possibility, continued to act in Western history even after that moment had passed.

Islam and the West from Muhammad to Mehmed the Conqueror

Intellectual relations between Christians and Muslims far predate the history recounted in these pages. Why did the translation movement described here not happen earlier? To understand how the intellectual projects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries diverged from what came before, it is necessary to cast a glance at the long history of Western Christian perceptions of Islam and of Muslims.

Islam was revealed—in the early seventh century CE—to a world already replete with religious beliefs and practices. Its first adherents were drawn from other religious communities: Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and polytheists. In the early years, this new belief system might have been of little concern to Christians living in Western Europe. Within a century of the revelation to Muhammad, however, Muslim armies had spread widely, and the political threat of Muslim invasion became real in such far-flung locations as Iberia, France, and Byzantium. As the Muslim empire expanded into territories that had long been Christian, and as Islam gained converts among Christians, the new religion began to impinge on the Western Christian worldview.

Inevitably, Islam represented a theological problem as well as a political one. The first Christians to deal intellectually with Islam were not the members of Western Christendom but Christians of the Near East. Their writings on Islam—composed in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic—would influence later European interpreters. Medieval Christians categorized non-Christians as Jews, pagans, or heretics. The Jews, involved in the foundational events of Christianity, had a peculiar status of their own—associated in the Gospel of Matthew with the death of Jesus, they were viewed with suspicion and outright enmity, and resented for resisting

conversion to Christianity. Pagans were defined as those who had not heard the Word of God; heretics had heard it yet persisted in not accepting it. Muslims did not fit neatly into any of these categories, but clearly they were not true believers. Yet their false creed enjoyed immense worldly success. Though the ways of divine Providence were often difficult to apprehend, Christian thinkers needed to grapple with the popularity of Islam. Was Islam a diabolical parody of Christianity, something the devil had concocted to mock true believers? Was the rise of Muslim empire a divine punishment, a scourge brought down on the Christian community of believers because they had sinned? Millenarian ideas about the coming of the end of the world also latched onto the rise of Islam. Was Muhammad the Antichrist? If so, the rise of Islam presaged the end of days.

Medieval writers tried to fit Muslims into the history of the world, but the classical sources invested with most authority in the Western Christian tradition had little to say about the Arabs and nothing about Islam. Some creative scholars endowed Muslims with a genealogy going back to Abraham's son Ishmael, who was cast into the desert with his mother, the Egyptian slave girl Hagar. Because these writers considered Hagar and Ishmael to be the origin of the Arabs, they labeled Muslims "Hagarenes" or "Ishmaelites," that is, descendants of Hagar or of Ishmael. "Saracens," the most frequently used word for Muslims, was more an ethnic than a religious designation.

Among the categories employed to understand Muhammad himself, the one that most influenced later tradition was that of false prophet, the figure against whom Jesus warns in the Sermon on the Mount, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The concept of false prophet was compatible with millenarianism: the New Testament foretold that false prophets would help bring about the Second Coming, the final era of history. Casting Muhammad as a false prophet who had cunningly misled his followers, Christian writers attempted to explain how this caravan trader had created such a successful religion.

Other attempts to discredit Muhammad included dismissing his moments of divine inspiration as nothing but epileptic fits or claiming that Islam

achieved such widespread success because Muhammad had promised believers carnal delights in Heaven. As for the origins of the Qur'an, Muhammad was supposed to have been illiterate, but the Qur'an evinced detailed knowledge of both Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad claimed that the book was God's word as revealed to him by the angel Gabriel; Christian writers thought that he had forged it with the help of Jewish and Christian assistants.

Even the man who did most to advance the Christian study of Islam in the Middle Ages, Peter the Venerable, the abbot of Cluny, did not definitively state whether Muslims were pagans or heretics. He oversaw the translation of the Qur'an into Latin in twelfth-century Toledo; Iberia, a frontier between Muslim and Christian states, was especially well placed for such an effort. For Peter, who composed a number of writings against Islam, knowledge-making was not the ultimate goal; religious polemic and conversion were.

Finally, Islam's central theological dogma, the unity of God, was a direct contradiction of the Trinitarian form of Christianity established at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. The Qur'an's statements about God's nature offered a direct rejoinder to the Christian concept. Sura 112 of the Qur'an, for instance, reads: "Say, 'He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one: " Although ancient unitarian heresies (such as Arianism) had been defeated, Islam represented the obdurate persistence of a belief that the Nicene Council had already sought to quash in the fourth century. In addition, the Muslim doctrine of the unity of God did not seem beyond the powers of human reason to apprehend, unlike the doctrine of the Trinity. This feature of Islam—its greater appeal to human reason in comparison to Trinitarian Christianity—would become salient once more in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Renaissance and After

A European looking at a world map in the middle of the seventeenth century would have been struck by the transcontinental extent of lands governed or inhabited by Muslims. In that era, those domains stretched from Morocco to Malacca and from Timbuktu to Tashkent. Three great Islamic dynasties flourished between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries: from east to west they were the Ottomans in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Levant, and North Africa; the Safavids in Persia; and the Mughals in northern India. Yet these empires were distinct, and they were not allied. The Ottomans and Mughals adhered to the Hanafi branch of Sunni Islam, whereas the Persians professed Twelver Shiism, a branch of Islam that the Ottomans condemned as heretical. Political enmity compounded this sectarian disagreement.

The elegant craftsmanship of Muslim artisans had been known to Europeans for centuries. Textiles, carpets, jewelry, metalwork, ceramics, glassware, and illuminated books bespoke the cultural refinement of the peoples of this wide swath of the world." Muslims had long been part of European history, from the medieval battles on European soil, such as Tours (also known as Poitiers, 732 CE), to the Crusades in the Holy Land and the Iberian wars that ended with the fall of Granada in 1492. In short, they were familiar foreigners.

At the level of thought and belief, moreover, most educated Europeans knew that Islam professed to be a replacement for Christianity, the final revelation of the Abrahamic God. The relative proximity of Muslims, their political, religious, and cultural achievements, and the geographical sweep of their states all impressed themselves on the European consciousness. At a time when Europeans were not yet the masters of the universe, there were good reasons to be interested in Muslims and their traditions.

The Ottoman Empire, geographically the closest to Europe of the three Muslim empires, was the one that most heavily influenced European understandings of Islam. In May 1453 the Ottomans, led by Mehmed II, conquered Constantinople and what remained of the Byzantine Empire, an event that put the study of Islam on the agenda for many European thinkers. The capture of the city founded by Constantine, the first Christian emperor, was widely perceived as a second fall of Rome. The destruction wrought by the Ottomans associated them in European minds with hostility to learning and culture. These parvenu conquerors appeared to many Europeans to be the enemy of the learned traditions of Christendom. In addition, the anti-Muslim rhetoric that had fueled

the Crusades remained a powerful cultural force well into the Renaissance.

The theological debates of the Protestant Reformation made European Christians more aware that their theology disagreed fundamentally withIslam's central creed—the unity of God. In the sixteenth century, Muslims, who had often been described in broad ethnic terms, such as "Saracens," gained new religious identifiers, like "Mahometists." "Mahometist" had a precisemeaning—a follower of Muhammad. Like the terms for Christian heresies (for instance, Arianism, Nestorianism, and Pelagianism, after Arius, Nestorius, and Pelagius), it bore the name of its founder. (In the sixteenth and seventeenthcenturies, new theological movements were also named after founders: for example, Arminianism, Jansenism, and Socinianism after Jacobus Arminius, Cornelius Jansenius, and Faustus Socinus.) In other words, to European Christians the term "Mahometist" did not imply that Muslims adored Muhammad himself. The term "Muslims"— based on what believers are called in the Qur'an (muslim, pl. muslimūn, a noun with the same root as the word "Islam")—first came to be used in this period as well; it was introduced by European scholars of Arabic, though it was not widely adopted. This new salience of religion can be tracked in the imaginative literature of the period. For example, in the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century romances of Matteo Maria Boiardo and Ludovico Ariosto, Christian and Saracen knights are hard to distinguish and follow the same code of honor. By contrast, the epic poems of Torquato Tasso and Edmund Spenser, both published in the late sixteenth century, are characterized by religious and ideological polarization.

As a result of Islam's association with unitarianism, by the sixteenth century, if not earlier, the religion became a resource for those who questioned orthodox Western Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant. Islam was so deeply associated with unitarianism in the minds of some Protestant Reformers that Adam Neuser, a German anti-Trinitarian, finally departed from his homeland for Istanbul, where he converted to Islam. The religion likewise held interest for such diverse readers as the Friulian miller Domenico Scandella, known as Menocchio, who was executed for heresy in 1600, and the early eighteenth-century English unitarian

thinker John Toland, on whom more in Chapter 3. This renewed salience of Islam is also indicated by the Catholic Indices of Prohibited Books, which began as a Counter-Reformation measure: they banned both printed and manuscript versions of the Qur'an."

The problem of how to classify Islam—as heresy, paganism, or alien religion—would continue into the Renaissance and after. This ambiguity, however, made the religion an interesting intellectual resource for thinking about foreign faiths and their relationship to Christianity. Its ambiguous categorization allowed the freedom to suggest new points of view, and, in particular, to argue that considering Islam alongside the classical cultures of antiquity was more relevant than contrasting it with Judaism or with Christian heresies.

A desire among some observers to understand Islam as a living religion predated the serious study of its written traditions. To some degree European travel writing even inspired later scholarly work in this area. Since the late Middle Ages, Europeans had produced accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land and secular travels to Constantinople and beyond. In the late Renaissance, theorists of travel codified a veritable "art of travel" (ars apodemica) prescribing how learned travelers might gather knowledge on their journeys. In the age of print, travel accounts spread knowledge of Muslim societies, peoples, and traditions to readers far and wide. These works dedicated much space to descriptions of manners and customs, and several important ones contained pictures of Muslim men and women, including clerics and mystics. These lively depictions testify not just to the intense European interest in Islam but also to the European capacity to consider it as a living and breathing phenomenon. The images illustrating books by Melchior Lorichs, Nicolas de Nicolay, and others were attempts to depict the tangible practices of Muslim believers. More than simply conveying information, travel narratives employed their descriptions of Muslim piety to moralize about the shortcomings of Christians: If heretics could be so pious, the argument ran, how could Christians not be inspired to outdo them?

European travel writers praised other aspects of Muslim societies, such as their magnificence, charity, tolerance, and meritocracy. Muslim social

institutions—charitable endowments of hospitals, for example—also impressed European visitors. The coexistence of different faiths within the Ottoman Empire seemed remarkable at a time when European states were much less religiously diverse and the continent was riven by sectarian violence and warfare, which lasted from about 1524 to 1648. From 1500 to 1700, dozens of published travel accounts of the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Persia, and Mughal India amounted to a large body of literature; during this same period, writings by Jesuit missionaries brought new knowledge of China to Europe. But it was especially the lands of Islam that captured the European literary imagination, as demonstrated by the fact that plays set in the Ottoman Empire were by far more common than those on Indian or Chinese subjects. Hindus, with their variety of deities, and their phallic lingam as an object of worship, seemed vastly more unfamiliar to Europeans than did Muslims, who recognized Jesus even if they denied that he was the incarnation of God.

Arabic scholarship produced in Europe—the subject of this book—had a vexed relationship with European travel writing. As forms of expertise about Asia, the two were in direct competition. Moreover, they had different epistemological bases. If the scholars valued linguistic and philological knowledge above all, eyewitnessing was the supreme form of authority for travel writers. As a result, some scholars of Arabic, like d'Herbelot and Johann Jacob Reiske, excluded travel writing from their sources. Others, like Richard Simon, Adriaan Reland, and Johann David Michaelis, employed travel writers whom they considered sufficiently learned and methodical and therefore trustworthy. Even so, to the end of the period Arabic scholarship and travel writing remained distinct undertakings, to the extent that some authors of the secular Enlightenment, such as Montesquieu, would rely on travel writing at the expense of the new Arabic scholarship altogether (see Chapter 6).

European Traditions of Knowledge

Beginning in the late sixteenth century, a number of European scholars set out to acquire Arabic and Islamic learning. The model for their activity was scholarly humanism, a movement that had begun in the fourteenth century with the recovery of Latin manuscripts, medieval copies of classical works that lay neglected or forgotten in monastic libraries across Europe. Soon enough, the humanist scholars sought Greek manuscripts as well, not restricting their searches to Italy or northern Europe, but pursuing them as far afield as monasteries in the Eastern Mediterranean. The end of the Byzantine Empire with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 brought emigrant Greek scholars and their manuscripts to Western Europe, enhancing the range of available sources. The humanist revival of Latin letters defined elite education in Europe for centuries, providing the curriculum for both a moral and a literary education from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth and beyond.

In the Renaissance, humanist scholars broadened their studies beyond Greek and Latin to include Hebrew, not only because the Bible was written in it but also because it was widely considered the original language of humankind. What started as the recovery of Latin letters grew into an increasingly polyglot affair; trilingual colleges were founded in Louvain (1517) and Paris (1530). Hebrew made European men of learning familiar with a Levantine, Semitic language. It also put the Christian scholars of the Renaissance into a complicated relationship with their Jewish contemporaries: they at once relied on them for their expertise and yet condescended to them on account of their religious difference.

The European study of Hebrew led to the study of Arabic, as well as of other Semitic languages, such as Aramaic (known as Chaldean); Syriac, the language especially of Near Eastern Christians in late antiquity; Ge`ez (known as Aethiopic); and Coptic. Knowledge of these languages was believed to enhance the understanding of Hebrew. Attention to Arabic could, therefore, be justified not merely on polemical or missionary grounds but also as a tool for understanding Christian Scripture itself. In significant ways, the study of Arabic followed the same path that the study of Hebrew had: first the creation of grammars and dictionaries, then the gradual translation of classical texts (the Hebrew Bible), on to the study of the Talmud and the main rabbinical commentators on Scripture, and eventually to the study of these writings as an end in itself. There were significant

differences: the Jews held a unique (and unenviable) place in Christian theology, and they had lived on European soil in recent memory, or—in Italy, the Netherlands, the Holy Roman Empire, and Poland-Lithuania—did so in the present. Their lack of political clout, moreover, made them easier to dismiss than the powerful and more distant Muslims.

European scholars recognized (and, indeed, overestimated) the family relationship of Arabic to Hebrew, and many thought that Arabic could clarify obscure Hebrew words. In addition, Arabic translations of the Bible existed in the Levant, and Europeans hoped that gathering them might illuminate obscure passages in the Hebrew Bible. The Complutensian Polyglot Bible, completed in Alcalà de Henares, near Madrid, in 1517, and the three Polyglot Bibles that followed were all the result of massive efforts of erudition and typography, as well as piety; they were the scholarly equivalent of Gothic cathedrals. Their goal was to bring together the biblical text in as many languages as possible. The Paris and the London Polyglots both contained Arabic versions of the Bible 26 Even if some scholars studied Arabic for its own sake, into the nineteenth century others continued to consider Arabic together with other Semitic languages, and especially as a resource for understanding biblical Hebrew.

Arabic was also the tongue of several communities of Eastern Christians and their liturgies and Bibles. Both Catholics and Protestants hoped to find in the Eastern churches evidence of the antiquity of their own beliefs and traditions. The Catholic Church, in particular, whose missions to the Holy Land had begun in the medieval period, sought to cultivate a special bond with the Christian communities of the Eastern Mediterranean, even compelling the Maronite Church of Mount Lebanon to join the Catholic Church in 1584. The Maronite College in Rome would form a link between Europe and the Christian Levant throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Above all, both Catholic and Protestant Europeans studied Arabic because they considered the language useful for shoring up their religious traditions. In an age of confessional states (states with an official religion), a ruler's legitimacy was based on religious and political theology. Even so, the interests that early modern scholars exhibited in

practice were much broader than the mandates they used to justify their scholarship. Alongside official motivations, equally important ones were not articulated but can be reconstructed by observing the scholars at work. Attaining an objective view of Islamic culture was not an explicit goal, but in their explorations, scholars roamed well beyond the dictates of "utility," narrowly construed.

From the late sixteenth century to the late seventeenth, Europeans created their own tools for the study of Arabic. The history of the early European Arabists is one of penury and struggle with such basic problems as obtaining manuscripts to study, mastering the lexical wealth of Arabic, and grasping the complex rules of its grammar. Over time, collective sweat and toil made these challenges less forbidding. The Dutch, especially, led the way. The great Leiden scholar Joseph Scaliger left a small but significant donation of Arabic books to the Leiden University Library, later enriched by a gift from his student Jacobus Golius. Scaliger, a man of many interests, had studied Arabic and had even lived with his onetime Arabic teacher, Guillaume Postel. The Arabic grammar of the Dutch prodigy Thomas Erpenius, published in 1613, was the standard reference into the early nineteenth century. For lexicography, Golius's Lexicon Arabico-Latinum (1653), a collation of several Arabic dictionaries, including that of al-Jawhari, replaced such earlier efforts as the Lexicon of Franciscus Raphelengius. Scholars elsewhere worked toward the same ends: the early English Arabist William Bedwell spent much of his life working on a dictionary that was never published, and, in Milan, Antonio Giggi translated al-Fīrūzābādī's dictionary, in 1632. Thanks especially to the contributions of Erpenius and Golius, the problem of teaching correct Arabic was in large measure solved by the middle of the seventeenth century. For the next two centuries, the instruments that they created would serve as vital references, and many of the protagonists of this book taught themselves Arabic from those pages.

Traditionally, Oriental studies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been seen as a Protestant achievement, though more recent scholarship has recovered Catholic contributions. Catholic scholars of the seventeenth century produced one of the first Arabic dictionaries, a new

translation of the Vulgate into Arabic, and, most importantly, the first accurate translation of the Qur'an into a European language, the history of which is recounted in Chapter 2. A Catholic scholar created a first Western encyclopedia of Islamic history and letters, the Bibliothéque Orientale, which is investigated in Chapter 4. This book integrates both Catholic and Protestant contributions and brings out their similarities and connections.

Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, was also the language of most highbrow intellectual output in Muslim lands, from the religious disciplines to scientific treatises. Yet it was just one of the three languages educated Muslims were expected to know, at least in the Ottoman lands. Persian was the idiom of courtliness, poetry, and many mystical writings. Ottoman Turkish served for everyday conversation, and was also the language of administration and the law. Both Persian and Turkish shared an alphabet with Arabic, and contained copious Arabic loanwords, but these were in all other respects three distinct languages for different intellectual activities. Europeans studied Persian and Turkish in the wake of Arabic, albeit not to the same extent. This book focuses on Arabic. A history told through Persian would be slightly different. Most obviously, it would offer a different geography—going all the way to South Asia—and different protagonists, both on the Muslim and on the Christian side.

Geographically the narrative marches from Rome and Padua north to Paris, Oxford, London, Cambridge, and Utrecht, and east to Leipzig. If such peregrinations prevent in-depth study of one location, they bring into view the parallels and connections between scholars of different languages, Christian sects, and affiliations. Spain, which to some degree was isolated from the European Republic of Letters, does not sit in the foreground of this study, yet it is nonetheless a subtle but insistent presence. Spain played a role in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European Arabic studies, and books written by European scholars, including Protestant ones, circulated there. Indeed, the translation of the Qur'an by Lodovico Marracci, which, as Chapter 2 will show, was crucial to the modern Western understanding of the Qur'an, began with a Qur'an commentary that had

been collected in Spain by the papal nuncio Cardinal Camillo Massimo.

This book is not the history of the formation of a field or the emergence of a discipline; disciplines in the modern sense are not to be sought in an era in which scholars could and did pursue broad and eclectic interests. The present work focuses on a single area of inquiry, but its subjects did not. To take but one example: Adriaan Reland, whose work on Islam is discussed in Chapter 3, was also interested in Persian, Hebrew, Malay, Urdu, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, and the native American languages, and published maps of Persia, Japan, Java, and Palestine. (Nor was he a mere dabbler; his geographical study of the Holy Land was deemed, in the nineteenth century, "next to the Bible ... the most important book for travellers in the Holy Land.")

Although the Arabists of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe pursued very different career paths, and did not necessarily hold university posts in Arabic, they recognized a common set of problems and were able to tackle these across national, linguistic, and even confessional boundaries. At the same time as they competed, Catholics and Protestants used each other's scholarship and pursued common goals. Occasional direct Catholic—Protestant exchanges, if not outright collaborations, are recorded. The new European knowledge of Islam was formed through this competition and cooperation among scholars—the Republic of Arabic Letters.

Conclusion

What brought the [Republic of Arabic Letters](#) to an end? Eventually the keen sense of analogy, even kinship, felt by several generations of European scholars faded away. The heyday of the Republic, from 1650 to 1750, was an exceptional era in the European evaluation of Islam, a time when the religious, literary, and intellectual traditions of Muslim peoples held so much promise in the eyes of their European students. The distinction this book makes between the creation of knowledge, on the one hand, and normative reevaluation, on the other, can help us understand what happened at midcentury, when the overall perception of Islam changed from one of similarity to its European equivalents to one of difference. In general, the preceding chapters show greater knowledge and

greater sympathy proceeding hand in hand. Yet these two interrelated processes could be decoupled. The story of Islam and its reception in the European Enlightenment is not merely about the many ways in which the attainments of European Arabic scholarship were assimilated into the Enlightenment's order of knowledge. It is also a tale of how normative ideas about Islam changed, especially after 1750.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the sense of kinship with Islam waned both within the broad intellectual culture of Europe and among the community of European scholars of Arabic. Over the course of the century there had been an evolution in the way Europeans understood themselves in regard both to non-Europeans and to their own past. The European economy had changed from primarily agrarian to increasingly commercial, with resultant shifts in manners, architecture, and urban life, transformations that seemed to support the notion of European singularity. Since the Renaissance, numerous observers argued, European civilization had been on a path that might be described as "progress," which marked it off from its own medieval past and from other regions of the world. This path ran from the recovery of classical letters and the invention of the printing press to the "new philosophy" of Descartes and Isaac Newton; over time it led to an increasingly secular European intellectual culture and self-definition, which in turn lowered interest in Islam. No longer considered an equivalent of Christianity (albeit a false one), the religion's status dropped. It came to be regarded as a force holding Muslims back.

Contributing to this reassessment was a diminishment in the geopolitical status of Muslim states. In 1736 the Safavids were deposed by Nadir Shah, who soon threatened the Mughals as well; when he was assassinated in 1747, his empire quickly disintegrated. Meanwhile, the European powers' hold on parts of South Asia, particularly Bengal, expanded during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Then, after a major defeat at Russian hands in 1774, the Ottoman Empire seemed to teeter on the brink of collapse. In addition, the European economy significantly outpaced the Ottoman one throughout the eighteenth century, and the balance of trade shifted: in the seventeenth century, French merchants

imported coffee from the Ottoman Empire, but by the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire was importing coffee grown in European colonial plantations.' Eventually, as the overland trade with Asia was rendered obsolete by European sea trade, the Mediterranean became a backwater. European observers took the great Muslim states' decline in power as confirmation that luxury brought about moral, cultural, and political corrosion, and they viewed the religion of Islam as complicit in this process. In short, due to new European self-definitions and to global geopolitical transformations, Islam ceased to play the exemplary role in the European imagination that it had done for such a significant season.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, European scholars disagreed as to whether Islam was a kindred tradition or a manifestly inferior one. Reiske thought that Arabic literature was akin, if not superior, to the Western classical tradition, while his contemporary and former classmate Johann David Michaelis believed that, for instance, the Muslim tradition of Qur'anic commentary had few insights to offer; he was persuaded that he could read the Qur'an without its assistance not only perfectly well but also more accurately.' A gulf separates Michaelis's sense of superiority from earlier European scholars' indebtedness to Muslim mediation and their willingness to be guided by native judgments. Islam continued to be studied, but not necessarily as a religion endowed with exemplary qualities.

The internal intellectual dynamics of the European study of Islam also transformed over time. At the beginning of the study of Arabic, European scholars had no recourse but to rely on native grammars and dictionaries, and to accept native interpretations of the Qur'an. As time went on, they emancipated themselves from that dependence. For example, after the publication of Marracci's Qur'an, which included notes drawn from five different Qur'anic commentaries, translating further commentaries lost urgency.' Michaelis's rejection of the commentarial tradition as obsolete mirrored the earlier course of European Hebrew studies, which by about 1700 rejected the rabbinic tradition that had seemed so full of promise to earlier generations of Christian scholars. The ladder could be kicked away once it had been climbed. In the

long run, learning more about the Islamic tradition led to the devaluation of many of its aspects.

To be sure, Arabic philology remained alive in Europe—it did not depend merely or mainly on sympathy—but its forms changed. Difference, rather than analogy, was emphasized. It is worth noting that drawing analogies is not an intrinsically sound strategy. As we have seen, European scholars could overstate similarities, misrepresenting Islam to make it more familiar. Likewise, emphasizing distinctions can lead to specious exaggerations of difference—but it can also bring about more precise knowledge. No longer attempting to reduce Arabic grammar to the rules of Greek and Latin, or Arabic literature to the conventions and categories of classical Greek literature, for example, was an achievement that had eluded earlier generations of European scholars of Arabic.

Eighteenth-century writers, influenced by the heightened sense of European distinctiveness, mined Islamic literary and intellectual traditions for examples of the foreignness of Muslim lands. Traditions of knowledge that are at the margins of the present inquiry, such as travel literature, often served such ends, but even Arabic scholarship could be enrolled to the cause. A case in point is d'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale, which served as a storehouse of material for Romantic writers looking for Levantine "color."

Was the Republic of Arabic Letters then a mere flash in the pan, an intellectual cul-de-sac? Jumping to that conclusion would be too hasty. For one thing, it would overlook the movement's later impact. The great achievements of nineteenth-century Islamic studies in the West were built on the work of members of the Republic. When the illustrious French Arabist Isaac-Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838) was starting out, he relied on the work of Reiske and his predecessors, and standard works produced in the Republic remained in use and in print throughout the nineteenth century—indeed, Ockley's History of the Saracens was published more often in the second half of the nineteenth century than throughout the eighteenth.' The greatest success of all was Sale's Qur'an translation, which remained the standard English version into the twentieth century.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that Western interactions with the peoples and religion of Islam did not go directly from Crusades to modern colonialism. The Republic of Arabic Letters stands as a reminder of a moment of intercultural possibility that our historical macronarratives have often overlooked. As a result of continued publication, not to mention continued existence on library shelves across Europe and North America, the knowledge produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was transmitted to later eras. Even as nineteenth-century Western views of Islam and of Muslims turned increasingly patronizing, the works of the Republic of Arabic Letters offered, at least in principle, a rebuke to any wholly dismissive view of Islam and its religious and intellectual traditions. As imperfect and incomplete as the Republic's intellectual contributions may have been, it seems fair to say that they did justice to Abū'l-Fidā' 's maxim: if you cannot know everything, do not for that reason give up, for partial knowledge is always preferable to ignorance. <>

The Act of Being: the Philosophy of Revelation in Mullâ Sadrâ by Christian Jambet ; translated by Jeff Fort [Zone Books, 9781890951696]

The Sufi Islamic-Greek influences upon the metaphysical ontology Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, (d. 1641) aka Mullâ Sadrâ are explored in this original study of the Persian Philosopher's contemporary revelence,

Exploring the thought of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, an Iranian Shi'ite of the seventeenth century: a universe of politics, morality, liberty, and order that is indispensable to our understanding of Islamic thought and spirituality.

This lluminating study by Christian Jambet explores the essential elements of the philosophical system of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, an Iranian Shi'ite of the seventeenth century. The writings of Mulla Sadra Shirazi (d. 1640) bear witness to the divine revelation in every act of being, from the humblest to the most celebrated. More generally, Islamic philosophy employs an ontology of the real that is important to the destiny of metaphysics, an ontology that belongs to our own universe of thought. The Act of Being, nourished by the Sufism

of Ibn al-'Arabi, the philosophy of classical Islam, the thought inherited from the Greeks, and the esoteric and mystical dimension of Shi'ism, seeks to make sense of this intuition of the real. Mulla Sadra saw the world as moving ceaselessly in an uninterrupted revolution of its substances, in which infinite existence breaks through the successive boundaries of the sensible and the intelligible, the mineral and the angelic. In a flourish of epiphanies, in the multiplied mirror of bodies and souls, Mulla Sadra perceived absolute divine liberty. Revealing freedom in the metamorphosis of the believer and the sage, existence teaches the imitation of the divine that can be seen "in its most beautiful form." Reading Mulla Sadra reveals the nexus of politics, morality, liberty, and order in his universe of thought--a universe, as Christian Jambet shows, that is indispensable to our understanding of Islamic thought and spirituality.

Excerpt: When a philosophical work written by a Westerner attempts to articulate the essential elements of a philosophical system constructed by an Iranian Shī`ite of the seventeenth century, the potential reader has the right to ask: For what reasons has the author of this book spent so many years reading the works of this man who will always remain a foreigner, whose very face he will never know, and whose beliefs belong to the intellectual universe that came to an end, in the West, with the mathematization of physical space, with the end of political theology, and with the great revolutions that radically modified the image of reason?

Rarely does such a question fail to become an objection. After reading The Act of Being, an erudite and attentive friend, who had long before included my first work on Islamic philosophy in the series he was then editing,' wrote to me in all honesty that for us today there is not much to learn from my dear Mullā Sadrā. Working before the age of modern science, deeply rooted in the soil of metaphysics, subject to the demands of religious revelation, Sadrā, like all the thinkers of Islam, is merely an object of learned study and of the history of philosophy, a kind of scholarly curiosity or even an antiquated exhibit fit for a museum.

This objection is not entirely without merit. I would even like to add a few arguments to it, in order to see whether it is possible to refute it in a serious manner.

The first argument against such an undertaking is of a historical nature. The interest that Western culture has shown for Islam, for its thinkers, poets, and mystics, has its own history. Roughly speaking, this history has had three major phases since the eighteenth century: first there was the "Oriental Renaissance," as Raymond Schwab has called it. Then, in response to the positivism of Ernest Renan, there was the discovery of the great spiritual figures of Islam, as part of a quest aimed at starting a dialogue between the mystics of the three religions of the Book — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Finally, today, the intent is no longer to gain self-knowledge in proximity with Islam, but rather to come to know Islam in its foreignness, or even its fundamental hostility toward ourselves. A concern no longer for the same, for similitude, but for the other, for difference, for the absence of any common space. This more recent perspective, which is eager to take up the vocabulary of war ("clash of civilizations," and so on) is the unreflective response to the political emergence of Islam at the present moment of world history.

The first phase can be associated with the names of Goethe and Hegel, the second with those of Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, Richard Walzer, and Seyyed Nasr. The third phase, our own, is seen as the time of the sociologists and the political scientists. The history of this research would thus show that the period when Orientalism was closely linked with the colonial era, and with that of the emancipation of colonized peoples, has ended. The present is seen as a time involving the reciprocal criminalization of the West and the Islamic East, the hegemony of "revolutionary" doctrines in Islam, and the ruin of all "dialogue" between the peoples of the Book. The major conflicts centered in the Middle East are said to overwhelm a more spiritual Islam, drowning it in blood — a spiritual Islam whose death knell was rung during the Islamic revolution in Iran.

The second argument is closely related to the first. Islam, it is said, is above all a political religion and gives rise essentially to political theologies, such that the only reason to study its ideologues would be to illuminate this politics, identified entirely with the "struggle on the path of faith." The philosophers, mystics, and poets should be placed

on the shelf of curiosities because they lack any concrete effectivity and reflect a scholarly culture cut off from the popular masses who make history. This observation is not false. The works of a thinker such as Sadrā, like those of Avicenna, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Hanbal, remain unknown to the people and are of interest only to scholars. The separation between philosophy, spirituality or Qur'ānic studies, and popular culture obviously promotes a religion for simple, ordinary people characterized by a naive adherence to the letter of the Qur'ān, to traditional customs, and to the teachings of local preachers, who may be more or less well informed. The simplicity of Wahhabism no doubt partially explains its success, and it promotes the expansion of the Islamist political ideologues. These considerations certainly do little to weaken such an argument.

Let us remark, however, that the culture of religious scholars is more consequential than is often acknowledged. In Iran, and more broadly in the Shiite world, the actors on the political stage use the discourse of classical philosophers or theologians, citing it and adapting it for their own purposes. It suffices to recall the example of the Ayatollah Khomeini, or one of his successors. If Khomeini turned his back, in a way, on Mullā Sadrā's thought, he nevertheless knew it very well, and his political gesture cannot be explained without taking into account his internal dialogue and his critical relation with the great Iranian mystic and philosopher. You turn your back only on someone who rules over you — and who for that reason influences you in the very gesture of separation. In the Sunni world, the rupture between mystical religion and political religion is in itself a major historical fact that only the study of the spiritual philosophy of Islam allows us to illuminate in a satisfactory way.

It therefore seems to me that the doubts and confusions can be dispelled if we examine their presuppositions.

The first objection to there being any present interest in studying the philosophies of Islam emphasizes the irreducible fracture that separates the Western system of thought based on the contestable in our eyes, without illuminating them through the exegesis practiced by Muslim authors on the religious revelation of these practices and,

consequently, without paying precise attention to the ontology of Islam that is unveiled by the philosophers and theologians, or even by the mystics? It is not in the surface discourse perpetually rehashed by the Muslim jurists that the truth of the political order is best revealed in Islam, but in the works of the philosophers, whether they turn away from politics or attempt to found it. Most often, philosophical and theological syntheses are conscious testimonies to the profound tension that animates Islam, a tension between a temporal vocation and a spiritual vocation that are simultaneously united and opposed.

The choice of an author like Mullā Sadrā thus becomes very clear. In order to understand this choice, we must not forget the importance of messianism for the ontology of Islam. Related to the "Servant" whose coming was announced by the prophets of Israel, to the "Suffering Servant" in the Old Testament, and to Jesus, and not without influence from the figure of Mani, who invented the notion of the "seal of prophecy," Muslim spirituality is an intense meditation on the essence, the prerogatives, and the demands of the complete Servant in proximity to his Lord. He is the Perfect Man, and the thinkers of Islam, inspired by the work of Ibn al-Arabi, focused their thought on the definition of this Perfect Man, on his future coming, and on his silent and active presence in this world and in the other metaphysical worlds. Already, Shī`ite thought, particularly Ismā`īlism, had thus proposed a scheme of sacred history, unfolding from its origin in the creation of Adam until the coming of the awaited Resurrector.

The study of such an ontology of history, one of the richest versions of which we are presenting here, is extremely important if we want to move forward in the comparative study of the three messianisms — Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. Such a study reveals a conception of human becoming that includes the exigency of man's divinization, or rather of his fulfilled resemblance to God, who made man in his own image and established him as "caliph of God on earth." The concept of the essential motion of all existents toward that point where the Perfect Man becomes the mirror of the divine names, a concept that we find in Mullā Sadrā, remarkably illuminates the dynamic orientation of Islam. Part of what is at stake in such a study is a philosophy of history that renounces the assertion of a supposed

"disenchantment of the world," and that renounces any abdication before a supposed "secularization" of historical time, seeing the everyday as only a surface phenomenon, beneath which the conflict internal to biblical and Qur'ānic messianism carries on its work. Toward what end? Toward what reconciliation? Toward what irreducible alterity? These are the very questions we face today.

The epistemological argument that maintains that these systems of thought are rendered obsolete by modern science or by the ascendancy of modern political thought disregards something that is nonetheless glaringly obvious. It is pointless to say to an entire culture that it is "behind," or that it has not completed the necessary journey to the age of scientific truth. It would be more useful to ask: Why, today, has such a culture, combined in a very complex way with multiple contributions from the West — in technology, economy, and ideology — begun to move, on the historical stage, so decidedly against the grain, and in such a flagrant way? Why is the present historical moment characterized by such a historical initiative?

To answer this by attempting to justify the "modernity" of Islamic science is pointless. To answer by deploring the "perverse" effects of a dead thought or a culture blocked in its development is to proffer a contradiction in terms. How, indeed, could a dead thought have any living effect (contestable or not, that is not the question here) if it is truly dead? What it would be necessary to understand, rather, is the following.

On the one hand, we would need to understand how the philosophy of Islam has a certain living power, from the very fact that it is not foreign to world history, because it is connected to and even interlinked with our own metaphysical destiny, both Greek and biblical. In the past, it already gave life to some of the most enduring categories of our vision of the world. A central example is provided here, when I examine the question of the existence of essence, in an attempt to give what I call the Avicennian moment its full importance.

On the other hand, we would have to ask how, against the background of a common metaphysics, Islam has maintained convictions foreign to those that made possible the development of modern philosophy in the West, as well as the worldviews that derive from these convictions. That is, we would

have to ask how it is not a thing of the past but rather lives according to its own rhythm, in a mode of historical life with its own logic, its own time, and its own autonomous finalities.

Such work goes far beyond the ambition of the present study. But it is at least within this perspective that I have written it. I would like to specify my method. My goal here was not primarily that of a historian of Islamic philosophy, although I do believe that I have been faithful to history and its demands. It is as a philosopher that I have attempted to read the philosophers, whether Western or Eastern, who are interrogated here. My only ambition has been to receive as faithfully as possible what Sadrā and those associated with him were trying to say, and to render manifest, in the language of a Western philosopher living today, the mode of appearance of being evident for these spirits in their immediate and direct vision. My method strives to be the phenomenology of a becoming, of a metamorphosis of thought, from its Hellenic bases to the Islamic figure of an absolute that is different from the absolute unveiled in Western Christian thought. That is my obvious debt to Hegel, whose teaching still seems indispensable to me, whatever the contestations with which practically all contemporary discourses have assailed it.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for the scrupulous and rigorous work done by Jeff Fort in translating this work into English — for he has done more than translate it; he has given it another life in a fitting and adequate philosophical language (and that is his specific contribution to this text), in all faithfulness to the original French. His work provided the occasion for a number of corrections and specifications, and in that sense, too, it cannot be seen as the passive reconstruction of a book in another language. Any errors or omissions in this book fall to me; the improvements and elucidations, however, owe a great deal to him. And for this I offer him my warmest thanks.

Contents

Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought by Sadr al-Din Shīrāzi, Critical Edition, Introduction, Glossary of Technical Terms and Index by Hossein Ziai [Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions Series, No. 13, Mazda Publishers, 9781568592824]

This volume is Part One of one of the most significant and truly philosophical texts of the post classical period in Arabic and Persian philosophy, published here for the first time in a critical edition. The text is titled Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought (al-Ta'līqāt 'alā Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Awwal ft Dawābit al-Fikr), and is an exemplum work in the revivalist scholastic tradition in Iran known as the "School of Isfahan."' This text represents the apogee of philosophical analysis of post classical Arabic and Persian philosophy, and in many ways it is the most innovative composition by the renowned Persian philosopher Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī best known as "Mullā Sadrā"—we shall henceforth refer to him as "Sadrā."

The text here published is in the illuminationist tradition and is distinct from the text-book genre where philosophy is limited by predetermined doctrine and is reduced to "handmaiden of theology." This text was, however, the least known of Sadrā's philosophical work during his life outside of specialist circles. This is because it was not meant for the broader scholastic audiences and was one of the author's "private" compositions. The author is

the most important figures of post classical philosophy in Islam taken as a whole, and a highly creative Persian thinker.

The present volume is one of the major results of my research in the past two decades on post Avicennan philosophical traditions, the creative side of which is defined by illuminationist philosophy. This text, Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought, is distinguished from textbooks on philosophy, in that Sadrā's approach is such that it does not limit the construction of philosophical arguments by pre-determined, or by given, dogmatic doctrine.

One of the aims of my research on post Avicennan philosophy has been to systematically identify principle texts in Arabic and Persian that form Sohravardī's illuminationist philosophy and inform us of the ways this innovative system continues in Iran from the end of the 12th c to the present. I have placed singular emphasis on identifying and publishing critical editions—including initial analysis—of philosophical texts first by Sohravardi himself, and subsequently by adherents of the new school, the Philosophy of Illumination (Hikmat al-Ishrāq), whose different types of compositions, commentaries and original work, continue Sohravardī's creative thinking after his brutal execution in Aleppo in 1191.

The Philosophy of Illumination is recognized as an independent school, and in order to study and write about its place in the history of the genesis and developments of philosophy in the Islamic civilization we must have access to critical editions of at least a core group of texts that represent its construction first by Sohravardī and then its development after him. I have been devoted to accomplishing this task, which has a two-fold significance. Firstly, the publication of exemplar texts in critical editions is the necessary preliminary step in the study of philosophy in Islam. Secondly, the more I have probed illuminationist texts and have analyzed specific problems and arguments such as especially theories of knowledge and the construction of a unified epistemological structure named "knowledge by presence," the more I have come to conclude that Sohravardi's legacy, his Philosophy of Illumination, has greatly impacted intellectual Persian poetry and in ways more than one has defined the poetic principle I have named

"Persian poetic wisdom." My work has also been instrumental in showing the inaccuracy of describing philosophy as it develops in Iran after Avicenna in subjective mystical terms. The use of the label, "theosophy" to describe the thought of Persian thinkers such as Sohravardi, Sadrā, Sabzevārī, and many others is inaccurate and also leads to misrepresentation of philosophy as some kind of subjective mysticism.

The publication of the present volume takes us closer to making available a representative group of texts that inform us of the development of philosophy in Iran during periods after Avicenna, and not determined by mysticism nor by theology. I have always felt that to firmly establish my claim that philosophy did not die out in the East after Avicenna, nor did it deteriorate into an ill-defined mystical "theosophy," we need first to have critical editions of a meaningful number of the important philosophical texts. Part Two of the present text, namely Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part Two: On the Light of Lights and the Principles the Ranks of Being (al-Ta`līqāt alā Sharh Hikmat al-Islirāq: al-Qism al-Thānī fi Nūr al-Anwār wa Rabadī al-Wujūd wa Tartībihā) was not published in 2011 because of the editors death, which will add to the plan of presenting representative texts that determine the origins and developments of illuminationist philosophy in Iran, from the time of Sohravardi in the 12th century to the present. The critical edition of Parts One and Two of Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination will add to the list of major critical editions of illuminationsit texts that I have published so far: Anvāriyya: Persian Commentary on Hikmat al-Isrāq; Shahrazūrī's Commentry on Hikmat al-Ishrāq; and Ibn Kammūna's al-Tanqīhāt .ft Sharh al-Talwīhāt. Refinement and Commentary on Sohravardī's Intimations: A Thirteenth Century Text on Natural Philosophy and Psychology.

The author of this text, Sadr al-Din al-Shīrāzī, is one of the most revered of all philosophers in Islam. His full name is Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Qavāmī Shīrāzī, and he is commonly known as "Mullā Sadrā." His honorific title is "Sadr al-Din" and his epithet is "Sadr al-Muta'allihin." He was born in Shīrāz in 979/ 1572 to a wealthy family. We know that his father was a "minister" in the Safavid court, but was also a scholar. Sadrā died in 1050/1572 while on his seventh pilgrimage journey to Mekka in Basra where he is buried, and where his grave was known until recent times. Unlike authors of earlier periods we have substantial information on his life, several autographs of his works, many letters, and a good number of glosses on earlier textual traditions have survived.

After completing his preliminary studies in his native Shiraz, the young thinker travels first to Qazvin and later to Isfahān, the seat of Safavid rule, perhaps the most important center of Islamic learning and scholarship in the 16th and 17th centuries. In Isfahān he first enrolls in courses on traditional Islamic scholarship, commonly named the "Transmitted Sciences" (al- `ulūm al-naqliyya), where the great jurist Bahā' al-Dīn Muhammad al-`Āmilī (d. 1031/1622) was laying the foundations of a new Shī`ite jurisprudence. Sadrā's early studies of the emerging Shī`ite jurisprudence, Hadīth, and Koranic commentary under the famous Shī`ite thinker distinguishes him from many of the earlier philosophers of Medieval Islam, whose knowledge religious subjects were not at the level of ranking clergy. This side of Sadrā's intellectual formation marked his thinking and represents one of the two main trends in his writings. He is known both as a jurist (faqih), considered to be at the rank of one who has achieved "independent reason" (i.e. has become a "mujtahidn'), as well as a philosopher.

The exact nature and expression of accepted philosophy in Shī`ism needs to be studied more, but it is safe to state that Sadrā's philosophical work, especially his popular texts such as al-Asfār al-Arba `a (The Four Journeys), and a few others that define his holistic reconstruction named, "Metaphysical Philosophy" (al-Hikma al-Muta`āliya), present philosophy in a framework that was not deemed hostile by the clergy, which marks an important point in the history of philosophy in Islam. While philosophy was never accepted by mainstream Islam, and in fact was shunned by the fundamentalists initiated by the anti-rationalist writings of Ibn Taymiyya in the 14th c, and later labelled "heretical" by Salafi figures from the 17th and 18th centuries on, a select group of Shī `ite scholastic figures accepted philosophy,

especially the tradition refined and expressed in a limited form by Persian scholars in Iranian scholastic centers such as Shīrāz, Tabriz, Qazvīn, and Isfahān. The role played by Sadrā and the substantial number of leading scholars he trained is of monumental significance. That philosophy is not just tolerated but actively pursued by some of the highest ranking Shī`ite Ulamā at present in Shī`ite circles, is a direct result of achievements in philosophical composition by Sadrā and his students in Iran. These scholars produced substantial numbers of work in various domains of philosophical analysis and discourse, but very few are available in critical editions and fewer still have been rigorously studied by historians of philosophy. Also, there are a few texts, such as the one here published, that were apart from the main group of philosophical writings, and belong to a more "private" set of work that were not meant for the larger scholastic readership of the Madrasas, but for private discussion among select numbers of students under the supervision of the teacher. This possible dual character of Sadrā's work needs to be fully studied. I plan to present such an analysis when Part Two of the present work is also published and when we have access to a more comprehensive range of Sadrā's sophisticated analytical work.

Sadrā's philosophical training commenced during the same period he was studying the traditional religious syllabus. We know that once Sadra entered Isfahān and while studying with Bahā' al-Din Muhammad al-`Amilī, he commenced his study of the "Intellectual Sciences" (al- `ulūm al- `aqliyya) in earnest with one of the greatest original Islamic thinkers of all time, Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī, well-known as "Mir Dāmād" (d.1040/1631). This famous, erudite philosopher, also known as the "Seal of Scientists" (Khātam al-Hukamā') and the "Third Teacher"—after Aristotle and Fārābī—taught Sadrā a comprehensive range of Arabic and Persian texts that form the core of of philosophical teachings in Islam. Mir Dāmād himself was a remarkably creative thinker and innovative philosopher. His concept Hudūth Dahrī (Eternal Generation) anticipated Bergson's "Creative Evolution," and had it not been for his pupil he would have been remembered more than he

currently is. In many ways Mir Dāmād's endeavors, funded by Safavid court's enlightened endowments of the arts and sciences, lead to the establishment of superior libraries where the older manuscript traditions were collected, copied and published. Evidence for this profuse activity are the tremendous numbers of Arabic and Persian manuscripts presently housed in major collections all over the world, all produced in Isfahān in this period. Mir Dāmād's texts on philosophical subjects, especially his Qabasāt and his Jadhawāt, are among the first that lead to the "revival" of philosophy known as the "School of Isfahān," as indicated.

Sadrā's studies with this Mir Dāmād lead him to the compilation of his most famous work, which is the next synthesis and reconstruction of metaphysics in Islamic philosophy after Sohravardi. This philosophical work is identified as an independent school in Islamic philosophy, and is perhaps the most dominant at present, and bears the name "Metaphysical Philosophy" (al-Hikma al-Muta`āliyya) chosen specifically by Sadrā himself.

Sadrā's fame as master of the then accepted both branches of Shī`ite learning: the Transmitted and the Intellectual, soon spread over the Safavid capitol, but he did not accept any official position in courtly Safavid circles in Isfahān. He did, however, accept to teach in the Madrasa built and endowed by the Safavid nobleman Allāh-verdī Khān in his native Shiraz.

Sadrā trained a number of students who become famous pillars of philosophy in Iran, and their texts are studied in scholastic circles. His two most significant pupils are: Muhammad ibn Murtada, well-known as "Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī," whose work, especially his al-Kalamūt al-Maknūna, emphasize the more religious component of philosophical expression; and 'Abd a1-Razzāq ibn Husayn Lāhījī, whose Persian summaries of the Peripatetic side of Sadrā's philosophical works have been especially popular in Iran. His Shawāriq al-Ilhām deserves special mention here for its inclusion of an older Avicennan view of Ethics. Both pupils were also married to two of Sadrā's daughter's, which is indicative of an increasingly "intimate" relation

between master and teacher in Shī`ite learned circles, prevalent to this day.

Later in life Sadrā retreated from society and from city life altogether, and stayed in the small village of Kahak, near Qomm. This period marks Sadrā's increased preoccupation with the contemplative life, and is also the period when he composed most of his major work. Judging by the voluminous extent of his textual compositions—a recent edition of his magnum opus philosophical work, al-Asfar al-Arba'a, alone is in ten volumes----this period of Sadrā's life represents the most fruitful time of his life.

Monumental though the impact of Sadrā's works and thinking have been on Islamic intellectual history, very few comprehensive, systematic studies of his philosophy are available in western languages. The earliest extensive study was done by Max Hörten, whose Das Philosophische System von Schirazi (1913), while problematic in places and difficult to use because of the author's use of pre-modern philosophical terminology and older Orientalist views, is still a good source for the study of Sadrā's philosophical thought. In more recent decades Henry Corbin's text-editions and studies opened a new chapter in western scholarship on Islamic-Iranian philosophy. Corbin's emphasis on the presumed esoteric dimension of Sadrā's thought has, however, hindered a properly philosophical analysis of his metaphysical philosophy.

More than fifty works are attributed to Sadrā. They can be grouped into two parts indicative of the two main trends of his thought mentioned above. His compositions that are predominantly on subjects that relate to the "Transmitted Sciences," i.e. that cover the traditional subjects of Islamic jurisprudence, Koranic commentary, Hadith scholarship, and theology, are best exemplified by: (1) Sharh al-Usūl al-Kāfi. This is a commentary on Kulayni's famous work, the first Shī `ite Hadith compilation on specifically juridical issues; (2) Mafātīh al-Ghayb, an incomplete Koranic commentary (tafsīr); (3) A number of short treatises each devoted to the Koranic commentary of a specific Sūra; (4) A short treatise called "Imāmat" on SW' he theology; (5) A number of glosses on standard Kalām texts, such as Baydāwī's Tafsir, and Qūshchī's Sharh al-Tajrid.

Sadrā's more significant texts, widely thought by Muslims to represent the apogee of Islamic philosophy, are those that indicate the second major trend of his thought, named the "Intellectual Sciences." His major texts in this group include: (1) Al-Asfār al-Arba'a al-Aqliyya (the Four Intellectual Journeys). This is Sadrā's magnum opus philosophical work, and includes detailed discussions on all philosophical subjects, minus logic; (2) Al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyya (Dvine Testimonies), which is generally accepted to be an epitome of the Asfār; (3) Glossess on Avicenna's Shifā and (4) Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination, Part One of which is here published in Arabic text.

Finally we should present the reader with a selected list of the most famous philosophical problems commonly associated with Sadrā. These are: (1) The ontological position called "primacy of existence" (asālat al-wujūd) which was chosen by Sadrā after a critical evaluation of the various ontological principles including the "primacy of essence," held by the illuminationists. His position is not simply that of the Peripatetics as explained by Avicenna, but Sadrā adds to this the illuminationist view of equivocal being, and considers that while being is primary it is also given to degrees of less and more in a continuous sense, as the illuminationists had applied this principle to essence. (2) Sadrā's other ontological position, commonly referred to as "unity of being" (wadat al- wujūd) is distinguished from the Peripatetic position which regards being to be a "common term" which for him is a "common concept." (3) The problem of the "unity of subject and object" (ittihād al-'āqil wa al-niā'qūl), which is a principle illuminationist epistemological position in the proof of the primacy of knowledge by presence and is also upheld by Sadrā.

The Text and the Edition

The Arabic text here published is named Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought (al-Ta `līqāt 'alā Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Awwal fi Dawābit al-Fikr). The term "addenda" (ta `līqāt, sg. to `līq) refers to one of several types of philosophical commentary. These are: (1) Shark (commentary), which may be in one of two styles,

interlinear comments on the main text, or commentary added in blocks; (2) Tanqīhāt (refinements); (3) Ta līqāt (addenda); (4) Hāshiya (gloss), which is often taken to be the same way comments are made and added to a text as in a Ta'līq; (5) Talkhīs (epitome), which was more prevalent in periods before the 12th c. and is also a type of philosophical work in the Peripatetic tradition, where an epitome (short or long) of a major text is produced by later scholars. For example, there are several epitomes of Aristotelian texts composed by Averroes, which were one of the main methods employed in publishing works on Aristotelian philosophy in Islam.

In the text, Addenda, Sadrā presents his arguments, discussions, rebuttals, and refinements concerning specific philosophical topics, problems and propositions in relation to two texts: (1) The main text, which is Sohravardi's Hikmat al-Ishrāq, and (2) The secondary text, which is Shark Hikmat al-Ishrāq by the 13th century Persian Illuminationist philosopher, Qutb al-Din Shīrāzī. The text is in a refined, technical philosophical Arabic. Sadrā introduces the topic he wishes to analyze by quoting either directly from Sohravardi's text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq or by quoting Qutb al-Din's text, but he then goes directly to what he considers to be the core illuminationist position on a given topic. Sadra does not quote the full text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq nor that of Shark Hikmat al-Ishrāq, usually quoting only a few phrases ended with "the rest"— the abbreviation is placed at the end of the short quote, introduced by "his [Sohravardi's] statement" (qawluhū) or by "the commentator [Shīrāzī] said" (gala al-shārih), and the reader is expected to have access to the full text. I have therefore added the full text in footnotes so that the reader will easily be able to access the complete text of the argument to thus better follow Sadrā's additional comments. The additions by Sadrā are usually his own highly refilled analysis of the argument at hand plus the conclusions he makes ill favor of, or against, the original argument as presented by Sohravardi and clarified by Shīrāzī. However, in the majority of cases the arguments are directed against Sohravardi's text alone. It is difficult to follow Sadrā's arguments, and the reader must be familiar with Sohravardi's teachings in general and of course with his specific arguments and constructs

concerning a specific problem. On the whole Sadrā takes an illuminationist position on the majority of the philosophical problems and topics he examines, and his aim is not to refute Sohravardī, but neither to simply comment on his illuminationist doctrine. His aim is to add to and to refine illuminationist arguments thus to present illuminationist philosophy as a more systematic and more self-consistent system. In this way Sadrā uses the method of augmenting (`allaqa 'ala) the argument by presenting ultimately his own often innovative refinements and constructions of philosophical propositions.

In sum, this critical edition of Sadrā's, al-Ta `līqāt 'ala Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Thānī fi Dawabit al-Fikr, is based on the above manuscripts and editions. In the annotations to the text, I have provided the full text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq based on my own edition of Shahrazūrī's, Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq, to facilitate the reader's access to the main arguments as presented by Sadrā. The critical edition therefore includes not just Sadrā's Addenda but Sohravardī's text, and in parts whenever necessary Shīrāzī's commentary as well.

The preparation and production of this critical edition of the Arabic text of Sadrā's, al-Ta `līqāt 'aid Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq, has been complex and time consuming. The result, it is hoped, will add to the body of critical editions of texts that collectively make up the tradition of post Avicennan philosophy as it originated and developed in Iran through the analytical work of innovative Persian thinkers. The publication of this text will help in our analysis of what is philosophy after Avicenna, and will help dismiss the previous errors of historians that philosophy died in East after Avicenna, and will also help refine the earlier misrepresentation that philosophy deteriorated into an ill-defined, subjective mystical theosophy. Reading and analyzing the details of Sadrā's sophisticated philosophical arguments and constructions in areas that include semantics, formal logic, material logic, foundations of physics—including the critique of Aristotelian matter and form—epistemology and the analysis of propositions that cover the topic "sameness of knowing and being" and how the first principles are obtained, will indicate clearly that this is a philosophical text of a refined nature, one

that exemplifies a high standard in philosophical analysis and expression. And, philosophy did not die in Iran.

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Islamic Philosophy after Avicenna
Islamic philosophy after Avicenna developed in ways even more innovative than in the past, transforming the previously dominant Greek element into new, reconstructed holistic systems with their own distinguishing characteristics. As demonstrated by H. Corbin, S. H. Nasr, S. J. Ashtiyani, M. Ha'iri Yazdi, Gh. H. Dinani-Ibrahimi, S. J. Sajjadi, J. Walbridge, M. Aminrazavi, and other scholars, Suhrawardī's Philosophy of Illumination served as the main conduit for these developments.

The new, holistic reconstructed system is distinguished from the earlier Avicennan Peripatetic philosophy by virtue of the epistemology of "knowledge by presence" (al- ílm al-hudūrī) a unified epistemological theory with a principle position that is capable of describing types of knowing, including the obtaining of primary principles. The Illuminationist (ishrāqī) theory of light and vision, and the principle ontological position of the "sameness of knowing and being," likewise rank among the technical refinements specific to the Illuminationist system.

Suhrawardī's innovative philosophical oeuvre was hailed as a major achievement soon after his execution in Aleppo in 1191; he was recognized as the founder of the new system and the "Master of Illumination" (Shaykh al-Ishrāq). Foremost among philosophers who wrote commentaries on Illuminationist texts during the 13th century was Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī, author of Sharh Hikmatal-ishrāq. In the course of time the Illuminationist tradition became widely recognized as the second school of Islamic philosophy (after Avicenna's Peripatetic school) and following Shahrazūrī, thinkers such as Qutb al-Din Shīrāzī and Said b. Mansūr Ibn Kammūna (13th century); Qīyās al-Din Mansūr Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Din Davvānī (15th & 16th century); Nizām al-Din Harawī (16th century); and Sadr al-Din Shīrāzī (17th century) wrote extensive commentaries on Illuminationist texts. The last great Illuminationist work is Sadr al-Din Shīrāzī's al-Taʿlīqāt âlā Sharh hikmat al-Ishrāq. Considerable more research is required, however, to ascertain the nature and the extent of Illuminationist writings after the 17th century. The discovery of the manuscript of Mir al-Fu 'ad, introduced here for the first time, is a clear indication that Illuminationist texts were studied and independent works were authored in this tradition during the 19th century. It is hoped that this publication will turn attention to philosophical writings in Persian from a period in Islamic philosophy that while of great interest, remains neglected in western scholarship.

Nur al-Fuʾād and its Author, Shihāb al-Din Kumijanī
In the course of my research into the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in UCLA's Special Collections at the University Research Library, I discovered a Unicom autograph Persian manuscript titled Mir al-Fuʾād Mr. Mohammad Karimi Zanjani Asl, co-author of this edition, subsequently discovered three other copies of Nūr al-Fuʾād, two of which—one in Berlin and one in Qum—predate the UCLA manuscript. The four texts form the basis of the present publication.

Nūr al-Fuʾād is authored by Shihāb al-Din Kumījānī (d. 1895) a strict follower of the Illuminationist school' in the 19th century who is extolled as "The Second Master of Illumination." Most likely a Kurd

from Western Iran, Kumījānī, studied with Hādī Sabzivārī for nearly two decades in Sabzivār, a city in northeastern Iran. His full name as it appears in the manuscript and in Manuchehr Saduqi's pioneering study of post Sadr al-Muta'allihīn philosophers in Iran, Tār-ikh-i hukamā' va 'urafā' muta akhkhir bar Sadr al-Muta allihīn, is Shihāb al-Din Muhmmad b. Mūsā al-Buzshallū'ī al Kumījānī, Badī` al-Zamān Furūzānfar further identifies Kumījānī as "The [Second] Master of Illumination."

Kumījānī describes his work as the quintessence of Illuminationist Metaphysica Generalfis and Specialis but adds that he has attempted, wherever possible, to refine the arguments previously presented by Suhrawardī, the "Master of Illumination," in the latter's Philosophy of illumination.

The discovery of such an original and engaging, often innovative, well-written and on occasion creative treatise from this period is a welcome development and is important for several reasons, some philosophical per se, and some of general relevance to the study of the intellectual history of Iran.

The style and content of Nūr al-Fu âd and its author's honorific underscore the significance of Illuminationist philosophy in 19th century Iran. Its substance challenges the Orientalist view that philosophical inquiry ceased after Avicenna—some would say after Ghazzāli—in eastern Islam. Relatedly, given its systematic analysis of philosophical problems, Nūr al-Fu âd demonstrates that the scientific discourse did not in fact deteriorte to a form of pseudo-philosophical "sagesse orientale" Indeed, as part of a corpus of philosophical writings—including several unpublished Persian manuscripts from the Qajar period that remain to be text-edited and examined—the work illustrates a course of revisionist and innovative trends in Islamic philosophy that found renewed energy in 19th century Iran. Although relatively few in number and marginal socio-political and historical impact, the writings point to a continuous line of creative thinkers that kept the science of philosophy alive.

The renewal of interest in philosophy in the early decades of the 19th century may be demonstrated by three examples specifically connected with the tradition of Hikmatal-Ishrāq. We know of Mull ā 'Ali Nuri, a well-known thinker in the 19th century who taught philosophy in Isfahan. His teaching is centered on Sadr al-Muta'allihin's glosses on commentaries on the main text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq. One of Mulla Sadra's most engaging, analytical works in philosophy whose text-edition I have recently completed and should be published soon is titled: Al-Ta'liqāt `alā Shari) Hikmat al-Ishraq One of the extant manuscripts of this work, which may in fact be Sadra's last composition, is found in Mullā 'Ali Nūrī's own handwritten copy—with a few marginal additions.

There is evidence that Ibn Kammüna's, al-Tanqihāt fi Shalh al-Talwīhāt (a commentary on one of the four main texts on Illuminationist philosophy was taught in Tehran. There may even have been a late 19th century lithograph edition of this work, which suggests that it was included in the syllabus on Hikmat al-Ishrāq.

Most significantly, Hādī Sabzivārī repeatedly states in several treatises that his "novel" reconstructive system—al Hikma al-Muta âlīya—aims to incorporate and harmonize Hikmat al-Ishrāq with Avicenna's Peripatetic philosophy and Sadr al-Din's al-Hikma al Muta âlīya. Indeed, the new system incorporates principle views taken from Hikmat al-Ishraq: in epistemology, "knowledge by presence;" and in ontology, "the sameness of knowing and being," deemed the resolution of the problematic of zīyādat al-māhīyya/zīyādat al-wujūd in the critique of predication. Kumījānī was Sabzivārī's student, a status that he acknowledges with great reverence for the master; but he also claims to be making refinements to certain Illuminationist principles, not as components of al-Hikma al-Muta âlīya but as logical extensions of Hikmat al-Ishrāq.

The Text: A Synopsis

The text is written in an elegant philosophical Persian that abounds with standard Illuminationist terminology but also introduces a number of new technical terms, an example of which will be discussed below. The text itself is divided into chapters with the heading, "Ishrāq" the first Ishrāq, the second Ishrāq, and so on. Each chapter constitutes divisions called " Tajallī, " with a few added "lemmas" and corollaries. Naming and

dividing chapters in this fashion was widely practiced in 17th century philosophical texts and has continued to some extent since:

Prolegomena, discussion of method, mention of the priority of knowledge by presence: the science of lights— 'ilm al-an wār Light—the primary thing in being—cannot be known by definition but only by "sight"—the correspondence of mushāhic/a and ibsār. The sameness (`aynīyyat) of the essence light with every and all ranks and orders of beings/existent entities (sameness of knowing and being since light is the most self-knowing entity)

Examines the term "Allah" as foundational and discusses the stated purpose of the work, namely, analysis of the proposition sameness (`aynīyyat) of the essence light with each and every existent entity in reality. Correspondence between demonstrated science (i.e., deductive metaphysics and physics [the cosmology of generation and corruption plus elements of De Caelo]) with the purely empirical; the sense-data prior to demonstration. This is a most significant methodological principle informing of basic views on science and technology: a light entity when seen is known itself. I will discuss one such principle further below and analyze Kumījānī's claim to refining and augmenting Suhrawardī's views.

To conclude this brief exposé, it is clear that 19th century Iran witnessed a revival of philosophy not as a mere continuation of a scholastic "text-book" tradition but in the context of an active and genuinely analytical discourse.

On Platonic Forms: The distinction between form, image, and paradigm

The epistemology of unified vision requires the proper functioning of the subject as instrument (say, eyes); visibility of object (say, a lit entity) and the medium (say, light), or the relational principle A number of basic Illuminationist principles that clearly distinguish this system from the Peripatetic are presented, discussed and, in a few cases, philosophically refined in Nūr al-Fu'ād. Perhaps the most technically significant argument is where Kumījānī elaborates on the idea of "sameness" between subject and predicate, and/or substance and attribute said of specific constructed and formulated propositions that relate to primary

principles, and on the distinctly Illuminationist perspective, between light as sub¬ject, and "evidence" (Evidenz in Husserl)/presence, as attribute, or object.

Analysis of the Relation Sameness

The proposition "sameness of knowing and being" is fundamental to philosophical inquiry; some thinkers have argued that the positing, plus the analysis in responding to this proposition together define: (1) what-is philosophical investigation (at the first, undifferentiated level and sub-sequent ontological, epistemological and cosmological distinctions); and (2) the necessary first step in philosophical construction, that is of holistic systems. Stated from a general philosophical perspective this proposition encompasses a singular problem that is distinguished by sets of naming characteristic of historical periods as well as by the domain of inquiry: The mind body problem (Kant, Neo Kantian and German Idealism); Cartesian cogito--je pense donc je suis--; self-knowledge; self-consciousness; and the transcendent ego (Phenomenological philosophy: Husserl, etc.); conjunction/ union with the Active Intellect (Aristotelian intellectual knowledge; most of Latin medieval philosophy; and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy); Plotinian and its developments of unity of the one and the first hypotheses; mystical monism; and the like.

The very nexus of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy's theory of knowledge rests on the strict epistemic formulation of this proposition as "Union with the Active Intellect"--al-Ittihād bi'l Aal al-Fu'ād. That is al-Ittihād mã bayna al-Aql al-Mustafād--sometimes al Aal al-Qudsī--wa al-Aal al-Fa al. This formulation may be traced to Aristotle (Past Analytics I, 79b ff; De Anima III; and Metaphysics XII) but is to be fully explained in view of the arguments on the intellect and intellectual knowledge by the later . Hellenic Peripatetic commentators, mainly Alexander of Aphrodisia and Porphyry (the latter is perhaps the one who first used the term nous poetikus, (Arabic al-'Aal al-Fa`āl). Scientific theory, and the requirement that the principles of science themselves may not be defined as a horos or horimos (al-hadd al-tāmm,) but must be known prior to demonstration by "immediate knowledge." This is a stipulation by Aristotle, who, however, never fully explains the structure of a theory of knowledge that would

explain how "immediate" knowledge leads to certitude; but in Arabic texts this type of knowledge is defined to be the result of a conjunction with the Active Intellect where it acts as "Dato rFormarum"(wāhib al-suwar; wāhib al-`lm, etc.;) thus, the requirement for obtaining the primary principles, the necessary first step in demonstration, is met.

Aristotle, and after him Alkindī, Alfārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes, talk of two aspects or modes of the intellect (nous): the active and the passive. Perhaps the theoretical motivation for this twofold distinction is the polarity of form and matter, but also the notion that intellectual knowledge presupposes dyadic differentiation (a notion that as we shall see a later, is rejected in other philosophical traditions in Arabic and Persian). As mentioned before, the name nous poetikus is not found in Aristotle who refers to nous theoretikus, or nous apathes--as noted by Avicenna in his al-Mabda' wa al-Ma ad where the term is attributed to Porphyry. To my knowledge, unlike many other Avicennan texts, this one was not translated into Latin. In De Anima III 5, 430a Aristotle (and then in the Arabic Peripatetic version of "On the Soul" as well--in Physics, fi al-Tabi ī) we read: "We must distinguish between two intellects: one able to become all things, and another able to give all things a form; the first represents the matter of thinking, the second the cause and form." And this is a central distinguishing constituent of the proposition: knower/known; knowing/being; or more strictly in its Peripatetic formulation: intellect/object of intellect; intellect as subject/intellect as object.

The standard Islamic Peripatetic view of the knowing/being question is this: Any science starts from principles best known through `aql/nous therefore the theoretical intellect is the locus of intelligibles, it is in the act, the intelligibles themselves--the thinking which thinks itself noesis noeseus noesis (al-Aql/al-aql al-awwal, idhā agala, âgala shayān wa huwa aglān sāra ma`qūlan). Here is Aristotle's account of the identity of nous and the intelligibles (Met, XII, 7, 1072b): "Thus thinking thinks itself by participating in the intelligibles, because it becomes the intelligible itself, coming into touch with its own object of thinking about it, so that the intellect and the intelligibles fuse, becoming identical. This is so

because the receptacle of the intelligibles and of essence is thinking, which manifesting its presence by the act, possesses the intelligibles." The noetic absorbs the ontological in a supreme fusion: the ontological background of reality is the intelligible, that is, intelligence in act. The nous is thus the locus of intelligible forms (De Anima, III, 4, 429).

Now consider a much later Arabic text of the 17ᵗʰ century, seldom if ever mentioned in the Orientalist tradition. Also the proposition in its Plotinian expression, which is in fact the Arabic expression of one of the Fragments of Parmenides, is: al-âql wa al-ma`qul huwa huwa. There has, however, been confusion as to the identity of this and the other type:

> Form one: al-ittihād bi'l `aql al-fa `âl
> Form two: al-ittihād al-`āgil wa al-ma`qūl

But the relation huwa huwa is first used in the Uthulūjīyā and later presented as we also see in Kumījānī's text, as âynīyya. Here the proposition is more aptly closest to the "sameness of knowing and being." In most texts the impact of the Plotinian doctrine of: 1) One beyond being; 2) the three hypotheses: intellect, soul, and matter; 3) continuum being, in that becoming and multiplicity does not entail differentiation with and from the one.

It is of historical significance that the problems as stated in these texts are traceable to Parmenides' famous statements on being and knowing, controversial as these may be in that the Greek has been translated drastically distinctly in European languages. The Greek statements appear in fragments III and VIII.

Thinking is identical (note the distinction between connection/conjunction, etc.) with the object of thinking; so the origins of the logical notion of the law of identity between thinking and existence are here traced to Parmenides, who states: "To think and to be is the same thing;" this may also mean: "Only what exists can be thought." In its philosophical form the statement is said to inform of the "identity/ sameness of knowing and being" [cp. logicians on identity relations--the distinction between the senses of predication and the meaning of nouns in predicative propositions, e.g., Frege].

What is significant for my purposes here is that one of the two ways that the statement made by Parmenides in his Moira was transmitted into

Arabic was via the Uthulījīyā, i.e., in its Plotinian form. The other was in Aristotle's De Caelo, which had a different impact altogether: The proposition is: al-'aqil wa al-ma'qul huwa huwa.

There are a number of non-Peripatetic Arabic and a host of Persian texts that make use of this proposition when discussing the foundations of knowledge. To name a few: Jāmi ` al-Híkmatayn, Gushāyesh va Rahāyísh by Nāsir Khosrwo; Kashf al-Mahjtrb by Abū Ya`qūb al-Sijistānī; similar texts of the early 4th-5th A.H. in Persian, specifically Ismā`īlī textual traditions; and most important of all, Suhrawardī's Arabic texts, the four (named: T; MUA; MM, HI); and his Persian Partow Nāmeh. Distinguished from Arabic Peripatetic texts, the discussion of knowing rests on examining "I"/ I-ness; `man" in Persian and ana/anā'īyya in Arabic in relation to the soul (nafs/ravān) or the body (tan/jasad,) the mind-body problem being more evident here. Most sections in such books probe the idea of the "togetherness" of knower and known; the idea togetherness is also Plotinian as the "coupling" (couplement in Cartesian thought) of mind/body; knower and known, Be-ham būdan/ma'íyya and in later texts as âynīyya. Sameness of knowing and being is thus generalized.

In general, a number of distinctly philosophical problems that are associated with Híkmat al-Ishrāq are also found in Nur al-Fu 'a-d. Some are illuminationist by common associa¬tion, such as the multiplicity of Intellects (kathrat-e `uqūl; §54-§61); the attribution "rich" and "poor" to equivocal being. Other problems are more complex and require closer exami¬nation below.

In the domain of epistemology, the unified theory of apprehension (Arabic, idrāk; Persian, daryāftan,) is known in Islamic philosophy as "knowledge by presence" (`ilm-e hudūrī), This theory rests on an inquiry into the relation between being and knowing, which is first rendered into Persian in The Book of Radiance; Kumījānī's Persian follows the same style. Here self-consciousness plays a fundamental role. "I-ness"; (mani, in Persian) is expanded to include "thou-ness" (tu ī) and "he/she/it-ness" (u'i); i.e., ipseity (huwīyya) is generalized and encompasses the second and third persons as well (§27, §44). The subject, or the "one

who apprehends/knows" (Arabic, mudrik; Persian, daryābandeh) apprehends the object (mudrak; daryāfteh) when an atemporal relation is actualized between them. Self-consciousness/self-apprehension does not derive from the dyadic differentiation of being but is prior to any differentiation. Thus, "I think" and "I am" are "sameness," which is a non-predicative identity relation.

Togetherness/sameness — aynīyyat in Kumījānī's text-is an identity preserving a one-to-one correspondence between each and every member of the set of all knowing subjects and knowable objects. Suhrawardi here extends a logical principle of identity on to a metaphysical principle of relational corres-pondence. Each side of the relation is defined as a continuous domain consisting of multiple things, and the sum total of all things constitutes the whole. Every member of each of the two domains is said to be self-conscious, which is further attributed as "living"; therefore, the whole is also said to be self-conscious and thus "alive" (hayy; §41-46).

Illuminationist philosophy contests the Aristotelian position that the laws of science formulated as A-propositions (the universal affirmative, al-mūjiba al-kullīya; are both necessary and always true, or universal. Through an elaborate process of arguments starting with the sections on logic in his major Arabic texts, Illuminationist philosophy establishes future contingency (al-imkān al-mustaabal) as a scientific principle. Using this and other principles he argues that contrary to the Aristotelian position, the laws of science cannot be universal. For us, this would mean that the current laws of science, such as formulated as, or equated with and are inherently refutable, and may in fact turn out to be wrong, because at time thus invalidating the universality of identity.

The first place to examine is the Law of Identity in logic, then the physics of continuity (ittisal) and discontinuity (infisāl) against the notions of "equality" (tasāvī); "union" (ittihād); and "connection" (ittisāl) between the apprehend¬ing subject (al-maw(lū` al-mudrik) and the apprehensible object (al-mawdū` al-mudrak).5 The theory is formulated in full for the first time in the section on Metaphysics in Paths and Havens: Book

Three. Kumījānī takes from the Illuminationist text and discusses what I call "Aristotelian predicative knowledge," thought to be inapplicable to the process of obtaining the Primary Principles,' and further elaborates on the unified theory of "knowledge by presence." In logical terms, this means that forms of equality such as "x is y" and "x = y" are replaced with a unified law of relational correspondence between each and every (kull wāhid wāhid) individual member (āhād) of aggregate wholes (al- jtimā , a novel illuminationist term): the "realm of knowing," and the "realm of being." This relation between subject and object is named al-idāfa al-ishrāgiyya'; meaning "illuminationist relation."

The idea of a relational correspondence between thinking and being, subject and object, thinker and the thing thought, is one of illuminationist philosophy's great achievements. The theory clearly defines the multi-level relation between the thinking subject and the knowable object as a relation function between each member of the two realms: thinking and being. Thus, non-predicative knowledge by presence is given priority over predicative knowledge, and finally, X = Y is replaced by a fundamental of pre-relational identity as (xy), which is called a unified law of metaphysics.

The theory of relational correspondence is then used to overcome such problems as the unity of essence and the attributes of the Necessary Being, and positing the non-priority of being/quiddity. So, the answer to "ma huwa al-wājib" if stated as `al-wājib huwa, mathalan, al-rahmān" would lead to a logical problem of the addition of māhīyya over Wujūd, or vice-versa, but employing the idea of "sameness" (`aynīyya) then `al-wājib ayn al-sifat, mathalan," or as we have it in Kumījānī's treatise al-nūr `ayn al-zuhūr, " then the essence, sameness as relational correspondence/ what-is, as a non-predicative proposition within first order logic, solves the problem.

Suhrawardī's novel criticism of Aristotelian logic is paralleled in William of Ockham's Summa Logicæ: Pars Prima: 13, 14. Other parallels include: Illuminationist critique of Aristotelian horos and horismos, in the Philosophy of illumination, Part One, I.7, §13 through §16, with summa Logicæ,

Pars Prima: 26: "On Definition;" and Summa Ligicæ, Pars Prima: 12: "Second intentions," with i `tibar t 'aglij ya, in the Philosophy of illumination, Part One, 111.3.1, §56 ff.

5 Consider: Selbsgefiihl, as "the central and original idea that underlines all of subsequent writings [of Fichte]" states the translator Daniel Breazeale (See Fichte, Early Philosophical Writings. Translated and Edited by Daniel Breazeale. In addition, Breazeale reports . Fichte's discussions with Henrik Steffens (a former student who noted the conversation in vol. IV of his Was ich erlebte. In one passage we read: "For some time he [Fichte] had dimly realized that truth consists in the unity of thought and object. He ... thought that the act by which self-consciousness seizes and holds onto itself is clearly a type of knowing. The I recognizes itself as something produced through its own activity; thinker and thought, knowing and its object, are here one and the same. All knowledge proceeds from this point.... he tried to establish the I as the principle of philosophy" (Was ich erlebte). Now consider Suhraward ī's statement as explained by his commentator Shahrazūrī: "All things self-apprehending are 'pure lights' and all pure lights are evident (Evidenz in German philosophical texts) to their I-ness (al-anā īyya, which is extended in Persian to include manī, tar, and u'i). .. . so, here the self-conscious subject (al-mudrik,) the knowable object (al-mudrak,) and awareness itself (al-idrāk (Vernehmen in German,) are one" <>

Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities edited by Marlene Laruelle [Eurasian Studies Library: History, Societies & Cultures & Eurasia, Brill, 9789004306806]

Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities results from the Central Eurasia–Religion in International Affairs (CERIA) Initiative, hosted at The George Washington University's Central Asia Program. The CERIA Initiative aims to promote state-of-the-art research on religion in contemporary Central Asia, understanding religion as a "societal shaper" — a roadmap for navigating quickly changing social and cultural values. Religion is not a given but a construct that appears alongside other aspects of life. It can thus take on

multiple colors and identities, from a purely transcendental faith in God to a cauldron of ideological ferment for political ideology, via diverse culture-, community-, and history-based phenomena that help people situate themselves in the world and define what makes sense for them.

Since the end of the 1990s, with the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan, and even more so since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror," the policy narrative on the role of Islam in Central Asia has been shaped by a sense of danger, with analysis of religion often seen as an offshoot of security studies. Paradoxically, the Western policy community and the Central Asian regimes share similar misperceptions of Islam. They tend, though to differing extents, to conflate Islamic practices, political Islam, and paths to violence, providing security-oriented explanations of local political and social changes. The new, post-Soviet expressions of religiosity are over-interpreted as signaling "risks of radicalization." With every emergence of a new Islamist movement, from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the 1990s to al-Qaeda in the 2000s and the Islamic State in the 2010s, the global policy community has expressed concerns about the "radicalization" of Islam in Central Asia. These skewed interpretations have damaged the image of Islam in general and its appropriate place in the societies of Central Asia. There is, for instance, a striking contrast between the positive image of Buddhism in the revival of political activism in Tibet, thanks in large part to the media visibility of the Dalai Lama, and similar trends among Uyghurs in Xinjiang, which tend to be viewed negatively because Uyghur claims are associated with an Islamic identity.

However, the so-called "re-Islamization" of Central Asian societies since the collapse of the USSR has very little to do with anything political. It is, above all, an apolitical re-traditionalization marked by calls for more conservative mores and stricter gender segregation; and demands for observance of (some) Islamic rites by younger generations. This re-traditionalization aims to reconsolidate the social fabric at a time of massive upheaval and to construct new individual identities in harmony with the times but respectful of what is understood as national belonging. The local traditions of submission to the authorities, of respect for long-

standing hierarchies, of assimilating religion into the community, whether national or local, are now competing with imported models in which Islam is lived as a more universal religion, less subordinated to the national or local, more confrontational and more individualist. Other, albeit smaller, trends are also visible: in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, some of the younger generations call for a kind of Islamo-nationalist ideology; globalized networks of believers work with foreign proselytizing groups such as the Tablighi Jama'at to reach out to a new community of believers; merchant groups and small entrepreneurs instrumentalize Islam to legitimize their economic success and to develop informal networks of solidarity through Islamic charities. Growing segments of the Kyrgyz and Tajik populations invoke Islam, sometimes Shari'a, to demand more social justice, less corruption, and "compensation" from states failing to deliver basic public services and security.

The field of studying Islam—the study of other religions, i.e. Christianity, focuses almost exclusively on conversion and proselytizing—has evolved dramatically since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, Western Sovietologists working on religion, heirs of Alexandre Bennigsen (1913–1988), found themselves challenged by scholars from Middle Eastern studies, who claimed that their knowledge of Islamic societies provided a better calibrated tool to approach the new Central Asia. Nonetheless, this new school faced difficulties in integrating the Soviet legacy and longer historical continuities in its analytical toolbox and indirectly reinforced the misreading that Central Asia was on the path to becoming a second Afghanistan or Pakistan. In the 2000s, a new generation of scholars emerged, with a more intimate knowledge of the region—often specializing in only one country—and of local languages. This new generation combined its area expertise with ongoing theoretical discussions in the social sciences and humanities with greater comparative skills than before. Academic disciplines such as cultural anthropology have deepened our knowledge of Islam to the micro-level of community, family, and gender relations, offering a more complex picture in which religion is one among many elements of everyday life impacted by macro-level political and socioeconomic changes.

Thanks to this new generation of scholars, our understanding of Islam and what it means in contemporary Central Asia has dramatically evolved and increased in complexity. The question of the "revival" of Islam has been transformed by a better understanding of the intricacies of Muslim practices during Soviet times and the revelation of Islamic plural debates and theological conflicts inside the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM). It also evolved by ending the simplistic division between "foreign influences" coming from abroad and domestic situations on the ground: Central Asian Islam is today a largely globalized phenomenon, with multilayered interactions that blur the boundaries between "home" and "abroad" and create transnational identities in tune with the rest of the Islamic Ummah. In terms of external influences, Turkey's preeminence in the early 1990s has been eclipsed by the Gulf countries, particularly the Emirates and Dubai, which are seen as the embodiment of a successful Muslim modernity, and by proselytizing groups such as Tablighi Jama'at coming from the South Asian subcontinent. Like any community, Central Asian Muslims are shaped by the multiple, contradictory definitions of what is "their own," national and traditional, and what is "other," foreign and new, especially in relation to everything that can be labelled as Arab.

One driver for new research has been to conceptualize that the central issue is not how external observers typologize the way Central Asians express their "Muslimness," but the fact that the fight to define the "right Islam" is a struggle going on inside the Muslim communities themselves. Some call for a Soviet-style Islam that would keep the public space secular and confine Islam to being merely one part of national traditions and identities; others call for Islam to be an individual practice carried out by each citizen according to their own conscience. Still others hope for a more normative Islam that prescribes individual manners and collective practices. Competing narratives, references and practices have therefore become the new normal for Central Asian societies. Some defend the Hanafi school against "intrusions" of Hanbali rituals; others debate the content of Salafism, Wahhabism, Deobandism, so-called radical Islam or unaffiliated Internet preachers; others discuss the Islamic legitimacy of pilgrims to local shrines and traditional medicine. The spectrum of Islamic practice is broad, stretching from Muslim "born-agains" to private entrepreneurs who capitalize on their "Muslimness" to justify their economic success in the name of an Islamic theology of prosperity. Across the region as a whole, several elements signal the structuring of Islam as a central reference for individual and collective identities: calls for teaching religion in the school system, rapid increases in the number of people fasting during Ramadan, and a rise in the number of people participating in zakat – giving alms to the poor and needy. References to Shari'a as religious orthodoxy, largely absent from Central Asian traditions, have become visible in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Central Asian Islamic communities are now deeply plural.

In post-Soviet Central Asia, the relationship between Islam and the state has often had a schizophrenic character: Islam has been glorified as a religion of the nation, local pilgrimage sites have been valorized, and the great national figures linked to Sufism have been celebrated, but at the same time religious practices have been monitored, sermons in the mosques are increasingly controlled, religious education is highly restricted, and interactions with the rest of the Ummah are looked upon with suspicion. However, the interaction between state and society emerges as much more complex than the black-and-white narrative of advocacy groups criticizing the lack of religious freedom in the region and the repressive practices of the state structures toward religion.

First, a large segment of Central Asian societies supports the securitization approach to Islam that is advanced by the state, a trend reinforced by the scary story of young people "lost" to jihad in Syria. Second, the Spiritual Boards and Council for Religious Affairs play an ambiguous role in "normalizing" what to accept and what to reject in Islamic practices and discourses. Third, some political elites, especially economic elites, are attracted by a new Islamic identity inspired by Dubai, and security service officers are often very respectful of religious leaders and of their authority. All these trends confirm, if such confirmation is needed, that the state secularism inherited from the Soviet regime is progressively eroding in the face of multiple ways to display "Muslimness." As everywhere in the world, social tensions within Muslim communities and in their

interaction with non-Muslims give a large room to debates about how women dress, because the topic embodies issues of purity, morality, self-respect, and the call for a more control over a rapidly evolving society.

In the first part of the volume, we discuss what it means to be a Muslim in today's Central Asia by looking at both historical and sociological features. In Chapter 1, Galina Yemelianova argues that, throughout history, Central Asians developed a particular form of Islam that presented a productive and fluid synergy between Islam per se, their tribal legal and customary norms, and Tengrian and Zoroastrian beliefs and practices. It is characterized by a high level of doctrinal and functional adaptability to shifting political and cultural environments, the prevalence of Sufism (mystical Islam), and oral, rather than book-based, Islamic tradition. A common Eurasian space and lengthy shared political history of Central Asians and other peoples of Muslim Eurasia account for considerable similarities in their Islamic trajectories.

In Chapter 2, Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Baurzhan Zhussupov investigate the rising religiosity and orthodoxy among Central Asian Muslims, drawing on two waves of public opinion surveys conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 2007 and 2012. They confirm that a religious revival is underway; however, cross-national variations remain important: religious practice, as measured by daily prayer and weekly mosque attendance, is up in Kyrgyzstan, but has fallen in Kazakhstan. They attribute these differences to political context, both in terms of cross-national political variation and regional differences within each country. In Chapter 3, Yaacov Ro'i and Alon Wainer focus on Uzbekistan and Uzbek identity and its relationship to Islam by looking at some 200 interviews with Uzbek students. While almost everyone considers himself or herself a Muslim, the vast majority perceive themselves, above all, as citizens of Uzbekistan. Moreover, their Islam is not reflected primarily in Islamic practice but rather in a somewhat nebulous Islamic traditionalism. In the international arena, young Uzbeks tend to prefer Muslim over non-Muslim peoples and communities, but not necessarily as destinations for labor migration.

The second part of the volume is devoted to Islam, politics and the state. Tim Epkenhans begins by

analyzing the evolution of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IKPT), the only Islamic party recognized in Central Asia (until it was banned in 2015, when the Tajik authorities abandoned the principles of the 1997 General Peace Accord, which had ended the country's civil war). Since then, the IKPT has distinguished itself as a credible oppositional political party committed to democratic principles and with an almost imperceptible religious agenda. By shifting the IRPT's attention to issues of democratization and socioeconomic development, its chairman, Muhiddin Kabirī, opened the IKPT to a younger electorate, although continuous defamation campaigns and government persecution have worn down the IRPT's activists and its electorate.

Chapter 5, by Aurélie Biard, delves into the political uses of Islam in the Kyrgyzstani Fergana Valley, through case studies of the main Kyrgyzstani Uzbek theologians based in the city of Karu-Suu, who appear to be core actors in re-Islamization and propagators of Saudi-style Salafi Islam. She argues that religious debates and postures concerning the relationship to secular power are inscribed in patronage and personal clientelist networks, as well as local power struggles. She states that we are now witnessing the reactivation of a religious utopia that challenges the existing political and financial order through local rhetoric about establishing an idealized caliphate, conveying a message not only of social justice but also of economic transparency and free trade.

In Chapter 6, Alexander Wolters examines another way in which the Central Asian states have instrumentalized Islam—namely, Islamic finance. Rather a recent phenomenon in the region, it was only with the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2007 that the cooperation between the states and the Islamic Development Bank resulted in domestic initiatives to establish forms of Islamic banking. Wolters sees a correlation between the subsequent development of such initiatives and the unfolding political crises. Specifically, the Central Asian states were eager to connect to available streams of Islamic investment capital in the early stages of the international financial crisis, but their commitment to further adapt declined when they entered periods of political crisis that forced them to reorder their reform priorities.

The third part of the volume explores the changing role of Islam in terms of societal and cultural values. Wendell Schwab looks at Asyl Arna, the most popular Islamic television channel and dominant Islamic media company in Kazakhstan. He examines how images on the social media pages of Asyl Arna create a way of understanding and engaging in contemporary Islamic life. The visual culture of Asyl Arna's social media promotes Islam as an achievable part of a middle-class lifestyle that can provide simple rules for a pious, economically successful life and a connection to the holy life through the Qur'an. Manja Stephan-Emmrich follows this search by investigating Muslim self-fashioning, migration, and (be-)longing in the Tajik–Dubai business. She analyzes how young, well-educated, and multilingual Tajiks involved in Dubai's various business fields create, shape, and draw on a sense of cosmopolitanism to convert their uncertain status as "Tajik migrants" into that of economically autonomous "Muslim businessmen." Pointing to the mutual conditionality of longing and belonging in migrant cosmopolitanism, she offers a nuanced picture of everyday life in Dubai that goes beyond the "spectacularity" of the city, challenging the prevailing representation of Tajik Muslims' engagement in transnational Islam as a security matter only. And in Chapter 9, Rano Turaeva explores the space of informal economies, focusing on transnational entrepreneurs between Central Asia and Russia. These male and female entrepreneurs live mobile economic lives in which Islam plays a central role in regulating informal economies. Islamic belonging has progressively become a stronger marker of identity than ethnicity among Central Asian migrants in Russia, and mosque communities have grown in influence as places to socialize.

The last section of the volume investigates female attire as a public debate. Emil Nasritdinov and Nurgul Esenamanova explore how the growing community of practicing Muslims asserts the right to be in the city, live according to its religious ideals, and create Islamic urban spaces. Such claims do not remain uncontested and, because religious identity has a strong visual manifestation, religious claims—especially female attire—become the subject of strong public debate. This contestation overlaps with socially constructed gender hierarchies—religious/secular claims over the urban space turn into men's claims over women, with both sides

(religious and secular) claiming to know what women should wear.

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Opposition to Philosophy in Safavid Iran: Mulla Muhammad-Tāhir Qummī's Hikmat al-Ârifīn Introduction and Critical Edition by Ata Anzali, S. M. Hadi Gerami [Islamicate Intellectual History, Brill, 9789004345645]

In Opposition to Philosophy in Safavid Iran Ata Anzali and S.M. Hadi Gerami offer a critical edition of what is arguably the most erudite and extensive critique of philosophy from the Safavid period. The editors' extensive introduction offers an in-depth analysis that places the work within the broader framework of Safavid intellectual and social history.

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Excerpt: The seventeenth century has been characterized by scholars of Ottoman and Savafid history alike as a period when religious fanaticism rose and eventually triumphed over the rational sciences and/or Sufism. It has been suggested, for example, that the study of rational sciences in Ottoman madrasas diminished significantly in the face of a puritanical movement spearheaded by a preacher named Mehmed Kāzīzāde (d. 1044/1635) and propagated by his followers in the first half of the century.1 Similarly, it is said that in the second half of the century, a successful campaign was waged against Sufism and philosophy in the Safavid realm by scholar/preachers like Muhammad-Ṭāhir Qummī (d. 1100/1689), Muhammad-Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), and Mīr Muhammad Lawhī (d. after

1081/1671). Their campaign, which was supported by the last Safavid king, Shāh Sultān Husayn (r. 1105/1694-1135/1722), resulted in the near total eradication of Sufism and a precipitous and significant decline in the study of Islamic philosophy.

As the intellectual history of the early modern era receives more attention, however, it has become increasingly clear that the picture is more complicated than these narratives suggest. In a recent monograph devoted to scholarly currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb in the seventeenth century, Khaled El-Rouayheb challenges the existing scholarly paradigm, arguing that the evidence for the purported decline in the study of rational sciences in the seventeenth century Ottoman madrasa system does not withstand critical scrutiny. The proponents of Kāzīzādelī movement, he says, were a minority group within the Ottoman religious establishment, and their role in the decline of practices of which they did not approve should not be exaggerated. Moreover, El-Rouayheb provides detailed evidence that the position of important Kāzīzādelī figures, including Mehmed Birgevī (d. 981/1573), who has been considered the intellectual forefather of the movement, was more nuanced than previously allowed and did not entail wholesale abandonment of the rational sciences. Based on the existing bio-bibliographic evidence, El-Rouayheb concludes that, "the study of philosophy and the rational sciences continued unabated in Ottoman scholarly circles throughout the seventeenth century."

Similarly, recent studies have revealed that while the organized networks of major Sufi orders were indeed significantly weakened by the end of Safavid rule, the extent to which this was caused by active persecution of Sufis has been exaggerated.s I have argued somewhere else, for example, that the decline of organized Sufi networks is better attributed to an epistemic shift that took place in the hearts and minds of the Safavid populous as it went through the protracted socio-political process of conversion to Twelver Shi`ism. This process did not result in a wholesale rejection of Sufism as an undesirable vestige of Iran's Sunni past. Instead, important aspects of the social functions and intellectual components of Sufism were adopted by Twelver religious scholars.' Popular scholars like Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1621) and the Majlisīs,

both father and son, were often treated by the public much as Sufi pīrs were treated by their followers. Other mystically-minded religious scholars, including Mulla Sadrā (1045/1635) and Fayż Kāshānī (1090/1680), incorporated fundamental elements of the Sufi worldview into Savafid Shi'i thought. This synthesis was so successful that even the most controversial of Sufi doctrines, the unity of existence (wandat al-wujūd), was discussed and debated in Qajar madrasas through the teaching of, and commentary on, Mullā Sadrā and Ibn `Arabī. Therefore, although it is fair to say that the traditional social structure of Sufism was marginalized over the course of the seventeenth century, this period was one of success for the Sufi worldview, which had significant impact on—and was incorporated into— Safavid Shi'i piety.

The decline narrative has also been popular when it comes to Islamic philosophy in the Safavid period. The standard conception is that the study and practice of philosophy experienced a renaissance in the early part of the seventeenth century with the emergence of the so-called School of Isfahan, which was led by towering figures like Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631-2), Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640), and Mulla Sadrā. This renaissance did not last long, however, and the study of philosophy plummeted in the face of mounting criticism from puritanical and fanatic mullas, led by hard-liners like Majlisī Jr. and Qummī, who had unrivaled access to and influence in the Safavid court during the last half century of the dynasty's rule. In the coming pages I will argue that the bio-bibliographical and other primary sources do not support the latter part of this narrative and that the study of philosophy and other rational sciences continued to flourish in the final decades of Safavid rule, experiencing only a slight decline despite growing opposition.

Philosophy and Philosophers: Hapless Victims or Elite Contenders?

When Qummī took it upon himself to write Hikmat al-`ārifīn sometime during Shah `Abbās II's reign (r. 1052/1642-1077/1666), the anti-Sufi campaign of the second half of the seventeenth century was gaining momentum. Popular preachers like Mīr

Lawhī had already begun to denounce Sufis from the pulpit as "Sunni heretics," and Qummī had involved himself in a heated debate about the vices of Sufism with Majlisī Sr. (d. 1070/1659), one of the most prominent religious scholars of the time. Sufis still had the upper hand, however, thanks to their rooted social networks, public support, and the sympathy of the Safavid king. As a result, both Qummī and Mīr Lawhī had to be cautious in their criticism, at times publishing under pseudonyms or keeping silent for fear of their lives.[10] Hikmat al-`ārifīn was the first full monograph of the Safavid era dedicated to a critique of philosophy, but Qummī had long had his eye on this "heretical" discipline. This is evidenced by his earlier work, namely a short treatise titled Bahjat al-dārayn, which he completed in 1055/1645, just a few years after he moved to Qom. Based on the chronology of his works, it appears that he started to publicize his views against philosophy much later than his critiques of Sufism. Only during the reign of Shah Sulaymān (r. 1666/10771105/1694), who appointed Qummī as the judge and Friday prayer leader of Qom, did Qummī feel secure enough to openly write anti-philosophy works in Persian to reach a broader audience. His efforts in writing works like al-Favā'id al-dīniyyah and the concluding section of Tuhfat al-akhyār were successful in that they led to an increase in volume and number of anti-philosophy voices in the final decades of Safavid rule. A superficial understanding of this dynamic, however, has led some contemporary scholars to espouse an uninformed and romantic view regarding the persecution of philosophers during the Safavid period—one that casts philosophers as noble guardians of rationalism and reason who, alongside peace-loving and tolerant Sufis, were threatened by bigoted literalists and exotericists. A detailed and passionate articulation this perspective is found in a chapter by Hamid Dabashi on philosophy in Safavid Iran in Seyyed Hossein Nasr's edited volume, A History of Islamic Philosophy. In a tone that betrays his disdain for the opposing camp, Dabashi writes: "Those who engaged in philosophical matters did so at some peril to their personal safety and social standing," and thus, "the fate of philosophy was left in the hands of whimsical monarchs who for a number of practical and symbolic self-interests, such as their

need for a court physician and court astronomer, would inadvertently provide for the possibilities of philosophical pursuit" which "has never had any institutional foundations except at the clandestine peripheries of the madrasa system, in the libraries of wealthy individuals, and ultimately in the whimsical vicissitudes of the court." Dabashi dramatizes the situation by suggesting that the pursuit of philosophy had "always" been a "precarious act," not only during the Safavid period, but "during the course of Islamic intellectual history." He immediately re-focuses on the Safavid period, however, stating that "financial support for students of philosophy was virtually non-existent," and that "the madrasa system and its total reliance on religious endowments prohibited any financial support for students who were attracted primarily to philosophy."

Dabashi offers scant historical evidence to support such sweeping claims of philosophers falling victim to bigotry and narrow-mindedness. He cites the example of Mulla Sadrā's retreat from Shiraz to Kahak, a village near Qom, and he mentions Shāh Sultān Husayn's expulsion of another philosopher, Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1721), in the final decade of Safavid rule. In addition, Dabashi references reports that "on the front doors of some schools in Isfahan the patrons had specifically prohibited the teaching of philosophy." But if the late Safavid environment was so hostile to the pursuit of philosophy, how did it nurture one of the most innovative periods of philosophical thinking in Muslim lands, a period that Seyyed Hossein Nasr calls "one of the apogees of Muslim history?"

Dabashi gives the Safavids no credit for this intellectual renaissance, saying, "If we witness the rise of a particular philosophical disposition, recently identified as the 'School of Isfahan' during the Safavid period, this phenomenon must be attributed more to the diligent and relentless philosophical engagements of a limited number of individuals rather than considered the product of favorable and conducive social circumstances." It is difficult to know what to make of this statement given that one page earlier he emphasizes that "The flourishing of Mīr Dāmād and the establishment of the 'School of Isfahan' would hardly have been possible without these necessary political and social developments" (that is, the advent of the Safavids and the establishment of

Isfahan as their capital and the new center of the Twelver Shī`ī world).

Dabashi's fervent enthusiasm for the victimized philosophers betrays his status as advocate-turned-historian, but he is not alone in his mischaracterization of this period. Some version of this romantic narrative of philosophy as victim, or philosophy as dangerous business, exists in many scholarly works that deal with the intellectual and cultural life of the Safavid period. For example, in his influential and otherwise phenomenal study, Arjomand writes, "the gnostic Shi`ism of the philosophers of the school of Isfahan, severely debilitated by Majlisī, was forced after his death to subsist outside the Shi`ite hierocracy, and was thus perhaps doomed to virtual extinction." Similarly, Meisami, in her study of the life of Mulla Sadrā, claims that "[T]he extreme hostility towards both rationalism and mysticism in the late Safavid period created an intellectually suppressed atmosphere for philosophy in general and mystical philosophy in particular. The attempts of a few remaining followers of Mulla Sadra to keep transcendental philosophy alive were at the cost of serious accusations and tragic consequences. Giving full power to Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110/1698), known for his religious and sectarian intolerance, Shah Sultan Husayn made any intellectual activity of 'unorthodox' nature impossible." It appears to me that the aura of credibility that this view enjoys, despite the dearth of historical evidence, is mainly due to paradigm-defining narratives developed earlier in the twentieth century by prominent scholars like Zarrīnkūb and Nasr as well as to the general tendency of the modern liberal reader to succumb to a romantic view in which "conservative" religious scholars are generally seen in a negative light as "fanatics" vis-à-vis the "open-minded" advocates of "rationalist" and "mystical" readings of religion.

A critical examination of the few pieces of evidence put forward to substantiate this view reveals its precarious foundation. The reason for Mulla Sadrā's retreat to Kahak remains highly debatable, as Rizvi points out, and it is not at all obvious that the so-called "nomocentric" jurists were behind it. Dabashi also fails to mention that sometime later, Imām-Qulī Khān, who became governor of Shiraz in 1021/1612, built the

magnificent Madrasa Khān (completed 1024/1615) and invited Mulla Sadrā to return and teach philosophy there. The latter accepted the invitation and began to teach there around 1040/1630, more than a decade after he had left that city for Kahak. The madrasa became so famous that the European traveler Herbert Thomas wrote, "indeed, Shiraz has a college wherein is read philosophy; astrology, physic, chemistry, and the mathematics; so as it's the more famoused through Persia." As for the oft-cited expulsion of the philosopher Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī and a number of his students, including Hazīn, from Isfahan, Ja`fariyān has pointed out that the story only appears in one late source (early thirteenth/nineteenth century) and is not corroborated by the earlier sources available to us. In fact, contemporary sources paint a different picture. Hazīn's autobiography, for example, does not mention him facing any difficulties in his extensive and enthusiastic pursuit of philosophy in Isfahan and Shiraz.

The fact is that philosophers remained highly influential in the court well into the early decades of the eighteenth century, preserving their high social status despite the increasingly hostile rhetoric against philosophy. This is not surprising, because mainstream philosophical discourse was deeply embedded in both the Shī`ī and Sunni intellectual traditions. Textbooks of rational theology, or kalam, regularly included extensive chapters on metaphysics with arguments and counter-arguments that were almost indistinguishable from the ones offered in the tradition of Islamic philosophy. This was the case in works like al-Mawāqif by `Adud al-Dīn Ījī (d. 756/1356), Maqāsid al-tālibīn by Sa`d al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), and Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī's Tajrīd al-i`itiqād, with its numerous commentaries and glosses by theologians like `Alī Qūshjī (d. 879/1479) and philosophers like Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502). These writings, along with works of Aristotelian logic covered over with glosses and commentaries, were used extensively and without interruption in both the madrasas of Safavid Persia and those of the rival Ottoman realm. In fact, the vocabulary of Aristotelian logic had penetrated kalam and (much later) usūl al-fiqh to such an extent that it was practically impossible for students to acquire a sound understanding of these Islamic disciplines without having a solid grounding in logic. Therefore, and unlike the organized Sufism centered in the khanaqāh, philosophy was an integral part of the madrasa curriculum, at least to the extent that it was required to understand theology. This being the case, prominent teachers of traditional Peripatetic philosophy were among the most respected figures in the madrasa, and they had a congenial relationship with the higher echelons of the political order. These teachers constructed and sustained a powerful philosophical orthodoxy, controlling the relevant discourse and the prestigious philosophy chairs in the madrasas. Prominent members of this establishment, for obvious socio-economic and intellectual reasons, did not welcome innovations of the sort that Mulla Sadrā was eager to introduce into philosophical thinking.

Some concrete examples of the status and influence of philosophers in the Safavid court might be of help here. We know, for example, that Mulla Muhammad-Bāqir Sabzavārī (d. 1090/1679), Isfahan's shaykh al-īslām at the time, played a prominent role in Shah Sulaymān's accession to the throne. The philosophically-oriented Āqā Husayn Khānsārī (d. 1099/1688)—a student of Mīr Dāmād, Majlisī Sr., and Sabzavārī—was also among the trusted members of the court `ulama, and the shah erected a mausoleum for him upon his death. But perhaps nothing illustrates the strength of philosophical studies towards the end of the Safavid period more vividly than the testimony of an Augustinian friar named Antonio, a native of Portugal who converted to Islam in Isfahan in 1108/1696 and wrote several treatises against Christianity and Judaism under his new name, `Alī-Qulī Jadīd al-Islām (d. after 1134/1722). His testimony deserves to be quoted at length:

> Too often I found myself in the company of a group of [religious students] who, having spent years in the madrasas in pursuit of knowledge, believed they knew something and numbered themselves amongst the knowledgeable. Even as a recent convert at the time with no thorough knowledge of the hadiths, when I asked them about a tradition that dealt with the most fundamental matters of religion, they knew nothing about it, and I was the one who taught them on the matter. They said, "We

study philosophy; we have busied ourselves for years with books like Sharḥ al-hidāya, al-Shifā, and al-Ishārāt, and thus we found no spare time to study hadith," an excuse worse than the offense itself! You see, all these considerable funds are tirelessly collected and spent on madrasas by pious endowments with the intention of creating `ulama and educating the followers of the first Imam in matters of religion... [and then] these students end up reading such material... Once I had a conversation with one of these philosophy-reading mullas and told him that Plato and Aristotle's philosophy has nothing to do with religion and religiosity. In response he told me, "Nowadays the amount of one's stipend depends on one's knowledge of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy. I and people like me who come here to study want to make a living as students, because we are poor. We see that the system of stipends and promotions in Isfahan revolves around philosophy, and so we spend our time studying Plato and Aristotle's philosophy and do not bother with jurisprudence or hadith."

Another interesting piece of evidence comes from Qazvīnī's Tatmīm amal al-āmil. In it, the author tells a story about the most prominent and politically well-connected jurist of the final decades of Safavid rule, Muhammad-Bāqir Khātunābādī (d. 1127/1715). Khātunābādī was the first cleric to occupy the position of mullābāshī, a post created by the last Safavid king, Shah Sultān Husayn, and the highest religious office in the land. The anecdote goes as follows:

> I heard my master... Amīr Muhammad Sālih Husayni [Khātunābādī] say, "We were studying Sharḥ al-ishārāt and its gloss with our great teachers. We were told to study Sharḥ al-ishārāt with Amīr Muhammad-Bāqir [Khātunābādī], for it would allow us to get closer to the sultan [because the teacher was close to him]. So we sat in his class while he boasted of knowledge he did not possess, and he would narrate something from `Allāma Khānsārī's gloss and oppose him with absurd criticism. Then, when we rejected his criticism of Khānsārī, he would turn to us and say, "I wanted to say that very thing!"

Khātunābādī is categorized in Tatmīm as a jurist. The fact that he took it upon himself to teach philosophy, even though—as the quote indicates—he was not an authority on the rational sciences, reveals much about the curriculum of the madrasas and the position of philosophy therein. The author also relates the story of another Khātunābādī, Hāj Ismā`īl, who taught the music section of Ibn Sīnā's classic philosophical work, al-Shifā, in one of the most important madrasas of Isfahan, Jāmi` Sultānī.

Moreover, a survey of the biographical contents of Tatmīm reveals no meaningful decline in the number of `ulama with expertise in rational sciences in the early decades of the eighteenth century compared to the latter half of the seventeenth century. Tatmīm is a perfect bibliographical source for such a survey, because it was written at 1191/1777 as a supplement to Shaykh Hurr al-`Āmilī's (d. 1104/1693) Amal al-āmil, extending the latter's coverage of prominent `ulama to the twelfth/eighteenth century and adding important figures from the past that had escaped al-`Āmilī's attention. The author lists one hundred and thirty-seven names, mostly from the twelfth/eighteenth century, and provides a short biography for each. Among them, seventy-two figures were active mainly in the last three decades of the Safavid rule and beyond. These can be divided into two groups: first, the twenty-two who died prior to 1150/1738 (which means a major part of their career as teachers of the Islamic sciences overlapped with the last three decades of Safavid rule) and, second, the fifty who died after 1150/1738, and who were probably teaching in their profession after the fall of Isfahan.

Nearly sixty percent of the `ulama featured in Tatmīm who died before 1150 are described either as philosophers (hukamā) or as proficient in both the rational and transmitted sciences (jāmi` al-ma`qūl wa-l-manqūl). This is the case for forty-four percent of those who died later. Thus we see that the number of students occupying themselves with philosophy declined at the end of the Safavid era, but nonetheless, over the span of this century, nearly half of the students of religion studied philosophy.

The polemical works of Qummī and others, then, had a certain degree of success. This is partly

reflected in a number of monographs written in Persian during the reign of Shah Sultān Husayn that opposed the rational-philosophical method and questioned its legitimacy as a tool for understanding questions of faith like the principle of tawhīd. We know of a number of fascinating, yet understudied, manuscripts on the topic written by authors otherwise unknown to us from extant bio-bibliographical compendiums. The fact that the authors are not among the well-known religious scholars of the time could be interpreted as a sign of the relative success of Qummī and his allies in expanding their message beyond a limited number of elitist `ulama.

The partial success of the anti-philosophy discourse in shifting public opinion against philosophy in the last three decades of Safavid rule can be further assessed by comparing vaqf-nāmahs (certificates of pious endowment) from the time of `Abbas ü with those written during the reign of Shah Sultān Husayn, the last Safavid king. No such documents dating to the former period explicitly exclude philosophy or Sufism from the curriculum of the madrasa being endowed, but a number of documents belonging to the latter period explicitly condemn the so-called illusory sciences.

The vaqf-nāmah of two of the most important madrasas built during the reign of `Abbas II, namely Jaddah-yi Kūchak and Jaddah-yi Buzurg, do not put any conditions on the type of studies resident students were permitted to pursue. The documents also include the list of books donated to the library, among which no major work of philosophy or Sufism can be found. Nor do they include a considerable number of hadith collections. Instead, the overwhelming majority of the books are related to fiqh, kalām, and manṭiq (logic). This stands in striking contrast to the vaqf-nāmah of the Sultānī madrasa, which was built between 1118/1706 and 1126/1714 and was one of the most splendid projects of the Safavid era. This document explicitly prohibits resident students from discussing books of Sufism and pure philosophy (ḥikmat-i ṣirf). It also outlines a requirement that students take at least one class on a Shī`ī book of hadith, a clear indication that the process of endowment was heavily influenced by the strong hadith-centered movement of the latter part of the Safavid period that was most notably manifested

in the emergence of Akhbārīsm. In another case, the vaqf-nāmah of the Maryam Bīgum madrasa, built in 1115/1703, explicitly prohibits students from teaching or learning from "books of illusory sciences," i.e., the sciences of shubha (doubt), as ḥikma and the rational sciences were known. Such books included al-Shifā, al-Ishārāt, Ḥikmat al-ʿayn, Sharḥ al-hidāya, and the like. Additionally, the vaqf-nāmah of a madrasa in Hamadan built in 1100/1689 by Shaykh `Alī Khān Zanganah Iʿtimād al-Dawlah, similarly asserts that "if the teacher and students occupy themselves with teaching and learning of philosophical sciences (ʿulūm-i ḥikmiyyah) that are contrary to the Shari`a without refuting it, their stipend should be withheld, and they must be expelled from the madrasa."

In addition to these explicit exclusions, we should also take into consideration the curious fact that at least two of the vaqf-nāmahs of madrasas established during the reign of Shah `Abbas II and Sultān Husayn contain an erasure exactly where the document clarifies what sciences may be pursued in that madrasa. One example is the vaqf-nāmah of the Shafī`iyyah madrasa built in 1067/1657. According to the document, eligibility to receive stipends was contingent upon the condition "that the students pursue [erased text] religious sciences."41 A similar phenomenon is observable in the vaqf-nāmah of the Imāmiyyah madrasa in Isfahan, built in 1129/1717, six years before the fall of the Safavid capital. Although we do not know what words are missing, these erasures indicate the extreme sensitivity surrounding what was considered a legitimate pursuit of knowledge and speak to the battle over who got to define these boundaries. Tampering with a vaqf-nāmah is considered a grievous sin, but apparently the stakes were high enough in these cases to overrule such concerns.

The evidence in the vaqf-nāmahs should be taken with a grain of salt. The documents cannot be taken as representative of widespread or universal practice, though they may point to an intellectual trajectory. Other vaqf-nāmahs available to us from the same period are silent about philosophy and Sufism. One such example is the vaqf-nāmah of the Sultān Husayniyyah madrasa built by Āqā Kamāl (d. after 1133/1720), director (sāhib jam') of the

Central Treasury (khazānah-yi `āmirah), on which construction began in 1107/1695 and continued until 1133/1720, with an attendant extension of its endowments. This document contains no negative mention of philosophy or Sufism. On the contrary, the brief list of endowed books at the end of this document includes classics in the study of philosophy like Ibn Sīnā's al-Shifā.

Furthermore, if we move from Isfahan to other major urban centers like Shiraz, there is no substantial indication that philosophy or Sufism was targeted. Instead, when we assemble the pieces of the historical puzzle, an image emerges of an intellectual environment quite welcoming to philosophers and Sufis. The vaqf-nāmah of the Muqīmiyyah madrasa, built in 1059/1649, states that students should occupy themselves with learning religious sciences (úlūm-i dīniyyah) like fiqh, hadith, tafsīr, usūl, and other preliminary sciences like Arabic grammar and literature. The document further states that students are allowed to extend their area of study to other sciences with the aim of "sharpening their minds;" an explicit reference to mathematics and philosophy. Another vaqf-nāmah from the year 1094/1683 belonging to the Imāmiyyah madrasa of Shiraz requires that the superintendent (mutavāllī) find and appoint a primary teacher for the madrasa competent in both transmitted (naqlī) and rational (`aqlī) sciences. Herbert Thomas' abovementioned observations on the Khān Madrasa bear repeating. He writes, "philosophy, astrology, physic, chemistry, and the mathematics [are read]; so as it's the more famoused through Persia." The situation does not seem to have changed in Shiraz in later decades as is evidenced by Hazīn Lāhījī's memoirs about his time in Shiraz, in which he fondly recalls the many teachers of philosophy and Sufism he met there. These include figures like the mystically-minded Shah Muhammad Dārābī Shīrāzī (d. circa 1130/1718), as well as philosophers like Ākhūnd Masīhā Fasavī (d. 1127/1715), a student of Āqā Husayn Khānsārī, the previously mentioned shaykh al-islām of Isfahan. Hazīn's remarks about Isfahan's intellectual environment in the final decades of Safavid rule are colorful, and they also remind us to view the success of the anti-philosophy, anti-Sufi campaign in relative terms. He speaks of his wonderful years in Isfahan and his erudite teachers,

including Mīr Sayyid Hasan Tāliqānī who, according to Hazīn, synthesized the vision of philosophy (hikmah) with that of Sufism and taught not only Ibn `Arabī's Fusūs al-hikam but also Suhrawardī's Hayākil al-nūr. In Isfahan, Hazīn also studied with the famous, mystically-minded philosopher of the time, Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī. As mentioned, his comments about Isfahan's intellectual environment are not followed by complaints about the opponents of Sufism and philosophy. Nor does he mention his alleged expulsion from Isfahan, along with Ardistānī, at the order of the Shah. Rather, what can be gleaned from his memoirs is (1) that the study of hadith had become a normal occupation not only for students of hadith but also for those in philosophically- and mystically minded circles of learning, and (2) despite growing opposition, philosophy continued to be pursued by students without significant difficulty. This conclusion stands in marked contrast to the above statements that present the study of philosophy in the late Safavid period as a dangerous enterprise undertaken at risk to one's life.

Only after the fall of Isfahan did many of society's elite figures, including Hazīn himself, flee the city they adored. It was this dispersion of human resources, along with an attendant lack of financial resources, which most gravely damaged the enterprise of teaching and learning philosophy and mysticism. With this as our backdrop, we turn to Hikmat al-`ārifīn and its author, offering an analysis of their significance in the intellectual history of the Safavid period.

Muḥammad-Ṭāhir Qummī

Muhammad-Ṭāhir b. Muhammad-Husayn Shīrazī Najafī Qummī was born in the late sixteenth century to an ordinary family in the province of Fars. His birthplace was most likely the small town of Bavānat, located halfway between Shiraz and Yazd. He may have spent early years in Shiraz, but for unknown reasons his father moved the family to the shrine city of Najaf in modern-day Iraq, where he grew to adulthood. Information about Qummī's life in Najaf is hard to come by, but we know that he attended the seminaries of that city. We know only two of his teachers by name. Both hailed from Jabal `Āmil in modern day

Lebanon, and we do not know whether he met them in Najaf or elsewhere.

The first of these two known teachers is Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn `Alī al-`Āmilī (d. 1068/1658), a well-known member of the prominent lineage of Twelver scholars from Jabal `Āmil. Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn is said to have taught in the Levant before moving to Mecca, where he lived for more than two decades until the time of his death. If that is the case, Qummī must have travelled in the pursuit of religious knowledge.58 Nūr al-Dīn is known as an anti-Akhbārī jurist (mujtahid), and he is the author of al-Shawāhid al-makkiyya, a critical commentary on Mulla Muhammad-Amīn Astarābādī's (d. 1033/1623-24 or 1036/1626-27) famed al-Fawā'id al-madaniyya. As we will see, in contrast to his teacher, Qummī was an avowed Akhbārī scholar. The second of Qummī's known teachers was Muhammad b. Jābir b. `Abbās al-`Āmilī al-Najafī (d. after 1035/1627), another prominent `Āmilī scholar who resided in Najaf.

We know little about Qummī's time in Najaf, but we know that it came to an abrupt and undesired end after the fall of Mosul in 1048/1638, when he fled to Iran in fear of further Ottoman advance. Qummī was a well-educated young scholar when he arrived in Qom, but it took time for him to establish connections in Safavid Iran. In Newman's words "al-Qummī had appeared on the scene somewhat suddenly ... with little apparent connection to Iran-based clerics of the preceding generation." Based on existing manuscripts and other surviving evidence we can deduce that Qummī's literary activities began in Qom, and his first treatise is dated 1053/1643. He went on to become a prolific author, and more than fifty titles are ascribed to him. Many of these are short treatises written in Farsi and intended to guide the educated public on matters of creed and orthodoxy, but a number of substantial books are attributed to him as well. None of these writings can be dated to the Najaf period.

Muhammad-Tāhir may have been a young man of little reputation or fame when he settled in Qom, but half a century later, by the final decade of his life, he had become one of the most well-known religious scholars and public figures of his era. He

actively sought the favor of Shah `Abbās II and Shah Sulaymān, dedicating a number of his works to them. His rather quick rise to prominence is a testament to his talents for navigating the socio-political landscape of Safavid Persia, which he did without having the advantage of being connected to prominent `ulama families of the time.

Most of Qummī's treatises – including many of his criticisms of Sufism and philosophy - were written during the reign of Shah `Abbās II. This was in spite of the latter's Sufi proclivities, and in fact it was Shah `Abbās II who appointed Qummī as a judge and as the Friday prayer leader of Qom. By the time Shah Sulaymān ascended to power, Qummī had accumulated sufficient credentials and established a good enough relationship with the court to be appointed to the position of shaykh al-islām, the highest religious office to be had in a major shrine-city. Qummī appears to have held that position in Qom until his death on a Thursday night on the 23rd of the month of Dhu al-Qa`da of the year 1100 hijrī, which corresponds to September 9th, 1689. He was buried in the Shaykhān cemetery close to the Shrine of Fātima al-Ma`sūma, where his grave stone can still be located today.

Given that he was perhaps the most powerful figure in Qom for several decades, and given his confrontational style of criticizing his opponents, it is not terribly surprising to see charges of corruption and abuse of power leveled against Qummī in some sources. A detailed and colorful picture of the rumors circulating about Qummī is preserved in two polemical works written in response to his critique of Sufism by Muhammad-Mu'min Tabīb Tunikābunī (d. after 1090/1680), a court physician during Shah Sulaymān's reign. In both Tabsirat al-mu'minīn and Futūfz al-mujāhidīn, Tunikābunī provides a detailed account of Qummī's supposed abuses. It is impossible to determine whether these allegations are true, but given their scope, it is clear that Qummī was considered a person of tremendous influence, at least in Qom.

This powerful position clearly reflects Qummī's favor in the eyes of Shah Sulaymān, but his relationship with the monarch was not uniformly positive. Once, we are told, Qummī's blunt criticism of wine-drinking in the court – Shah Sulaymān was

known for excessive drinking - got him into trouble with the king, nearly costing him his life. Nonetheless, Qummī not only managed to retain his position, but also made a name for himself as an outspoken critic of Sufism, and later, philosophy. His increasing power and influence and his strong stance against Sufism, which was still a formidable social and intellectual force, made him many enemies along the way. Animosity toward him extended beyond proponents of Sufism and philosophy, due in no small part to the brutality of his criticism and his liberal use of takfīr as a weapon not only against Sufis and philosophers but also against members of the `ulama whose intellectual outlooks diverged only marginally from his own. For example, Qummī attacked Mulla Khalīl Qazvīnī (d. 1089/1679), an ally in the anti-Sufi campaign, due to latter's belief that Friday prayers were not obligatory. According to Khānsārī, he even called Qazvīnī an infidel because of this position. The following anecdote, transmitted by Khānsārī, provides a sense of how strong a reaction Qummī provoked even among like-minded colleagues:

> [D]uring one of Mawlānā Khalīl's gatherings, the hadith regarding the naming of the holy town of Qom was mentioned. [The hadith says] that during his night journey, the Messenger of God (PBUH) saw groups of people amassed at that location. Among them was a man at the pulpit who wore a red hood and sought to deceive them. [The Prophet] asked Gabriel the meaning of what he saw. He said, "This is a place settled by your followers (shī`a) and those who love your descendants. The man standing among them is a cursed devil who wishes to lead them astray from the path." As a result, the expression on the face of the Messenger of God changed, and he said to [that devil], "Depart (qum), you cursed one!" This is why that holy place is called Qom. When the conversation reached this point, Mawlā Khalīl said "That devil whom the Messenger of God (PBUH) saw is presently in the pulpit of that holy place, blocking people's way on the path. In saying this, he was alluding to Mawla Muhammad-Tāhir [Qummī]. Some of the people who were present asked him, "If, as you say, this man is misguided and

leading people astray, why don't you do something to oust him from this high position and to deter people from following him?" In response he said, "How could he be dissuaded by what I say when he was not dissuaded by what the Messenger of God (PBUH) said and did not come down from the pulpit at his command?!"

This anecdote appears to have been in circulation from much earlier times. It can even be traced back to Qummī and Qazvīnī's lifetime, strengthening the likelihood that it contains a kernel of truth. Furthermore, we know that Qummī wrote a refutation of Qazvīnī's treatise on Friday prayers. Titled Jā'a al-haqq and written in 1076/1665, the treatise begins with Qummī's claim that he was prompted to write this refutation due to accusations of kufr leveled by Qazvīnī against people who deemed Friday prayers permissible.

Khānsārī also transmits an elaborate anecdote about the highly strained relationship between Qummī and Fayż Kāshānī (d. 1090/1680). The story relates that Shah Sulaymān had decided to kill Qummī for his public criticism of wine-drinking at the court. After a successful intervention by some of Qummī's allies in the capital, the shah changed his mind and ordered that Qummī be summoned to Isfahan to be personally reprimanded by the Shah. On his way to Isfahan, we are told, Qummī stopped briefly in Kāshān, where he was greeted by prominent religious scholars of the town, among them `Alam al-Hudā. When Qummī recognizes Fayż's son,

> [H]e asked someone in his presence, "Hasn't this Zoroastrian (majūsī) Shaykh died?" By that he meant the abovementioned's [`Alam al-hudā's] father. This was due to what he [Qummī] believed about the corruption of his [Fayż's] belief in God's unification (tawhīd). When Fayż heard of this, he came to pay him a visit, but he [Qummī] did not let him in, so he said, "Oh, our master, I will present to you my beliefs from behind the door. If what I say corresponds to what you have heard [then I will leave]; otherwise let me in." After he presented his beliefs to him and he [Qummī] realized their soundness and that he had been misled about his [Fayż's]

position, he allowed him to enter, the two greeted, and he [Qummī] apologized. Whatever reservations were in their hearts [against each other] were removed.

This late hagiographical account should be taken with a grain of salt, especially because Rawdāt and other late hagiographies of the `ulama written in Qajar period betray a clear effort to present the `ulama as an undivided front dedicated to the defense and explication of the faith. By the time such hagiographies were written, both Fayż and Qummī had been canonized as representatives of true Shi`ism and prominent members of the `ulama, and any indication of substantial and irreconcilable differences appears to have been problematic for hagiographers. Such sources deny, for example, that Fayż had any association with organized Sufism and/or explain away his mystical proclivities and beliefs influenced by the school of Ibn `Arabī through his mentor, Mulla Sadrā.

While we can be reasonably sure that the happy ending to the above story is a pious fiction, earlier sources confirm how strongly Qummī felt about Fayż's "unorthodox" positions on matters of belief. Again, Tabīb Tunikābunī informs us in his Futūh al-mujāhidīn that Qummī was of the opinion that all the pages of Fayż's al-Wāfī should be washed clean – a not so subtle way of implying that it was among books deemed to be heretical (kutub-i z llah). This anecdote comes from a source biased against Qummī, but it is likely true. Qummī's position as an Akhbārī scholar of hadith means that Fayż's compendium of hadith would have been of special interest to him. This is evident in the text of Hikmat al-`ārifīn, in which Qummī quotes Fayż's work, presents strong objections, and almost always refers to the latter as sāhib al-Wāfī.

Qummī was recognized in his lifetime as a prominent scholar of hadith, and two of the major religious scholars of his time, Muhammad-Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) and Hurr al-`Āmilī (d. 1104/1693), list him as an authority in their ijāzahs. Additionally, it appears that their pronounced opposition to Sufism and their focus on the hadith literature were influenced by Qummī. Yet the most important aspect of Qummī's influence and legacy was not related to his training of a large number of students, but to his contributions as

a polemicist to the formation of important aspects of "orthodox" Shi`i piety. In this he resembled Majlisī Jr. The latter was of a more scholarly bent, but both men dedicated their lives to promoting and defending what they considered to be the true creed received from the infallible imams. For his part, Qummī seems to have thrived on attacking heresies and innovations that, from his perspective, threatened Twelver orthodoxy, while Majlisī was more inclined toward describing that orthodoxy, outlining its contours in a series of accessible treatises. Both figures avoided elitism and made a conscious effort to write many of their works in Persian with the aim of educating the public on matters of creed. Qummī's obsession with issues of orthodoxy is clearly reflected in his writings, which span more than half a century. His major goal was to defend the integrity of Shi`ism – especially the doctrine of the imamate – against Sunnis arguments and to purify Shī`ī thought and practice from the influence of what he considered to be foreign elements, which included philosophy and Sufism. His understanding of what constituted true Shi`ism was informed by his Akhbārī leanings, which led him to believe that hadith literature, especially the Four Canonical Books, was the only legitimate source of religious knowledge.

A significant portion of Qummī's writings falls under the genre known as refutation, or radd. These include works that he wrote in refutation of Sufism and philosophy. The earliest of his writings in this genre is Bahjat al-dārayn, a treatise completed in 1055/1645 on the subject of determinism and destiny (al-qadā wa-l-qadar) and his rejection of various schools of thought, including mainstream Peripatetic philosophy. A considerable portion of this text is spent explaining and refuting philosophers' arguments on issues like the nature of divine attributes, cosmogony, and cosmology in so far as they pertain to the question of free will. Notably, Qummī expresses his astonishment and dismay that a prominent contemporary Shī`ī philosopher like Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631) would follow the "unorthodox" beliefs of earlier figures like Ibn Sīnā on the issue of free will. He refrains, however, from attacking Mīr Dāmād directly.

However, it was the controversial treatise known to us as Radd-i sūf~yān, probably written before

1060/1650, that brought him into the spotlight and earned him fame (or infamy, depending on your position in the debate over Sufism). This work was written when Qummī was still a largely unknown relgious scholar, and it was brought to the attention of Majlisī Sr. (d. 1070/1659) against Qummī's intentions. The former decided to write a refutation of its content in the form of a gloss, thus putting Qummī, the younger scholar, in the position of having to confront one of the most famous and well respected religious scholars of his time. Majlisī Sr.'s prominence, however, does not appear to have given the young Qummī pause. He wrote a stinging response to Majlisī in the form of a super gloss, accusing his opponent of being an ignorant populist and friend of Satan, among other niceties. He dispatched the super gloss to the capital, and this tête-à-tête became one of the best-known and most frequently cited debates in subsequent decades, when a virulent anti-Sufi campaign swept the Safavid realm. In the immediate context, however, as Newman astutely observes, both Shah `Abbās II and the general cultural environment were favorable to Sufism, making Qummī "aware that too extreme a polemic might endanger both his personal safety and his career prospects, and he continued to modify both the tone and substance thereof as compared with those in his earlier Radd." For example, in Radd, Qummī does not seem to care that the Safavid dynasty was rooted in the Sufi order established by Safī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, but in Tuḥfat al-akhyār, the final version of which was completed around 1075, he is careful to pay lip service to the Safavid claims to legitimacy by affirming Safī al-Dīn, while claiming that the legendary figure was neither a Sufi nor a Sunni. Rather, says Qummī, Safī al-Dīn was a true Shi`i gnostic (`ārif) who was opposed to the path of Hallāj and Bāyazīd, but who practiced dissimulation (taqiyyah) due to the Sunni milieu in which he lived. Qummī then immediately expresses gratitude to Shah `Abbās II and his forefathers for establishing and promoting Twelver Shi`ism in Iran. Although Tuḥfat al-akhyār was the last of Qummī's monographs to be wholly dedicated to the repudiation of Sufism, its contents were reproduced with minor changes by other likeminded writers and published under different names. The anti-Sufi campaign gained more social traction during the

reign of Shah `Abbas II's successor, Shah Sulaymān, who did not share his father's Sufi proclivities. With the help of popular preachers like Mīr Lawhī and other like-minded religious scholars, Qummī spearheaded this campaign, which raged in major cities like Qom, Mashhad, and Isfahan, where other anti-philosophy works continued to be written.

In later years, Qummī focused his attention on attacking philosophers. A final chapter of his widely-read anti-Sufi work Tuḥfat al-akhyār is devoted to criticism of philosophers, which was, most likely, the last of his many revisions to the book. Hikmat al-`ārifīn, the subject of the present volume, is his most extensive critique of philosophy written in Arabic. During Shah Sulaymān's reign, Qummī also wrote al-Favā'id al-dīnīyyah, a Persian treatise against philosophy in a question and answer format obviously intended for a broader audience.

Qummī's refutations were not confined to philosophy and Sufism. As an influential Akhbārī jurist, he contributed to the hotly-debated question of Friday prayers, writing rebuttals in response to two of his colleagues who did not believe attending Friday prayers was obligatory during the twelfth Imam's occultation. One of these treatises was written against the teachings of Mulla Hasan-`Alī Shūshtarī (d. 1075/1664) in 1068/1658, and the other, as mentioned above, was written against those of Mulla Khalīl Qazvīnī completed in 1076/1665.

As a Twelver theologian, Qummī considered explaining and defending the basics of Shi`i creeds and rituals, including the important doctrine of the imamate, to be among his most urgent tasks. His Jāmī' safavī, for example, is a short catechism-style treatise written in an accessible language explaining Shi`i basics like the imamate (Qummī enumerates ten reasons for the necessity of the existence of infallible imams). His most detailed and technical defense of the doctrine of the imamate appears in al-Arbain, an Arabic work in which Qummī offers, in his words, "irrefutable arguments for [the twelve imams'] imamate, beginning with texts included in the books of the opposing party [Sunni sources] on the issue of the imamate of our master and the master of all the people, the commander of the believers. [This is

followed by] clear responses to the misinterpretations (ta'vīlāt) and doubts (shubuhāt) of our enemies, ending with an explanation of Sunni beliefs related to both the principles (usūl) and branches (furū' of religion." Atiyyah-yi rabbānī va hadiyyah-yi sulaymānī is another monograph in an accessible style in which Qummī deals with the subject of the imamate, providing basic information on the imams' lives, their virtues, the enmities and injustices they faced, and their miracles.

What makes his portfolio of writings much more fascinating, however, is a body of Persian treatises that could be classified as works of zuhd, one of the earliest genres to emerge in Islamic literature. These writings are illuminating because they stand in direct contrast to the abrasive, takfīrī style of many of his other works. They reveal their author to be a sensitive, introspective soul committed to the development of a moral and spiritual life aimed at subduing the carnal soul and drawing near to the imams and to God. In refuting Sufi piety, Qummī had more to offer in its place than a dry, rigid, literal understanding of sacred texts. In these works, he appears to have been genuinely and deeply interested in a framework for spiritual life based wholly on the Qur'an and the teachings of the imams. The ideals and practices of the introspective mode of piety he espoused resemble those of the renunciants (zuhhād) who lived in the early centuries after the rise of Islam. Theirs was a piety that emphasized the value of utmost sincerity (ikhlās) in all ritual devotional practices (`ibādāt), whether obligatory or supererogatory. Like the zuhhād, Qummī was deeply suspicious of the carnal soul, believing it must be kept in check through examining one's intentions (muhāsabāt al-nafs/murāqabāt al-nafs), meditating on the transient nature of this world and worldly possessions, and reminding oneself of impending death and the prospect of eternal damnation in the fires of hell. In Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn, for example, after making it clear that, from his perspective, ḥikma can only be attained through the knowledge of the teachings of the infallible imams, he emphasizes the centrality of the practice of zuhd, or asceticism, for attaining this ḥikma. He is quick to mention that zuhd does not involve wearing rough cloths or eating rough food like the followers of Hallāj and Abū Yazīd. Rather, he says, it requires "cutting

worldly desires short (qaṣr al-amal) and avoiding what God has prohibited (al-wara' ʿammā ḥarrama Allāh)." The key for success in such practices is constantly reminding oneself of the reality, and inevitability, of death and what follows it. Although the fear of death and a pious awaremess of God (taqwā) are emphasized throughout, Qummī's writings in this genre are also sprinkled with lines of his own poetry in which the subject of love, or maḥabbat, is mentioned, though not elaborated. Examples of this poetry give the reader a better sense of this aspect of his personality:

> O Lord, capture me with your love (maḥabbat).
> Consume my body in the fires of purification.
> Pluck all neglect of God from my wings and feathers,
> That I might fly to the pinnacle of your love (maḥabbat).

> O Lord, capture me with your love (maḥabbat).
> Turn me away from anything but your love.
> Sprinkle my face with the water of your mercy,
> To awaken me, in the blink of an eye, from my sleep.

> O Lord, free me from the bonds of my body,
> Rescue me from attachment to this world.
> Pour a sip of the nectar of your desire into my mouth,
> Setting me free in an instant of the need for bread and water.
> Sincerity is the motto of the gnostic (sāhib-i `irfān),
> In whose heart lies the light of faith.
> One who obeys God out of greed [for paradise]
> Is among the merchants and mercenaries.

> Obedience is accepted by the Lord,
> When it comes from love and desire.
> Sincerity is the accomplishment of the skilled man,
> Whose heart contains the light of insight.
> The Four Books are the soul of religion;
> They are four pillars of faith.
> In the struggle against the carnal soul,

They are four mirrors for the man of gnosis (`irfān).

The above lines reflect the kind of spiritual and religious teachings that Qummī advocated as an alternative to the prevalent discourse of his time, which was heavily influenced by Sufism and philosophy. Throughout his work, Qummī explains aspects of this alternative paradigm, which some have called `irfān-i hubbī in contrast to the traditional tasavvuf-i `ishqī.105 Qummī's semantic choices are highly significant. For example, Qummī rejects the concept of `ishq because it is not attested in the canonical sources of faith and replaces it with the concept of mahabba, a concept that is attested in hadith literature and the Qur'an. Similarly, the concept of ma`rifa is central to him, but it has a radically different meaning than the Sufi conception of ma`rifa. Therefore, at the very outset of Hikmat al-`ārifīn, the foundational qudsī hadith so often referenced in Sufi literature ("he who knows himself, knows his Lord") is replaced with an exclusively Shī`ī hadith on the imamate: "One who dies not knowing his imam has died a jāhilī death [that is, as a non-Muslim]." Similarly, Qummī has an understanding of hikma that diverges sharply from the way the word is used in the context of the discursive practice of Islamic philosophy. Indeed, Qummī offers his own definition of the term in his introduction to Hikmat, once again placing knowledge of the imams at the center:

> Hikma is knowledge (ma`rifa) of the imam, and the hakīm is one who knows the true imam and learns religious knowledge from him. There is no question that the purified imams from the family [of the Prophet] are leaders of truth and repositories of hikma, having learned it from the Prophet himself, PBUH ... He said, "I am the house of hikma, and `Alī is its door. Whoever desires hikma must approach the door." Therefore, hikma is what is understood from the sayings of the pure imams, who are the companions of infallibility and the interpreters of God's Book... [Hikma does not lie in] the problems of philosophy, which are in contradiction to the Book and the tradition (sunna).

Elsewhere, he espouses the same sentiment in the form of a quatrain:

> The ignorant man busies himself with Greek philosophy (hikmat),
> While neglecting God and following Satan.
> We have no need for Ibn Sīnā's Shīfā,
> For the Qur'an is the healer (shīfā) of the believers.

In short, the immediate object of gnosis or `irfān is the infallible imam and not, as Sufis would have it, the divine nature. Similarly, the only epistemologically legitimate sources of religious knowledge are the Qur'an and the four books.

The importance of these semantic shifts cannot be overemphasized. They lie at the heart of a broader epistemic shift in seventeenth century Safavid Persia, one that forced proponents of long-established traditions of knowledge like philosophy, usūlī jurisprudence, and Sufism to formulate new ways, and find new sources, to legitimize their discourse. As Twelver Shī`īsm increasingly acquired an independent identity as a world religion rather than a sect during the seventeenth- and early eighteenth century, religious scholars of all stripes engaged themselves more seriously with the Shī`ī hadith traditions in an effort establish the legitimacy of their discourse in accordance to the ethos of the newly-established Shī`ī sacred nomos. The dramatic increase in scholarly activity focused on the canonical collections of Twelver hadith is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the number of commentaries written on Usūl al-kāfī. Out of the twenty commentaries/glosses that can be identified using Āqā Buzurg's bibliographical compendium, sixteen were written between 1001/1592 and 1150/1737. Like Mulla Sadrā and his teacher Mīr Dāmād are also on the list, as are theologian-philosophers like Mīrzā Rafī`ā. This diversity illustrates the centrality of Shī`ī hadith literature in the consolidation of orthodoxy and the competition for authority involved in that process.

Perhaps the most distinctive and radical expression of the central place the infallible imams and their sayings found in the newly-established Safavid sacred nomos during the seventeenth century was the Akhbārī movement. The success and rapid popularity of Akhbārīsm should be understood as part of a broader intellectual, social, and political shift during the Safavid period that required a re-

evaluation of the old regime of truth and its bases of legitimacy. The categorical rejection of Sunni hadith sources and methodologies developed primarily by Sunni scholars was in line with Safavid propaganda, which made every effort to draw a sharp distinction between the Sunni Turks (Ottomans) and the followers of the family of the Prophet (the Shi`a under Safavid rule). The jurists adhering to the Akhbārī legal school, in a return to what they dubbed as tarīqat al-qudamā (the way of the predecessors [among hadith scholars]) freed themselves of the necessity of using the extensive technical Usūlī vocabulary which was, in turn, thoroughly indebted to Peripatetic philosophy and logic. This gave them the added freedom to attack philosophy as a foreign element that needed to be purged from the madrasas. Therefore, the gradual rise to prominence of Akhbārīsm in the madrasa as an alternative framework of legal thought facilitated the turn against philosophy in important ways.

Although debates over the epistemic legitimacy of philosophy were nothing new in the history of Islamicate world, during Qummī's time these issues were being debated on new terms: those of a politically dominant and symbolically self-contained Twelver Shī`ī worldview that required the authentication of long-established social and intellectual formations on new grounds. Although Qummī and the philosophers to whose teachings he objected had very different views of the nature of the imams and the essence of their teachings, they all directed their efforts toward the Shī`ī hadith compendiums, writing commentaries and using many hadith reports from those compendiums in their works. In other words, although philosophers like Sadrā and Fayż fundamentally disagreed with scholars like Qummī or Qazvīnī, they were united on a larger point: all believed it was imperative to demonstrate that traditions like philosophy were based on the teachings of imams.

Qummī himself was an avowed Akhārī scholar, as mentioned, and the clearest articulation of this intellectual commitment appears in a lengthy introduction to his commentary on Tūsī's Tahdhīb al-ahkām, entitled Hujjat al-islām. This still unpublished work is around 200 pages in length and is among the last that Qummī authored. It is a testament to

his erudition and in keeping with his status as a prominent member of the `ulama. It is also where Qummī tackles the issues of hottest debate between the Akhbārīs and Usūlīs, namely, which sources of religious knowledge are valuable, and what constitutes proper methodology. Not surprisingly, after long and winding arguments, Qummī maintains that only two sources are legitimate: the Qur'an and the Sunna. He vehemently attacks the notion that ijtihād is a valid method of approaching these sources, offering arguments based on both Sunni and Shī`ī sources. Additionally, he rejects the usefulness of the concept of ijmā` and then uses the remainder of the introduction to critically examine specific topics in the discipline of uṣūl al-fiqh one by one, from semantics (mabāhith al-alfāẓ), to the issue of probative power (ḥujjiya), to procedural principles (al-uṣūl al-ʿamaliyya).

In short, Qummī's writings and the information we have about him from other sources reveal that he was a religious scholar of some prominence with relatively strong ties to the political center. He seems to have been more concerned with issues of orthodoxy and piety among the masses rather than the hair-splitting his elite colleagues. He may not have had considerable influence on later generation of Shi`i religious scholars, but his polemical writings were a significant contribution to the formation of Shi`i piety in his time. His puritanical insistence that the Qur'an and the hadith canon were the only legitimate sources of religious knowledge may not have become a majority opinion in Iran in the centuries after him, but it remained a serious epistemological challenge to the epistemologically pluralist strains Shi`i thought. As Gleave, Ansari, and others have noted, the contemporary proponents of maktab-i tafkīk can be seen as intellectual inheritors of the trend of thought in Shi`i history for which Qummī was a prominent advocate as an Akhbārī.

Ḥikmat al-ʿĀrifīn

Ḥikmat al-ʿĀrifīn is a substantial monograph written at the height of Qummī's literary campaign against philosophy and philosophical mysticism. If the number of surviving manuscripts is any indication, it was also his most widely read

technical work.118 Internal evidence suggests it was written between 1068/1657 and 1075/1664.119 This is based on two features of the text. First, Qummī mentions Fayż Kāshānī's al-Wāfī multiple times.120 We know that al-Wāfī was finished no earlier than 1067/1657,121 and it is unlikely, given the strained relationship between Fayż and Qummī, that the latter had access to incomplete drafts from the author. Qummī also mentions Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn in his other work, Tuḥfat al-akhyār, which, as discussed, was finished no later than 1076/1664.

Two important aspects of Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn have significant bearing on the intellectual history of the Safavid period. First, it is the first monograph of the Safavid period dedicated to criticizing mainstream philosophy and Ibn ʿArabī's school of philosophical mysticism from a Shīʿī-Akhbārī perspective. Second, it is the earliest work of its kind to single out Mulla Sadrā and his philosophy as a primary target. Despite these noteworthy features, Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn has attracted little scholarly attention. S. M. Hadi Gerami was the first to offer a brief discussion in Persian of the significance of this work, especially its attention to Sadrā's philosophy.124 Some years later, I discussed the book in the context of the broader intellectual and social transformations of the late Safavid period. Most recently, Sajjad Rizvi has provided a partical and brief report of the content of Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn as part of a larger analysis of the takfīr of philosophers during the Safavid period. The following synopsis of the work is intended to provide a bird's eye view of the content of the work. Readers, of course, must refer to the detailed arguments of each section for a thorough understanding.

As mentioned earlier, Qummī begins Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn with an epistemological critique of the category of ḥikmat, emphasizing that the only legitimate source of ḥikma is maʿrifa, or knowledge of the infallible imams and their teachings – not the philosophical speculations of Greek philosophers that are contrary to divine injunctions as encapsulated in the Qur'an and hadith literature. Without a proper knowledge of the teachings of the imams, says Qummī, "the rational faculty cannot be perfected, nor can it be

purified of illnesses, and attaining ḥikma would be impossible." Like any Akhbārī scholar worth his salt, Qummī spends most of the rest of introduction justifying this position by deploying dozens of hadith reports, both from Shiʿi and Sunni sources, to the effect that it is obligatory to learn religious knowledge only through the infalli-ble imams, and that the two sources of Qur'an and hadith cannot be separated from each other. Qummī closes the introduction with extensive quotes from al-Ghazālī's al-Munqidh and Tahāfat al-hukamā (sic), all with the single theme of how all philosophers are infidels.

The first major subject of Hikmat is a discussion of the mainstream philo-sophical methods of proving God's existence. For this purpose, Qummī focuses on the question of why a contingent being (mumkin) needs a cause (ʿilla) for its existence – a question that happens to be the cornerstone of many philosophical arguments about God's existence. From his perspective, two major schools of thought exist on the issue, one espoused by philosophers and the other by theologians (mutakallimun). Philosophers believe that imkān, or contingency itself, is the reason that a contingent being needs a cause, whereas theologians stipulate hudūth, or "coming to be," as the criterion. Not surprisingly, Qummī takes the side of the latter group, claiming that their position is supported by the Qur'an and the sunna.

In his criticism of the philosophers' school of thought, he engages in a detailed discussion of the issue of al-awlawiyya al-dhātiyya, or "essential precedence," quoting extensively from Lāhījī, Dashtakī, Qūshjī, and Davānī and rejecting their arguments that a contingent entity, as contingent, is equivocal vis-à-vis existence (wujūd) and non-existence (ʿadam). Then, he turns to what he views as the correct way of proving God's existence. Quoting verses of the Qur'an to support his claim, he concludes that the only valid way to argue for God's existence is by pondering on His creation. Qummī then goes on to say that since the philosophical arguments fail to prove God's existence, they naturally fall short of proving His unity. As for his own arguments, he contends that the issue is among the necessities (al-darūriyyāt) of faith and, as such, it does not need to be supported

by rational arguments. Rather, the ample evidence for God's unity in the Qur'an and hadith literature is sufficient for the faithful. Qummī adds that "tawḥīd is not among the [theological] issues necessary for proving [the necessity of] prophecy, therefore, it is possible to make arguments for it [tawḥīd] based on transmitted reports (al-naql) without [committing the fallacy of] circular argument."

The second major issue Qummī takes up in his criticism of philosophy is that of God's knowledge. Not surprisingly, the bulk of discussion is dedicated to the question of how God knows, i.e., the extent and quality of His knowledge of the created world. This issue, of course, is hotly contested in philosophy and has long been used by opponents of philosophy to demonstrate how philosophical speculation falls short of the requirements of faith. Qummī spends a number of pages criticizing Ibn Sīnā's conception of divine knowledge and then turns to some of his contemporaries (ba`d al-muta'akhkhirīn) who, according to Qummī, believe that God's knowledge of the contingent world is presential (huḍūrī) as is His knowledge of Himself. Although he names no one in this section, it is quite clear that his ire is focused on Mulla Sadrā and his school of thought. After rejecting both ḥuṣūlī and ḥuḍūrī notions of divine knowledge and accusing Lāhījī of infidelity because of his views on the issue in his Shawāriq, Qummī goes on to explain his own position in a very brief statement that has striking similarities with the Hanbalī position on divine attributes:

If someone asked "if you deem all these positions and schools of thought [madhāhib] false, what is your school of thought on the issue of [divine] knowledge?" [In response] we say "our belief is based on what we have acquired from rational arguments. We have taken this belief from the niche of prophecy, and that is that his knowledge, exalted is he, is without quality (lā kayfa lahu), just like his essence. His knowledge is not like the knowledge of creatures. Rather, his knowledge is [identical to] his essence in the sense that his perfect essence is the source of illumination with no quality, no need for the acquisition of the images of the known things, and no [necessity] of the presence of

their essences; his knowledge comprehends all things, universal and particular."

The next issue Qummī addresses is that of divine attributes and their identity with the divine essence, followed by a brief discussion of divine volition (al-mashiyya/irāda). Next he discusses the issue of determinism and destiny (al-qaḍā wa al-qadar) and the related, and controversial, idea of al-badā. It is here that, for the first time in Ḥikmat, he takes on Fayż Kāshānī, to whom he refers throughout the books as a ṣāḥib al-Wāfī. Qummī begins his criticism of Fayż by saying, "know that since ṣāḥib al-Wāfī founded his exegesis of Qur'anic verses and hadiths on the basis of the principles of Sufis and philosophers, he interpreted [the doctrine of] al-badā in a very strange manner that would surprise anyone with common sense and a straightforward outlook." His major criticism of Fayż is based on the latter's interpretation of al-badā as a change in the knowledge of spherical souls (nufūs falakiyya), whereas , he claims, the relevant Qur'anic verses and hadith reports explicitly attribute the change in knowledge implicit in the concept of al-badā to God himself.

The next major theological issue in Ḥikmat is the nature of divine and human actions. Qummī claims that within the framework of Peripatetic philosophy, all actions, whether human or divine, are inevitable and necessitated (mūjab). This leaves no space for free will because an action, as a contingent entity, is equivocal vis-à-vis existence and non-existence and does not "come to be" unless it is necessitated by a prior cause. In contrast, Qummī says, most of the Mu`tazila believe that an action "comes to be" only after it has found some priority (awlawiyya) without reaching the threshold of necessity. Qummī takes the latter position, rejecting the necessity of the cause-effect relationship in the case of a volitional actor and arguing that, with such actors, the caused action can actually deviate from (takhalluf) what the complete cause (al-ʿilla al-tāmma) demands.

Qummī then goes on to tackle the well-known and controversial theological problem of the creation of human actions (khalq al-afʿāl). After listing six different schools of thought on the issue that, from his perspective, are incorrect, he introduces what he

sees as the correct theological position as derived from the Shi`i hadith canon. This position is presented as a middle ground between the two extremes (al-amr bayn al-amrayn) of complete divine determination of human actions (al-jabr) on one hand, and the complete autonomy of human agent (al-tafwiḍ) on the other.

The next major topic in Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn is the issue of al-ḥusn wa-l-qubḥ al-ʿaqliyyayn or "the [rational] intelligibility of good and vile." Here, Qummī denies the validity of both the Ash`arī and Mu`tazilī positions and claims that the correct theological stand is, again, that of a middle ground between two extreme positions (al-amr bayn al-amrayn). Qummī remarks that one can agree with the Mu`tazilites that the notions of ḥusn and qubḥ are independently recognized by human intellect. This recognition by itself, however, does not make the human agent a subject of divine reward (thawāb) and punishment (ʿiqāb). In other words, for divine punishment and reward to be justified, the human agent must also be able to recognize the notions of 'obligation' (wujūb) and 'prohibition' (ḥurma). That is possible, he says, only through divine guidance and injunctions.

After this general discussion, Qummī treats several important theological issues as sub-sections (al-furūʿ) of the above topic. Among these is a discussion of qāʿidat al-luṭf, or "the argument from [divine] benevolence." Qummī rejects the validity of this argument and offers an alternative argument based on the principle of the necessity of obedience (wujūb al-tamkīn) to the effect that it is incumbent upon the believers to attain certitude (al-ʿilm al-yaqīnī) regarding God's injunctions. From Qummī's perspective, the hadith reports are definitive that mere opinion (ẓann) does not relieve believers of their religious duty. Certainty regarding God's injections is impossible without an infallible guide who has comprehensive knowledge of God's law. In order for the believer to properly obey divine injunction, God must appoint such guides.

Another significant theological issue treated as a sub-section is the issue of al-iḥbāṭ (frustration of good deeds due to the effect of later sins) and al-takfīr (concealment of sins due to the effect of later good deeds – not to be confused with takfīr in the sense of declaring someone infidel). Here Qummī indulges us with an extensive discussion of the nature of major sins (dhunūb kabīra), criticizing both Shaykh Tūsī and Shaykh Bahāʾī's interpretations of the concept. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of al-ʿadāla (justice) and what it means to be a just person (`ādil) in light of the previous discussion of what constitutes a major sin.

Next, Qummī's attention turns once again to his disagreements with philosophers, this time on the question of the existence of al-mujarradāt or "abstract beings." Qummī lays out his own position that rational arguments for and against the existence of abstract beings other than God are incomplete. Furthermore, he notes that based on the Qur'an and the sunna, one cannot stipulate any abstract beings beside God. The issue at stake is the principle of tanzīh, or the utter incomparability of God. From Qummī's perspective, accepting the existence of other beings that are beyond time and devoid of special dimension amounts to tashbīh and a clear rejection of the Qur'anic statement that laysa ka mithli-hī shay'un ("there is nothing in His likeness"). Qummī expresses astonishment that some of his "knowledgeable contemporaries" (ba`d al-fudalā al-muta 'akhkhirīn) – most likely one of Mīr Dāmād's students in this case— has followed the philosophers in accepting the existence of such abstract beings. For Qummī, this misguided position reveals nothing but this man's ignorance of the hadith literature and the unfortunate influence of Ibn `Arabī's nonsense in al-Futūhāt and Fusūs.

Next, Qummī takes on a principle that has been the cornerstone of the cosmogonic scheme advocated by most philosophers since the time of Ibn Sīnā or earlier: al-wāhid la yasdur `an-hu illā al-wāhid, which literally means that "from one, no more than one can issue forth." According to this principle, it is impossible for God, as a unified and simple entity, to be the immediate cause of multiple entities, because this would be a violation of the purity of His oneness. Therefore, there is only one entity, the First Intellect (al-`aql al-awwal) of Muslim philosophy, which is the immediate creature of God. Qummī ridicules this argument, saying that it

blatantly contradicts the Qur'anic dictum that God is omnipotent. He rejects the notion of the First Intellect entirely. Anticipating the skepticism of those who would point to the famous hadith in Usūl al-kāfī that states that the first creation of God was the Intellect (al-`aql), Qummī remarks that the term `aql in that hadith has nothing to do with what philosophers called `aql. To clarify his point further, he examines Fayż Kāshānī's commentary on the abovementioned hadith in al-Wāfī, rejecting the latter's philosophically inspired interpretation. Qummī's argument against Fayż is based on the principle of perspicuity and goes something like this: God

speaks with humans using their common language. Therefore, his words need to be understood in such terms unless a specific religious (shar`i) meaning is clearly designated in addition to the customary meaning (as in the case of rituals like salāt or adhān). In this case, Qummī says, no hadith reports lead us to a technical/philosophical conception of `aql, and therefore we are obliged to understand and interpret the term as it is customarily understood, which is to say as the human faculty that allows for differentiation between good and bad, true and false. In this sense, the term is the opposite of madness (junūn) and ignorance (jahl). After offering this argument, Qummī adds his analysis of what led Fayż to commit such a mistake, saying, "it is no secret that the author of al-Wāfī based his exegesis on philosophy and Sufism and a synthesis of the two, despite the fact that the Sufis reject philosophers in the strongest words, as is clear from the works of Ghazālī, Rumi, and others." No matter what our opinion of Qummī or Fayż, this is an accurate observation. Qummī is correct that the merger between philosophy and Sufism, attested here in the writings of Fayż, is a relatively new development, and for Qummī a highly concerning one. In the remainder of this section, Qummī offers his own interpretation of the abovementioned hadith and follows with multiple proofs that, from his perspective, demonstrate that spirits are not abstract beings.

Next Qummī treats the issue of whether the universe is eternal (qadīm) or non-eternal (hādith). Little is new in this portion of the book beyond the fact that Qummī adds Mīr Dāmād's argument on al-

hudūth al-dahrī, or "perpetual incipience," to a long list of arguments that philosophers have put forward in contradistinction to what Qummī sees as the position necessitated by Qur'anic verses and hadith reports, which is that the universe has come to be in a strictly temporal sense (al-hudūth al-zamānī). This raises the question of how the universe could have come into being temporally when the very existence of time is dependent on the universe existing in motion. Qummī replies that the rational faculty can imagine time extending before and after the creation of the universe, and that our ability to imagine such a thing warrants talking about the universe as "coming to be" (hādith) in time.

Qummī continues his foray into fundamental debates in philosophy and theology by discussing the notion of existence (wujūd) and whether it is the semantic form (ishtirāk lafzī) or the semantic content (ishtirāk ma`nawī) that is common when using the term to refer to God and the created world. He weighs in on the side of the latter option and then turns to the contentious issue of the relationship between existence (wujūd) and quiddity (māhiyya). In a rare and inexplicable moment of agreement with the philosophical tradition that he has castigated throughout the entire work, he invokes Ibn Sīnā and the author of al-Mawāqif to assert that wujūd is among the second-order constructed concepts (al-ma`qūlāt al-thāniya), which does not correspond to anything real outside the mind. "[W]hat is outside," Qummī says, "is human, blackness, and other realities; these are the quiddities (al-māhiyyāt) that actually exist in reality. [Concepts like] existence and thingness have no primacy, or ta'assul, in reality. Rather, they are among the second-order concepts that are derived from first-order concepts - as concepts - and nothing outside corresponds to them."

It does not take long for the reader to realize that Qummī's decision to align himself with the mainstream Peripatetic philosophical position of asālat al-māhiyya, or "the primacy of quiddity over existence," is a strategic choice. The concluding section of Hikmat al-`ārifīn makes this particularly clear. That section is dedicated to an extensive refutation of what Qummī considers the most dangerous and heretical aberrations of all: the

idea of wandat al-wujūd, or "unity of existence." The significance of this issue in Qummī's mind is clear from the fact that the khātima makes up one fourth of the length of the entire work.

Rather than proceeding with Ibn `Arabī, whom he calls "the chief of the antichrists" (úmdat al-dajjālīn) and "the killer of religion" (mumit al-dīn), Qummī focuses initially on his contemporaries, Mulla Sadrā in particular. In a clear reference to the latter, he begins the section by expressing surprise that "some among his contemporaries" have "merged philosophy and Sufism." His criticism of Sadrā's position focuses mainly on the two pillars on which the entirety of the philosopher's system is built. These are his argument in favor of the primacy of existence over quiddity, or asālat al-wujūd, and the notion that wujūd is a reality that is subject to "gradations," or tashkīk. These two pillars, according to Qummī, lead Sadrā to the untenable and heretical position of wandat al-wujūd. Qummī quotes extensively from al-Asfār al-arba`a and al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya, demonstrating a firsthand, extensive knowledge of the writings of his opponent on the issue. Abrasive personal attacks may have been his style, but it is clear that he was committed to an accurate representation of the positions with which he disagrees.

Qummī's criticism of Mulla Sadrā is in accordance with the mainstream philosophical and theological paradigm of the time, and it revolves around the former's view that the concept of wujūd corresponds to nothing outside the mind. If wujūd exists only as a universal concept (mafhūm kullī) in the human mind, says Qummī, talking in terms of gradations or primacy, let alone conceptualizing it as a principle that permeates all, is absurdity.

Yet, Qummī is well aware that it is foolish to blame Sadrā for this heretical idea. It is true that the latter is responsible for the "unholy" marriage between Sufism and philosophy during the Safavid period, but the real culprit is Ibn `Arabī. "It is clear," says Qummī, "that the notion of wandat al-wujūd did not exist and was not well-known before Muhyi al-Dīn al-`Arabī al-Andulusī al-Hanbalī and his followers, and his statements make clear that he was possessed of the lowest and most nonsensical intellects. As for the earlier generation of Sufis like

Abī Yazīd [al-Bistāmī] and al-Hallāj and the likes of them, their statements make clear that some of them believed in ittihād (unity of man and God in essence) and others in hulūl (divine incarnation) ... therefore, you must be aware that it was Muhyi al-Dīn, who in reality is Mumīt al-Dīn (the killer of religion), who made the idea of wadat al-wujūd famous among the [intellectually] weakest Muslims using treachery and deception..." Qummī then treats the reader to a long list of quotes from Ibn `Arabī's Fusūs as well as quotes from famous commentaries by his followers, including al-Qaysarī (d. 751/1350), al-Qāshānī (d.735/133), and al-Jandī (d. circa 700/1300), to expose their heretical beliefs.

When Qummī penned his critique of Sadrā's metaphysics, the latter's philosophy was known only to a small circle of elitist philosophers. Nearly a century would pass before his system replaced the Peripatetic tradition as the dominant philosophical paradigm. So why, one might ask, did Qummī choose to focus on Sadrā? If Qummī's colleagues dismissed Sadrā, why help bring the latter's philosophical thought from the margins to the center of scholarly discussion?

As we have seen, Qummī was alarmed by Sadrā's merger of philosophy and Sufism. But can we go farther, as Rizvi has recently argued, and say that this synthesis was the very reason that philosophy came into the radar of opponents of Sufism at the end of the Safavid era? In other words, had it not been for the innovative synthesis of Sadrā and his students, would philosophy have escaped the attention of Qummī, Mīr Lawhī, and others?

The answer, I would argue, is negative. It is true that an important concern of Qummī in his attacks against philosophy was the fact that some of the hukamā advocated a monistic perspective on questions of existence, but his problems with philosophy were much broader and more fundamental, as it is evident from the first three quarters of Hikmat al-`ārifīn. Qummī's other writings that criticize philosophy confirm this perspective. In works like Tuhfat al-akhyār and al-Favā'id al-dīniyyah, Qummī eschews his critique of Mulla Sadrā's philosophical monism in favor of a broader critique of philosophy as a discipline. The

bottom line for Qummī, as mentioned above, was that philosophy was an invalid and illegitimate discipline of knowledge because of its foreign roots and because on several important and fundamental issues, it contradicts what he perceived as the normative stance of Shi`i hadith literature.

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