SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books

Robert Tenor, editor
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EDITORIAL

Scriptable is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for "the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies" derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. The sum of our reviews are carefully pruned excerpts from the books themselves so as to preview the style and technicality of the text itself.
Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.
Each issue should surprise.

A SLIVER OF ISLAM: THE TRANSLATOR OF DESIRES, A COLLECTION OF SIXTY-ONE LOVE POEMS, IS THE LYRIC MASTERWORK OF MUHYIDDIN IBN 'ARABI

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ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES: THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS by Chase F. Robinson [Illustrations: 80 color images, University of California Press, 9780520292987]

Religious thinkers, political leaders, lawmakers, writers, and philosophers have shaped the 1,400-year-long development of the world's second-largest religion. But who were these people? What do we know of their lives and the ways in which they influenced their societies?

In **ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES,** the distinguished historian of Islam Chase F. Robinson draws on the long tradition in Muslim scholarship of commemorating in writing the biographies of notable figures, but he weaves these ambitious lives together to create a rich narrative of Islamic civilization, from the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century to the era of the world conqueror Timur and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the fifteenth.

Beginning in Islam's heartland, Mecca, and ranging from North Africa and Iberia in the west to

Central and East Asia, Robinson not only traces the rise and fall of Islamic states through the biographies of political and military leaders who worked to secure peace or expand their power, but also discusses those who developed Islamic law, scientific thought, and literature. What emerges is a fascinating portrait of rich and diverse Islamic societies. Alongside the famous characters who colored this landscape—including Muhammad's cousin 'Ali; the Crusader-era hero Saladin; and the poet Rumi—are less well-known figures, such as Ibn Fadlan, whose travels in Eurasia brought fascinating first-hand accounts of the Volga Vikings to the Abbasid Caliph; the eleventh-century Karima al-Marwaziyya, a woman scholar of Prophetic traditions; and Abu al-Qasim Ramisht, a twelfth-century merchant millionaire.

An illuminating read for anyone interested in learning more about this often-misunderstood civilization, this book creates a vivid picture of life in all arenas of the pre-modern Muslim world.

Reviews

"An elegant digest of the many colorful, creative and technologically innovative manifestations that the Prophet Muhammad inspired from his seventh-century oases in the Arabian peninsula."—*The Economist*

"Robinson delivers a fascinating snapshot of Islamic history through 30 brief biographies. By including a mixture of the usual suspects (Muhammad, Ali, Saladin) and the unexpected (Ibn Hazm, Ibn Muqla, Abu al-Qasim), the author offers readers a rich variety of lives in pre-Islamic history."—*CHOICE*

"In a survey course covering the period, Robinson's would make an excellent text to use to introduce more in depth and comprehensive material. The engagingly written biographies will make the topic more accessible to students while also drawing out the variety of individuals who made up 'Islamic civilization.' The author's attention to political economy will in simple fashion help students grasp underlying concepts with which they sometimes struggle."—*Al-'Usur al-Wusta: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists*

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Robinson not only traces the rise and fall of Islamic states through the biographies of political and military leaders, but also discusses those who developed Islamic law, scientific thought, and literature. What emerges is a fascinating portrait of rich and diverse Islamic societies. Alongside the famous characters who colored this landscape—including Muhammad's cousin 'Ali; the Crusader-era hero Saladin; and the poet Rumi—are less well-known figures, such as Ibn Fadlan, whose travels in Eurasia brought fascinating first-hand accounts of the Volga Vikings to the Abbasid Caliph; the eleventh-century Karima al-Marwaziyya, a woman scholar of Prophetic traditions; and Abu al-Qasim Ramisht, a twelfth-century merchant millionaire.

Beautiful images are featured throughout the text, creating a vivid picture of life in all arenas of the pre-modern Muslim world.
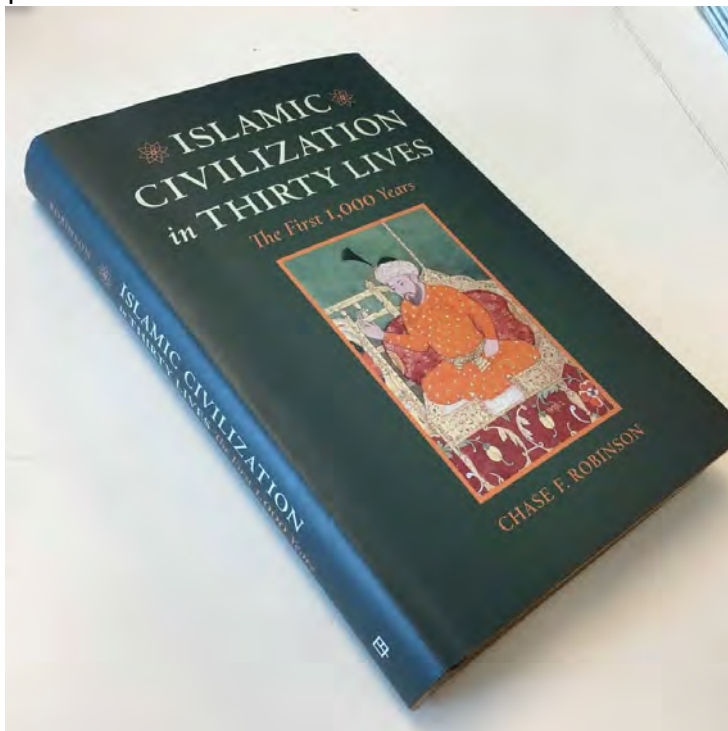
A Fascinating Snapshot of Islam through Thirty Brief Biographies

Happy Ramadan! Celebrate with a look into the lives of thirty notable figures who shaped the world's second-largest religion, from the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the fifteenth.

In *Islamic Civilization in Thirty Lives: The First 1,000 Years*, Chase F. Robinson weaves these ambitious lives together to create a rich narrative of Islamic civilization over a millennium while beautiful images throughout vividly depict the pre-modern Muslim world.

A few snapshots from the book follow:

MINIATURE OF THE BATTLE OF THE CAMEL, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT BASRA IN 656. 'A'ISHA IS DEPICTED TOP LEFT RIDING THE CAMEL THAT GAVE THE BATTLE ITS NAME. FROM THE "SIYER-I NEBI," A TURKISH EPIC ABOUT THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD, 16TH CENTURY.

'A'isha, wife of the Prophet

'A'isha was a native Meccan, and a daughter of Abu Bakr, one of the earliest converts to Islam. She was also one of the Prophet Muhammad's wives, the third and his favorite, called the "Mother of the Believers." Robinson notes that relatively few accounts exist about her, but each say something interesting about gender. One such account involves her leading a force of 1,000 men to oppose 'Ali, who had come to power as a result of the caliph 'Uthman's assassination. She can be seen as an unforgettable heroine who spoke her mind.

DETAIL OF A PERSIAN MINIATURE FROM AL-BIRUNI'S "CHRONOLOGT OF ANCIENT NATIONS," COPIED IN 1307, SHOWING BIHAFARID, A RELIGIOUS LEADER FROM IRAN, TRYING TO CONVINCE A PEASANT TO JOIN HIS SECT.

Al-Biruni, cataloguer of nature and culture

As Robinson notes, Al-Biruni's "supranational celebrity-scientist" status is well earned. Not only did he write prolifically, tacking topics in astronomy, applied physics, geography, astrology, and medicine, he was also interested in the humanities, in history, culture, and comparative religion. No other Muslim scholar wrote so widely and authoritatively. His polymathy was staggering, linguistic range extraordinary.

INDIAN MINIATURE OF RABI'A AL-'ADAWIYYA, C. 1725.

Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya was a Muslim saint.

Her ethnic and social background is contested, but according to the earliest surviving biographical details, which were circulated a generation or two after her death, Rabi'a was from a high-status lineage of the Quraysh tribe and never married. "The marriage knot," she once said, "can only tie one who exists. Where is existence here? I am not my own — I am His and under His command." Known for her piety, she was only one of several female renunciants who made names for themselves in eighth century Basra.

ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THIRTY LIVES: THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS is an illuminating read for anyone interested in learning more about this often-misunderstood civilization.

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Are the Saracens the Ottomans?
No, the Saracens are the Moors.

The Ottomans are the Turks.

So reads, in its entirety, Lydia Davis's micro-story 'Learning Medieval History'. In conventional (and now obsolete) usage, the 'Saracens' are 'Moors', and the Ottomans, Turks. But learning history is more than assigning labels, as Davis's satire tells us. At least to my mind, history is an exercise in critical imagination, and in the case of the Middle East, this exercise has become all the more important.

This is because the Islamic past has never mattered more than now, what with civil war fracturing societies along Sunni and Shi'ite lines, militants reviving traditions of jihad and donning the mantle of caliphs, and those in and out of power making various - and often wild - claims about what constitutes 'true Islam'. Anyone attentive to events in the contemporary Middle East is likely to intuit that history - both real and imaginary - has an enduring and (perhaps) undue influence upon the politics and culture of the region; misunderstandings of that history also condition Western perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The present is not merely shaped by the past: it is constituted of conflicting claims about the past. As Salman Rushdie put it, we are all 'irradiated' by it.

How is one to judge the claims made about the Islamic past? More specifically, how is one to distinguish between fantasy and myth on the one hand, and genuine history (at least as reconstructed according to modern standards of critical scholarship) on the other? My hope in writing this book is to make available scholarship that is typically specialized and inaccessible, and thereby to offer some answers. According to an oft-transmitted Prophetic tradition, 'When God wishes good for someone, He gives him understanding in religion'. In what follows I hope to address some of the misunderstandings and myths that attach to Davis's schoolboy categories.

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As will become clear, much remains unknown about many of the figures featuring here. For example, childhoods are usually lost to history, and as much as it is the rule that death dates are fairly accurate, birth dates are very rarely so. For most famous people were not born famous; and unless their families or at least their fathers were notable in one way or another, birth dates were usually forgotten. Rumi (d. 1273), whose father was a well-known scholar and mystic, is the exception that proves the rule. Sometimes silence was even filled with legend. We can be fairly certain that Timur died on 17 or 18 February in 1405, but we shall see that his birth date was concocted. I shall therefore dispense with birth dates.

The problems do not end with dates, however. The evidence for these biographies — mainly historical, biographical and literary accounts — is often as misleading as it is exiguous. Because memory and record were often compounded over centuries by legend, myth and misunderstanding, we generally know much more about the afterlives of early Muslims than we do their actual lives. We shall see that Rabi'a al-Adawiyya was an eighth-century ascetic, but the compound portrait constituting her afterlife belongs mainly to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The later the figure, the fuller and more accurate the historical record tends to be, but even then, fame and infamy meant distortion, as it does now.

And a final qualification: what follows is a work of synthesis and interpretation — with all of the perils that this implies. As Eduard Sachau wrote in his translation of the staggeringly erudite Chronology of Ancient Nations of al-Biruni (see below), '...even in the simplest historical narrative the editor and translator may go lamentably astray in his interpretation, if there is something wrong with the method of his research'. In a work of this range and scope, it would be sheer hubris for me to imagine that I have not gone astray.

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One of the most striking features of Islamic 'civilization' (we shall turn to a definition in a moment) is the scale and variety of learning. 'Of making many books there is no end', is how Ecclesiastes 12:12 described the problem that learned Muslims would face throughout their history: there was too much to learn in too little time, and for all that books might be summarized, epitomized and condensed, knowledge never stopped growing. Each generation produced ambitious authors with new ideas or original ways of recycling old ones.

Books were of many, many kinds - on topics from agriculture, algebra and alchemy to zodiacs, zoology and Zoroastrian heresy. One of the most distinctive literary genres was the chronologically or alphabetically ordered compendium of capsule biographies, which could number in the hundreds and thousands. Some of these were restricted to specific professions or schools of thought, such as Qur'an reciters, jurists who belonged to a given school of legal thinking, philosophers or Sufis, to mention only a handful of examples. An early example belongs to an Iraqi scholar named Ibn Sa'd (d. 845). His Book of Generations starts with a long biography of Muhammad, and then, in seven volumes, assembles information about Muhammad's contemporaries and followers, most of whom we would call amateur or professional scholars, especially those who transmitted Prophetic traditions - stories, maxims and opinions expressed by or about Muhammad, which were building blocks of Islamic law, ethics and history. Other books were generic, offering to their readers hundreds or thousands of notices of men (and the occasional woman) from the widest variety of professions, occupations and careers - not just scholars, but also poets, rulers, physicians and much more besides. The most celebrated example belongs to a native of Damascus named Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282); his Obituaries of the Notables brings together approximately 5,500 capsule biographies, 'notable' here simply meaning 'famous'. It is not unlike a 'Who's Who'. Coming from nearly all corners of the Islamic world and every century of Islam, these figures shared little besides celebrity.

Beyond showing off their inexhaustible energies, what were the compiler-authors of these compendia trying to achieve? It is not always clear, but at least one goal is frequently made explicit: the lives of highly accomplished Muslims were to be preserved and narrated because they told stories, some inspiring, others humbling and chastening, but all edifying. In other words, exemplary lives offered lessons for Muslims.

My goal is not altogether different. I have composed thirty brief biographies, which can hint at the scale, diversity and creativity of Islamic civilization over about a millennium. I should like to emphasize from the start that diversity and creativity, which were generated in large measure by that scale - not merely the size of polities, cities, wealth, networks of learning, even libraries, but also intellectual and political ambition. We shall see that for some Muslim thinkers, the sky - not God - was the limit. In using the terms diversity and creativity, I aim to capture a wide and inadequately acknowledged spectrum of ideas, social practices and personal styles and commitments. There was legalism and dogmatism, of course; but so too was there hyper-rationalism, scepticism, inventiveness, iconoclasm and eccentric individuality. For the Islamic civilization that I shall be describing here, dynamism, experimentation and risk-taking were the rule. And I stop in the early sixteenth century not because that diversity and creativity dried up or that civilization stultified, but because the underlying economic and political framework of the pre-industrial Middle East began to undergo major changes. As a result, the 'early modern' or 'modern' societies that emerged generated fundamentally different cultural forms.

'Civilisation is a loaded term, of course. It is sometimes used stuffily or polemically by those censorious of non-Western societies and cultures, who sometimes imagine that civilizations are monoliths, adjoining and colliding like tectonic plates, and that 'the West' is distinctive or even unique in its traditions of freedom, rationalism and individuality. This is not how I use the term.

What I mean here is the distinctive yield, in lived experience and especially high culture, of the religious and political project undertaken by Muslims over the near millennium that spans from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries. The framing conditions of that project were military, political and economic - and so much will be said in what follows about those who conquered and ruled, especially in introductions to each of the book's four sections.

Moreover, those framing conditions explain why the Muslims described here came overwhelmingly from a tiny numerical minority. This uneven coverage is inevitable. We live in an age of great and growing inequality, but in pre-industrial societies, divided as they were between oceans of poor producers (especially peasants, pastoralists, labourers, serfs, slaves) and small islands of wealthy consumers, it was even more extreme. And so it follows that it was the elite who had the capacity to produce the exemplars, the notables, the stars, the powerful and the influential. Of course there is the occasional figure with the singular genius, intelligence or ambition that empowered him or her to escape a modest background.

But there is no getting around the general rule that families and households of means reinvested and so reinforced their social capital, generation after generation, typically by outfitting their children with education, social connections and wealth. Elite Muslims made contributions to Islamic civilization that were disproportionate to their number because they could draw on such resources.

Readers should also be reminded that the cultural categories once used by Muslims naturally differed from those commonplace nowadays: it made little sense a millennium ago to speak of 'fiction, for example, or 'the humanities' (as opposed to 'science'). For the same reason - the divide between the post-Enlightenment world we know and religion-infused Eurasia of the pre-industrial age - unfamiliar readers may be surprised by the extraordinary pull that religious problems and ideas exercised upon men (and a small handful of women) with great intellectual ability and ambition. Nowadays, such men would be drawn into any number of fields in academia, business or creative arts; in those days, they were attracted just as much to theology and law as they were to disciplines, such as mathematics, astronomy or optics, that we would now categorize as science.

Finally, readers should know that the thirty biographies presented here do not capture a scholarly consensus, a 'Who's Who' in Islam or Islamic history. There is no such consensus and nothing special about the number thirty. Although most of the names will be familiar to specialists, at least some will be new. In a few cases, I have spurned the obvious in favour of the less celebrated. I have also omitted some worthies in order to accentuate some themes, such as the permeability of civilization and the breadth of culture: this book is not a pantheon of Muslim intellectuals. Be this as it may, collectively these thirty figures can offer what I hope to be an accessible introduction to Islamic civilization, which, for all its extraordinary diversity, remains poorly understood in the English-speaking world. <>

THE SHĪʿĪS IN PALESTINE: FROM THE MEDIEVAL GOLDEN AGE UNTIL THE PRESENT by Yaron Friedman [Series: Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, Brill, 9789004420311]

In **THE SHĪʿĪS IN PALESTINE** Yaron Friedman offers a survey of the presence of Shīʿism in the region of Palestine (today: Israel) from early Islamic history until the contemporary period. It brings to light many pieces of information and interesting developments that are not widely known, in addition to the general point that, contrary to common belief, the Shīʿī community has played a

significant role in the history of Palestine. The volume includes a study of Shīʿī shrines in Palestine, as well as showing the importance of these Muslim sites and holy towns in Palestine in the Shīʿī religion.

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Excerpt: Today, the largest Shīʿī community in the region of al-Shām (greater Syria) is located in Lebanon, mainly in the south of the country, in the Biqāʿ Valley in the east, and in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Smaller Shīʿī communities in this region live in western Syria, and less significant Shīʿī minorities can be found in Egypt and Jordan. It is commonly accepted in academic research that there is no significant Shīʿī community in Palestinian society today, neither in the state of Israel, nor the Gaza Strip, or in the West Bank. In comparison, we find that small Shīʿī minorities remain in each of the neighboring countries: in Syria there are some two million Shīʿīs (including ʿAlawīs and Ismāʿīlīs), in Lebanon there are approximately two million, in Egypt several hundred thousand and in Jordan several thousand. In light of this, the almost complete absence of Shīʿīs in Palestine seems particularly unusual.

To date no monograph on Shīʿī history in the region of Palestine has been published, although there are primary Arab sources, medieval as well as modern, that shed light on this important issue. In this study, I focus on three main goals: reconstructing medieval Shīʿī life in Palestine, explaining the disappearance of the Shīʿīs from this specific region, and ultimately, describing Shīʿī history in Palestine from the Ottoman period to the present. In the last part, I include current Shīʿī groups that have emerged in recent years in northern Israel, and those that are active in the Gaza Strip, in an effort to explain the circumstances of their advent and the difficulties that they face.

In dealing with the medieval period, I draw on several Arabic genres that mention Shīʿīs in Palestine: *taʾrīkh* (history), *riḥla* (works of travelers and geographers), and works of religious scholars in diverse fields, such as *ḥadīth* (traditions), *nasab* (geneology), *faḍāʾil* (merit, or praise, usually of towns), and *firaq* (sects in Islam). Late medieval sources from the Mamlūk and Ottoman periods

include Sunnī and Shīʿī historians, travelers, and geographers who described the region of Palestine or traveled in Palestine.

Although sources on Shīʿī history in Palestine do exist, researchers encounter some difficulties in relation to sources dealing with the medieval period. This is due to the fact that the period of Shīʿī rule in greater Syria, including Palestine, was limited to approximately two centuries (that is, the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries), which was then followed by a long period of Sunnī dominance in this territory. While Shīʿī sources are abundantly available for Iraq, in greater Syria most of the Shīʿī chronicles and history books have been lost, censored, or destroyed by the Sunnī authorities that ruled Palestine from the sixth/twelfth century on. In a recent article, Carole Hillenbrand deals with the phenomenon of lost Syrian Shīʿī chronicles, such as that of the seventh-/thirteenth-century Aleppan historian Ibn Abī Ṭayy. Apparently, the most important medieval Shīʿī sources covering Palestine that have survived to the present, were preserved by the neighboring Imāmī scholars of Jabal ʿĀmil (southern Lebanon) and copied by their colleagues in Najaf (Iraq). This seems to be the case of the jurist Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Karājukī's anthology, *Kanz al-fawāʾid* and that of the genealogist ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-ʿUmarī's *al-Majdī fī ansāb al-ṭālibiyyīn*. Both scholars passed through Palestine during the fifth/eleventh century. It would seem that their works have subsisted because they were not history books; thus, they survived Sunnī censorship. These sources contain few, but valuable historical details from the periods of their composition. The fall of the Fāṭimid Empire and the persecution of Shīʿīs by the Ayyūbids and the Mamlūks had the same results in Egypt and in Syria, where some historical works were destroyed. It is reasonable to assume that lost Fāṭimid sources could shed light on the Shīʿī history of Palestine. Paul E. Walker states that most of the available sources on the Fāṭimid period are problematic because they were collected and preserved by later Sunnī historians, such as Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). In most cases, with the exception of al-Maqrīzī's *Ittiʿāz al-ḥunafāʾ* that focuses on the Fāṭimids, these later historians wrote universal history books. In addition, most of these Sunnī historians were hostile to the Shīʿīs and to the Ismāʿīlī Fāṭimids in particular. Nevertheless, these books still contain reliable information about the region of Palestine, which can be cross-checked with or confirmed by Shīʿī sources.

From the eleventh/seventeenth century onward, historians from southern Lebanon and Jabal ʿĀmil become relevant to this study, since they considered the Galilee a part of their territory. When covering the history of the Shīʿīs in Palestine during the first half of the twentieth century, I used the work of Lebanese historians, Palestinian *nakba* literature (describing the events of 1948), and Israeli archives. With regard to recent Shīʿī groups in Israel and Gaza, the available research in this field is insufficient, and the subject is ongoing; for these reasons, I have included new Arabic materials that are available online.

When studying the issue of the Shīʿīs in Palestine, it is important to define the geographic frame of the research.

Medieval and Modern Palestine

Before dealing with the Shīʿī history of Palestine, it is necessary to describe the territory that we have included, in order to avoid discrepancies, confusion, or anachronisms. In the Arab world, the territory that I deal with in this study is defined as Palestine (Filasṭīn). The same territory is defined by the state of Israel and the Jewish people as the 'Land of Israel' (Eretz Israʾel).

Given the discrepancies between the definitions and partitions of the region of Palestine throughout the long period of Muslim rule (from the first/seventh century to the twenty-first century), it is important to define the geographic choices I have made.

The medieval period (first/seventh century to ninth/fifteenth centuries)

What is Palestine/Israel today was, for the most part, included in the two medieval districts of Jund Filasṭīn and the southern part of Jund al-Urdunn. Medieval Muslim geographers defined Jund Filasṭīn and Jund al-Urdunn as the two southern districts of the five districts (jund, pl. ajnād) of Bilād al-Shām (greater Syria). This Muslim partition of Palestine was inherited by the Muslim caliphate from the previous Byzantine partition of the diocese of the eastern province into Palaestina Prima and Palaestina Secunda, two military administrative territories.

The traditional Muslim division was briefly interrupted, when most of these two districts (ajnād), Filasṭīn and Urdunn, were temporarily united by the crusaders, under the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (493–583/1099–1187); these were divided again at the end of the sixth/twelfth century when they were returned to Muslim hands. Jund Filasṭīn, whose capital was Ramla, included most of what is known today as Judea and Samaria, or the West Bank, and the coast between Mount Carmel in the north to Gaza in the south (nowadays most of Israel's Mediterranean Sea coast). Jund Filasṭīn included the desert of Judah as well.

Jund al-Urdunn, whose capital was Tiberias, included Galilee, the region of Tyre in today's southern Lebanon and in some medieval maps also the territory that is the eastern part of the Kingdom of Jordan (Transjordan or the East Bank). Nevertheless, while medieval geographers included Galilee in Urdunn, the inclusion of Transjordan in this territory varied from time to time and from one geographer to another. Transjordan and the regions south of Lebanon (Jabal ʿĀmil excluding northern Galilee, and the regions of Jezzin and Tyre), which were never considered part of Muslim Palestine, remain outside the frame of this study. This medieval geographic framework corresponds roughly to the definition of Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler from the sixth/twelfth century. He considered Acre "the beginning of Eretz Israel [Palestine] from [the] northwest is Qadesh in the region of Naftali [eastern Galilee] and its southern end is in Ashkelon, next to the edge of Egypt. They [the borders of Palestine] are limited between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River."

The Ottoman period (tenth/sixteenth to twentieth centuries)

The region of Palestine discussed in this period includes the sanjaks of Safed, and Acre (i.e., Galilee excluding Jabal ʿĀmil), Nablus, Jerusalem, Gaza, located within the vilayet of Damascus; in the nineteenth century, these became the sanjaks of Acre, and the sanjak of Jerusalem, which was in the southern part of the vilayet of Beirut.

The modern period (twentieth century to the present)

Modern Palestine includes the British Mandate borders to the borders of the state of Israel, including the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some changes to the Lebanese-Palestinian border took place during British-French negotiations in 1923; these were tremendously significant for the Shīʿī community.

Within the borders of the territory defined as Palestine, I deal only with towns and villages in which Shīʿīs dwelled or those which appear in Shīʿī sources. As an exception, I treat Gaza briefly because of its link to Hāshim, the great grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad and, in the modern period, because of the new Shīʿī presence in the Gaza Strip. The inclusion of the Golan Heights is another exception, since it was occupied by Israel and part of its population seems to originate from the region of Tiberias.

The following towns appear in this study by their English names; their Arabic names appear transliterated in the maps, from north to south:

Safed (Ṣafad); Acre (ʿAkkā); Tiberias (Ṭabariyya);
Nablus (Nāblūs); Ramla (al-Ramla);
Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis/al-Quds);
Hebron (al-Khalīl); Ashkelon (ʿAsqilān), Gaza (Ghazza).

Shīʿī villages in Galilee, which I discuss in this research, comprise the following (from west to east):

al-Baṣṣa; Tarbīkha (or Ṭīrbīkha); Ṣaliḥa/Ṣalḥa; al-Mālkiyya; Qadas; al-Nabī Yūshaʿ; Hūnīn; Ābil al-Qamḥ.

The Negev desert in the north and Eilat, which were part of the Byzantine Palaestina Tertia prior to the Muslim period, was not considered by medieval geographers as part of Filasṭīn. In addition, there was no Shīʿī presence in this region during the period of Muslim history; thus, this region is not considered in this study.

Note that Shīʿī and Sunnī sources share the same definition of the territory of Palestine. For example, in *Biḥār al-anwār*, the prolific Shīʿī scholar al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699) cites the Sunnī historian Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233) in the following geographic description:

Filasṭīn [Palestine]: The well-known territory between al-Urdunn [i.e., Galilee] and the land of Egypt and the mother [i.e., the most important] of its land is Jerusalem.

Elsewhere in the same book, al-Majlisī provides the following description:

… and Gaza, Ashkelon, Caesaria, Ramla, and Jerusalem are all [part] from the land of Palestine….

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The history of the Shīʿīs in Palestine can be divided into two main periods. The first is the medieval period, between the third/ninth and the fifth/eleventh century and the second begins with the eighth/fourteenth century and goes on to 1948. The first period involved the settlement of Shīʿīs in Palestinian towns, the second was a period during which Shīʿīs settled in rural Galilee; this was part of the expansion of the Lebanese Jabal ʿĀmil.

At the beginning of the Shīʿī settlement in Palestine, the Arab sources describe two kinds of population: The immigration of the ʿĀmila tribe into the region that included modern-day Lebanon and northern Palestine, and another kind of immigration, of descendants of the *ahl al-bayt*, during which al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī's respected family bought lands in Tiberias then immigrated to it. With the exception of al-Yaʿqūbī (third/ninth century), medieval sources are silent about the tribal Shīʿīs in northern Palestine in general, probably because they had little influence in political and religious life. Most of the medieval Muslim scholars who described this region focused on the urban Shīʿīs in Palestine.

From the early period of their settlement, the Shīʿīs suffered from oppression, as reflected in the murder of Abū l-Ṭayyib (one of their leaders) in Tiberias. The latter became the first Shīʿī martyr in Palestine and thus his family members were called Banū l-Shahīd. The negative attitude toward the Shīʿīs in Palestine is reflected in every Sunnī report about their settlement in this region, whether these reports originated with historians, religious scholars, geographers, or travelers. While complaining about their immigration to the southern Jund al-Urdunn and the Jund Filasṭīn (which together constitute what is, roughly, today's Palestine), these Sunnī reports seemed to exaggerate their descriptions, as if whole parts of Palestine had been taken over by Shīʿīs or Shīʿī sects.

Urban and Rural Shīʿīs

Shīʿī settlement in urban areas took place mainly in Ramla, Tiberias, and Acre. Shīʿī populations were rarely mentioned in other towns, such as Safed, Jerusalem, and Nablus, where their presence seems to have been small or insignificant. The Shīʿīs who settled in the cultural centers of Palestine were comprised of educated scholars, and also Ṭālibīs, descendants of the *ahl al-bayt* who seemed to enjoy a relatively higher economic status.

The Golden Age of Shīʿism in Palestine

With the Fāṭimid capture of Palestine in the second half of the fourth/tenth century, the situation of urban Shīʿīs in Palestine improved dramatically, as reflected in the medieval sources. The century and a half of Fāṭimid rule in this territory ended with the Turkoman invasions, followed by the crusader's capture of most of Palestine at the end of the fifth/eleventh century. Yet, this period can be considered the golden age of the Shīʿī presence in Palestine. During this period, Shīʿīs from Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon passed through and sometimes settled in Palestine, where they enjoyed the patronage and protection of the Fāṭimid dynasty and were granted prestigious appointments as community leaders, governors, and judges. The most important example of the intellectual climax of the Shīʿīs of Palestine is reflected in the life of the well-known shaykh Muḥammad al-Karājukī, the student of Shaykh al-Mufīd, who visited Tiberias and settled in Ramla in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century. There seems to have been a connection between the Shīʿī community of Palestine and the intellectual Imāmī center of Tripoli (Lebanon). We can deduce this from the fact that al-Karājukī visited Tripoli and the Imāmī scholar Asʿad b. Abī Rawḥ attempted to transfer books from the library in Tripoli to Haifa, to found another library. This effort was curbed by the Frankish invasion.

Palestine also attracted Shīʿī scholars because the Fāṭimid authorities had invested in the construction of buildings and mosques in Palestine; they understood their economic and religious importance to the consolidation of their rule in the region. Most of the Fāṭimid period in Palestine seems to have been characterized by tolerance of different points of view. Although sources reveal a few attempts to impose Shīʿī customs and to punish Sunnīs who dared to insult the authorities, these cases were rare.

In this study, I described four examples of Fāṭimid attempts to impose Shīʿī prayers in Palestine and one case in which a Sunnī prayer was prohibited. Interestingly, some of the newly introduced prayers were later also observed by Sunnīs, although they were controversial. An example of this phenomenon is the *qunūt* prayer at noon. It is possible that the night prayers of *raghāʾib* in Rajab and mid-Shaʿbān were also Shīʿī in origin. During Fāṭimid rule in Palestine, medieval historians recorded only one case of public cursing of the Companions (of the Prophet) (*sabb al-ṣaḥāba*) in Jerusalem and only one case in which the *tarāwīḥ* on the eve of the first day of Ramaḍān was prohibited.

Thus, it seems that the process of transforming Palestine into a Shīʿī state, if such a project existed, failed. Jerusalem remained mainly a center of Sunnī scholars, and the sources are silent on the issue of Sunnīs converting to Shīʿism, since this seems to have been rare. The contemporary sources do not report a public celebration of *ʿāshūrāʾ*, the foundation of a *ḥawza* or a *ḥusayniyya* (religious seminary and congregation place for ceremonies) in Palestine, which means that Fāṭimid authorities were careful not to impose Shīʿī customs in Palestine, which seems to have had a Sunnī majority. We lack information on the daily life of the medieval Shīʿī communities in Palestine, with the exception of one reference in the *nasab* literature to a Shīʿī butcher in Ramla.

In sources from the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh century, Shīʿī sects are mentioned for the first time in the region of Palestine, mainly in the three towns that were also the centers of Imāmī Shīʿī life: Ramla, Tiberias, and Acre. This phenomenon of Shīʿī sects in Palestine, seems to be the result of the Fāṭimid tolerance of Shīʿī groups (Imāmīs and Nuṣayrīs), Ismāʿīlī propaganda (Bāṭinīs and Ḥākimīs, later called Druzes), and the weak grip of the Fāṭimids in the region during certain periods; these factors enabled local rebellions and invasions of violent Shīʿī groups (Qarmaṭīs).

The Fāṭimids, as opposed to other dynasties during the "Shīʿī century," had ambitious goals. For example, they were the only dynasty to install a living Imām as caliph, which indicates that they planned to become an alternative to the caliphate of Baghdad. Their caliph appointed a leader of the Jews in Jerusalem and Ramla, as the caliph in Baghdad did in relation to the Jews in Iraq. In general, the promotion of Jews in the Fāṭimid Empire is unparalleled in Muslim history, and therefore raises several questions. Was Fāṭimid policy influenced by the Jews who were promoted or even by Jewish concepts, such as the holiness of Palestine, or the idea that the Davidic line is parallel to the ʿAlid line in the Ismāʿīlī Imām-Caliph? Were the Fāṭimid conquests encouraged by the converted Jew Yaʿqūb b. Killis in particular? These questions demand further study.

At their zenith, the Fāṭimids controlled the three holiest towns in Islam: Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. However, as Shīʿīs they were more interested in taking control of the sites in Iraq, mainly the tombs of the Imāms, which were more important to Shīʿism. But the Turkish invasion in the East in the middle of the fifth/eleventh century devastated other Shīʿī powers in Iraq and in Syria and alarmed the Fāṭimids. We might assume that the invasion of the Turcomans and Seljuks forced the Shīʿīs from Iraq and Syria to escape and to take refuge in Palestine, since the Fāṭimids were the last Shīʿī dynasty to survive this invasion.

Bringing Karbalāʾ to Palestine

The Fāṭimids understood that if capturing Karbalāʾ became impossible, they could "import" the sacred objects they venerated and locate them in their territory; so they established a site to honor the head of Ḥusayn. A site for the head was chosen in Ashkelon, since it was a closely fortified town that protected the road to Egypt, the seat of the caliph, and yet was remote from the battles with the Turcomans in central Palestine. Although sources mention that the mausoleum in Ashkelon was built at the end of the fifth/eleventh century, its construction, which required time, began some years earlier and was completed under the Fāṭimid leadership of al-Afḍal, the son of Badr al-Jamālī. The mausoleum of Ashkelon was taken by the crusaders fifty years after the fall of Jerusalem; this means the sanctuary existed long enough under Muslim rule to become a significant religious site for the local population.

Shīʿī Sites in Palestine

During the Fāṭimid period, four major Shīʿī sites in Palestine were built. The Fāṭimid's goal was to attract Shīʿī population to Palestine, though they may have had strategic purposes as well. We know about most of these Shīʿī sites from later post-Fāṭimid sources, from which we can reconstruct the interesting process that they went through. These sites were built as Shīʿī mausoleums (*mashhad, mazār*) or as modest shrines (*maqām, ḍarīḥ, qabr*); they were captured and held by the crusaders for some decades, then reconquered by Muslim dynasties (Ayyūbids and Mamlūks), who transformed them into Sunnī sites.

In this study, I show that the sources that dealt with the four main sites reflect the Fāṭimid period, although they were written in later eras. These shrines were all meant to honor members of the *ahl al-bayt*. When Palestine was reconquered from the crusaders by Sunnīs, they returned the sites to

their original Muslim identity. While some of the religious sites the Fāṭimids erected were specifically Shīʿī in nature, others, like al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, which they reconstructed, are Muslim holy sites. The Fāṭimids rebuilt these sites after damage from earthquakes, but also to glorify their dynasty and legitimize their rule.

The specifically Shīʿī sites in Palestine included two tombs in northern Palestine, one for ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib in Acre, another for Ḥusayn's daughter Sukayna, and her cousin ʿUbaydallāh b. ʿAbbās near Tiberias. Two other shrines were located in southern Palestine, namely, that of the head of Ḥusayn in Ashkelon, and another of the tomb of Fāṭima the daughter of Ḥusayn in a cave in Hebron. Although the tomb of Hāshim in Gaza apparently existed during the Fāṭimid period, our information about it is insufficient to enable us to reach any conclusions; further study is required.

In Shīʿī religious terms, these tombs of the *ahl al-bayt* in Palestine were erected to fill a void, since Shīʿī Imāmī literature focuses on holy sites in Iraq and has few traditions about the sanctity of towns in Palestine. Moreover, although Shīʿī religious texts include several traditions praising Jerusalem, they also contain traditions that diminish its sanctity, and attempt to prove the superiority of Kūfa. With regard to Ramla and Tiberias, there are few traditions that deal with them and these focus solely on eschatological events. Religious traditions about Acre are totally absent in Shīʿism. Some traditions that mention Ashkelon are even negative.

The transmission of the head of Ḥusayn from Ashkelon to Cairo marks the end of Fāṭimid rule in Palestine and the beginning of a tremendously difficult period for Shīʿīs in this region. The crusaders ruled over the site of Ashkelon for less than forty years before Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn recaptured it. In an effort to reinstate the Sunnī Muslim character of Palestine after almost a century of Christian Frankish rule, the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk dynasties undertook a process of transforming Shīʿī sites into objects of popular Sunnī cults. This process also involved a reassertion of the Sunnī identity of Palestine, particularly over Shīʿī shrines. The Mamlūk inscriptions in the shrine of Sukayna reveal Shīʿī traces, mostly in the choice of the Qurʾanic "verse of purification." These traces may indicate that the Shīʿī identity of the shrine for Sukayna and ʿAbbās was well-known to the local Sunnī population. Its declaration as a *waqf* (endowment) is a typical example of this reassertion of the Sunnī identity of the site. From that moment, it became part of the sultan's endowment, then an object of pilgrimage by the local Sunnī population. Some Shīʿī sites, such as the mausoleum of the head of Ḥusayn, also became objects of the popular local festivals, the Sunnī *mawsim* tradition, that took place from the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn until the 1948 war. The tomb of the head of Ḥusayn in Cairo, which was transferred from Ashkelon, became a popular Sunnī site of pilgrimage.

The Disappearance of the Shīʿīs

I characterize the Arabic sources covering the period that began with Frankish rule in Palestine and lasted until the late Mamlūk period as "a disturbing silence," concerning the Shīʿī population in Palestine. In sources covering the late medieval period, that is, between the sixth/twelfth and the early eighth/fourteenth centuries, there are no references to the Shīʿī population in sources on Palestine. This study reflects a "methodology of absence," that is, all the sources concerning Palestine during this period similarly neglect the Shīʿī population, as if they no longer existed. In the present research, I examine how, during this long period, the Shīʿīs are systematically omitted from the sources that deal with Palestine. Moreover, Muslim historians and travelers who described Shīʿī groups in other regions remained silent when they described Palestine.

This clear absence leads to the conclusion that the Shīʿīs disappeared from Palestine for two centuries. This disappearance was the result of several reasons, including wars and natural calamities.

The towns Tiberias, Ramla, and Acre, where Shīʿīs had lived, were destroyed, depopulated, and later burned by Sunnī leaders who sought to reconquer Palestine from the crusaders. It seems that the first to suffer were the Shīʿīs of Ramla, which was destroyed during the Seljuk-Turcoman invasion of the second half of the fifth/eleventh century. The Shīʿīs of Tiberias may have been the last to survive in Palestine. If any of them survived Frankish rule, they certainly left after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn destroyed the town.

Unlike Jews, Christians, and Sunnīs who were rooted in Palestine and shared in their veneration of its holy sites, mainly those in Jerusalem, Shīʿīs in Palestine were relative newcomers and were more closely attached to sites of pilgrimage in Iraq, where the original tombs of the Imāms were located. As new immigrants, the Shīʿīs were fewer in number than other communities that had lived in Palestine for centuries. The Shīʿīs in the towns, who were scholars rather than soldiers, were extremely vulnerable, especially after losing the Fāṭimid protection. For example, Druze tribes like the Tanūkh had military experience before they embraced their new religion and could survive the turbulent events of the region. Moreover, they often cooperated with the Sunnī authorities.

The Ayyūbids, and the Mamlūks even more extensively, contributed to the disappearance of the Shīʿīs from Palestine by creating an anti-Shīʿī atmosphere in which only the four Sunnī schools were considered legitimate. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya's attack on Shīʿism in general and against the pilgrimages to the tomb of Ḥusayn in Ashkelon in particular, symbolizes this negative atmosphere during Mamlūk rule in Palestine. Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā* against the cult of the head of Ḥusayn is an important document that enables us to understand the process; its author warned against transforming Shīʿī holy sites from the Fāṭimid period into objects of Sunnī popular cult in Palestine. Ibn Taymiyya, who reflects the extreme Sunnī Ḥanbalī view, warned against the commission of two sins: The cult of tombs in general and the adoption of Shīʿī worship of saints in particular.

It is logical to assume that the last Shīʿīs in Palestine, the few who survived the Turkish and the crusader invasions, left the region during the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods and joined the closest and most prominent Shīʿī community in the region: that of Jabal ʿĀmil (present-day southern Lebanon).

The Matāwlīs in Northern Palestine

After the "disturbing silence" of the sixth/twelfth and the seventh/thirteenth centuries, the Shīʿīs appeared in Palestine again, this time only in Galilee. Historians of the eighth/fourteenth century mentioned the Shīʿīs in the district of Safed.

From the Palestinian Shīʿī villages which appear in modern sources, Qadas is the only Shīʿī village that was mentioned (once) in early medieval sources. Al-Maqdisī (fourth/tenth century) mentions it and Hūnīn, but it is not characterized as a Shīʿī village prior to the description of al-ʿUthmānī (eighth/fourteenth century). With regard to the rest of the Shīʿī villages in Galilee, which later became part of Palestine, most of these were not mentioned by name in any source prior to the tenth/sixteenth century, when they appeared for the first time in Ottoman tax registers. Nevertheless, even these Ottoman sources did not describe them specifically as Shīʿī (in Ottoman terms, *rafizi*; Ar. *rafiḍī*, or heretical Shīʿī) villages, and they were clearly only defined as Shīʿīs in Arabic sources from the twelfth/eighteenth century onward.

Beginning from the eighth/fourteenth century onward, Shīʿī communities in Palestine emerged as part of an expansion of the Lebanese community of Jabal ʿĀmil southward toward Galilee, rather than as a continuation of the medieval Shīʿī presence in Palestine, which had disappeared long ago. Indeed, during the eighth/fourteenth and the ninth/fifteenth centuries, Sunnī historians complained about the

growing presence of a Shīʿī population in the district of Safed. This community was very different from the urban Shīʿī scholars who emigrated from Iraq and Syria to Palestine during the golden age. Although they shared the same religion, the new Shīʿīs of Galilee belonged to a lower socio-economic level; they were poor uneducated peasants living under the rule of feudal chieftains. Furthermore, their history of rebellions proves that, in contrast to the previous Shīʿī communities in Palestine, these later communities were men of the sword, not of the pen.

Between the ninth/fifteenth and the eleventh/seventeenth centuries, the Druzes of the Maʿn clan enjoyed considerable autonomy and controlled the district of Safed. Unlike the Shīʿīs, the Druzes were considered allies of the Ottomans because they served the authorities by collecting taxes from the local population, which was under the control of their *amīr*. This alliance ended at the close of the eleventh/seventeenth century after the Ottoman oppression of a Druze revolt. The combination of the collapse of Druze power, which included the Safed district, together with the general weakness of the Ottoman Empire (because of its war with Russia) at the end of the eleventh/seventeenth and beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century, caused a new situation to come into being. It provided an opportunity for the Shīʿīs in Lebanon and Galilee, who were called from this period "Matāwlī" (pl., Matāwila), to rebel. These new circumstances coincided with the advent of the powerful Shīʿī Naṣṣār family, which united and led the Matāwlīs in Jabal ʿĀmil. In addition, the Naṣṣār clan found a powerful partner for its rebellion against the Ottomans: the Sunnī Zaydānīs who ruled in northern Palestine.

The Silver Age of the Shīʿīs in Palestine

Although the void created by the collapse of the Druze *amīr*s provided new opportunities, it also brought new dangers and instability. The expansion of the Matāwlīs southward and the increasing power of the Zaydānīs in northern Palestine brought an inevitable clash between the two rising powers in Galilee in the first half of the twelfth/eighteenth century.

The claims of Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar, that villages in southern Jabal ʿĀmil belong to him, support the thesis of a growing Shīʿī presence in villages in Galilee. Another indication of the Matāwlī expansion southward is the existence of villages with mixed populations, where the Matāwlīs settled after the eleventh/seventeenth century. Al-Baṣṣa near Acre was inhabited by Shīʿīs and Sunnīs and Ābil al-Qamḥ, north of Safed, was half Shīʿī and half Christian. The fact that Ābil al-Qamḥ did not appear in the list of the twelfth-/eighteenth- century Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī as a village of Jabal ʿĀmil may indicate that this was the beginning of the process of its settlement by Matāwlīs. Ultimately, the thesis of the Shīʿī expansion southward is supported by an explicit account of their growth to the Ḥūla region; this is described by the twelfth-/eighteenth-century Lebanese historian Ḥaydar al-Shihābī. A later source, the modern study of the seven villages in Galilee by the Lebanese al-Rayyis, describes the immigration of Matāwlīs from Syria and Lebanon to these villages in Palestine; al-Rayyis also supports this thesis.

The agreement of Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar and Nāṣīf al-Naṣṣār and their mutual cooperation in the rebellion against the Ottoman authorities mark the silver age of the Shīʿīs in northern Palestine. It cannot be considered a golden age, since it was only maintained for twenty-five years (1751–76), a much shorter period than the Fāṭimid golden age of Shīʿism in Palestine, and it covered a much smaller region of northern Palestine.

Al-Naṣṣār's building of al-Nabī Yūshaʿ shrine near Ḥūla Lake symbolized the climax of the modern Shīʿī expansion southward into Galilee. The case of al-Nabī Yūshaʿ is in fact extraordinary, since it was located deeper inside the territory of Palestine than the rest of the Shīʿī villages in this region.

The new site, which was, until 1948, the most important Shīʿī religious site for pilgrimage in Palestine, was settled by a Matāwlī family named al-Ghūl. It also became a site for the *mawsim*, the annual feast and the pilgrimage of the Matāwlīs and some villagers from Jabal ʿĀmil even asked to be buried close to it.

This silver age ended in the late twelfth/eighteenth century with al-Jazzār's deadly raids against the Matāwlīs. Although this silver age was short, its significance went beyond economic (mainly the export of cotton through Acre) and strategic (anti-Ottoman) interests. In the history of this region, this was the only period in which Sunnīs and Shīʿīs cooperated politically and made a peace agreement. This was also a period during which the border between Ẓāhir and Nāṣif was divided based on religious differences, an arrangement that was violated later, in the border agreement of 1923.

Although the Matāwlīs were dealt a painful blow by al-Jazzār, they recovered in the nineteenth century and returned to their deserted villages in Palestine; the numbers of Shīʿī population in Galilee continued to grow until 1948.

Between Palestinian and Lebanese Identities

The Matāwlī villages in northern Palestine considered themselves part of Jabal ʿĀmil. Nevertheless, after World War I, when Britain and France fixed the borders, they annexed the partly Shīʿī village of al-Baṣṣa to Palestine. Further border changes in 1923 annexed seven additional Shīʿī villages in Galilee to British Mandate Palestine. Thousands of Matāwlīs were included in the new territory of the British Mandate in Palestine.

These Matāwlīs, separated from their community in Lebanon, tried to maintain good relations with their Sunnī, Christian and Jewish neighbors. In their reactions to the dramatic events of the 1948 war, the leaders and older generation tried to avoid the conflict, while the young generation adopted the Arab nationalist ideology and opposed the creation of the state of Israel. During the fighting, these young Shīʿīs joined the Lebanese army and other soldiers from Syria, and on several occasions opened fire on Israeli forces from their villages in Galilee.

The Zionist movement, which developed special relations with the Druzes in Palestine from the early 1930s, did not understand the potential benefits of collaborating with the Shīʿīs until 1948, and by that time it was too late. During the war, the negotiations in Kfar Giladi with the leaders of Hūnīn demonstrate that the potential for Shīʿī-Zionist negotiations did exist. In the Israeli documentation of this meeting, it was clear that the Shīʿīs were a minority that had been oppressed for centuries. As such, this community could have been partners with the Jews. According to the document, both were minorities in the Middle East, and shared the same threat from the Sunnī majority. On the Israeli side, this understanding (regardless of whether or not it was justified), came too late, when the war was already underway and most of the Shīʿī villagers had fled from Palestine to Lebanon. This missed opportunity to build a bridge between modern Israel and the Shīʿī community in the region, was missed again, in 1982, when the Israeli IDF invaded southern Lebanon and fought the Sunnī Fatah, who controlled the Shīʿī villages. At the beginning of the war in 1982, the IDF was welcomed by the Shīʿīs; the Israelis were considered liberators, but before long, the IDF was seen as another foreign occupying force.

The situation of the Shīʿī refugees from Palestine in 1948, created a disagreement between the Palestinian and the Lebanese national movements. The Palestinians considered these refugees Palestinian, and the Lebanese claimed them as Lebanese. This problem of identity raised another question: Are the seven villages of Galilee part of Palestine or Lebanon? In

Palestinian *nakba* literature, writers work to blur their Shī'ī identity, and describe them only as "Muslim" Palestinian refugees, while Lebanese Shī'ī writers emphasize their Shī'ī identity. Hizbullah, as the most influential Shī'ī organization in Lebanon, went to great lengths to get refugees from these Palestinian villages citizenship in Lebanon—because of their Shī'ī faith. On the basis of the claim that the Shī'ī belong to Lebanon and not to Palestine, Hizbullah also claims that parts of northern Galilee belong to the Shī'īs and thus should be liberated from Israeli occupation (by war) and returned to Lebanon.

The Ongoing Shī'ī History of Palestine

The 1948 war and the deportation of the last Matāwlīs to Lebanon, could mark the end of Shī'ī history in Palestine, but over the last two decades, some minor Shī'ī cells appeared in the state of Israel and the Gaza Strip. A wave of conversions to Shī'ism was triggered by the second Israeli-Lebanese war (2006), which was considered a success for Hizbullah, since the IDF failed to crush the Shī'ī Lebanese organization. Shī'īs in Israel, in Dabūriyya and other villages in Galilee, were attracted to Shī'ism, probably as a result of Iranian propaganda and Shī'ī missionary sites online created by clerics from Najaf and Qumm.

Iran saw the coup of Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 2007 as an opportunity to extend the *muqāwama*, the resistance axis (of Iran, the Syrian regime, and Hizbullah) to the Palestinian front. As a Sunnī movement originating from the Society of the Muslim Brothers, Hamas recoiled from these ties with Iran and from their efforts to convert Palestinians to Shī'ism (*tashayyu'*).

The conversion of Palestinians to Shī'ism seems to be motivated by three main reasons: ideological motivation based on propaganda, economic support from Iran, and political and strategic regional developments (for example, Hizbullah's "victory" in 2006).

The complexity of the connections of Iran with Hamas can be illustrated in the following three circles of Iranian involvement in the Gaza Strip.

The external circle represents Iran's ties with Hamas, which are political and do not involve any religious influence. These relations are based on opportunity and Hamas' need to finance its movement in the current difficult situation, in which they lack Sunnī patrons. Iran's support of Hamas pushes the movement toward more extreme positions in its demands from the Palestinian Authority, and toward more frequent military engagement with Israel. The middle circle represents Iran's connection with the Islamic Jihād Movement in Palestine (IJMP), an organization that identifies itself as representing the Iranian revolution in Palestine and is the main opposition to Hamas in Gaza. The IJMP is committed to ongoing confrontations with the "Zionist enemy." Although some of its members converted to Shī'ism, the organization's connections with Iran are purely ideological, not religious. The inner circle, that of al-Ṣābirīn movement (which was created in 2014 by members of the IJMP), represents a new phase in the Iranian involvement; this phase is ideological and religious, since its members are Shī'īs only. Al-Ṣābirīn movement openly tries to spread Shī'ī propaganda. Like the IJMP, al-Ṣābirīn is also engaged in an ongoing and uncompromising war with Israel. The Iranians encouraged this inner Palestinian split because it prevents the three Islamic organizations from one side from reconciling with Fatah from the other. They are divided over external and internal Palestinian issues: The question of whether or not to have any relations with Israel (that is, *jihād* versus negotiations) and over the nature of the future Palestinian state (that is, Islamic or secular).
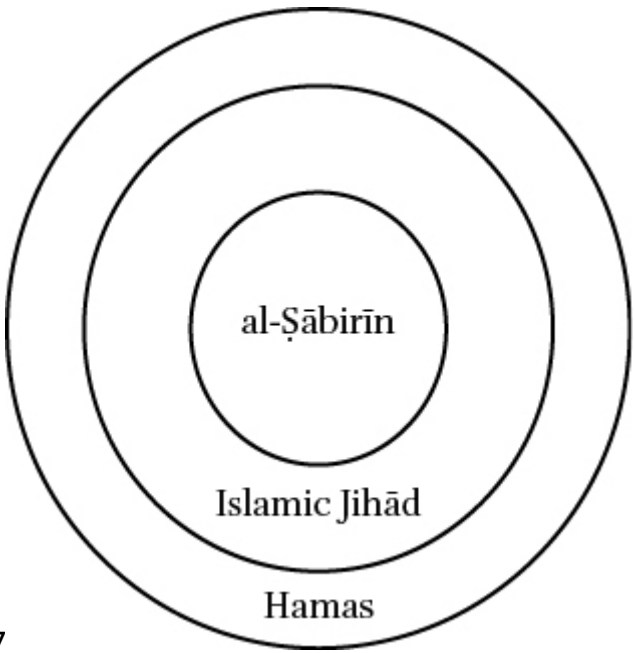
Figure 7

Circles of Iranian involvement in the Gaza Strip

The situation of the few hundred Shīʿīs inside the state of Israel, most of whom live in Galilee, mainly in Dabūriyya, can also be illustrated by a three-circle diagram that presents the problematic nature of their position in the state of Israel.

Like the small Shīʿī presence in the Gaza Strip, who are threatened by Hamas and the Salafī movement, the Shīʿīs in Israel do not have much chance to survive. The diagram above demonstrates their problematic position as a group inside two circles of hostility. The Shīʿīs comprise a minority (probably less than 1 percent) of the Muslim population, which is also a minority in Israel (some 20 percent). This minority within a minority faces hostility and suspicion from both Israeli and Sunnī society. In addition, as a Shīʿī community, the Israeli security authorities consider it a dangerous pro-Iranian group.
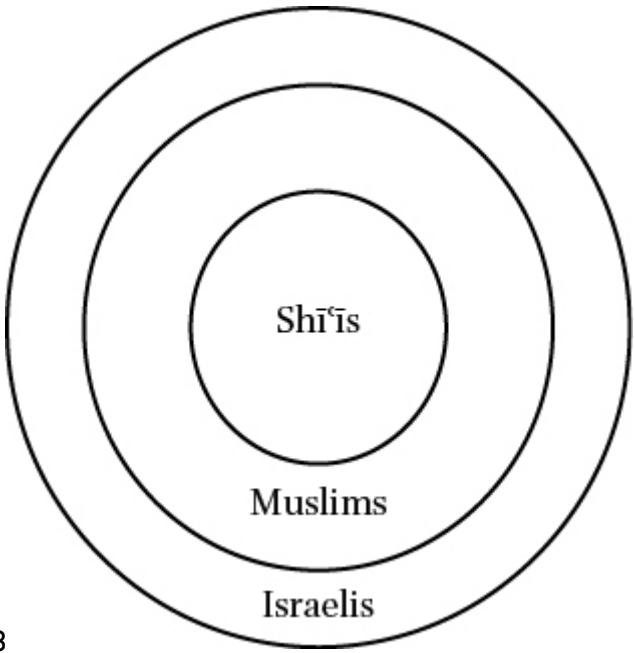
Figure 8

Circles defining the Shīʿīs' status in the state of Israel

Although Shīʿism does not represent a real threat to the majority of Sunnī Arabs in Palestine (Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the Gaza Strip), the fear that the Shīʿīs will return is still present. Among intellectuals and religious authorities in particular, this fear is based on the Sunnīs historical memory of the "Shīʿī century," when Shīʿīs dominated the Middle East including Palestine, and when a small but significant part of the population of Palestine was Shīʿī.

With regard to the Druzes in Israel, this sect, which was originally Shīʿī, then split from Islam, are the last remnants of the Fāṭimid period (that is, they were followers of the caliph al-Ḥākim). The Dāwūdī-Bohrās, whose members are mostly from India and Pakistan, are the only Ismāʿīlī group who still make pilgrimages to the holy sites in Palestine. In my interview with Dr. Mustafa Abdulhussein from the Dāwūdī Bohrā community in England, he confirmed that it is unlikely that Shīʿīs would return to live in Palestine in the future as they did during the Fāṭimid period.

Finally, I described the three ʿAlawī villages in the Golan Heights that Israel occupied following the 1967 war. These ʿAlawīs seem to be the last of the Nuṣayrī community that lived in the region of Tiberias in the fifth/eleventh century. The ʿAlawī village of Ghajar was annexed to the state of Israel in 1982 and its villagers, whose lives and socioeconomic status improved dramatically, work in Israel and speak Hebrew. This group identifies itself as part of the ʿAlawī sect in Syria, not as Imāmī Shīʿīs.

Interestingly, seventy years after the departure of the last Matāwlīs from Galilee, most of the Shīʿīs in Israel (the Imāmīs in Dabūriyya, the ʿAlawīs in Ghajar) and sects of Shīʿī origin (Druzes in Galilee, Bahāʾīs in Haifa and Acre) chose to settle in the same region, northern Israel. <>

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY
edited by Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke [Oxford Handbook. Oxford University Press, 9780190070076]

The study of Islamic philosophy has recently entered a new and exciting phase. Both the received canon of Islamic philosophers and the grand narrative of the course of Islamic philosophy are in the process of being radically questioned and revised. The bulk of twentieth-century Western scholarship on Arabic or Islamic philosophy focused on the period from the ninth century to the twelfth. It is a measure of the transformation that is currently underway in the field that the present Handbook gives roughly equal weight to every century from the ninth to the twentieth. The Handbook differs from previous overviews in another significant way It is work-centered rather than person- or theme-centered. This format is intended to give readers a better sense of what a work in Islamic philosophy looks like, and of the issues, concepts, and arguments that are at play in works belonging to various periods and subfields within Islamic philosophy.

Contents

Excerpt: The study of Islamic philosophy has entered a new and exciting phase in the last few years. Both the received canon of Islamic philosophers and the narrative of the course of Islamic philosophy are in the process of being radically questioned and revised. The bulk of twentieth-century Western scholarship on Arabic or Islamic philosophy focused on the period from the ninth century to the twelfth. It is a measure of the transformation that is currently underway in the field that the present Oxford Handbook has striven to give roughly equal weight to every century from the ninth to the twentieth. I.1. Rethinking the Course of Islamic Philosophy Older assumptions about the study of Islamic philosophy were part of a grand narrative according to which the Islamic world preserved and interpreted the Greek philosophical heritage during the European "Dark Ages" and

later handed over this heritage to the Latin West in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At this point, the role of the Islamic world in the narrative was over, and little scholarly attention was given to later Islamic philosophy. Some even speculated that, due to the disapproval of orthodox theologians, the philosophical tradition died out in the Islamic world in the twelfth century— so that, by a stroke of luck, the Latin West managed to take over the Greek philosophical heritage just in time, before the Islamic world itself repudiated this heritage and sank into fideist darkness. (Influential and older studies in this tradition include De Boer 1901; O'Leary 1922; Madkour 1934; Fākhūrī and Jurr 1957; Watt 1962.) Three pioneering figures who questioned this narrative in the West starting from the 1960s were Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Nicholas Rescher. Corbin and Nasr, influenced by a very different narrative of the history of Islamic philosophy that has survived in Iran, showed in a series of studies that the Islamic philosophical tradition continued without interruption in Shī'ī Iranian circles down to the modern period (see, for example, Corbin 1964; Nasr 1961, 1964). They emphasized in particular the rise of the anti-Peripatetic Platonist "Illuminationist" (ishrāqī) school of Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and the later synthesis of Illuminationist and mystical philosophy in seventeenth-century Iran. Rescher, for his part, drew attention to the continued vigor and sophistication of Arabic works on logic in the thirteenth century, a century after the supposed demise of the Islamic philosophical tradition (Rescher 1964, 1967). The insights of Corbin, Nasr, and Rescher have since been incorporated into mainstream presentations of Islamic philosophy. The excellent **CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ARABIC PHILOSOPHY** (edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, 2005), for example, emphasizes the period from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, but also includes chapters on Suhrawardī and later Shī'ī Iranian philosophy, and its chapter on logic acknowledges and develops the insights of Rescher concerning thirteenth-century Arabic logic. In recent years, however, the field has moved decisively beyond the points made by Corbin, Nasr, and Rescher in the 1960s, and it is high time for a new presentation that reflects this fact. It is now generally recognized that Corbin and Nasr unduly stressed the Platonist-mystical-Shī'ī synthesis of later centuries. Especially Hossein Ziai and John Walbridge have drawn attention to aspects of the Illuminationist philosophical tradition such as physics and logic that were of little interest to Corbin and Nasr (see especially Ziai 1990; Ziai and Alwishah 2003; Walbridge 2005; Ziai 2010; Walbridge 2012). At the same time, it is beginning to emerge that there is a largely untold story of continued philosophical activity outside Illuminationist and Shī'ī-Iranian circles. Particularly the work of Dimitri Gutas, A. I. Sabra, Ayman Shihadeh, and Rob Wisnovsky has drawn attention to the fact that the supposed demise of philosophy in the (majority) Sunnī Islamic world is a myth (Gutas 2002; Sabra 1994; Shihadeh 2005; Wisnovsky 2004b, 2013). It may be that the word falsafa ("philosophy") was typically avoided due to association with specific ideas deemed heretical by mainstream religious scholars (for example, the eternity of the world, the denial of the possibility of miracles, the denial of God's knowledge of particulars in the sublunary world, and the denial of bodily resurrection). However, a great deal of "philosophy" in the modern sense of the word was still pursued under other names. Especially the field of Islamic theology (kalām) became thoroughly suffused in later centuries with terminology, issues, and modes of argumentation derived from Greek philosophy. Widely studied handbooks of theology after the twelfth century typically de voted considerable attention to thoroughly rational discussions of philosophical topics such as the nature of knowledge, the relation between essence and existence, the soul and its relation to the body, the ten Aristotelian categories, predication, modality, the nature of time and space, physics and cosmology (see, for example, the table of contents of one such theological handbook translated in Calverley and Pollock 2002, or the contribution by Alnoor Dhanani to the present volume, on another handbook from the fourteenth century). The study of logic also became incorporated into the curricula of Islamic colleges (madrasas) in later centuries, and the continued vitality of the later tradition of logic even beyond the thirteenth century has been

brought out by recent research (for example El-Rouayheb 2010). The upshot is that sophisticated epistemological, metaphysical, natural-philosophical, and logical discussions in later centuries were often carried out by scholars who did not self-identify as falāsifa largely because they would have associated the term with acceptance of an Aristotelian and/or Neoplatonic cosmology. Supplementing these recent insights have been a number of further developments in the field. In the past decades, there has been a steady stream of modern editions of philosophical works, largely thanks to the efforts of modern scholars in the Islamic world. According to the older vision of Corbin and Nasr, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1045/1635) marked the culmination of the later Islamic philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, recent years has seen editions of works by important later philosophers active in Iran, some of whom were highly critical of Mullā Ṣadrā, such as Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1669), Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1687), and Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī (d. 1243/1826) (see, for example, Hiravī and Bayraq 2007; Iṣfahānī 1999; Bū ʻAlī 2007). Furthermore, the older narrative of later Islamic philosophy tended to jump from Suhrawardī in the twelfth century to Mullā Ṣadrā in the seventeenth. Recent editions and studies have drawn attention to important figures in the intervening centuries, such as Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284), Quṭb al-Dīn al1Shīrāzī (d. 711/1311), Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī (fl. 883/1479), and Najm al-Dīn Nayrīzī (fl. 928/1522). (See, for example, Walbridge 1992; Schmidtke 2000; Schmidtke and Pourjavady 2006; Ḥabībī 2009; Pourjavady 2011.) There has also been an awakening of interest in Ottoman philosophy in recent years in Turkey, with scholars beginning to edit works by important figures such as Ṭāşköprüzāde (d. 968/1561), Ebū Saʿīd Ḥādimī (d. 1176/1762), and Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī (d. 1205/1790) (see Gül 2009; Konevi and Konevi 2012; Öküdan 2007). Later Indo-Islamic philosophy is also beginning to receive some of the attention it deserves, especially in the work of Asad Q. Ahmed and Sajjad Rizvi (see, for example, Ahmed 2013a, 2013b; Rizvi, 2011). Equally important, there has lately been a significant re-evaluation of the literary forms of commentary (sharḥ) and gloss (ḥāshiyah). For much of the twentieth century, the predominant assumption was that the commentaries and glosses of later centuries were pedantic and uncritical expositions that would not merit closer examination. However, this was largely an "armchair" assumption not grounded in a patient examination of these works. In recent years, the older view has been questioned, and more and more scholars are coming to recognize that commentaries and glosses were important vehicles for critical reflection in later centuries (see especially Wisnovsky 2004a; Ahmed 2013b). The fifteenth-century Persian scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502), for example, was arguably one of the most innovative and influential of later Islamic philosophers. Yet his major writings—widely studied for centuries in Iran, India, and the Ottoman Empire—took the form of commentaries and glosses on works by earlier figures (see Reza Pourjavady's contribution to this volume for further details). I.2. A New Presentation of the Field The present volume is different from earlier overviews in two conspicuous ways. First, as mentioned above, it strives to give roughly equal weight to every century from the ninth to the twentieth. Second, its entries are work centered rather than person or theme cen1tered. In other words, contributors focus, after briefly introducing a philosopher's life and oeuvre, on one major work and give a relatively detailed exposé of it. Article-length entries on individual philosophers can be excellent, but they often have to sacrifice depth to breadth. Entries on movements would have to sacrifice depth to breadth to an even greater degree, and would risk becoming little more than a list of names and titles. Entries on themes are arguably not feasible given the present stage of research. Too few contemporary scholars have a solid command of both earlier and later Islamic philosophical literature, and thematic entries would risk being slanted toward the earlier centuries and more well-known figures at the expense of the later period and lesser-known figures. Particularly at a time when the canon of Islamic philosophy is being reconsidered and new figures and works are emerging from undeserved obscurity, a thematic approach would be counterproductive. The work-centered format is also intended to allow room for the attention to detail and sustained exposition that are

often sacrificed in article-length surveys of the entire range of contributions by an individual philosopher. This should hopefully give the reader a better sense of what a work in Islamic philosophy looks like and a better idea of the issues, concepts, and arguments that are at play in works belonging to various periods and subfields within Islamic philosophy. The selection of entries has aimed to bring out the uninterrupted history of Islamic philosophy down to the modern period, and to emphasize the fact that philosophical activity in later centuries was not confined to one region of the Islamic world and was not exclusively preoccupied with a single set of issues. Works that were the product of the vibrant philosophical scene in Iran in the Safavid (1501–1722) and Qajar (1779–1925) periods have been supplemented by including less-known works from Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, and Mughal India, and later works with the expected focus on metaphysics and ontology have been supplemented with works on logic and natural philosophy. The twentieth-century works that are covered include an attempt by a traditionally trained Shī'ī scholar to solve Hume's problem of induction, and an influential Egyptian philosopher's adaptation of the ideas of the logical positivists. By covering such works, we hope to challenge a widespread assumption that later Islamic philosophy is necessarily an arcane (or peculiarly "spiritual") discipline that, for better or worse, bears little relation to the concerns of modern Western analytic philosophers Though one of the aims of the present work has been to broaden the geographic and temporal scope of the field of Islamic philosophy, some major figures and works that ideally should have been included have unfortunately had to be left out. Inevitably, some of the scholars who were asked to contribute to the volume were unable to do so, for reasons ranging from prior commitments to medical issues. Though we actively sought contributions from scholars who are based in the Islamic world, many of these scholars were not comfortable writing in English. Due to such factors, our volume has had to forgo including contributions on works by, for example, the important logician and philosophical theologian Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), the Ottoman scholars Ahmed Ṭāşköprüzāde and Ismā'īl Gelenbevī, as well as Safavid and post-Safavid philosophers such as Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 948/1542), Rajab 'Alī Tabrīzī, Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1795), and Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī. There is a long-standing dispute over whether to call the field of study "Arabic philosophy" or "Islamic philosophy." Neither term is entirely satisfactory. The term "Arabic philosophy" is often deemed offensive by non-Arab Muslims. To some extent, this might be because it is difficult to capture the distinction made in English between "Arabic" (a linguistic designation) and "Arab" (an ethnic designation) in some relevant languages. In Arabic and Persian, for example, both would be translated as 'arabī, and the term "Arab philosophy" is clearly both inadequate and offensive. But even the linguistic term "Arabic" elides the fact that especially in later centuries philosophical works were written in Persian and Turkish (and even English, as in the case of Muhammad Iqbal). At the same time, the term "Islamic philosophy" does not do justice to the role of non-Muslims in this tradition, for example the Christians Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 260/873), Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974), and Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 434/1043), or the Zoroastrian student of Avicenna Bahmanyār (d. 457/1065), or the Jewish philosophers Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 560/1165) and Ibn Kammūna. Furthermore, some contributors to the tradition, such as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), were born Muslims but came to reject fundamental precepts of the Islamic religion (such as prophecy). In light of these difficulties, some modern scholars prefer locutions such as "philosophy in the Islamic world" or even "Islamicate philosophy," but the first of these is unwieldy and the second unfamiliar. In the end, there are more important tasks than getting bogged down in issues of nomenclature. "Is1lamic philosophy" may not be ideal, but a choice had to be made, and it may be less un1satisfactory than the alternatives. <>

'HIS PEN AND INK ARE A POWERFUL MIRROR': ANDALUSI, JUDAEO-ARABIC, AND OTHER NEAR EASTERN STUDIES IN HONOR OF ROSS BRANN edited by Adam Bursi, S.J. Pearce, and Hamza Zafer [Series: Christians and Jews in Muslim Societies, Brill, 9789004369139]

'HIS PEN AND INK ARE A POWERFUL MIRROR' is a volume of collected essays in honor of Ross Brann, written by his students and friends on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The essays engage with a diverse range of Andalusi and Mediterranean literature, art, and history. Each essay begins from the organic hybridity of Andalusi literary and cultural history as its point of departure, introduce new texts, ideas, and objects into the disciplinary conversation or radically reassesses well-known ones, and represent the theoretical, methodological, and material impacts Brann has had and continues to have on the study of the literature and culture of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in al-Andalus.

Contributors include: Ali Humayn Akhtar, Esperanza Alfonso, Peter Cole, Jonathan Decter, Elisabeth Hollender, Uriah Kfir, S.J. Pearce, F.E. Peters, Arturo Prats, Cynthia Robinson, Tova Rosen, Aurora Salvatierra, Raymond P. Scheindlin, Jessica Streit, David Torollo.

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Excerpt: This is a volume of essays and texts published in honor of Ross Brann's 70th birthday by his students and friends. The contents of the volume are wide ranging but united thematically by contributions concerned with literature, religiosity, and ideas in al-Andalus, the Islamic West, and the wider Mediterranean basin, with the multiconfessional, multilingual cultural history of the region and its inhabitants. What is remarkable about this volume is that its authors are exactly the scholars, thinkers, and translators one would have solicited for a volume designed to showcase the cutting edge of scholarship in these areas even absent their connections to the honoree. That these are all individuals who have been taught and mentored by Ross and have been his colleagues and carried out research alongside him is itself evidence of his role in shaping the intellectual work that has come to define our understanding of the literary and cultural history of the medieval Judaeo-Islamic world with Spain at its center.

Ross's work in Islamicate and Andalusi medieval literary and cultural history altered the trajectory of the field by insisting upon a holistic approach that does not separate Islam and its cultural framework from Christianity and Judaism and sees the high culture and day-to-day lives of adherents of all three religions as embedded in that cultural framework. Such an attitude characterized Ross's career from the very beginning, as he left his first professorial post on principle, to object to New York University's decision in the early 1980s to separate the fields of Islamic studies from Jewish studies, creating two new departments out of the one—then known as Near Eastern Languages and Literatures—that they had previously inhabited jointly.

Along these lines, Ross's first book, **THE COMPUNCTIOUS POET**, published in 1991, changed the paradigm for our understanding of the cultural and social role of Hebrew-language poets in an Arabizing and Islamicate Andalusi society. Through paradigmatic case studies of three "compunctious" poets—Moses ibn ʿEzra, Judah Halevi, and Todros Abulafia—the volume explores, on their own terms, the seeming contradictions of the Arabizing Hebrew poetry of al-Andalus and the apparently competing contemporaneous opinions about its development. In doing so, the volume ultimately elucidates the poetic typology that allows these bards and their verse the flexibility to inhabit a single world that only appears to be divided in two along the lines of religion and language. The book challenged the conventions of scholarship at that time, which held that the poets were partisans and their lives the static subject of either Hebrew or Arabic biography and criticism, and ultimately it is a vindication of literature as an identiary measure and a historical force.

In 2002, he again revolutionized the study of medieval Arabizing Hebrew poetry in its cultural and historical contexts with his second monograph, *Power in the Portrayal*. Predicated upon a between-the-lines reading of classically cast historical polemical texts, the volume offers an interpretation that moves beyond the conservatism of its Straussian origins to demonstrate the value of literary texts for cultural history. By setting writings by and about Jews into its Islamicate context, *Power in the Portrayal* argues to its readers that al-Andalus was a literary and cultural world in which authors and readers could offer a word-perfect performance of their roles while simultaneously subverting them, and in which the distance between Jews and Muslims reflected in their polemics against each other was predicated on their closeness and perhaps even their mutual appreciation. Through this reading, al-Andalus comes into focus as a historical reality in which only by knowing each other could individuals be self-critical about their place in the world and could writers speaking on behalf of their self-identified smaller societies both pillory and praise each other with the same level of detail and skill. Perhaps more importantly, it marks a methodological sea change in the field, realigning the relationship between historical and literary writing in the Middle Ages that had previously seen historiographic overlap only incidentally and in a more limited fashion. By insisting upon a historiography and a poetics of both-and rather than either-or, and through a historicizing

contextualization of close and careful readings of text, the body of Ross's work has broken through walls that exist within the academy and has expanded no less than the visible horizon of Spain itself.

His work also extends to scholarship on the reception of medieval Spain in the modern world and to teaching Cornell students in such diverse areas as the literature of the contemporary Arab world, the modern evolution of the concept of holy war from its origins in late antiquity and the medieval period, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He has written for both scholarly and lay audiences on modern topics, with work ranging from an academic article defining and defying the mythology of the misbegotten term *moor*, to a popular presentation designed for students of Andalusi cultural history and its impact on the modern world. In the classroom, too, rather than falling into the easy trap of teaching only in his most immediate area of research, Ross has dramatically amplified the reach of the Department of Near Eastern Studies by teaching historically grounded, timely, topical courses that draw in hundreds of students; he has also taught the wider community in New York State, offering regional workshops to the general population at critical times—such as in the wake of September 11, 2001—when knowledge outside of the academy of the Mediterranean and the Near East has been in short supply but more necessary than ever.

Understanding the value of community life in education, Ross devoted the better part of fifteen years to the development of Cornell's residential house system and ultimately served as the first Dean and House Professor of the first house, named for Cornell emerita professor and labor historian Alice Cook—it was at Ross's urging that all the houses are named for distinguished Cornell faculty. At a Passover seder that he and his family hosted at Alice Cook House one year for Jewish students in the House and the Department of Near Eastern Studies, one undergraduate student let on that a third of the students in the three-hundred-person lecture on holy war that Ross was teaching that semester thought he was Christian, one third thought he was Muslim, and one third thought he was Jewish. "That means I'm doing my job right," Ross answered, living and modeling to his students a fully integrated life of the mind that offers no quarter to partisanship or factionalism.

Similarly, his insistence in the classroom that students of Arabic learn Hebrew, too, and vice versa, enriches the intellectual lives of his students and has helped to make the academic programs in Cornell's Department of Near Eastern Studies among the most integrative and innovative in the country. The breadth of his work, interests, commitments, and investments speaks not only to an exceptional intellect but also to an unrivaled generosity of magisterial spirit and skill.

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Thus, this volume seeks to honor Ross's career as a researcher and teacher and herald its next decades through a set of studies, essays, text editions, and translations that showcases the breadth of his impact on a wide range of academic fields—Judaeo-Arabic language and literature, Hebrew poetry, Mediterranean cultural history, and religious studies, among others—written not only by his friends and teachers, and by his colleagues and cohort, but also by his students and the younger generation of scholars he has taught and mentored in his more than three decades at Cornell University. Ross's vision of the Middle Ages is an organic one that refuses to accept the borders and boundaries imposed on it by post-Enlightenment thought. His work insists on a unity of both or of all, rather than the academy's more traditional insistence on either-or. The inclusion here of work that might be considered traditionally and exclusively the purview of Islamic studies, such as a translation of the Qurʾān by Shawkat Toorawa, and of an essay on early Christian textual history by F.E. Peters alongside fourteen studies on various aspects of Andalusi, Andalusi-diaspora, and Judaeo-Arabic literature, is designed to show that the literature of al-Andalus and of Arabophone Jews and Muslims at once stands as its own coherent unit and as a part of a broader literary and historical

continuum. This is not simply a book of *sic-et-non* but a literary-historical mosaic on an even grander scale.

Jonathan Decter's chapter makes precisely that point by illustrating how Moses ibn ʿEzra's *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* can be read as an apologia for Hebrew verse grounded fully in Arabic poetics. Through a first-of-its-kind reading of the "model poem" appended to the end of the work, Decter offers many new insights into Ibn ʿEzra's engagement with his Arabic sources (in particular the understudied *Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara* by al-Ḥātimī) and opens up new avenues for the study of *badīʿ* in Andalusi Hebrew verse. Cynthia Robinson's chapter, too, demonstrates the ways in which Andalusi artists and poets began with raw material from the Islamic East and transformed it into something wholly and distinctly Andalusi. By integrating a study of the material remnants of *mawlid* celebrations in Naṣrid Granada with a reading of the Arabic poetry written and recited to mark those festivals, Robinson shows that court poets writing to mark the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday evoke a landscape that draws upon eastern descriptions of the Najd and leverages that choice (different from that of the eastern poets, who often set their *mawlid* poetry to evoke the Ḥijāz) to create a uniquely Andalusi form connected both to the Iberian Peninsula and its material culture, to the point that these ceremonies so deeply suggested the place that they were ultimately used to legitimate Naṣrid rule in Granada against Marinid encroachment from North Africa. Along a different geographic axis, Jessica Renee Streit likewise illustrates the ways in which Andalusi materials draw upon other parts of the Islamic world and make them their own. In her chapter, Streit demonstrates the centrality of North African aesthetics in Andalusi architecture in the Almohad period, while also showing that it was natively Andalusi philosophical and aesthetic thinking that helped architects and artisans make the building particularly local to Seville.

Ali H. Akhtar's study demonstrates that economic and social life in the literary and historical continuum of the Mediterranean often requires tremendous creativity in the face of legal and social pressures. His chapter explores the parallel and interconnected pressures faced by sixteenth-century Sefardi-Jewish and Catholic merchant families whose lives and businesses were conducted in the limen between the republic of Venice and the Ottoman Sultanate; he demonstrates that both communities were swept up in the larger political entities' desires to assert their sovereignty and that as they adopted different strategies to work around new limitations that altered the legal and commercial realities in which they lived, ultimately transforming themselves from religious minorities within a particular realm into transimperial citizens.

Geographic and temporal boundaries are also crossed within the realm of Hebrew poetry and poetics. Elisabeth Hollender highlights the fascination of northern French readers with Andalusi-style piyyutim as reflected in a particular manuscript witness, the liturgical manuscript now known as Bernkastel-Kues 313. In her chapter, she shows that the collection of nonobligatory piyyutim included in the manuscript demonstrates positive French attitudes of desire toward Andalusi-style liturgical poetry, in contrast with well-documented negative attitudes in the region, insulating French religious law and reasoning from its Andalusi counterpart. S.J. Pearce's chapter explores the reception of Andalusi poetry across temporal, rather than geographic lines through a reading of an essay written by a young Yehuda Amichai that argues for the inclusion of Samuel ibn Naghrīla's poetry within a fully Spanish literary canon. She argues that Amichai's essay represents an early attempt at a poetics in which modern Hebrew writers could recourse to Andalusi poetry and its history in order to situate themselves as both national poets and poets within a trans-national Jewish poetic tradition. And Esperanza Alfonso's chapter examines the headings of select Psalms in a heavily glossed biblical codex now part of the collection of Oxford University's Bodleian Library with particular interest the Romance words in those glosses as an interpretive cipher for later readers; by rejecting a culturally artificial distinction between Romance and Semitic languages within the Andalusi

and post-Andalusi ambit, she is able to lay out the traces of late medieval readers as they struggled to make sense within the liminal space between the two.

Hebrew rhymed prose *maqāmāt* are the most widely discussed object of study in this volume. The contributions on this topic reflect all phases and types of investigation: Aurora Salvatierra Ossorio presents the first published edition of newly-discovered stories while Tova Rosen offers a new reading of an already well-known text. Salvatierra introduces new manuscript evidence that confirms what scholars have only been able to speculate about in the past, namely that even medieval readers saw a close connection between Yehudah ibn Shabbetai's *Minḥat Yehudah Soneʾ ha-Nashim* (The offering of Judah the Misogynist) and Yedaiah Bedersi's riposte, *Ohev Nashim* (The woman-lover), and understood the two texts to form part of a single literary conversation. Salvatierra's analysis of Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 offers codicological proof for the intertextuality at which the texts themselves hint. Her edition of the manuscript's version of Ibn Shabbetai's texts makes available another important manuscript witness to the text, with some significant variations from the versions already edited and published. Rosen's introduction to the eighth maqāma in Jacob ben Elʿazar's *Sefer ha-Meshalim* makes important Hebrew-language scholarship available for the first time to an Anglophone audience while simultaneously updating it with insights based in the theories of language and discourse of Mikhail Bakhtin; her translation of the chapter reflects that new theoretical perspective. Raymond P. Scheindlin's innovation in reading Judah al-Ḥarīzī's collection of maqāmāt entitled *Sefer ha-Taḥkemoni* comes in viewing it with the eye of a historian of religion, demonstrating the ways in which various exempla within the collection draw upon Islamic, Neoplatonist, and Jewish thought to create a recognizable and complex Jewish substratum within a work that is usually read for its entertainment or literary value, thereby demonstrating the inseparability of religious considerations from aesthetic ones and the subtle interaction of many spheres within this cultural context.

Both David Torollo and Uriah Kfir demonstrate the ways in which secular Hebrew literary texts grow up natively within an Arabo-Islamic context, while Arturo Prats Oliván sets them in their Romance context, as Alfonso does earlier in the volume. Prats Oliván issues a clarion call to the field at large to consider and to work with late texts from and around the Aragonese city of Zaragoza that reflect Andalusi memory within a Christian context through full literary engagement with both of those religio-cultural environments. Torollo's analysis and new translation of a single story from a collection of *maqāmāt* similar to the one authored by Jacob ben Elʿazar, the anonymous *Mishle he-ʿarav*, identifies a typology of storytelling that draws his analysis to the sources, broadly construed, of the particular story of the female Jewish wine merchant; through that typology and source-critical analysis, he demonstrates the engagement of Hebrew-language literary writing for a Jewish audience with the Arabo-Islamic legal tradition in which it grew up. And finally, returning to our starting point, Uriah Kfir approaches Ibn Gabirol's poetry following a methodology that resembles Torollo's, showing that the "matrix of similes" found in an early Ibn Gabirol poem emerged and developed from a starting point in eastern Arabic poetry and underwent a process of Andalucization, similar to the process in poetics discussed by Decter and in art by Streit. Kfir's chapter demonstrates that even when Arabic and Hebrew literary traditions are in tension with each other, they nonetheless represent parts of a unified literary culture in which Jewish tradents could be full participants.

Although in this introduction we have grouped the chapters according to one set of thematic criteria, we have organized them within the volume alphabetically by author rather than thematically in order to allow readers to draw the many kinds of connections that exist among all of the different papers in this volume rather than preconditioning them to see some chapters as more related to some than to others. Allowing each reader to trace his or her own path through the volume rather

than insisting on an authorized reading seemed an approach to curating this volume befitting its recipient.

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The title of the volume, *His Pen and Ink Are a Powerful Mirror*, comes from a poem, *Ha-Shir zoʿeq* (Poetry wails) written in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century by the Castilian exile Isaac al-Aḥdab, who took up residence in Sicily after the violence directed against northern-Spanish Jewish communities in 1391; it is a review of the history of Hebrew poetry in Spain from the perspective of a poetic voice who sees itself already past the end of an age. Yet rather than joining in the mourning for the literary form, the voice instead lauds its great practitioners not only as the poets who forever changed the literary landscape but as mourners of Zion caught between the sacred and the secular and as the political leaders of Spain itself who could command by the pen:

> Ibn Ghiyyat's thinking was swift:
> he carved out the lines that we still hear.
> How deep they were, and how they soared,
> taking their place on high with the spheres!
> And the poems of Halevi are milk and honey,
> with manna beside them, a sheer delight—
> smooth and pleasing, precious vessels,
> their discourse sweet, their texture tight.
> The Ibn Ezras were like commanders
> who harnessed their chariots in armies of song—
> verse their vehicle, they were riders,
> bearing bows along with their swords.
> All these in each generation
> were viziers of song, whose bread was words.

Yet al-Aḥdab precedes all of these with Ibn Gabirol, who was a nostalgic muse of sorts to many of the late fifteenth-century poets:

> Shelomo led in Spain at the start
> with sacred currency and figures of splendor.
> Poetry crowned his kingdom and rule.
> His pen and ink were a powerful mirror.

With his reference to the "sacred currency" (*shiqlei qodesh*) of Ibn Gabirol's language, al-Aḥdab places his predecessor at the center of the Andalusi Hebrew poetic canon; the phrase suggests a double meaning referring to the sacrality of the Hebrew language and to the embedding of verses from Ibn Gabirol's *Choice of Pearls* into Joseph Qimḥi's later *The Sacred Currency* (*Sheqel ha-qodesh*). He lauds Ibn Gabirol not only on his own terms but by signaling to the reader the lasting impact he had on his successors. The final line cited here evokes Ibn Gabirol's own claim to the literary-regnal title of "prince of the poem" and ultimately concludes that it was his output and the tools of his trade that cast his reflection forward to illuminate the work of the poets who would come after him.

The circumstances from which we are writing could not be more different from those in which al-Aḥdab found himself; although these are dark days in which parallels to a lachrymose vision of medieval Spain may be increasingly attractive to some readers, the study of poetry and the humanities are flourishing at Cornell, and in the broad area of Judaeo-Arabic and Andalusi studies more generally, in large measure because of Ross's fostering of his students and disciples and his contributions to the field at large. Where al-Aḥdab saw "every idiot, and every fool, spread his net in the hunt for poems," our field sees precious little of that because of the standards that Ross, as its veritable dean, has set for himself and exemplified for others. The tools of his trade are the mark of

his own *faḍāʾil* and of the impact he has had and continues to have on those who have followed him. And so, felicitously, although this volume marks an anniversary, it does not mark the end of anything. *Wa-rashadta.* <>

ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA: REVISED, ENLARGED AND UPDATED SECOND EDITION by Jamal Malik [Series: Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Brill, 9789004422698]

ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA: REVISED, ENLARGED AND UPDATED SECOND EDITION traces the roots and development of Muslim presence in South Asia. Trajectories of normative notions of state-building and the management of diversity are elaborated in four clusters, augmented by topical subjects in excursuses and annexes offering an array of Muslim voices. The enormous time span from 650 to 2019 provides for a comprehensive and plural canvas of the religious self-presentation of South Asian Muslims. Making use of the latest academic works and historical materials, including first-hand accounts ranging from official statements to poetry, Malik convincingly argues that these texts provide sufficient evidence to arrive at an interpretation of quite a different character. With major and substantial revisions, changes, abridgements and additions follow the academic literature produced during the last decades.

CONTENTS

Excerpt: South Asia comprises a vast geographical area, roughly half the size of Europe. A geographical unit that is home to many cultures influenced by Hindu traditions, it has been the topic of numerous descriptions, whether academic, fictional or in travelogues. Due to its wealth of mineral and natural resources, cultural variety and propensity to integrate different communities, this region has provided much space for projections, yearnings and dreams as well as traumata. Many books have been written on Islam and Muslims in South Asia, and many contributions penned recently have sought, with varying degrees of success, to work their way through the religious vitality and breadth of the ethnic, linguistic, religious and political plurality of the subcontinent. Nevertheless, there is still much more to be communicated on South Asian Muslims; after all, they make up a sizable population: in 1901 they numbered approx. sixty-three million and in 1941 some ninety-four million, increasing to approx. 243 million in 1981 and their number climbed to some 300 million in 1991. In 2000, their number was already around 430 million, including two Muslim majority countries, Pakistan totalling about 200 million and Bangladesh with some 140 million Muslims in 2018. India, with approx. 175 million, is currently home to the largest Muslim minority population world-wide. The region, which accounts for nearly one third of the world's Muslim population with an annual increase of more than 2%, had quite early on become a hub of Muslim theological, intellectual, and political as well as literary activities, representing incredibly multifaceted dynamics, at times affecting wider circles of the Muslim world through travel and communication, which is becoming increasingly virtual. Yet it is problematic to speak of a monolithic South Asian Islam, let alone of an Indian Muslim minority, given the extent of diversity and distinction in the formations of religious communities—or religious communitarisation, on a scale ranging from "pure" to "hybrid" that has evolved over a long time and diverse space—with a myriad of grey zones in-between. There are even stark cultural and climatic differences between North and South India, the borderline being the Narmada River. These variances have historically affected politics, religion and economy. While in South India, Islam was introduced basically by sea, trade and commerce, in the north it arrived by land through military conquest and forced migration.

The legitimate questions to pose, however, relate to where South Asian Muslims came from and how they adapted to their new homeland, especially with regard to their interactions with local Hindu communities. Which channels were operative that made political manoeuvring possible in a predominantly polytheistic environment, and what ideas and practices were helpful in that project? What of Muslim groups that strove for public acceptance or for a place in the respective master narrative and could be challenged by a narrative of a dominant normative history based in stark dichotimising positions, torn between state-building and the management of diversity? Over the course of time, how did the monotheistically inclined theology of Islam lead to a process of regularisation, in which alternative options were hereticised by one meta-narrative or another? In other words, was there a specific Muslim tradition in terms of a firm and authoritative aspect of religious and cultural identity, or were there cultural and discursive limitations to what was negotiated as tradition? What were the ideational overlaps that blurred religious and religiously legitimised boundaries to the extent that Islamic became what Marshall Hodgson has called

Islamicate? What made Muslim traditions flexible and adaptable to local variations of life on the one hand, yet exclusivist in terms of sticking to what was perceived to be the essentials on the other? How was the tension between identity and alterity negotiated in a pluralistic context and eventually used for the making of Muslim empires and their maintenance? And what lay beneath dynastic structures that operated as significant residuals powerful enough to outlive dynasties? Who were the actors?

This assortment of questions is further complicated when, in the process of cultural interaction, both Hindu and Muslim communities—diverse as they are in their normative ventures and habitual practices—encountered European colonial power. Was the subjugation a unilateral process in the rationale of a colonial encounter, or can forces of reciprocity and entanglement be traced between Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, and colonialists? Did colonial power—analogously to the term Islamicate—become colonialicate? After all, those involved have—to varying degrees—benefitted from the process of cultural encounter, albeit with the major difference being that while Europeans strengthened their native countries, Muslims came to be integrated into South Asian societies, though often with a tinge of nostalgia. What kind of colonial policies were envisaged and to what end? And, finally, why was the disintegration of British India inevitable for the creation of a separate Muslim homeland?

As the narrative goes, in the course of political manoeuvring toward a separate Muslim homeland, religion played a major mobilising force, endowing Muslims and Hindus alike with identity and solidarity, ushering in imagined communities, which were probably more effective than any use of identity politics had ever been from 711 up to 1947. Religious communalisation, that is the formation of religious communities, was meant to integrate large and fragmented societies into perceptibly homogenous nations, but such attempts did not succeed in the end. Why? Finally, how do Muslims conceive of their destinies in different political contexts, which range from singular coercive-dictatorial to pluralist-democratic ones?

There are indeed many more pertinent questions to pose than plausible answers available. The present volume shall not and cannot, of course, fully answer even a fraction of all these appropriate queries, nor can it satisfactorily present all of the manifold Muslim identities and voices that have evolved in South Asia in the process of cultural encounter, even in part. It is true that many studies have been written on different aspects of the history of Muslims and Islam in South Asia, from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Yet, because of the sheer diversity of cultural articulations, it has been difficult to produce a systematic and synthesising approach that is capable first, of bringing together some of the precious results of the vast but incremental research available in a plausible narrative and second, of helping to illustrate a few important gestating tracks over a long stretch of time. This vast temporal scope spans from Arab conquests starting even before 711 through to the rule of Turkish and Afghan-based dynasties from the thirteenth century onwards and the experience of European colonialism, up to state formation in the twentieth century and the subsequent waves of Islamisation from above and religious resistance from below.

Due to such a lengthy time-frame and the utter complex polyvocality of the sources, a comprehensive narrative is hard to sustain. What is even more bewildering is the fact that most of the literature available is—to paraphrase Bruce Lawrence—characterised by "sweeping narratives", mostly focusing on dynastic history, reducing a complex reading of the sources to specific ruling houses. Much of this scholarship is teleologically oriented with a beginning, and generally an ending, that depicts a grim scenario. This image usually envisions an Islamic golden age, followed by a decline, followed by a revival,[4] mostly in the shape of an increasingly militant Islam. This is also in line with long standing Orientalist[5] perceptions which see a gradually improving Islamic high culture swept

away by the Mongols in 1258, followed by a long dark-age and stagnation culminating by around 1750 when enlightenment came to flourish in Europe while barbarism and despotism reigned in the Orient. This mirror image is complemented by the idea of a deep colonial kiss to awaken the Oriental sleeping beauty, resulting in an Islamic revival in the nineteenth century and its ensuing exostoses. These mnemonically effective images are unfortunately also believed by many a Muslim. The underlying essentialism is based on "Orientalist empiricism" and was continuously pursued in colonial and nationalist historiography, producing quite a number of Orientalist studies.

Readers may find themselves perplexed at the pained attempts of this book to shake off these stereotypes. And if epistemological compatibility with European historiography is attempted, then the charge of being heuristically and perhaps also normatively Eurocentric will be rapidly at hand. Finally, if things are supposed to speak for themselves, then some voices have to be disclaimed, and thus one is left arbitrarily to one's own liabilities; one "risks being reductive rather than representative." Despite this looming conceptual danger, in comparison with other works on South Asian Muslim history, this book tries to focus precisely on the destructive and constructive sides of multiplicity, entanglement and reciprocity. It attempts to cover considerable ground, both at the level of social and cultural history and the history of ideas, over a period of fourteen hundred years, taking into account different contesting as well as overlapping voices deemed to be important for the narrative. In the face of complex historical developments, the history of events is also traced, sometimes consciously or unconsciously playing out the dynastic card. After all, historians tend to produce coherent narratives which are usually functionally equipped. It is naïve to ignore the interaction between academic description and religious practice and deliberation. Religion and the academic study of religion are intertwined in a complex relationship, and in more than a few cases, academic description has actually created or established religion. This work tries to lay open that epistemic entanglement.

The reader will realise before long that not all entanglements have been addressed and comparatively few voices have been made accessible. This silencing is crucial and cannot be compensated for, such as in the cases of the Muslims in Nepal or Sri Lanka, let alone marginal groups, though modest attempts have been made here to give some voice to Dalit and female expressions. The initial, rather too ambitious plan to carve out a history of Islam and Muslims in South Asia specifically from the margins—in terms of geography as well as of institutional and societal formations, ideas and practices—could hardly be realised. First, detailed analyses are mostly only available for the political centres, such as Delhi, Hyderabad, Lahore and Lucknow. By nature, centripetal narratives are more easily accessible, and due to their enduring symbolic efficacy and historical plausibility, they are not easy to dismantle or deconstruct. Second, political but not necessarily socio-cultural peripheries, not to mention the marginal or subaltern groups, are for the most part still awaiting academic discussion, especially though not limited to when it comes to early modernity and before. Third, linguistic barriers in a region with hundreds of languages have always loomed on the heuristic horizon. Therefore, the composition of a typology of the transfer of ideas and institution-building processes and their systematisation over so many centuries was only rudimentarily possible.

Leaving these apologies aside, this updated version of *ISA* covers a wealth of detail, though it is assumed that the reader has some acquaintance with the subject. The audience addressed includes students of South Asian history from different academic backgrounds such as religious studies, theology, Indology, history, social and cultural studies as well as political science. Researchers from area studies as well as those from systematic traditions might also find the book useful.

An attempt has been made to shed light on the necessary conditions for the evolution of political or religious formations operating below the level of rule and lordship, trespassing and crossing dynastic rule. Efforts have also been made to elaborate on social themes such as market and garrison towns (*qasbah*s), as well as urban and rural organisation over the centuries. Critical perspectives on the study of South Asian Islam to Orientalism and European imperialism have been employed following the latest academic deliberations. As such, the book in hand is a modest attempt to identify some of the major trajectories that seem to be characteristic of Islamicate societies in this vast region over time. It also tries to find a remedy for some academic desiderata by unfolding and juxtaposing political, religious and cultural references floating between different dynamic societal formations, some of which have been forgotten, collecting dust in colonial and national archives. In this respect, the book ties in with *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden 1980) by the late Annemarie Schimmel, while also featuring a critical focus on modern times and modifying the problématique through the methodological approach in the above-mentioned sense. In doing so, the narrative is oriented towards contemporary Anglo-American historical and cultural scientific research. An attempt has also been made to confront contributions to the sociology of religion with an extensive body of empirical material which has not been easy to tame.

The religious history of South Asia with special reference to Muslims and their sometimes staggeringly diverse or dramatically similar Islamic and Islamicate forms of cultural articulation has been traced through the processes of institution-building—such as religious schools and endowments, mystical orders and religious reforms, but also through empire- and nation-building. This has been accomplished with the help of a rich body of literature, including both primary and secondary sources in many forms, such as mystical texts, imperial edicts, formal legal opinions, literary contributions, polemics, mirrors of princes, colonial and post-colonial correspondence as well as artefacts of material culture.

By extending and revising *Islam in South Asia: A Short History*, the current edition follows the epistemological and organisational framework of its forerunner (see below: *The Issues*), but with substantial reworking and major additions.

First, as far as the reception of fresh academic contributions is concerned, an attempt has been made, as much as is possible, to incorporate literature produced on specific areas and regions during the last decade. A cursory scanning of that literature reveals that while comparatively little has been written on the advent of Islam in South Asia or on the period of the sultanate and the following century, in contrast much has been recorded on the Mughals, their sacred kingship and the millennial age. Similarly, the period between 1857 and 1947 has been secondary in importance to the many case studies focusing on the post-1947 nation-states of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. This gives the impression that most scholars have followed the dynastic framework at the cost of the rather fluid in-between phases.

Second, recent material has also been incorporated into the excursuses that follow several of the chapters. This is especially the case with regard to the ones on historiography, Shiʿis, caste, conversion and political Islam.

Third, Shiʿis and Shiʿa ritual and learned traditions have been and still are important players in the field of Islam in South Asia, from the early Islamic expansion to the aftermath of the Sultanate of Delhi, during the heydays of the Mughal Empire as well as in the successor states. Finally, Shiʿis came to play a role during the independence movement and then in modern Pakistan and India. Hence, based on recent findings Ismaʿilis and the more numerous Ithna ʿAsharis have been given more space—though perhaps still not enough—in the various chapters.

Fourth, a selection of primary texts translated into English has been added to each chapter as an annex comprising a diverse array of Muslim voices, including the scholarly, mystical, political and historiographical, at times with a view of their perception of Hindu and Islamic societies. These short excerpts are not intended to offer answers to pertinent questions, but to provide the reader a more tangible sense of the world that he or she is reading about. The choice of these contributions— admittedly sometimes fragmental and arbitrary—can and most probably will be a cause of disagreement, especially as hardly any marginal and few female voices for the pre-modern and early-modern period were found, let alone in translation. Similarly, no Hindu or colonial voices have been taken on board.[11] Nevertheless, hopefully those few that have been presented here can compensate for the lacuna. Moreover, a comparative or cross-border approach, which would have provided a view of South Asia in relation to the wider world, has not been specifically attempted as this would have exceeded the scope of the present volume. Lastly, these short excerpts are not intended to offer answers to pertinent questions, but to provide a window into the worlds of people who were there at the time.

The largely normative texts in this book—broadly defined in oral, written, visual and audible terms— reveal negotiations over religious and religiously legitimised areas. We find this not only between protagonists of different religions, but also between those of the same religious tradition, making a point that differences within one religion can be as sweeping as those between different religions. At the same time, interesting syntheses between seemingly contradictory religions come to the fore, contributing substantially to the creativity of South Asian Muslim composite culture. One may add that trends in contemporary Indian historiography, both liberal and Marxist in contradistinction to the conservative-reactionary, has treated these notions of compounding and composite secular nationalism as a powerful resource in Indian society to combat communalism and other forms of sectarian strife.

Of particular interest for the narrative in hand is the extremely complex and difficult to reconstruct negotiation of the implicit tension between the notion of Muslims as rulers and Islamic rule as such, between state-building and management of diversity, when normativity and agency are re-negotiated. This tension unfolds precisely in the dynamics in and between so-called "world religions", which by definition are not limited to a specific region but transcend their actual place and culture of origin. Here one might look at the functionality and flexibility of religious repertory that can by all means be a reflection of any given socio-political environment. In the process of negotiation over normativity and agency, over religious boundaries, identity and alterity, the religious actors are determined by constant changes and they thereby persistently play with the semantics of the religious. Therefore, it must be the task of academic inquiry to carefully focus on the actors and to disclose their specific interpretation processes. The significance of such a hermeneutic endeavour also increases in the face of the fact that the Quran revised some pre-Islamic customs, such as in the field of personal law. Hardly more than eighty out of the approx. 6,240 verses in the Quran refer to questions of society and have—in a narrower sense—any relevance for legal matters. Thus, the Quran can neither serve as a constitution nor as a civil code, but instead must be understood in the context of its particular period of time and place in order to apply its spirit to new circumstances. After all, Islamic law itself is not the word of God but it is—first and foremost—based on fallible human interpretations. Hence, one may look to the plurality of Islamic legal opinions and ask: Is such variation not a testament to the inability of humans to fully and indisputably comprehend God's expectations as outlined in the Quran? *Allahu ʿalam* ("God knows better.").

Thus, if the question arises as to how Islam refers to certain cardinal terms such as protection and dues, minority law and human rights, military rule and democracy, then both aspects must be taken into consideration: the various social constructions of *shariʿa*, that is, Islamic scholastic opinion *(fiqh)*,

and its re-interpretations by various Muslims who are also embedded in different contexts. Muslims as well as non-Muslims can no longer hide behind the image of an ideal Islam. We must instead appreciate diversity and contextuality in and of the worlds of Islam. Hence, our aim is to elaborate on the trends within Muslim cultural articulations, in their different manifestations in complex situations of Muslim majority and minority regions.

The Issues

To this end, several core issues—some of which have already been mentioned—may be highlighted, the less contentious ones being Islamic scholarship and mysticism, and the processes of their institutionalisation. It is important to state up front that the realm of Islamic scholarship and mysticism evolved over time. These systems of knowledge were marked by certain stages of development reflecting the incremental complexity of social order. Scholars and mystics oscillated between patronage and loyalty on the one hand, and rebellion and subalternity on the other, depending on the degree and nature of their political integration, on their theological rationalisations, and on the products they offered. They contested, marginalised but also influenced each other, not to mention the fact that the two categories are not mutually exclusive and that in most contexts one can find both scholar-mystics and mystic-scholars. Rationality and discipline, bureaucratisation and centralisation, functional differentiation and professionalisation eventually changed the character of religion, when contesting religious communities bargained as actors of civil society in the public sphere.

Similarly important are ambivalences in the field of identity and alterity, raising questions as to how far self-perception and perception of the other are delimiting and restricting, but at the same time require and account for each other, to such an extent that reflexive self-perception brings to light the formation process of new religious communities. Thus, identity is understood as a procedural event, as situational, corporate or multiple, a mode of becoming rather than a given entity and frozen property. Consequently, it is the notion of multiple and embedded identities that makes it possible to argue for social constructions of the self and the other that lie beyond assumptions of primordialism. In fact, the setting of criteria of difference unfolds its impact only when endowed with meaning, when identity must not only be defined by alterity or otherness alone but also by a mediating pluralising space—the creative and meaningful subset, when the "me" becomes "me" through the other. Thus, multiplicity of identity not only implies, but rather presupposes ambivalence. The other can therefore be perceived as part of the self to transcend fixed, confessionalised debates, or in short, identity matters in context.

Yet the problem is based in instrumentally endowed constructions of enemy images with enormous lasting power. They confine the other to specific central, culturalist features which can easily be distilled from the poly-vocality and plurality of human identity that at the same time silences the other, contextual markers of lived religion. Thus, the essentialised other can serve as a folio to project native fears. It can serve as a locus in which to banish the negative aspects of one's own cognition. This imagination of another world provides for the important segregation between us and the other, and must—according to this perspective—not be blurred, because similarities would hamper the self-image and destroy the contours of the self. The enemy has to be *different*. This othering becomes even more pronounced in times of crisis. Thus, it is important to understand the hermeneutical processes in cultural encounters, such as before, during and after Muslim rule and/or colonial domination.

Religious symbols obviously have an important role to play with regard to awareness and understanding the staging of debates on identity and alterity, when confessional boundaries are negotiated, crossed, shifted and transgressed in pluralist contexts. This should not, however, be read

as a statement in favour of post-modern romanticism. Learned interventions, discussions of religious specialists and politicians vehemently opposing religious pluralism through identity-politics are equally deliberated and placed in context. Hence, religion can be considered as a process through which human beings—the actors—appropriate the world. Some Muslims and non-Muslims alike establish and foster essentialised positions when they claim that Islamic practice and confession are not subject to historical change. It might be more accurate, however, to see religion as a repertory of references that enables people to interpret—and hence make meaningful—their complex lifeworlds. Rather than considering religion as the prime force for Muslim, Christian or Hindu rationality and calling for essentialised religious traditions, which would regularise religious dynamics through epistemologies endowed with political power, the dynamic role played by different religious actors must be appreciated. Additionally, contextualisation is as important as the media employed (forms, script, orality, music, architecture) which changes religious experience and mental mapping. Religion is thus conceived as one of many identity markers in disputed and competitive discursive fields, in contrast to mainstream colonial and post-colonial nationalistic narratives which consider religion to be the prime marker.

Another issue is that of processes of defining and creating religious and religiously legitimated boundaries. The perspective on and from the border—in contrast to the one from a historically constructed centre—makes the edge itself the main topic of academic inquiry: who constructed which boundary and why, and how is it shifted, demolished or transcended? Dealing with boundaries brings into focus mutual relations and entanglement, but also constructions of demarcating identities. This is especially the case for ethno-religious conflicts when the collapse of law and order can result in communities resorting to the religious legitimisation of acts of violence. Yet recognised religious boundaries are in general the condition for tolerance or even acceptance. The transition from acknowledged and theologically digested differences to processes of othering, to deviations and "heresies" can lead to the active use of violence. Nevertheless, conflicts are not only signs of social pathologies but they can also contribute decisively to the stability and cohesion of societies as well as to religious pluralism.

Finally, there is the issue of pluralism, which has to be differentiated from plurality, as it demands an active and reflexive perception of the other. It implies more than the co-existence of two or more communities at the same time and in the same space. It presumes that co-existence was made into an issue either by those who were or are politically in charge, and/or by the religious communities themselves. In pluralist societies, such self-reflections have taken place within the religious traditions as well as in academia. And since all religions have developed and defined themselves by mutual reference, it was proximity rather than distance which persuaded religious communities to draw up boundaries. Thus, pluralism does not displace or eliminate deep religious commitments; rather it is the encounter of commitments. Islam has a variety of manifestations and there is no single reading of the holy text, the prophetic tradition or the *shariʿa*. In the same vein, Sunni Muslims did not establish one religious authority, comparable to the Pope, but rather an interpretative religion invested with pluralism. While Shiʿis did develop a hierarchical religious structure, they still left much room for independent reasoning. This plurality and pluralism actually endowed Islam with dynamic power up to the very onset of colonialism. This updated edition of *ISA* thus aims at an understanding of the complex images of Islam as they evolved over time and space by analysing the tensions between religiously advanced identification and other societally important identity markers, such as political, social and ethnic affiliations on the one hand and the dynamics of the sacred and the secular on the other. The analysis of how these entangled and multiple identities have been detached and partly transformed into exclusivist religious ideas and practices is an important part of the narrative. It can be argued that in specific historical contexts, selective discourses endowed with particular meaning evolved into core elements of the exclusivist identity-politics that led to religiously legitimised

conflict and ultimately to the emergence of new independent nation-states in South Asia, thereby creating a stage for the largest wave of mass migration in modern times. These identity-politics construct antagonistic and agonistic relations between the self and the other which eventually reach a critical velocity and intensity. Let us now turn to a brief introduction to the organisation of the book in its clusters and the individual chapters therein, so as to allow the issues to speak for themselves.

The Chapters

The book has been organised in a way that interleafs excursuses on topical subjects such as historiography, caste, conversion and gender between chronological arrangements of chapters which occasionally overlap in terms of dates. The chapters and excursuses are augmented by annexes with various voices, briefly discussed in the main narrative. There are four main clusters, the first of which covers early Muslim expansion and the formative phase in the context of initial cultural encounter, after Arab traders had landed at Malabar and Kerala in the south, followed by incursions in Sindh and from Kabul in the north-west which produced a unique blend of Islamicate culture (approx. 700–1300). In the second cluster, the narrative deals with the establishment of Muslim empires oscillating between Islamic and Islamicate, between centralised and regionalised power and universal dominion (approx. 1300–1700). The third cluster is set against the backdrop of territorial princely states and colonial rule, as well as the accommodation and processes of integration and differentiation of Muslim cultures in the colonial setting (approx. 1700–1930). Finally, tensions between lived Muslim pluralism versus normative Islamic singularity as well as between Muslim minorities and the Hindu majority as they are articulated by different actors in the public sphere make up the fourth cluster (approx. 1930–2019). These clusters can be explicated as follows.

The *first cluster* opens with a broad description of South Asia before considering the early Arabs and how they slowly began to penetrate into a politically fragmented South Asia, partly by force but basically by contract. This took place from the north-west, that is Sindh (precisely along the Indus River) which was located on major trade routes connecting West Asia with Southeast Asia. Thus the rationale of such penetration is highlighted, a reasoning in which a prominent place was accorded to women (Chap. 1). There they stayed for a couple of hundred years, consolidating Hanafi Muslim power through trade, the military and forced migration. In doing so, they made use of Islamic semantics, which they expanded intelligently, particularly since the rationale for expansion was informed by economic opportunities rather than by religious zeal. The eastern market was so lucrative for Arab traders that locally conquered non-Muslims, Hindus in particular, came to be appreciated as people of the covenant, *dhimmi*s. Thus, the theoretical basis was laid for an administrative necessity in an overwhelmingly Hindu environment. Muslim jurisprudence displayed flexibility. Mercantile Buddhists converted to Islam to take part in Muslim cultural and symbolic capital. Functionally speaking, conversion provided the possibility of participating in a global—Muslim—horizon, and at the same time to a large extent it guaranteed institutional coherence and normative continuity. Yet, there were also trends of minoritising Hindus and segregating Muslims. Thus, tensions between Islamisation and Islamicatisation were characteristic right from the beginning, the latter being the *conditio sine qua non* for Muslim expansion into al-Hind when the Islamic mingled with local perceptions. The first referred to critical Muslim deliberations on the question of Islamicity, as shown by the discussions among the people of *hadith*, e.g. those who considered sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad to be of normative character. Similarly, the marginalised and the dissidents, free thinkers and atheists, the Ismailis and Sufis found their way to India to establish their respective realms. Eventually Sindh became a site of proxy wars between different Muslim Arab dynasties. Thus, there was no one single Islamic, let alone Islamicate voice but many overlapping and contesting voices. Yet, Islamic historiography has always tried to establish a normative master

narrative that is biased towards prophetic tradition and linked to *adab* literature, as discussed in the excursus on historiography, while the annex provides a wider view on differences between Hindus and Muslims and on Muslim expansionism.

When Arabic Hanafi forces faded away after some three centuries, particularly due to the intra-Arab-Muslim disputes such as those between the Sunni Abbasids and the Shiʿi Fatimids, another force intervened from the north-west: Turkish Hanafis, slave dynasties who ruled major parts of South Asia for quite some time. They were pragmatic enough to introduce Persianate rules of comportment informed by *akhlaqi* norms, liberal Sufi treatises and flexible Islamic law that would fit to the new environment at the expense of strict prophetic tradition and its relevance as an ethical ideal. Specific constituents for a new system of governance were transferable revenue assignments in lieu of salary for service (*iqtaʿ*). This included Islamicatedly evolving spaces such as the *qasbah*, the shrine (*dargah*), school (*madrasa*) and endowment *(waqf)* while Muslim mystics and Sufi orders as well as scholars flocked to this region. As outlined in Chap. 2, they did so not only for patronage but also to escape Mongol onslaughts. In the wake of these developments, two major contesting Sufi orders emerged sharing some sort of a division of labour. Thus, India's Islamicate traditions were to become more versatile and inclusive, as the immigrant Muslim communities adapted to Indian environments as the bearers of a different civilisation and faith. They increasingly expressed their concerns in shared symbols and local languages rather than in the high cultural icons and language of the elite. Arabic continued to be the language of orthodox scholars while Persian became the language of the court, administration and mystical lore. Mechanisms of assimilation and refraction in the field of material culture were also discernible: the integration of local architectural forms by the new political leaders was to sustain the grandeur of local dynasties in popular memory. These were some of the channels used by Muslims during their expansion and also by later dynasties which were at times wise and practical enough to accommodate their policy and symbolic use of authority to the local environment. After all, Muslim appropriation of South Asia was not possible without local acknowledgement and support. It occurred gradually, sometimes through war but also through peaceful transfers of power, as can also be read in the annex.

The *second cluster* focuses on processes of empire building: the provision of ideas and structures and how an increasingly fragmenting Hindu environment gave way to the Ghaznawids and Ghorids, culminating in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, which seemed to be—at least in the cultural memory of South Asian Muslims—the only guarantor of Sunni territory after the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258. These military slave governors and frontier commanders from Central Asia represented an amalgamation of Islamic and Turkish cultures with a strong Iranian underpinning, as outlined in Chap. 3. By extending their power as far as western Persia and the Ganges River Valley, these slave dynasties to a large degree Persianised South Asia. Both Islamisation and Islamicatisation, that is coercive Islamic politics and pragmatic indigenous realpolitik were used in the quest to establish, confirm and legitimise power. Interestingly, coercion and symbolic affiliation to the Islamic mainland through caliphal investiture and accommodation by way of political and social indigenisation went hand in hand with their control over land and people. The more Muslim powerholders fell behind, the more they tended towards Islamisation, which provided them a conceptual basis for centralisation—and vice versa. Similarly, the more they flourished, the more they turned to local expertise and thus to accommodationism—and vice versa. In their political actions, they made use of the ideas and institutions of religious specialists, who were not only cooperative but also sometimes critical of assimilation, depending upon their own interests. Notorious were the contentions between rulers who issued profane edicts and orthodox scholars or mystics who produced their own contesting discursive texts. While some Muslim thinkers and politicians strove to establish universal and exclusivistic Islamic identity in the broadest sense, others seemed to work for inclusivistic and plural Muslim identities, using historical memories and religious symbols to their

advantage. Nevertheless, we cannot speak of any single common or monolithic body of rulers, such as the sultans, nor was there any one singular body of Muslim functionaries, such as scribal groups. Contestation was a daily occurrence. Both exclusivism and inclusivism can be traced through cultural and numismatic artefacts. Even Mahmud of Ghazna, the archetypal Islamic warrior of al-Barani, issued a Sanskrit version of the Islamic profession of faith, describing the Prophet as an *avatar* of God. Thus the numismatic continuity did not correspond to the normative values of textual rhetoric, but instead symbolised reassurance for the indigenous population of their economic and administrative participation. As such, alliances were not based on the identities of Muslim and Hindu, but on the identities and requirements of smaller communities. Similarly, the rational sciences (*maʿqulat*) ousted the transmitted sciences (*manqulat*). In settling the sultanate, however, major land grants were issued to loyal service elites who eventually became virtually independent and challenged the authority of the sultan; these groups also included the Shiʿis. An important but perhaps unintended consequence of this loss of central authority was the growth of several independent centres of Islamic learning and culture under the patronage of local rulers, the Mongol invasion in the offing. The versatile relations between Sunnis and Shiʿis and the internal diversification of this Muslim minority have been traced in the excursus to the chapter while the annex gives voice to different actors, such as Sufis as well as political theoreticians.

The dismantling of the Delhi Sultanate was the acculturative result of successive administrative, economic and ethnic restructuring. Chap. 4 argues that these Islamicating tendencies produced a context in which different traditions interacted and contested over Muslim hegemony, thereby adding to the religious and societal complexity of South Asia. In this emerging and often fluid context, the dialectic between the social location of Muslim identities and its cultural articulation played a crucial role. On a higher plane, it was embedded within the greater dialectics between indigenous and Islamic cosmology. The complex, sacred geography resulting from such an interplay of cosmologies considerably weakened the centre-periphery relations if not altogether dissolving them, leading to different contesting but also sometimes complementary regional entities, such as Kashmir, Bengal and the Deccan. Sufi orders were particularly important in a process of trickling-down, for they informed the high culture of the elite with local and regional symbols, thereby making it accessible to the masses within their own subaltern matrix, and at times becoming agents of what they considered sophistication themselves. Needless to say, these processes of universalisation and parochialisation provided the basis for a variety of exclusive, inclusive and liminal religious identities. This was even more important since Muslim annexation of larger parts of al-Hind was basically driven by the search for new cultivation areas and the revenue income attached to them. Through sedentarisation an agrarian population was integrated into religious institutions organised around charismatic figures. Reception, appropriation and obliteration of autochthonous ideas and institutions marked the process of Muslim expansion. Mutual encounters and interaction between Muslims migrating from the north, or having been settled there for many centuries, gave these regions their peculiar Indian Muslim traditions. As evident in the local architecture, in the practice of religion as well as Sanskrit epigraphic and literary sources, religiosity was not the prime marker of identity, distancing or exclusivism. The coalescence of different interest groups opened numerous fissures which found their theological rationalisation in different schools of thought. In this context, the rational sciences seem to have played a major role, outnumbering the transmitted sciences characterised by the study of *hadith*. The first sciences went back to the Persian-Shiʿi immigration to provide legitimisation for the settlement of a powerful state, the latter took recourse to prophetic ethics often based in Arab tradition. Here, the long-standing tensions
between ʿ*arab* and ʿ*ajam* became crucial and went hand in hand with the decreasing influence of the liturgical language of Arabic vis-à-vis the more profane Persian, which came to replace the former in areas such as administration and literature. This gradually resulted in an elevation of the importance

of the *shariʿa* in non-Arab traditions of eastern Islam. Due to these developments, tensions within the social fabric emerged between immigrants, the older settlers and natives. The societal distinctions between different social actors and their meaningfulness for the South Asian Muslim context are traced in an excursus on caste, and also addressed in the various readings found in the annex.

The strains accruing in and between these many independent states were taken advantage of by the Mughals from Central Asia, who extended networks of loyalty through patronage. Chap. 5 shows that administrative and fiscal reforms were paralleled by a vast network of small garrison posts and market places, having not only military significance but also linking the economy of Bengal to that of North India. Through further Persianisation, the Mughals could effectively negotiate the diversities of Indian society. Political tactics of conquest, annexation and matrimonial alliance, as well as patronage, particularly of the Sufi orders, all focused on the person of the Mughal emperor and his sacred kingship. Social and religious policies towards universal dominion which championed the equality of all people were, however, never bereft of political motives, such as to secure authority internally while extending power externally through expansion. The successes of appropriating authority depended on those very Hindu landlords who had been variously subjugated. Initial contacts with European traders created an interesting cultural symbiosis. Renaissance traditions supported further developments of a humanist worldview, shifting from the framework of an Islamic community to that of humanity as a whole. The emperor's imperial construction reflected this transference of divine benediction. "Pax Mughalica" was based on wide-ranging fiscal, administrative, military and land reforms, as well as the mixture of rational sciences and monistic mysticism, supported by *akhlaq* literature, which perceived political organisation in terms of cooperation achieved through justice. This system of universal dominion gave way to what has been called patrimonialism, which again produced millennial revolts that increasingly questioned imperial power, competing for the establishment of their faith more firmly by enforcing stricter rules, and as a consequence, creating distinctive confessional identities. So again, different forms of Islamic and Islamicated articulation can be delineated: from the most orthodox to the most heterodox, leaving a broad belt of millennial concepts and practices for the new formations of religious communities and thinkers as different as the Rawshaniyya and Mahdawiyya, or Sirhindi and Dara, some of whom are reproduced in the annex. The dynamics of religious "communalisation" are discussed in terms of conversion and mission in the excursus.

Problems occurring mainly on the margins of the empire resulted in a policy towards a strong monarchy compatible with orthodox Islamic principles pursued with the help of landowners, religious scholars and orthodox Sufis, mostly of Turani stock. A shift from Islamicatisation to Islamisation can be traced, as documented in Chap. 6, yet the implicit religious iconoclasm has been exposed as a portrayal of an essentialised Islam especially supported by later colonialist historiography. The system had, however, seen the day: the Maratha war cost immense sums which could only be raised by giving land rights to the extent that land became hereditary. In an attempt to impose a clearly defined and homogenised legal system, the emperor commissioned an authoritative *fatwa*-collection. Thus, the patronage of Hanafi scholars and institutions strengthened Muslim orthodoxy vis-à-vis Shiʿis in particular. Yet, the collection also reproduced Hindu social stratification.

A juridical codification and collective endeavour conceived in this way was conceptually new, however, and probably anticipated the first steps towards a modern state legislation. This codification stressed the tradition of what has been called the rational sciences. On the eve of the political collapse of Mughal rule, such systematisation made a crucial advance when it came to be established in a syllabus called *dars-e nizami*, designed for "scribal groups". Ironically enough, it was

Awrangzeb's juridical codification that paved the way for the very syllabus that enabled such scribal groups in helping to stabilise the princely states, legitimising these evolving regional powers at the expense of the decaying central political rule. At the same time pietistic formations evolved that were, for the most part, inspired by Arab influence. *Hadith* studies and Sufism envisioned political and social utopias that challenged the power of received legal authority. While prophetic *sunna* was considered a model for social and political reform, Muhammad came to be humanised. Divergent sectarian trends increased—between Sunni and Shiʿa as well as among those confessions themselves. At the same time, new audiences and fora emerged to provide for the articulation of new ideas in new settings. In what was an improbable but true development, the centre's control over the provinces in the seventeenth century was reversed in the eighteenth century, when the provinces came to control the centre. While the Mughal Empire had tried to integrate different communities into an imperial unity, the evolving national markets in new princely states sought the regionalisation of imperial culture. Thus, ironically enough, the territorial disintegration of the empire resulted in various levels of regional and local integration, as compounded through the voices in the annex.

Turning now to the *third cluster*, by the end of the seventeenth century, the feebleness of the Mughal fiscal system had ultimately led to autonomy movements initiated by chiefs who had been high officials in the Mughal administration (Chap. 7). They considered their former fiefs as home provinces, and were closely affiliated with wealthy merchants, moneylenders and bankers. They introduced various land and administrative measures throughout these national markets wherein Muslim communities were now perceived as cultural unities in specific territories, with local patriotisms and devotional religions, centralised revenue systems and standardised languages. Every principality boasted its own religious-cultural "variety" cum "verity". Externally they struggled with Delhi; while internally they pursued centralisation on the regional level which eventually resulted in "regional centralisation". These national markets also provided space for Afghan encroachments on the one hand and on the other for Europeans who were competing with each other materially and politically to control the new world economy. Thus colonialism did not expand into traditional and primitive societies but into closed political entities, which had replaced the Mughal Empire. The British East India Company gradually integrated these national markets into a colonial economy with the help of local informants using indirect rule. But since these cultural translators could insert their own personal information, acquiring local knowledge became important for the Europeans. Colonial educational institutions were established and English translations of Hindu and Muslim law texts were produced. A new land revenue system was introduced by the end of the eighteenth century which not only created a new class of landowners, but also fuelled Hindu and Muslim animosities, which had already been in the making due to Hindu affluence. Under subsidiary alliances, local rulers protected themselves from external aggression by using British troops, whom they had to maintain financially. This was economically viable and saved energies for other endeavours. It was legitimised through the reproduction of Mughal nominalism. In this process, India gradually became a major source for raw materials; an exploitation that resulted, among other things, in the decline of the *qasbah*s, the traditional strongholds of the Muslim gentry. European economic liberalism was introduced and the misery was compounded due to the fragmentation of landholdings, which was the inevitable result of the above-mentioned factors. By 1820, the Company had nearly established its all-India rule, thereby converting trade monopoly into a monopoly of territorial domination. The importance of religious endowments for the purposes of sedentarisation, education and politics, from early Muslim times to the colonial period and well into the era of nationalisation which resulted in contemporary Muslim states, is outlined in the excursus on *waqf* while the annex bemoans the decay and lost grandeur.

The increasing colonial influence was paralleled by changes that were reflected in normative terms underlying the colonial process (Chap. 8). A cultural technique for self-affirmation and demarcation

was projection: ontological fixation and valorisation of differences as congenital and inherent helped maximise disparities. A strategy of plausibilisation was provided by colonial historiography backed by the establishment of colonial academies. The construction of the cultural other followed by "purification"-discourses eventually culminated in the idea that the Indian Orient was chaotic, caste-ridden and governable only by indirect rule: by a policy of subsidiary alliances or coercive intervention. Yet at the same time, agents of colonial power were very clearly emulating Mughal traditions, to the point of cultural mimicry, appropriating, appreciating and absorbing local reformist notions which helped create their own identities. The "eccentricities" of European identity lay in these processes of reciprocity, gradually turning into discourses of distinction, especially with the increasing influx of Christian missionaries after 1813. In this context, evolving Muslim religious communities, associations and societies began to act as agents of contesting publics, increasingly using local media and providing space for reformed notions. Emulation of the *sunna*, as the symbol of prophetic authority and source of continuity with the past, was deemed necessary to guide Muslims in what they perceived to be a situation of increasing depravity. Some of these movements, like the "Wahhabis", considered the Prophet a mere messenger, while others, such as many Sufis, upheld his inviolability, all the while adhering to the same aims: mobilising against unjust rule and offering alternative remedies in line with prophetic ethics. This complex process of the evolution of different religious publics enabled encounters to take place on the same reformed colonial discursive level and could allow for a great deal of emancipation, which also comes out clearly in the annex.

This prompted the colonialists to move towards the semantics of "traditionalising" the colony, thereby introducing a policy of a civilising mission and modernisation. "Modernising" the colony required vast and detailed information about the subject and its operations (Chap. 9). In doing so, Indian societies came to be communalised, with Hindu and Muslim communities becoming two monolithic actors in the colonial imaginary. Different reforms and juridical changes had repercussions on post-Mughal societies, when Muslim space, including Muslim education and its institutions, were relegated to the private realm. The pace of colonial encroachment eventually led to the revolt of 1857. In the cultural memories of both the colonialists and the colonialised, this bloody event made history in different ways, be that as a war of independence or a rebellion, an attempt to establish a reformed agenda or an attempt to re-establish traditional Mughal rule. The policy of a civilising mission subsequently served the policies of homogenisation and official nationalism. This provided legitimacy for the colonial sector, as it was expanding gradually with the help of influential loyal actors and religious endowments alimenting Muslim education as it came to fall under colonial control. The massive restructuring of society, however, produced new societal formations with new social needs and new forms of articulation and discontent caused by the lack of opportunities to participate in the colonial project. Language has always played a major role in the making of homogeneous and coherent entities, including their recognition, as was the case in the context of growing regional powers in the eighteenth century and then again with the growing communal scenario by the end of the nineteenth century. Some of these issues are discussed in the excursus on Urdu and are highlighted in the annex that follows it.

The all-encompassing colonial situation ushered in a new phase in the formation and institutionalisation of Muslim communities. As contesting actors in a plural religious field, they varied from "traditionalist" to "modernist", reshaping and rendering local the new situation in a colonial environment in a number of ways (Chap. 10). In their quests for "civility", their Islamicities went public, keeping alive the Prophet Muhammad as the normative example, either by emulating his tradition or criticising its historical viability. Iconoclastic *hadith*-based reformists alongside educational reformists, with their focus on theology and the study of traditional sciences, emerged next to Sufi groups, variously safeguarding Hanafi tradition or rejecting it. Based in different social and regional groups, their actors focused on law, prophetic tradition, Sufism and folk-religious

practices, and differed on issues of doctrine such as the acceptability of adhering to a school of law, mysticism or the definition of (unlawful) innovation. In contrast, to these more inward-looking movements, others sought a more outward-looking approach, taking up issues of colonial critique such as the one on the authenticity of *hadith*. In making this fruitful for their own Muslim tradition, they also adopted colonial categories of religious minorities and majorities, thereby reproducing a Muslim *angst*-discourse in a Hindu dominated context. Yet others tried to strike a balance by reforming the traditional syllabus which had evolved in the context of the evolution of princely territorial states in the eighteenth century. In the quest for civility and to meet colonial demands, all these groups tried to bring the *religious* (that had been rendered *private* since colonial intervention) back to the *public*. They ended up politicising and also masculinising Islam, which met yet another wave of colonial constraints. While these movements failed in organising Indians on a common platform to voice their concern about colonial policy, other secular organisations evolved led by the middle-class and landlords of Hindu and Muslim origin. Their "moderate" argument for greater participation and representation in British-Indian politics eventually made much use of identity-politics, which led to the hardening of religious monolithic blocs on the eve of political independence. It is at this time that a specific notion about Muslim women evolved, partly based on Islamic tradition but mostly tracing to colonial encounter and the processes of reciprocating European ideals of chastity. This is discussed in the excursus on gender while the selected readings in the annex throw light on a new Islamicity of sorts.

While discontent grew, nationalist movements raised their heads against the colonial rule leading to temporary compromises, but these could not prevent the masses from taking to the streets. When colonial policy accelerated the pace of communalisation, Muslim loyalists were swift to form institutional bodies (Chap. 11). In the shadow of colonial shelter, they hoped to safeguard their socio-economic positions from the Hindu majority that was rallying behind slogans of Hindutva. Thus, both Hindu and Muslim identity-politics arose simultaneously under conditions of colonial modernity. Several policies and reforms followed to negotiate these polarising religious boundaries, but to no avail. In an attempt to overcome this communal aporia, both Hindu and Muslim pan-Indian nationalists came together in a unique entente in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Yet, the Khilafat movement had different meanings for different players. Its collapse eventually ushered in significantly more communal blood-shed, providing a basis for political mass mobilisation that until then had been unknown in this part of the world. While some Muslim nationalists played out the communal card for a separate Muslim homeland, others were hesitant to join the movement. After the idea of an independent Muslim nation was openly voiced, the shaping of a sovereign state took another decade and a half to materialise. The semantics of Islamic symbolism was expanded while colonial politics oscillated between coercion and appeasement. Finally, British India was divided into an independent India and Pakistan with an eastern and a western wing, causing the largest migration movement and human displacement in recent history. How communal violence emerged and what role it played in the context of identity-politics, both positively as well as negatively, is elaborated in the excursus on communalism, and further attested to by evidence in the annex.

This complex history is complemented by the *fourth* and last *cluster*. The Muslim public had diversified into an even greater plethora of communities, while some participated in the struggle for an independent state for Muslims, most were reluctant to see secular leaders represent Islamic agency. Again, the issue was about the agency to represent the singularity of prophetic tradition. Messianic, missionary, quasi-fascist, Islamist, modernist and secular groups emerged, some of which were held very tightly together by institutional patterns and normative ideas while others were loosely organised, leaving much individual space for political manoeuvring (Chap. 12). Some were confined to South Asia, yet others became global. Still others became the vanguards of an Islamic revolution. Muslim mystical tradition and shared religion did play some role in the making of such

movements, even if their leaders formulated their resentment over these traditional patterns of social and religious organisation, yet they took considerable recourse to them in terms of semantics and institutionalisation. Sufism had been increasingly contested by emerging urban Islamic reform movements, pan-Islamic and Salafi endeavours and eventually by Islamist organisations. The latter used the language of colonial and colonialised urban culture, to which they had access via media and their social embeddedness. In different scenarios—polemic as well as academic—they tried to render themselves into the sole agents of Islam, regardless of their contesting opinions, declaring mystical ideas and folk-religious practices unlawful innovations. These aspects of Islamicate traditions were thus relegated to the private, and thereby feminised. Yet these forms of shared religion are very much prevalent in South Asia and are relevant for the limited success of reformist and politicised movements vis-à-vis this complex and vital side of lived Islam which is practiced virtually everywhere in the subcontinent, even if the voices in the annex suggest differently.

Given the various competing religious and secular formations evolving, establishing and disappearing over time—effective in carving master narratives or challenging them successfully—the story of South Asian Muslims seems to provide the best examples for teleological trends, which are so characteristic for the sweeping narratives of this part of the world (Chap. 13). For some, it is as if the Arab commander Muhammad b. Qasim had laid the foundation stone for the establishment of an independent Muslim nation some fourteen centuries ago as embodied in the battle-cry "*Labbaik*!" The narrative power of these stories can, however, not be belittled, let alone ignored. They determine the political cultures of independent states in their daily politics and current affairs, informed by identity-politics impelling the states to militant hostility. The issue of Kashmir even drove them to the brink of atomic destruction. The question is open as to whether partition primarily took place for Muslims or for Islam, but whatever the case it is clear that religion was evoked and instrumentalised in the laborious and extensive dramaturgy underlying the actions and speeches of religious politicians. And since the Muslim state was separated into two wings by the British, a productive form of national integration could not develop. Instead, one-sided dependencies emerged which, as was to be expected, led to resentments on both sides. The political leaders, who themselves stood in the colonial tradition, emerged as authoritarian potentates who would seek coalitions to keep their positions stable. The controversial debates about the Islamicity of the new state carried weight, but they did not suffice to integrate the particular concerns in these regions, nor did they bring the issues in two culturally and linguistically different wings, into a homogenous national ideology. Coercive politics did not succeed in establishing the extremely necessary, lacking infrastructural preconditions for that process of national integration. Moreover, still functioning patterns of social organisation which had long and deep roots in society were dissolved by the policy of nationalisation without providing adequate alternatives. The policy of modernisation had negative consequences for the majority of the rural population, and the discussions about modernisation revolved around the authenticity and normative meaning of *hadith*, which the ʿulamaʾ considered themselves to be the guardians of. Thus, it was only a matter of time that the country would split apart. Here and there repressive policies continued which led to outbreaks of massive violence—eruptions that represent the distressed attempts of masses of pauperised and marginalised citizens and minorities to liberate themselves from the yoke of post-colonial domination rather than the nihilistic excesses of a few fringe groups. How far Islamist extremism can prosper in this sort of soil and how it articulates itself to offer ways towards a self-proclaimed salvation is shown in the excursus on Islamic fundamentalism, political Islam and post-Islamism, while the annex provides some alternative voices.

As anticipated in the excursus, these tensions became even more apparent after the 1971 establishment of another new state in South Asia, Bangladesh. On the whole, one must assert that Islam's repertory provided ways of ingenious interpretation in the use of religious semantics to serve

political purposes, especially in the face of the growing number of religiously articulated social forms of civil society, made up as it was of Islamic scholars and Sufis, intellectuals and politicians alike (Chap. 14). Religious schools, relegated to the private sphere since colonial times, provided shelter and support for the destitute, and came to play some role in mobilising and fuelling their sentiments of despair. This was a resulting conflict against state power arrayed against marginalised citizens, and one may add, a systemic one. Moreover, the homogenising language of the policy of Islamisation from above met with similar attempts of homogenisation among different schools of thought competing with each other from below. While these developments certainly have indigenous roots, they were much supported by foreign interests, even using the network of these institutions to plan and carry out religious violence and proxy wars, which literally led to the verge of collapse and civil war. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we are heading unavoidably towards a bleak destiny, as the media and also much of the recent political analysis would have us believe. In fact, there are many gleaming examples of flourishing Muslim cultures on different societal levels which—in conjunction with the floating deliberations on Islam and power—can be made fertile for a political culture in which at least the majority of participants can find a comfortable existence. Yet, politics such as "enlightened moderation", which among other strategies included making use of the integrative potential of Sufism turned out to be an extremely short-lived policy. This fact might have allowed western governments and think tanks pursuing or advising similar agendas to anticipate that such politics ultimately lack sufficient semantic coverage to achieve their intended results, as has also been anticipated by those voices in the annex.

The same is as much true for Muslims in independent India who are divided into several contesting groups—in every aspect of the term: "You can unite them by arousing their anti-Hindu sentiment but you cannot unite them in the name of Islam." (Abu al-Kalam Azad) The structural heterogeneity of Muslims in India is discussed in the excursus on their social structure. Similar to Pakistan and Bangladesh, the situation of the majority of Indian Muslims is a state of distress, if not desolation, while the Indian nation is still haunted by the challenges of communalism and religious fundamentalism, possibly in its worst and most aggressive form (Chap. 15). The narrative of monolithic but powerful Indian Hindu and powerless Muslim communities unfolds its remarkable energies in those areas pertinent to language, gender, space and law. This narrative has flared up in communal riots, which further cement religious othering. Here as well, Muslim institutions such as *madrasa*s and endowments are subject to attempts at civility disguised as state reforms which are usually resented. Again, it is the formations of religious communities which constitute, in a de-privatised manner, the pattern of civil society and in this way have the potential to offer feasible, practicable and promising alternatives. Whether they are really able in the current situation, which is heavily determined by global actors, to consolidate the civil sector for the sake of an integrated coherent society with the help of religiously connoted postulates is debatable. This is particularly the case when the gulf between the rapidly increasing number of those living below the poverty line and a seemingly increasing (in absolute terms) yet decreasing (in relation to population) middle-class, is widening day by day. Some of these issues have been raised in the annex.

At any rate, Muslim textual sources are often informed by superiority complexes while the semantics of diaspora, the notion of exile, nostalgia and the myth of return are celebrated, and a longingly backward-looking diasporic memory suggested. Religion as a cultural resource helps to mobilise these powers. Yet South Asia is forceful and expressive, and not only in terms of religious imaginaries; it can also accommodate multiple identities and boundary-work in the best sense of the words. As long as we consider the fuzzy and non-ideological potential of everyday lived religious reality as something viable for the process of cultural integration, we may be on the safe side. Lived Islam offers a broad panoply of internal arrangements, beyond dogmas and debates about normativity. In contrast, it seems to be the learned debates on Islam that reformulate the

frustrations of Muslims into generalising Islamic issues. How then did Islam and its actors evolve in their different Islamicate and Islamic manifestations in such a context informed by religious pluralism?

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Thus a teleologically oriented perspective closes and comes to an end. Even if we dislike the grim scenario, it is a highly visible reality that occupies not only our minds but also the public sphere. One can well argue that beneath these influential and effective images, which tend to reduce major cultural achievements to the realm of religious fanaticism, other more lenient and Islamicate forces are at work—despite the powerful symbolism of "*Labbaik*!" The whole universe of lived tradition and shared religion is a major case in point which facilitates cultural interaction and provides healthy spaces for reciprocity and entanglement. We may consider the profound impact of institutions and the lore of mysticism and lived Islam that inform everyday life, whether in urban, tribal or rural areas, enabling people from different walks of life to come together in an atmosphere of sharing and participation.

Preconditions for this entangling scenario were provided well in advance, that is with the early Muslim settlers, when Arabs encountered Hindus and Buddhists in the quest to expand their influence over a market extending far beyond al-Hind. The area around the Indus Delta and the coasts of South India proved to be reasonable starting points. Rather than expanding Islam by fire and sword, the Arab Muslims turned out to be indifferent to conversion. The observance of prophetic traditions, so important to these fledgling Muslim communities, was kept in tune with political pragmatism—an abiding conceptual challenge all the way up to present day. The accommodation of polytheistic Hindus into the Muslim taxonomy corresponded to the conversion of Buddhists in order to participate in a global Muslim horizon. Furthermore, in a time when the study of transmitted sciences was of the utmost importance, the correspondence between the textual piety of *hadith* scholars and Buddhist textualism and literalism provided for even more interaction on the level of Arab-Muslim mercantilism. Nevertheless, a singular form of orthodoxy could not emerge, for there were too many different groups contesting over Islamic agency, contestations that eventually resulted in proxy wars between early Arab Muslim dynasties on Indian soil. As a result of these interactions, a basis was laid for a colourful plurality of religious practices, communities and institutions. Indigenous communities were Islamicated and Islamic religious articulations indigenised, but what happened in most cases was probably a mixture of both. Thus, the impact of and negotiation about Muslimhood did not vanish with the Arab retreat; rather it accelerated, this time coming as it did from the north-west with Turkish invaders and refugees.

The major structural change occurring during this shift was the introduction of Persianised culture, involving ethical texts, Persian literary pathos, liberal Sufi texts and the Hanafi tradition's flexible understanding of Islamic law. These sources were to provide non-sectarian and humane alternatives for Muslims in South Asia. The channels along which these ideas spread were versatile and based on the meeting of traditional religious and non-religious institutions and infrastructures as well as various symbols of authority to provide for pluralistic religious milieus. These rather accommodationist positions were encountered by different orthodox scholars and practitioners. The creation of Pakistan as the embodiment of a Muslim majority state, distinct from a Hindu majoritarian state, seems to anticipate that the latter (orthodoxy) won the day and that a homogenous Muslim identity emerged—on both sides of the border. But this was not the case; in fact far from it, thanks to the existence and persistence of several virtually contesting Muslim ideas in plural and pluralist contexts. The extreme poles of the disputes were represented by, on the one hand, those who sought affiliation and also patronage in the Arab context, focusing strongly on the Arab Prophet as a crucial ethical ideal for the purposes of identity and solidarity. On the other hand,

there were the more indigenised Islamicate forms of articulation embedded in the shared religion of the ʿajam. In between ʿarab and ʿajam, there was a plethora of voices arguing for balanced encounter that sought creative paths between both poles, complementing precisely these different and at times contesting Muslim positions.

The conflict between ʿarab and ʿajam, however, was decided in favour of the latter, when non-Arabs could boast the only functioning Muslim sultanate east of Baghdad. Arabic was replaced with the more profane Persian, which eventually produced an accumulative character of the shariʿa, as it incrementally adopted and absorbed local ideas and practices in the non-Arab environment of eastern Islam. Precisely to counter this blurring of the shariʿa, at the behest of scholars and Sufis alike, some sultans re-introduced the language and law books of the Arabs, while others sought to limit rather than entirely eliminate the assimilative Sufi discourses to keep the sultanate working. The institution of ijtihad proved to be of the utmost significance for both sides, since this crucial mechanism of Islamic normativity had always been the perennial duty and responsibility of Islamic scholars. In later centuries, after a lengthy period in which the gates of ijtihad were widely considered to have been closed, this device was reactivated, the issue at hand being who ought to exercise it: the scholars, the ruler or the common man. Thus issues of agency as well as of normativity were equally at stake. These antagonisms were not only crucial in terms of the culture clash between ʿarab and ʿajam, they were also extremely important for the operationalisation of different Muslim political systems in a pluralistic context. The breaking apart of several political entities into independent Muslim principalities was possible precisely because of these different, conflicting and overlapping tendencies, which were formulated in religious terms. Muslim heterogeneity facilitated the ability of the margins to become centres of Muslim power, among other factors through Shiʿis flocking there from neighbouring Western regions.

Islamic mystical ideas, transmitted especially through poems and songs, encouraged belief in the unity of pluralism, particularly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Close bonds between Hindus and Muslims were common and the Prophet Muhammad came to be seen as an avatar of Hindu gods. Yet, people like al-Barani and Sirhindi wanted not only shariʿa rule over the country but even also called for the humiliation of its non-Muslim subjects. In contrast, the Mughals built upon these different tendencies and strove to maintain a balance between rivalling interests. In their project of implementing universal dominion, which came to be reflected paradigmatically in the notion of "peace with all" (sulh-e kull), different players can be discerned: some Sufis, such as Sirhindi and ʿAbd al-Haqq, strove for the restoration of Sunni orthodoxy, particularly in the face of growing Shiʿi influences. It is in this context that the study of prophetic tradition (hadith) gained renewed impetus after several centuries of neglect. Apart from individual figures that provided the necessary theological and juridical expertise, the encompassing Moghul policy of universal dominion, backed by the notion of sacred kingship in a millennial age, witnessed a growing plurality of competing religious groups. In their encounter with the monarch, as well as with each other, they were forced to acuminate their religious profiles, that is to more precisely define the strict and distinctive confessional identity-boundaries between them. Moreover, to produce doctrinal conformity and disciplined behaviour among their own members, a wide range of social techniques were developed. This competition from below was to a great deal responsible for processes of institutionalisation and routinisation of the religious. In effect, the methods employed by these different groups were similar. In some cases, cooperation with the rulers was thought to be essential, while in others, millenarian movements challenged those in power. Whatever the case, however, the moral and ethical role of the Prophet in the making of such religious communities was invariably an important point of reference. Considering these developments in terms of a "confessionalisation paradigm" during a millennial age might help in understanding similar developments in the context of Muslim empires and beyond from a perspective contemporary to those times.

It may be more than a coincidence that these religious communities produced certain modernising effects in state and society. These include rationality and discipline, bureaucratisation and centralisation, and, going along with such developments, a heightened personal responsibility for life. The latter manifests as part of a conscious attempt to ideologically instrumentalise one's own confessional affiliation in clashes with the confessional other. In the course of events, it was precisely these effects that changed the character of religion. Henceforth, regionalisation of imperial culture ushered in various levels of regional and local integration, whereby devotional religion went hand in hand with patriotism and centralised revenue systems. Patronage was a major means for realising these steps towards territorial independence. Thus, on the occasion of colonial penetration, national markets had developed which were later used by Europeans as springboards for economic and political conquest. Two major trends can be delineated among urban Muslims: on the one hand, established elites holding to legalism and a quasi-standardised program of education designed for scribal groups to run the virtually independent princely states; and on the other, reformers who challenged this very system and called for processes of religious individualisation. The reinforcement of *ijtihad* increased the reflexivity and individualisation of religion, while prophetic *sunna* was considered paradigmatic for social and political reform. Practically experienced religion was conceptually reflected, the sacred was humanised, and the humane was sacralised, as can be traced in the writings of the age, such as the pious texts and poetry that mass-circulated in the bazaar. Just as in the pietistic tradition, there was a critical consciousness of existing institutions and of religious "superstition". The visibility of publicly accessible spaces like poetry meetings was a common feature in other institutions as well, such as libraries, coffeehouses and bathhouses, the number of which increased rapidly during this period. It is therefore no wonder that contemporary Indian travellers to Europe could perceive similar institutions in Europe within their own cultural categories. Thus this indigenous process of emancipation was also accessible for colonialists, who at times even indulged in cultural mimicry, a mimicry that could be selfless, but which was also important in embracing the colonial process. At the same time, however, this process could also threaten colonial objectives. Therefore, the semantic of traditionalisation and—following that—of modernisation of the Orient was to endow the colony with "civility" and to safeguard the major colonial project: economic exploitation.

In the face of subsequent wide-ranging changes, it took Muslims many decades to restore Islam as a normative force in the public mind. Emphasis on *hadith* and the centrality of the Prophet were the major vehicles in that endeavour—though the positions varied from conflict to complement. Thus the initial process of emancipation in the eighteenth century was radicalised in the nineteenth century. One may consider this phase in terms of neo-confessionalism, characterised by a high degree of diffusion of Islamic learning and piety, facilitated through various media, increasing mobility in the Muslim world as well as pan-Islamic sentiments. Islamic puritanism played an important expanding role because it appeared in different—sometimes contradictory—forms, such as scripturalist, yet Sufic. The latter was prominent and integral to society, even as urban reformist movements were trying to get rid of it. The revival of ritual activities and scriptural norms was important for establishing distinct contesting confessional groups, functionally attributed to scholarly tradition (beyond traditional scholarship) in the public sphere. Later, during the anti-colonial struggle, these groups came to be complemented by yet others still.

Even if the current macro-political situation of Muslim South Asia looks rather grave—considering for example the issues of communalism and sectarianism or the low standards in terms of education, income and political participation; on the micro-level the fate of South Asian Muslims is not actually quite so bad. After all, they have at their disposal vibrant socio-religious capital that operates through self-organising networks, networks that have been helping people right from the beginning in 1947, and then again for Bangladeshis in 1971, when the states had little infrastructure of their

own to offer. The potential for the formation of religious communities is immense, competitive and versatile. In attending to their constituencies as competitors, these religious communities can negotiate as actors of civil society in the public sphere. And what is more important: because they are much more rooted in society than the agents of the anonymous state, they can challenge the already limited authority of the government. Religion, as it appears to have been de-privatised, becomes a representative player in civil society, helping to shape or at least affect that society. To this extent, it is not only the nation-state that defines religion, but religious actors themselves also exert a major impact on the state. This is indeed a truism, but considering the fact that different players are informed and determined simultaneously by very different models and attitudes in the same localities, this contest becomes dramatic. Yet it is not only the condition of "the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous" (Ernst Bloch), which has been asserted all around, particularly in the context of globalisation. Indeed, religion is a special mediator for communicating this non-contemporaneousness—via memory, visualisation and repetition. What is both bewildering and fascinating is its sheer dimension and magnitude in South Asia. Consider: one community of the faithful affirms universal human dignity and human rights motivated by religion, while the other rejects this claim for secular sacrality with similar arguments, precisely at the same time and from the same space. One religious community demolishes the remains of ancient history in the name of the Prophet, the other cherishes them in the name of precisely the same Prophet. One considers *hadith* to have prime importance for understanding the divine message, while the other questions the infallibility of the *sunna* and assigns man the faculty of interpreting the Quran, whether *ashraf, ajlaf* or *ardhal*. In other words, when subjectively construed, shared religious, institutionalised and non-institutionalised systems of ultimate meaning and truths are increasingly and expeditiously replacing traditional Muslim religious forms and authorities, be it in Muslim minority or majority regions, when some sort of religious individualisation takes place, affirming the idea of the dignity of the human being, while at the same time atrocities are committed in the name of God, reconciliation of the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous is hardly possible. This continues alongside events that further alienate Muslims in India, such as the November 2019 supreme court ruling in favour of building a Hindu temple on the former site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya or the brutal suppression of protests in the wake of the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution and the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, both of which targeted the rights of Muslim minorities. Likewise, intra-Muslim divisions are exacerbated by the sectarian violence that plagues Pakistan, such as in Baluchistan where thousands of Shiʿi minority Hazaras have been killed in extremist attacks over just the last decade and a half.

It is open to doubt as to whether these tensions—deep as they may be—can be smoothed over through globalisation and the homogenising vigour of modern nation-states, which can sometimes turn into obsession. To be specific: state policies that function to extend the process of globalisation and homogenisation and seek to impose transcultural values look for recognition and acceptance of this process as a "de-cultured" one. However, this globalisation meets with a variety of reactions and encounters resistance, in a process of external global pressures interrelated with distinct local struggles. Thus, the recent expressions of religious "resistance" in the context of formations of religious communities in a space of autochthonous cultural articulation, or the non-contemporaneous as it were, can be seen as a response to the political economy of globalisation and state penetration proceeding "from above." At the same time, religious communities have developed their own dynamics vis-à-vis the ever encroaching state and respond to local skirmishes between local factions competing for scarce resources "from below". Their engagement in homogenisation and contestation in the pursuit of domination over their own constituencies and those of others is a case in point. Hence, these religious communities are focused on, or affected by, global as well as local concerns. In fact, there is an interplay between these two levels, when religious communities

are situated in ways that blend both together. Thus, globalising policies do not necessarily follow isomorphic processes, but can effect localisation and cause de-coupling, though with strikingly similar homogenising tendencies. In the final analysis, these differences are systemic parts of the continuous religious vitality of Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike, and all the more so in South Asia. They should be understood as different facets of cultural praxis embedded in culturally conditioned symbol-systems, that is in lived religions, in all of their contextual richness. <>

THE HORIZONS OF BEING: THE METAPHYSICS OF IBN AL-ʿARABĪ IN THE MUQADDIMAT AL-QAYṢARĪ
translated, commentary and edited by Mukhtar H. Ali
[Middle East and Islamic Studies, Brill, 9789004425248]

THE HORIZONS OF BEING explores the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī by examining Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's (d. 751/1350) Prolegomena to his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, popularly known as the*Muqaddimat al-Qayṣarī*. A masterpiece of Sufism, the *Muqaddima* is both a distillation of the *Fuṣūṣ* and a summary of Ibn al-ʿArabī's entire metaphysical worldview. As such, it is a foundational text that delves into the most important subjects characterizing the philosophical Sufi tradition: Being, God's attributes, divine knowledge, the universal worlds, unveiling, creation and the microcosm, the perfect human, the origin and return of the spirit, prophethood and sainthood. The present work is a complete translation of the *Muqaddima*and a commentary that incorporates the ideas of the main exponents of this tradition.

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The prominence of Muhyi al-Din ibn al-`Arabi (d. 638/1240) within Islamic studies is in part secured by the eruption of a school of theoretical Sufism with wide-ranging influence. That school of metaphysics came to fruition through commentaries by his students, and students of his students – commentaries that have mostly remained untranslated. For that reason alone, Mukhtar Ali's English translation of and commentary on the introduction to Dāwüd al-Qaysari's (d. 751/1350) Arabic commentary on Ibn al-`Arabi's Fusüs al-Hikam (The Ringstones of Varied Wisdom) is a valuable contribution to the study of Sufism and Islamic metaphysics. Added to its value is that The Horizons

of Being offers the parallel Arabic text of al-Qay^ari's introduction to his commentary, using a recent edition by the renowned contemporary Iranian Ibn al-`Arabi scholar, Hasan Hasanzãda Ãmuli (b. 1929). **THE HORIZONS OF BEING** is limited to al-Qaysari's introduction to his commentary on Ibn al-`Arabi's Fusüs al-Hikam, the proper name of which is Masla` khusüs al-kilam fï ma`ãnï Fusüs al-Hikam, or A Preamble of Select Discourse on the Meanings of the Fusüs al-Hikam. It should be mentioned that that introduction stands apart from the rest of al-Qay^ari's commentary as an almost independent treatise. It thus makes sense to publish a translation of the introduction separately, as has been done here, yielding a text that might be considered a worthy primer to the study of the school of Ibn al-`Arabi from the perspective of metaphysics.

The commentary itself, as Caner Dagli has discussed, has great historical significance. It played an important role in disseminating Ibn al-`Arabi's teachings throughout Ottoman lands, since it rendered those teachings in a systematic way, one that brought together Sufism (tasawwuf), philosophy (falsafa), and theology (kalãm). The commentator, al-Qaysari, was made head of the first Ottoman school system in 736–37/1336, himself trained by a student of Nasir al-Din Tüsi (d. 639/1242), whose name was Mu^ammad ibn Sartak al-Marãghi and who studied at Tüsi's observatory in Marãgha.1 Another of his teachers – the one acknowledged in al-Qaysari's commentary – is the eminent Akbarian `Abd al-Razzãq al-Kãshãni (d. between 730–6/1329–35), who authored his own oft-referenced commentary on Ibn al-`Arabi's Fusüs and whose Qur^anic commentary is frequently, in publication, attributed to Ibn al-`Arabi. The wideranging academic training that al-Qaysari underwent, which included masters in both the philosophical tradition of Avicenna and the theoretical Sufism of Ibn al-`Arabi, echoed in his writings. Those writings themselves became sources of influence: al-Qaysari's impact can be seen in the Ottoman writings of Molla Fenari (d. 834/1431) and Ismail Hakkí Bursevi (d. 1137/1725); in the Shi`i Sufi writings of Haydar Ãmuli (d. after 787/1385); in the philosophy of Mullã Sadrã (d. 1050/1640); as well as in the writings of `Abd al-Ghani al-Nãbulusi (d. 1143/1731) and Amir `Abd al-Qãdir al-Jazãsiri (d. 1883). His work exemplifies the way in which the commentary tradition established Ibn al-`Arabi's larger system of thought. Commentaries provided an opportunity to forge a set of terms that would systematize the visionary writings of Ibn al-`Arabi. That al-Qaysari's introduction to his commentary was especially primed to create and define a working vocabulary of Akbarian metaphysics, as opposed to the rest of the commentary, seems to be a function of the format of such introductions. As Dagli notes, "an introduction is not constrained by having to explain any text."

Beyond the above, what stands out perhaps most strikingly is Ali's ability to bring this text to life through a clear and accessible translation. Stylistically, al-Qaysari's succinct Arabic phrasings find a home in Ali's careful and economical choice of words: they lack the excessive bracketed insertions found in many translations of theoretical Sufism or Arabic philosophy. Offered instead are notes that remain true to their sources but strive to avoid the obscurities of technical language, functioning instead as useful glosses. Those glosses – the footnotes offered in Ali's translation of al-Qaysari's commentary – build carefully on basic concepts in the text to provide the reader with a structured and orderly appreciation of Akbarian cosmology and metaphysics. The notes to Ali's translation often seem to be in conversation with the text; indeed, perhaps the most impressive strength of Ali's translation is his ability to foresee occasions of ambiguity. When "privative attributes" appear for the first time, for example, a note immediately elucidates its meaning using wording that is precise but would be accessible to non-specialists or undergraduate students. Similarly, Ali is able to describe "witnessing" in a sentence that avoids other technical terms and yet draws from Ibn al-`Arabi's own writings on the topic (p. 163, n2). Ali's notes throughout the translation offer parallel Akbarian terms, varying versions of a given Hadïth, as well as perspectives from other commentaries. <>

Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn al-ʿArabī by Mukhtar H. Ali [Routledge, 9781032019024]

Analyzing the intersection between Sufism and philosophy, this volume is a sweeping examination of the mystical philosophy of Muḥyī-l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 637/1240), one of the most influential and original thinkers of the Islamic world. This book systematically covers Ibn al-ʿArabī's ontology, theology, epistemology, teleology, spiritual anthropology and eschatology.

While philosophy uses deductive reasoning to discover the fundamental nature of existence and Sufism relies on spiritual experience, it was not until the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī that philosophy and Sufism converged into a single framework by elaborating spiritual doctrines in precise philosophical language. Contextualizing the historical development of Ibn al-ʿArabī's school, the work draws from the earliest commentators of Ibn al-ʿArabī's oeuvre, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. ca. 730/1330) and Dawūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), but also draws from the medieval heirs of his doctrines Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385), the pivotal intellectual and mystical figure of Persia who recast philosophical Sufism within the framework of Twelver Shīʿism and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), the key figure in the dissemination of Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas in the Persianate world as well as the Ottoman Empire, India, China and East Asia via Central Asia.

Lucidly written and comprehensive in scope, with careful treatments of the key authors, **Philosophical Sufism** is a highly accessible introductory text for students and researchers interested in Islam, philosophy, religion and the Middle East.

Reviews

"Mukhtar Ali's *Philosophical Sufism* is his second major contribution to analyzing the intersection between the two disciplines, written in a clear and accessible language and deserving a wide readership. Having supervised his dissertation some years ago, I am gratified to see that he has emerged as a prominent scholar in this field of Islamic Studies."— **Hamid Algar**, *Professor Emeritus of Persian and Islamic Studies, University of California, Berkeley*

"Exceptionally clear and clearly exceptional, Philosophical Sufism presents us with an analytically rigorous and spiritually sensitive explication of the main doctrines of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī, which dominated spiritual and intellectual life in the pre-modern and early modern Islamic world for well over six hundred years. As such, this book recommends itself to not only intellectual historians and professional philosophers, but also those who would like to bring the riches of the Sufi metaphysical tradition to bear upon the impoverished scene of contemporary Islamic thought."— **Mohammed Rustom**, author of *Inrushes of the Heart: The Sufi Philosophy of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt*

"Philosophical Sufism is a very welcome addition to Islamic studies. Mukhtar Ali's presentation of the intersections of philosophy and Sufism manages to maintain a balance that is wide-ranging, yet structured; accessible, yet profound. Lucidly written, with careful treatments of the key authors and texts of this important intellectual phenomenon, Philosophical Sufism will be invaluable for both researchers and instructors."— **Cyrus Ali Zargar**, author of *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism*.

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The spiritual teachings of the Qur'ān have always played a central role in the life of Muslims who aspired to refine their character through God-consciousness, devotions and contemplation. There was an implicit understanding that true knowledge was attained through self-purification and the illumination of the heart. On this basis, one would model himself upon the perfect character of the Prophet and thus attain nearness to God. While these ideals are explicit in the Qur'ān and hadith, and since Islamic spirituality encompasses both an inward and outward dimension, spiritual masters over time identified the true nature of the soul and the detailed path to God. The trajectory of spiritual development of the soul was called "wayfaring" (sulūk), which is the spiritual movement through states and stations to reach the ultimate truth, reality or the divine presence. Towards the end of the second/eighth century certain identifiable teachings and practices became codified in manuals of spirituality. Historically, this came to be called Sufism, which was not a separate sect of Islam, but a methodology underlying religious devotions and an inner quest to understand and attain reality. Sufism, furthermore, developed over time as a cultural phenomenon with the formation of orders, specific practices, rites of initiation and various types of esoteric knowledge. The nascent intellectual climate of Islam ushered in new branches of knowledge through the translation of Greek works, and philosophy, among other disciplines, entered the Muslim mindset. In the Islamic context, Greek philosophy could be characterized by two distinct trends, one that followed the methodology of Plato (428-347 BCE), who had a predilection for mysticism and the other Aristotle (384-322 BCE), whose philosophy was characterized by logic and discursive reasoning. These influences also played into the epistemological divide that was already fomenting in Islamic culture, namely, the divergence between reason and intuition. Those who inclined towards esotericism held that true knowledge can only be attained by spiritual experience, inspiration and unveiling. Whereas those who inclined towards the exoteric, such as the legalists, theologians and philosophers, relied upon either textual evidence, rational proofs or a combination of both. Others attempted to reconcile the esoteric with the exoteric, claiming that they are two sides of the same coin, or three realities expressed as sharīʿa (law), ṭarīqa (way) and ḥaqīqa (reality). Based on a certain narration from the Prophet, thinkers such as Sayyid Haydar Amulī (d. 787/1385), divided religious life into these three levels: Know that sharīʿa is a term denoting the divine path, which contains principles and branches, permissions (rukhas) and resolutions (ʿazāʿim), the good and the excellent. Ṭarīqa is the way of maximum precaution, its superlative and firmest aspect. Whatever path leads man to tread the firmest, most superlative path is called ṭarīqa, whether it concerns speech, action, quality or state. As for ḥaqīqa, it is the affirmation of something through the experience of unveiling, witnessing or a state. That is why it is said that sharīʿa is that you worship Him, ṭarīqa is that you attain His presence and ḥaqīqa is that you witness Him. It is also said that sharīʿa is that you fulfil His commands, ṭarīqa is

that you uphold His commands and haqīqa is that you subsist through them. Historically, Sufism and philosophy have had divergent epistemologies. Philosophy uses deductive reasoning to discover the fundamental nature of existence, whereas mysticism relies primarily on spiritual experience. However, philosophy in its original sense as "the love of wisdom" can be applied more generally to denote any intellectual activity that posits an ontology and epistemology in an attempt to discover the true nature of things. We can say that "intellectual" is not limited to the faculty of reason alone but includes spiritual modalities of perception related to the heart or spirit.6 In this sense, mysticism can be considered a branch of philosophy. Even within Sufism, there have been various methodologies, some that have incorporated reason and some that have relied on spiritual insight or intuition alone. It was not until the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī that philosophy and Sufism converged into a single framework where the school of philosophical Sufism came into being. What we find in this school is the elaboration of spiritual doctrines in precise philosophical terminology. In other words, the Sufism of Ibn al-ʿArabī is not only a way of conduct or personal wayfaring, but it embodies an entire cosmology and philosophical worldview. We will return to the specifics of this school momentarily.

An Overview of the Philosophical Schools

To better understand the nature and significance of philosophical Sufism, one must begin with an overview of the main philosophical movements that emerged in the Islamic world. Broadly speaking, these are the schools of scholastic theology (kalām), Peripateticism (mashā'), Illuminationism (ishrāq), Transcendent Philosophy (al-Ḥikmat al-mutaʾāliya)8 and Sufism (tasawwuf). Caner Dagli in his Ibn al- Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture has meticulously provided an account of the theoretical and historical background leading up to the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī, highlighting the interaction between and Sufism. As early as the eighth century, the school of scholastic theology, or kalām, refers to the speech, argument or dialectic used to establish correct doctrinal views and defense of the tenets of the religion established by the Qur'ān and sunna. It was called "kaām" possibly because many theological works began with, "al-kalāmu fi kadha" (the doctrine is as follows), or from the word itself, which means "to speak"; namely, to speak about that which one must not discuss, such as the Essence of God and His attributes. The name may also have been derived from the very first issue that was discussed in this discipline, which was whether the speech of God is eternal or created. Scholastic theology provided answers to the most important metaphysical questions such as the existence of God but also debated issues concerning the divine attributes, God's relation to creation, and freewill and determinism. However, many theological arguments did not always have a sound methodological basis, often resorting to religious and doctrinal presuppositions. For this reason, the proponents of this school were criticized for being entangled in numerous fallacies and polemics. The theologians generally did not hold the Sufis in a positive light, nor did they depend on unveiling to discover truth; rather, they relied solely on scriptural evidence from the Qur'ān and hadith. Nevertheless, some theologians accepted unveiling as an epistemological method, particularly, the towering figure, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who became a devotee of Sufism towards the end of his life. The most important theologians were Abū-l-I-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936), Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad (d. 416/1025), Abū-1-Ḥusayn al-Baṣri (d. 478/1085), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī(d. 672/1274), Ḥasan b. Yūsuf (ʿAllāma) Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) and ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355). In the Islamic world, the Peripatetic school is attributed to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who systematically established its most fundamental arguments. It was named "peripatetic" based on Aristotle's habit of lecturing while walking (mashyī), or perhaps because premises lead to their conclusions in a systematic and logical manner, like walking from point A to point B. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī (d. ca. 256/870) was the first Peripatetic philosopher in the Islamic tradition. The other

key figures include Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), the "second teacher" after Aristotle, and All Ibn Sina (d. 428/1037), known as Avicenna in the West, who is arguably the most influential philosopher of Islam, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the Persian polymath who was a follower of Ibn Sīnā. The salient feature of this school is the claim that truth can be ascertained through rational argumentation and deductive reasoning, and that it is not possible for man to arrive at truth without the aid of deductive reasoning. The second feature of this school is the attention paid to metaphysical concerns. The Peripatetics did not rely on unveiling to arrive at truth, rather they used deductive reasoning and logic. From the point of view of mysticism, which asserts that truth and reality is known through unveiling and witnessing, this is held in a negative light. The scholars of law also criticized the Peripatetics for not adhering to the tenets of the Law (sharī 'a) and acknowledging its sanctity. Peripatetic philosophy held that truth is obtained by rational thought alone, which essentially undermined the basis of jurisprudential principles that were derived directly from revelation and prophetic sayings. The philosopher was considered a heretic and disbeliever on account of his strict adherence to reason and intellectual proofs. However, not every Peripatetic philosopher rejected unveiling as a means of arriving at truth, and many were, in fact, compelled to accept unveiling. One clear example is Ibn Sind, who in the ninth section of his al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt (Remarks and Admonitions) skillfully discusses the stations of the Sufis and describes various modalities of perception and types of esoteric knowledge. Furthermore, it was not only Aristotle who exerted an influence in the Islamic world, but Neoplatonic emanationist motifs and Pythagorean natural philosophy were promoted by thinkers such as the Ikhwān al-Ṣarā' (Brethren of Purity), an erudite secret society living in fourth/tenth century Baṣra. Their encyclopaedic work, Rasā ʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ assimilated Hermetic, Platonic, Aristotelean, Neopythagorean, Buddhist, Manichean and Zoroastrian teachings into four main branches of learning according to the following divisions: Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Sciences of the Soul, and Intellect and Theology. Whether or not mediated by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Pythagorean and Platonic ideas were profoundly influential in the development of the schools of Illuminationism and philosophical Sufism. The school of Illumination was pioneered by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) whose main proponent in the Greek tradition was Plato followed by Plotinus. The central idea of this school is that truth is known through divine illumination or unveiling (kashf) after the soul has become purified. This path of arriving at truth is not restricted to self-purification and divine illumination, but intellectual reasoning, reinforced by logic and analytical deduction. Arguments put forth by the theologians were also incorporated in this school insofar as they reflected the teachings of the Qur'an and Surma. Although this school was anti-Peripatetic, it was still a fusion of reason, revelation and divine illumination. Many of the other schools, including philosophical Sufism, drew from this school and Mullā Ṣadrā described it in his commentary on Suhrawardīʿs central work, Ḥikmat al-ishrāq (The Philosophy of Illumination) as "the apple of the eye of the gnostics and the people of witnessing." Key figures include Quṭb al-Dīn Shirāzī (d. 709/1309), Jalal al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502) and Ibn Abī Jumhūr Aḥsāʿī (d. after 906/1501).

The school of Transcendent Philosophy was founded by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrazī (d. 1050/1640), popularly known as Mullā Ṣadrā, the monumental figure of philosophy in Safavid Iran.16 Ṣadrāʾ s most famous work, al-Ḥikmat al-rnutaʾāliya fī-l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arba'a (The Transcendent Philosophy Concerning the Four Intellectual Journeys), is a compendium of traditional philosophy that synthesizes rational and mystical approaches, and includes ontology, natural philosophy, theology, eschatology and soteriology. The main feature of this school is that it combines three epistemic modalities: reason, revelation and inspiration. It can be said that Mullā Ṣadra's methodology is a veritable synthesis of all prior Islamic learning up until his day, amalgamating the works of Aristotelian Peripatetic philosophy represented by Ibn Sīnā, the School of Illumination of

Suhrawardī, scholastic theology and the philosophical Sufism of Ibn al-Arabī. As for Sufism, the salient feature of this school is that witnessing and unveiling is the only way for the human being to arrive at truth. The term Sufi originates from the Arabic word taṣawwuf, which means the wearing of wool, perhaps referring to the woolen garments worn by the early ascetics. In Arabic, the terms irfān, ma rifa or ʿilm are frequently used to denote this discipline. Sufism traces its origin back to the Prophet himself but its pioneers were Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiya (d. 185/801), Dhū-l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246/860), Abū. Bakī (d. 334/ 946), Abu-l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910), Abu. Yazīd al-Bisṭamī (d. 234/ 848 or 261/875), Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj 309/922), Alī b. Uthmān Hujwīrī (465/1072), ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadanī (d. 525/1130) and Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1234).20 Other famous Sufi masters who can be described as being on the "path of love" (rnadhhab-i ishq) include Ahmad Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), Farīd al-Dīn 'Attar (d. 618/1221), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) and Shams al-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ (d. 792/1390). However, the culminating figure of Sufism who developed the most profound and original mystical worldview is the greatest Shaykh (al-Shaykh al-Akbar), Muḥyī-l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). His magnum opus, al-Fūtūḥāt al- Makkiyya, is 560 chapters, covering virtually every sphere of Islamic knowledge, and his most influential work, Fuṣūs al-ḥikarn (The Gemstones of Wisdom) has been the subject of over one hundred commentaries. Ibn al-ʿArabī᾽s Sufism is epistemologically at odds with philosophy despite their shared terminology. He considered philosophy as counterproductive to attaining reality: None of the scholars and philosophers have discovered the knowledge of the soul and its reality except the men of God, namely, the Messengers and the Sufis. As for the rationalists and speculative thinkers from among the theologians and ancients, none have discovered the soul, its essence and its reality. Reasoning will never yield this knowledge. Thus, whoever seeks it by way of reasoning does so in vain. "They are those whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good" (18:104). He who seeks the matter by other than its path will not achieve its realization. In this statement, Ibn al-ʿArabī is referring not only to the knowledge of the soul but also to the nature of existence. There are, however, two views within this school, one that relies entirely on unveiling and one that accepts both unveiling and reasoning. The second method was employed by the earliest commentators of Ibn al-ʿArabī's works, such as Qūnawī, Jandī, Kāshānī and Qayṣarī. However, the Sufis never considered reason as a means for arriving at truth but relied on unveiling and witnessing through purification of the heart and the soul. This purification was enough to reach the goal, but the texts of philosophical Sufism were intended to explain spiritual experience in philosophical language. Since philosophy is the closest discipline to Sufism, the earliest commentators attempted to reconcile knowledge gained from spiritual experience in philosophical terminology; it was not an attempt to arrive at the truth by means of reason alone.

The School of Ibn al- Arabī

 Philosophical Sufism here refers to the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Mohammed Rustom writes that it is called philosophical Sufism because: The central concern of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī is with Being or wujūd, which is also the central concern of Islamic philosophy. Members of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabi did not invent an entirely new philosophical vocabulary to explain their teachings. Many of the technical terms and concepts with which they were working had been bequeathed from the well-developed traditions of Islamic philosophy and theology. Given that Ibn al-ʿArabī neither established a specific madhab or ṭarīqa, William Chittick notes that the term "school of Ibn al-ʿArabī" has been coined by Western scholars. Most of the commentary on his works is both an attempt to unravel his teachings and elaborate upon the author's own insights and unveilings. In other words, we are investigating two aspects of the Greatest Master (al-Shaykh al-Akbar), his own writings and the writings of those who were in some way affiliated or influenced by him James Morris remarks that "Ibn al-ʿArabī's writings were only the starting point for the most diverse developments, in which

reference to subsequent interpreters quickly became at least as important as the study of the Shaykh himself." This is because his works are a type of unfolding, a spiritual seed planted in the hearts of the gnostics. To see the fruits of those writings, one must wait for it to appear on the branch. These spiritual secrets are scattered throughout time and reveal themselves in the various forms and writings of the commentators, who were themselves great luminaries of the Islamic mystical tradition. Thus, the focus of the present work is the metaphysics of Ibn al-ʿArabī as expressed in his own writings and those of his commentators. Even though Ibn al-ʿArabi wrote prolifically in classical Arabic, much of his writings are too complex even for native speakers. They are the expressions of his visions and describe spiritual realities that are beyond the scope of ordinary understanding. Thus, a large part of grasping his ideas is mediated through the writings of his students and commentators, most of whom were Sufis and the people of spiritual insight. The students of his inner circle wrote the most authoritative commentaries. In this regard, his earliest and closest disciple, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) is key to the whole tradition. Others in the lineage after Qunawi were his students Mu'ayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. ca. 700/1300), 'Afi al-Dīn al-Tilmisānī' (d. 690/1291), Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. ca. 699/1300) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-'Irāqī (d. 688/1289). Jandī's student was ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. ca. 730/1330) and Kāshānī's student was Dawūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350). Other prominent Sufis and proponents of his doctrines are the following, mentioned in chronological order: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Ḥammūya (d. 650/1252-53), ʿAzīz al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. ca. 661/1262), Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. 741/1340), Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385), ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. ca. 832/1428), Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī (d. 834/1431), Ṣā'in al-Dīn Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 830/1437), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), Shams al-Dīn Lāhījī (d. 912/1507), Ḥamza Fanṣūrī (d. 933/1527), Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640), Ismāʿil Hakkī Bursawī, (d. 1137/1725) and Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731). ʿAzīz al-Dīn al-Nasafī, one of the most important Sufis of the medieval period and author of Maqṣad-i aqṣā, integrated the writings of Ibn al-ʿArabī and Najm al-Dīn Kubrā. He was a disciple of Sad al-Dīn al-Ḥammūya (d. 650/1252-53), a friend of Qunāwī and also disciple of the founder of the Kubrāwī order. Maḥmūd Shabistarī is the greatest Persian poet associated with the school of philosophical Sufism. A masterpiece of Persian poetry, his Gulshan-i rāz (The Garden of Mystery) forms the basis of Lāhījī's 800-page commentary entitled Mafātīḥ al-iʿjāz fī sharḥ gulshan-i rāz (Keys of Wonder Commenting on the Gulshan-i rāz). Lahiji's opus is the most complete work on philosophical Sufism in the Persian language. Sayyid Ḥaydar Amulī, the pivotal intellectual and mystical figure of Persia was among the medieval heirs of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings, recasting philosophical Sufism within the framework of Twelver Shīʿism. Āmulī can be credited for the rapprochement between early Sufism, which was primarily a Sunni phenomenon and Shīʿism. In his most famous work, Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa manbaʿ al-anwār (The Compendium of Mysteries and Source of Lights), he demonstrates that the essential reality of Sufism and Shīʿīsm are the same, and that Ibn ʿArabī's teachings are the esoteric interpretations of Shīʿī doctrine. His work is an indispensible manual for Shīʿī mysticism (ʿirfān) that coalesces the three epistemic modalities, reason (ʿaql), revelation (naql) and unveiling (kashf). Furthermore, it discusses some of the main doctrinal issues concerning divine unity, the nature of Prophethood, sainthood, unveiling and the various levels of Islam. Given that it covers both ontology and epistemology, Jāmiʿ al-asrār is a sourcebook for Shīʿī ʿirfān. Amulī wrote one of the longest commentaries on the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn entitled Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ fuṣūs al-ḥikarn (The Text of Texts Commenting on the Fuṣūṣ). He also wrote a Qur'ānic commentary in seven volumes entitled al-Muḥīṭ al-aʿẓarn (The Supreme Ocean). ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī was a descendant of the Sufi saint Abd al-Qādir Jī lānī (d. 561/1166), the eponymous founder of the Qādiriyya order. A visionary and Sufi saint, he wrote a seminal work summarizing the doctrines of Ibn al-ʿArabī entitled al-Insān al-kāmil fi rnaʿrifat al-awākhir wa-l-awā'il (The Perfect Human Concerning the Knowledge of Ends and Beginnings). James Morris remarks that Jīlī is "undoubtedly

both the most original thinker and the most remarkable and independent mystical writer"35 among the followers of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī was the first Ottoman jurist to become Shaykh al-Islam and a key contributor to the intellectual life of the nascent Ottoman state.36 He wrote Misbāḥ al-uns (Lantern of Intimacy), a commentary on Qūnāwī's Miftāh al-ghayb (The Key to the Unseen) which is generally considered the most advanced text studied in philosophical Sufism. Chittick notes, "In the rnadrasahs of Iran, the Miftāḥ has been considered the most advanced work on metaphysics, and along with its commentary by Fanārī, was taught after the Fusūs." Seyyed Hossein Nasr states that it is the "premier text for the teaching of theoretical gnosis especially in Turkey and Persia."

Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī was an Illuminationist interpreter of Peripatetic philosophy and a commentator on Ibn al-ʿArabī's writings. His Tarnhīd al-qawāʿid (Establishing the Principles) is among the essential texts of philosophical Sufism. He also wrote a commentary on the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn synthesizing the various philosophical schools. In his integration of Illuminationist theosophy with Peripatetic thought and philosophical mysticism, he is perhaps the most important figure in Islamic philosophy after Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, figuring as the key link in the chain [of philosophical thought stretching] between Mullā Ṣadrā, Suhrawardī and Ibn Sīnā. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī was a key figure in the dissemination of Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas in the Persianate world as well as the Ottoman Empire, India, China and East Asia via Central Asia. Jāmī enabled the widespread reception of Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas beyond the central Islamic lands. Two of his works were translated into Chinese, Ashiʿʿat al-lamaʿāt (Rays from the "Flashes")41 and Lawa'ih (Gleaming Lights). Sachiko Murata writes, "The fact that Jāmī is the author of two of the four Islamic works translated into Chinese certainly suggests that it was difficult to study Islam in Chinese without being exposed to Ibn al-'Arabī." His first prose work was Naqd al-nusūs fī sharḥ naqsh al-fuṣūṣ (Critical Texts Commenting on the Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ), which is a commentary on Ibn al-ʿArabī's own ten-page distillation of the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn, entitled Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ. Jāmī wrote Naqd al-nuṣūs in both Arabic and Persian intending a wider audience unlike his Sharḥ al-fuṣūs al-ḥikam, which is a detailed commentary of the Fuṣūy itself. His works also include Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn (Commentary on the Bezels of Wisdom), Lawā'iḥ (Gleaming Lights), Lawārni (Sparks of Inspiration) and Ashiʿat al-lamaʿāt (Rays from the "Flashes"). Professor Hamid Algar notes, "It is a significant measure of his lifelong devotion to Ibn al-ʿArabī that his final, as well as his earliest, work in prose was devoted to the analysis of Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikarn." Jāmī also influenced the Malay world through mystic poet Ḥamza Fanṣūrī's translation and adaptation of his Lawā'iḥ. ʿAbd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, the eminent Sufi saint of Ottoman Syria, is the author of Jawāhir al-nuṣūṣ fī ḥall kalimāt al-Fuṣūṣ (Precious Texts in Resolving the Words of the Fiṣūṣ). The most popular and "widely read commentary on the Fuṣūṣ in the Arab world was written by the prolific Sufi author al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī." In an autobiographical account of his devotion to Ibn al-ʿArabī, Nābulusī reports: It is well-known that I draw upon the Shaykh's words in all my states and that his books, in accord with the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the pious forefathers, are the pillar of my belief. In my turn I affirm his speech to others. For I was raised suckling at his two breasts from the time I was a child who knew nothing. I am his suckling child, son of the Shaykh al-Akbar, and he is my father. Ismāʿīl Hakkī Bursawī was an eminent Ottoman scholar and mystic who translated and commented on the Fūṣūṣ in Ottoman Turkish. His Qurʿānic exegesis, Rūḥ al-bayān (The Spirit of Elucidation) combines the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī with the earlier Sufi commentaries such as Ahmad Saḥ'ānis Rawḥ al-arwāḥ. In the following sections, we will identify Ibn al-ʿArabīs immediate circle and the formative figures of the early generations upon whose edifice the whole tradition relies. More than mere commentators, Qūnawī, Jandī, Kāshānī and Qayṣārī can be considered the architects of this school, each having studied the texts with his predecessor, or having "received" them by word and spiritual transmission.

Ibn al-' Arabī

ʿMuḥyī-l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī, one of Islam's most influential thinkers and prolific writers, is referred to as the Greatest Master, al-Shaykh al-Akbar. He brought the esoteric dimension of Islam to new heights and created a comprehensive system of mystical thought that has permeated Islamic disciplines for the past seven hundred years. He was born in the Andalusian city of Murcia in southern Spain in 560/1165 and died in 638/1240 in Damascus. The name "Ibn al-Arabī" refers to a pure Arab ancestry from the lineage of legendary Arabian poet, Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī. He received his education in the traditional Islamic disciplines in the city of Seville, the cultural capital and crossroads between the Islamic world and Europe where he remained for some 30 years before migrating to the East. Claude Addas has written the definitive biography, so this brief section focuses on a single aspect which distinguishes him from his followers. While we consider the school of Ibn al- 'Arabī as philosophical Sufism, truth be told, there is very little philosophy proper in his works. Ibn al- 'Arabī was a visionary not a philosopher, and his writings originate from spiritual experience, not deductive reasoning. So, in applying the term "philosophy" to his writings, it should not be understood as discursive or analytical philosophy like that of Aristotle or Ibn Sina. In this sense, philosophy is diametrically opposed to Sufism, so the term philosophical Sufism is an inherent contradiction. But in another sense, if philosophy means the logic, elaboration and description of a metaphysical system studied separately from its epistemic origins, then it is the only way to describe his Sufism. He describes realities attained through spiritual experience in a language that resembles philosophy or theology, redefining terms as he creates a whole new metaphysical framework. Ibn al-Arabī says:

> In what I have written, I have never had a set purpose, as other writers. Flashes of divine inspiration used to come upon me and almost overwhelm me, so that I could only put them from my mind by committing to paper what they revealed to me. If my works evince any form of composition, that form was unintentional. Some works I wrote at the command of God, sent to me in sleep or through a mystical revelation ... My heart clings to the door of the divine presence, waiting mindfully for what comes when the door is opened. My heart is poor and needy, empty of every knowledge. When something appears to the heart from behind that curtain, the heart hurries to obey and sets it down in keeping with the prescribed limits.

Ibn al- Arabī, in spite of his commitment to inspired knowledge, was conversant with the writings of the theologians and philosophers, specifically, al-Ghazālī, al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. He was also acquainted with the works of other Sufis such as ' Abdallah al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sulamī (d. 412/1021), Abū-l-Qāsim Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), Ḥārith Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 298/910) and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996).' He was also familiar with other literary forms, stating: I have included in this book which I have entitled Kitāb muḥāḍarāt al- abrār wa musamarat al-akhyār (The Conference of the Pious and the Conversation of the Perfect), all kinds of literary forms, such as sermons, proverbs, unusual stories, chronicles of the past, a history of ancient Prophets, peace be upon them, records of both Arab and non-Arab kings, noble virtues, marvelous occurrences, prophetic narrations concerning the beginning of this affair and the origination of the world. Ibn al-ʿArabī's attitude towards philosophy was not entirely negative, since "not all knowledge of the philosopher is invalid" but it was not sufficient to gain certitude of the inward, hidden realities behind the veil of phenomenal existence. In other words, the heart's perception is through spiritual insight (baṣīra), and the intellect's perception is through reflection. In the Futūḥāt he says: Is there something that cannot be obtained through unveiling (kashf) and spiritual experience (wujūd)? We say there is nothing and reject analytical reasoning all together because it causes confusion (talbīs) and untruthfulness. There is nothing that is not possible to know through unveiling and spiritual experience. Preoccupation with rational thought is a veil (hijāb). Others may reject [this position], but none of the people of God's Way denies it; only the

rationalists and speculative thinkers (ahl al-naẓar wa-l-istidlāl) and the exoteric scholars who have no taste for spiritual states deny it. If any of them did experience such spiritual states like those of the divine sage Plato, then this is something extremely rare; those individuals are comparable to the men of unveiling (kashf) and spiritual experience (wujūd).

Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and his Students

Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī is considered to be the greatest expositor of Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs works and the foremost of his students. Ibn al-ʿArabī and Qūnawīʾs father, Majd al-Dīn Isḥāq were friends, and Ibn al-ʿArabī married his widow, becoming Qūnawīʾs stepfather. Many referred to Qūnawī as al-Shaykh al-Kabīr, the Grand Master, after Ibn al-ʿArabī, al- Shaykh al-Akbar, the Greatest Master. While still in his mid-twenties he was granted permission (ījāza) to transmit all of Ibn al-ʿArabi's writings, having had the Futūḥāt al-Makkiya, as he states, "recited to me from beginning to end" a year earlier. Qūnawī was the first to give structure to his master's teachings, systematizing and popularizing them through philosophical language. Jāmī says about Qūnawī, "It is impossible to understand Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs teachings concerning the oneness of Being in a manner consistent with both intellect and sacred Law without studying Qūnawīʾs works." The school of philosophical Sufism is largely a product of Qūnawīʾs recasting of Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs doctrines into the language of philosophy in order to reach a larger audience. However, it should not be imagined that Qūnawī promoted analytical reasoning over intuition as a means of arriving at truth. His aim was to describe the realities witnessed by direct experience through the shared terminology of philosophy. Qūnawī says: Among the Greeks, the earlier sages or philosophers (hukamā) based their teachings primarily upon the unveilings or openings (fatḥ) that they received as a result of spiritual practice, but after Aristotle, philosophy limited itself to those things that can be discerned by the intellect. In the first chapter, I will point out the level of rationality so that those of you who come across this and other works by the people of the Way should realize that if there was sufficiency and healing in rational proofs and dialectics, neither the prophets, messengers or their inheritors the saints, who uphold and convey divine proofs would have turned away from them. With respect to the historical characteristics that emerged from Qūnawīʾs writings, James Morris stresses some salient features of this development. The first is that Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs teachings were maintained through the actual study of his texts, particularly, his famous work, Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn. over which more than one-hundred commentaries have been written. Second, in the intellectual milieu in which Qfmawi was writing, there were deep intersections between philosophy, theology and Sufism. We have in Qūnawīʾs own handwriting his personal copy of a set of glosses on Suhrawardīʾs Ḥikmat al- ishrāq (Philosophy of Illumination), as well as a set of glosses on Ibn Sīnāʾs Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt (Remarks and Admonitions) by the Ashʿarī theologian and philosopher, Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī. Qūnawīʿs interactions were not limited to the intellectual and literary domain, but he disseminated Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs teachings through the initiatic spiritual transmission characteristic of Sufism, and through other personal or collegial relationships. Among his contacts were Persian mystical poet, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238), the shaykh of the Suhrawardiyya order, Sad al-Dīn Ḥammūya and Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 654/ 1256), shaykhs of the Kubrawiyya order and Avicennan philosopher and Shīʿī theologian, Naṣr Dīn al-Tūṣī (d. 673/1274) and his disciple, Quṭb al-Dī n al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311). Qūnawī, having been initiated into the Suhrawardī order, spent around 15 years with Kirmānī, one of Ibn al-Arabīʾs close companions. Qūnawī used to say, "I have drunk milk from the breasts of two mothers," referring to both Ibn al-Arabī and Kirmānī. The role of the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn as Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs decisive work and vehicle through which his ideas spread cannot be overemphasized. Because of its importance, Ibn al-ʿArabī found it necessary to write a condensed

version of the Fiṣūṣ entitled Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ (Engraving of the Fuṣūṣ). In the Fuṣūṣ commentarial tradition, Qūnawīs al-Fukūk fi asrār mustanadāt ḥikarn al- Fuṣūṣ (The Unravelling of the Mysteries Behind the Wisdoms of the Fuṣūṣ) is the first commentary after Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs own Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ. The Fukūk is an explanation of the chapter headings of the Fuṣūṣ rather than an exhaustive commentary, a task that would be undertaken by his student Muʾayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī. Qūnawī describes Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs most celebrated work in the following: The Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam is one of the most precious distillations of our master's works ... one of the seals of his writings and one of his last inspirations, flowing from the Muḥammadan station and wellspring of the Essence and comprehensive Singularity. It came from the quintessence of the spiritual taste (dhawq) of our Prophet peace be upon him with regard to knowledge of God, and intimates the origin of the tastes specific to the saints (awliyā) and prophets mentioned therein, guiding each perceptive person to their quintessence ... and the spiritual perfection of each. There is no doubt that an awareness of the mysteries contained in a book of this stature whose source of knowledge is that Prophetic station ... is dependent upon realizing the spiritual inheritance of him who has tasted all of that, having opened and unveiled for him The Fukūk was Qunawi's last complete work, only to be followed by Sharḥ al-aḥādīth al-arba ʿiniyya (Commentary on Forty Hadiths), which contains a commentary on only twenty-nine hadith. Other works include I ʿjāz al-bayān fī ta 'wīl urnrn al-Qur ʾān (The Inimitability of Expression in the Hermeneutics of the Mother of the Qur'ān), Risālat al-nuṣūṣ fī taḥqīq al-ṭawr al-rnakhṣūṣ (The Treatise of Texts in the Verification of the Distinguished Degree) and al-Risāla al-rnurshidīya (The Epistle of Spiritual Guidance). Among his earliest students was Afīf al-Dīn al-Tilmisānī (d. 690/1291) who had the manuscript of the Futūḥāt recited to him by Qūnawī. Tilmisānī was also a student of Ibn al-ʿArabī and later became Qūnawīʾs closest companion after the Shaykh's death. He is the author of Sharḥ asrmā al-ḥusnā (Commentary on the Divine Names), commentaries on the Fuṣūṣ and Abd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī (d. 350/961) classic, Kitāb al-Mawāqif (The Book of Standings). He also wrote a commentary on Abdallah Anṣāri's Manāzil al- sā 'irīn (The Stations of the Wayfarers), the consummate manual of spiritual wayfaring. Both Tilmisani and Kāshānī wrote commentaries on this work, attesting to the fact that the earliest circle of students was as immersed in spiritual wayfaring as they were in intellectual pursuits and philosophical expositions. Sufism is first and foremost a spiritual path, then an academic discipline that lends itself to philosophical meditations as evidenced by the writings of its founders. Contrasting Ibn al-ʿArabī with Qūnawī, Tilmisānī says, "My first shaykh was a philosophizing spiritualist (rnutarawḥin mutafalsif) and my second was a spiritualizing philosopher (faylasūf rnutarawḥin)." Qūnawīʾs style was decidedly philosophical, reinforced by the fact that he held a philosophical correspondence with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the foremost Peripatetic philosopher of the time and the reviver of Ibn Sīnāʾs works through his commentary on the Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt. Qūnawīʾs circle also included Sa'ad al-Din Farghānī who attended his lectures on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem, Tāʾiyyah or Naẓm al-sulūk (Poem of the Way). Umar b. al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) was one of the greatest Sufi poets of the Arabic language. He was a contemporary of Ibn al-ʿArabī who lived in Cairo. Chittick notes that Ibn al-Fariḍ's Tāʿiyyah and Ibn al-ʿArabīʾs Fuṣūṣ symbolize two tendencies within Sufism_ the ecstatic and poetical and the philosophical and intellectual.72 Farghānī was inspired to write a commentary on it in Persian entitled Mashāriq al-darārī (The Rising of Radiant Stars) to which Qūnawī wrote a foreword. Then he rewrote this work in Arabic as Muntahā-l-madārik (The Furthest Perceptions). Remarking on its prolegomenon (muqaddinia),73 Jami says, "It is the clearest treatise on esoteric science ever written." The other important student is Persian poet Fakhr al-Dīn 'Iraqī, the author of Lama ʿāt (Divine Flashes), a sublime work of Persian literature inspired by Qūnawīʾs lectures and the subject of Jāmīʾs commentary Ashi'at al-lama ʿāt (Rays from the Flashes). 'Iraqi was also a

devotee of Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī while in Konya, attending his music and poetry sessions, and about whom he said, "No one ever understood him as he should have been understood. He came into this world a stranger and left it a stranger!"

The Structure of This Study

An annotated translation of the Muqaddirna has been published as a parallel Arabic—English text, The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al- Arabī in the Muqaddirnat al-Qayṣarī. Even though it is an introductory text, it was written for a readership already well-versed in the philosophical and theological debates of the time. While the annotations attempt to define key terms and concepts of this school, the present work hopes to give a similar introduction to the subject in a more readable format, yet still addressing the main themes in Ibn al-ʿArabī's oeuvre. In fact, the present work was first conceived as a commentary on my translation of the Muqad- dirna and later reworked into an independent text. So, if the reader, while comparing the two works, encounters some repetition of material or quotes, it is because both were born out of the same project, and thus it was appropriate to include them in both places. Pedagogically speaking, it is not uncommon to revisit a text like the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikarn multiple times with the assistance of various commentaries, since each successive pass reveals new insights and different shades of meaning. This is why each generation of scholars, beginning with Qunawi, attempted to write a commentary on the Fuṣūṣ, each work corresponding to new divine manifestations and personal insights. Qayṣarī's definition of Sufism is as follows: The subject of this discipline is the unitary Essence, eternal qualities, everlasting attributes, the emergence of multiplicity from God's unitary Essence and its return to the Essence. Furthermore, it discusses the manifestation of the divine names, the methodology of wayfaring of God's folk, their practices and disciplines, the outcome of their efforts, and the result of their actions. Thus, it can be said that the subject of this discipline is God, Almighty, and His relation to His creation. The principles of this discipline consist of the divine names and attributes. They can be divided into three types, names of the Essence, names of the Attributes and names of the Acts. The names of the Essence are those that refer to the Essence of God since their governance is comprehensive, such that other names are subsumed under them. The Attributes of Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Light, Oneness, Necessity, and others, fall under this category. They are the names of the Essence because contemplating their unity with the Essence does not necessitate either contemplating the other names or creation. They refer to the degree of Singularity (al-aḥadiyya), which excludes any kind of multiplicity, and do not take into consideration their referents. Some of the names of the Essence possess individuation (al-ta'ayyun) but are witnessed from behind a veil for the virtuous. While the foremost of the wayfarers and perfect gnostics witness them without any veils whatsoever. Some names of the Essence are not individuated and hidden in the Unseen, as mentioned by the Prophet, "O God, I ask you by the names which You have named Yourself, revealed in the Book and taught to Your servants, or have reserved for Yourself in the knowledge of the Unseen." Since this work is largely based on the Muqaddirnat al-Qayṣarī in sequence and content, it can be read as a commentary on its main themes. Besides the earliest masters mentioned above, this study will also invoke the writings of some key figures in the school of philosophical Sufism, particularly, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī and Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. The first chapter discusses ontology: Being qua Being, privative and positive properties of Being, necessity, contingency and impossibility and the divine Being which the Sufis refer to as al-Ḥaqq. Since the doctrine of the "Oneness of Being" (waḥdat al-wujūd) is attributed to the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī, this chapter discusses divine unity, the divine attributes, transcendence and immanence, and the universal degrees of Being. The second chapter explores the divine names, their divisions, positive and privative attributes, the names of Beauty and Majesty, the Mothers of the Names, the Keys of the Unseen and the names of the Essence, Attributes and Acts, the engendering of the names, the universal and the

particular, and their dominion, governance and relationship with creation. These first two chapters are foundational insofar as Being and its manifestations are the primary concerns for the school of philosophical Sufism. Divine knowledge is among the first manifestations, which is the subject of the third chapter. This chapter investigates the essences in the divine knowledge called the Permanent Archetypes (al-aʿyān al-thābita), the presence of the divine Essence in all things and the appearance of the macrocosmic levels of manifestation beginning with the First Intellect, the Pen and the Tablets. The fourth chapter explores some shared concepts between philosophy and Sufism on the origin of multiplicity. It also defines some key terms of this school, such as Expansive Being (al-wujūd al-rnunbasiṭ), the First Engenderer (al-ṣādir al-awwal), the Outstretched Parchment (al-riqq al-rnanshūr) and the Breath of the Merciful (al-nafas al-raḥmānī). The fifth chapter describes the five Universal Worlds or five divine Presences (al-ḥadarāt al-ilāhiyya al-kharns), which refer to the principal degrees of Being. Ibn al-ʿArabī uses the term "presence" (ḥaḍra) to indicate that God is present in every world. In this chapter we delve into one of the central concepts of his metaphysics, the Perfect Human (al-insān al-kāmil), the fifth and comprehensive degree that contains all of the divine names, representing the entirety of existence. This concords with the Qurʾānic concept of vicegerency about which God says, "I am going to place a vicegerent on the earth" (2:30). As we move further down the hierarchy of Being, in the sixth chapter, we find that the Imaginal World (al-ʿālam al-mithāl) is an isthmus between the worlds of matter and Intellect and is the vastest of the worlds. This topic also concerns dreams, visions, spiritual intuition (firāsa), the Intermediary World (barzakh) and prepares the reader for the central topic on unveiling in the next chapter. The seventh chapter investigates Sufi epistemology, unveiling and its types. Unveiling (kashf) technically signifies gaining awareness of that which is behind a curtain from among Unseen meanings and existential realities, through "finding" or witnessing, in meaning and in form. This chapter describes the differences between unveiling and revelation, unveiling of form and unveiling of meaning, and those that are categorized in accordance with the theophany of the divine names to which they refer. The eighth chapter revisits the topic of human vicegerency, namely, the relationship between the Great Man (al-insān al-kabīr), the Small Man (al-insān al-ṣaghīr), the Great World (al-ʿālam al-kabīr) and the Small World (al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr) to denote the macrocosm and microcosm, respectively. The human being is the mirror of God, the comprehensive isthmus between God and the World, and the very book of existence. This is because the human reality has particular manifestations in the world and summarized manifestations in the human world. Thus, "He who knows himself, knows his Lord." The ninth chapter discusses the existential circle in greater detail, which connects the Arc of Ascent (al-qaws al-ṣuʾūdī) and the Arc of Descent (al-qaws al-nuzūlī). The highest point on the circle is the First Intellect or the Muhammadan Reality and the lowest point is the corporeal human frame. Since the Muhammadan Reality is the manifestation of the name Allah, its governance also extends in every realm and in every period, so it possesses lordship over every manifestation. Just as the name Allah lords over the rest of the divine names, the Muhammadan Reality lords over the forms of the worlds. This chapter also discusses the Pole (al-quṭb), who is the axis of existence around whom the governance of the world revolves. The tenth chapter discusses the microcosm which is the Supreme Spirit, the first individuation in existence, possessing all the perfections of the Essence in the form of the names and attributes. In Sufi terminology, it is the first manifestation of all realities on the plane of Unity, also referred to as the First Intellect, the Muhammadan Reality, or the Muhammadan Light and the Pen, as mentioned in various hadith, "The first thing that God created was my light," and "The first thing that God created was the Intellect," and "The first thing that God created was my spirit." This chapter gives one of the most compelling descriptions of the human spiritual constitution, defining the spirit (rūḥ), soul (nafs), heart (qalb), intellect (ʿaql), breast (ṣadr), inner heart (fuʾad), mystery (sirr) and hidden (khafi). The eleventh chapter discusses the realities of prophethood and sainthood (wilāya). Sainthood is the inner aspect of prophethood since wilāya is a

universal reality of the divine Essence, the source of manifestation and the origin of individuation. The contrary properties of the names of Beauty and Majesty give rise to the multiplicity that is present in every realm. The origin of conflict is the necessity of each divine name to seek the realization of its intrinsic properties, governance and period. Thus, the true prophet is the eternal Pole of existence that guides and brings all things to their ontological perfection. The twelfth chapter describes the Day of Resurrection through the governance of some divine names over others. It is the Spirit's return, the true manifestation of divine unity and the removal of veils. Since all things possess form and meaning, or external form and inward reality, everything will appear in its true form. The Resurrection is thus characterized by the removal of the dense veil of corporeal matter, which is the lowest ontological realm. <>

KNOWING GOD: IBN ʿARABĪ AND ʿABD AL-RAZZĀQ AL-QĀSHĀNĪ'S METAPHYSICS OF THE DIVINE by Ismail Lala [Series: Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, Brill, 9789004400511]

Can we know God or does he reside beyond our ken? In Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī's Metaphysics of the Divine, Ismail Lala conducts a forensic analysis of the nature of God and His interaction with creation. Looking mainly at the exegetical works of the influential mystic, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), and one of his chief disseminators, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), Lala employs the term huwiyya, literally "He-ness," as an aperture into the metaphysical worldview of both mystics. Does Al-Qāshānī agree with Ibn ʿArabī's conception of God? Does he agree with Ibn ʿArabī on how God relates to us and how we relate to Him? Or is this where Sufi master and his disciple part ways?

CONTENTS

Excerpt: "Is God apophatic or kataphatic, according to Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī?" This was the first question I was asked at a medical ethics conference by a complete stranger who had discovered my doctoral study was to do with the ubiquitous Sufi. Notwithstanding the abrupt nature of the enquiry, or perhaps because of it, I felt vindicated, for my research addressed this very issue through analysis of the term *huwiyya* (literally, He-ness or ipseity). But, in so doing, it also followed advice I was given during my first lecture: "Most of you will not make it in academia," our professor announced rather matter-of-factly, "for those of you who do, pick a guy." A question and a guy—these, then, are the twin pillars upon which is constructed the edifice of my research. My question: What is the true nature of God? My guy: ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335?), a disciple of the enigmatic Sufi

theorist, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). So, technically, there are two guys, but one has to go through the master to get to the disciple.

This work is about the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabī and one of the chief disseminators of his thought, al-Qāshānī, specifically. But it is also about mysticism, generally, and the way we perceive God, and the manner in which He interacts with us and we with Him. With articles devoted to him numbering in the thousands, commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* alone in the hundreds, and translations in the scores, Ibn ʿArabī surely is, and has been, one of the most widely read and studied mystics of all time. His style is so tightly honeycombed with preciosity and involutions that it has at once enamoured and beguiled all who have had the good fortune, and bad luck, to stumble upon it.

So what sets this work apart from its precursors? For the answer, we must reconnect with our two acquaintances: the idea—a detailed analysis conducted from primary texts on a single term that is conspicuously emblematic of his "monism," and which is scrupulously contextualized in Ibn ʿArabī's two most enduringly popular works, the *Fuṣūṣ* and the *Futūḥāt*; and the guy—al-Qāshānī, who Toshihiko Iztusu in his seminal work, *Sufism and Taoism*, relies on more than Ibn ʿArabī himself to elucidate his Sufi *Weltanschauung*. The former adheres to the Joycian maxim that in the particular is contained the universal, and is a window that no one has yet peeked through; the latter a lacuna that no one has yet filled.

The Meeting

He asked me, "Yes?" I replied, "Yes." His satisfaction with me grew on account of my comprehending him. Then, when I became cognizant of his being delighted by that, I disclosed to him, "No." Crestfallen, his color changed. He began to doubt what he had learned. He inquired, "How have you found the matter to be through spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) and divine outpouring (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*), is it the same as what we have been bequeathed by speculative thought (*naẓar*)?" "Yes-no," I answered, "and between yes and no, spirits take flight from their matter and necks from their bodies." He grew pale, a tremor seized him. "There is no strength nor power but in God," (*lā ḥāwla wa lā quwwa illā bi-Allāh*) he spluttered, sitting down. He understood to what I was alluding by that.

A decisive meeting: the renowned philosopher—Abuʾl-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198)—and the young upstart mystic—Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī, speculative thought and spiritual unveiling, yes and no. Yes, perhaps there is no better place to start our journey on knowing God than with this anecdote. No, the journey will not be smooth. After all, the liminal topography we seek to navigate compels spirits to "take flight from their matter and necks from their bodies." The reason this passage—one of the most well-known and oft-cited of the *Futūḥāt*—furnishes us with a most apposite point of departure is that in it Ibn ʿArabī confronts the dichotomy of the innate human need for knowledge of God and His ultimate apophasis, the path that can be traversed but the destination that cannot be reached. This is the distance between yes and no. This, according to Ibn ʿArabī, is truly knowing God.

The negative theology at the end of this peregrination we already know. The primary concern of this work is not seeking Virgilian entry to Dis, it is the road to it, and, in particular, how far we can proceed along it before we must submit at the palisade of apophasis. This being the case, the reader would be forgiven for thinking that we will be unapologetically operating in the realm of epistemology. Yet, as Ibn ʿArabī identifies, knowledge of God with that of the self, and being as theophanic loci that serves God's yearning to know His self, the line between epistemology and ontology becomes decidedly blurred.

So knowing God through the self in the two most influential exegetical works of Ibn ʿArabī, namely *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *Al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, and those of his acolyte, al-Qāshānī, is the purpose of this enterprise. The foundational text by the disciple is *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, though extensive reference will be made to his various lexicons. This remit may, *prima facie*, appear feasible, but a consummately contentious figure like Ibn ʿArabī unites devotees and detractors on precisely two issues: his anfractuous diction and his dauntingly erudite locution. It is the task of any analyst, therefore, to rein in the Andalusian's periphrastic proclivities and unravel his rhetorical rosettes. There are many ways to achieve this. The Homeric paradigm of collapsing the universal into the particular nevertheless presents itself as an attractive option. If one moment, be it the wrath of Achilles, or the return of Odysseus, betrays an entire historic episode, then, too, may one term spotlight an entire worldview. Employing the term *huwiyya* as an aperture into the semantic world of both mystics conduces to an adherence to the theological underpinnings of their respective argumentations, and allows our linguistic odyssey to proceed linearly.

But how do we answer the all-important question Quentin Skinner poses: "What are the appropriate procedures to adopt in the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the work?" Ibn ʿArabī recounts a fantastical meeting that occurred in 599 AH/1203 CE, which may hold some clues:

> I was in Mecca on Friday, circumambulating the Kaʿba after the communal prayer (*ṣalāt al-jumuʿa*), when I saw a man of noble mien (*ḥusn al-hayʾa*), venerable and dignified was his bearing. He was circumambulating ahead of me. I fixed my gaze upon him that, perchance, I may recognize him. But I realized he was not a resident, yet he bore no vestiges of travel, as attested by his freshness (*ghaḍāḍa*) and vigor (*naḍāra*). I saw him walk up to two men who were circumambulating hand-in-hand; he passed through them, not separating them, and they perceived him not. So I began following him, step-by-step, putting my feet where he had just placed his—he did not raise his foot but I put mine in the place his foot had just been, my attention firmly on him, my sight glued to him, lest I should lose him. I walked up to the two men circumambulating hand-in-hand whom he had walked up to, and I penetrated through them following his footsteps, just as he had done, without separating them. This surprised me. When he had completed the seven circumambulations and intended to leave, I seized hold of him and greeted him. He returned the greeting and smiled at me. I did not avert my eyes from him for fear of losing him, for I suspected that he was a corporealized spirit (*rūḥ tujassad*) and that sight would fetter him. So I said to him, "I know you are a corporealized spirit." He replied, "You are right." I enquired, "Who are you, may God have mercy on you?" He retorted, "I am al-Sabtī ibn Hārūn al-Rashīd." I remarked, "I would like to ask you about the state you were in during your life in this world." "Speak," he pronounced. I began, "I have been informed that you are not called 'al-Sabtī' [lit. 'Saturday-man'] save for your turning away from [your spiritual vocation] only every Saturday that you may earn enough to feed yourself for the rest of the week." "That of which you have been informed is correct," he acknowledged, "it was like that." I asked, "Why did you single out Saturday and not some other day of the week?" He responded, "What an excellent question you ask!" Then he said to me, "I was informed that God began creating the universe on Sunday and finished it on Friday, so when it was Saturday, He rested, putting one leg over the other, and said, 'I am the King.' This is what has reached me from the ḥadīth (*akhbār*) while I was alive. I said to myself, 'By God, I will abide by this.'"

The moral of the story, if indeed there is a moral (Ibn ʿArabī is not big on fables), is that sometimes to not lose someone, you must pursue them rigorously, unflinchingly, keeping your gaze fastened on them, placing your feet where they raise theirs. If this is true for al-Sabtī, it is truer for the

infamously slippery Ibn ʿArabī. Yet his recondite circumlocution is not the only barrier to comprehension. Ibn ʿArabī's and to a lesser degree al-Qāshānī's works teem with subterranean suppositions that need to be excavated if their thought is to be understood. It is this process of quarrying and pursuing that affords the surest path to arriving at an understanding. However, the context cannot be wholly extricated from the equation if one is to arrive at a higher plateau of comprehension. For though this study is unashamedly synchronic in nature, focussing on the texts themselves without tracing their historical trajectory, there must be some awareness of the socio-religious milieu, some insight into the interlocutors, even if this diachronic aspect is not the emphasis. This study thus aims to integrate a synchronic accentuation with a smattering of diachronicity. But before we proceed to the texts, it behoves us to get to know our two principal authors.

The Master

Writing a biography of Ibn ʿArabī after Claude Addas' magisterial *Quest For the Red Sulphur* is rather like writing a biography of Johnson after Boswell—it is redundant. But that is not the purpose of this work, still less of this section. Here one merely adumbrates the vague contours of an extraordinary life that continues to beguile and enthral many with its matchless monomania, its excruciating askesis, and its delightful denouemont. The chief purpose of this subchapter, though, is to make a slanting approach to contextualizing Ibn ʿArabī in the overall superstructure of Islamic mysticism to better impart a sense of what his thought represents in the evolution of the Sufi tradition.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿArabī al-Ṭāʾī al-Ḥātimī was born on the 27th of Ramadan in 560/1165 in Murcia, Spain. His early life was typical of a boy from an affluent family: he was well-educated, married and worked as a secretary for the governor of Seville. At the age of 20, however, Ibn ʿArabī was formally initiated into the Sufi path. Subsequently, he travelled extensively in Tunisia, Egypt, Mecca, Anatolia, Iraq and Syria teaching, writing and enjoying the patronage of various rulers. Ibn ʿArabī finally settled in Damascus in the year 620/1223? and remained there till his death in November 634/1240. He authored hundreds of works, from brief treatises to the multi-volume *Futūḥāt*, and is widely regarded as one of the most important Sufi thinkers of all time.

Ibn ʿArabī combines the traditional Islamic disciplines of Qurʾanic commentary (*tafsīr*), Ḥadīth and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with the more rationalistic fields of cosmology, theology (*kalām*) and philosophy (especially Neoplatonism) to devise his own highly mature thought. It is due to his unique blend of all these disciplines that his work is *sui generis*. This makes contextualizing him in the Sufi tradition especially problematic. On the other hand, rationalistic sciences did exert a profound influence on him. To uncover these influences we must first take a brief survey of Sufism up to his time.

Schimmel notes that "Sufism traces its origin back to the Prophet himself." All Sufis most likely saw the tendencies in the prophetic example of Muḥammad as the basis for their entire outlook. But tracing Sufism, as a defined movement, to the Prophet or his Companions is fraught with difficulties, as observed by Christopher Melchert who writes that "classical Sufism crystallized in Baghdad in the last quarter of the ninth century CE. Biographers of the early eleventh century worked out a spiritual lineage for Sufism going back to the Companions of the Prophet." The antecedents to the Sufis are thought to be the ascetics who promulgated none of "the theosophy which developed later."

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) has commonly been seen as a major proponent of this movement. Reactionary in nature, this movement inveighed against a perceived inclination towards worldly gain and away from religion. Recent scholarship nevertheless casts doubt on such a cut-and-dried designation of al-Ḥasan. Suleiman A. Mourad comments that when one analyzes medieval literature,

it emerges that there were two al-Ḥasans: "The highly pious al-Ḥasan who renounced this world and lived in constant sorrow, and the highly sociable al-Ḥasan who loved the delicacies of this world and the company of people." In light of the contradictory evidence, he concludes that "one cannot verify beyond reasonable doubt any authentic part of the literary corpus attributed to him or any real aspects of his character."

Waters are muddied further when we consider that a question mark hangs over whether the ascetics were even the precursors to the mystics. Nile Green, for instance, argues that it would be more accurate to see the early ascetics as "competitors" of the mystics rather than their forerunners. Be that as it may, scholarly opinion seems to be skewed in favor of the view that they were antecedents and not opponents. Indeed, Melchert confidently asserts that "modern research has largely confirmed that Sufism grew out of this earlier, ascetic tradition." How exactly the term "Sufi" came to be applied to these ascetics of the early tenth century remains to be seen, especially as "the early ascetics who were expressly called 'Sufis' were seldom characterized by mysticism."

The Sufis, regardless of how they came to be known as such, or from which tradition they emerged, were constantly being accused of "overplaying the allegorical aspects of the Qurʾan, claiming privileged, esoteric understanding of its contents and distorting its literal meaning." This charge was most vociferously levelled against the so-called "intoxicated Sufis" among whom Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 234/848 or 261/875) was the first. Abū Yazīd was illiterate (*ummī*), a fact that was at once the source of his lasting fame and the root of the unremitting obloquy directed at him. This self-styled *ummī* emphasized the emotional aspect of a relationship with God, a relationship of such profound love that it was not to be sullied with knowledge. "My Lord! Do not make me a scholar (*ʿālim*), nor an ascetic, nor a close associate [of Yours] (*muqtarib*)," he exclaimed in one of his ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt*), "but if You welcome me, welcome me as one of Your things (*shayʾ min ashyāʾik*)." Such behaviour, quite predictably, scandalized the orthodoxy and paved the way for more sober Sufis to condone and rationalize, temper and qualify the language of the ecstatics. The stalwart of Sufi orthodoxy, the man justly anointed as "the acknowledged representative of the orthodox Sufi path," Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910), sought to do just that by composing detailed apologia for the ecstatic utterances of people like Abū Yazīd.

Due to the various perceived transgressions of the ecstatics, Sufism was increasingly viewed with the eye of suspicion. The efforts of al-Junayd notwithstanding, Sufism was still attracting the ire of the orthodoxy with its Islamic moorings under ever intense scrutiny. This skepticism and suspicion culminated in the execution of al-Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922). In the aftermath of such a seismic event, misrepresentation and marginalization of Sufism was rife. It is this hostile environment that Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990?) entered and, with his seminal *Kitāb al-taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, aimed to effect a religious rapprochement. His approach seems to be a powerful mélange of an academic style with deft expurgation of more divisive Sufi statements to expose, or rather, establish the essential orthodoxy of the Sufi movement. The prominence of Qurʾanic verses and traditions of the Prophet in the work seems to insinuate that Sufi practices are not a form of innovation (*bidʿa*), but rather a healthy and longstanding expression of faith (*īmān*).

Almost a century after al-Kalābādhi, ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī's (d. 465/1072?) *Kashf al-maḥjūb* takes his project yet further by meticulously taxonomizing Sufi denominations. Al-Ḥujwīrī divides the Sufis into twelve sects (*firaq*), each with their own kind (*ṣinf*) of Sufism and following their own spiritual master (*shaykh*). He considers two of these to be outside the pale of Islam due to their advocacy of incarnationism (*ḥulūl*). Al-Ḥallāj, significantly, is exonerated of such blasphemy. Instead, al-Hujwīrī qualifies his ecstatic utterances, attributing them to his union with the divine. This work

served the dual purpose of disentangling the various strands of Sufism for the orthodoxy and setting boundaries which could not be transgressed, and had the dual effect of informing and propitiating critics.

Although al-Junayd was probably the most influential of the early Sufi theorists, it is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī (d. 350/961) who seems to be the most direct antecedent to Ibn ʿArabī. For not only does he display a marked penchant for paradoxes, much like Ibn ʿArabī who revels in the ambiguity brimming under the façade of his metaphysical musings, he also alleges that his *Mawāqif* and *Mukhāṭabāt* were the products of divine illumination, just as Ibn ʿArabī claims the *Futūḥāt* was dictated to him "by God through the angel of inspiration, whereas the *Fuṣūṣ* … [was] inspired by the Prophet." More specifically, clear parallels may be observed between Ibn ʿArabī's *Mashāhid al-asrār al-qudsiyya wa maṭāliʿ al-anwār al-ilāhiyya*, in which an instructive dialogue takes place between God and a worshipper (presumably Ibn ʿArabī himself) and al-Niffarī's *Mawāqif*, which has the same format.

Al-Niffarī, influential though he may have been to Ibn ʿArabī's thought, could not have been alone in this regard, for one perceives in Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics mystical notes of a number of his predecessors. The Andalusian's ascension (*miʿrāj*), for instance, which he describes as having taken place while he was in Fez in 594/1198, may be based on Abū Yazīd's own ascension, or the concept of the "Seal of the Saints," so conspicuous in Ibn ʿArabī's self-hagiography, which was first coined by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 320/932). Abū Madyan, too, was an important influence. Indeed, he is one of the few mystics whom Ibn ʿArabī reverentially cites and whose spiritual journey he assiduously charts. However, it can hardly be denied that Ibn ʿArabī's most "immediate model was [Abū Ḥāmid] al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)." Franz Rosenthal even argues that the *Futūḥāt* was designed by its author to supplant *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, as evidenced by its overall structure, "which starts out with a thorough discussion of the meaning of the principal Muslim ritual obligations," in much the same way as its forerunner. What this assertion, and that of Schimmel, who maintains that Ibn ʿArabī intellectualized Sufism and "was more a genius of systemization than an enraptured mystic," fails to acknowledge is that Ibn ʿArabī himself declared he did not "write" the *Futūḥāt* at all.

Whether the *Fuṣūṣ* and *Futūḥāt* were written by Ibn ʿArabī or revealed to him, it is clear that he *believes* them to be the harvest of divine inspiration. Nor are these isolated instances of gnosis, for Ibn ʿArabī at times attributes mystical knowledge to his spiritual state, which affords him the opportunity to be privy to some divine secrets whenever he wishes, and, at others, to an unexpected spiritual unveiling that discloses theretofore unknown information. An example of the latter is the command to raise one's hands (*rafʿ al-yadayn*) during prayer, which, Ibn ʿArabī alleges, was given to him by the Prophet himself in a dream. It bears mentioning that there is no contradiction between Ibn ʿArabī's proclamation of deific provenance for his works and the product being highly rationalistic (perhaps more so than any such work before him, or since). What is questionable, it may be urged, is the implication of premeditation associated with the pronouncement that the *Futūḥāt* was meticulously designed or that one is either a "genius of systemization" or "an enraptured mystic." Such mutual exclusivity sets up chimerical binaries that are in no way conducive to an accurate portrayal of any Sufi, least of all one as complex as Ibn ʿArabī. Furthermore, the compartmentalization of any given Sufi in this manner assumes a criterion against which each may be measured, which, of course, does not exist.

Carefully considered or divinely inspired, the *Futūḥāt* does have many parallels with the *Iḥyāʾ*, as does Ibn ʿArabī with al-Ghazālī. One key difference between the two masters, nevertheless, is that although both emphasize the boundaries of reason, Ibn ʿArabī is far more willing to employ language

and all forms of conceptualization to illuminate divine secrets than his Persian counterpart. "Wherever the intellect claims to attain knowledge, unveiling can claim to know much more," asserts the Andalusian, yet forsake rationalistic and linguistic tools at his disposal to describe divine realities he does not. Moreover, "he avoids the aphoristic style of so many of his predecessors and in fact goes to the other extreme by elaborating his ideas in great detail." But through all these detailed metaphysical reflections, "always there is an implicit appeal to the intellect, even though he disclaims its authority," as it is only through reason that man can comprehend the profundity of divine opacity, or, as Ibn ʿArabī puts it, "Through reason one knows but does not see, while through unveiling one sees but does not know." The reason for this is that "the divine reveals itself through language and we know it through language, [but] it is also hidden by what it says, and hence Ibn ʿArabi also maintains, like many other mystics, the ineffability of the divine, paradoxically, through language itself," and, by extension, through reason itself.

 Ibn ʿArabī did not share al-Ghazālī's reservations about philosophy. He even went as far as asseverating its utility, while maintaining that those who rely on reason alone are ultimately doomed to "stray from the road, because they think that the only mentor they can accept to guide them is their own thinking." The assertion that some things are inherently beyond the ken of speculative thought constitutes a recurrent theme in Ibn ʿArabī's works, which constantly aver that "the power of thought (*al-quwwa al-mufakkira*) does not suffice to achieve a perception of the essence of God." This is because, says Ibn ʿArabī, reason only takes one to a point, after that point is reached, the paradox inherent in the nature of the divine, which necessitates the harmony between opposites, or the redundancy of *principium tertii exclusi*, leads to confusion and misguidance. How can these paradoxes be understood and be articulated? These are at once the challenges of, and the reasons for, Ibn ʿArabī's convoluted and abstruse language. Gershom Scholem touches on this issue when he asks,

> What kind of direct relation can there be between the Creator and His creature, between the finite and the infinite; and how can words express an experience for which there is no adequate simile in this finite world of man? Yet it would be wrong and superficial to conclude that the contradiction implied by the nature of mystical experience betokens an inherent absurdity. It will be wiser to assume … that the religious world of the mystic can be expressed in terms applicable to rational knowledge only with the help of paradox.

Ibn ʿArabī makes full use of ostensibly paradoxical language in his quest to express the inexpressible.

It is significant that the cool ratiocination or pantheistic philosophization of which he is accused sit in stark contrast to his own proclamation of divine inspiration, for ʿAfīfī writes,

> Interpretation within reasonable limits is justifiable, but with ibn ʿArabi it is a dangerous means of converting Islam into pantheism or *vice versa*. This is most apparent in the *Fuṣūṣ*, and to a certain extent in the *Futūḥāt*, where the Qurʾanic text and traditions of the Prophet are explained mystically or rather pantheistically.

ʿAfīfī believes that the Qurʾan and traditions of the Prophet are not the sources of Ibn ʿArabī's inspiration. Rather, they are a cloak in which he drapes his own pantheistic notions. He sees Ibn ʿArabī's thought as Neoplatonism, conceived through the eyes of al-Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, remarking, "On the philosophic side ibnul ʿArabi is chiefly Neoplatonic … it was Neoplatonism *as understood* by the Ikhwanus-Safa that he knew." The *Fuṣūṣ* and *Futūḥāt* are, for him, the most flagrant examples of this.

It would be foolish to maintain that Ibn ʿArabī's works do not contain philosophical elements, as it is "unavoidable to associate Ibn ʿArabī with some vague mystic neoplatonism." This is because his

intellectual milieu was one of "multi-religious interaction" and had "a common language (Arabic), the common philosophical and scientific curriculum and the shared libraries," that "facilitated a close association of Jewish and Muslim intellectuals." It is this intellectual-religious *mise en scène* that became the cradle for Andalusian mysticism; what seemingly began with Ibn Masarra found its apogee in Ibn ʿArabī.

Perhaps, going as far as declaring Ibn ʿArabī's outlook to be "philosophical mysticism" (*taṣawwuf al-falāsifa*), as ʿAfīfī does, and by which he means that Ibn ʿArabī combines philosophy and mysticism by couching his personal philosophy in mystical jargon, is swinging the pendulum too far. Indeed, ʿAfīfī views Ibn ʿArabī as somewhat of a failed philosopher who attired his faulty philosophy in mystical parlance to gain wider acceptance. Mincing no words in his introduction of the *Fuṣūṣ*, ʿAfīfī claims,

> Ibn ʿArabī, even though he was given skill (*basṭa*) in cogitation and reflection, and profundity (*ʿumq*) in spiritual discernment (*al-ḥiss al-rūḥī*), was still in need (*yaʿūz*) of precise philosophical methods (*al-manhaj al-falsafī al-daqīq*). … So he was, without doubt, a philosopher and a founder of an ideology (*ṣāḥib al-madhhab*). … However, he was a philosopher who preferred to overlook intellectual methods (*manhaj al-ʿaql*) … and adopted methods of emotional depiction (*al-taṣwīr al-ʿāṭifī*), allegory (*ramz*), and allusion (*ishāra*); and he relied upon ideational methodologies (*asālīb al-khayāl*) in his interpretations (*taʿbīr*). … So Ibn ʿArabī is, without doubt, a philosopher in terms of having a doctrine on the nature of existence (*ṭabīʿat al-wujūd*), like all philosophers, but he is a mystical philosopher (*faylasūf ṣūfī*) who has fabricated (*iṣṭanaʿa*) Sufi methodologies and allegories (*rumūz*) in order to interpret his own philosophy. This is one of the reasons for the complexity (*taʿqīd*) that we perceive in every one of the lines in his books.

Subsequent scholars, Schimmel, Chittick, Mayer and others, make the antithetical assessment that it is actually mysticism framed in largely philosophical language. The divisiveness of the issue notwithstanding, ʿAfīfī's own trenchant position becomes somewhat untenable when he asserts that Ibn ʿArabī's writings were the harvest of divine unveiling.

Ibn ʿArabī wrote his books under "the influence" (*taʾthīr*), which is a type of revelation (*waḥy*) or [divine] inspiration (*ilhām*). So in his lines is manifest that which was revealed to him, not what was determined by the faculty of reason (*manṭiq al-ʿaql*). This is why we have to look at his ideology (*madhhab*) holistically (*fī jumlatih*) and not just its details (*tafāṣīlih*). … So it [i.e. his ideology] is both philosophical and mystical; he has combined in it uniqueness of thought (*waḥdat al-tafkīr*) with the power of [spiritual] ecstasy (*wijdān*), and has tried to reconcile intellectual matters (*qaḍāyā al-ʿaql*) with the states of spiritual 'tasting' and unveiling (*aḥwāl al-dhawq wa ʾl-kashf*).

ʿAfīfī may be uncertain whether Ibn ʿArabī is a philosophical mystic or a mystical philosopher. What is certain, nevertheless, is that one cannot concurrently allege the Andalusian master was experientially driven and surreptitiously percolated his personal philosophy through mystical terminology. True, all human experiences are shaped by our conceptual apparatus, which could include their role in mystical unveilings, but the question here is not whether Ibn ʿArabī's conceptual apparatus informed his mystical unveilings, it is whether he deliberately sought to disguise his philosophical reflections in mystical language to make them more palatable.

A third phalanx of researchers seem to suggest that Ibn ʿArabī was both divinely inspired and working of his own volition, that the *Futūḥāt* and *Fuṣūṣ* were both uncontrollable spiritual unveilings and premeditated. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, for instance, comments,

> At times Ibn ʿArabī did this [i.e. write in a convoluted manner] deliberately and intentionally in order to justify this outlook with the ambiguity of his thought, and, at other times, because he was not under the control of himself.

Ibn ʿArabī himself, rather predictably, announces that the *Futūḥāt* is not "concerned with results of proofs derived from thought, but having as its subject the results of divine revelation (*kashf*)." The mystic, it would seem, is a curious amalgamation of Neoplatonic philosophy with Bisṭāmī-esqe ecstasy and Ghazālian uniformity. He has both the emotive volatility of Abū Yazīd and the discursive ingenuity of Abū Ḥāmid. He is "both extraordinarily original and totally traditional." The same, however, cannot be said about our second author whose style is scrupulously scientific.

The Disciple

Unquestioning acquiescence to the master's commands, obliteration of the id, possible consignment to an impossibly abstemious life, and—the cherry—immemorial second-fiddle-status to the master. These are the fringe benefits of a career as a disciple. Ambling through the aureate world of the sumptuous central mosque, to which the resplendent mausoleum of ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Naṭanzī (d. 699/1300?)—al-Qāshānī's principal master—is adjoined, his name ringing out from the tree-lined streets, his sarcophagus in the eager lens of every tourist, it is difficult to see the attractions of a disciple's life. Especially when every inquiry into al-Qāshānī is greeted with a perplexed, "Who?" Yet, though many of the details of al-Qāshānī's life remain elusive, a biographical sketch may be drawn from the few sources that mention him.

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Why al-Qāshānī?

Eminence and influence. These are the two fundamental reasons why alQāshānī serves as a candidate of particular importance for a study focussing on terminology. His eminence in the field—with three, increasingly detailed, lexicons—is discussed below under the individual works. So too is his influence, especially that of his commentary on *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam*, Ibn ʿArabī's terse summation of his entire thought, which has long been studied through the lens of al-Qāshānī's explanatory deliberations. Al-Qāshānī's formalization of Ibn ʿArabī's formidably erudite metaphysics, as expressed in the *Fuṣūṣ*, ensures his status as commentator *par excellence*. Subsequent sections that burrow into the internal metabolism of each work puts flesh on these bones, but, at root, these are the nutshell reasons why al-Qāshānī has been drafted for this study. Ibn ʿArabī, with undeniable superstar status, may have been spared the ignominy of the "Why you?" question, but the same courtesy has not been extended to the disciple, and nor should it be extended to the linguistic periscope: *huwiyya*.

The Word

"Arbitrary" and "capricious," are adjectives that cannot entirely be avoided in a candid account about the selection of any term. The selection of the term that is at the center of this study must, of necessity, be somewhat arbitrary, it must be a little capricious, as all terms used by Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī are important and betray their worldview to some extent. Still, if all terms are important, some are more important than others. *Huwiyya* plays a central role in these Sufis' semantic *Weltanschauung* and often incorporates other terms within it (such as *anāniyya*, whose existence is implied by *huwiyya*, as the latter is a third person pronoun-derived abstract noun and the former is a first-person pronoun-derived one). Fundamentally, though, it is because *huwiyya* plays a key part in the two mystics' account of God—the origin and objective of everything in their

outlooks—that it has been selected for, ultimately, every facet of Ibn ʿArabī's (and al-Qāshānī's) worldview returns to God.

And there is another reason. Yes, *huwiyya* functions as a designation of God, but it is an intensely implicative term. Derived from the "pronoun of absence" (*huwa*), it underscores the non-manifest aspect of God. And though both mystics' definition bears this out, it is only Ibn ʿArabī who most often uses the term to denote God's absolute unknowability—a state in which He is truly non-manifest. Al-Qāshānī, striking out on his own, deploys it principally to connote the second emanatory stage in which there is a prefiguring of creation within the divine consciousness. So it transpires that though both believe *huwiyya* is the non-manifest aspect of God, Ibn ʿArabī uses it to accentuate God's absolute incomprehensibility and remoteness from His creation, whereas his disciple employs it to underscore the fundamental way in which He is connected to it. But it is not just in this surreptitious feat of semantic prestidigitation that al-Qāshānī demonstrates he is his own man, it is also in his overall style and approach.

The Presentation

Perplexing periphrasis, oracular announcements and sententious statements ensure that style and approach are foregrounded in any analysis of Ibn ʿArabī's works. The pendulum swings between pithy and prolix, from rambling to rational, and often in the same work. While the denotation of *huwiyya* constitutes a major difference between al-Qāshānī and Ibn ʿArabī, the delivery of this denotation is no less significant. This difference derives from divergent objectives and readership. For though it is patently clear that technical terminology plays a central role in the writings of both Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī, with Annemarie Schimmel going as far as to allege that Ibn ʿArabī's primary influence on Sufis who came after him was that of a lexical systemizer, and al-Qāshānī was widely regarded as Ibn ʿArabī's terminological formalizer, nevertheless, there is a difference between the two since Ibn ʿArabī is not as fastidious about explaining his terms as his disciple.

Indeed, Muḥammad ibn ʿĀbidīn al-Shāmī (d. 1252/1836), in his *chef d' oeuvre*, *Radd al-muḥtār*, writes that one of the main reasons Ibn ʿArabī is misunderstood is a lack of familiarity with his technical nomenclature. Vociferous in his defense of Sufis in general and Ibn ʿArabī in particular, he declares:

The Sufis work within a technical framework and mean by their terms things which are not known to the jurists (*fuqahāʾ*), so whoever attributes to them meanings which are known [among jurists] will consider them to be unbelievers.

But if Ibn ʿArabī is not scrupulous about explaining his terms, it is only because it is not his purpose. This is precisely why al-Qāshānī undertakes the elucidative endeavors he does: to clarify these terms for those not well-versed in them and in order to mollify jurists who would seek to condemn Ibn ʿArabī and his ideas, or as Ronald Nettler puts it, "Al-Qashānī employs a literary method of stylization and formalization of Ibn ʿArabī's technical terms and concepts." His appeasement, nevertheless, seems to be as much about style as it is about content.

An inquiry into the approach and composition of al-Qāshānī's *tafsīr* and lexicons will reveal that his pacification of the orthodoxy is not limited to legitimization with Qurʾan and Ḥadīth. Rather, it is supplemented by placation through use of familiar language and manner, chief among which is his seemingly "guidebook" style approach for autodidacts who may have wanted to learn about Ibn ʿArabī's thought, as these works were excluded from law colleges and *madrasas*. The format of al-Qāshānī's works also appears singularly tailored for use in public debates that were enduringly popular at the royal Mongol court, and which were known to be powerful sources of promulgation of one's ideas and thoughts, if the correct patronage was secured.

This, then, represents one of the fundamental differences between the authors: it is a difference in style and language due to a variance of purpose. Whereas Ibn ʿArabī is vibrant and assimilates in his works all the methods and modes of articulation at his disposal, al-Qāshānī is comparatively dull, reserved and conservative in both his expression and approach. His works look and feel much more like scholarly studies of Sufism or step-by-step manuals for Sufi neophytes on the path, and much less like extemporaneous enunciations of the experiential. This is because, ultimately, the texts are what readers can use to access, through intellect, something of the experiential, in as far as it is possible to go through language.

Al-Qāshānī, it seems, intentionally structures his works not only to educate and instruct Sufi neophytes in Ibn ʿArabī's thought by guiding them through the stages of spiritual development until they reach the heights of the "people of tasting" (*ahl al-dhawq*), who are the Andalusian's sole audience, but also to assuage Ibn ʿArabī's detractors, who do not comprehend what he means and level charges of heresy against him in ignorance. In order to achieve these goals, al-Qāshānī is far more rigid and consistent in his use of terms and their denotations. He does not share his master's penchant for loose characterizations and ambiguous meanings as this detracts from his purpose of clarity and conciliation. Indeed, this is one of the reasons his own mystical vocabulary is appreciably smaller than that of his master. Still, we would be unjust if we limited al-Qāshānī's contribution to mere education and pacification, depriving him, in the process, of all creativity and originality.

What al-Qāshānī achieves with the *Taʾwīlāt* is no less monumental a task than what Abuʾl-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) achieved with his Qurʾanic commentary, *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt*. I would go further. If al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* was the precursor to Ibn ʿArabī's *Futūḥāt*, it would not be overstating the case to assert that al-Qushayrī's *Laṭāʾif* was the precursor to the *Taʾwīlāt*. Al-Qushayrī's objective was to recast Sufism in a more 'moderate' light. Al-Qāshānī's objective was to recast Ibn ʿArabī's Sufism in a similarly moderate light. Al-Qushayrī seeks to project a Sufism that is acceptable to everyone; as his endeavor is essentially eirenic, much like that of al-Qāshānī, many of the devices he employs are ones picked up by al-Qāshānī who, nevertheless, deploys them in other ways and with other measures to fulfil his own aims.

One of the main arrows in al-Qushayrī's quiver to effect a détente between the exoteric sciences and the esoteric ones, between the traditional scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) and the Sufis, and between knowledge (*ʿilm*) and gnosis (*maʿrifa*), is to expunge the dividing line between them. No longer are exoteric sciences and esoteric ones competing forces; ejected are the ideas of scholars as opponents of Sufis. Now "every [type] of knowledge *is* gnosis, and every [type] of gnosis *is* knowledge" (*kull ʿilm maʿrifa, wa kull maʿrifa ʿilm*). This means that despite its primary commitment to mystical interpretation, exoteric and esoteric exegesis do not quarrel for the prized real estate of authentic commentary in the *Laṭāʾif*; al-Qushayrī instead uncovers the true mutualism between these two channels of inquiry.

This co-habitation of exoteric and esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾan in both commentaries has the additional effect of situating the mystical component within the larger commentary framework, thereby normalizing it. Not as selective in singling out only mystical verses for interpretation as his predecessor, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (d. 376/986), was wont to do, al-Qushayrī's exegetical egalitarianism has the effect of at once showcasing the scriptural symbiosis between "the sciences of divine law" (*ʿulūm al-sharīʿa*) and the "sciences of reality" (*ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqa*) and imbuing the mystical component with a certain familiarity. Al-Qāshānī appropriates this approach—employed not only by al-Qushayrī but also by Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 283/896)—in the *Taʾwīlāt*, to similar effect.

However, where al-Qushayrī and al-Qāshānī part ways with al-Tustarī is in their considered delivery of mystical intrepretations. Not erratic scrawlings of ecstatic utterances like their Sufi forebear, al-Qushayrī and al-Qāshānī's commentaries are calculated compositions to be embraced as didactic tools for the instruction of initiates. Indeed, to achieve their pedagogical aims, both give a wide berth to profuse citations so their works would be compendious rather than comprehensive, scrupulously studied rather than sporadically cited, and become core texts rather than arcane encyclopedias.

Another point of stylistic convergence between al-Qushayrī and al-Qāshānī is in the primacy they both give to personal reflections in their respective commentaries. Nguyen observes that al-Qushayrī offers a highly original and intensely personal commentary of the *basmala*, something that is emblematic of his interpretive disposition, while Lory notes that al-Qāshānī periodically provides interpretations that are based, above all, on his spiritual unveiling (*kashf*).

A final mystical concept and instructional device from al-Qushayrī's commentary that al-Qāshānī seems to have enthusiastically embraced is the notion of a spiritual hierarchy. Al-Qushayrī not only believes that exoteric knowledge is complementary to esoteric knowledge, he also believes it is introductory to it—a sentiment that al-Qāshānī wholeheartedly shares. Going further, al-Qushayrī delineates a specific mystical pecking order according to the "spiritual attunement" of the person. What al-Qushayrī calls "spiritual attunement," al-Qāshānī labels "preparedness" (*istiʿdād*).

There is no doubt, then, that these two consciously compiled commentaries have a lot in common. Yet, though both may be calculatedly put together and share much of the same genetic makeup, the result is still very different. Whereas al-Qushayrī's personal interjections are replete with rhetorical flourishes and extravagant language, al-Qāshānī maintains a succinct and sober style—the better to carry his message. This may be because, though a firm pedagogical intent is perceptible in both works, with each assuming their audience is acquainted with their technical lexicon, al-Qushayrī presumes insertion of his commentary in a *khānqāh/madrasa* curriculum and as a vehicle for mystical truths to be imparted through the master-aspirant (*shaykh-murīd*) paradigm. Al-Qāshānī, on the other hand, seems to view his work more as an extra-curricular tool for the autodidact. This means his delivery is simple and streamlined, it assumes familiarity with mystical nomenclature—which could be garnered autodidactically with his lexicons—while adopting all feasible measures to reduce or eliminate confusion. And for all their similarities, this is the chief and most telling difference between them: whereas al-Qushayrī's commentary is *khānqāh/madrasa*-style, al-Qāshānī's is extra-*khānqāh/madrasa*-style.

This divergence is most noticeable in al-Qushayrī's incessant allusions to the *shaykh-murīd* relationship, and al-Qāshānī's relative disinterest in it. Indeed, even the most acclaimed illustration of the special *shaykh-murīd* relationship in the Qurʾan—that of Mūsā and al-Khiḍr—in which the latter assumes the role of the *shaykh* and the former that of the *murīd*, is never referred to in this way by al-Qāshānī. Al-Qāshānī does make a half-hearted mention of the path of wayfaring (*sulūk*), such as when he writes, "[Mūsā's saying,] '*May I follow you*,' is manifesting his desire for wayfaring (*sulūk*) and ascending to perfection." But the requirement of a *shaykh* is never formally acknowledged. Moreover, he recruits the story to accentuate the importance of realizing the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) and striving to achieve this purpose, something that can ostensibly be done alone.

Al-Qāshānī, then, fashions his commentary to harmonize the exoteric and esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾan, much like al-Qushayrī. But unlike al-Qushayrī, he further seems to fashion it as a tool

for the autodidact to gain an awareness of Ibn ʿArabī's Qurʾanic metaphysics. This commitment to educate the autodidact permeates not only the *Taʾwīlāt* but also his lexicons.

For all his propitiative and instructive labors, however, al-Qāshānī is still a Sufi adept of remarkable standing, and what he achieves in his lexicons and the *Taʾwīlāt*, though informed by these motives, is no less remarkable. In his interpretation, a nuanced difference here and a slight change there have the cumulative effect of forging a different worldview from the one his master conceived. Most importantly, he achieves this without compromising or diverging significantly from the conceptual outlook of his predecessor. It is still Ibn ʿArabī's *Weltanschauung*, but facets of it, such as God's connectedness to His creation and the didactive imperative, have been emphasized more than others. In doing this, if al-Qāshānī quietly breaks ranks with Ibn ʿArabī when it comes to diction, and, to a lesser extent, content and ideas, he is fiercely faithful to him in terms of the Qurʾan being central to his outlook.

The Qurʾan

A Muslim thinker proclaiming that his religious outlook is the truest interpretation of the Qurʾan is rather like an Epicurean saying pleasure should be sought, or a Marxist saying fiscal inequality is a pretty bad thing. Yet pronouncements are not proofs, and orthodox assertions need to be assessed in the tangible terrain of text. If Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī's theological viewpoint is truly Qurʾan-centric, and not adventitious with Qurʾanic decking, this will be borne out in the manner in which the verses are conscripted. Are they the cynosure of the writing around which concentric circles of exegesis orbit? Or are they simply expedient accouterments to buttress personal perspectives? These are questions only the texts can answer. Let us consider Ibn ʿArabī's two works first.

Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam

What is a "*tafsīr*," or Qurʾanic commentary? What are the conventional components that permit induction into the pantheon of this genre? Less concerned with delineating the formal features of a Qurʾanic commentary, and more with the overall *telos*, a much looser definition is here adopted. Few would argue that the *Fuṣūṣ* is not a Qurʾanic commentary in a formal sense, but it is still Ibn ʿArabī's understanding of certain verses of the Qurʾan, which a close textual examination reveals. Ibn ʿArabī's very first passage, when he introduces the reason for the creation of Ādam, is a case in point:

> Verily, the Truth, be He praised, created the entire Cosmos in an existence that was an indistinct, unprepared thing, without a spirit, so it was like an unpolished mirror. And it is the nature of divine decree that it does not prepare a locus except so that it may receive a divine spirit, which is expressed as "breathing in it." So it is naught save the attainment of preparedness of this undifferentiated form for the acceptance of the outpouring: manifest and perpetual (*al-fayḍ: al-mutajallī al-dāʾim*), which has always been and shall always be. Thus, nothing is left but the receptacle, and the receptacle cannot be without His holiest outpouring. So the matter is from Him entirely: its beginning and its end, *to Him the matter in its entirety shall be returned*, as it began from Him.

The entire metaphysics of Ibn ʿArabī is here on display: his qualified monism, and even his emanationism—though this is merely alluded to by the phrase "*al-mutajallī al-dāʾim*." All of this is linked to one verse of the Qurʾan, or even part of a verse, *to Him the matter in its entirety shall be returned*, which serves as the source of Ibn ʿArabī's entire metaphysical outlook and is one of his favorite Qurʾanic citations. Not erecting the structure of our analysis on quantitative determinations, we may still justifiably highlight that Ibn ʿArabī mentions this verse eight times in the *Fuṣūṣ* and a staggering 68 times in the *Futūḥāt*. Numbers can be false friends; operating as extra-contextual monoliths, they can be beacons to false conclusions. But we observe in this passage that

the verse is integral to Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics, and not simply a convenient slogan he adopts to feign Qurʾan-rootedness. The frequent repetition of the part-verse merely serves to reinforce this assertion. There can be little doubt, then, that Ibn ʿArabī believed himself to be propounding the true meaning of the Qurʾan.

We see how Ibn ʿArabī's ontological vision, for him, constitutes the meaning of the Qurʾan; it is not simply a means to bolster his viewpoint. Everything Ibn ʿArabī writes about *al-insān al-kāmil*, about absolute existence (*wujūd muṭlaq*) and contingent existence (*wujūd muqayyad*), about divine manifestation (*tajallī*), about preparedness (*istiʿdād*) to accept this *tajallī*, about almost everything, is therefore presented by him as a commentary of this part-verse. This is not to suggest that it is a formal commentary, of course, which is another matter entirely. Though it is true that this is only how Ibn ʿArabī understands the part-verse but, given that we have only his insistence that everything was imparted to him by mystical unveiling, coupled with a lack of any documented forerunners whose ideas he may have assimilated, we have recourse only to what he has written. This is why there is an emerging scholarly consensus about the centrality of the Qurʾan for Ibn ʿArabī.

Ibn ʿArabī relies heavily on the Qurʾan because in his quest to articulate ineffable realities, particularly with regard to the unfathomable divine essence, he often has need to go beyond linguistic boundaries, and this he does with the aid of the Qurʾan, which is not of human authorship. This phenomenon is explicated by Josef van Ess:

> If God is the Other *par excellence*, he is beyond our reason just as he is beyond our senses. The world can be analyzed through phenomena, but God is accessible only through revelation.

His outlook and the Qurʾan, therefore, become a complex lattice which is so tightly interwoven that it is almost impossible to disengage the Qurʾan from his Sufi metaphysics. This is because though his metaphysics is extra-Qurʾanic in the sense that it has concepts and ideas, nomenclature and notions that are not ostensibly present in the Qurʾan, it is still his comprehension of the Qurʾan. Furthermore, this is entwined with a parallel interpretation that is Qurʾanic, with seamless cohesion between the two. So Ibn ʿArabī acknowledges the Qurʾan bespeaks a reality that cannot be expressed, one which transcends linguistic boundaries. Yet he also makes full use of linguistic tools and is immersed in language; he is a man of language; thus the ineffable experiential reality and its detailed articulation co-exist in him.

William James argues that mystical experiences are too varied and too personal to make any claims to universal authority. But this is precisely what Ibn ʿArabī does. His spiritual unveiling is at once personal and public. It is a personal experience made public through language. In the presupposition of attainable meaningful articulation, and its actual articulation, he anticipates what Wittgenstein would later describe as the shared public world in which the most intimate thoughts are public because the words that frame them only gain currency from social and public usage.

It is this very feature of the mystic's confidence in his experiential knowledge to not only make the private public, but to attribute the same certainty to the empirical as to revelation itself that prompts Abū Zayd to write, "It is difficult, in many cases, for someone to separate the Qurʾanic text and the words of Ibn ʿArabī," especially since, for him, the two are the same, his writings being the only real meaning of the Qurʾan—a claim he allows himself due to the certitude of *kashf*-derived knowledge. Correspondingly, Ibn ʿArabī often cites a verse without even deeming any commentary necessary, so axiomatic does he believe the explanation to be in the sphere of his mysticism. Abū Zayd, elaborating on this issue, comments,

It is curious how Ibn ʿArabī strikes a balance between his style of writing and the Qurʾan, for the Qurʾanic verses may appear explicitly without any connection to monistic thought, even if in their reality and inner meaning there is a connection, such are the works of Ibn ʿArabī.

The task, consequently, is one of extrication: to disengage the Qurʾan from Ibn ʿArabī's thought and expatiate on that which he considers to be evident in order to map the path the Andalusian traverses from the Qurʾanic narrative to the frontiers of his metaphysical thought. In so doing, the way in which Ibn ʿArabī understands the Qurʾan, and how it not only informs his worldview but is the very basis of it, will be laid bare. This is the burden subsequent chapters will bear. But, lest we get ahead of ourselves, we must first prove the *Futūḥāt* echoes its shorter sibling, the *Fuṣūṣ*, in its Qurʾan-rootedness.

Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya

Prolix and comprehensive rather than terse and allusive, the *Futūḥāt* is a completely different proposition to the *Fuṣūṣ*. If there is one trait they share, however, it is that both are primarily Ibn ʿArabī's comprehension of selected passages of the Qurʾan. The central position the Qurʾan occupies in the *Futūḥāt* is something that cannot escape the watchful gaze of the discerning reader. Michel Chodkiewicz argues vehemently that Ibn ʿArabī's writings in general, and the *Futūḥāt* in particular, are nothing but commentaries of the Qurʾan. Approaching the work holistically, the veracity of Chodkiewicz's assertion becomes clear, for even concepts which at first blush appear entirely exogenous may easily, on scrupulous inspection, be understood from Ibn ʿArabī's perspective as being plausible explanations of certain verses of the Qurʾan.

A paradigmatic example is the Andalusian's theory of divine emanation and its relationship to the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) of things that appear in the phenomenal world. The fundamental dichotomy with which Ibn ʿArabī grapples here is that of the infiniteness of the divine Names and the finiteness of the phenomenal world, when the latter is nothing but an expression of the former. Ibn ʿArabī states that though there is no limit to the divine outpouring which imbues everything with existence in the material realm, only certain things have the capacity to accept it, which is why sensible reality is finite. Only entities which have a preparedness that allows them to have phenomenal existence, therefore, are manifestations of the Names in the sensible world. Those that do not have phenomenal existence have a form of existence which is pre-phenomenal, but they too are manifestations of the Names. Thus, the Names that are represented on the sensible plane are only a portion of all the Names.

Ibn ʿArabī confronts the conundrum of why some things are given this *istiʿdād* that allows them to be while others are not:

> Preparednesses of the receptacles are among the "keys of the unseen." This is because there is naught there save absolute and all-encompassing giving (*wahab muṭlaq ʿāmm*), and outpouring of bounteousness (*fayḍ jūd*); there is nothing there, in the matter itself, which is unseen but there are no witnesses. Rather, it is information (*maʿlūmāt*) which has no limit. From this [information], there are those who have existence and those who do not, those who have causality and those who do not, those who have the aptitude to accept existence and those who do not. … Preparedness is not something that is earned. Rather, it is a divine benefaction, which is why no one knows it but God.

Istiʿdād, says Ibn ʿArabī, is something which is simply bestowed by God and is a phenomenon about which man knows nothing. Going further, the mystagogue says that divine knowledge is like DNA which contains the information for existence, and is continually pouring forth from the divine—like a radio station continually broadcasting on all wavelengths (to borrow Anthony Kenny's

metaphor)—but only some receptacles have the capacity to accept it by tuning into the correct one. This is *istiʿdād.*

Ibn ʿArabī offers the foregoing as an extended commentary of the verses, *He sends it down in due measure as He wills* and *And We do not send it down save in an appointed measure*, both of which refer to the provision of sustenance. Ibn ʿArabī takes this apparent meaning of both verses and expands it to include existence, which is also bestowed according to divine benevolence and in its wisdom. Nor does it appear he strays too far from the manifest meaning as the provision of sustenance and bequeathal of existence are not entirely dissociated: the former simply continues what the latter initiates. It is also evident that whenever verses of sustenance are mentioned, Ibn ʿArabī directly transitions to the provision of *istiʿdād* or knowledge, in other words, to "spiritual sustenance," which, in his opinion, is far closer to the true meaning of such verses.

This passage is actually the resolution of a contradiction created by Ibn ʿArabī's understanding of the various verses of the Qurʾan. On the one hand, he asserts that God is "overflowing with bounteousness" (*fayyāḍ bi ʾl-jūd*), which he derives from such verses as, "*And My mercy envelops all things*," and about which he comments, "The [Divine] mercy pervades all existent things." But the manner in which he identifies this mercy is unique: with the bestowal of phenomenal existence. This is predicated on verses like, *He gave everything its form (khalq)*. Ibn ʿArabī understands this verse to mean God imbued everything with sensible existence.

Together, these two verses, for him, mean God is All-Merciful, which is why He gives existence to everything, and there is no limit to this mercy. Still, there are verses—like the aforementioned ones—which appear to restrict God's mercy. Ibn ʿArabī thus attempts to reconcile this paradox by stating that though the divine mercy is limitless, the preparedness—also bestowed by God—curtails it so that only certain entities make the leap from pre-phenomenality to sensible reality. This means God is simultaneously overflowing with mercy and restricting it to those whom He has given the preparedness to accept it.

The *Futūḥāt*, being a veritable encyclopedia of Ibn ʿArabī's ideas, allows the reader to delve much deeper than the *Fuṣūṣ* into the thoughts of its author, and it is this that inspired ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 812/1408?) to write that it is:

> The greatest book written in this field in terms of benefit, with the greatest number of arcane and abstruse terms, and it is the loftiest in extensiveness and comprehensiveness. He [Ibn ʿArabī] spoke in it in many tongues.

These passages exemplify how the tapestry of Ibn ʿArabī's thoughts are woven into the Qurʾanic text. Addressing this issue, Abū Zayd writes,

> The truth is that scarcely a page from the works of Ibn ʿArabī are free from presenting a verse, or a collection of verses, from the Qurʾan in order to corroborate, explain or resolve [an issue].

If al-Qāshānī breaks away in his enunciation of the nature of the relationship between God and Man, at least in the provenance of mystical insights being the Qurʾan and canonical texts of Ḥadīth, he remains dutiful to his master. This is as apparent in his lexicons as it is in the *Taʾwīlāt*, and it is to the lexicons that we now turn.

The Lexicons

With three increasingly complex and detailed Sufi dictionaries under his belt, al-Qāshānī is justly hailed as a major formalizer of Sufi terminology. Defense by education and anticipative recruitment seems to be the order of the day. The works are far more term-centered than those of his

predecessor, and al-Qāshānī is patently more self-conscious of nomenclature. If this makes him a good commentator of Ibn ʿArabī, it makes him an even better educator and promulgator of his teachings. The most well-known and widely disseminated of his lexicons, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, is up first.

Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya

The most concise and most popular of his dictionaries, al-Qāshānī mentions his impetus for writing the *Iṣṭilāḥāt* in his prolegomenon:

When I finished my rough draft (*taswīd*) of a commentary of *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn* and what was said in it, and [what was said in my] commentary of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, based on Sufi technical terms (*al-iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*), the scholars of transmitted [i.e. Qurʾan and Ḥadīth] and intellectual knowledge (*ahl al-ʿulūm al-manqūla waʾl-maʿqūla*) did not know them [i.e. the terms], nor were they well-known (*tashtahir*) among them. So they asked me to explicate them for them. … I thus busied myself (*taṣaddaytu*) in complying with their request.

Since the *Iṣṭilāḥāt* is referred to by its author as a supplement to the *Taʾwīlāt* (as well as *Manāzil* and *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ*), its importance for our purpose in understanding al-Qāshānī's terminology in the context of the *Taʾwīlāt* can hardly be overstated. In this work, the mystic expounds a little on Ibn ʿArabī's definitions—if one is mentioned by Ibn ʿArabī in his own *Iṣṭilāḥāt*—followed by verses from the Qurʾan, Ḥadīths or snippets of Arabic poetry to bolster his definition.

That al-Qāshānī understands the terms in the Qurʾanic perspective, and his attention never veers too far from this, is amply exhibited by his persistent recourse to the Qurʾan in his explanations. Beyond common literary etiquette, abundant scriptural quotations are *sine qua non* for legitimacy and acceptability for many Muslim (and indeed Christian and Jewish) authors. But more than volume, it is the manner in which al-Qāshānī (and Ibn ʿArabī) deploy these verses that displays their Qurʾan-rootedness. For both these mystics use the Qurʾan as the basis of their mystical outlook and their citations are not merely incidental or enumerative. If this is clear in the works of Ibn ʿArabī, the distinction is yet more lucid in those of al-Qāshānī, especially his *Taʾwīlāt* in which al-Qāshānī's mystical outlook is subordinated to the scriptural text. Indeed, a mystical commentary of the Qurʾan penned by a resolute adherent and defender of Ibn ʿArabī is itself testament to the pervasive influence of the Qurʾan in the Andalusian's works.

Returning to the lexicon at hand, a suitable example of al-Qāshānī's significant reliance on the Qurʾan in this work is the entry on "the Greatest Name" (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*), about which he writes,

According to us, it is the name of the Divine Essence in terms of what it simply is, that is, the Absolute (*al-Muṭlaqa*), the True (*al-Ṣādiqa*), whether it occurs with all of them [i.e. the Names], like when He, be He Exalted, says, *To God belong all the Beautiful Names*, or some of them, like when He, be He Exalted, says, *And God is the Forgiving, the Merciful*, or with none of them, like when He, be He Exalted, says, *Say! He is God, the One*.

Each assertion is here not just corroborated by al-Qāshānī with a verse from the Qurʾan, the verse is the foundation of the assertion. It is the verses that inform and forge the definition, not a preformulated definition into which the verses are shoehorned.

Al-Qāshānī has compiled the first part of the work alphabetically and the second part according to subject (*mawḍūʿī*), as stated in his preface. The general format and approach of his next lexicon, *Rashḥ al-zulāl*, follows its shorter sibling.

Rashḥ al-Zulāl

The middle child, both in chronology and length, is *Rashḥ al-zulāl fī sharḥ al-alfāẓ al-mutadāwila bayna arbāb al-adhwāq waʾl-aḥwāl*. This work does not differ from its forerunner in approach, but is "more comprehensive and has some definitions which the other does not. The converse, however, is also true. So it turns out that both books have one purpose, with one completing the other and neither being independent (*yastaghnī*) of the other." Al-Qāshānī's reason for compiling this second lexicon may be gleaned from the following statement found in his prologue: "I have responded to you, O persistent petitioner (*al-sāʾil al-laḥūḥ*)! And have presented you, in keeping with your particular nature (*takhṣīṣ*), this privileged [knowledge] (*masmūḥ*)." So there was a need—either expressed by people or in al-Qāshānī's own judgement—for more terms to be explained and for more detail to be given on some terms that were already explained. This work caulks these lexical cracks.

The scope of *Rashḥ al-zulāl* is larger than that of its precursor. Whereas the *Iṣṭilāḥāt* is an addendum to three specific works, this book is meant to be used in conjunction with all of Ibn ʿArabī's writings. His *modus operandi* in this work is to "mention a line or two from what Ibn ʿArabī says at the beginning of the definition [and] then [to] complete the rest himself until it reaches a page or two or more!" The *Rashḥ* is configured conceptually (*tartīb mafhūmī*), such that all correlated terms are listed together. Greater in scope, varying in detail, the chief emphasis in this work, nevertheless, remains the Qurʾan, as attested by it forming the basis of definitions. Quantitively—though this alone is no proof—there are almost twice as many verses as there are Ḥadīth, with Arabic poetry coming a very distant third. Viewed by al-Qāshānī as correspondence *par excellence* between God and His most perfect creation, the preponderance of Qurʾanic citations is hardly surprising. Under the entry of "the correspondence" (*al-musāmara*), al-Qāshānī explicates the profundity of this interaction:

[It is] the Truth speaking with the gnostics from the realm of secrets and concealment (*ʿālam al-asrār waʾl-ghuyūb*). The Exalted said, *The Trustworthy Spirit (al-Rūḥ al-amīn) has brought it down upon your heart*, for it is, in reality, the Truth speaking to you behind the veil of the Trustworthy Spirit, the Cosmos and whatever is in it.

Allusively, al-Qāshānī, in conjunction with many mystics, affirms that though the revelation received by Muḥammad was the last formal revelation given to a prophet, it does not preclude the possibility of an informal, personal revelation bestowed upon the elect gnostics. This is their spiritual unveiling (*kashf*), and it is of this that the Qurʾan is the most powerful and perfect model. Gershom Scholem eloquently elucidates this concept:

Revelation, for instance, is to the mystic not only a definite historical occurrence which, at a given moment in history, puts an end to any further direct relation between mankind and God. With no thought of denying Revelation as a fact of history, the mystic still conceives the source of religious knowledge and experience which bursts forth from his own heart as being of equal importance for the conception of religious truth. In other words, instead of the one act of Revelation, there is a constant repetition of this act. This new Revelation, to himself or to his spiritual master, the mystic tries to link up with the sacred texts of the old; hence the new interpretation given to the canonical texts and sacred books of the great religions.

It is little wonder, then, that al-Qāshānī relies so profoundly on the Qurʾan, for the Qurʾan is nothing but the *kashf* of the Prophet, and the *kashf* of all the gnostics who follow in his wake must be congruent with it. In explaining Ibn ʿArabī's terms with the aid of Qurʾanic references, al-Qāshānī implicitly acknowledges this. In creating his own intuitive commentary, he explicitly expresses it.

As the big brother of the lexicons, *Laṭāʾif al-iʿlām* goes deeper and further than his more reticent brethren. It is the last lexicon written by al-Qāshānī, and it is the one where the Persian Sufi most conspicuously emerges from the shade of his master.

Laṭāʾif al-Iʿlām

Not only the final lexicon, *Laṭāʾif al-iʿlām fī ishārāt ahl al-ilhām* is also the final work al-Qāshānī authored in his life. Reverentially, the title is adopted from one of Ibn ʿArabī's treatises, but this work in many ways transcends Ibn ʿArabī since "it does not draw (*yastaqī*) its material from any specific works, as is the case of the first one [*Iṣṭilāḥāt*]; nor does it derive (*yastamiddu*) its technical terms from any specific Sufis, as is the case with the second dictionary [*Rashḥ*]; rather, it includes all the technical terms which the prominent Sufis use in their various works." Such is the vastness of mystical erudition on display that Ḥājī Khalīfa classifies it as "unparalleled" (*lā naẓīr lahū*) in *Kashf al-ẓunūn*. In corroboration, ʿAlī al-Qāsimī writes that this work is more than just definitions of technical terms, it is "an encyclopedic lexicon (*muʿjam mawsūʿī*) of Islamic Sufism."

Unparalleled and encyclopedic though it may be, al-Qāshānī's steadfast dependence on the Qurʾan remains uncompromised. He even classifies the Qurʾan as the path through which a believer may be admitted into the highest echelons of gnosis wherein the essential equivalency between multiplicity in God's creation and divine unity become apparent. This is

the vision of differentiation (*tafriqa*) with the eye of unity (*ʿayn al-jamʿ*) … as this vision is the most perfect (*akmal*) of the stations (*maqāmāt*) of gnosis and of the gnostics. … This is because the vision of differentiation without the eye of unity is a state of the veiled ones (*maḥjūbīn*) from the Truth in reality, as is the case with the lay folk (*ʿawāmm*) among the unbelievers and believers. … And [as for] those from among the *awliyāʾ* who inherit (*wārith*) their [i.e. the prophets'] station and emulate their ethical behaviour (*akhlāq*), they are the people of the Qurʾan (*ahl al-Qurʾān*) … which is why it behoves them to be the medium (*wāsiṭa*) [to transmit] that which they have taken from the Truth, through [His] help (*imdād*) and outpouring (*fayḍ*), to those who are not of their rank among the creation, and this is the highest rank, though there are different levels [in this], as He, be He Exalted, said, *And surely We have preferred some prophets over others.*

Al-Qāshānī is unequivocal that the Qurʾan is the basis and means of true gnosis. It is the "people of the Qurʾan" (*ahl al-Qurʾān*) who are the absolute receptacles of divine outpouring (*fayḍ*) and charged with its transmission to the creation. No surprise, then, that the mystic leans so heavily upon it in his definitions.

This work seems to represent the culmination of al-Qāshānī's Sufi training course; it is the most comprehensive and complex of his lexicons and requires the student of mysticism to have graduated from the previous two works. But it is also the most rigorous in defense of Sufism, as a whole, and Ibn ʿArabī, in particular. Consonant with its predecessors, the author's prefatory remarks elucidate his motivation for compiling it:

When I saw numerous exoteric scholars (*ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm*) opposing them [i.e. the Sufis or esoteric scholars] on multiple occasions as they did not comprehend our books, or books of those other than us [i.e. of other orders, *ṭarīqas*], in terms of the points (*nukat*) and secrets (*asrār*) alluded to by the gnostics of God from among the great sheikhs of Sufism; the inheritors (*wārithīn*) of the knowledge of the Reality (*ʿilm al-ḥaqīqa*) and gnoses of the sacred secret (*maʿārif al-khufya al-qudsiyya*), those who combined the comprehensive speech of wisdom (*jawāmiʿ al-kalim al-ḥikmiyya*) and divine secrets (*al-asrār al-ilāhiyya*); I wanted to compose this book which contains an exposition of that which is important among their technical terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*), words (*alfāẓ*) and titles (*alqāb*), and

which go hand-in-hand with them, and interpret that which is passed among them of divine knowledge and secrets (al-ʿulūm al-ilāhiyya wa-asrārihā al-rabbāniyya).

Not content with mere explication, al-Qāshānī claims that the Laṭāʾif proves the essential orthodoxy of Sufi terms, and is a defense against an exoteric scholastic onslaught.

The arrangement of this work also contrasts with that of its foregoers as it follows a strictly alphabetical format. By al-Qāshānī's own admission, Laṭāʾif is about more than just Ibn ʿArabī's Sufi terminology; the terms analyzed will, nonetheless, still be looked at in relation to Ibn ʿArabī as al-Qāshānī derives much of his mystical insight from the Andalusian's works.

Al-Qāshānī, then, in all his lexicons is unerringly dependent on the Qurʾan, Ḥadīth and poetry (in that order); his style is scientific and clinical, all of which reduces the "shock factor" of Ibn ʿArabī's thought. Suddenly, ideas that seemed unorthodox in the obscurity of nuance and density seem conventional and sober in the warm embrace of familiarity, a familiarity not only in expression, but also in format. While this staunch dependence on the Qurʾan and Ḥadīth may imbue al-Qāshānī's works with an apologetic hue, it is one borne out of a conviction that these texts are the fundamental source of gnosis. Even though both mystics hold to this maxim, it is more discernible in al-Qāshānī's works only because he has chosen to spotlight it more.

If the compilation of three progressively elaborate dictionaries with varying formats that were to become standard layouts of lexicography was not enough to cement al-Qāshānī's standing as a peerless Sufi etymologist, we find large sections of his other works devoted to Sufi terms. The most notable of these is Tuḥfat al-ikhwān fī khaṣāʾiṣ al-fityān. He is thus justly lauded as being "one of the great linguists and lexicographers," whose passion for nomenclature permeates the entire corpus of his scholarly output. Despite this, however, his reputation in the West remains chiefly as an expositor of Ibn ʿArabī due to the incontestable significance of this illustrious Sufi master in whose imperious shadow al-Qāshānī resides. The fact that Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān is still marketed as Tafsīr Ibn ʿArabī, though it has been proven al-Qāshānī authored it, bears ample testimony to this. It is this much-misattributed commentary that constitutes the exegetical province in which we most fully explore al-Qāshānī's conception of the God-Man relationship through the term huwiyya.

Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān

As simply the only extant exegetical work of a mystical nature, the selection of the Taʾwīlāt from the works of al-Qāshānī is as axiomatic as it is ineluctable. It also conforms to the widely accepted tafsīr formulation of a verse-by-verse commentary from the beginning of the Qurʾan to the end, a work that subordinates itself to the text of the Qurʾan and explains it. Given that al-Qāshānī's stated objective in many of his works is to defend Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine—something that is apparent in his letter to al-Simnānī in which he champions the doctrine of "oneness of being" (waḥdat al-wujūd)—a Qurʾanic commentary would seem the ideal format to display the essential orthodoxy and Qurʾan-rootedness of his Sufi master and deflect any accusations of heresy from exotericists. The Taʾwīlāt thus assumes the role of a dual commentary: a commentary of the Qurʾan primarily, and then a commentary of Ibn ʿArabī's thought. This study investigates the interplay between both of these functions, and the relationship of the Taʾwīlāt with al-Qāshānī's lexicons, which are more overt commentaries on Ibn ʿArabī's thought.

Al-Qāshānī's tafsīr and technical terminology will be analyzed, showing how he mediates the content of the Qurʾan through Sufi nomenclature, while acknowledging that it is deeply intertwined with Ibn ʿArabī's semantic framework. The Qurʾan, as with Ibn ʿArabī in the Fuṣūṣ and Futūḥāt, remains central throughout this endeavor. Al-Qāshānī draws his language from the Qurʾan while

complementing it with Sufi terminology, not only to expose the essential compatibility of both, but to accentuate that the mystical explanation proffered is very much subsidiary and has no designs on intruding upon the Qurʾanic narrative.

The account of the ascension of ʿĪsā in chapter three of the Qurʾan lucidly showcases al-Qāshānī's subservience to the text of the Qurʾan. According to the Qurʾanic narrative, God discloses to ʿĪsā His plans to save him from the machinations of his enemies, and reveals what the consequences will be for those who refuse to believe. The verses run,

> O ʿĪsā! Surely I will take you and raise you unto Me, and purify you of those who do not believe until the Day of Resurrection. … As for those who do not believe, I shall punish them with a terrible chastisement in this world and the hereafter, and they will not have anyone to help them.

Al-Qāshānī commentates,

> The corporeal form of he who [attempted to] assassinate ʿĪsā, which was the manifestation of ʿĪsā, the spirit of God, upon him be peace, was made to resemble the actual form of ʿĪsā, so they thought he was ʿĪsā and slew him and crucified him, while God caused ʿĪsā, upon him be peace, to ascend (rafaʿa) to the fourth heaven so that his spirit would receive the outpouring from the spirituality of the Sun. And they did not know, due to their ignorance, that the spirit of God cannot be killed. So when he [i.e. ʿĪsā] became certain of his fate just before the ascension (rafʿ), he said to his companions, "I am going to my and your heavenly Father," meaning, "I am purifying (uṭahhiru) myself of the realm of filth (ʿālam al-rijs) and joining the Holy Spirit bestowing forms, the Outpourer (Mufīḍ) of souls and perfection, the One worshipped by people through spiritual inspiration, and I will aid you from His outpouring."

Far from being the star of the show, al-Qāshānī's commentary merely seeks to explicate the verses with the benefit of mystical insight. His subservience to the Qurʾanic text is underscored by his fastidious attention to the language of it, which he emulates. This proclivity manifests itself through his rigid conformance to the two central concepts in the above verses: the ascension (rafʿ) of ʿĪsā and the cause of it, which was his purification (taṭhīr) from those who did not believe.

Al-Qāshānī maintains the terms as they are in the Qurʾan and only furnishes the reader with the backdrop to the ascension. His narrative, in other words, simply augments the text of the Qurʾan. Nor is his tafsīr a labored mystical reading of the Qurʾan, as is patently perceptible from his commentary of the following verse of chapter 45, in which the argument of Muḥammad's enemies is confuted. Those who repudiated the final Messenger's call asserted that there was nothing beyond the life of the world. The Qurʾan repeats their logic in order to refute it:

And they say, "There is naught save our life of the world," that is, sensible [existence], we die, by a natural, physical death, "and we live," the physical, sensory life, there being no death or life besides them. And they do not attribute this [death] except to time due to their being veiled from the true Executor, the One who seizes souls, the Outpourer (Mufīḍ) of life upon bodies.

The blatant exotericism of this commentary cannot escape the attention of the keen reader. Indeed, this passage would not seem out of place in the orthodox commentaries of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) or al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273). Al-Qāshānī thus does not feel the need to ascribe an esoteric meaning to every verse of the Qurʾan. It is only when mystical insight (baṣīra) endows particulars which a literal reading glosses over that he engages in such a commentary. The mystical aspect, then, is something which, for him, emanates organically from the text, but where such a meaning may be coupled with his Sufi outlook, al-Qāshānī is quick to avail himself of the opportunity.

The exoteric interpretation, then, resides cheek by jowl with the esoteric one, but the construction is within the larger framework of al-Qāshānī's pedagogical commitment, a commitment that conforms to the preparedness of the reader. Indeed, al-Qāshānī fashions his commentary in layers that are uncovered by the spiritual discernment of the mystical wayfarer, and this bespoke pedagogical imperative is nowhere better displayed than in his commentary of chapter 12. Al-Qāshānī affirms that the reason the story of Yūsuf is "the best of stories" (aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ) is:

because its expression (lafẓ) and structure (tarkīb) are inimitable; its apparent meaning corresponds to reality and its esoteric meaning indicates the form of wayfaring (sulūk) and is an exposition of the state of the wayfarer, just like other stories created for that purpose but [this one] corresponds (ṭibāq) and conforms (wifāq) more than them.

The various intentions of al-Qāshānī and the role each plays in the hierarchy of his commentary is here transparently articulated. Al-Qāshānī explains that the superiority of the story of Yūsuf is due to its:

- Language—this includes the lexical expressions and the structural composition;

- Exoteric meaning, which takes the form of a straightforward narrative;

- Esoteric meaning, which betrays mystical truths of the spiritual path, in accordance with the spiritual state (ḥāl) of the wayfarer.

Other narratives perform these functions also, but none, says al-Qāshānī, that "correspond" and "conform" to the spiritual state of the wayfarer as closely as this one.

In his exegesis of the next couple of verses (12:4 and 12:5), al-Qashānī again shows that though the verses have a profound metaphysical importance and he is keen to analyze that aspect, they, nevertheless, are also basic statements of fact. Yet his most detailed allegorical departure begins with 12:7 in which Yūsuf assumes the role of the heart; Yaʿqūb, the role of the intellect; and the eleven brothers, the roles of the five external senses and the five internal senses, and an additional sense of anger and lust, both of which are subsumed under one sense.

The eleven senses (brothers), in this allegorical retelling, envy the heart (Yūsuf) because they desire the intellect (Yaʿqūb) to actualize their corporeal pleasures but the intellect inclines towards the heart, which bids it to actualize noble traits. The battle lines thus drawn, the entire narrative becomes a story of the triumph of the noble heart over its base inclinations—a story, indeed, of actualizing the latent potential of one's preparedness. And lest the relevance of the entire story to this individual objective be lost on the reader, al-Qāshānī is as eager to end the chapter with this point as he was to begin with it. And since he began with the significance of the state of the wayfarer, he ends with:

Have they not travelled in the land of their preparedness (istiʿdād), so that they see how the matter ended for those who came before them, and [what] the end of their perfection [was], such that they may attain the pinnacle of their initiative and achieve their perfection, in accordance with their preparedness. Surely, everyone has an individuality (khāṣṣiyya), and an individual preparedness that necessitates a particular felicity, which is his [final] outcome (ʿāqiba).

Unabashedly showing his hand, al-Qāshānī claims the story of Yūsuf galvanizes us to actualize the pinnacle of our individual preparedness against the machinations of our concupiscent self.

The task of the wayfarer thus defined, al-Qāshānī proceeds to delineate his own role in the process:

Surely there is in their stories wisdom, meaning, that by which they can cross over (*yaʿbar*) from their apparent meaning to their esoteric meaning, just as we crossed over in the story of Yūsuf.

A solitary crossing it may be, but al-Qāshānī does not leave the wayfarer unaccompanied. He is there at the crossing, showing the way, joining dots, holding hands. How much we see depends on our preparedness, and how much we have actualized its potential.

The manner in which al-Qāshānī's pedagogical predilection appears in the context of *huwiyya* will be explored, as will how he negotiates the winding byways of the Qurʾan with it. Additionally, the similarities and differences of this term with Ibn ʿArabī's usage will be examined, as contextualizing it in Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysical outlook is unavoidable. It will be shown, also, if *huwiyya* assumes a categorically theocentric hue as it does in Ibn ʿArabī's writings. For if every existent thing in the phenomenal and pre-phenomenal realms is a manifestation of the Divine Attributes, then all terms ascribed to them will necessarily need to refer back to God. Language itself, therefore, in Ibn ʿArabī's worldview, is merely an allusion to, and an articulation of, His ubiquity in every plane of existence. This is why *huwiyya*, which is particularly expressive of the non-manifest aspect of God, has been chosen for this study, as it is the most efficient way of pinning down what can be a very convoluted and nebulous theological outlook.

Before embarking on a synchronic scrutiny of *huwiyya* in the works of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī, it may be beneficial to know, deplorably briefly though it may be, the diachronic backstory of the term, that we may better understand how our two protagonists deploy and distort the term for their own expository ends.

The History

"But words are things," urges Byron, "and a small drop of ink,/Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces/That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think." It may make millions think, but it would be folly to suppose the millions were of the same epoch, or that it would make people of varying eras think in the same way. Equally, a word may elicit an effect alone, or may be contextually directed, or often be both, but in very different ways. The temporal aspect, following a synchronic/diachronic bifurcation, has already been mentioned. But Toshihiko Izutsu also ramifies the denotations of terms into either "basic" or "relational" meanings. A hierarchy of words is further posited by the linguist with "focus-words" at the semantic summit. The worldview the Qurʾan creates and perpetuates, says Izutsu, is the product of an intricate lattice of key terms, which generate linguistic microcosms with a nominal nucleus, or focus-word. These semantic fields, with the focus-word at their center and key terms orbiting them, are bound to other semantic fields by polyvalent key terms that act as connective tissue fastening these fields together to form an entire conceptual outlook. While this unitary, synchronic method frames our analysis of the lion's share of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī's works, here a historical aperçu is dimly adumbrated, for if Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī use the term in their own way, their notion is still informed by *huwiyya*'s historical dimension.

Huwiyya is an abstract noun from the pronoun *huwa* (he), and comes directly from the lexicon of Hellenistic learning. It has also been suggested that it is a loan-word based on the Syriac *hāywā*. The relationship between *huwiyya* and *mawjūd*, and which should be used for the same Greek word, constituted a significant dilemma for Arabic translators of Greek philosophical texts. Indeed, Ibn Rushd's (d. 595/1198) "overwhelming interest" was "in the difference between '*mawǧūd*' or '*huwiyya*' which signifies the essence of the thing and the '*mawǧūd*' or '*huwiyya*' which signifies the true. … Should they use '*mawǧūd*,' despite its misleading paronymous form, or coin a new word and say '*huwiyya*?' "

First appearing as a cameo in the works of Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī's (d. 259/873) circle, there is a close association between *huwiyya* and the abstract noun *anniyya* as both are translations for the Greek terms *on* ("being") and *einai* ("to be"). *Huwiyya*, nonetheless, is also employed by these early translators as an antonym for "otherness." Adamson suggests that *huwiyya* is most commonly used to denote *on* whereas *anniyya* is mainly reserved for *einai*. Yet there are cases when the converse is also true. The interchangeability between the terms suggests that the difference between them was not sufficiently delineated. Indeed, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) resolutely declares the two to be synonyms.

In al-Kindī's circle, then, *huwiyya* and *anniyya* are used to refer to God, in terms of his existence, which is often presented with the ordinal adjective *al-ūlā* (the first). This means the nature of God's existence is not expressed by the term, only its priorness to everything. However, there are also passages of the *Theology of Aristotle* translated by al-Kindī's circle that clearly deny that the First has being. Thus the term is also applied to that which does have being first, which is the *intellect*. Adamson hypothesizes that:

… the Adaptor is trying to hold on to the idea that God *is* being, though he is prepared to admit that God does not *have* being, perhaps thinking that this would imply that God has being as something external attributed to him.

In this case, *huwiyya* (and *anniyya*) is "the immediate effect and proper effect of the First, with all things being indirect effects through the mediation of the intellect." There are other times, though, when it refers to the unknown-ness of God. We are told that His *huwiyya* is "not perceived in any way. He is the one whose name is unknown, to say nothing of His substance."

Another connotation of *anniyya* and *huwiyya* used by this early theologian/ translator is that it is an articulation of God's simplicity, meaning, "His being [is] nothing other than what it is" because "if God had attributes distinct from His being, He would not be truly one." Again, this is not an outright negation redolent of the hypertranscendentalism of the Muʿtazilites, for it is conceded that though God has no attributes because He is their cause, He is still connected to them in the way a cause is connected to the caused. In this sense, then, He does have attributes. Also, at other times, it seems positive attributes, at least in principle, can be said to be identical to God's *huwiyya*.

Al-Kindī himself further uses *huwiyya* to underscore the simplicity of God, that is to say, he equates God's being to His simplicity. This means the primary difference, according to al-Kindī, is that God's *huwiyya* does not have multiplicity; everything else, in contrast, does. The term *huwiyya* thus has the following early meanings:

1. It denotes God in terms of His priorness to everything else.
2. It is a term for the first thing to have being, that is, the intellect.
3. It connotes the unknown-ness of God, who cannot be apprehended by intellects.
4. It represents the positive attributes of God that are His being insofar as He is their cause, but are not He as He is one and simple.
5. It means the simplicity and unity of God, as opposed to the multiplicity of all other things.

By al-Fārābī's time, *huwiyya* was already very much part of the philosophical lexicon, which is why the late philosopher, Ibn Rushd, is somewhat of an outlier in seeking to explain the term. Al-Fārābī, without feeling the need to elucidate the term, makes an important distinction between *māhiyya* and *huwiyya*: the former connotes conceptual essence, and the latter, an individual, existing manifestation of that essence, such as man, and Fred who is *a* man. He also distinguishes

between mental and extra-mental (that is, proper) existence, with *huwiyya* being employed for the latter. The only example where there is no distinction between *māhiyya* and *huwiyya*, according to al-Fārābī, is in God. This is because every essence needs an external stimulus to bring it into existence, notwithstanding God.

Huwiyya seems to be a term of extraordinary versatility. In the *Liber de Causis*, it is applied to the whole gamut of beings, from God, the first Being, to pure intelligences, to beings with sensible existence. Indeed, in Ibn Rushd's commentary of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, it is "said to assume as many meanings as Aristotle has categories." Moreover, according to Ibn Rushd, not only may *huwiyya* be used for substances and accidents, it may also denote both the essence of a thing, and whether it is true, that is, actual or existing. In both cases, the word is the same, but the meaning very different. A.M. Goichon identifies eleven uses for *huwiyya* in *Lexique de la langue philosophique d' Ibn Sīnā*, the primary denotation being "a concrete being considered universally." Ibn Sīnā expounds much on the distinction between *māhiyya* and *huwiyya* initially presented by al-Fārābī, and the term clearly plays a pivotal role in his philosophy. All these meanings and associations of *huwiyya* were available to Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī, and inform their own usage of the term, though one does not find in either a conscious philosophical use of it.

Indeed, Ibn ʿArabī displays little appetite for the application of unvarnished philosophical explanations and categorizations for the nature of God. The absolute essence of God can never be comprehended, much less categorized. Yet we would be hasty if we assumed this was the Andalusian's last word on the matter. For God, in the manner he relates to His creation—through the Names—opens avenues for comprehension and categorization. And it is in this sphere that Ibn ʿArabī avails himself of every mode of thought and articulation in order to depict and display the nature of God and the nature of his interaction with the Cosmos.

The *huwiyya* of God, says Ibn ʿArabī, in its numinous transcendence does not admit of any of the Aristotelian categories. But shun the categories he does not because it furnishes him with an adaptable framework within which to characterize and convey the communicable nature of God—His comparability (*tashbīh*). And how this facet, though not God in His supra-rational transcendence (*tanzīh*), relates to and is realized in the phenomenal world. Denis Gril is correct, then, to adduce Ibn ʿArabī's treatment of the Aristotelian categories as an example of "the way in which a Sufi appropriates concepts that may originally be used for another purpose, for his own purposes."[295] Yet to consider that Ibn ʿArabī would acknowledge his debt to, or even *actively* appropriate and absorb the categories, and use it as his point of departure for *huwiyya* would be presumptuous. Being part of his cultural heritage, these ideas palpitated in his mind, ideas that would be resurrected in the domain of his explanation and argumentation. To conflate organic absorption and conscious assimilation would, nevertheless, constitute an error and a leap, both of which play down his originality and play up the contribution of his precursors.

Though I am unwilling to acknowledge active assimilation of Aritostle's categories, it is nonetheless undeniable that Ibn ʿArabī makes passive use of the categories to answer two fundamental questions, as Gril puts it: "What can we know about God and how did the universe come into being?" In other words, what is the connection between "the Essence, the Attributes and the Acts?" The problem with these questions and the reason Ibn ʿArabī never employs the categories to delineate the transcendent reality of God is that "the knowledge we can have of God is strictly contrary to that which we have of the universe." This is because "the categories allow us to think about the world but not its transcendent principle." The true nature of God—His *huwiyya*—thus cannot be expressed in positive terms. This does not indicate that the Names of God, His Attributes, are

extra-categorical, nor that they had not been subjected to categorization prior to Ibn ʿArabī. Indeed, though not overtly associated with or connected to Aristotelian categories, divine Attributes and their implications for the Cosmos had kindled the curiosity of many philosophers and theologians in the Islamic tradition before Ibn ʿArabī entered the scene. Ibn ʿArabī's contribution is not in the way he applies the categories, it is the way in which he adapts them.

Not allowing application of the categories to God in His Absoluteness and even expressing displeasure at the mere contemplation of the absolute divine Essence (but contemplating it anyway), Ibn ʿArabī applies the two categories of action and affection to the divine Names. In particular, Names such as "the Avenger" (*al-Muntaqim*), "the Grateful" (*al-Shakūr*) and "the One Who responds" (*al-Mujīb*) to advertize how God reacts and responds to His creation. His unique contribution, however, is in establishing a "correspondence between divine nature and the form of the world." Each existent in the phenomenal world, Ibn ʿArabī proclaims, has a noumenal counterpart on "the divine side." The mystic thus theologizes Aristotelian categories. Furthermore, because he has installed an ontological connection between the divine Names and the cosmos, the function of the categories becomes ontological as well as theological.

Huwiyya, then, is a term that sits at the intersection of the Venn diagram of Hellenistic thought, the philosophical tradition of Islam and Sufism. This study does not scrutinize the appropriation of the term from Hellenistic learning to Sufi literature, nor does it analyze the evolution and various incarnations of it in the Islamic mystical tradition. It simply charts Ibn ʿArabī and al-Qāshānī's own usage of the term and what they mean by it in their principal works: the *Futūḥāt* and *Fuṣūṣ* for Ibn ʿArabī (with a greater emphasis on the latter), and the lexicons of al-Qāshānī and his *Taʾwīlāt*. A direct comparison of the two mystics in the context of this term will then be attempted to disinter the similarities and display the differences, and to decipher what these say about the authors. As with any such study, the point of departure must be each author's own definition of the term under investigation, inasmuch as it has been defined by them, and it is from this definition that this study, too, begins. <>

THE TRANSLATOR OF DESIRES: POEMS by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi and Michael Sells [The Lockert Library of Poetry in Translation, Princeton University Press, 9780691181349]
A masterpiece of Arabic love poetry in a new and complete English translation

THE TRANSLATOR OF DESIRES, a collection of sixty-one love poems, is the lyric masterwork of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240 CE), one of the most influential writers of classical Arabic and Islamic civilization. In this authoritative volume, Michael Sells presents the first complete English translation of this work in more than a century, complete with an introduction, commentary, and a new facing-page critical text of the original Arabic. While grounded in an expert command of the Arabic, this verse translation renders the poems into a natural, contemporary English that captures the stunning beauty and power of Ibn 'Arabi's poems in such lines as "A veiled gazelle's / an amazing sight, / her henna hinting, / eyelids signalling // A pasture between / breastbone and spine / Marvel, a garden / among the flames!"

The introduction puts the poems in the context of the Arabic love poetry tradition, Ibn 'Arabi's life and times, his mystical thought, and his "romance" with Niẓām, the young woman whom he presents as the inspiration for the volume—a relationship that has long fascinated readers. Other features,

following the main text, include detailed notes and commentaries on each poem, translations of Ibn 'Arabi's important prefaces to the poems, a discussion of the sources used for the Arabic text, and a glossary.

Bringing **THE TRANSLATOR OF DESIRES** to life for contemporary English readers as never before, this promises to be the definitive volume of these fascinating and compelling poems for years to come.

Review

"Michael Sells has produced a book of glories, poems like dry stones in reflecting water. This collection is both a visual experience for one who can't read Arabic and a deep literary thrill for one who can open to these translations. The threads of Quranic sound are spread in patches on the pages. Here we see fulfilled a poetics of bewilderment. Without desire, where would the future be?"**—Fanny Howe, author of *Love and I: Poems***

"Accurate yet not overawed by the Arabic texts, this authoritative translation renders Ibn 'Arabi's *Translator of Desires* into a nuanced, flexible, and accessible modern idiom that enables English readers to enjoy the delights of these poetic gems."**—James E. Montgomery, University of Cambridge**

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THE TRANSLATOR OF DESIRES

Excerpt: Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi tells us that he compiled his famous volume of love poems, *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* ("The Translator of Desires"), in 1214 CE during a visit to the Ka`ba shrine in Mecca. Born in 1165 to a prosperous and politically connected family in al-Andalus, Ibn 'Arabi

benefited from an immersive education in religious, literary, and philosophical studies. At a young age, however, he chose to separate himself from court circles in favor of a life of itinerant learning. For the next two decades, he was constantly on the move through networks of Sufi mystics, religious scholars, and poets, with weeks- or months-long stays in such Andalusian and North African cities as Seville, Fez, Marrakesh, and Tunis. After two decades of travel, study, and contemplation, he set out for Mecca—only to be marooned in Cairo because of a plague that left the city under quarantine.

After finally reaching Mecca in 1202, he began to experience visions that, by his own account, would inspire much of his vast literary production over the next four decades. It was while circling the Ka`ba that he encountered the mystical youth (young man or *fata)* who inspired his monumental masterwork, *The Meccan Openings,* which he would compose over the next three decades. On another occasion, his encounter with the Ka`ba, personified, prompted him to compose a series of love letters addressed to the shrine itself, titled *Diadem of Epistles,* in an intricate and elegant rhymed prose *(saf).* And it was at the Ka`ba in 1202 that he encountered a young woman who fiercely critiqued each of the four verses of a love poem he was reciting—an experience that led him to compose sixty more poems during a subsequent stay in Mecca and, eventually, to publish all sixty-one under the title *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq.*

After his first stay in Mecca (from 1202 to 1204), he resumed his peripatetic life. His journeys would now take him through cultural centers within the Islamic East: Mosul, Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and the Anatolian cities of Konya and Malatya (Melitene). These journeys formed elliptical orbits around the Ka`ba, to which he returned time and again. His itinerancy notwithstanding, and despite the lack of formal institutional support, Ibn 'Arabi was prolific, and during the four decades following his first arrival in Mecca he produced dozens of books, treatises, and collections of poetry-the latter composed in a variety of genres and styles.

In the second and third decades of the thirteenth century, Ibn `Arabi compiled a belletristic work, *Sessions of the Righteous,* into which he placed hundreds of love poems composed by himself and by earlier poets as well as remarks on the occasions during which he recited such verses in the company of other scholars and poets. *Sessions of the Righteous* includes most of the *Tarjuman* but places the poems in different sequences, and within different thematic, hermeneutical, and autobiographical settings.

By the time he settled in Damascus in 1223, Ibn 'Arabi was surrounded by scholars and followers who were reading, editing, and disseminating his works. There he completed the second edition of the *Meccan Openings* as well as his classic work of mystical philosophy, *Ringstones of Wisdom.* During the same period, he produced what is known as his "Great Diwan," which brought together some 3,500 of his poetic compositions.' At the time of his death in 1240 (638 of the Islamic calendar), he was well on the way to being known as *al-shaykh al-akbar* or "the grand master" of Islamic mystical thought.

Ibn `Arabi's notoriety throughout premodern Islamic civilizations ensured that many of his works—including the *Tarjuman*—would be preserved, disseminated, argued over, and passed on through the centuries. But that same notoriety at times overshadowed the writing itself with its various controversies over—for instance—his alleged monism or pantheism, the attacks on his character and his orthodoxy leveled by the fourteenth-century Damascene preacher and jurist Ibn Taymiyya, and more recent contentions relating to Sufism, colonialism, and modernity.

Ibn 'Arabi himself offered contrasting accounts of the genesis and intent of the *Tarjuman* poems in the course of his own autobiographical and prefatory writings, and those accounts have been passed

on by subsequent generations down to the present. We might call that metaliterature "The Tale of the *Tarjuman,*" with three interrelated aspects: "The Romance of the *Tarjuman,*" "The Trial of the *Tarjuman,*" and the "Allegory of the *Tarjuman.*"

Tarjuman al-ashwaq

'I he first word of the title, which can be vocalized as either *Tarjuman* or *Turjuman,* might be rendered as translator, translation, interpreter, interpretation, discloser, disclosure, guide, or guidebook. The word is also closely related to the word for biography, *tarlama.*' For whom, we might ask, do these poems translate, and **what** might they disclose?

Arabic poetry employs more than two dozen words that in the lexicons are rendered as love, desire, passion, or longing. One of those words is *shawq* (plural *ashwaq [ash* as in "hush" + *waq* as in English "walk"]). Ibn `Arabi's *shawq* is analogous to classical Greek *pros* insofar as it was taken as a fundamental driving force within human life, art, and thought. In relationship to the finite human object, *shawq* is infinite; and the poet-lover within the poems is presented at once as the subject, victim, champion, and voice of shawq-conditioned human existence. The paradoxes of this condition—that love is both disease and cure, for example, or that the lover longs to be near the beloved, even though nearness only intensifies the longing—pervade love lyrics across many traditions. But within the broader context of Arabic poetry and song, and within the *Tarjuman* in particular, these paradoxes play on particularly acute and culturally specific associations.

In pre-Islamic and very early Islamic Arabic poetry of the sixth and seventh centuries CE, erotic themes were primarily expressed in the first movement of the classical Arabic ode *(qasida),* a metrically rigorous, end-rhymed poem that began with the *nasib,* a movement centered on remembrance of a lost beloved. In the tripartite ode common in the pre-Islamic period, the nasib could then lead into a journey-quest and culminate in a galvanizing battle boast, praise of the tribe, or panegyric to a king. Later poets tended to compose bipartite odes consisting largely of nasib and journey or nasib and panegyric.

By the end of the first century of Islam, a freestanding love poem, known as *ghazal,* was emerging. Early Arabian ghazals drew upon and intensified the nasib. The Arabic ghazal tradition could take on various voices, including the tragic mode known as `Udhri (after the Arabian tribe that produced some of its famous poets) and associated most famously with the figures of Majnun and Layla. The poet, Qays, goes mad through his love of Layla, a madness that gives him his nickname of Majnun Layla (mad or "jinned" for Layla). In the legendary biographies of Majnun, his mad love is both a cause and a result of his inability to be with her, and he ultimately perishes after love has emaciated him. He and other ghazal poet-lovers become "martyrs" to love, and early Sufi writings present them as models for the adepts who perish and, by passing away from themselves, become one with the divine beloved.

The other major style of early ghazal takes on a more urbane voice. In this style or mode, known as `Umarite after its most important early master, `Umar bin abi Rabi`a (who died ca. 700), the poet-lover not only mourns the loss of his beloved(s) but also boasts of his amatory adventures or turns his language into a form of flirtation. Yet even as the styles and subgenres of Arabic ghazal continued to evolve, one core nasib motif remained, explicitly or implicitly, at the heart of any love lyric: the poet's encounter with the *atlal-the* ruins or traces of the beloved's abandoned campsite.

The act *of poesis* emerges from the poet's decoding of the *atlal* and his realization that these are not the traces of just any camp, but of the camp struck by the beloved in her journey away from him. With that moment of recognition, the poetic voice surges. through contagion, other sites and features can take on the power I the *atlal:* the mere mention of one of the stations of the beloved's

journey away from the poet; a scent of the Eastwind that carries news of the beloved's location; the sight and scent of the moringa, desert tree associated with the beauty and grace of the beloved; the verse of an earlier poet in memory of his lost beloved, a verse that might contain a fragment of a verse of a still earlier poet. The contagion extends across space through messengers like the Eastwind and its analogues, and across time through the resonance of a verse or phrase through poems of the past.

By the tenth century CE, court circles in urban centers like Baghdad were compiling collections of ghazal lyrics and the romantic legends associated with the early Arabian poet-lovers and their beloveds, collections that culminated with the *Great Book of Songs,* a massive collection of poetry and romance narratives. t**he** author-compiler, Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 967), provided descriptions of the musical modes employed in the performance of the verses he quoted. Even though his descriptive notation does not allow a modern reconstruction of the modes and melodies indicated, it offers clear indication of the mutual permeation of poetic verses and musical performance in high Abbasid culture.

This urban literature of ghazal poetry, song, and Bedouin romance emerged parallel with the development of a variety of odes and ghazals in which the ruins of a great city, palace, or civilization took the place of the Bedouin campsite as the site and source of longing (see appendix 4 for an example). The various voices of love (tragic, triumphant, sorrowful, provocative, pious, and ribald in turn) continued to inflect the ghazal tradition. A stanzaic form known as the garland poem *(muwashshaha),* which flourished especially in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, offered yet another mold for ghazal. By the time of Ibn 'Arabi, a Persian ghazal tradition was also ascendant, and later epochs would see the emergence of ghazal traditions in Ottoman, Urdu, Punjabi, and other languages. Each of these traditions shared major themes of the Arabic ghazal, but they were also bound more specifically to a particular poetic genre."

The poetic imaginary embraced a correspondence between love and religion. Love poetry had its own version of *halal* and *haram* (allowable and prohibited, in the vocabulary of religious observance) and its own *sunna* and *shari*'*a* (sacred path and law, in the same). Love and fate served as judges and muftis (authors of legal religious opinions). The poets also performed a theology of love: just as the divine reality in its infinite depth exceeds all naming and description, so does the beloved or love itself.

No aspect of religious teachings and practice is more central to the *Tarjuman* than the hajj pilgrimage, which for those who are able to perform it marks the culmination of devotional life. At the center of the hajj experience are three rituals that carry the pilgrim back in time to the origins of Islam and of the world itself and forward to meeting the creator on the day of judgment. Pilgrims ritually circle the Ka`ba shrine that, according to Islamic tradition, was constructed by Abraham. At `Arafa, a plain and adjacent mount about twelve miles from Mecca from which the prophet Muhammad delivered his farewell address, pilgrims stand throughout the day and chant the words "here I am for you" that all souls will recite as they meet their creator. At Mina, pilgrims cast pebbles at three stone pillars and, on the holiest day of the Muslim year, reenact Abraham's sacrifice." The *Tarjuman* returns time and again to these rites as it articulates the experiential dimensions of *shawq.* At the same time, it mixes the stations of the hajj and the stations of the beloved's journey, tying together the poetic and religious solemnities of place, and establishing an implicit homology between the poet's wandering from site to site in pursuit of the beloved and a pilgrim's station-by-station movement during the pilgrimage.

Just as ritual reenactment can collapse time, bringing the pilgrim back to the origins of the faith and bringing those sacred origins **into** the present, so too does the practice of *hadith* transmission,

which becomes a core element within the *Tarjuman*'s poetics. A hadith consists of a report of the words or actions of the prophet Muhammad or his companions, along with the transmission genealogy *(isna d):* the chain of transmitters who passed the report, generation to generation, from the birth of Islam down to the time **of the final individual** in the chain. Islamic culture in the thirteenth century was both literate and oral, and hadith transmission linked **the** two modes. Although the written hadith compilations were **considered** authoritative by most Sunni Muslims, the pious still traveled widely to hear oral hadiths from a living transmitter who himself had heard them orally from a predecessor back to the time of Muhammad. Such a practice emphasized the vast temporal distance between the Prophet and the present but also, through nested levels of embedded quotation, collapsed it: at the moment of hearing a hadith transmitted, the hearer was hearing the words of the Prophet as if they were in a certain sense being spoken live. Early on, the *hadith-isnād* model was appropriated by other literary (and not necessarily religious) genres. Poetry anthologists, historians, and storytellers would provide *isnāds* for the verses and stories they recounted. In the *Tarjumān,* the poet presents the words of the beloved or her companions as transmitted through a chain of natural phenomena or interior emotive states stretching back to the primordial moments of early Islam, or back further to the garden of Eden, or even to before the creation of the world.

Of the lyric mode of expression, literary theorist Northrop Frye wrote that the poet normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else: "a spirit of Nature, a muse, a personal friend, a lover, a god, a personified abstraction or a natural object." In the case of the *Tarjumān,* we might add to that list the critic or scold *(al-'ādhil)* and note that in defending himself against the critic, the poet is also addressing himself, the critic within. Here Ibn 'Arabi animates the conventional image of the scold in medieval Arabic poetry and brings us into its heart. The poems of the *Tarjumān* destabilize the notion of a single addressee, shifting from the beloved, to muse, to the personification of beauty, to friend, to critic, to the interiorized critic within the poet, to an element of nature, to all lovers everywhere, and through all of the above in either singular or plural, masculine or feminine. Both the Qur'an and classical Arabic poetry (each in its own distinct way) contain radical shifts in voice, constantly engaging the reader in adjusting to apostrophic changes in addresser and addressee. Indeed, classical Arabic rhetoricians considered this feature, called *iltifat* (turning, shiftIng, wrapping), a distinctive and audacious aspect of Arabic expression. In the *Tarjumān,* the persona of the poet-lover also shifts. It presents itself conventionally as male but may speak in the first-person singular (I) or plural (we), even as it speaks *to* various personae, including itself (within self-address), or *of* various personae (including itself).

Take, for example, the first verses of the *Tarjumān* where the poet ponders where "they are," what "they know," and whether "they are safe." Readers familiar with the Arabic tradition will easily infer that the verse evokes the beloved and the other women of **her** tribe traveling away from the poet, but will also understand that the plural serves as a metonym for the beloved. At the same time, an echo can be heard of the same question as addressed by poets of other beloveds and, more widely, within the world of *dhawq* conjured by the poet, by other past and present star-crossed lovers.

In other poems the poet shifts from the singular to the plural into himself. From early in the tradition, the singular/plural shifting was more than a movement between two synonyms. That we assume a specific tonality that contrasts with the "I," often taking on the possibility of speaking as lovers generally or the duality of mutuality between lover and beloved ("we" were in love, "we" were separated against our will), though the poet's effort to express or create such mutuality can be ironized or undermined by the **poem** itself. The "we" can also include the wider group of which the **poet** was, and poetically purports to still be, a part: family, clan, nation, and civilization—that is, the group to which the poet belonged, longs to still belong to, and poetically strives to belongto again.

Similarly, the stations of the beloved in her journey from the poet can spur longing for those sites of earlier happiness, for a homeland, a sense of belonging, and a lost youth.

The beloved can be male or female, pubescent or postpubescent, married or unmarried, slave or free, divine or human.

In the *Tarjuman,* the beloved is primarily imagined as female, but there are significant appearances of the beloved as male as well, and sometimes the gender switch can take place within a single poem. The *Tarjuman* consists of ever-repeated acts of reenchantment as the beloved is brought back to the present and the withered world is revived. But the poems are also fevered with the knowledge that such a rebirth can only last an instant and must be constantly repeated.

The Tale of the *Tarjuman*

In what most scholars believe to be his first preface to the *Tarjuman,* Ibn 'Arabi tells us that the poems were inspired by a young woman named Nizam, who was the daughter and niece, respectively, of two Persian scholars, a brother and sister, who had settled in Mecca. I've rendered the word *nizam—which* in Arabic means "ordered arrangement"—as "harmony" to reflect the wordplay within the poem and the ambiguity between its possible meanings as a common noun or a female name. Nizam's reputed role in the inspiration of Ibn `Arabi's poetry has drawn comparisons to the role of Beatrice in Dante's poetry and thought."

The poems of the *Tarjuman* do indeed contain erotic dialectic between the Arab poet-lover persona, a "son of Yemen" as he refers to himself, and a beloved who represents for him the quintessential non-Arab (`ajami) civilization of Persia. In addition to the personal affection Ibn 'Arabi may have had for Nizam, the *Tarjuman*'s Arabic-Persian dynamic may reflect the wider cultural symbiosis within thirteenth-century Islamic civilization. Although Ibn 'Arabi never acknowledges knowing Persian or listening to Persian poetry, he was a man of profound linguistic gifts, someone who had Persian poets and scholars among his companions and who spent considerable time in Anatolia where Persian flourished as an administrative and literary language. He would not have been impervious to contemporary developments in Persian ghazal and Persian-language Sufi literature.

In his other preface, Ibn 'Arabi relates that while he was circumambulating the temple of the Ka`ba, some poetry came to his mind. He left the paved central area around the Ka`ba to avoid disturbing other pilgrims and recited the verses on the sandy periphery. Although they have been included as poem 1 in the *Tarjuman,* Ibn Arabi does not claim authorship of them, leaving their author Indeterminate.

No sooner had he begun reciting, Ibn 'Arabi tells us, than he felt **a jolt** between his shoulders "from a hand softer than undyed silk." When he turned around he found there before him a maiden *(fariya,* an unmarried woman, usually a young female slave or freed slave). He tells us that she was from among the Rum, meaning that the was from areas of Anatolia, which were or had been under the control of the Byzantine Roman Empire. At the time, the word could designate Christians specifically or (as was the case with the poet Jalal al-Din Rumi who settled in Anatolia in the early thirteenth century) Muslims living in the former Christian territory. T*he jairiya* fiercely criticizes each of the four verses, refuting each part of them and rebuking Ibn 'Arabi for reciting verses unbecoming of a personage of his stature. When Ibn 'Arabi asks her name, *the* responds that he could call her by the nickname Qurrat an endearment that means "comfort for the eye."

Interpreters and translators have commonly viewed Qurrat al-'Ayn as being identical with Nizam. Indeed, Ibn Arabi's suggestion **at the** end of his Qurrat al-'Ayn account that he would come to **know** the young woman well seems to support that reading, as does the similarity in language in his homages to the young woman's beauty, artistry, and wisdom in both the Nizam and Qurrat al-Ayn

prefaces. However, Ibn 'Arabi defines Nizam emphatically as being of the finest Persian heritage but describes Qurrat al-Ayn as of Christian or Muslim Anatolian background. Ibn Arabi's fascination with Christian cultic practices and theology runs throughout his writings, and allusions to Christian ritual and Trinitarian debate can be found in several poems of the *Tarjuman,* allusions that are expanded upon in his commentary. Qurrat al-Ayn, though *a jariya* of possible Christian background, might well have converted to Islam, and thus it would not be surprising to find her visiting the Ka`ba."

Was Nizam a historical personage either as a cherished acquaintance or wife of the poet, or was she a personification of beauty? She may have been both. The social detail of her family of illustrious scholars was quite specific, and had Ibn 'Arabi invented the story, it would have been easily refuted by his contemporaries. Yet the depiction of her in the preface and the allusions to a Nizam figure in the poems place her within a visionary imaginary as beauty, eloquence, and grace par excellence. Similarly, was Qurrat al-Ayn a historical personage, and if so, was she Nizam? Was she a visionary apparition? Or was she a development of a long literary history of jariya-savants at the Ka`ba, a literary motif that makes a strong appearance in Ibn Arabi's own *Sessions of the Righteous?*" These choices may not be mutually exclusive. The romance of the *Tarjuman* is powerfully told, and because Ibn Arabi's writings about the *Tarjuman* are, like everything he wrote, brilliantly associative, elusive, and tied into everything else he has written, these questions are not likely to be resolved at the level of historical biography, any more than the accounts of Qays and Layla and other famous lovers and poets gathered in the *Great Book of Songs* exhaust amenable to distinctions between historicity and legend. However, while the compiler of the *Great Book of Songs* wove together traditions regarding the poets and lovers of the past to form romances, in the case of the *Tarjuman,* Ibn al `Arabi served as his own romancier."

No sooner had it begun to circulate than the *Tarjuman* was coned with controversy. A jurist in Aleppo had rebuked Ibn Arabi's claim made in the Nizam preface that the erotic homages to her reflected a realm of spiritual love and refined and intimate mystical knowledge or *connaissance (ma'rifa).* The critic suggested that ibn 'Arabi, who was known as a man of religion, was attempting to hlde the true nature of the poems behind an allegorical façade. Two of Ibn Arabi's companions appealed to Ibn 'Arabi to respond to the criticism, and he did so in the form of a short, versified apologia, followed by a lengthy verse-by-verse commentary on the poems that he titled *Priceless Treasures.*" An assembly of religious and literary notables convened to adjudicate the controversy over the poems, during which Ibn Adim (d. 1262)—another jurist, who would become one of the most important historical chroniclers of medieval Syria—recited a large part of the commentary in the presence of both the poet and his critic. Ibn 'Arabi adds that after the event concluded, the critic declared himself persuaded that the wins were indeed allegorical expressions for the Sufi's love for and Tourney toward the divine beloved.

Priceless Treasures inaugurated a new tradition of extensive mystical commentaries on Arabic love poetry. That tradition bears slmilarities to Song of Songs commentaries in medieval Judaism **and** Christianity, and remarkable structural similarities to the Spanish poet John of the Cross's commentary on his erotic poem "Cantle of the Soul," which was modeled on the biblical Song of Songs (although there is little chance that John would have had access to Ibn `Arabi's work in either the original or translation). Yet there is a twist, as there always seems to be in Ibn `Arabi's accounts of the *Tarjuman.* While the Aleppan jurist criticized Ibn 'Arabi for disavowing the erotic nature of his poems, the maiden at the Ka`ba rebuked the first poem for not being extravagant enough in its expression of desire, that is, for not culminating in the complete passing away of the poet-lover in love for the beloved.

Ibn 'Arabi may be best known for his mystical philosophy, which took shape around the notion of *wahdat al-wujud* ("the unity of existence"), although he nowhere employed that phrase. The ontological and metaphysical aspects of such thought are not addressed explicitly in the *Tarjuman.* However, several of the poems do contain intimations of the Sufi notion of "mystical union." In Sufi thought, God cannot be known as an object: the infinite existence of the divine reality exceeds the knower-known duality and cannot be described or even referenced in human language. The goal of the religious and mystical path is the annihilation or passing away *(fana)* of the ego-self in union with the divine beloved. For Ibn 'Arabi, the key sacred source expounding such a union comes in the form of a "divine saying" (a hadith that, instead of reporting words or actions *of Muhammad,* reports words of God addressed *to* Muhammad). In this saying, the divine speaker states that nothing is dearer to him than his servant drawing near through devotions above and beyond those required of the believer. When the servant draws near, "I [the divine speaker] am the hearing with which he hears, the seeing with which he sees, the hands with which he holds, and the feet with which he walks."

In a famous opening passage from *Ringstones of Wisdom,* Ibn `Arabi presents the human being in its archetypal state, represented by the prelapsarian Adam, as the "polishing of the mirror" that is the world. Insofar as that mirror is polished, it reflects the image of God, and in that image the divine and the human are one. For the human being in space and time, such polishing occurs at the moment of *fana',* when a person passes away from the ego-self. At that tint the divine persona manifests itself in the polished mirror of the heart. Because God or "the Real" is infinite, beyond space and time, its manifestation in space and time lasts only for a moment. The ever-new moment the manifestation changes. Whoever attempts to hold onto the image locks himself into the dead husk of that manifestation and precludes himself from receiving new manifestations of the divine. The goal is to let go of the previous image in order to be receptive to the divine appearance the next moment within the polished mirror of the heart. A bittersweet dynamism haunts the *Tarjuman:* the beloved(s) or personified embodiments of Beauty can never be possessed. The beloved appears to the poet m d in her apparition he passes away, only to find himself cast back into the world of time and loss.

***

Was Ibn 'Arabi a Sufi poet? He was certainly a contemplative mystic *(mu'tabir,* "one who observes and ponders") and Sufi. He also composed a large number of Sufi poems, that is, poems that are imbued with the vocabulary of Sufi psychology, cosmology, and metaphysics. Yet the poems of the *Tarjuman* do not fit neatly into that category. Had Ibn 'Arabi not been known as their author, they might not have been classified as Sufi poems, although they would have been appreciated by Sufis, who were steeped in the tradition of ghazal and nasib. Many cherished poems within the Islamic tradition—including the *Tarjuman* as well as poems by Ibn `Arabi's younger contemporaries, al-Farid and al-Shushtari, not to mention a treasury of Persian, Ottoman, and Urdu ghazals—tread a fine line het ween sacred and profane. That phenomenon makes perfect sense from the perspective of Ibn Arabi's conception of *shawq. Shawq,* eros, is infinite. It cannot be confined into mutually exclusive categories of human and divine. At the most basic level, the *shawq* at the heart of pre-Islamic and Islamic love poetry may carry within it an inherently mystical dimension. In *shawq,* the normal rules of logic are suspended, and the human being opens onto the unlimited, a force that cannot be contained in space or time. Like the divine reality, *shawq* kills and brings to life, exists without and within, is both beyond the world and deep in the heart of the lover.

Much of the reception to the *Tarjuman* has been driven by Ibn Arabi's commentary, which is focused on tying the poetry to Sufi psychology and cosmology and which distracts attention from the poems as poetry. Yet the mystical thought touched upon in the commentary emerged in fully developed

form decades later with such works as the *Meccan Openings* and *Ringstones of Wisdom.* It may be more accurate to view that poetry as foreshadowing the later teachings. Far from being versified philosophy or attractive illustrations of his philosophical ideas arrived at independently, the poems of the *Tarjuman* were in a very real sense generative of Ibn `Arabi's vision of existence as a shawq-driven process born of the tension between a creator's longing to create and the paradoxical longing of the nonexistent creature's to be and, once existent, to return to its source.

Translating the *Tarjuman*

In 1911 the British scholar Reynold Nicholson published what was both the first translation of the *Tarjuman* as well as the first printed edition of it; a pioneering work that has been read and appreciated over the decades. The more recent history of *Tarjuman* translations began with the 1977 Spanish rendition of Vicente Cantarino, and hat time the *Tarjuman* has received generous attention from Spanish, French, and German translators. (An account and appre**iation** of this translation history is found in appendix 7.) This volume constitutes the first edition and first complete English translation in of the *Tarjuman* since Nicholson.

translate classical Arabic poetry entails finding a balance between conservation and compensation. Each poem of the *Tarjuman,* as is the case with most classical Arabic poetry, follows one of about a dozen standard meters, and the poetry's pulse is quickened by the tension between the meter and the syntax. When the syntactical pause falls in the middle of a metrical foot, it creates a tension; when it falls at the end of a foot it provides a realistic. Arabic meters, like those of classical Greek and Latin, are quantitative instead of accentual. (A syllable is long if it includes a vowel or a short vowel followed by two consonants.) Arabic meters can employ metrical feet of two, three, four, or five syllables." To offer one example, I present below the opening verse of poem 11 from the *Tarjuman.* It is in the meter known as *tawil, which* is based on alternating three- and four-syllable feet. The three syllable foot can follow one of two patterns: --- or - ---. The four-syllable foot can also follow one of two patterns: - ¨ or ----; and as with other meters, a line can end with a full foot or a shortened (catalectic) one.

The first verse of poem 11 reads as follows in my translation:

> Gentle now, doves
>   of the sprigberry and
>
> moringa, don't add your
>   sighs to my heart-ache

Here below is a scansion, transliteration, and word-by-word gloss of the verse:

_ - - / _ - - - /   _ - _ / _   - - -

ala ya hamamati l-arakati   w a l-bani

oh! O doves   of the sprigberry and moringa

_ - _ / _ _ _ - / _ -   - /   - --

taraffaqna la tu(lifna bi-sh-shajwi   ashjani

be gentle don't increase by your lament my sorrows

In addition, the classical Arabic poem, however long, follows a single end rhyme from beginning to end, another feature that is not amenable to modern English poetry. Equally impervious to direct translation *is jinas,* the combination of etymological play, punning, and repetitions of consonants that

marked what was called the "new style" of poetry in ninth-century Baghdad and that recurs in several of the *Tarjuman* poems.

Classical Arabic poetics is also based on the independent line of verse; enjambment is rare, and end rhymes provide a strong sense of closure to each verse. That verse-by-verse independence engages the reader in bridging the semantic and rhetorical gap between verses, a gap intensified by the *Tarjuman's* frequent if not incessant apostrophic turning. I employ punctuation sparingly to preserve this critical aspect of Ibn Arabi's poetic voice. I have eschewed end-stops altogether, with line breaks, capitalization, and spacing serving as guides where needed.

I have used stanzas of two, three, or four lines, depending on the poem, to correspond to an Arabic verse. I have numbered the Arabic verses and their parallel English stanzas at intervals of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30. On rare occasions I have found it necessary to condense the translation of two Arabic verses into one stanza or to expand the translation of one verse into two stanzas. In those cases the design of the facing-page text has been adjusted to make these adjustments transparent. The verse numbers in the English correspond to their numbered Arabic counterparts in those cases as well, in order to clarify the relationship between the two pages.

The poems of the *Tarjuman* redound with place-names and the names of various trees, bushes, and herbs that have no direct equivalent in anglophone lands. Each specific place and plant is embedded in a web of literary, cultural, and religious associations that topography and botany but extend them mythopoetically. For the Bedouin, or for the pilgrim traveling through the arid regions of central and northern Arabia, the herbs, shrubs, flowers, trees they encountered took on a sensual impact that those of us from moderate climes can scarcely imagine. To approach an oasis, even an oasis consisting of little more than a few trees and shrubs, is to be overcome with the intense fragrance of wet earth and of the flora that grow there. I have resisted simplifying matters by removing the specific plant names, a simplification that would strip the poetry of a core element. However, in order to fit those names naturally within the English cadence of the translation, I employ an adapted and flexible transliteration that allows the Arabic words to fit within an English accentual rhythm and acoustics, with limit making the name in question unrecognizable to Arabic speakers. In some cases, I translate place-names on the basis of their root meanings (Sand Hill), and plant names where there is an appropriate English equivalent (tamarisk, Tote, and artemisia).

A similar rationale guides the approach to prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, many of whom have biblical analogues. I employ the Arabic, Qur'anic names rather than the common English versions of the biblical names. Musa rather than Moses, Sulayman rather than Solomon, 'ha rather than Jesus, and Idris, the Qur'anic prophet who was associated with the biblical Enoch by Islamic tradition. Preserving the Arabic allows those names to fit into a translation that includes many names of Arabic lovers and beloveds as well (such as Qays, Layla, Mayya, and Ghaylan), and, in the natural flow of the verse, it gives readers a palpable sense of the power these words hold for readers, or listeners, in Arabic. It also serves to mark the distinctiveness of Qur'anic prophetic figures vis-à-vis their biblical counterparts. While the Qur'anic and biblical accounts can overlap in substance, they can also diverge, sometimes starkly. The Qur'anic Isa, like the biblical Jesus, is the messiah *(masih)* and, according to hadith accounts, will return at the end of times. Like his biblical counterpart, he was born of a virgin mother and raised the dead to life. In contrast to his biblical counterpart, however, he is not considered the Son of God.

* * *

In a short introductory remark to a poem that he presents in *Sessions of the Righteous,* Ibn 'Arabi provides a key to his own understanding of himself as a translator of desires. Eros *(shawq, ashwaq)*

comes in two forms or "languages": longing for what is in the past, or distant; and longing for what is near, or at hand, or for what one already has, which Ibn 'Arabi calls *ishtiyaq. The* introduction presents the poem as, in fact, authored by the fully personified Ashwaq: "Among the poems that the Ashwaq composed *(nazamat)* in the language of *ishtiyaq* are what I said regarding Nizam. . ." Nizam emerges here not only as the subject of the poem that follows but as the very act of composing it. In theological terms, she transcends the poem that is about her, but she is also immanent within it. As a muse, Nizam is not only the beloved who inspires the poet's verses but the creative spark within them.

Meaning in *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* is in constant movement—like b[eings,] like the longings that "come upon" us as voices, apparitions, and emotions; like the beloved in her journey from station to station; like the mystic's heart being transformed each moment; like the ever-changing manifestations of the beloved in the mirror of a **human** heart. To be is to be moved from site to site, from word to **word,** from self to self, ever lost and ever regained—always in translation. The Poet, lover, and beauty itself are in a state of constant bewilderment, which forms the subject of the first poem of the *Tarjuman,* **recu**rs throughout it, and culminates in the final poem of the collection.

Example:

Bewildered

I knew if they knew

    whose heart they've taken

my heart knew which

    high-ridge track they follow

you see them safe
    or perishing?

The lords of love are in love

    ensnared, bewildered

Poem 1. This poem, and with it the *Tarjuman* as a whole, begins with the poet asking where his beloved and her company might be in their journey away from him. That motif establishes the *Tarjuman*'s first-order poetics in which the lover is voiced as male, and the beloved primarily (although not exclusively) as female. The poet may refer to the beloved in the singular or the plural. Thus, the plural "if they knew" refers to a specific group, the women of the tribe who, accompanied by male camel-drivers or guides, would travel together, shielded from the elements and from the gaze within their howdahs. "They" can then refer to the ensemble or to the beloved specifically. In many *Tarjuman* poems, the lover has his own ensemble with the companions who are asked to share the poet's grief.

Verse 4 introduces the bewilderment that inflects poems throughout the *Tarjuman*. Lovers, referred to grandly as the "lords of love" *(arbab al-hawa),* are ensnared and bewildered by that which they

should master. In the *Tarjuman,* bewilderment comes in many forms and goes by many names, as the poet and even beauty itself find themselves perplexed, speechless, astonished, or lost. <>

THE DISCOURSES: REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY, SUFISM, THEOLOGY, AND LITERATURE—VOLUME ONE by al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī, edited and translated by Justin Stearns [Library of Arabic Literature, NYU Press, 9780814764572] A bilingual Arabic-English edition

Wide-ranging essays on Moroccan history, Sufism, and religious life

Al-Hasan al-Yusi was arguably the most influential and well-known Moroccan intellectual figure of his generation. In 1084/1685, at the age of roughly fifty-four, and after a long and distinguished career, this Amazigh scholar from the Middle Atlas began writing a collection of short essays on a wide variety of subjects. Completed three years later and gathered together under the title Discourses on Language and Literature (*al-Muhadarat fi l-adab wa-l-lughah*), they offer rich insight into the varied intellectual interests of an ambitious and gifted Moroccan scholar, covering subjects as diverse as genealogy, theology, Sufism, history, and social mores.

In addition to representing the author's intellectual interests, **THE DISCOURSES** also includes numerous autobiographical anecdotes, which offer valuable insight into the history of Morocco, including the transition from the Saadian to the Alaouite dynasty, which occurred during al-Yusi's lifetime. Translated into English for the first time, **THE DISCOURSES** offers readers access to the intellectual landscape of the early modern Muslim world through an author who speaks openly and frankly about his personal life and his relationships with his country's rulers, scholars, and commoners.

Excerpt: In 1084/1685, at the age of roughly fifty-four, and after a long and distinguished career during which he had become arguably the most influential and well-known intellectual figure of his

generation in Morocco, al-Hasan, an Amazigh scholar from the Middle Atlas, began writing a collection of essays on a wide variety of subjects. Completed three years later and gathered in a book titled **The Discourses on Language and Literature (al-Muhadaratfi l-adab wa-l-lughah)**, they offer rich insights into the varied intellectual interests of an ambitious and gifted eleventh/seventeenth-century Moroccan scholar, covering subjects as diverse as genealogy, theology, Sufism, literature, and sociology. The book is not only representative of the author's intellectual interests—some of which, including the fields of logic and epistemology, received short shrift—but also includes numerous autobiographical anecdotes, passages about the recent history of Morocco that had lived through, and passages about the people he had met and the places to which he had traveled. Today, The Discourses presents the reader with the rare opportunity of gaining access to the intellectual landscape of the early modern Muslim world through an author who speaks openly and frankly about his personal life and his relationships with rulers, scholars, and commoners. Morocco's complicated history during al-Yusi's lifetime heightens the value of the work even as it requires the contemporary reader to acquire an overview of the general features of Moroccan political history.

Al-Yusi's life spanned the gap between the two dynasties that have governed Morocco from the sixteenth century AD until today, the Sa'dis (927-1069/15211659) and the Alawites (1075/1664-present), both of which managed to preserve Morocco's independence from the expanding power of the Ottoman Empire. These two dynasties claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, implicitly affirming their Arab origins, unlike the Almoravids, Almohads, and Merinids, the major Amazigh dynasties that had ruled Morocco from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. Beginning with the death of the Sa`dis' strongest and most famous ruler, Ahmad al-Mansur, in the plague of 1012/1603, the Sa'dis' control over Morocco splintered and regional leaders launched varyingly successful bids for power to preserve or contest Sa'di rule before the dynasty's last ruler died in Marrakesh in 1659. During most of these five decades, much of Morocco was outside the control of the descendants of al-Mansur as they fought with each other and with a variety of rebels. One such rebel was the messianic

ibn Abi Mahalli (d. 1022 /1613), of whose career offers an incisive critique in The Discourses. More lasting opposition to the Sa'dis was presented by a number of Sufi orders, predominantly those at Dila' in the Middle Atlas, where al Yusi lived, studied, and taught for fifteen years, and High in the Anti-Atlas, where Sidi 'Ali of Tazeroualt (d. 1070/1659-60) built his own political center in the 1040-50s/1630-40s before being eclipsed by the rising power of Dila' in the 1050s /165os. The importance of these political centers was equaled by the rising importance of other orders as centers of learning and scholarship, such as the Hamziyyah-Ayyashiyyah in the High Atlas and the Nasiriyyah in the Dar`ah Valley in the south of Morocco. This was in a century when the traditional urban centers of learning at Fez and Marrakesh were overtaken, if not eclipsed, or at the very least reduced to just two among many sites of intellectual production. It was also a century when the political, economic, and intellectual contribution of what has been called "Saharan Morocco" —those areas lying south of the High Atlas—played a much greater role than they had in the previous several centuries, or would in subsequent ones.

Under the Sa`dis in the sixteenth century, Moroccan rulers had extended their control of the Saharan trade routes, which in previous centuries carried travelers as well as merchants trading in gold, salt, and slaves. This expansion had culminated in Ahmad al-Mansur's sending of an expedition composed largely of Moriscos and Christian converts equipped with firearms to conquer the West African Songhay Empire in 999/1591. This conquest brought the cities of Timbuktu and Gao under Moroccan control, but one that only lasted a few decades in any meaningful sense. The strengthening of the political ties between West Africa and Morocco's urban centers north of the Atlas resulted in

the trade route in the south of Morocco gaining in importance and realigning from Sijilmasah in the Tifilalt region to the Dar`ah Valley, farther west, where the Nasiri order was founded in the seventeenth century at Tamgrut, south of Zagora. Although both the Sa'di and the Alawite dynasties came to power north of the Atlas and are remembered today for their imperial projects in Meknes, Fez, and Marrakesh, both began in the Tifilalt and then moved north.

Al-Yusi's education was shaped foundationally by his stay at Tamgrut and his long relationship with Abu Abd Allah Mahammad ibn Nash (d. 1085/1674) who first inducted him into the Shadhili order of Sufism. To understand Morocco in the seventeenth century, and the political and intellectual nature of the world that al-Yusi moved through and wrote about, we need to grasp this orientation toward the south. Doing so not only corrects the modern-day marginalization of this part of Morocco, it also cautions us against judging Morocco to be at the intellectual margins of the Muslim world in the early modern period. As Khaled El-Rouayheb has persuasively argued in a recent book, it was precisely during the seventeenth century that the Arab Ottoman lands—and Egypt and Syria in particular—experienced an intellectual revival due to an influx of scholars from the so-called geographical margins: The importance of Moroccan scholarship in fact reached far beyond its borders, into the central Ottoman territories to the East.

The lands under Ottoman rule play only a minor role in The Discourses, due no doubt in part to al-Yusi not having traveled east before composing it; he did perform the pilgrimage to Mecca in the years before his death, but subsequently barely interacted with the scholars in Egypt and in the Hijaz. The one extended episode of The Discourses that is set in Egypt details a meeting between the leader of the Dila' lodge, Abu Abd Allah Mahammad al-Hajj (d. 1o82/1671), and the famed author of the history of al-Andalus, Abu 'Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Maqqari (d. 1041/1632), who had previously lived in Fez for many years. Besides this and what Mahammad al-Hajj related to al-Yusi of al-Maqqari's own experiences in Egypt, discussion of the contemporary eastern Mediterranean—as opposed to during the Abbasid period—is completely absent.

The world al-Yusi describes also almost entirely ignores Morocco's northern neighbors, Spain and Portugal. This omission is especially striking considering the establishment of Christian European enclaves on the Moroccan coast in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries and the mass expulsion of Moriscos from Spain in 1018-23/1609-14, many of whom found their way to Morocco, settling in the north of the country, including in Sale, Rabat's sister city. It was in Sale, during the first decades of al-Yusi's life, that an independent pirate state emerged, composed in large part of former Moriscos and Christian converts to Islam.' This is in stark contrast to mentions of these events in the works of such figures as the Morisco Ahmad al-Hajari (d. after 1051/1641-42) and to the careers of the Jewish Pallache family, whose members in this period were almost constantly involved in economic and political affairs with European powers.' Al-Yusi's interests, on the contrary, and thus also the content of The Discourses, are focused on Morocco's internal history, and its intellectual and spiritual landscapes.

The author

Al-Hasan al-Yusi was born into the Amazigh tribe of the Al-Yusi in 1040-41/1631 in the Fezaz region of the Middle Atlas of Morocco. His mother died early in his life, a loss he describes in his Fahrasah, or account of his studies, as having a great impact on him, leading him to focus on his studies and to ask his father to send him away to further his learning.' His father sent him south, where he studied first in Marrakesh, Sijilmasah, and Tarundant, and then, much more importantly, in the Dar`ah Valley south of Zagora at Tamgrut, where he studied with Abu 'Abd Allah Mahammad ibn Nasir, the founder of the Nãsiriyyah branch of the Shadhili order. That Sufi order and its branches, together

with the Qadiri order, have dominated the social and intellectual landscape of Morocco from the seventh/thirteenth century until today.

Al Yusi returned to the Middle Atlas and settled at the Dila' za- wiyah, or lodge, which was in the process of becoming the central political power in northern Morocco. He was based at the Dila' lodge for fifteen years, during which time he married, had children, and solidified his status as a major scholar. In 1079/1668, Rashid ibn al-Sharif (d. 1082/1672), the first ruler of the rising Alawite dynasty, defeated the Dilã'iyyah, razed their lodge, and brought and other scholars to Fez. Al-Yusi enjoyed generally good relations with the first two rulers of the new Alawite dynasty, but he deeply mourned the destruction of the Dila' lodge and wrote a long poem lamenting its demise.

For the next decade and a half, al-Yusi moved between teaching in Fez, Tetouan, and Marrakesh. In 1095/1684, he was sent by the second Alawite ruler, Moulay Ismail, to live near the ruins of the Dila' lodge, where he spent three years. It was here, where he had been happiest years before, that he wrote The Discourses, and it was also from here that he wrote a letter to Moulay Ismail admonishing him publicly for some of his policies, including his disarming of several major tribes!' Notwithstanding this critical letter (which added substantially to its author's fame), and a subsequent exchange with the ruler, al-Yusi seems to have remained on favorable terms with the ruling family." In 1101/1690, he undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca with Moulay Ismall's son al-Mu`taim.

In 1102./1691, shortly after his return from the east, al-Yusi died in his hometown of Tamzizit and was buried there. His body was later moved to a tomb near Sefrou. His influence in Morocco was substantial, not only through his many written works, but also because some of his many students spread his teachings east to Egypt and the Levant."

THE DISCOURSES and its intellectual context

THE DISCOURSES does not fall easily within any given genre. In it, al-Yusi moves seamlessly from history to poetry, from Sufism to personal anecdote, from grammar to theology. For the modern reader, especially one who has not read widely in Islamic intellectual history, The Discourses therefore poses a variety of challenges, not the least of which is understanding why cared about the things he did. A brief and necessarily insufficient survey of the major intellectual trends of his time will be useful.

Al-Yusi belonged to the Shadhili Sufi order—named after its putative founder, Abu l-Hasan al-Shadhili (d. 656/1258)—which had been revived in Morocco by al Jazuli (d. 869/1465) in the ninth/fifteenth century; to the Ash`ari school of theology, which had been introduced in the Maghrib in the fifth/eleventh century; and to the Sunni Malik" school of jurisprudence, which had dominated the Muslim West since the same period.' Whereas these affiliations may be distinct, al-Yusi hardly experienced them that way. In seventeenth-century Morocco, and throughout the premodern Muslim world, the study and practice of jurisprudence and theology—not to mention logic, medicine, and grammar—were carried out by scholars who were to varying degrees associated with Sufi orders. These scholars brought the focus of these orders on disciplining the desires of the body and on cultivating an awareness of the immanence of the Divine to their understanding of how to organize society and interpret the natural world. This understanding of Sufism as a coherent method to interpret and synthesize jurisprudence and theology had arguably first reached Morocco with al-Ghazali's (d. 502/1111) Revival of the Religious Sciences (Ihya' 'ulum al-din) in the sixth/ twelfth century, an arrival often associated with Ibn Tumart's Almohad movement, and one mentioned in passing in The Discourses itself. The extent to which a scholar should focus on mystical as opposed to more worldly scholarship was a personal issue for al-Yusi, and in a striking anecdote in The Definitive Collection of Rulings Regarding the Sciences (al-Qanun fia ahkam al-'ilm)—his book on

knowledge, teaching, and studying—he reflected on his own desire to turn his pack on his social responsibilities and devote himself to spiritual practice:

> In the time that I kept company with our teacher, the exemplar Abu `Abd Allah ibn Nasir, Exalted God have mercy on him, my ego incited me to occupy myself solely with religious devotion, to travel only for spiritual purposes, and to give up teaching. He did not agree with this, so I asked him one day, "Which is better, knowledge or mystical understanding?" "Mystical understanding," he replied, and I said, "Why then do we not busy ourselves with those things that bring it about?" And he replied, "Mystical understanding is an allotment, and whoever it has been allotted to will receive it. In our time, I have not seen anything better than teaching knowledge."
>
> I spent some time in Fez in the days of Rashid ibn al-Sharif. I taught and was well compensated for doing so. I would ride to his court, eat his food, and dress like the others, but I became troubled by this state of affairs and planned to flee and travel the world, leaving my family in the care of their Great and Mighty Creator. I mentioned this to our teacher Abu Muhammad `Abd al-Qadir ibn 'Ali al-Fasi, and he said to me, "If this took place in the proper fashion, it would be possible, but I am afraid that you would do it out of vain desire and therefore find doing so to be without profit." Because of this, I gave up my plan. What he was referring to is the fact that if the worshipper moves toward Exalted God, then he is a worshipper of Exalted God, who will then help him and care for him. But if he moves due to his ego then he is a worshipper of his ego, and he will give himself over to it and will perish along with it.
>
> Al Yusi uses this anecdote as an occasion to stress the importance of having a teacher to guide one through complicated matters, and consoles himself by noting that while abandoning one's family to focus on God may have been appropriate for al-Ghazall and al-Shadhili, both the mystic and the scholar have roles to play, and while the former is nobler, the latter is of greater use to God.

A number of Moroccan Sufi saints appear in The Discourses, including those who brazenly rejected religious rituals and are remembered principally for their ecstatic sayings. It was profoundly devoted to his spiritual teachers and, from what we can tell from his writings, to developing his own spiritual practice, but he was also deeply critical of those Sufis who demonstrated a desire for political power or social authority. This is perhaps unsurprising given the political unrest of his time. Yet, in his analysis of the dangers of the ego, al-Yusi not only critiques such prominent cases as the rebel Ibn Abi Mahalli (d. 1022 /1613), who had messianic pretensions, he also criticizes the more systemic abuses within Sufi communities, notably those leaders who mislead their followers or deceive them in hopes of temporal gain and social prestige. It needs to be emphasized that al-Yusi's conservatism was one of principled critique and not of conformity. His suspicion of Sufis who sought temporal power was balanced by his sense that a person of principle, such as himself, ought to hold authority to account. This impulse runs through both The Discourses and the letters he wrote in the last years of his life to the ruler Moulay Ismail calling on him to live up to the example of rule offered by the four righteous caliphs who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad.' Similarly, his critique of abuses should not distract from his discussion of the numerous prominent Sufis who appear in the pages of The Discourses, presenting a far-flung interconnected web of spiritual devotion to God that united the Baghdad of the third/ninth century with the Cairo of the ninth/ fifteenth century and the Morocco of the five hundred years preceding al-Yusi himself.

On the theological front, the reader of The Discourses will repeatedly encounter the doctrine of occasionalism, central to the Ash`ari school to which al-Yusi belonged, which holds that God is the only causative agent of everything that occurs (this doctrine could easily be associated with the imperative to place one's trust in God, which is prominent within Sufi circles, but also often found outside them). Proponents of Ash`arism, which included to varying degrees the vast majority of

Maliki jurists in North and West Africa in the eleventh/seventeenth century, saw occasionalism as an elaboration of a belief in the unity and oneness of God and opposed it to the belief in secondary or natural causation that they attributed to philosophers!' Al-Yusi's repeated engagement with occasionalism, particularly in the section of The Discourses where he discusses contagion, deserves close reading for numerous reasons, among them his willingness to criticize an unspecified group of Sufis for going too far in their interpretation of the principle: They ignored the fact that God's habit of making things happen in specific ways can be relied upon with confidence? There is for our author no tension between the regularity of natural processes and God's status as sole actor. Al-Yusi moves effortlessly between natural and moral worlds when be compares God being the original cause of the transmission of disease with man's ego (and not Satan) being the original cause of his sins. For al-Yusi, a correct understanding of causality is vital for the discerning scholar who wishes to understand the external and internal worlds.

In terms of jurisprudence, al-Yusi's Maliki background is comparatively irrelevant in comparison with the broader historical, literary, theological, and spiritual concerns that run through the entire work. This is not necessarily curious, but in a work that ranges so broadly it is worth noting that the author was not invested in exploring his interests in law (or logic, for that matter), although he adopts a highly logical approach to many of the themes he discusses.

A final aspect of The Discourses that may surprise readers new to premodern Islamic literature is its relentlessly classical nature. By classical I mean the author's use of a canon of poetry, political history, and literary anecdotes that have little to do directly with Morocco in the seventeenth century, but that deeply reflect al-Yusi's education and self-understanding. Much of the poetry he quotes is by Arab poets of the sixth through twelfth centuries from the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and the Levant, preponderantly pre- or early Islamic. Similarly, he retells or quotes numerous accounts from the lives of the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions, and the first four caliphs, as well as scattered anecdotes from the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates. In doing so, al-Yusi not only demonstrates that an Amazigh scholar from the Middle Atlas had fully absorbed the classical Arabic literary heritage—after all, this had been happening for centuries—but he also weaves Morocco's contemporary political and spiritual landscape into this much earlier Eastern narrative. Thus, the hubris of the first Alawite ruler, al-Rashid, is compared to that of a Buyid ruler of fourth/tenth century Baghdad, and prominent Sufis of his own day are juxtaposed with Junayd (d. 298/910) and Sari al-Saqati (d. 253/867), Sufis of the classical period. The desire to reach into the past to find stories and anecdotes with purported moral and pedagogical benefit is not limited to the East, however, and al-Yusi has a biting passage on the misguided nature of the sixth/twelfth century messianic Amazigh Almohad movement that united the Iberian Peninsula with sub-Saharan West Africa and reshaped the intellectual and political landscapes of the Muslim West in the succeeding centuries. It is this desire and ability to include episodes from Morocco itself that gives The Discourses' classicism a local touch, although it bears remarking that al-Yusi includes material from only as far back as the Almoravids in the fifth/eleventh century, mentioning the Arab Muslim conqueror of North Africa, 'Uqbah ibn Nafi` (d. 63/683), only briefly in passing.

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How Iblis Errs (6.18-6.22)

My veins are closely linked to the root of mankind

while this death strips me of my youth.

Imru' al-Qays's sentiment is a reference to this. Every person after Adam has a different origin than this—namely, a drop of sperm. The Exalted has said: «Then He fashioned his progeny from an

extract of base fluid.» If all Tim is equal in originating from clay, and subsequently from base fluid, it is not possible for them to possess merit on the basis of their genealogy. If all are equal then none are superior to any other. The Prophet, God bless and keep him, drew attention to this fact, saying, "God preserved you from the foibles of the Time of Ignorance and the vaunting of ancestors that took place then. You are the sons of Adam and Adam came from dust." Exalted God drew man's attention to his origins in many verses of the Qur'an, so that he might take note and know himself and his Lord's power. Our leader 'Ali, God honor his countenance, said, "What justification has the son of Adam for boasting, for he begins as sperm and ends as a corpse." 'Ali may have worded it as follows: "His beginning is in a worthless drop of sperm, his end in a dirty corpse, and he carries excrement between the two." A poet has versified the first part as follows:

How can he boast,

    when he begins as a drop and ends as a corpse?

Another said:

Amazing, one who admires his own form

    when he began as a worthless drop of sperm.

His beauty tomorrow

    will be dirt—a corpse in the earth.

His arrogance and pride

    merely excrement emerging between his legs.

People are in fact distinguished by what is singular to them beyond their clay-formed body, such as, for example, possessing reason, knowledge, and religion. These attributes speak to their merit and the merit of some over others. When accursed Iblis—a malcontent—was blind to Adam's unique nature he saw only Adam's origin in clay. He was not pleased with Adam, nor with bowing down to him. He failed to comply with his Master's order, and refused to bow down, justifying this with his own superior origins. In this, Iblis erred in several ways. One was that he was unaware of created characteristics, looking instead at the attributes of the substances: This was great ignorance on his part. Or else he was aware of them but did not know the merit acquired through them. This was also ignorance on his part. Or he knew their merit, but did not accept their existence in Adam, having already rushed to deny something before verifying his view or before considering that these characteristics were present. This too is ignorance, rashness, and the willful denial of what is rationally possible and of what the freely acting Agent, the Exalted, can do.

Perhaps Iblis considered it possible for Adam to have these qualities but acted as if they were absent. This position also manifests ignorance, false opinion, a lack of caution, and a disregard of the indicators that lead to knowledge. If Iblis had contemplated these at all, he would have realized the truth that Adam had been designated as a worthy vice-regent. The words of Exalted God were not kept from him: «I will create a vice-regent on earth»," nor the fact that, with God's support, all bowed down to Adam. Perhaps Iblis did know this, but was so overcome by envy and arrogance that he hewed to obstinacy Lid deception—this too is ignorance. Useless knowledge is tantamount to not snowing, and whoever does not act according to what he knows should be counted as ignorant. Such obstinacy is the greatest flaw after self-advancement and the loss of self-control—we ask

immunity from it from Exalted God, who has said: «Prosperous is he who purifies his ego, and he who lets himself be seduced by it has failed.»

Among the reasons a person errs is that he does not attain correct knowledge and pure faith in God's unity until he knows with certainty, conviction, and confidence that the Agent, praise Him, proceeds in His kingdom as He wishes. He raises up and casts down whom He wishes, and promotes and holds back whom He wishes. There is no cause but eternal providence, and everything is subject to the divine decree and predestination: «He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned.»

Among Iblis's errors is that he relied upon weak argumentation concerning the superiority of fire over clay—this is an unacceptable line of thought. If the superiority of fire subsisted in its beautiful appearance only, that would not be enough of an advantage. Things were created for their benefits; differentiating between them should be only on the basis of the level and importance thereof. A beautiful appearance is among the visual benefits, but others are more important. The benefits of fire include burning, igniting, cooking, warming, disintegrating, thickening, tormenting others, and serving as a reminder.

It has many negative and extremely dangerous qualities as well, such as burning people, property, and crops; drying; desiccating; causing pain and the punishment of hell. It suffices to say that it is a harm, the contrary of paradise, as distinct as the opposition between benefit and harm. There are other types of suffering, but fire is the worst kind, and therefore it is fitting that it be designated a harm.

Earth is man's abode, his berth while he is alive and his resting place when dead. It is also the provenance of water, from which issues life, the source of crops. and all nourishment for mankind and other living beings. It is the source of all medicines that heal, and of the metals fundamental to life and with which one does business. Its benefits are innumerable, and it has no negative or harmful qualities except some so insignificant that they fade next to the advantages and benefits. The nobility and distinction of each substance is apparent in what issues from it. Consider what issues from earth—namely, mercy and benefit. In this way, knowledge, religion, and mercy manifest them-selves in man. Exalted God said regarding His Prophet, may He bless and keep him: « He is full of mercy for the believers.» Then consider what issues from fire—vengeance and harm. This is the way that corruption, temptation, and provocation are manifested in Iblis.

Everything is in God's power, for man is created from all four elements: earth. water, fire, and air. The Exalted has said: «from earth»," « from clay», which is earth and water, the Exalted also said: «from dry clay», which is dry clay that has been cooked. He also said: «from mud molded into shape »." This clay has various odors, according to how the air has affected it. Thus, in his composition man has received his full share of fire and more. For the one of fire to vaunt himself over the one of fire, water, earth, and air is arrant stupidity. <>

Varieties of American Sufism: Islam, Sufi Orders, and Authority in a Time of Transition
edited by Elliott Bazzano, Marcia Hermansen [SUNY Press, 9781438477916]

Participant-observation-based studies that explore a range of Sufi movements operating across the contemporary American religious landscape.

From Rumi poetry and Sufi dancing or whirling, to expressions of Africanicity and the forging of transnational bonds to remote locations in Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Turkey, *Varieties of American Sufism* immerses the reader in diverse expressions of contemporary Sufi religiosity in the United States. It spans more than a century of political, cultural, and embodied relationships with Islam and Muslims. American encounters with mystical Islam were initiated by a romantic quest for Oriental wisdom, flourished in the embrace of Eastern teachings during the countercultural era of New Age religion, were concretized due to late twentieth-century possibilities of travel and immigration to and from Muslim societies, and are now diffused through an explosion of cyber religion in an age of globalization. This collection of in-depth, participant-observation-based studies challenges expectations of uniformity and continuity while provoking stimulating reflection on a range of issues relevant to contemporary Islamic Studies, American religions, multireligious belonging, and new religious movements.

Review
"The blend of approaches (historical, ethnographic, documentary, etc.) provides a spectrum of methodologies for the study of Sufism in America." — Martin Nguyen, author of *Modern Muslim Theology: Engaging God and the World with Faith and Imagination*

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This volume brings together detailed ethnographic and historical work on diverse Sufi orders operating in the United States. While it is generally observed that the Indian mystic Inayat Khan introduced Sufism to the United States in 1910, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that

we find larger numbers of Americans participating in movements related to Sufism, together with growing public awareness of the phenomenon.

The themes of "what is a Sufi?" and "what is the relationship of Sufism to 'orthodox' or 'mainstream' Islam?" are ones that vex this study and are often debated among American Sufis themselves, taking on new dimensions with an upsurge in Islamic revival on a global scale beginning in the 1970s. As American popular culture and the popular imagination is always changing and evolving, both in its self-understanding and in its view of Islam, Muslims, and Muslim-majority countries, the realities and the images of Sufism encountered by Americans have likewise not remained static. Participants in the movements studied here are therefore situated in and view themselves against a diverse and contested background of both the Islamic and the Sufi.

The appeal and significance of the chapters gathered here is that many of them provide for the first time detailed reports on certain Sufi orders by scholars who have carried out in-depth participant observation of the movements involved. Such studies are able to provide us with relevant examples of the current and ongoing challenges facing small and somewhat exotic religious groups in diverse American contexts. Rather than focusing exclusively on leaders, histories, and texts, many chapters incorporate the voices and memories of participants as well. At the same time, the American Sufi groups considered here represent distinctive types of connections with individuals and movements in what would be considered "traditional" Muslim societies.

Yet a further component of understanding Sufi Orders in America is their relationship to the broader Muslim experience in the United States. One aspect of this is ethnic diversity within particular Sufi groups, in part due to how Sufism has historically been received across regions of the Muslim world, but also due to dynamics of race, class, and religiosity in America. For example, Rasul Miller's chapter 8 on Tijani Sufis in New York City provides an example of how one order with strong West African roots appealed to black Americans due both to its Islamic orthodoxy and its Africanness. Many of the other Sufi orders treated in this volume primarily attracted middle- and upper-class white American spiritual seekers from the 1970s until the 1990s, while currently the children of Muslim immigrants from South Asia or the Middle East who have grown up in American culture are increasingly drawn to forms of Sufism that emphasize Islamic authenticity.

The academic study of Sufism in America began in the 1990s. Scholars have pointed out historical shifts or waves of development in American Sufism in response to developments such as increased immigration from Muslim societies and global Islamic revival. Sufi identity and organization into orders, the role this feature plays in attracting members, Sufi adaptations to Western contexts, and the function and transmission of authority within specific Sufi movements are all topics engaged by the chapters in the present collection. For this reason, the editors formulated the volume's subtitle: "Islam, Sufi Orders, and Authority in a Time of Transition."

Globally and in the American context, expressions of Muslim identity have become increasingly public, dynamic, and contested in recent decades. From being something distant, exotic, and oriental, Islam has now become a polarizing factor in the American political landscape. Muslim individuals and Islamic religious practices,' while increasingly familiar to many Americans given the growing Muslim presence, particularly in urban areas of the United States, are also in some cases projected as being threatening, especially since the 9/11 attacks. In fact, the relationship of Western Sufi movements to Islam is influenced by perceptions of Islam in broader American politics and culture as well as by the attitudes toward the religion among those who become involved in American Sufism. In some cases there may be a pull toward articulating and embodying practices identified as "Islamic" according to the norms of Islamic law (sharia). In other instances, such as in movements where Sufism is

understood as being just one reflection of universal wisdom and spirituality, participants may prefer to embrace Sufi elements as distinct from Islamic discourse and activities.

The role of Sufi orders as systems of personal affiliation, transmitting charisma, and social networking is also globally in a state of flux. In the traditional Muslim world, if such an entity can be imagined, Sufi orders have played important social, political, and even economic roles in cultural systems based on kinship, clientage, ethnic and tribal ties, and so on. Once Sufi institutions developed, affiliations to orders came to constitute systems of social linkages that attracted and empowered members, along with any religious and transformative roles they may have played in individual lives. Modernity, in many cases, worked against such systems of affiliation due to its challenges to traditional authority and the growing roles of the state and its institutions in framing and securing the social positions of citizens.

At the same time, some functions of traditional Sufi orders appeal to modern Americans, such as their role in establishing smaller and more intimate circles of friendship and support. They thus provide alternatives to mainstream religious institutions in the United States that have come to be viewed by many as no longer offering intense and personally meaningful experiences of spiritual community. This was particularly true during the period of the Counter Culture of the 1960s and early 1970s, when American New Age seekers pursued alternative forms of Eastern spirituality and personal religious experience.' The role of charismatic representatives of such movements, be they Indian gurus, Zen roshis, or Sufi shaykhs, represented a new form of religious authority for many Americans, something that could be directly experienced and was often centered on the leader himself, and perhaps in a few cases "herself," rather than being conferred by an institution and its doctrines and practices.

Many of the chapters in this volume document the trajectories of American Sufi groups as "new religious movements" from the critical decades from the 1970s until the present, half a century later. They further provide a sense of the challenges to traditional Sufi forms of affiliation to an Order (Arabic tariqa, pl. turuq) both in a new cultural context and in a time of rapid societal change. As an example, Gen-Xers and Millennials have interests and styles of affiliation different from those of their Baby Boomer parents and grandparents.' In the case of American Sufi movements, responses to such changes have included declining interest and membership, bifurcation into "Islamic" versus "New Age" branches, shifts over time in the ethnic backgrounds of participants, and the embrace of various forms of more diffuse "post-tariqa" affiliations.

The expression "post-tariqa" Sufism has been coined for developments emerging in the twentieth century in which traditional forms of confirming affiliation to a particular Sufi Order through formal initiation by an authorized shaykh has in some cases been replaced by more diffuse forms of association and affinity For example, several important Muslim pietistic movements with Sufi roots, such as the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asian origin and the Nur Movements in Turkey, tend to downplay personal connection and loyalty to a single teaching shaykh, while formal initiation and practicing the rituals of a specific Sufi order are no longer considered foundational for participation in or affinity with the group. <>

THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS by Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Jawbarī, edited by Manuela Dengler, translated by Humphrey Davies [Library of Arabic Literature, NYU Press; Bilingual edition, 9781479897636]

Uncovering the professional secrets of con artists and swindlers in the medieval Middle East

THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS is a comprehensive guide to trickery and scams as practiced in the thirteenth century in the cities of the Middle East, especially in Syria and Egypt. The author, al-Jawbarī, was well versed in the practices he describes and may well have been a reformed charlatan himself. Divided into thirty chapters, his book reveals the secrets of everyone from "Those Who Claim to be Prophets" to "Those Who Claim to Have Leprosy" and "Those Who Dye Horses."

The material is informed in part by the author's own experience with alchemy, astrology, and geomancy, and in part by his extensive research. The work is unique in its systematic, detailed, and inclusive approach to a subject that is by nature arcane and that has relevance not only for social history but also for the history of science. Covering everything from invisible writing to doctoring gemstones and quack medicine, **THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS** opens a fascinating window into a subculture of beggars' guilds and professional con artists in the medieval Arab world.

Review
"A mesmerising account of . . . quacks and tricksters." — The Spectator

From the third/ninth century on, medieval Muslim men of letters developed an interest in the lives of simple people and marginal groups. This produced some remarkable works. In various literary forms, and to a greater or lesser extent, these works focused on the manners and customs of wandering professional beggars. They include the list of beggars in the Book of Misers (Kitab al-Bukhala') of the essayist and encyclopedist al-Jahiz (d. 255/868); the Beggars' Poem (al-Qasidah al-Sasaniyyah) of the doctor, globetrotter, and poet Abu Dulaf (fl. fourth/tenth c.); the Assemblies (Maqamat) of the courtier and scribe Badi`

al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (d. 398/1008); the Shadow Plays (Khayal of the eye doctor Ibn Daniyal (d. 710/1310), especially that entitled Ajib wa-Gharib, which not only depicts scenes of the everyday life of vagabonds but also contains elements of the jargon of the Band Sasan; and a further Beggars' Poem (Qasidah Sasaniyyah) by the poet Safi al-Din (d. ca. 750/1339). All these texts provide diverse glimpses of the colorful daily life of the various sorts of beggars, swindlers, charlatans, and vagrants generally known in the Arabic of the time as the Banu Sasan ("Sons of Sasan")—followers, according to the best-known account, of a certain Shaykh Sasan, usurped heir to the throne of Persia, who traveled the world and gathered around him a band of like-minded roamers.' C. E. Bosworth drew on many of these literary genre paintings for his pioneering The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld (1976), which reproduces, translates, and discusses in detail the qasidah sasaniyyahs of both Abu Dulaf and Within this subgenre of Arabic literature, a book that has attracted little attention is The Book Containing a Selection Concerning the Exposure of Secrets (Kitab al-Mukhtar fi kashf al-asrar), rendered here as **THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS.** Written in the mid-seventh/-thirteenth century,

THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS describes a wide range of beggars' and charlatans' groups, with examples of their various tricks, and portrays the mentality and morals of this secret subculture. It thus provides a sketch of the social reality of the professions of begging and swindling, making **THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS** one of the most important literary representations of underworld customs in medieval Islamic civilization. Al-Jawbari recorded unique aspects of the charlatans' milieu with the eyes and knowledge of an initiate, opening a window onto the daily life of the medieval Islamic underworld that would otherwise be effectively closed to us, as these are rarely described in other historical sources. **THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS** is also important because of its language, a form of Middle Arabic' shot through with jargon and rare words, an invaluable source for linguistic analysis of the sociolect of professional beggars and charlatans.

The Author and the Work

There is little in the relevant Arabic biographical and bibliographical literature about al-Jawbari and his literary activity except for two short entries in the Removal of Doubt Concerning the Names of Books and Arts (Kitab Kashf `an asamil-kutub wa-l-funun) of Hajji Khalifah (d. 1067/1657) and one entry each in the Gift of the Knowledgeable (Hadiyyat al-arifin) of Isma'il Pasha al-Baghdadi (d. 1335 /1920) and the Dictionary of Authors (Mu'jam al-mu'allifin) of `Umar Rida al-Kahhalah (d. 1407/1987). Hajji Khalifah characterizes al-Jawbari's **THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS** as "an amazing book, unique . . . . Its author has torn away the liars' veils and stripped naked the impudent of every sort"3 and bestows on the author the honorifics "unique imam" and "shaykh," implying that Hajji Khalifah considered al-Jawbari to be a scholar of a certain level of attainment.' Al-Kahhalah, presumably following Ismail Pasha,' notes that al-Jawbari was an adherent of the Shafi'l school of Islamic law and that he was still alive in 613/1216. He describes him as an occultist (`alim ruhani) and lists his works as The Book Containing a Selection Concerning the Exposure of Secrets and the Rending of the Veils (al-Mukhtar fi kashf al-asrar wa-hatk al-astar), The Straight Path to the Science of the Celestial Bodies and the Astrologers' Craft (al-Sirat al-mustaqim fi 'ilm al-ruhaniyyah wa-sina'at al-tanjim), and The Drawing Aside of the Veils of the Artful and [the Exposure] of the Illusions of the Artificers (Kashf asrar al muhtalin wa-nawamis al-hayydlin). The only source to provide more specific information for al-Jawbari's biography is his partly autobiographical Book of Charlatans, the sole work of his known to have survived.

Al-Jawbari's full name is Jamal al-Din (or Zayn al-Din) Abd al-Rahim (or `Abd al-Rahman) ibn `Umar ibn Abi Bakr al-Dimashqi al-Jawbari. He was from al-Jawbar, at that time a village in the Ghouta (the irrigated ring of gardens encircling Damascus) and now a suburb of the city. Based on the limited internal and external evidence, the exact dates of al-Jawbari's birth and death cannot be ascertained with precision, but all dates specified or implied in the work as occurring within the author's lifetime fall between 613/1216-17 and 646/1248.

Al-Jawbari nowhere refers to a teacher and was therefore in all likelihood self-taught. If his remark that he had studied more than three hundred books (§04) is to be believed, he was unusually well read for his time. The vast majority of the authors to whom he refers, and who range from the apocryphal (such as Adam and Solomon) to contemporaries, wrote on the sciences, whether occult or natural (§§0.3-6). Despite occasional references in the text to the poetry of al-Hallaj (d. 309/922) (§2.3) and to literary figures such as al-Hariri (d. 516/1122) (§414.10) and al-Jahiz (§30.13), he was not a product of the classical literary and religious curriculum typically followed by the educated of his day, a fact that is reflected in his writing style. The two works that he claims to have written himself—namely, The Straight Path to the Science of the Celestial Bodies and the Astrologers' Craft (al-Sirat al-mustaqim fi ilm al-rahaniyyah wa-sina'at al-tanjim) (§0.6) and a short treatise in verse on geomancy (§§0.6, 12.25)—confirm the focus of his interests. Nothing certain is known today of either text.'

According to his own account (§0.7), al-Jawbari wrote The Book of Charlatans at the request of a ruler of the Turkmen Artuqid Dynasty, al-Malik al-Mas`ud Rukn al-Din Mawdud (r. 619-29/1222-32). In his preface, al-Jawbari recounts how, during a salon at the ruler's court, talk turned to the Deceit Disrobed and Doubt Dispelled (Fi kashf al-dakk wa-idah al-shakk) of Ibn Shuhayd (d. 426/1035). Rukn al-Din asked for a copy to be brought and was impressed. After asking al-Jawbari his opinion of it, he ordered him to compile a new work along the lines of Ibn Shuhayd's, but "shorter and easier to understand" (§0.7). Despite al-Jawbari's conventional and pro forma demurral, Rukn al-Din continued to insist, and the author eventually accepted the commission, undertaking to put down in writing secrets that, he claimed, no one before him had uncovered or divulged. It may be assumed that al-Jawbari received the commission while al-Malik al-Mas'lid Rukn al-Din Mawdul was in power—that is, between 619/1222 and 629/1232.

Al-Jawbari's sometimes extremely precise descriptions of tricks and recipes give the impression that he was familiar with many different areas of knowledge, including alchemy, chemistry, pharmaceutics, medicine, geomancy, astrology, and mechanics, although it is far from certain that he mastered them all. This raises the question of his professional life and to what extent he was involved in the activities he describes. He says nothing about how he earned a living during his travels (which ranged from western Morocco to India and included Tunis, Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, the Hejaz, and Yemen) beyond mentioning that at a certain point he was involved in treasure seeking in Egypt (§27.26). On one occasion, he admits he was tempted to participate in nefarious activities, but his better self-refused to allow him to do so (§13.24). At the same time, the author's repeated claim that his reports are based on personal observation ("I have direct experience of these matters" (§6.1); "there isn't a single art of theirs that I have failed to study or a single science of theirs of which I lack direct experience" (§6.25), and so on) should be treated with caution (even if we set aside the clearly fantastic nature of many of them). For example, the story of the pious ape whose behavior the author claims to have witnessed with his own eyes "when I was in Harran in the year 613" (§6.5) is cited, with differences of detail, by the tenth/seventeenth-century bibliographer Hajji Khalifah as an example of "things [done by the Banu Sasan] that the mind is incapable of grasping.' Hajji Khalifah then adds, "This story is also mentioned in the History of Mir Khund," referring to a ninth/fifteenth-century Persian-language work. Though it is of course possible that Mir Khund took the story directly or indirectly from al-Jawbari, it seems more likely that the latter was using a story that was in general circulation and attempting to add credence to it by claiming that he—or, in other cases, a friend (§ 6.24)—had witnessed the events in question.

Certainly, al-Jawbari's attitude to the activities of the charlatans he describes is in some cases ambiguous. While in many cases he condemns them for the heinousness of their crimes, in others he expresses his admiration for their skill, even remarking on how "smart" a given trick is (e.g., §27.11, 27.55-60) or how closely an ersatz or adulterated substitute for a certain food or mineral either resembles the original (a certain recipe makes "a lovely high-grade toffy that couldn't be bettered" [§10.8]) or even improves on it ("The result is spicier and better than real ginger" [§10.4]). Occasionally, he mentions tricks he has invented himself: He describes how he once devised a new means to expose a thief (§§13.22-23); on another occasion, he cannot conceal his pride at having invented a new way to make fake pepper (§27.12).

The possibility that al-Jawbari was himself, wholly or in part, a "charlatan"—that is, someone who practiced one or more of the activities described in the work—must be entertained. That said, the author emphasizes throughout the work the difference between genuine, though hermetic, disciplines such as alchemy (a skill that he implies he has himself mastered; see, e.g., §§9.17-27 and §25.7), astrology, and magic; and practices such as the staging of illusions and other chicanery intended to deceive. In doing so, he reflects a tradition among Muslim theologians, who "discussed

the possibility of distinguishing between magic and tricks on the one hand and the genuine divine miracle on the other." What the author most violently condemns in THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS are the deceitful practices of false astrologers, geomancers, and alchemists, who abuse these sciences for their own nefarious ends. Lower forms of chicanery—to which the greater part of the book is devoted—he approaches with the attitude that, however remarkable the trick may seem, it is just that: a deception that can be picked apart and whose ingenuity may even be worthy of admiration. It is this "spirit of suspicious scepticism, always on the look-out wherever supernatural forces seemed to put gold, lust, or power into all too easy reach" that caused Stefan Wild to suggest that The Book of Charlatans should be seen as "a first and important step in something like an enlightenment literature in Islam."

THE BOOK OF CHARLATANS is an extremely rich source for the cultural, social, and psychological history of medieval Islam. It has documentary value as a mirror of medieval Islamic religious and social life in the seventh/thirteenth century, providing a wealth of material that has yet to be exploited. Khawam describes al-Jawbari well when he says that "he looks at society with the eyes of a sociologist avant la lettre —a hundred years before Ibn Khaldun—but a sociologist who is less interested in society's structures than in its flesh. His favorite method is close to a social survey; he has a flair for mingling with the different milieus he studies and getting people to talk; he compares their accounts and, if necessary, he does not hesitate to play Sherlock Holmes, sometimes with considerable talent."

In the city of Harran in the year 613 [1216-17], there occurred a most extraordinary scene.

It was a Friday, the Muslim day of communal prayer, and the city's mosques were packed with the faithful, completing their ablutions and rolling out prayer mats. But one of those faithful was not like the rest. He was an ape, dressed in the clothing of princes and perfumed like royalty, riding upon a mule in a saddle of finely worked gold. Indian slaves escorted him, carrying his prayer mat and shoes as the creature made his way down the street and into the mosque, performing his ablutions and then greeting the mosque by performing the customary salutation prayer, before busying himself with prayer beads, the very picture of piety.

But if the sight of the ape was enough to render worshippers speechless, the story his slaves spun was even more astonishing. According to them, the ape was not truly an ape—he was a prince from one of the richest kingdoms of India, his beastly appearance the result of a jealous wife's curse. As the ape prince wept tears like rain, a handkerchief pressed to his eyes, his loyal servants continued his tragic account, telling the growing crowd how handsome and devout the young man had once been. They related how his wife was now holding his life in ransom, swearing not to reverse the curse until she was paid a handsome amount of gold. And what good fortune, for the assembled kings of India had nearly gathered the hefty sum—they just needed a little bit more: money the good people of Harran could offer in return for blessings on such a holy day.

The scam worked, the "prince" and his companions collecting a tidy fortune and then presumably vanishing. But they weren't the only travelers to Harran—and their trick hadn't worked on everyone. Watching from the sidelines was a self-proclaimed, self-taught scholar from Damascus, an explorer and seemingly quite the veteran of cons himself: Jamal al-Din Abd al-Rahim ibn 'Umar ibn Abi Bakr al-Dimashqi, known as al-Jawbari.

Al-Jawbari would later recount the tale of the well-trained ape—among dozens of others—in a book he claimed he was pressured to write by a Turkmen ruler. The text must have been popular, considering the number of copies that have survived into the modern era. And its popularity shouldn't be surprising—the book is incredibly entertaining, told by a natural storyteller whose tales

of lecherous highwaymen, knockout drugs delivered via sweaty armpits, and the best way to construct a fire-breathing, booby-trapped snake would captivate a modern audience as surely as they did his medieval ones.

While no one enjoys being swindled, people have long devoured tales of con artists and their schemes. From ancient tricksters such as Anansi and Loki, to their medieval counterparts Scheherazade and Robin Hood, to the blockbuster heists that dominate summer movie theaters, there is a peculiar thrill in following the transgressions—criminal or otherwise—of shrewd, audacious men and women. Indeed, it is impossible to read al-Jawbari's text and not notice how cleverly he skewers many of the magical tropes of contemporary fantasy tales such as **THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS** and **TALES OF THE MARVELOUS** and **NEWS OF THE STRANGE**, pulling back the curtain to examine how one might manufacture an "ancient" treasure map, make a severed head appear to speak, and disable the sword-bearing automatons known to guard jewel-stuffed tombs. Al-Jawbari takes clear delight in his knowledge—he boasts throughout that there is hardly a book he hasn't read and that the astonishingly comprehensive list of tricks he shares is but a mere fraction of what he knows.

And what tricks! There are recipes to manufacture fake ginger and lapis lazuli so precise one could attempt a recreation (though I would suggest you avoid doing the same with the many poisons and drugs also listed). False holy men who fill hairnets with glowworms to give themselves the appearance of the blessed and others who use remarkable engineering to make it appear that the Nile is rising. Appropriately for the medieval setting, there are over a dozen accounts of alchemists, though al-Jawbari openly mocks the famed craft, pointing out—quite rightly—that if anyone had solid knowledge of turning ordinary metals into gold, they not only wouldn't need a partner, they'd be a fool to spill such a lucrative secret.

Al-Jawbari's narration is as entertaining as the text. This is the kind of historical account that brings the past alive, and both al-Jawbari and his twelfth-century audience leap from the page. It is a product of its age—modern readers will no doubt notice that al-Jawbari has far sharper words for con artists who are female, Jewish, or Zoroastrian than he has for Muslim and Christian men. But in al-Jawbarl's silver-tongued telling, we get a glimpse of the lives of people who don't show up in the annals of sultans and scholars, and see a world that was about to be irrevocably changed; indeed, Harran, a city that had thrived for millennia, would be destroyed by the Mongols only a few decades after the incident of the royal ape above.

That darkness, however, is little seen in al-Jawbarrs account, even among tales of murderers and thieves. Though he curses the worst offenders, he seems more often amused by the charlatans he encounters, and eager to learn their tricks. This begs the question: What kind of trickster was al-Jawbari? For he relates many of his stories in the oily, teasing tone of his two-timing characters—he could tell you a hundred other tricks, but he would hate to bore you! For a book purportedly about laying bare deceptions and dodges, there are tricks listed here that are so complex, time-consuming, and unnecessarily convoluted—Solomon's ant and the unfortunate boy come to mind—that they strain belief. Are we to believe that al-Jawbari, clearly a clever man well aware of the power of stories, bought everything he's selling here? Or might our self-taught master have learned there was just as fine a life to be had in the telling of criminal deeds as in committing them? It's tempting to imagine al-Jawbari in the well-appointed salons of the rich rulers of his day, winking as he collected his coins and spun increasingly elaborate fictions.

Readers will have to find their own line between truth and falsehood. However, as you make your way from Morocco to India in the company of al-Jawbari's sly hustlers and devious tomb raiders, you

may find, like the many enthralled audiences that have come before you, that sometimes it's a bit more fun to believe in the magic. — S. A. Chakraborty <>

IN PRAISE OF THE FEW. STUDIES IN SHIʿI THOUGHT AND HISTORY by Etan Kohlberg, edited by Amin Ehteshami [Series: Shii Islam: Texts and Studies, Brill, 9789004406964]

In Praise of the Few: Studies in Shiʿi Thought and History is a selection of Etan Kohlberg's research on Shiʿi Islam over a period of fifty years. It includes previously published articles, revised dissertation chapters, and a full bibliography of the author's work. Divided into two parts, the collection begins with chapters from Kohlberg's Oxford doctoral dissertation (1971) and related articles that investigate Sunni and Shiʿi views on the Prophet's Companions and debates concerning the extent of their authority as sources of religious knowledge. Part Two traces the doctrinal and historical developments pertaining to various dimensions of Imāmī Shiʿi intellectual tradition such as theology, hadith, law, jurisprudence, and exegesis.

CONTENTS

The present volume is a selection of Etan Kohlberg's writings, spanning the period from his doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Oxford in 1971 to an article published in 2013. For over fifty years, his work has been consistently marked by two distinctive features: scholarly rigor and unwavering attention to a neglected area of research; the chapters included in this volume attest to both. Professor Kohlberg's scholarship offers the fruits of historical contextualisation and sober analysis of an extensive body of Arabic sources. His research area chiefly concentrates on Imāmī Shiʿism. While Sunni Islam – partly due to its historical prevalence – has had more traction in western academia, the study of Shiʿi Islam remains the domain of the few. This was particularly the case when the topic first attracted Kohlberg's interest in 1965. Although the state of research has improved over the past four decades, Shiʿi scholarly traditions continue to remain understudied. An approach to the study of Islamic thought based exclusively on a single tradition deprives Islamic intellectual history of some of its dynamism. It also hinders the formation of a more comprehensive understanding of the questions and considerations of thinkers who, while working within their own tradition, developed their ideas in interaction with others. Professor Kohlberg's contributions have been instrumental in drawing attention to this neglect and enticing others to join him in the task of remedying it.

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Writings collected in this volume are arranged in two parts. The eight chapters comprising Part 1 investigate different understandings of the term "Companion" (ṣaḥābī), debates concerning the Companions' reliability as transmitters of the Prophet's teachings, and contrasting views among Sunni and Shiʿi scholars as to whether or not a person's views should be designated a privileged status merely in virtue of being a Companion. Thus far, studies on the Companions in European languages have often focused on the historical narratives regarding the succession conflicts that followed the Prophet's passing; "Companion" as a conceptual category has yet to receive a comprehensive examination. These chapters, it is hoped, will contribute to broadening informed discussions on this topic. The chapters in Part 2 examine various issues pertaining to the Imāmī intellectual tradition such as the intertwined relationship between the historical and doctrinal developments (9–12); theological beliefs (13–19); hadith (20–22); law and jurisprudence (23–25). As Kohlberg's list of publications illustrates, his contribution to the study of Islam extends far beyond the chapters included in this volume. Besides various articles, critical editions, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews, his monograph on Ibn Ṭāwūs (1193–1266)—a distinguished scholar and bibliophile—is, in itself, an achievement sufficient to ensure Kohlberg's enduring significance as a historian of Shiʿi written heritage.

As with any scholarly enquiry, the discovery of new sources and rereading of those already known might lead to the revision of previous theories and conclusions. This volume is intended both to contribute to the current state of scholarship as well as to offer starting points for students and scholars discovering the study of Shiʿi Islam for the first time. It is hoped that the issues explored by Professor Kohlberg in this volume will be studied further in the years ahead.

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For editorial considerations, the system of transliteration used in this volume is that adopted in the third edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. If some terms or place-names have acquired a commonly-used Anglicized orthography, they have been preferred over a literal transliteration; hence Shiraz rather than Shīrāz and Shiʿi rather than Shīʿī. Personal names have been transliterated except for Muhammad when reference is to the Prophet. The lunar years of the Islamic calendar are generally followed throughout the text and footnotes by the corresponding Gregorian solar years (e.g., 11/632). The dates of the sources published in modern Iran are often based on a solar Islamic calendar (Shamsī) coinciding with the corresponding Gregorian solar years starting on 21 March (the first day of Spring). The Hijra solar dates are marked with Sh to distinguish them from lunar dates. In the various chapters, different conventions are used in the footnotes (e.g., for page and volume numbers), reflecting the conventions used in the original venues. Chapters based on Kohlberg's

dissertation (1–2, 4–6) have been revised but not updated, with virtually the only exception being references to *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. A list of sources for further reading relevant to the themes discussed in these chapters is provided in Appendix 3. In the other chapters, occasional references to more recent literature have been added; all additions are enclosed within square brackets. Since some material in the chapters based on the dissertation was subsequently included in a revised form in articles of Part 2, a certain amount of repetition was inevitable. This is indicated in the footnotes where appropriate.

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One of the prominent features of Sunni Islam is the central position held by the Companions of the Prophet, known collectively as the sahaba. These men and women have been revered for centuries as the first Muslims, who followed Muhammad and served his cause with devotion, and who became after his death the link through which his teachings were transmitted to later generations. Hence their significance is twofold: first, they are held up as the most excellent of all pious believers, whose actions, inspired by the living example of the Prophet, are to be admired and imitated. Second, their role as transmitters of Muhammad's sayings places them in a position of authority second only to that of the Prophet himself.

Whereas the basic facts about the Sunni attitude to the Companions are generally well-known, the same is not true of the attitude of the Imam' Shi'is. Indeed, until fairly recently Shi'ism as a whole received less than its due share of attention. Interest among Western scholars focused mainly on the Sunnis, who comprise roughly ninety percent of the world's Muslim community. Shi'i material (except that which reached European libraries through the efforts of individual collectors) was for centuries located in areas lying outside the more accessible Islamic centres of learning (for instance, Imam' Shi'i works were to be found predominantly in Iran, Zaydi works in Yemen, Ismaili works in India and Yemen). This material consisted almost entirely of manuscripts and lithographs which for the most part were only produced in small numbers. For these reasons, most of the information about the various branches of Shi`ism had to be culled from non-Shi'i sources. These sources were often inaccurate, either because they were not directly based on original Shi'i texts, or else because they were written from a hostile point of view. This gave rise to numerous misconceptions about Shi'ism.

Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), one of the few scholars of his age with an extensive knowledge of Shi'i sources and the author of many valuable studies on Shi'ism, corrected in his Vorlesungen three fallacies about the Shi'is which were current in his day. These were, first, that the Sunnis accept the Prophet's sunna as a source of religious belief and knowledge beside the Qur'an whereas the Shi'is confine themselves to the Qur'an and reject the sunna; second, that Shi`ism represents a modification of Islam by ideas of the Iranian peoples; third, that Shi`ism represents a reaction in favour of intellectual freedom. Yet at the same time, Goldziher helped to spread at least one fallacy by accepting the blanket claim of anti-Shi'i polemicists that the Imami attitude to the Companions is characterised by hatred and contempt. As will be shown in the following chapters, the Imamis position is in fact more complex and variegated than Goldziher's statement would seem to indicate.

In this as in other doctrinal matters, the views held by Imami scholars underwent significant changes during successive periods of Imann history. From a chronological point of view, one can speak in general of four major phases in the growth of early Imami doctrine:

The Umayyad period (41-132/661-750), which is characterised by a proliferation of Shi'i sects, many of which were to be called by later heresiographers ghulat ("extremists"). It is also the period in which some elements are discernible of what were to become the Zaydi and Imami branches of Shi'ism. Though proto-Imami scholars of the time held similar views on a number of subjects, they had not yet formulated their beliefs in a - and systematic form.

The middle and the latter half of the 2nd/8th century. This appears to be the first time in which a specifically Imami view on a number of central doctrinal matters is crystallised. The beginnings of an independent Imami school of law can also be traced back to this period.

The 3rd/9th century. For most of this period the Imami community was under the authority of a line of Imams. There appears to be no evidence that the views of these Imams on basic doctrinal issues differed appreciably from those formulated in the previous century. The utterances attributed to the

Imams appear mainly in collections of traditions, which constitute the bulk of Imam.' literature of that period.

The first half of the 4th/10th century and the Buwayhid period (334-447/945-1055). This is arguably the most important stage in the early history of the Imamis. The benevolent rule of the Buwayhids gave the Imamis a golden opportunity to consolidate their doctrine and establish it along clear lines. The disappearance of the twelfth Imam (in 260/874) placed Imami scholars in a position of greater authority, allowing them to express their own independent views. It is not surprising, therefore, that an impressive number of works on historical, legal and doctrinal subjects was written during that time by such outstanding figures as al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022), al-Sharif al-Murtada (d. 436/1044), and Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi (d. 460/1067).

There are additional factors contributing to the diversity of views found in Imami texts. Thus, texts addressed to the inner circle of believers might differ from texts intended for a larger Shi'i audience or for a primarily non-Shri readership. This was often the case where the need arose to conceal one's true beliefs (taqiyya). There were also occasional differences of opinion between various Shi'i centres. Popular Shi'ism constituted yet another significant element, often expressed in poems and anecdotes. Finally, from the 3rd/9th century onwards, the influence of Mu'tazila gave rise to a further diversification of views. The Imam' attitude to the Companions, as indeed to any other subject, must be examined with all these factors in mind.

In order for this attitude to be placed in its proper perspective, the views of non-Imami Muslims must be taken into account. In the present study, therefore, Chapter 1 examines Sunni attitudes to the Companions, and this is followed in Chapter 2 by a discussion of Mu`tazili positions. Chapters 3-6 deal with various aspects of the Imami views on the Companions. These views should be seen in connection with the doctrine of the imamate. Two elements of this doctrine are particularly relevant: the belief that Ali b. Abi Talib was the only rightful successor to the Prophet, and the belief that the Imams alone, being infallible and omniscient, possess authority over the believers. In discussing the Companions, Imami scholars were thus faced with two major questions: how to judge the Companions as Muslims, i.e., how to present and interpret their behaviour towards Ali, given that for the Shi'is, loyalty to 'Ali is the touchstone of true faith; and how to relate the authority vested in the Imams to the authority which the Companions enjoyed in Sunni Islam. The first of these questions is discussed in Chapters 3-5; the second, that of authority, is dealt with in Chapter 6. The Zaydis were also confronted with these issues, and the solutions which they devised are discussed in Chapter 7. The term "Rafida", finally, seen by some as referring to the Imam' rejection of the two foremost Companions, Abu Bakr and `Umar, is the subject of the concluding chapter of Part 1. <>

KNOW THY ENEMY: EVOLVING ATTITUDES TOWARDS "OTHERS" IN MODERN SHIʿI THOUGHT AND PRACTICE by Meir Litvak [Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, Brill, 9789004439207]

In **KNOW THY ENEMY,** Meir Litvak analyzes the re-articulations of the "Others" in modern Shiʿism, as a novel way to examine the formulation of modern Shiʿi identity and place in the world. Among these others, which have transformed into "enemies" in the modern period are the West, apostates, Wahhabism, Jews, Baha'is and feminism.

Looking at the rhetorical themes that Shiʿi writers use, the book demonstrates the contrast between the collective positive "We" and the negative threatening "Other" as a major principle in the evolution of Shiʿism as the minority branch of Islam. It offers a complex view of Shiʿi identity combining a sense of victimhood and insecurity together with conviction of intellectual and moral superiority and long-term triumph.

CONTENTS

?"Any person, whose path is not the path of Islam is our enemy," declared Ayatollah Rahollah Khomeini (d. 1989) leader of the 1979 Revolution prior to the March 1979 referendum, which approved the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Pursuing the same line of thought, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor as Supreme Leader, asserted that the Islamic Republic had faced enemy conspiracies from the onset, because it had established a unique, morally superior system of government. He has, therefore, repeatedly called for vigilance against the "enemy" who threatens Islam and the Iranian nation. These statements were, and still are, part of a broader religious and cultural phenomenon of "othering," or drawing a clear distinction between the collective self and the "other", which is essential for articulating the Shi'i and any other religious worldview. The construction of the "self" for any group has, throughout history, arisen from differences between groups, and responses to them range from complete rejection to wholesale acceptance. The disliked "other" may be a foreigner who triggers xenophobic reactions, or a member of an alternative group within the same society, which engenders alterophobia. In fact, some scholars argue, that dislike of "others" has been a persistent condition of society throughout history."

The politicization of Shi'ism in the modern period, which culminated in the establishment of the Islamic Republic, sharpened the "self-other" distinction into a more dichotomous "friend-enemy" juxtaposition. The evolving re-articulations of the "others" in modern Iranian Shi'i thought and practice, particularly since the 1979 Revolution — be they Westerners, jihadi-Salafi Sunnis, Jews, feminists, or Baha'is — and the formulation of boundaries between Shi'is and these "others" are the subject of the present study. The examination of such attitudes and practices will shed light not only on the formation of modern Shi'i identity, but also on modern Islamism at large.

The concept of othering highlights how societies create a sense of identity, belonging, and social status by constructing social categories as binary opposites and by stigmatizing differences, real or imagined, between the in-group (us) and the out-group (them or the "other"). Social identities are not natural, but are constructed, negotiated, and contested as historical processes. They are relational as groups typically define themselves in relation to "others." Identity has little meaning without the "other", as by defining itself a group automatically defines "others," and vice versa, the portrayal of the "other" is crucial to the way a group sees itself. Thus, the ancient Greeks and Chinese viewed the world as divided between them and barbarians, the Jews created the Jews-gentile antithesis, and the Muslims divided historically the world between believers and infidels.

Within this larger context, religious identities are defined not only by the sets of beliefs and practices that coreligionists share, but also through the religious community's differentiating itself from other communities. They are dynamic and constantly in evolution. This is particularly true in modern times

as people are more exposed to new stimuli and challenges and apparently feel a greater need to reassert their identity or sets of collective identities that may provide important "anchors" in a world that is constantly in flux. Identities are thus context dependent and discursively constructed in ever-new ways.

According to Okolie, identity is rarely claimed or assigned for its own sake. Definitions of the self and of the "other" are tied to rewards and punishment, both material and symbolic, which is why identities are contested. The distinction between self and "other" and the representation of each group are often embedded in power relations, as both dominant and weak groups formulate dichotomies between the self and the "other". The very process reflects these power differentials. Accordingly, social institutions like the law, the media, education, and religion hold the balance of power through their representation of what is accepted as "normal" and what is considered other and "different." In sociological terms, the underlying aim is to construct and represent the "other" as pathological and morally inferior, and thus make the subordinate individual or group aware of their inferior status.

In the Shi'i case, however, the "other"s, e.g. the West, Wahhabi and jihadi-Salafi Islam and possibly also Zionism, are conceived as formidable foes who threaten the Shia, the Islamic Republic, and Islam in general, even though they are considered morally and intellectually inferior. This process both reflects and enhances the Shi'i self-perception as a "saved community" (alfirqa al-najiyya) — that is, God's chosen community, the righteous few who are besieged by powerful and hostile "others," but which will be saved by God at the end of time. It emanates from the historical reality of past Shi'i weakness and suffering, augmented by the bitter Iranian experience of two centuries of foreign intervention and exploitation. In the Islamic Republic, it serves the regime's political needs in that it presents Iran as successfully confronting formidable enemies. Besides reflecting Shi'i conviction of the rightness of its cause, it also conveys a growing confidence in the future. At the same time, in the domestic Iranian arena, othering serves to preserve the dominant power structure, since it is the ruling establishment that determines who the "other" is (feminists, Baha'is, or religious liberals), and how they should be treated or suppressed, especially when they are perceived as challenging the dominant power structure.

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When considering the othering discourse in. Iran, one ought to remember that the Iranian religious, intellectual and clerical arenas are far from monolithic. They can each be divided into three major camps or discourses: religious conservative (Usul gara , often translated as "principlist"), reformist (Islahgara) and liberal.

The conservative camp refers to an array of forces that had previously identified themselves as conservative, fundamentalist, neo-fundamentalist, or traditionalist. They are the largest and politically dominant clerical faction supported by Supreme Leader Khamenei and are organizationally associated with the Jami'a-i ruhaniyat mubariz (society of militant clergy). They espouse an absolutist and legalistic Islam, premised on the notion of "duty," as well as on a strict and, if needed, forceful and violent enforcement of religion onto all facets of the social and political spheres and moral codes in the public sphere. They believe that Iran must remain true to its revolutionary goals of 1979, and fear that compromising on revolutionary principles would threaten the pillars of the Islamic Republic. Many of them are ardent supporters of the principle of the absolute authority of the ruling jurist (vilayat-i mutlaq), which may even position him above Islamic law. Therefore, they do not tolerate dissent and make few concessions to the popular will and contemporary realities, particularly on issues pertaining to gender equality. They regard enmity toward the United States and Western culture as a fundamental pillar of the revolution and central to the very identity of the Islamic

Republic. Hence, they oppose economic opening to the world, which might open up Iran to foreign cultural influences. Instead, they promote economic self-sufficiency titled "resistance economy." While they cherish the sanctity of private property, they support the dominant role of the state in the economy."

A more militant hardline faction emerged in the late 199os in response to the electoral victories of the reformists in the 1997 presidential elections. These radical or neoconservatives, many of them laymen, argued that the revolution had lost its way with the election of Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani (d. 2017) to the presidency in 1989 and therefore advocated a return to the ideological purity of the early days of the revolution. The most prominent politician associated with this group was former president Mahmud Ahmadinezhad (2005-2013) and his clerical mentor Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Misbab Yazd', the leading hardliner within the clerical establishment."

The reformist camp advocated a more flexible interpretation of religion to accommodate social changes, while at the same time attempting to preserve Islam's spiritual nature. It sought to reconcile Islam with democracy, human rights, and improvement in gender equality as a way to adapt religion to the needs of a changing society and to keep it relevant in the eyes of a broader and younger public. In domestic policies, the reformists wanted the regime to pay more attention to issues such as unemployment, poverty and corruption, instead of adhering to the rigid revolutionary ideology of the early 1980s. On foreign policy, they sought the normalization of Iran's relations with the outside world, including the West. Organizationally the reformists were closer to the minority group the Majma-i Ruhaniyun Mubariz (Association of Militant Clergy, MRM) in the clerical establishment. They achieved temporary prominence with the unexpected victory of Seyyed Muhammad Khatami in the 1997 presidential elections and the 2000 Majlis elections. However, with the return to more overt political repression in April 2001, the ideological debate in Iran became largely one-sided as the reformist spokesmen were gradually and systematically silenced. The reformists somewhat recovered following Hasan Rouhani's election to the presidency in 2013. Rouhani, however, was ideologically less committed to reform than Khatami.

The conservative and reformist groups supported the Vilayat-Faqih doctrine and system, though they differed over its correct scope. Both supported the stability and long-term survival of the Islamic Republic, but disagreed over the best means to preserve it. Contrary to these two groups, the small group of liberal clerics and religious intellectuals questioned, if not challenged, the doctrinal validity of the dominant system in Iran. Rather, they gave priority to democratic principles in their interpretation of religion. They rejected any coercion in the application of religious law as opposed to the very essence of religion. The most notable members of this group were the clerics Muhsin Kadivar, Hasan Yusufi Eshkivari and Muhammad Mojtahed-Shabestari and the philosopher Abdul Karim Soroush. Significantly, Kadivar and Eshkivari had been imprisoned for their views and all four thinkers are in exile. Still they posed an important intellectual challenge to the dominant discourse in Iran.

Structure of the Book

Considering the evolution and momentous changes in the nature of othering in modern Shi'i thought and practice, the present study aims to address this issue thematically, devoting each chapter to the discourse on a specific "other" moving from the external to the internal enemies.

Chapter 1 discusses the evolving ideological attitudes towards the West, which Khamenei defined as the greatest enemy of Islam in the modern period. The chapter analyzes the shift from the fear of the West's cultural offensive to the articulation of a dogma predicting the imminent decline of Western civilization. It examines, inter alia, how the Shi'i writers contend with modern Western thought on global development, such as Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization and Francis

Fukuyama's End of History theories in order to articulate an idyllic Shi'i end of history. Overall, this discourse is examined in light of broader sociocultural developments, particularly concern over the growing appeal of Western culture among Iranian youth together with the confidence, typical of many religious groups that the future belongs to them.

Chapter 2 analyzes the shift from traditional attitudes and polemics against the Jews to a modern, politicized anti-Semitic discourse. In particular, it discusses the emergence of a new discourse, which presents the Jews as enemies of Shi'ism from its inception to the present. Accordingly, Jewish manipulations are responsible for the distortion of Islam following the Prophet's death, and have caused many of the tragedies that have befallen the Shi'is throughout their history. In addition, the Jews and Zionists are presented as standing behind all the hostile "other"s analyzed in the book.

Chapter 3 examines the Shi'i attempts to defuse the sectarian rift with the Sunni majority in two ways: The first is through the emphasis on the common Islamic cause against the West and Zionism; the second is through the banning of popular Shi'i practices, such as cursing the first three Caliphs, that alienated Sunnis, and the ensuing internal debate over this policy. The chapter also examines the gap between the official discourse and popular practices that were slow to change despite indoctrination from above.

Conversely, Chapter 4 investigates the Shi'i discourse against Wahhabism and jihadi-Salafi trends, the two fiercest ideological enemies of Shi'ism in the Sunni camp. It traces the evolution from a defensive discourse vis-à-vis Wahhabism, characterized by apologetics designed to prove that Shi'is were legitimate Muslims, to a broad denunciation of Wahhabism and jihadi-Salafi ideologies as crude, duplicitous, and intellectually inferior distortions of Islam. It also highlights the Shi'i attempt to forge a common cause with mainstream Sunni Islam against them by accusing them of being close to the West and to Zionism, and by branding the jihadi-Salafists as non-Muslims.

Chapter 5 shifts the discussion to the internal "others" as it discusses the Shi'i debate on the meaning and scope of the concept of liberty within the Islamic system. It analyzes the dominant perception of liberty as voluntary submission to God and liberation from one's whims and desires, and the way this discussion addresses and opposes Western liberal notions of "negative" and "positive" liberty. The chapter then examines the implications of this debate on the accepted scope and boundaries of liberty allowed within an Islamist system and its application to so-called apostates who challenge these boundaries.

Chapter 6, addresses the polemics and actions against the Baha'i minority in Iran. It traces the presentation of Baha'ism as an illegitimate deviationist sect that lacks any sound religious principles, and the rhetorical devices used to deconstruct Baha'i doctrines and modes of action. It also shows how the linkage that is made between the Baha'is and external hostile "others," such as Western political and cultural imperialism, fuses religious and nationalist motifs, which depict the clergy as the champions of Iranian nationalism. While this discourse serves to exclude and oppress the Baha'is, it also reflects Muslim fear of them as agents of modernity.

Chapter 7 analyzes the hostile representation of feminism as a Western-inspired threat to the three pillars of Islam: the centrality and stature of the Shari'a; the family, which is regarded as the bastion of proper religious life; and the monopoly of male clerics over the interpretation of religion. Special attention is given to the critique of Islamic feminism, which was portrayed as a sophisticated yet devious challenge to a clerical-led system. The book's conclusion points to the common and different motifs and features in the polemics against the different "others," as well as their reflection on modern Shi'i self-perceptions.

Any study on public discourse raises the questions whether the material collected is sufficiently representative and did not overlook important positions and trends, considering the wealth of printed and electronic publications in Iran. This abundance enables those who are interested to focus on key sources and expand from them by ever widening circles through references, approvals or disputes. The writings of the leaders are an obvious starting point as they set the contours for the various debates. All of Khomeini's writings have been published in print and electronically. His sermons and statements have come out in official compilations. Supreme Leader Khamenei's personal websites contain all his speeches as well as his rulings and books. Similarly, numerous clerics from all ranks have their personal websites, which contain their articles, sermons and interviews as well as many of their books. There are also smaller compilations containing the Leader's statements on specific topics.

Official Q&A websites such as Porseman and Rasekhoon as well as government research centers such as Mouood Cultural Institute and Hazrat-I `Asr Institute provide the authoritative clerical and governmental position on a broad array of political and theological questions. Numerous scholarly journals focusing on historical, theological, doctrinal, legal and philosophical issues provide the views and analysis of academics affiliated with Iranian universities and scholarly bodies.

Since the Shi'i clerical establishment has never been monolithic, different opinions and views have always aroused lively debates and disputes, which refer the readers to an ever-expanding pool of sources. Thus, the writings of reformist or dissident clerics provide an important source, not only of their own ideas, but also for their more conservative rivals whose views they dispute. The present study does not presume to have covered every single statement said or written on the topics discussed. Still, I am convinced that the picture presented here is comprehensive and reflects faithfully the breadth of the Shi'i discourse, considering the tendency of Shi'i writers to address each other's writings and recirculate crucial themes and arguments through numerous venues, thereby minimizing the possibility of missing them. Overall, while offering insights to Shi`i perceptions of "others," the present study also sheds new light on Shi'i self-perceptions and thus contributes to a better understanding of modern Shi'ism. <>

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