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Spotlight 10

The Ottomans and Others: Gryphon from the Heart

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Ottoman World

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

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

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

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

Excerpt: The Ottomans and the Caliphate

With the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the historical caliphate, embodied by the Abbasid Empire, formally ended with traumatic consequences that, in response, facilitated the rise of a new wave of self-reflection, exploration, and experimentation in all segments of Islamicate societies. In the absence of the imperial caliphate, along with the rise of independent regional Muslim dynasties from the fourteenth century onwards, the idea of the caliphate, reinterpreted in response to profound changes taking place in the broader Muslim community, regained its prominence in Islamic political discourse, and, with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, became the linchpin of imperial ideology in the sixteenth century. Modern studies on the question of Muslim rulership repeatedly assume that the historical caliphate, as conceived by Muslim jurists during the Abbasid period (c. 750-1258), continued to define both the concept and the institution in subsequent political thought and praxis. This assumption confines the theoretical construction of the caliphate to jurisprudence, overlooks the impact of later historical experiences, and disregards the formative influence of broader intellectual traditions in framing the caliphate as both an institution and an ideal. The post-Abbasid caliphate, or the making of the non-Arab caliph in the Ottoman case, was reconstructed in the language of Sufism infused with indigenous traditions of rulership and shaped by defining historical experiences, rather than through the juristic canon of medieval universalism. In sixteenth-century political discourse, the Ottoman caliph was a mystic, in the sense that he was a friend and deputy of God on Earth, with sway over both temporal and spiritual realms. The House of Osman was God's chosen dynasty commissioned to serve divinely assigned purposes, and the Ottoman rulership was the seal of the caliphate to last until the end of times.

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

Despite their accommodating approach to rulership, jurists per se in the Ottoman Empire ceased to be the leading exponents of the theory of the caliphate because of both theoretical and practical problems they could never definitively resolve. One was the juristic fixation with the historical caliphate as a successorship to Muhammed through an established lineage from his tribe, the Quraysh, a ruling that manifestly stood at odds with that of the Ottoman dynasty. Second, although a few jurists radically altered the theory of the caliphate, the canonical formulation of the caliphate proved impervious to the demands of coercive power or even captivating esoteric visions, and remained unchanged in all the juristic and theological textbooks taught in Ottoman madrasas, creating an unresolved tension between formal Islamic training and individual opinions. This

cognitive dissonance created an irreparable rift between jurists who pursued academic careers in the Ottoman madrasas and remained loyal to the medieval ideal and those who pursued legal careers in the imperial judicial administration and tended to be pragmatic by accommodating divergent political realities. Because of this rift, the leading jurists either abstained from writing on the question of the caliphate in normative juristic language or resorted to the mystical philosophy of prominent Sufi intellectuals, such as Ibn Arabi, to reconfigure the caliphate outside the disciplinary confines of Islamic jurisprudence.

Relatively unbound by juristic doctrines, the Sufis offered a radically new understanding of the caliphate that better suited the legitimation needs of a rising Muslim empire. As Sufi orders and their leaders became increasingly involved in public life, their notions and imageries of authority permeated into dynastic visions of authority. Almost all the books on rulership that were taught to dynastic heirs between 1400 and 1600 as part of their training in statecraft were written by prominent Sufi authors. Tutors for princes were mostly renowned Sufis or Sufi-minded scholars whose teaching centered on esoteric, spiritual, and moral interpretations of rulership. Princes had little training in jurisprudence but were deeply exposed to mystical visions of rulership. The close association between the Ottoman ruling elite and prominent Sufi orders turned Sufism into the principal medium of formulating Ottoman dynastic legitimacy and inculcating a sultanic image as a spiritual leader. The Ottoman court countered the political challenges posed by powerful Sufi orders by adopting mystical visions of authority, and by depicting the Ottoman ruler as a caliph who conforms to Sufistic expectations.

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

The caliphate, in both concept and practice, could tie the historical with the utopian, the temporal with the spiritual, the individual with the communal, and the object with the subject. It could be equally meaningful in philosophical, juristic, and Sufistic discourses, and utilized for conversation among different disciplines, world views, and social structures. Whether simply considered as "succession" of authority in historical practice or the very act of "creation" of human beings per Sufi cosmology, the term's defining qualities remain to be "representation" and "performation." As one Arabic text in the sixteenth century formulated, khilāfa does not materialize unless the mustakhlaf (successor) fully reflects the mustakhlif (succeeded).

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

In Ottoman practice, envisioning the caliphate as a comprehensive cosmological position that encompasses both temporal and spiritual realms was embroidered in discursive narratives constructed by dynastic apologists and enigmatic letterists as well as mainstream scholars through literary articulation, artistic representation, and occultic revelations. This caliphal myth, as part of the central theme of the imperial ideology, entailed that the House of Osman was commissioned to rule as the "Great Caliphate" of the end of times foretold in the Qur'an, prophesied by Prophet Muhammed, envisioned by saints, and proven by discernible manifestations of divine providence. The

caliphate as such was closely tied to an eschatology drawn from indigenous traditions and Abrahamic teachings conveyed via Islamic sources. The Ottoman caliphate, turned into a powerful foundational myth that was enhanced by a syncretic amalgamation of popular imageries and formal teachings of Islamic disciplines, then became the defining mantra of Ottoman imperial ideology continuously adapted to new political configurations and confessional manifestations, and reworked until the end of the empire.

The Caliphate in the Age of Süleyman

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

> The ulama never ceased to think of the ideal unity of Islam in terms of a khalifa, a Caliph ruling a human empire. The Sufis made much of a very different sort of khalifa, the human being who as perfected microcosm is the final end of, and holds limitless sway over, the world of nature and men together. He is a Muslim, and exercises his power largely upon and through Muslims (the Abdal); but there is a recognized place under his care for the believers in every faith however crude, not only peoples of the Book as in the historical Caliphate, but outright pagans. The kings who come and go are but the servants of such a saint, as many beloved anecdotes make clear; no Caliph had such power over his governors as the Sufi shayhks, and especially the supreme shaykh, the Qutb of any given time, had over the earth's rulers.

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

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

and Mahdi. As reflected in his more common epithet, "lawgiver" (kānūnī), Süleyman was commonly perceived to be an epoch-making sultan both in Ottoman memory as well as in modern historiography.

In this study, the Süleymanic age refers to the period that roughly corresponds to the tenth century of the Islamic calendar. It is marked by the ascendance of a new imperial elite that started to take form after the conquest of Constantinople, thrived under his reign, and carried his classicizing legacy after his death. Süleyman's birth coincided with the beginning of the tenth century, which lent an added excitement to the brewing millenarianism of the period. The age of Süleyman thus conveniently corresponds to the millennial century of Islam, which also loosely syncs with the sixteenth century. Süleyman's mark was already evident before his succession and remained afresh long after his death. Neither Süleyman's succession nor his death caused any major disruption in administrative continuity. Although Süleyman was enthroned in 1520, he appeared on the Ottoman dynastic scene before 1512 during the succession struggle of his father, Selim I. By playing a crucial role in his father's takeover of the throne, Süleyman secured his own succession as the crown prince. As the sole heir to the throne, the only such case in all of Ottoman history, he himself was well aware of his uniqueness, and his contemporaries were keen to highlight this exception as a sign of his chosenness. When he succeeded to the throne at the age of twenty-five on the sudden death of his father, he continued to rule along with the statesmen and ulema promoted by Selim I, most notably Grand Vizier Piri Pasa (d. 1532) and Sheikh ul Islam Zenbilli Ali Cemali Efendi (d. 1525). When he died in 1566, Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasa (d. 1579) and Sheikh ul Islam Ebussuud (d. 1574), two major figures of his later reign, remained in office until Selim II's death in 1574. Major intellectual figures of his reign such as Ibn Kemal (d. 1534), Taşköprizade Ahmed (d. 1561), Celalzade Mustafa (d. 1567), and Birgivi Mehmed (d. 1573), had a defining impact on later Ottoman thought.

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

The age of Süleyman is best known in historical memory, modern scholarship, and popular imagination for its classicizing legacy in arts, literature, learning, lawmaking, and institutionalization. Yet, in originality and future effects, political thought was no less spectacular than any other achievement of the era. The most conspicuous development of this period was the emergence of an extensive corpus of political literature across various genres and disciplines with an unprecedented range of dissemination. Juristic, philosophical, ethical, sufistic, and theological views were expressed in the conventions of their respective disciplines or in the synthetic genre of mirrors for princes. The sheer number of political texts in circulation alone attests to the emergence of a broad-based interest among the reading public on questions of rulership. Accompanying this surge of interest was the gradual broadening of the field of political thought. Increased contact of Ottoman men of learning with the non-Ottoman body of political writings led them to deal with issues and questions that had not appeared in pre-sixteenth century Ottoman political literature. al-Siyāsa al-shar`iyya, for example, a field that developed during the Mamluk period, came to the

attention of Ottoman scholars only toward the middle of the sixteenth century, after the conquest of Egypt. Similarly, the question of bayt al-māl or public treasury, a topic not included in previous Ottoman political writings, became an important issue in this period, largely because of the influence of the Mamluk tradition of political writing. In addition, the Ottoman experience in government posed new questions to address in the political literature. Kānūn, for example, in the sense of law, had never made its way into political theory before this period, because no pre-Ottoman polity had such a highly developed legal system characterized by kānūn.

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

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

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

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

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

The Caliphate as a Moral Paradigm

In the age of Süleyman, the general tenor of political writing was set by the moralist tendency that had dominated political discourse since the rise of independent rulers in the eleventh century

against the overarching rule of the Abbasid caliphate. During the high caliphate of the ninth and tenth centuries, the main quest of juristic political thought was to establish the normative form of life. Regardless of disciplinary interests and priorities, the dominating theme of political discourse was defining the best qualified candidate to lead the Muslim community. The holy grail of political theory during the formative age of Islamic thought was to define the most perfect ruler to lead the community in the right direction towards its ideals with less regard to moral technologies of reforming the ruler-in-charge.

principles of governance, whereas theological writings were limited to the proper definition of imamate in response to alternative claims of authority. Philosophical works, in the main, treated the political as part of their search for the best form of human association that leads to the attainment of a higher with the decline of the central caliphate and the rise of independent rulers, the discrepancy between classical juristic theory and political practice widened. As best illustrated in a burst of mirror for prince's literature, moralism replaced idealism as the central theme of political discourse. This fledgling breed of political literature, which ultimately originated from the writings of Ibn al-Muqaffa in the eighth century but was overshadowed by the juristic discourse, shifted the focus from the qualifications of the universal caliph to the moral recuperation of the ruler in office, and from the uncompromising but abstract shar`ī principles of governance to specific instructions to turn existing administration into an efficient but just one. Because instating the best qualified candidate to the universal leadership of the Muslim community remained an unrealized utopia, the moralist tendency that aimed to turn the ruler in office into the best possible one found widespread appeal among statesmen, jurists, philosophers, and Sufis alike. Despite this shift of focus toward specific principles of rulership, the medieval fixation that the best governance could only be undertaken by the best of people survived as a noble ideal in political writing.

Guided by the moralist-pietistic tendency, most Ottoman authors pursued to improve the quality of rulership while totally disregarding its form. Ideal rulership was to be achieved not by finding the best form of political authority but by improving the moral quality of ruler and his aides in government. Thus the defining element of rulership was not its institutional sophistication but the human agent at the helm. Those moralists commonly defined rulership, in the generic sense, as the mere acquisition of sufficient executive power to rule. This ordinary rulership transforms into true rulership only when the ruler achieves personal sophistication in morality, spirituality, and piety. False rulership, also dubbed as worldly, material, and temporal, was most commonly labelled as sūrī (in appearance) and regarded as an imperfect form of rulership that should be turned into a superior one. True rulership, characterized by such designations as ma`nawī (in meaning), rahmānī (manifesting God's mercy), and rabbānī (manifesting God's lordship), extends its authority over both the material and spiritual realms as a result of the ruler's moral perfection. Morally conscious authors with these convictions did not pay much attention to the institutional features of government or the principles of governance but simply extended the teachings of ethics, piety, and Sufism into the realm of rulership. With their focus on the human agent as the benchmark of true rulership, there was virtually no difference between reforming an individual initiate in a Sufi tract and a ruler in power. For Sufi moralists, the Qur'anic concept of the caliphate, not the historical one, provided the perfect model, a moral paradigm for the perfection of rulership. The historical caliphate, as a legal and social construct, was the political embodiment of the Muslim community's collective responsibility to uphold and execute Islamic law and services. The Qur'anic caliphate, in Sufi idiom, was the fulfillment of the very purpose of creation par excellence, the materialization of God's representation on Earth through human being's manifestation of the divine by adopting God's attributes (ahlākullāh) as his morality

The Rumi Character of Political Writing

The scope of this study is limited to Rumi expositions of political thought that include Ottoman authors who either dedicated their works to the sultan or lived in the core provinces of Asia Minor and the Balkans, excluding other parts of the empire. Many authors who wrote on the subject from the Arab provinces, such as al-Hamawi (d. 1529), are excluded from the study. Although the practices of past rulers, as recounted in mirrors for princes,

continued to inspire political writings, moralists and kānūn-conscious bureaucrats alike increasingly idealized the Ottoman precedence in government as a benchmark for good governance and a penultimate objective of perfect rulership. These Ottomanists perceived their own achievements in state building to be on a par with the greatest accomplishments of the past that filled their imaginations from histories, epics, and legends. While still greatly revering such past idols as Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BCE), Khosrow Anushirvan (r. 531-579), Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809), and others, they illustrated their teachings more and more with anecdotes and aphorisms attributed to the past Ottoman sultans, statesmen, scholars, and Sufis. For them, government and rulership reached its unsurpassable perfection in the realm of Rum under the Ottoman dynasty, just as the Rumis perfected human potential in character refinement, morality, and creativity.

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

The age of Süleyman was also the time when the Rumi elite increasingly added their own voice into the broader tradition of political thought. Geographical expansion and increasing contacts with the outside world sparked new curiosities and interests that turned the learned more inquisitive about non-Ottoman cultural repositories. The unification of the central lands of the Islamic world had by itself transformed the Ottoman ruling elite from being distant recipients of the cultural heritage of this region to its inheritors, protectors, and promoters. Increased mobility of scholars and circulation of classical works opened new venues for Ottoman men of learning to become acquainted with political ideas that found expression before their time or outside their former cultural geography. During the age of Süleyman, for the first time in their history, Ottoman men of learning became fully exposed to the vast corpus of political writings produced before them outside the Rum. Ottoman readers and authors on rulership became fully integrated to diverse traditions of political writing in Arabic and Persian. The Ottoman court and institutions of learning were exceptionally resourceful on the subject. A contemporary witness and the author of a political treatise, Tasköprizade, praised the reigning Süleyman for his unmatched investment in library building and book collecting. He observed that these libraries provided all kinds of books, religious or nonreligious (shar`ī wa ghayr shar`ī), in Arabic or Persian, to the extent that there was no book one could not find there."

In addition, the expansion of learning institutions and bureaucracy created more appetite for reading and writing on political theory that turned the question of rulership into a staple of Ottoman public discourse. Struggles for succession among princes, factional rivalries in government, voices of dissent in society, competition among social groups to gain the favor of the sultan or to influence his

policies, and clashes with neighboring dynasties turned various political questions into public matters. Ottoman political writings before this period were dominated by translations of some of the well-known classics of political works in Arabic and Persian. While the translation activity continues with accelerating speed and diversified interests, during the age of Süleyman Ottoman men of learning from different walks of life grew more confident and began to compose their own works on the subject. This fast growing politica literature was accompanied by a large body of official documents that came to be produced en masse and became increasingly laden with political ideas, Law codes, sultanic decrees, inscriptions, correspondence with other states legal opinions issued by the leading ulema and official chronicles, in addition to the specific reasons for their compilation, served as media to express political views. Further, histories, poetical works, biographical dictionaries, and hagiographies were charged with contemporary ideals, interests, and sensiblities regarding rulership and government. In the age of Süleyman, writing on rulership and government, once the preserve of a small group of leading men of learning and statesmen, became part of a public discourse where ordinary scribes, obscure mystics, low-ranking provincial commanders, and poets with no training in statecraft could write on political matters. Although most of the political corpus was still dedicated to the sultan or the grand vizier, they ceased to be the sole addressees of political writings. Tasköprizade, in his encyclopedia of sciences, explained why ordinary people needed to learn about governance:

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

As profusely illustrated in dynastic epics and histories, the imprint of the Rum in political theory was often marked by Ottoman exceptionalism that articulated the Rumi style in government based on laws, wisdom, and principles of perfect rulership. Writing within the confines of conventional genres, scholars such as Kinallzade and Celalzade, despite their unflinching conviction about the greatness of the Ottoman state and society, were still reserved in incorporating the Ottoman experience into political theory. Their works, still reflecting the timeless wisdom of good morality and governance envisioned in non-Ottoman cultural and political contexts, were not suitable to express political views with specific relevance to the realities of the Süleymanic age. In the face of such inherent constrictions, the rising Ottoman consciousness that introduced the Ottoman experience into political theory brought about the genesis of a completely new type of political writing, the epitome of which was Lütfi Pasa's Āsafnāme. Despite its innovative approach to the question of governance, Āsafnāme owed as much to pre-Ottoman traditions of political writing as to the genius of its author and the unique Ottoman experience in government. Writing around the same time, the anonymous author of Mesālihü'l-Müslimin achieved a complete break with traditional forms of political writing and conventional ideas by dissociating political theory from the ruler and his morality and replacing them with state and law as primary objects of political reasoning. This new breed of works that increasingly dominated the crowded scene of Ottoman political discourse from the mid-sixteenth century onward was marked by a focus on contemporary issues of Ottoman rulership and government. Authors who wrote in this vein were mostly statesmen or officials who employed an empirical method of analysis, a critical perspective from their observations, and a terminological framework drawn from the current administrative language.

The prescriptive exaltation of the Ottoman experience brought about an extensive reshuffling of ideals, visions, symbols, and theories pertaining to rulership and governance that had a lasting impact on the way the Ottoman ruling elite viewed their ruler, government, and society. This paradigmatic watershed in the course of Ottoman political thought was no less original than any other spectacular achievements of the Süleymanic age. The pursuit of moralism in government that dominated the political theory gave way to legalism that evaluated rulership by its conformance to the now archetyped Ottoman

model of government rather than moral excellence. The observance of customs and sultanic laws became the touchstone of measuring the quality of government that was previously gauged on the basis of ethical norms, piety, and juristic prescriptions. The caliphate in this model was envisioned as a cosmic rank between Man and God, attained in the spiritual sphere, with the implication of a comprehensive authority over both temporal and spiritual planes as conventional conceptions of rulership in mainstream political theories became increasingly infused with esoteric teachings of Sufism. The focus of political analysis shifted from the personality of the ruler to the existing government and its institutions. From this perspective, institutional aspects of government and procedural practices mattered more than the personality of the ruler or his direct control of day-to-day affairs of state.

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

Outline of the Book

This book details the post-Abbasid trajectory of the caliphate and its Sufistic reconstruction in five chapters. Chapter 1 examines the Ottoman political discourse from its origins in the early fifteenth century to the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Views on the caliphate were expressed through a diversified corpus of works on government and rulership across various genres and disciplines accompanied by a broad-based interest in engaging with issues related to government among the Ottoman readership. This diverse body of political literature, written in different languages and genres, was produced by an equally diverse group of authors from various backgrounds, including statesmen, jurists, and Sufis. Along with the expansion of the public sphere in sixteenth century social life, not only did ordinary folks come to be more interested in matters of government but new questions and sensibilities were introduced to the sphere of the political as well. The conventional form of political discourse that was largely confined to providing advice for rulership by a select few gave way to presenting views on all aspects of government by people from different walks of life.

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

By analyzing authors, texts, audiences, and specific issues raised, Chapter 1 lays out the full scope of the Ottoman discourse on rulership and its impact on state and society. A key problem discussed in

this chapter is the question of intended media to convey political ideas. In the context of the sixteenth century, proponents of different visions of rulership expressed their ideas via three principal languages that emerged in this period. The administrative language of the bureaucrats was empirically drawn from the very Ottoman experience in statecraft and therefore exclusively belonged to its specific context. The juristic language was part of the standard Islamic law and enabled one to speak for and engage with the universal legal imperative of the broader ulema network. The esoteric and symbolic language of Sufism was an encrypted medium of communication and always purported to have contained hidden messages intelligible only to the properly trained.

Chapter 2 deals with the formative period of Ottoman political thought from the formal end of the Seljuk state at the turn of the fourteenth century to the Egyptian campaign of 1517. It argues that political ideals and imageries inculcated from the Ottomans' own historical experience, appropriation of Arabic, and the Persian corpora on Islamic political theory; and its exposure to indigenous practices of authority constituted an integral part of state formation and ruling ideology that redefined rulership in general, and the caliphate in particular. Having been founded at the western fringes of the Islamicate society in the midst of nominally converted Turkish-speaking nomadic populations, the Ottomans at large were only gradually exposed to learned traditions of High Islam. Popular spiritual orders of autonomous frontier dervishes who imagined rulers in the image of their shaykhs played a crucial role in the process whereby the Ottoman elite acquainted themselves with Islamic notions of rulership. Two foundational epics of the Ottoman Empire, Halīlnāme and Iskendernāme, were composed in this period. These narratives were among the first Turkish texts that defined the Ottoman state in Islamic terms and portrayed the Ottoman ruler as caliph. Translation of political texts and composition of frontier epics gradually transformed Turkish, which was continuously despised by the learned as a profane language of illiterate nomads with no alphabet, into one of the three principal languages of Islamic learning and culture.

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

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

The practical application of this ontological consideration was worked out through three principal theories of acquiring rulership. By largely disregarding qualifications formulated in medieval Islamic sources, Sufis, bureaucrats, and jurists argued whether rulership was attained by grace, merit, or executive power. The prevailing view, however, purported that it was a grace from God (ni`met). It was a grace for humankind for which all should be grateful, as without political authority chaos and anarchy would prevail in the world, and people of different dispositions, interests, and talents would be unable to cooperate. It was a grace for the ruler because it placed him at the highest position among humankind, in the line of the prophets and the rightly guided caliphs and offered him the opportunity to become the governor of both the material and the spiritual realms at once. Undergirding these arguments were different perceptions of human nature, both as individuals and social bodies. For Sufis, for example, a human being is inherently related to and is a reflection of God through his nature and therefore created to be His deputy on Earth. Every individual is considered to be a political being and, by nature, qualified to be His caliph. Such a perception made virtually every Sufi saint a potential claimant for universal caliphate as shown by many high-profile uprisings by rebel mystics who challenged the legitimacy of the Ottoman ruler.

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

Chapter 4 continues to examine the views on the nature of authority in Islam, diverse visions of the caliphate and its relation to sultanate as a political regime, and portrayals of the perfect ruler through archetype-building and reinterpretation of Islamic history. At the core of this discourse was the question of prophethood that came to be widely contested in the post-Abbasid Muslim society, namely, who was Prophet Muhammed, who inherited his position, and in what capacity? The emergence of Turko-Mongolian dynasties whose Islamic credentials were at best questionable, the decline of the power of the jurists, and the spread of Sufi orders in response to spiritual anxieties of fragmented Muslim society enabled the Sufis to resolve this question in their favor. It was consensual among Ottoman Sufis to argue that the Prophet had three distinct natures: spiritual (wilāya), political (saltana), and prophecy (nubuwwa), where the latter two emanate from the first one. In this configuration, the jurists, as inheritors of Muhammed's prophecy, and rulers, as claimants for his political nature, were obliged to submit to the spiritual authority, namely the perfect human being among the Sufis whose identity was disclosed only to the worthy.

The juristic conception of the caliphate formulated by medieval jurists was, in theory, a contractual relationship between the ruler and the Muslim community, provided that an elaborate set of conditions—including the ruler's descent from the tribe of the Prophet—are met. Being a non-Arab dynasty, the Ottoman authority could hardly be legitimized in the form of a caliphate on the basis of the juristic canon. The fragmentation of the post-Abbasid unity of Muslim polity and society had irreversibly compromised the universality of Muslim rulership. For the medieval caliphate, it was the jurists who formulated the script for the political ecumene, exercising a near monopoly for religious

justification by establishing the standard of law across the ecumenic cosmopolitanism of the Abbasid Empire. In the post-Abbasid world, this role was overtaken by the Sufis whose esoteric and syncretic teachings let them profoundly reinterpret the concept of the caliphate by dissociating it from its historicist justifications and juristic normativism. While the Ottoman historians successfully docked their dynastic lineage to the historical caliphate, the juristic conception was confined to the scholarly study of legal texts in Ottoman madrasas. The juristic/historical caliphate was a successorship to Muhammed (khalīfat Rasūl Allāh) in his political capacity through a sanctioned physical lineage. The Sufi-minded proponents of the Ottoman dynasty, however, envisioned the caliph to be God's unmediated deputy (khalīfat Allāh) and attributed to the Ottoman ruler the same spiritual qualities and powers accorded to the axis mundi (qutb), the invisible perfect human being to whom God entrusts the management of His whole creation in Sufi cosmology.

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

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

To counter the Safavid propaganda, Sufi-minded scholars first fabricated a noble lineage by infusing Abrahamic, Persian, and Turko-Mongolian traditions of origination that not only tied the Ottoman dynasty to prestigious empires of antiquity but also Islamized its lineage and portrayed it as divinely ordained to rule. Second, they put Islamic sources to a new scrutiny to discover divine revelations regarding the Ottomans, which resulted in constructing an elaborate eschatology in which the Ottomans were specifically foretold to rule. Third, the Ottoman rulership was depicted to be the seal of the caliphate; that is, there would not be any other Muslim authority until the end of times. Süleyman I was often compared to his namesake, King Solomon, and found mightier than the latter, for in fighting the war of the end of times he was endowed with unique qualities by divine providence. One of the most interesting texts of the entire Islamic corpus on political prognostication was written in this period by a prominent Sufi, Ibn Isa Saruhani. This was an elaborate future history of the Ottomans from 1516, the year it was composed, until 2028 CE, the year it was believed the world would end. For generations, the text was continuously updated to refresh the Ottoman myth as God's chosen and final caliphate by validating Ibn Isa's prognostication. This and similar undertakings produced a new genre of political writing that exclusively narrated the unique qualities of the House of Osman and its Islamic credentials. First conceived and drafted by Idris-i Bidlisi in his chronicle, this account was continuously updated and expanded at critical junctures and served as the basis of imperial ideology with constitutional import until the very end of the empire.

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

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

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

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

The Ottoman political enterprise appears to have transformed from a post-Mongol principality into an early modern empire beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century. The conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul), the time-honored capital of the Roman (later, Byzantine) Empire, in 1453 appears as a milestone that properly marked the beginning of the transformation. This astonishing

success underlined the military edge the Ottomans enjoyed over their rivals. Their advantage increased with the growing use of firearms in field and siege battles, a technology that marginalized nomadic warriors? The Ottomans continued to extend their territories in the east and west after the conquest until the end of the sixteenth century, moving at differing paces during various periods and sometimes facing setbacks. Having brought Istanbul under their control and established rule over diverse geographies and peoples, the Ottomans gradually adopted an imperial identity and began to assert a universalist ideology. Related to this new imperial identity were efforts to establish a legal-bureaucratic administration, which would increase the center's power by facilitating its control of the provinces.

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

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

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

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

with political authorities was thought to compromise the integrity of individual scholars.

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

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

Scholar-Bureaucrats

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

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

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

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

category may also include scholars who were not scholar-bureaucrats.

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

Sources

Not many written sources from the period attest the history of scholars in Ottoman lands during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Researchers have necessarily made do with the occasional notes in Ibn Battuta's (d. 1368/69) Tubfa al-Nuzzar about the scholars he met during his travels in Anatolia,19 several endowment deeds for madrasas, a few official documents, and scattered biographical or autobiographical notes about scholars in various sources. The architectural evidence, however, of surviving madrasas and other buildings can inform educated guesses about investment in educational institutions and about the attitude of rulers toward scholars and scholarly institutions during these years.

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

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

During the sixteenth century, a new type of source for the history of scholars in the Ottoman realm appeared. In Al-Shaqa'iq al-Nu`maniyya fi `Ulama al-Dawla al-`Uthmaniyya, Ahmed Tasköprizade (d. 1561) adopted the genre of biographical dictionary to write the history of scholars and Sufis in Ottoman lands in Arabic. He collected information about the scholars and Sufis who lived in, passed through, or died in the Ottoman realm from the beginning of the Ottoman enterprise until his completion of Al-Shaqa'iq in 1558 and recorded their lives using written sources, orally transmitted reports, his personal memories, and the memories of his friends and relatives. As Al-Shaqa'iq includes a great deal of information about scholars that cannot be acquired from any other written or unwritten sources, it is probably the most significant source available attesting the history of scholars during the period covered in this book, 13001600. Nonetheless, one must not overlook the fact that writing in Istanbul in the middle of the sixteenth century, Tasköprizade reflected some of the interests of scholars in the Ottoman center and tended to project the realities of his century backward in Al-Shaqa'iq.

Al-Shaqa'iq quickly became popular among the reading public in the Ottoman realm. Several scholars abridged it, and others translated it into Turkish.32 Mecdi Mehmed's (d. 1590/91) translation, Hada'iq al-Shaqa'iq, later came to be considered the most successful of all the translations.33 Scholars such as Asik Çelebi (d. 1572) and Ali bin Bali (d. 1584), who was also known as Ali Minik, wrote continuations (dhayl) to Al-Shaqa'iq in Arabic. These continuations include the biographies of scholars and Sufis who died after 1558. During the early seventeenth century, Nevizade Atayi (d. 1636) wrote a Turkish continuation to Al-Shaqa'iq, incorporating the biographical information contained in its earlier

Arabic continuations. During the sixteenth century, in addition to Al-Shaqa'iq, its translations, and continuations, other important biographical dictionaries were also written, recording the lives of poets and Hanafi scholars — from Abu Hanifa to Ottoman times.36 These biographical dictionaries at times provide information about scholars that is not available in any other sources.

The Structure of This Study

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

Part I covers the early Ottoman period (1300-1453), tackling in Chapter 1 the political and ideological transformation in Anatolia after the advance of the Mongols in the thirteenth century and discussing how the Ottomans worked through the opportunities and limits of the time. Chapter 2 explores Ottoman efforts to attract scholars to their realm and the variety of relationships that obtained between scholars and the Ottoman government.

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

Part III deals with the period of the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy's consolidation (1530-1600). Chapter 6 underlines the shift in managing the Ottoman imperial enterprise and the growing emphasis on internal consolidation at the expense of territorial expansion, beginning in the 1530s. The increase in the number of civil and military officials in the center and provinces, the vigorous activity of population surveys for military and tax purposes, the introduction of new bureaucratic procedures, the concentration of the dynastic family in Istanbul, the formation of new rules, and the regulation and codification of laws are discussed as elements of the new emphasis on administrative efficiency. The remaining Chapters (710), thematically organized, investigate various aspects of the development of the scholarly-bureaucratic class during the period 15301600. Chapter 7 addresses the increasing power of dignitary scholarbureaucrats (mevali) in the administration of the hierarchy and general imperial governance. Chapter 8 details the proliferation of positions in which scholar-bureaucrats could serve through the construction of new madrasas, the incorporation of old ones into the hierarchy, and the extension of the centralized judicial administration. This chapter also points out the growing concern of administrators, madrasa founders, architects, and scholar-bureaucrats with defining the rank of each position within the hierarchy. Chapter 9 takes up the issue of professional differentiation between scholar-bureaucrats and explores knowledge, professional competence, patronage, and economic means as factors affecting the success of individual scholar-bureaucrats in professional life. Chapter 10 deals with the four different career paths scholar-bureaucrats could follow.

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

Conclusion

Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire represents the findings of research on the

formation of a civil bureaucracy, its development, and its growing sophistication in the Ottoman Empire through an examination of changes in the relationship of scholars with the dynasty and its enterprise of state formation during the early modern period.

In the tumultuous political and ideological environment of post-Mongol Anatolia, the Ottomans needed the services of scholars to develop a sophisticated administration and to augment their legitimacy. The early Ottomans had no indigenous scholars in their realm, because the Ottoman polity originated and developed in formerly Christian territories. For this, beginning in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans invited prominent scholars to visit their lands and encouraged them to stay. Simultaneously, they began to build madrasas in which these educated men could teach and train other scholars. As specialists of law, scholars provided the Ottomans with knowledge of statecraft and fulfilled essential governmental tasks. They served as viziers, bureaucrats, professors, judges, jurists, and in other capacities. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, scholars were in high demand throughout the Islamic world. A plethora of political units built on the ashes of the Mongol system wanted to acquire the services of scholars. Scholars were aware of this situation and did not feel obliged to remain loyal to any particular political group. For this reason, the Ottomans had difficulty retaining scholars in their service, and many insouciantly left Ottoman territories to receive the patronage of other rulers.

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

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

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

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

In the face of this significant development, both scholar-bureaucrats and rulers at times appeared mistrustful of what such a system would lead to. Scholar-bureaucrats did not want to lose their integrity, while sultans were fearful of developing a system that lay beyond their immediate control. For this reason, many scholar-bureaucrats considered government service a burden and felt the urge to assert their independence. On the other hand, sultans and their agents occasionally improvised new hierarchical rules or breached existing ones.

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

This augmented administrative centralization after 1530 had repercussions for the positions of scholar-bureaucrats in the empire. First of all, the bureaucratic expansion was accompanied by bureaucratic specialization: financial and scribal offices were assigned more and more to officials who had received specialized training. As a result, scholarbureaucrats stopped serving in these positions. Second, the central government brought under its control a greater number of educational and judicial offices, such as professorships, judgeships, and jurist positions. Thus, the increased number of scholar-bureaucrats (denied access to positions in the financial and scribal offices) became professionally specialized in educational and judicial offices, and they came to constitute a bureaucratic hierarchy of their own, known as the ilmiye. Finally, the expansion, sophistication, and division of the bureaucracy occurred alongside the development of well-defined rules governing the appointments and promotions of bureaucrats, as well as their duties and powers. The heads of the government, including the sultan, hardly ever attempted to breach these rules. Hence, the stages of professional life for scholar-bureaucrats became ever more predictable.

Related to these changes in Ottoman ideology and administration after 1530 was the transformation in the attitude of the scholar-bureaucrats toward the Ottoman imperial enterprise. By then, affiliation with the imperial administration had a history and had become routine. Given the strong legal guarantees and precedents for their regular professional advancement, most scholar-bureaucrats did not question the propriety of their affiliations. In addition, scholar-bureaucrats now had their own bureaucratic hierarchy, which largely functioned according to impersonal rules. They probably felt that they had their own autonomous sphere within the imperial system, that their

scholarly integrity and independence were not harmed, and that they could transform Ottoman ideology and law from within according to their own ideals. Thus, scholar-bureaucrats increasingly saw the Ottoman enterprise as a blessing and dedicated themselves to its advancement, attempting to strengthen their own positions in it.

Implications for Ottoman Historical Studies

To begin with, the conception and periodization of Ottoman history according to the decline paradigm dominated Ottoman studies for most of the twentieth century. According to this model, the period from the beginning of the Ottoman enterprise until the late sixteenth century was conceived as a period of gradual ascendance, while the following period until the end of the empire in the early twentieth century was a period of slow but inevitable decline.1 Within this periodization, during the period of ascendance, scholar-bureaucrats appeared as constituting a significant administrative branch that developed and implemented increasingly sophisticated principles while contributing to the advancement of imperial power and prestige. On the other hand, beginning in the late sixteenth century, this paradigm sees scholar-bureaucrats as degenerated: bribery, nepotism, favoritism, and the sale of offices grew rampant among their ranks; scholarly creativity ended; and incompetents filled scholarly offices. Thus, in this view, scholar-bureaucrats played a significant part in the decline of the empire?

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

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

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

law (sharia) and scholar-bureaucrats began to play a greater role in the regulation of public affairs and provided legitimacy for limiting the sultan's authority.

My study indicates the existence of developments analogous to what Tezcan identified as characteristic of the Second Ottoman Empire throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I have shown that acquiring the status of askeri by entering the hierarchy of scholar-bureaucrats was a path open to nearly anyone during the period. Men of Muslim or non-Muslim origin, from different ethnicities and various geographies, could become part of the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy by acquiring the necessary skills and associating with dignitaries. In addition, during the period 1453-1600, the hierarchy of scholar-bureaucrats developed and acquired increasingly sophisticated rules. The professional career paths of individual scholar-bureaucrats could be foreseen with considerable precision. The regulations that made this possible did not always start from the top and move down, from the sultan to his subjects. True, Mehmed II's law code played a critical role in the formation of the hierarchy; however, many rules were unwritten. Sultans, founders of madrasas, architects, administrators of the hierarchy, and job seekers all participated in the development of these unwritten binding rules with their actions, demands, and rejections. Did the sultan have the power to break these rules? Theoretically, yes. But in practice, sultans and their representatives could enforce decisions contradicting these rules only with difficulty. They also would not want to risk appearing to be law-breaking sultans. Moreover, scholar-bureaucrats until the end of the sixteenth century do not appear to have been simple instruments legitimating and augmenting the power of the sultans. Rather, as representatives of the Islamic tradition and legal experts, they spoke with a discrete authority and frequently participated in the formation of public discourse. Although they did not have the means to independently curb the power of the sultan, they could authorize and provide legitimacy for forces within the dynastic family or outside it that emerged in opposition to the sultan.

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

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

Another area rich for exploration is the relationship between scholars outside the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy and the imperial administration. Scholar-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Excerpt: This is a small Book about a very large book, composed in the early fourteenth century by an Egyptian bureaucrat and scholar named Shihāb al-Din Abmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayri. After a high-flying career in the financial administration of the Mamluk Empire, al-Nuwayri retired to a quiet life of study in Cairo, devoting his

remaining years to a project of literary self-edification. This took the form of a compendium of universal knowledge entitled The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition (Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab). Containing over two million words in thirty-one volumes, the Ultimate Ambition was a work of enormous scope, arranged into five principal divisions: (i) the cosmos, comprising the earth, heavens, stars, planets, and meteorological phenomena; (ii) the human being, containing material on hundreds of subjects including physiology, genealogy, poetry, women, music, wine, amusements and pastimes, political rule, and chancery affairs; (iii) the animal world; (iv) the plant world; and (v) a universal history, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing all the way through the events of al-Nuwayri's life. Perusing the Ultimate Ambition's pages, one comes across such varied topics as the substance of clouds; the innate dispositions of the inhabitants of different climes; poetry about every part of the human body; descriptions of scores of animals, birds, flowers, and trees; qualities and characteristics of good rulers and their advisors; administrative minutiae concerning promissory notes, joint partnerships, commercial enterprises, loans, gifts, donations, charity, transfers of property, and much more.

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

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

My interest in the Ultimate Ambition has been motivated from the outset by a curiosity about why this time and place in Islamic history witnessed an explosion of compilatory texts: dictionaries, manuals, onomastica, anthologies, and compendia of all shapes and sizes. In earlier decades, such texts were generally seen as tokens of intellectual stultification and a lack of originality—the baroque sputterings of a civilization content to collect and compile the writings of earlier centuries. In recent years, the growth of scholarship on late medieval Islamic history has led to a recognition of the important role played by compilers like al-Nuwayri, whose works served as the primary custodians of the Islamic tradition in the early modern period and remain among the most important interpreters of that tradition for modern scholarship and Islamic thought.

Still, the motivations and working methods underlying this movement remain little understood, as are the ways that the Mamluk compilers positioned themselves vis-à-vis the archive they were assembling. I take up this subject in chapter 1 in the course of situating al-Nuwayri and his text within the landscape of encyclopedic production around the turn of the fourteenth century. As a bureaucrat, scholar, and aspiring litterateur who traveled all around the empire and held various administrative offices, al-Nuwayri's biography

reflects many of the forces that shaped cultural attitudes towards large-scale compilation at this time. What it does not seem to reflect at all is a fear of civilizational catastrophe brought on by the Mongol conquests, which was long thought to be a principal cause for encyclopedic production in the Mamluk Empire. While the trope of the encyclopedia as a defender and guarantor of civilizational heritage is certainly widely attested in Renaissance and Enlightenment intellectual history, I propose that it did not motivate the Mamluk compilers to write their books.

Rather, encyclopedists such as al-Nuwayri were moved by other factors entirely, chief among them the feeling of an overcrowding of authoritative knowledge in Cairo and Damascus, the great school cities of the empire. The explosion of investment in higher education and the changing migration patterns of scholars in West and Central Asia had a transformative impact on the sociology of scholarship at this time, making new texts available for study and prompting the formation of new genres and knowledge practices. In chapter 2, I present a bird's-eye view of al-Nuwayri's work—its internal arrangement, structural divisions, and overall composition—comparing it to other Mamluk encyclopedic texts as well as earlier exemplars within the adab tradition. What emerges from this panoramic view of the work is a sense of how dramatically it brought together compositional elements from different genres—the classical literary anthology, the chronicle, the cosmographical compendium, and the scribal manual—and fashioned something altogether new by combining them. This generic hybridity was not unique to the Ultimate Ambition; I argue that the processes of summary, concatenation, and expansion on display in al-Nuwayri's work can be seen as productive of a diverse range of encyclopedic forms in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.

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

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

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

the heart of the Ultimate Ambition and in certain ways is its raison d'être.

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

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

“How could I allow my soldiers to sail on this disloyal and cruel sea?” These words, attributed to the most powerful caliph of medieval Islam, Umar Ibn al-Khattab (634–644), have led to a misunderstanding in the West about the importance of the Mediterranean to early Islam. This body of water, known in Late Antiquity as the Sea of the Romans, was critical to establishing the kingdom of the caliphs and for introducing the new religion to Europe and Africa. Over time, it also became a pathway to commercial and political dominion, indispensable to the prosperity and influence of the Islamic world. Sea of the Caliphs returns Muslim sailors to their place of prominence in the history of the Islamic caliphate.

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

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

Excerpt: The Medieval Mediterranean and Islamic Memory

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

Many arabic texts of the Middle Ages relate the fame of celebrated sailors—admirals (sahib al-bahr) and "leaders [ra'is] of sailors"—acquired on the waters of the Mediterranean. The remarks attributed to one of the most glorious of these sailors, Muhammad b. Maymun, an admiral of the Almoravid, then Almohad fleets, as well as a member of a family originally from Denia that produced five admirals who served Islam, show the extent to which the profession had gained prestige and recognition in the port cities of Islam, as well as in Constantinople, Venice, Pisa, Genoa, and Barcelona. As early as the period of the Medina caliphate, the figure of 'Abd Allah b. Qays al-Jasi, the man who led fifty maritime campaigns and the first Muslim martyr to win glory at the head of the caliph's fleet by landing in Cyprus in the middle of the seventh century, occupies an important place in the collective memory passed down by the historians of Baghdad. Several Abbasid admirals were similarly honored. Among them, the two commanders of the caliphal squadrons based in Tarsus in Cilicia and Tripoli of Lebanon, Damian and Leo, became famous in 904 after pillaging Thessaloniki. Their Greek origins, which made them "renegades," as well as the obscure background of Ahmad al-Siqilli, who defeated the Portuguese admiral Fuas Roupinho in 1181, showed the advantages of assimilating all those who joined Islam, no matter their origins, by serving the caliph.

Other admirals, such as the Banu Kalbi, in the service of the Fatimids; the Banu L-Rumahis, favorites of the Umayyad caliphs of Cordoba; and the Banu Maymun, admirals of the Almoravids and Almohads, but also Ghanim b. Mardanish, one of the sons of the emir of Murcia, who had joined the Almohads in 1172, and even one of the members of the caliphal dynasty, 'Abd Allah b. Ishaq al-Jami', were often from high-ranking clans and families, a sign of the prestige attached to the

position. Some maritime lives were even recounted in narratives honoring the heroes who fought the Christians at sea. Thus the eleventh-century emirs of Denia, al-Mujahid and his son 'Ali, distinguished themselves by their commitment to jihad on the sea: they undertook the conquest of Sardinia, an initiative doomed to failure, but which brought them immortality through the Arabic chronicles. During the Almoravid collapse in 1147, 'Ali b. Maymun, nephew of the admiral of Almeria, turned Cadiz, then a mere anchorage, into the capital of his principality. These glorious deeds recalled those found throughout the accounts of the heroes of the Arab conquest celebrated for having pushed back the boundaries of the Dar al-Islam.

The Mediterranean of the Arabic texts was thus distinguished, among the seas of Islam, as the place where the caliph's jihad was accomplished, even if the caliph did not participate in person. The presence of the Prophet's successor on the Basileus's border between Cappadocia and Syria was enough to associate all the regions, both land and maritime, with jihad. As a space of war, the Sea of the Romans had become the vast and terrifying stage for the display of Islamic universality under the guidance of the caliph. The Mediterranean embodied the ultimate hostile space for the believer, which therefore also became the sea of the martyr, the conquest of which was to be achieved with the taking of Constantinople and Rome and would precede the beginning of the time of salvation. Consequently, the saga of the great sailors of Islam, who represented the caliph at sea, singled out the Mediterranean among the seas of the Dar al-Islam as the only maritime space of caliphal jihad. This is a far cry from the Latin pragmatism attributed to Benedetto Zaccaria, the great Genoese admiral who defeated the Pisans at the Battle of Meloria in 1284 and a shrewd businessman who embodied the Genoese spirit: Ianuensis ergo Mercator, "a Genoese, therefore a merchant."

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

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

of the great maritime cities of the Latin world, in a prelude to the development of capitalism on the North Sea.

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

Despite the fact that Islam remained the only universality he recognized, al-Idrisi, a Muslim Arab who lived in the middle of a formerly Greek, then Islamic, land that became Latin in 1063, was convinced he lived in the heart of the ecumene, not because his homeland of Sicily was under Norman and Christian control but because in the twelfth century it was a prosperous world born of the admittedly violent cohabitation of three great civilizations, visible in places such as the palatial chapel of the Norman kings. In his unrivaled descriptions of innumerable communities, such as Sicily's fishing villages and their timeless fishing techniques,3 this Muslim in the service of the Norman king reveals the richness of this world in its totality, no longer from the perspective of the kingdom or the caliphate but from that of the villager, the fisherman, or the sailor. More than war, whose damaging effects on Ifriqiya are described in his work, al-Idrisi renders a complex Mediterranean civilization, in which prosperity constantly existed side by side with the disasters of violence and destruction. The Sicilian geographer's map and its commentary are the peak of the art of Arab geography, discipline born in Baghdad, which for a time was alone in its constant task of discovering and measuring the Mediterranean.

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

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

Ibn Khaldun took this logic to its natural conclusion in his masterpiece, The Book of Examples. He has the period of Muslim domination over the Mediterranean coincide with the period of the region's Fatimid and Umayyad caliphates in the tenth century. He assigns the sea the roh of a border, controlled by the most powerful rulers in Islam, whether caliphs or sultans, not as an end unto itself but as a prelude to other conquests, under the guidance of the most virtuous princes and conquering tribal forces driven by the spirit of Islam. When Ibn Khaldun met Tamerlane in the capital of Syria, he gave him a signed copy of his book, thinking he had found the Muslim sovereign able to subject the world—including the Christian world and its seas—to Islam. Like his peers, he was not looking for a particular place in the Islamic world from which the conquest would be launched but rather for an army and its guide, who would be able to revive the conquering spirit of their Arab ancestors. The lost Mediterranean had not become a place of useless nostalgia but an area to be taken back from the Christians thanks to the spirit of Islam.

Finally, the Mediterranean has a singular place in the rihla of Ibn Battuta (1304-ca. 1377), but not in the way one would expect from a Maghrebi and native of Tangier.6 In this redistribution of the world's spatial hierarchy, it is the new spaces, the lands and seas of expansion and Islamization that most attracted the Moroccan traveler's attention: India and its oceanic extension, the steppes of Central Asia, the Mali of Mansa Suleyman (1335-1358), and the southeast of Africa between

Mogadishu and Kilwa are presented as models of government, some of which were still poorly integrated but prosperous and filled with hope for Islam's future. For Ibn Battuta, the sea that embodies Islam's maritime space is no longer his own but instead the Red Sea, and more specifically the maritime route of the pilgrimage to Jeddah, Islam's maritime center stretching from Rabat to Delhi.

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

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

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

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

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

great Ottoman religious rebel and reformer, incited his revolt against the dynasty in 1416.

Thus, as Deliorman and Gerlovo's countryside was being repopulated by groups potentially not quite amenable to the centralizing drive of the rising, sedentary, and increasingly self-consciously Sunni, Ottoman imperial bureaucratic regime, the Ottoman state undertook to encourage the growth of urban centers to strengthen its control over what was theretofore an internal Ottoman "no man's land." The most decisive development in this respect was the foundation of the city of Hezargrad (mod. Razgrad) in 1533 by the mighty grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, who provided for the town's rapid growth through the establishment of a richly endowed pious foundation (Ar. waqf; Tr. vakif) which would finance the construction and maintenance of a congregational mosque, a madrasa, a soup kitchen, and other typical Ottoman (and Islamic) urban institutions that would turn the new city into a stronghold of Ottoman Sunni "orthodoxy." Soon after its foundation, Hezargrad was made the center of a newly carved-out provincial district and equipped with a judge and the appropriate military-administrative personnel. Concurrently, Shumnu (also Sumnu, mod. Shumen) — a medieval Bulgarian fortress town to the southeast of Hezargrad which had been captured by the Ottomans in 1388-9 and destroyed by the crusaders of Varna in 1444 — was rebuilt and developed into an Ottoman provincial district center. By 1579, Eski Cuma (mod. Târgovishte), to the west of Hezargrad and Shumnu, had emerged as a new Ottoman provincial district center, to be recognized as a town by the Ottoman authorities in the first half of the seventeenth century.

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

The present work is thus essentially a double case study. On the one hand, it explores the formation of one of the most numerous, compact (and in this case, Turkish-speaking) Muslim communities in the Balkans; one characterized, moreover, by a very significant "heterodox," non-Sunni element — the Alevi-Bektashis of today. It can thus be compared to other significant Muslim communities that developed elsewhere in the peninsula, such as those in Thrace, the Rhodope Mountains, Albania, and Bosnia. Arguing for a nuanced view of the formation of these communities, the present study emphasizes the importance of regional differentiation, as each of these communities followed separate trajectories that make the search for a common model precarious. In this regard, it explores the interplay between Turcoman colonization, conversion to Islam, the articulation of confessional identities, and Ottoman policies of centralization and regional development in the formation of the Muslim community in Deliorman and Gerlovo.

No less importantly, the present work is a regional case study of "the process of imperial construction"' whereby from the mid-fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries the Ottoman polity made the definitive transition from a frontier principality to a centralized bureaucratic empire. In the process, groups that had played paramount roles in the rise of the Ottoman frontier principality, such as Ottoman frontier-lord families, semi-nomadic Turcoman warriors, and non-Sharia-minded dervishes, came to be gradually displaced and marginalized by the emerging imperial regime's development of its institutional instrumentarium, which came to rely upon regular army units more tightly answerable to the center, a new military-administrative service class of largely kul/slave

origin, a rapidly developing professional palace bureaucracy, and the rising ulema (Ar. ulama) class of medrese (Ar. madrasa)-trained religious scholars who endorsed scriptural, Sharia-minded Islam and would staff the Ottoman judiciary and educational system. The semi-nomadic Turcomans and "heterodox" dervishes in Deliorman and Gerlovo who were "tamed" by the late sixteenth century were very much descendants of those original "masters of the frontier zone" who had made formative contributions to the success of the Ottoman frontier principality, having acted as members of a power-sharing partnership with the early Ottoman dynasty. The study thus aims to demonstrate how this "process of imperial construction" played out in a distant province, highlighting also the changing balance between the "wanderers" and the "settlers" — Le. the itinerants and the (semi-) nomads and the sedentarists, respectively — in the decisive favor of the latter, the triumph of the cereal/agricultural economy over pastoral nomadism, and the relationship between confessional/religious identity and imperial policy.

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

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

Geographical Scope

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

This area thus stretches from the Danube River — roughly between modern Ruse (Ott. Rus, Rusçuk) and Tutrakan in the northwest to the Balkan range in the southeast — just to the south of modern Târgovishte and Shumen. At the northwestern end, along the Danube, lies a several kilometer-wide strip of flat land. Moving to the southeast, the larger part of the area studied is dominated by

Deliorman — the hilly and wooded plateau roughly delineated by the Danube to the northwest, the Ruse-Varna line to the southwest, and the relatively arid steppe-like plain of Dobrudja to the east.9 With an average altitude of 300m, but reaching 485m, Deliorman, like the rest of the area under discussion, enjoys considerable yearly precipitation (around 550-600mm per year); however, due to its karst limestone and loess base, its aboveground water resources are limited, small creeks and rivers often losing their way in the loess sediments. This lack, at least in the pre-modern era, demanded the digging of wells and tapping of karst springs to ensure a satisfactory water supply. Until the nineteenth century most of Deliorman was covered by oak, ash, elm, and maple trees."

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

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

Early Modern Ottoman Deliorman and Gerlovo in the Scholarly Literature

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

The first Ottomanist to advance a hypothesis about the origins of Deliorman's heterodox Muslim population — usually referred to as Kizilbas (as well as Alevi-Bektashi) today — for which the region has been well known in the modern age, was Franz Babinger — one of the founding fathers of Ottoman studies. He claimed, without adequate substantiation, that the Kizilbas in Bulgaria, Deliorman included, were descendants of adherents of the "Safaviyya" (Ger. "Sefewijje"), which he seems to have conceptualized in the narrower sense of adherents of the Safavid order, but which could also be understood more broadly in the sense of sympathizers of the newly established Safavid regime in Iran (1501) who had fled from Anatolia in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in the sixteenth century.16 There the issue long rested, but later research on the revolt of Sheykh Bedreddin in the early fifteenth century and the letters of the judge of Sofia, Sheykh Bali Efendi, to the grand vizier and the sultan in the 1540s, which point to the presence of adherents of Bedreddin's movement in Deliorman, has induced some scholars to assume that the heterodox population in the area largely had its origins in that movement, and not in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. In the past few decades this view has been expressed in specialized studies as well as in general histories of the Ottoman Empire.19 Most recently, Nevena Gramatikova, in several fine works devoted to the history of the heterodox Muslim communities in Bulgaria, emphasized the importance of the heterodox collectivity of the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba (d. 1478) and his successors — the sixteenth-century saints Akyazili Baba and Demir Baba (the latter being the great sixteenth-century regional saint of Deliorman) — for the formation of

the heterodox Muslim communities in the eastern and specifically the northeastern Balkans. Gramatikova also places the development of heterodox Muslim communities in the eastern Balkans in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict and notes that these communities were in all probability augmented by the migration of Safavid sympathizers onto Ottoman Anatolian soil into the Balkans in the sixteenth century (which, in turn, affected these communities' nature).

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

Overview of the Sources

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

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

Synoptic registers usually contain only summary household and bachelor numbers as well as the total tax amounts assigned for each settlement. Most of the land was defined as state-controlled (miri) and tax revenue accruing from it was apportioned into small, medium, and larg revenue grants assigned in lieu of a salary to state functionaries, usu ally defined as the ruling askeri class (lit. the "military" class, but which included bureaucrats and members of the learned hierarchy). The mos numerous, small benefices (timars) were usually assigned to members o the provincial sipahi cavalry, fortress garrison members, and low-leve administrative and judiciary personnel; mid-sized benefices (ze amets) to mid-ranking provincial military commanders; and large benefices (has pl. havass) belonged to the sultan, members of the dynasty, high state dignitaries, and provincial governors. Apart from miri lands, these registers include pious endowment (evkaf) properties (with the respective taxpayers, the accrued tax revenue, and the beneficiaries of the endow ment) as well as freehold properties (mülk, pl. emlak). While many such registers included properties of all three kinds (miri, evkaf, and emlak) some covered only miri lands with their respective revenue grants (often referred to as timar tahrir defterleri) or only covered pious endowment and freehold properties (referred to as evkaf ve emlak tahrir defterleri).

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

As for narrative sources, the study utilizes a variety of works of Ottomar historiography: chronicles of

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

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

Apart from the basic division into administrative, narrative/literary, and legal, at least two other divisions among sources could be made. First, from the perspective of authorial provenance, one may distinguish between sources that were products of the state and/or clearly endorsed the dynastic and state perspective, as opposed to sources emanating from non-state actors, who could be individuals or groups that espoused varied and changing attitudes toward the evolving Ottoman dynastic project. Thus, Ottoman administrative documents and dynasty-centered chronicles would fall in the former category, while hagiographic accounts of heterodox saints and sources of non-Ottoman provenance in the latter.

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

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

The book consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an expanded introduction that provides a brief overview of Ottoman history through the sixteenth century and discusses theoretical and comparative aspects of the Ottoman transformation from a frontier principality to a centralized bureaucratic empire, together with a historiographical analysis of the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans. Chapter 2 analyzes the broader aspects of Turcoman colonization in the Ottoman Balkans through the early sixteenth century and also contains case studies of the lives of two prominent Balkan Muslim heterodox saints from the mid-fourteenth through the fifteenth century — Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kizil Deli) and Otman Baba — based largely on their respective hagiographical accounts. Chapter 3 discusses the pre-Ottoman and early Ottoman northeastern Balkans (through the fifteenth century). Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the demographic and socio-economic development of Deliorman, Gerlovo, and adjacent areas in the rural countryside and the urban centers, respectively. Chapter 6 analyzes select aspects of religion, culture, and authority in Deliorman and Gerlovo, largely through the lenses of Demir Baba's vita. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of two major conceptual and historiographic issues — conversion of Islam and confessionalization — within the regional context of the present study.

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

Islam and Its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qur'an brings together scholars from various disciplines and fields to consider Islamic revelation, with particular focus on the Qur'an. The collection provides a wide-ranging survey of the development and current state of Qur'anic studies in the Western academy. It shows how interest in the field has recently grown, how the ways in which it is cultivated have changed, how it has ramified, and how difficult it now is for any one scholar to keep abreast of it. Chapters explore the milieu in which the Meccan component of the Qur'an made its appearance. The general question is what we can say about that milieu by combining a careful

reading of the relevant parts of the Qur'an with what we know about the religious trends of Late Antiquity in Arabia and elsewhere. More specifically, the issue is what we can learn in this way about the manner in which the "polytheists" of the Qur'an related to the Jewish and Christian traditions: were they Godfearers in the sense familiar from the study of ancient Judaism? It looks at the Qur'an as a text of Late Antiquity--not just considering those features of it that could be seen as normal in that context, but also identifying what is innovative about it against the Late Antique background. Here the focus is on the "believers" rather than the "polytheists." The volume also engages in different ways with notions of monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia. This collection provides a broad survey of what has been happening in the field and concrete illustrations of some of the more innovative lines of research that have recently been pursued.

Excerpt: This volume has its origin in a conference held at the UCLA G. E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies in October 2013. The theme of the conference was `Islam and its Past: Jahiliyya and Late Antiquity in the Qur'an and Tradition', and the occasion for it was the conferment of the Levi della Vida Award on Patricia Crone. It was a happy occasion for all, despite the fact that at the time the honoree was already ill with terminal cancer and died less than two years later. In preparing the volume for publication we have retained the title of the conference, but have modified the subtitle to reflect the content of the volume more precisely.

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

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

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

The next two contributions are research articles that aptly illustrate two of the trends in the scholarship surveyed by Stewart. In `Processes of Literary Growth and Editorial Expansion in Two Medinan Surahs' (Chapter 2), Nicolai Sinai reconstructs the redactional history of the opening passages of Q 5, dealing with dietary prohibitions and the performance of ablution before prayer, and Q 9, concerning warfare against the Associators' (mushrikūn). Sinai thus devotes his chapter to what one might call the internal archaeology of the text. If we start from the Qur'an as we have it in our hands, how far and by what means can we convincingly reconstruct the earlier history of the text? What makes for a definite inference, a plausible inference, and an inference so vague as not to be worth making? The chapter sets out guidelines and criteria for research of this kind, and applies them to the study of the particular passages from the Qur'an referred to above. Given that such methods were developed in scholarship on the text of the Bible as much as a century-and-a-half ago, and have since been applied well beyond the point of exhaustion in that field, one might have thought that specialists on the Qur'an would already have done most of what can be done with them. Mercifully for the next generation of scholars, Sinai's chapter shows that in the study of the Qur'an the point of exhaustion for such methods still lies far in the future.

In "0 Believers, Be Not as Those Who Hurt Moses": Q 33:69 and its Exegesis' (Chapter 3), Joseph Witztum, by contrast, probes what one might call the external archaeology of the text. If we start from a knowledge of the content of the Bible as refracted in Jewish and Christian tradition down to the eve of the rise of Islam, what can we do to better understand what the Qur'an is saying, what it is not saying, and what it is doing in saying or not

saying it? Given that the relevant sources in Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Greek were mostly published long ago, and that a quorum of scholars of earlier generations were able to use these and the Islamic sources conjointly, one might again have expected the point of exhaustion to have been reached some time ago. Here again Witztum's chapter, with its focus on one particular puzzle in one particular verse, shows that we are still a very long way from the point of exhaustion. This too is a pleasant discovery, and good news for the next generation.

The two chapters that follow are concerned less with what is going on inside the Qur'an and more with situating it in a wider field. Patricia Crone's chapter, `Pagan Arabs as God-fearers' (Chapter 4), is part of an exploration of the milieu in which the Meccan component of the Qur'an made its appearance. The general question is what we can say about that milieu by combining a careful reading of the relevant parts of the Qur'an with what we know about the religious trends of Late Antiquity in Arabia and elsewhere. More specifically, the issue is what we can learn in this way about the manner in which the `polytheists' of the Qur'an related to the Jewish and Christian traditions: were they Godfearers in the sense familiar from the study of ancient Judaism? Angelika Neuwirth's chapter, `Locating the Qur'an and Early Islam in the "Epistemic Space" of Late Antiquity' (Chapter 5), is a broader approach to the questions that arise if we resolutely consider the Qur'an as a text of Late Antiquity—not just looking at those features of it that could be seen as normal in that context, but also identifying what is innovative about it against the Late Antique background. Here the focus is on the `believers' rather than the `polytheists'. In particular, the chapter is a call for a broader and more sustained focus on the variety of typological strategies creatively employed by the Qur'an in putting material drawn from the Bible at the service of the community of believers.

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

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

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

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

What was the relationship between government and religion in Middle Eastern history? In a world of caliphs, sultans, and judges, who exercised political and religious authority? In this book, Ali Humayun Akhtar investigates debates about leadership that involved ruling circles and scholars of jurisprudence and theology. At the heart of this story is a medieval rivalry between three caliphates: the Umayyads of Cordoba, the Fatimids of Cairo, and the Abbasids of Baghdad. In a fascinating revival of Late Antique Hellenism,

Aristotelian and Platonic notions of wisdom became a key component of how these caliphs debated their authority as political leaders. By tracing how these political debates impacted the theological and jurisprudential scholars and their own conception of communal guidance, Akhtar offers a new picture of premodern political authority and the connections between Western and Islamic civilizations. It will be of use to students and specialists of the premodern and modern Middle East.

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

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

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

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

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

Most early specialists of jurisprudence within the growing body of scholars earned their livelihood from other skills, numbering amongmerchants, copiers of manuscripts, textile manufacturers, and tradespeople in a variety of occupations illustrative of their deep ties with local communities in the cities and towns of the Middle East and North Africa.6 That is, the scholars' growing expertise in fields such as lexicography and Islamic ethics was not an inherently salaried pursuit. In terms of harmonizing paid careers with polymathic intellectual pursuits, the financial situation of the early scholars paralleled that of the early astronomers and philosophers. Some of the most influential figures in the history of medicine and surgery were also philosophers and astronomers, which meant that many astronomers saw patients when not reading Aristotelian-Neoplatonic writings on the nature of the cosmos. In the case of the scholars'

harmonization of paid careers and intellectual pursuits, the push to professionalize the geographically wide networks of scholars as full-time paid jurists and judges in a growing administrative system of courts was partly the aspiration of centralizing ruling circles. Ruling circles may have drawn on a mix of early Islamic and pre-Islamic administrative practices in this process. As far as how scholars reacted to and participated in the administrative development of the judiciary, some scholars resisted appointments to administrative positions as judges, protective of what they perceived as the independence of their knowledge and authority.' Other scholars, however, were more willing to take on official judicial appointments, even in the early centuries.

Significantly, even after the proliferation of administrative courts of justice and later theological colleges, which came to be funded largely by charitable endowments (awqāf), the scholars largely held onto their intellectual dominance in the justice system because of the epistemic authority they held at a popular leve1.10 What supports this conclusion is the vast surviving body of non-binding legal opinions (fatāwā) from the writings of early scholars, which are illustrative of how scholars were available locally to offer a variety of answers to questions dealing with the most mundane of family matters and the mediation of neighborhood disputes.11 The general populace's informal accessibility to the scholars, who issued these non-binding juridical opinions in their capacity as specialists of jurisprudence, continued to develop hand in hand with the scholars' more formal presence in these administrative courts as both judges and advisers to judges. Court-appointed judges, who were typically scholars themselves, often drew directly on the growing body of non-binding legal opinions that were specific to what became the most influential schools of jurisprudence in early Sunni circles: the Hanaf i, Shāfi`ī, Mālikī, and Hanbalī schools of thought, and for a long period particularly in al-Andalus, the Awzā`ī and Zāhirī schools of thought. In some cities and periods, these judges drew directly on the opinion of a sitting juris consul (mufti) for a specialized legal matter.

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

Specifically, beyond the early limitations of interference in the Christian and Jewish clergy's internal communal affairs, the Muslim scholars' religious authority in the judiciary was additionally limited or perhaps counterbalanced by a court structure known as the mazālim. The mazālim courts were a type of court system in which rulers and not scholars administered justice directly. The jurisdiction of a ruling figure in these courts had theoretical parallels with the way the market inspectors, who were political administrators, oversaw financial and social practices in the public marketplaces. On the one hand, the mazālim courts and the role of the market inspectors illustrate the extent to which some legal jurisdictions were shaped directly by ruling circles. On the other hand, the respective roles of a ruler in the mazālim courts and a market inspector became partly embedded in the way the scholars themselves theorized, or more likely accommodated retroactively, the historical role of governing circles in administering justice and maintaining security and order in a slowly expanding public sphere.12 Notably, this scholarly theorization of the role of ruling circles in maintaining security and order occurred long before the bureaucratic nation-state made deep inroads of direct governance into a vastly expanded public sphere. In this context of the scholars' theorization of ruling governance in empire, it is notable that the scholars also identified and recognized aspects of other legal systems that already existed in the central lands of the Middle East. These legal systems include the laws and customs of the previously mentioned Christian and Jewish clergy, who held onto semiautonomous legal jurisdictions within their own Middle Eastern

communities. In sum, the image of these distinctions in legal systems and legal jurisdictions in the medieval Middle East, from courts with a scholarly mufti and the ruling mazālim courts to the semi-independent legal realm of the Christian clergy, offers a picture of Muslim scholars who constituted a significant part of premodern religious authority, but whose authority and power was contested or perhaps counterbalanced within the judiciary by ruling political authority and non-Muslim religious authority.

Against the backdrop of this historical development of the judiciary and the rise of the scholars, what deserves more attention in current research is how this interplay between the rulers' political authority and the Muslim scholars' religious authority continued to develop not only inside, but also outside the judiciary's institutions. In the current study, the multifaceted realm of Islamic intellectual culture, and specifically written debates on philosophy and theology, is of particular concern. Alongside the vast corpus of surviving writings on jurisprudence, legal theory, language theory, ethics, and other fields in the expanding scholarly sciences, the scholars' writings on philosophy and theology have also survived. These latter works offer overlooked evidence of the way models of ruling political leadership and scholarly religious leadership developed in tandem within a larger dialogue over the intellectual underpinnings of communal guidance. By the tenth century, distinct trends in Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines were becoming an increasingly common and openly acknowledged part of how ruling circles and scholars debated and articulated conceptions of sound knowledge, communal guidance, and leadership. One controversial example of an influential political model that drew on Graeco-Arabic theories of cosmology is the tenth-century Fatimid caliphate, which was founded by political reformers within a subgroup of Ismā`īlī Shiism. As discussed in the next section of this introduction, by the time the Fatimids founded Cairo in the late tenth century on the site of Fustāt, Fatimid ruling circles had begun to project to their neighbors in Abbasid Baghdad and Cordoba a unique representation of the Ismā`īlī Shiite caliph as a semi-messianic (mandi) Platonizing guide to salvation. The Fatimids thus challenged not only the ruling political authority of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad, but also the scholarly religious authority of the networks of predominantly Sunni scholars and rising Imāmī (Twelver) Shiite scholars.

The Fatimid Ismā`īlī theologians' embrace of Graeco-Arabic cosmological doctrines in their conceptions of communal guidance was not an isolated phenomenon. In the same early centuries of the Islamic-era Middle East, although the Sunni scholars rejected the Fatimid caliphate's Platonizing conception of political and religious leadership, the scholars had already been in the process of expanding their sciences and conceptions of scholarly religious authority in ways that engaged the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic theories of the Graeco-Arabic philosophers. Specifically, many scholars of the Qur'an and hadith who studied sciences such as lexicography were also interested in the theological value of Graeco-Arabic philosophy's analysis in logical reasoning, doctrines in psychology on the soul and the intellect, and theories of cosmology about the underlying elements of the world and the agency of God in it. That is, from Cordoba to Baghdad, the early Sunni scholars were part of an intersection of diverse intellectual networks that included, most notably for this book, the following: dedicated hadith specialists among the scholars (`ulamā'), writers of Arabic-language commentaries on Aristotle (Aristūtālīs) and Plato (Aflātūn) among the Baghdad Peripatetics (mashshā'iyyūn), and writers of a specifically Islamic metaphysics among the speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) interested in both hadith and Graeco-Arabic philosophy, each group intermingling with the next and influencing each other's works. In the case of the Cordovan scholars Ibn Masarra (d. 319/ 931) and Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064), discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, their writings illustrate how the polymathic learning of a scholar who studied hadith in the tenth and eleventh centuries often included an education in Aristotelian-Neoplatonic doctrines related to scriptural topics, from discussions of human intellect and sense perception to the underlying mechanisms of causality. That is, the example of early Sunni scholars interested in philosophy shows that in addition to studying scriptural texts, jurisprudence, ethics, and other expanding Islamic sciences, a scholar in early Sunnism might also engage the tools of Aristotelian logical reasoning or Neoplatonic conceptions of the soul and intellect in

order to investigate more deeply the various scriptural references to the world's natural phenomena, the afterlife, and what lies beyond the visible realm both within and beyond the human mind.

With a focus on these changing modes of knowledge and authority that were part of both ruling and scholarly conceptions of communal leadership, the heart of this book offers an investigation of the following two-part hypothesis: First, in the multi-religious, scripture-valuing urban societies of the medieval Middle East and North Africa, where Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines were in various levels of circulation among the general populace of urban Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities, debates within ruling circles and scholarly networks about sound leadership of the growing Muslim populace played out not only in a negotiation over the expanding judiciary, but also in a theological dialogue about Graeco-Arabic psychological and cosmological doctrines that had widely recognized implications for conceptions of personal virtue and communal ethics. Second, the joint participation of ruling circles and the scholars in this dialogue, which occurred through both oral and textual mechanisms such as the patronage of books, was an intertwined and contested activity illustrative of how the ruling political leadership and scholarly religious leadership shaped each other's historical development in a dialectic of authority that constituted neither a ruling political orthodoxy nor a scholarly clerical orthodoxy. The parallel rise of philosopher-governors among the caliphs together with philosophical theologians and philosophical Sufis among the scholars offers a window into this interaction of political and religious leadership.

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

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

The scholars (`ulamā) were analyzed in the previous section as an urban social network with influential scripture-related knowledge in sciences such as jurisprudence, legal theory, language theory, and ethics. Coinciding with the bibliophile Abbasid caliphs' support for the translation of Hellenistic philosophy and science in Baghdad, and in a move reminiscent of the Middle East's late antique Christian clergy and Jewish rabbis' activities, some of the Muslim scholars began to engage Aristotelian-Neoplatonic philosophy in its Graeco-Arabic form when debating two questions: What did it mean to be one of the Muslim scholars, and what modes of knowledge were relevant and sound when providing spiritual and theological guidance to the faithful Muslim populace? In the eyes of large swaths of early scholars in Sunnism, it was not inherently problematic to draw on the curriculum of late antique Aristotelian-Neoplatonic philosophy and science in the investigation of scripture-oriented theological questions about the cosmos, God's agency in that cosmos, and the mechanisms of the human intellect and soul as referenced in scripture. The study of particular sciences in the Graeco-Arabic philosophical curriculum was of particular interest to early scholars because it included not only the widely practiced medical sciences, but also natural sciences such as astronomy, which had perhaps the clearest religious significance both for ritual and theological matters. From the perspective of ritual, the nature of the daily prayer and the fasting month of Ramadan encouraged a precise awareness of solar patterns, lunar movement, and geographical direction. From the perspective of scriptural exegesis and theology, astronomy offered the possibility of exploring further the omnipresent astronomical references found throughout the

Qur'an that described the nature of the cosmos and the agency of God in it. These questions were at the heart of the early Mu`tazilī and Ash`ari speculative theologians' (mutakallimūn) investigations of the nature and underlying elements of the created cosmos as experienced by mankind and as described in scripture. The fact that scholars of hadīth began to participate in these discussions, and the fact that both hadīth scholars and specialists in speculative theology began to engage the writings of the Baghdad Peripatetics, meant that for many scholars, aspects of the late antique Aristotelian-Neoplatonic curriculum of philosophy were key to what it meant to be one of the scholars of Islam by the tenth and eleventh centuries. To be sure, these developments were debated internally among the scholars, and Chapters 1 and 2 highlight how these debates even erupted politically in the tenth century. However, by the time the Timurids and Ottomans rose to power at the end of the European medieval era, the scholars of Islam had come to incorporate into the Islamic sciences a wide variety of disciplines transmitted in Arabic and Persian from the late antique philosophical curriculum. In what illustrates the longevity of these developments, fourteenth-century scholar Nizām al-Din al-Nīsabūri even declared the study of astronomy morally recommended (mandūb) as a kind of religious virtue, while the most influential jurisprudential college in fifteenth-centuryTimurid Samarkand incorporated an observatory to enrich the Islamic sciences' curriculum.

In an additional avenue for an early scholarly bridge between Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theological writing, the early philosophers among the Baghdad Peripatetics also described the ancient philosophical tradition as one with roots in the wisdom of prophetic figures such as Luqmān and Idris, the latter whom some early philosophers identified with the ancient sage Hermes.'8 The identification of Hermes with the prophet Idris became commonplace by the ninth century in what further contextualizes the various angles of early scholarly interest in Graeco-Arabic philosophy. In late antique Hellenistic philosophical writing, Hermes appears to have been a marginal figure in contrast with the towering legacies of philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato. However, early Graeco-Arabic philosophers emphasized the description of Hermes as having achieved an intellectual ascent to the higher world, a goal that was of paramount importance to mystical piety in early Islamic mysticism. In the lens of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic and specifically Plotinian cosmology and psychology, which was central to the writings of the Baghdad Peripatetics, Hermes' intellectual ascent was understood as the ascent of the human soul toward a greater Universal Soul, of which the Neoplatonic human soul was a part. Plotinus (d. 270), who was born in Graeco-Roman Egypt and who was one of the most influential Platonic philosophers after Plato and Aristotle, understood the human intellect and soul to be connected to a greater Universal Intellect and Universal Soul that were spaceless and outside of time. In late antique Plotinian psychology and cosmology, the underlying principles of the cosmos included One, Intellect, and Soul. al-Fārābī interpreted this cosmology according to Ptolemaic astronomy in a revised theory on the celestial emanation of these principles through the world's ensouled cognizant spinning planets, identified by some Graeco-Arabic philosophers as planets with angels.19 This emanation, according to Neoplatonic cosmology, proceeds logically down to the sublunary world of man. From this perspective, Hermes's intellectual ascent was the human soul's rediscovery of this primordial spiritual realm. The early philosophical emphasis on Hermes as having achieved an intellectual ascent to the higher world encouraged the claim among some particularly influential early Graeco-Arabic philosophers that the ancient Hermes, identified increasingly with the prophet Idrīs, was the most accomplished of the ancient sages. This picture of Hermes-Idrīs was one of the various links that bridged Graeco-Arabic philosophical writing with both theological and mystical writing among the early scholars of Islam. Two influential figures in transmitting this early understanding of Hermes-Idrīs more widely are of particular significance, as their legacies illustrate the process through which the intersection of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and theological writing became more widespread. The first is the philosophical Sufi Shihāb al-DinYahyā al-Suhrawardi (d. ca. 1190-2), and the second is the group of early anonymous writers of the highly influential and widely circulated Epistles of the Pure Brethren.

The first figure, Shihāb al-Din Yahyā al-Suhrawardi, was the founder of a school of Sufi metaphysics that brought together philosophically oriented theological writing with theories on mystical experience. His school of thought, known as Illuminationism (Hikmat al-Ishrâq), offered a Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) critique of aspects of Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) formal and material logic, al-Suhrawardi's legacy represents the culmination of a process, highlighted in Part II of this book, in which scholars who were interested in Islamic mysticism increasingly and deliberately drew on Neoplatonic-Avicennan philosophical doctrines and, in some cases, represented figures like Hermes, Plato, and the ancient Hellenistic philosophers as pre-Islamic proto-Sufi figures. The second group, the Brethren of Purity, was an anonymous philosophical coterie in early Abbasid Iraq who wrote and transmitted the Epistles of the Pure Brethren. The Epistles were a set of popularly circulated philosophical works that were influential in the development of Platonizing theological writing in both Sunnism and Shiism, particularly among Sunni mystics and Ismā`īli Shiite theologians. The wide scholarly and popular appeal of the Epistles of the Pure Brethren is well documented in early Islamic history, and while later Ismā`īlī theologians took a particular interest in their writings and actively adopted their legacy, the Brethren's original theological affiliation remains uncertain given their eclectic interests and intentional anonymity. Though some of their strongest critics were found in Sunni scholarly circles, the writings were in fact absorbed very quickly by both early Sunni and Ismā`īlī Shiite theological circles, both having picked and chosen which sections they found sound and valuable. Current research has left the question open of the Brethren of Purity's original theological affiliation in what illustrates how the Epistles' eclectic mix of Graeco-Arabic philosophy, Islamic theology, and mysticism in their diverse discussions of the mind and the cosmos had wide appeal in early Islamic history. The legacies of al-Suhrawardi and the Pure Brethren together underline the point that in sum, from the perspective of the predominantly Sunni scholars interested in Graeco-Arabic philosophy's relevance to their own education and conception of communal guidance, multiple avenues existed for a theological engagement with philosophical doctrines in psychology and cosmology.

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

Scholars as Philosophical Theologians and Philosophical Sufis

From the perspective of the theological dimensions of a scholar's polymathic knowledge and guidance of the general Muslim populace, later forms of speculative theology in Sunnism after the eleventh century increasingly intersected with Graeco-Arabic philosophy in the formulation of dedicated philosophical theologies. This development was centered not only in the Middle East and North Africa, but also in Central Asia. That is, the scholars' scripture-based understanding of the mechanisms of the world, God's agency, and the process of deepening one's spirituality increasingly absorbed and reinterpreted doctrines of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in Aristotelian logical reasoning, Neoplatonic conceptions of the mind, and Neoplatonic understandings of the body and soul. In the case of what became the predominant Ash`ari school of theology that emerged from the earlier Mu`tazilī approach, later Ash`arism after the twelfth century became increasingly oriented around Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) methods of logical reasoning with additional engagement of select aspects of Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) psychology and cosmology. On the one hand, the picture of an increasingly philosophical dimension of scholarly theological knowledge is not the picture of scholars

encouraging the general Muslim populace to draw on Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) logical reasoning in the formulation of basic creedal beliefs. On the other hand, evidence suggests that large segments of the urban Muslim populace came to understand the scholars' original role of mediating disputes, offering guidance in ethics, and clarifying doctrinal questions, as a role increasingly connected to logic-oriented (mantiq) reasoning in the tradition of Aristotle and Avicenna. What supports this picture is a combination of the following: the wide circulation of scholarly texts that include logical treatises and short creedal works with theoretically complex conclusions, the enduringly large social networks of urban scholars even after the rise of colleges, the public dimension of the later scholars' occupational activities as increasingly full-time paid professional scholars educated in publicly funded legal-theological colleges of prominence, and the text-oriented careers of much of the urban general populace. The general urban populace in the medieval Middle East and North Africa included teachers, civil servants, accountants, hobbyist scientists, friends of scholars, and writers of belle-lettres. The most recent analyses of Middle Eastern social history and Arabic writerly culture show that the general urban populace in the ninth and tenth centuries was educated in a manner that cultivated a strong value for the practical importance of books, reading, and various forms of written and oral knowledge in an intellectual milieu from which the scholars themselves emerged.

In contrast with this philosophical turn in Islamic theological writing, and against the backdrop of Middle Eastern Christian Christological debates that had grown highly philosophical in both the late antique and early Islamic eras, some Muslim scholars unsurprisingly articulated concerns about the integration of Aristotelian-Neoplatonic theories into an otherwise simple and straightforward doctrinal system oriented around the basic belief in "No God but God" Who created the cosmos. Scholars asked whether the average individual's sacred belief system might misunderstand basic theological precepts if complex theoretical discussions were taught in the context of scriptural hermeneutics, creedal belief, and spiritual reflection. Examples of these more complex theological discussions that became increasingly philosophical include theories on the relationship between divine agency (qudra) and divine knowledge, the connection between divine knowledge and the divine attributes (sifāt), the relationship of the attributes with the Beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-husnā), and other fine points of doctrinal belief drawing on scriptural references. Among the scholars, the early critics of speculative theology in either its simpler or more philosophical forms were a diverse group. They included the With-compiler Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), the defender of the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic corpus and Cordovan judge Ibn Rushd (Averroes d. 595/1198), and even the later Platonizing Sufi metaphysician Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), all of whom articulated some criticism over the potential misguidance of the general populace following the proliferation of more complex and often contested theoretical approaches to theological ideas. In this concern, however, these scholars moved against the prevailing tide of history that saw the Sunni scholarly discipline of theology, particularly later Asharī theology, take on more philosophical approaches to articulating doctrinal beliefs, with conclusions that were ultimately transmitted to the general populace through various intertwining channels such as al-Ghazālī's treatises. By the thirteenth century, Sunni scholars increasingly tended toward conclusions in psychological and cosmological doctrines found in the philosophical neo-Asharī and Māturīdī schools of theology, which showed continuity with trends in the early and once prominent eleventh-century Andalusi Zāhirī school discussed in Chapter 2. Ibn Hazm, who systematized a local Andalusi form of Zāhirī theological writing, formulated a pioneering epistemology in this regard. Several decades before al-Ghazālī articulated his logic-oriented nominalist critique of Neoplatonism in later Asharī theology, Ibn Hazm called for the absorption of Aristotelian logic in Islamic theological writing to the exclusion of Neoplatonic cosmological conclusions.

Even after this widespread intersection of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology in Sunnism, however, the question of whether this development was epistemically sound continued to be discussed by influential scholars well into the Ottoman period. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who lived in the last decades of the Abbasid-Mamlūk period as the Ottomans were coming to power, was famous

among the later critics. Had even the most judicious philosophical theologians absorbed philosophy into Islamic thought too uncritically? Were the revised applications of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic really able to avoid Neoplatonic-Avicennan conclusions in Plotinian cosmology and psychology? Despite his admiration for aspects of philosophy's logical tools, Ibn Taymiyya's fourteenth-century position on the place of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in Islamic theology echoed significant aspects of Ibn Hazm's pre-Ghazālian nominalist critique of Neoplatonism discussed in Chapter 2. Ibn Taymiyya broke with Ibn Hazm and al-Ghazālī, however, as these earlier scholars

embraced a reformed approach to Graeco-Arabic philosophy as part of Islamic theology. In systematizing this project, both Ibn Hazm and al-Ghazālī built on the work of some early Graeco-Arabic philosophers who already questioned a wholesale acceptance of the AristotelianNeoplatonic corpus into an Islamic theological worldview. al-Kindī (d. 260/873), whom al-Fārābī (d. 235/850) and Avicenna (d. 428/1037) represented as more a theologian than a true Peripatetic philosopher, offers an illustrative example. al-Kindi was influential among later philosophers such as al -Amid (d. 381/992) and objected to the philosophical doctrine on the pre-eternity of the world. In formulating a philosophical argument for the divine creation of the world out of nothing (ex nihilo) in time, which would break with Aristotelian- Neoplatonic doctrine and agree with scriptural cosmology's references to God's creation of the world ex nihilo, even al-Kindī did not need to create a philosophical solution from scratch. Christian philosophers and philosophical theologians of the late antique Middle East, who were writing in Aramaic and Arabic in the early Islamic-era Middle East, were long at work formulating philosophical positions that were in agreement with the cosmological tenets of biblical texts. For example, al-Kindī had at his disposal the logical arguments of pre-Islamic Christian philosophers such as John Philoponus, and he was likewise in conversation with contemporary Muslim speculative theologians such as the Mu`tazilīs and their early Ash`arī successors who were already at work extracting a system of metaphysics of the world from the scriptural text. Ibn Hazm's philosophical theology, discussed in Chapter 2, represents one example of the way al-Kindī's synthesis of Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology anticipated or found an audience among the growing numbers of philosophically minded Muslim scholars who simultaneously studied Aristotelian logic for both jurisprudence and theology and also questioned key conclusions in Neoplatonic psychology and cosmology. Where Platonizing trends in psychology and cosmology found an additional place in scholarly writing was in the language of Sufi metaphysics, which came to intersect very strongly with Islamic theology after the twelfth century.

Sufi metaphysics, like philosophical theology, was likewise formulated and transmitted within the circles of the scholars, specifically among mystics like the Hanafi scholar Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d. ca 380/990) and the Shāfi`ī scholar Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulami (d. 412/1021). Remarkably, the figure in Sunnism popularly associated with a more enduring absorption of Aristotelian (Aristotelian-Avicennan) logic into scholarly jurisprudence and theology was the same figure associated with the more widespread absorption of Sufi metaphysics into the scholarly sciences — namely, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). In the decades and centuries following the popularization of mysticism in ninth-century Iraq, scholars who were interested in an experiential dimension of theological truths began to articulate theories of metaphysics that amounted to what might be called today a kind of mystical theology. al-Ghazālī's short Niche of the Lights foreshadowed the extent to which works of Sufi metaphysics written by scholars were to become increasingly oriented around Neoplatonic-Avicennan conceptions of psychology and cosmology. These works, whether short mystical treatises or longer volumes of metaphysics, were not oriented around the Baghdad Peripatetics' harmonizing of Aristotle with Plato, nor were they oriented around the philosophical theologians' attempt to formulate a systematic scripture-based logic-oriented representation of the world's mechanisms and God's agency. Rather, among the more primary goals of these mystical treatises and volumes was to articulate to mystical aspirants how to attain, through spiritual contemplation and ritual, a form of experiential knowledge (ma`rifa, kashf, dhawq) of the spiritual realm, and additionally how to articulate one's mystical experience scrupulously.

Given this distinction between the Sufis' intellectual goals and those of the Baghdad Peripatetics and philosophical theologians, the interest in Graeco-Arabic philosophy among Sufi metaphysics seems, at first glance, perplexing. What makes this interest in philosophy among Sufi metaphysicians confusing is the history of Sufis criticizing the philosophers' deductive methodology and championing a more inductive and mystical epistemology, a criticism matched by the philosophers' own representation of some Sufis and theologians as pseudo-philosophers.

There are two possible explanations why these Sufi metaphysicians took on an explicit interest in Neoplatonic (Neoplatonic-Avicennan) or rather Platonizing conceptions of the mind, body, soul, and universe to an extent that employed select aspects of Neoplatonic language and imagery. First, these Sufis interested in Neoplatonic-Avicennan conceptions of the mind, such as al-Ghazālī himself, often numbered among the same scholars who were writing works of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic-oriented philosophical theology. Second, as mentioned, Sufis made their own claim on Hellenistic philosophy through an alternative genealogy in which the Sufis and not the Peripatetic philosophers inherited the knowledge of ancient philosophers like Socrates and Hermes, or rather Hermes-Idrīs.37 The previously mentioned founder of Illuminationism, Shihāb al-DinYahyā al-Suhrawardi (d. ca. 1190-2), provides an illustrative example of a Sufi whose mystical metaphysics offered a Neoplatonic-Avicennan critique of aspects of formal and material Aristotelian-Avicennan logic.38 In the case of philosophically oriented Sufis like him, who increasingly emerged from the circles of the scholars, they often identified their Sufi metaphysics neither as the scholarly discipline of "speculative theology" nor the contemporary study of Graeco-Arabic "philosophy" (falsafa), but rather "wisdom" (hikma). In what makes the exact meaning of the term hikma dependent on time and place, philosophers like al-Fārābī (d. 235/850), Ibn Sina (d. 428/ 1037), and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) used the term "wisdom" (hikma) interchangeably with the term "philosophy" (falsafa) of the Peripatetic (mashshā'i) Aristotelian-Neoplatonic commentary tradition. For many Sufis, the term hikma became synonymous with Sufi metaphysics, with pre-Islamic philosophers such as Empedocles represented in later Sufi texts as influences on early mystics like Dhū l-Nūn al-Misri (d. 245/859) and his student Sahl al-Tustari (d. 238/896). As seen in Chapter 4, for example, the scholar and Sufi Ibn Barrajān (d. 536/1141) of Seville represented hikma as his own mystical approach to cosmological conclusions attained erroneously by the philosophers. Ibn Barrajān's use of hikma in this way very closely anticipated Ibn `Arabī's (d. 638/1240) critical assessment of Ibn Rushd's (Averroes d. 595/1198) deductive methodology and likewise echoed the writings of his Cordovan predecessor Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931). As discussed in Chapter 1, Ibn Masarra claimed the philosophers (falāsifa) arrived successfully at key theological truths when discussing the Universal Intellect and Soul while simultaneously criticizing the philosophers' use of imprecise language.

Despite the fact that Sufi metaphysics developed among mystics within scholarly circles, some scholars offered enduring critiques of the mystics and Sufi metaphysics in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Significantly, these criticisms were often less centrally oriented around their approach to philosophical doctrines and more oriented around their use of esoteric scriptural hermeneutics. Scholars pointed to the potential dangers of how the mystics, much like the Ismā`īlīs, integrated interpretations of theological beliefs and ritual in an "interior" (bātin) category of scriptural meaning that in some cases departed significantly from the corresponding "exterior" (zāhir) level of meaning. Though mystics pointed to the parallel importance of these interior and exterior meanings, critics highlighted controversial cases where "interior" meanings appeared to compromise traditional creedal doctrines and ritual obligations. The resulting controversy was the Islamic version of an antinomianism (ibāhiyya) debate, which saw some critics misrepresent mystical approaches to esoteric scriptural hermeneutics. From the critics' perspective, the discovery of deeper meanings of theological belief and ritual was not itself problematic, as it was commonplace in Qur'an commentary. Where criticism emerged was in cases when the distinction between "interior" meanings and "exterior" meanings was so great that the resulting dichotomy resembled the esoteric hermeneutics of the Ismā`īlī Shiite theologians. That is, Sufi metaphysics, despite

being systematized within Sunni scholarly circles, had become entangled in the writings of critics with the controversy over Ismā`īlī theology because of a shared history of interest in esoteric scriptural hermeneutics. In what brings the political dimensions of this controversy into clearer focus, esoteric scriptural hermeneutics formed the basis of the Fatimid Ismā`i1ī movement's claim to the caliphate in tenth-century North Africa, which explains the rise of the epithet "esotericists" (bātiniyya) to describe the Fatimid caliphate and the Ismā`īlīs more broadly. By the fourteenth century, the scholar Ibn Taymiyya applied the Ismā`ïlī epithet "esotericists" to both the philosophers and the Sufis in a critique that included special criticism of al-Ghazālī, whom medieval and modern historians identify as a key figure in the rise among the scholars of philosophical theology and philosophically oriented Sufi metaphysics. Ironically, al-Ghazālī was the author of the Scandals of the Esotericists, a work written under political patronage that praised the Abbasid caliphate and criticized the rivaling Fatimid caliphate. That this work included its own criticism of the Fatimid caliphate's political use of Graeco-Arabic philosophy, and that it was written under a caliphate in Baghdad that once sponsored the translation of Hellenistic works into Arabic, reflects the extent to which scholarly debates about philosophy's value in communal guidance and leadership were heavily impacted by caliphal politics.

Caliphs as Bibliophile Patrons of Philosophy and Platonizing Guides

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

As mentioned, the Fatimid caliphate (r. 909-1171) emerged in North Africa from a movement not in the predominantly Sunni manifestation of Islam, but in a subset of early Shiism, specifically early Ismā ilism. The early history of the Ismāilī movement in the ninth century is vague because of the loss of early texts, and it is largely known based on representations of its origins written both by later Ismāilī theologians and by critics of Ismāilism. By the formative ninth century, the other main subset of Shiism, the Imāmī (Twelver) form of Shiism dominant in present-day Iran, had already adopted a politically conciliatory position within the Sunni political and religious establishment of the Abbasid caliphate. Twelver Shiism's political position was so conciliatory in recognizing the Sunni Abbasid caliphate that the reigning "protectorate" dynasty of military emirs in Abbasid Baghdad who ruled coterminously with the caliph was an Imāmī Shiite

military dynasty — namely, the Būyid or Buwayhid emirs (r. 9451055).4' While the successor Seljuk sultans of Baghdad (r. 1055-1258) represented themselves as restorers of Sunni authority within the Abbasid caliphate during the sultanate ofToghril (r. 1040-1063), the Būyids' earlier military reign throughout Iraq and Iran had already been partially accommodated in political theory by the Sunni scholarly establishment of Iraq. The arrangement of a reigning emir or sultan in Baghdad who ruled concomitantly with a caliph in Baghdad became embedded in the later Sunni scholars' formally elaborated distinctions between the nature of the caliph's leadership and the sultan's or emir's leadership. These theories were articulated formally by figures such as the jurist and political theorist al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) and the polymath scholar al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), chief judge under the coterminous rule of the Abbasid caliphs and Seljuk sultans.

What made the rise of a rival Fatimid Ismā`īlī Shiite caliphate much more alarming to the predominantly Sunni scholars than the rise of an Imāmī Shiite emirate in the Abbasid heartland was the fact that the Fatimids rejected the entire Abbasid imperial framework. A rejection of the Abbasid caliphate was not simply the rejection of the caliph. Because the caliph stood atop a decentralized imperial hierarchy of political authority, a rejection of the Abbasid caliph implied a rejection of the governing authority of reigning sultans and emirs from Cordoba to Baghdad, as well as a dismis works of influential Sunni and Imāmī Shiite scholars who recognized the political legitimacy of the prevailing Abbasid political system. The declaration of a rival caliphate in 909 by the Fatimid Ismāilīs challenged the authority of all of these groups. This rejection of the legitimacy of what amounted to the prevailing imperial commonwealth of Islam based in Baghdad had its roots in some ninth- and tenth-century Ismā`īlī Shiite theological circles that theorized significant political change. While early Ismā`īlī Shiite writers did not have a uniform approach or conception of what ideal models of religious and political authority looked like, some writers appear to have theorized a politically revolutionary approach that contrasted with Imāmī Shiism's more politically conciliatory approach. How the Platonizing philosophical underpinnings of this Ismā`īlī political theology took shape is a particularly elusive story.

Ismā`īlī theologians in the ninth century had begun to develop a reputation found in Sunni representations of Ismā`īlism for synthesizing Shiite theories of a coming semi-messianic leader (mandī) with Graeco-Arabic doctrines in psychology related to inspired knowledge and celestial intelligence. This Platonizing representation of Ismā`īlī theology, epitomized in al-Ghazālī's writings examined in Chapter 3, had a genuine basis in the writings of early Ismā`īlī theologians. Specifically, some early philosophically oriented Ismā`īlī writers active in Persia and Central Asia, including Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Nasafi (d. 332/942), were interested in explaining Ismā`īlī theology and conceptions of salvation using the analysis of contemporary Neoplatonic psychology and cosmology. Al-Nasafi agreed with Graeco-Arabic forms of Plotinian (Neoplatonic) cosmology. According to this cosmology, human souls were connected to a greater Universal Soul, and human intellects were likewise connected to a greater Universal Intellect, which philosophers like al-Fārābī (d. 235/ 850) understood to be spaceless and outside of time in agreement with Plotinus (d. 270). As previously discussed in the context of the scholars' encounter with philosophy, the late antique synthesis of Aristotelian and Platonic commentary traditions found in Plotinus's legacy posited that the underlying principles of existence included One, Intellect, and Soul. Drawing it seems on the Baghdad Peripatetics who emerged from the Greek-Arabic, Aramaic-Arabic, and Pahlavi-Arabic translation movement under the early Abbasid caliphate, al-Nasafi understood the human soul to be an element that somehow linked man in the corporeal world with the Plotinian Universal Soul outside of time and space. In line with aspects of Plotinian soteriology, al-Nasafi and later Ismā`īlī theologians such as al-Kirmānī (d. 411/1020) characterized the process of perfecting the soul as part of man's spiritual ascent toward ultimate enlightenment and eventually salvation. According to these theories, this spiritual ascent was enabled through the medium of intellect, and in a way that had implications for religious authority, Ismā`īlī theologians came to represent Ismā`īlī spiritual

guides and teachers as facilitating this process of a philosophical intellectual ascent.

During the early reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Muizz (r. 953-975) the Fatimids ultimately adopted, in part through the patronage o Ismā`īlī theological books, this early ninth-century Ismā`īlī synthesi of Neoplatonic psychology and Ismā`īlī conceptualizations of leader ship and salvation. While these theories were originally formulated by figures like al-Nasafi (d. 332/942) who were not officially connected to the Fatimid movement, others like al-Kirmānī (d. 411/1020) were formally aligned with the Fatimids. Given the Abbasid-era Sunni scholars geographical proximity to the early philosophical Persian Ismā`īlīs of al-Nasafi's (d. 332/942) circle, Sunni scholars may not have had to wait for Fatimid caliph al-Muizz (r. 953-975) to adopt these more Neoplatonic Ismā`īlī concepts of leadership in order to develop an early stereotype of Ismā`īlī theology as a Platonizing one. In fact, from a Sunni scholarly per spective, the idea of ruling circles drawing on select aspects of Hellenistic thought in ruling political culture was a familiar one, even if the Fatimids addition of semi-messianic overtones was less familiar. As mentioned from at least as far back as the bibliophile Sunni Abbasid caliphs such as al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-833), the caliph associated with the dream abou Aristotle, Sunni scholars from the era of the politically backed Greek Arabic translation movement were already familiar with the idea that ruling political administration could draw on Graeco-Arabic philosophy in the formation of political culture and articulation of political leadership Hówever, it was particularly the messianic dimension of the Fatimids conception of a philosophical caliph that attracted special criticism in it representation of the caliph as claiming more religious authority than an: of the previous caliphs of Baghdad, Damascus, or Medina. The Fatimid conception of the caliph was even the source of the Qarmati Ismā`īlīs unwillingness to join the Fatimid Ismā`īlī movement. Still, the more basis notion of the caliph as a philosopher-governor was not a new one, as in had a place in both Abbasid and Fatimid political culture despite thrse distinctions in approach. What is particularly significant in this concept' tandem development in Abbasid and Fatimid political culture, however is how one came to impact the other. Specifically, the Fatimids' model o a Platonizing Ismā`īlī caliphate seems to have had an impact on how the Abbasid caliphate revised and backpedaled its political connection with Graeco-Arabic philosophy.

While the early Abbasid caliphate in the era of Ma'mūn (r. 813-833 was originally a source of patronage of a wide spectrum of Graeco Arabic philosophical books and ideas, a pattern that made the caliph ate a bibliophile center of global knowledge, the later Abbasid caliph ate in the era of al-Mustazhir (r. 1094-1118) moved toward sifting ou problematic political and theological manifestations of Graeco-Arabic philosophy. At the center of the Abbasid caliphate's critique, which can be located in the realm of a new set of court-commissioned books, was a disapproving representation of the Ismā`īlīs' conception of the Ismā`īlī caliph and his inner circles as Platonizing guides who claimed to facilitate a kind of spiritual enlightenment among the general populace. More specifically, in response to both the Fatimid Ismā`īlīs and the breakoff Nizārī Ismā`īlīs led by Hasan-i Sabbāh (d. 518/1124) of the famous Hashīshiyya, the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustazhir (r. 1094-1118) commissioned chief judge al-Ghazālī to write a short theological treatise called the Scandals of the Esotericists that criticized Ismā`īlī politics and theology. The treatise condemned in particular the way the Ismâ`īlīs used philosophical doctrines in psychology and cosmology as the basis of a claim to communal leadership and guidance. Interestingly, as Chapter 3 discusses, three of the doctrines in cosmology that al-Ghazālī criticized in Ismā`īlī philosophical theology were the same three that he selected for special condemnation against the Graeco-Arabic philosophers in the form of a fatwā in the Incoherence of the Philosophers. These doctrines were specifically the philosophical notion of the pre-eternity of the world, the nature of God's knowledge of the universals and particulars, and the nature of human resurrection in terms of body and soul.52 The Incoherence, in turn, played an important role in laying out more enduring contours of Sunni scholarly distinctions between theologically sound and unsound absorptions of Graeco-Arabic philosophical doctrines. Scholarly works like the Scandals of the Esotericists and the Incoherence of the Philosophers shaped the parallel

development of an Aristotelian-Avicennan logic-oriented form of Islamic theology (later Ash`arism) and a more loosely Platonizing form of Islamic mysticism (Sufi metaphysics), both of which became central dimensions of what it meant to be a Sunni scholarly guide of the community after the eleventh century. One of the key arguments of Part I of this book is that earlier sets of writings in al-Andalus, controversial rise of the Fatimids as a semi-messianic Platonizing political movement.

The examples of Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/ 1111) criticizing the Fatimids' Platonizing political theology within their respective investigations of Neoplatonic cosmology's role in the Sunni scholarly sciences points to a key pattern illustrated in this book. Just as the Abbasid—Fatimid rivalry in political models had an impact on Abbasid conceptions of ruling political authority, it likewise had an impact on how the predominantly Sunni networks of scholars articulated the contours of their own scholarly knowledge and religious authority as communal guides. In particular, the Abbasid—Fatimid political rivalry helped shape a tenth- and eleventh-century scholarly conversation about which aspects of Graeco-Arabic philosophical knowledge were relevant parts of what it meant to be a theological guide of the Muslims within the general multi-religious populace. As Part I shows, the impact of this conversation on the scholars was twofold. First, Sunni scholars cultivated a lasting place for Aristotelian logic to the exclusion of specific Neoplatonic conclusions in the most influential methodologies of Islamic theology. Second, the scholars cultivated an enduring space in Sufi metaphysics for revised interpretations of Neoplatonic doctrines in psychology and cosmology. That is, the history of the scholars embracing AristotelianAvicennan logic-oriented forms of philosophical theology and more loosely Platonizing forms of Sufi metaphysics in their debates about what it meant to be a Sunni scholarly guide of the community's belief, which was discussed in the first part of this introduction, was shaped partly by the political contingencies of this Abbasid-Fatimid rivalry and its competing philosophical conceptions of political leadership. This dialectical relationship between conceptions of ruling political authority and scholarly religious authority can be located in two key textual phenomena traced in this book. First, scholarly theological debates about the contours of sound belief and ritual were often articulated in writing with an explicit awareness of how specific positions were used controversially in contemporary politics, especially in Fatimid politics. Second, the texts in which these ideas were elaborated were often entangled with ruling attempts to sponsor or alternatively marginalize specific groups of scholars and works. At the highest level of the Abbasid-Fatimid rivalry, this attempt to sponsor specific scholarly circles developed into competing patterns of patronage for the Sunni theological-juridical colleges of Iraq and the originally Ismāilī al-Azhar college of Cairo. Ironically, scholarly circles maintained a degree of intellectual independence despite this patronage, though the scholars' conception of their own role as communal guides developed in dialogue with continuing political developments.

A Fluid Dialectic of Authority between Rulers and Scholars

In sum, the historical picture of authority illustrated in this book is still the familiar image of scholarly networks constituting the core of religious authority in the medieval Middle East and North Africa, whose authority in jurisprudence was extensive yet limited by the legal jurisdiction of political ruling circles and the communal boundaries of Jewish and Christian communities. What is new in this book's analysis is an illustration of how the knowledge and epistemology that undergirded the scholars' own communal leadership as doctrinal guides changed in response to the ideological underpinnings of various political models of leadership, which scholars debated and deemed either legitimate or illegitimate conceptions of political leadership. The trajectory of the rulers' and scholars' respective embrace of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in political culture and the scholarly sciences, and the scholars' growing distinction between the value of Aristotelian-Avicennan logic and shortcomings of Neoplatonic-Avicennan psychology and cosmology, represent one of the most significant consequences of this dialogue of authority, one that ultimately impacted Latin Europe's nominalist critique of Neoplatonism and the discussions of the Scientific Revolution.

At the center of the analysis of politics and religion in this book, in sum, is evidence in Arabic from

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

The story told in the six chapters of this book has traced the historical relationship between government and religion in the pre-modern Middle East and North Africa. At the heart of this story has been an elusive interplay of political and religious authority that involved rival ruling administrations as well as the wider scholarly networks (`ulamā') of Islam. Since the seventh century C.E., these groups have debated an enduring question that has been answered differently across time and geography: in the post-prophetic era, what constituted sound models of political leadership and communal guidance of the general faithful populace?

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

In the case study examined in this book, eleventh- and twelfth-century scholars (Varna') active in the Andalusī Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba and Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad disapproved of the rival Fatimid caliphate in Cairo (r. 909 — 1171) and its controversial image 238 of the ruler as a semi-messianic (mandi) and Platonic philosopher-governor endowed with a special intellect. The scholars' disapproval of the Fatimid caliph occurred despite their acceptance of the earlier Abbasid caliphs' own Hellenistic model of political culture, reflected in the politically backed translation of Greek, Aramaic, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit works of learning to Arabic beginning in the eighth century C.E. With the spread of proselytizing Fatimid theologians westward and eastward to al-Andalus and Iraq, the majority-Sunni scholars' growing alarm over the Fatimid caliphate's political power deepened their self-scrutiny over the way some fellow scholars, such as the Cordovan Ibn Masarra (d. 331/931), played an additional role in their communities as philosophical sages (hukamā').The once innocuous social and religious phenomenon of scholars as philosophical sages, guiding the spiritual and intellectual ascent of their followers, suddenly became a phenomenon that was politically and religiously contentious with the rise of the Platonizing Fatimid philosopher-caliphs and their itinerant supporters.

By the twelfth century, in an intellectual synthesis epitomized by al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) embrace of early Abbasid-era philosophical writings, and likewise foreshadowed by the philosophical reputations of his Sunni predecessors Ibn Masarra (d. 331/931) and Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064), the increasingly multifaceted scholars of the Middle East and North Africa largely came to the following conclusion about how to define their own role as guides of communal belief: On

one level, as Sufi metaphysicians, the scholars could soundly assimilate early Neoplatonic-Avicennan doctrines on the ascent of the soul and intellect into the language they used to articulate and instruct mystical experience, and they could do so without sanctioning the specific theory of intellectual ascent used in later Fatimid political culture. On another level, as logicians, and as nuanced critics of various Platonizing Islam c theologies such as those of Ibn Masarra and the Fatimids, the scholars could soundly assimilate Aristotelian-Avicennan logic and its syllogistic tools into their knowledge of jurisprudence and theology without uncritically accepting the entirety of logic's Platonizing and seemingly dualist conclusions about the nature of the world and the human mind. That is, in a notable reflection of their political and geographical context, and in an expansion of their early social role, the increasingly polymathic scholars (Varna') of the Middle East and North Africa after the twelfth century increasingly embraced two additional roles, often simultaneously: (1) the role of Neoplatonic-Avicennan Sufi metaphysicians, who were increasingly active in Sufi lodges (zāwiya, tekke, khāngāh) in the early modern period, and (2) the role of Aristotelian-Avicennan neo-Ash`arī theologians, who were active in endowed colleges of jurisprudence (filth) and theology (kalām). That the nominalist critique of Plato's realism emerged in Arabic in this period in the writings of the Zāhirī scholar Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) and the Shāfii scholar al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), long before its wider transmission in Latin Europe, speaks to the extent that the modern border between Western and Middle Eastern historiographies overlooks a shared geographical and intellectual context dating back to the medieval world, and even further, to the world of late antiquity.

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

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

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

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

Excerpt: We begin with a discussion of the books scope and purpose. The first part includes a definition of the term `shrine' as used in the book,

followed by a discussion on the origin of shrines in Islam and their place in the modern world. The final part of the chapter provides an outline structure of the remainder of the book.

The land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River has remained one of the most bitterly contested areas of the world for nearly two millennia, and at the heart of the conflict are the sacred places of the three main religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Whilst Christian and Jewish claims to sacred sites are well known outside the region, with the exception of Jerusalem and Hebron, the Muslim shrines are not well known and poorly understood. The principal aim of this book is to understand how Muslim shrines have become integrated into the fabric of Palestinian history and landscape. As a starting point, we can consider the following passage from the book of Joshua:

> And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. (Joshua 24:32)

The above verse has been used by both Jews and Muslims as proof of the authenticity of the shrine of Joseph's Tomb (Qabr Yusuf) outside the West Bank city of Nablus. Whilst the shrine will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 8, the biblical quotation encapsulates three major issues which set Muslim shrines at the heart of many debates in the contemporary Middle East. The first question relates to competing claims between Islamic and Jewish traditions, which both claim custodianship of shrines and, by extension, ownership of the land. The second issue relates to the existence of shrines built over graves—whilst this is a widespread phenomenon in the Muslim world, it is increasingly being called into question by advocates of fundamentalist Islam. The third issue relates to authenticity—and the importance of graves and human remains in the creation of Muslim shrines. To secular observers, the identity of a particular burial place is in many cases open to question, yet graves remain the most powerful and significant feature of most Muslim shrines. This book aims to address these questions and also explore other issues relating to the origins, development and current condition of Muslim shrines, which form a unique aspect of the Palestinian heritage.

Although the book will discuss a wide range of different forms of shrine, it will not include either the Haram in Jerusalem or the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron. This is because both these shrines are exceptional and do not easily relate to the typical shrines of Medieval and Ottoman Palestine. In any case, both Hebron and Jerusalem have been discussed in considerable depth elsewhere, and their inclusion would tend to overshadow the many important issues surrounding the other shrines. In addition to describing the context for the creation and use of the shrines, the book will focus on the architecture and history of the shrines rather than the many and varied ways in which the shrines were used by their local regional communities. This is partly because some of these issues have been examined by a number of publications, including Tewfik Canaan's detailed study, and partly because this requires a more specialised approach grounded in ethnology and anthropology. As a consequence, the book will also not discuss the important role of women in relation to the use, maintenance and veneration of shrines, although there is certainly considerable scope for further research in this area.

Whilst the rest of this book will be firmly focussed on shrines in Palestine, this chapter will discuss a number of general issues of relevance to understanding the historical and cultural contexts of the Muslim shrines. Three main issues will be addressed: (1) the concept and definition of shrines, (2) the development of shrines within Islam and (3) the significance of shrines in the modern world. The final part of the chapter will give an outline of the structure of the book.

CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF SHRINES

Shrines exist in most world religions and, in particular, within Palestine, where each of the three main faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has both major and minor shrines. Although there are many definitions of the word shrine, the continuities between religions demonstrate that there are certain important and recurring characteristics. The term `shrine' derives from the Latin term scrinium, which refers to the box or receptacle holding relics or other material regarded as sacred. According to Tim Insoll, the term is inadequate for describing the range of locations and features which can be

regarded as shrines. Probably the most basic definition of a shrine would be 'a material focus of religious activities'. Although this definition describes a necessary attribute of shrines, it is not a sufficient definition of shrines within a Muslim context. For example, it could be used to describe a mosque or specifically the mihrab within a mosque, which is explicitly not a shrine. Allowing for this exception, a wide variety of locations and objects within the Muslim world can be considered within the general classification of shrines. This is a reflection of the huge geographical range, cultural complexity and religious groupings which can be regarded as part of Muslim civilization.

Although there are examples of religious objects or relics which could be regarded as shrines within Islamic culture, it is the location of the relics which are designated as shrines rather than the objects themselves. Portable or mobile shrines certainly existed amongst the pre-Islamic Arabs who would often carry them into battle. These tribal shrines comprised stone idols carried within wooden boxes which could be carried to different locations and set up within a campsite. It is probably because of this association with idols that portable shrines are such a rare feature of Muslim religious practice. Exceptions to this general aversion might include the portable shrines or tabaqs containing depictions of 'Ali and other imams carried by Shi`as during festivals in the month of Muharram. The mahmal or empty camel litter which accompanied the Hajj annually to Mecca should not be regarded as a shrine despite bearing a superficial resemblance to portable shrines in other cultures and religions. Instead, the mahmal symbolized the authority of the secular ruler who was unable to accompany the Hajj.

For some Muslims there is only one shrine in Islam, which is the Kaaba in Mecca, which comprises a square box-like structure surrounded by a sacred precinct. Other major shrines within Islam which are accepted by the majority of Muslims are the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock has certain similarities with the Kaaba, including its pre-Islamic origins, the presence of a stone or rock at the centre of the shrine (the Kaaba has a black stone hajar aswad embedded in one corner) and the practice of circumambulation or circling the shrine. Certainly, the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount was established early on within the Muslim community, and for the first few years, Jerusalem functioned as the qibla or direction of prayer before it was changed to Mecca. There were even attempts to re-direct the qibla towards Jerusalem during the Umayyad period when Mecca was under the control of Ibn Zubayr. The importance of Jerusalem within Islam is further demonstrated by the construction of the Dome of the Rock by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik' at the relatively early date of 691 AD.

Whilst Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock are fairly unproblematic as Muslim shrines, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina poses a different problem. Certainly, Medina has a central place within Islam as the home of the first Muslim community, the location of Muhammad's house and the first mosque. The problematic part is that when he died, Muhammad was buried within his house—a custom which is not alien to pre-Islamic Arabian culture and can still occasionally be seen today. Although the building was designated as Muhammad's house, it also fulfilled the function of a mosque and was the centre of the nascent Muslim community. Whilst Muslims revered Muhammad as a prophet and as the person to whom the Quran was revealed, he was explicitly only a messenger and was not the focus of the religion. The fact that Muhammad's grave was located within the house/mosque later caused problems for some Muslims, such as Ibn Taymiyya, who was worried that people might inadvertently pray towards Muhammad's grave rather than towards the Kaaba in Mecca. However, for most Muslims, the direction of prayer towards Mecca was well enough established that there would not be a chance of confusing this with Muhammad's grave. Also, Muhammad's pre-eminent position within Islam meant that the location of his grave within the mosque would only enhance the importance of the mosque and the prayer towards Mecca. Muslims would still be able to pay their respects to Muhammad and also follow his teachings in relation to the prayer towards Mecca.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHRINES WITHIN ISLAM

Although shrines do not need to incorporate the tomb of a deceased person, the vast majority of Muslim shrines are associated with graves or

presumed burial places of people considered to be exceptional in terms of piety, relationship to the Prophet or other religiously important figures. However, as Thomas Leisten has pointed out, a substantial group of Muslim religious texts, including the Hadith, regards them (Muslim tombs) as distinctly unreligious, pagan and anti-Islamic. The scholars seemed particularly anxious that the tombs should not become shrines; thus the early thirteenth-century Hanbali theologian Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 1223) wrote 'the special treatment of graves by praying by them is similar to the veneration of idols by prostrating oneself before them and wishing to draw near them'. With statements like this, it is very surprising that Muslim shrines were not only built but flourished especially from the twelfth century onwards. There is, in other words, a huge gap between what is stated in religious and legal texts and the surviving architecture of Muslim shrines which are found throughout the Islamic world. It seems, therefore, that the numerous legal rulings and prohibitions were a reaction to the construction of domed buildings over tombs, which the scholars and lawyers were powerless to prevent. In this context, it is worth noticing that although building over graves was explicitly forbidden, it was not described as haram (i.e. forbidden) but rather as makruh (objectionable, disapproved of). One of the biggest problems with the legal prohibitions against funerary architecture was that Muhammad himself was buried within his house, which subsequently developed into one of the principal shrines of the Islamic world.

It can be argued that Muhammad's tomb in Medina is a special case, and certainly it appears that for the first few centuries of Islam there were no other built tombs which developed into shrines. There is, however, some evidence that shrines developed around the graves of members of the Prophet Muhammad's family, although the exact form of these shrines is not known. In particular, the locations of the graves of some of the imams (descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatimah) were known but there is no surviving architectural evidence for these from before the beginning of the tenth century. For example, the twin shrine of the imams al-Hadi and al-`Askari at Samarra was founded in 944, although it is not clear if anything survives from this period and the earliest inscription within the complex dates from the early thirteenth century. There has been an assumption that the development of shrines connected with Muhammad's family was primarily connected with Shi`ism; however, Bernheimer has shown that they were visited and perhaps developed by Sunni Muslims.

One of the problems is distinguishing between a mausoleum and a shrine. Whilst some mausolea developed into shrines, this was not always the case, and not all shrines were based around tombs. For example, many of the mausoleums in the larger medieval cemeteries, such as that of Bab al-Saghir in Damascus, could be construed as family tombs rather than as shrines. Similarly, large numbers of shrines are either natural sacred features or feature relics, such as footprints of the Prophet. Until recently, the octagonal domed building of Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya at Samarra in Iraq was thought to be an early example of an Islamic mausoleum, as it contained three burials, although these are now interpreted as a later intrusion. Instead, Alastair Northedge has intriguingly suggested that Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya was a fabricated shrine representing the Kaaba created by the caliph as an alternative Hajj destination for his Turkish troops.

The earliest dateable Muslim mausoleum which has survived in more or less its original condition is the tomb of the Samanid Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Ismail, who died at Bukhara in 943 AD. The mausoleum comprises a square room (5.7 x 5.7 m internally) built of fired bricks with a doorway on each of the sides and a decorative arched frieze at roof height which hides the transition to the octagonal transition to the dome. It is perhaps significant that the mausoleum has the same basic proportions and shape associated with the majority of Muslim shrines throughout the world. Whilst it is likely that there were other mausolea of similar date which have not survived, it is apparent that from the tenth century onward, shrines and mausolea began to appear in diverse parts of the world, perhaps indicating a major social or political change within Islamic society. The most obvious change which occurred in the tenth century was the final break-up of the caliphate into disparate political units. Prior to the tenth century, there was at least a theoretical idea that the Islamic world comprised a unified political and cultural entity—by the eleventh century, the political fragmentation of Islam meant

that there were numerous rulers competing for secular authority. By the middle of the twelfth, all provinces of the Muslim world had acquired large numbers of mausoleums which functioned as shrines. There were regional variations in the architecture of these structures; thus Iraq had a series of buildings roofed with muqarnas (conical or honeycomb) shaped domes, whilst in Iran double-shelled domes were developed during the eleventh century along with a series of round tower-shaped tombs. There was also considerable variation in the size of these structures, from the relatively modest Tomb of the Samanids in Bukhara to the immense structure (27 m per side and 38 m high) built over the tomb of the Seljuk ruler Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118-1153 AD) in Merv.

Within Palestine, the earliest shrine for which we have evidence after the Dome of the Rock (built 691 AD) is the Haram at Hebron. According to the writer al-Muqaddasi writing in 985, Muslims built a stone dome over the tomb of Abraham in the latter part of the tenth century. The tombs of the other patriarchs were not included within the domed structure but were included within the sacred enclosure (Haram), which also had a hostel with a bakery and other facilities for pilgrims (Le Strange 1890, 309). As will be demonstrated in the remainder of this book, the real growth in the number of shrines in Palestine occurred directly after the Crusaders had been expelled, starting in the late twelfth century.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHRINES IN THE MODERN WORLD

Unlike many aspects of the medieval and pre-modern world, Muslim shrines continue to have considerable direct relevance in the contemporary world. Although not every shrine is well known, or fully investigated, as a building type shrines continue to attract attention both from scholars and, in recent years, from the news media. Two issues of particular interest are the roles of shrines within the religious political conflict between Palestine and Israel and the increasing fundamentalist rhetoric and, more recently, action against Muslim shrines. Whilst these issues

will be discussed in more detail later in the book, it is worth noting that in both cases, shrines are being used to support particular views of history. In the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict, shrines are often used as territorial markers, with ownership of a shrine used to support ancient claims to land. For example, Israeli extremists regard both the Tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem and the Tomb of Joseph as concrete proof of divinely sanctioned Jewish ownership of the land. Amongst Muslim fundamentalist extremists, shrines are regarded as an innovation within the Islamic tradition and the destruction of structures built over graves is regarded as a return to the purity of early Islam. In both cases the appeal is to an idealised past which ignores other religious traditions and the complexities of historical development embedded in the fabric of the shrines themselves. In order to reject these hard-line views, which are an affront to modern civilised society, it is important that these locations and structures are documented and investigated in a scientific manner which reflects the true nature of the past.

STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK

This book is arranged into three parts: Part I: Introduction, Part II: Types of Shrines, and Part III: Shrines in the Contemporary World. The aim of this approach is both to set the shrines within an historical context and also to show how they remain relevant today.

Part I is divided into three chapters—the present chapter (Chap. 1), Chap. 2, which discusses the Arabic and Islamic historiography, and Chap. 3, which reviews the European and secular literature relating to Palestinian shrines.

Part II is arranged into four chapters, each describing a different form of shrine. The categorization is based on the types of people or groups who developed the shrines in the first place rather than either the architecture or the identity of the personality buried within the shrine. There may be considerable overlap in the categorizations but the idea is to emphasize the different aspects of how shrines were developed and used. The first category (Chap. 4) is shrines built and developed by rulers which, for obvious reasons, tend to be architecturally significant and commemorate major figures. The second category (Chap. 5) considers the role of Sufism in the creation and maintenance of shrines. One of the principal arguments of this book is that the rise of Sufism coincided with an increase in the number of shrines and was the

context within which the cult of saints flourished. The decline of Sufism within Muslim society may also be equated with a decrease in the practice of visiting tombs. The third category (Chap. 6) discusses local tombs which may have been built either by Sufis or by local people and which form the majority of shrines within Palestine. The final category (Chap. 7) discusses those Muslim shrines which are not from the dominant Sunni tradition, demonstrating considerable continuities between different religious traditions.

Part III is divided into three chapters, the first of which (Chap. 8) examines the factors which have led to the destruction and disappearance of many shrines throughout the country. Chapter 9 investigates how shrines can be managed and conserved to provide a future for these important but endangered buildings. The final chapter (Chap. 10) provides an argument for why the shrines are important in the twenty-first century.

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

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

Contents

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

What unites Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that they are religions of the book. And their holy books are related, too. The Christian Bible can be seen as an extension of the Hebrew Tanakh, and the Qurʾan as the fully revised version of both predecessors. Anyone familiar on the field of the interpretation of these holy texts will realize that describing the relation between these holy books in this way is a vast simplification. The problematic relation between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in past and present times seems to indicate that there is more that divides than unites these religions. The motivation behind the present volume is not to give in to the present tendency of emphasizing the differences. On the contrary, in many different ways the following contributions will show that there is in an intricate web of relations between the texts of these three religious traditions. This not only concerns the holy books themselves, but we also see on other levels how the different readings and interpretations intermingle and influence each other. Studying the multifaceted history of the way Hebrew texts were read and interpreted in so many different contexts may contribute to a better understanding of the complicated relation between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

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

Hebrew Texts in Jewish Surroundings

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

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

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

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

about the processes and techniques with which parables were adapted and re-used in the course of the history of rabbinic literature.

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

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

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

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

Hebrew Texts in Muslim and Christian Surroundings

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

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

Andreas Lehnardt pays attention to the fact that many Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of Rabbinic literature have been preserved in medieval bindings of books, registers and notarial files. In recent years several hundreds of these Hebrew binding fragments have been discovered in European libraries and archives. Through this unintended recycling Jewish tradition is kept-up in Christian hands. Lehnardt analyzes and translates a newly identified fragment with a text from Midrash Bereshit Rabbah, discovered in the University and

State library of Jena. The fragment appears to be an important witness for famous midrashim, among them a dialogue between Matrona and Rabbi Yose, and the narrative on Diocletian and the rabbis in Paneas.

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

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

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

Hebrew Texts in Jewish and Christian Surroundings

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

Pieter W. van der Horst introduces the reader to what is probably the first Jewish-Christian dialogue after Justin Martyr, the Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus, a Greek text written around 400 ce, most probably in Egypt. It can be seen as a good example of the debate that has been going on between the two religions for centuries. Zacchaeus rejects any form of christological interpretation of the Old Testament. The text shows how difficult it was for Christians to prevent themselves from being accused of polytheism.

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

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

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

Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings

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

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

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

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

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

Excerpt: You have in your hands an exciting new work which richly rewards the reader. But please do not read this book if you are looking for a simple guide to what to think. This work invites you to reflect on a range of complex and sometimes sensitive issues. It is a pioneering attempt to engage a variety of voices on the question of reading the Bible in Islamic context. There is a

great deal of theological work on the Bible in a variety of contexts, but rarely with Islam and Muslims as the context in view. There is also much work on Islam and Muslims, but only occasionally with the Bible in view. This book represents a series of detailed experiments conducted to help to change that situation. It was born from a conference held in Oxford in September 2015, which I attended, and where I had the privilege to meet an amazing array of people, from a wide range of different nationalities and backgrounds. The energy and enthusiasm of those presenting work at the conference was clear for all to see as they explored this new and exciting ground.

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

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

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

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

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

Part I: Intertextual conversations

This first section contains five chapters that compare the report of an event in the Bible with a report of the same event in the Qur'an. In the first of these, George Bristow compares an evangelical Christian reading of Genesis 12-16 with a Turkish Muslim reading of a number of Abraham narratives in the Qur'an. In the second, Shirin Shafaie employs a narrative analysis of voice and characterisation to explore how the focus and interests of the Joseph narrative of Genesis 37-50 are quite distinct from those of Surah Yusuf. In the third, Ali Makhlabi and Larry Ciccarelli form a Muslim—Christian partnership to review how the doctrine of `isma (the sinless nature of the prophets) has impacted the way in which Muslims have approached the story of David and the ewe lamb. In the fourth, Carol Walker employs rhetorical analysis to understand how the story of King David and the ewe lamb functions within its biblical setting of the Books of Samuel and then how the different telling

of this story functions in its qur'anic setting in Surah Sād. The fifth and final chapter of this section by Mohammad Ghandehari and Mohsen Feyzbakhsh argues that many of the lacunae in the accounts of Aaron and the golden calf that are found in Exodus 32, Surah 7 and Surah 20 can be resolved when the three accounts are read in relation to each other.

Part II: Questions about texts

The second section contains five chapters that address Muslim readings of the Bible and biblical tradition. First, Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor and Jaffary Awang recount the historical development of a Muslim method of reading the Bible. In this approach, the Qur'an is used as a means to evaluate the places in which the biblical text provides a genuine revelation, the places in which it provides an uncertain guide to truth and the places in which it, in its present corrupt form, opposes the truth. Second, Nazirudin Mohd Nasir examines this Muslim approach to the Bible as exemplified by the nineteenth-century Muslim Indian scholar Hamiduddin Farahi in his analysis of the Hebrew text of Genesis 22 and expresses some reservations in regard to it as a method of understanding the text of the Bible. Third, Daniel Crowther observes how seven different features of the form and the content of the Bible scandalise Muslim readers. In each case, Crowther finds that the feature that causes the scandal illuminates the very different identity and function of the Bible as scripture vis-à-vis the Qur'an. Fourth, Martin O'Kane and Talha Bhamji survey different Muslim treatments of Abraham's sacrifice of his son on Mount Moriah. O'Kane and Bhamji argue that, although the relationship between the text of the Bible and the text of the Qur'an is uncertain, both the qur'anic text and subsequent Muslim traditions are an important chapter in the reception history of the text of Genesis 22. Fifth and finally, Ali Aghaei considers the evolution of the Islamic tradition relating to the cow of the sons of Israel as found in Q2:67-74. Through a detailed analysis of nine different traditions reported in al-Tabarī, Aghaei observes how Muslim tradition developed in interaction with the biblical text and biblical tradition.

Part III: Analogical explorations

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

Concluding reflection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This chapter offers a brief exploration of the question of what might be involved in reading the Bible in Islamic context, a look at the contributors and their tools, and then a consideration of the tasks that they have set themselves and the insights and issues that have resulted. The `tasks' — that I have called intertextual conversations', `questions about the texts' and `analogical explorations' — give the basis for the organisation of the volume.

`Islamic context': what might it mean?

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

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

reading the Bible alongside the Qur'an, and this is reflected in the subtitle of the present volume.

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

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

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

material related to the Bible. It refers to the Torah, the Psalms, the Prophets and the Gospels, and includes treatments of characters and themes that are found in the Bible. It also includes material that relates to Jews and to Christians, who are characterised as `People of the Book'; and 'The Book' is likely to be an allusion to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.' It sees itself as a continuation from biblical revelation, but it is a different kind of book than any biblical book!'

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

- Consideration of the similarities and differences between biblical and qur'anic ideas of revelation and of the nature of Scripture. For example, the Qur'an's view of itself as direct divine dictation highlights, by comparison, the varied human voices of the Bible. Biblical interpretation in Islamic context is likely, then, to provoke reflection on the nature and origin of the biblical text in question. Further, the range of Christian views of what the Bible is, may be put into conversation both with Islamic views of what the Bible ought to be, and with Islamic responses to the actual phenomena of the Bible.
- Consideration of the Qur'an's treatment of characters and stories that are found in the Bible. Most of the increasing literature on comparative reading of the Bible and the Qur'an is more concerned with understanding the Qur'an than with interpreting the Bible.' Some literature takes this further, asking what the comparative reading does for mutual understanding as, for example, believers read their scriptures together after the manner of 'Scriptural Reasoning'. It is acknowledged that such reading challenges Jewish and Christian readers of the Bible and can open fresh understandings of their own texts: in this volume and in the series which it inaugurates, we are seeking to focus on those fresh understandings. Of every comparative reading, we ask, 'How might this affect biblical interpretation — by Muslims as well as by other readers?'
- Consideration of qur'anic themes. There are common themes that have different places within the two Scriptures, apparently common themes that have different meanings, and unique features of each. Any of these may provoke the Bible reader into paying attention to neglected aspects of the text. For example, both the Qur'an and the Bible deal with laws about inheritance. In the Qur'an, they are precise and are used in current legal decisions.' In the Bible, they are seldom read, the legal details being generally seen as inapplicable, perhaps on the basis of Jesus' discussion about inheritance in Luke 12:13-21. In Islamic contexts, not least in the case of conversion between faiths, it may be important to re-visit the biblical material.
- Consideration of the range of Muslim readings of the Qur'an. Non-Muslim focus on comparative and historical studies of the Qur'an may neglect engagement with tafsir or other Muslim discourse. For a reading of the Bible to be in `conversation' not only with texts but also with persons, we require engagement at least with the qur'anic interpretation of the particular dialogue partners. For a thorough reading,

engagement with the wider tradition of interpretation is needed.

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

It is not, then, surprising, that there is a long history of Muslim writings about the Bible. Many of these are polemical, attacking either the biblical text or Christian and Jewish interpretations of it.' However, there are also more positive works, which use biblical material to assist commentary on the Qur'an,' or which see the Bible as a source for material that affirms Islam and predicts the coming of Muhammad. There are very few that seek to understand the Bible as it is understood by Christians or by Jews.

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

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

Who is reading? People and their tools

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

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

Equally important is another aspect of reader variety: our authors have been trained in a variety of academic disciplines. All are currently working in areas relating to scriptural interpretation, and the reader will readily discern consequent approaches in their chapters. For example, O'Kane uses the methods and approaches of the reception history

of the Bible, and Wan Razali, Mohd Noor and Awang use tools drawn from classical Islamic thought.

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

Tasks, questions and the organisation of this volume

The analysis above implies that there are many tasks before the scholar who wishes to take the Qur'an into account as they read the Bible. Many of our contributors focussed on the task of reading part of the Bible alongside its qur'anic parallel. Several focussed on the more methodological question of how Muslims might approach the Bible, or of how the Qur'an might be related to the history of biblical interpretation. Others developed discussions around themes of interest on the Muslim—Christian interface. We have organised this book around such tasks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part 1: Intertextual conversations

- `Abraham in narrative worldviews: reflections on doing comparative theology

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

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

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

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

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

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

While Ciccarelli and Makhlabi look at their chosen David narrative in the context of later discussion of a particular problem in it, Carol Walker places her study of part of that same narrative in the context of a wider study of the structures of the biblical books of Samuel and of Surah Sād (Q38) in which it appears. She sees the biblical parable of the ewe lamb as a highly significant part of Samuel's dealing with issues of power, humility, covenant and social justice: in contrast, it appears in Surah Sād as one of a series of examples of people who turn to God in repentance and receive forgiveness. While the narratives have. different purposes in their contexts, she recognises that David's repentance and forgiveness follow the parable in the Bible and that the themes of Samuel are, if sometimes in different ways, also qur'anic concerns. She recognises other shared themes which she relates to contemporary issues: that of the temptations faced by political leaders and the importance of leaders being under, and not above, the law.

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

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

Ghandehari and Feyzbakhsh are Muslims, and Bristow is an evangelical Christian. Their contrasting approaches are consonant with a tendency that can be observed throughout this book for Muslim authors to handle apparent differences as problems to be solved or as ways of adding to their understanding of the Qur'an, while Christian authors tend to accept difference as indicating irreducible differences between the biblical and the qur'anic worlds. How far, we might ask, is this related to the fact that, while the Qur'an requires Muslims to accept the Torah (at least in its original form) to be God-given, there is no biblical requirement for Christians to have any particular expectation of the Qur'an?

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

different ways in which such narratives have been handled in their respective traditions?

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

Part II: Questions about the texts

- The fourth source: Isrā'iliyyāt and the use of the Bible in Muslim scholarship' by Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor and Jaffary Awang
- `Constrained by scriptural polemics: Hamiduddin Farahi on the Akedah' by Nazirudin Mohd Nasir
- 'The culture shock of the Bible' by Daniel J. Crowther
- `Islamic tradition and the reception history of the Bible' by Martin O'Kane and Talha Bhamji
- The morphology of the narrative exegesis of the Qur'an: The case of the cow of the Banū Isrā'īl (Q2:67-74)' by S. Ali Aghaei

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

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

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

Nazirudin Mohd Nasir's chapter opens a discussion on these questions as he interrogates a particular nineteenth-century treatment of the Akedah sacrifice of Genesis 22 and Q37:99-111: that of Hamiduddin Farahi. Farahi differs from most of his

predecessors in that he deals directly with the Bible and can read Hebrew. Mohd Nasir notes that, while Farahi uses some of the same methods in interpreting the Bible as he does in interpreting the Qur'an, his agenda is polemical. He is using the Qur'an as his hermeneutical key to the Bible, with the purpose of finding tabrif— corruption of the biblical texts.

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

Danny Crowther proposes a refreshing model for dealing with acute difference: he re-formulates the problem in terms of culture. He offers an analysis of the disjunction between Muslim expectations of scripture and the phenomena of the Bible — in particular, its human voice, variety of genre, textual and canonical history in addition to the sinfulness of prophets explored in the above discussions about 'isma. The Muslim experience of this he describes as `culture shock', and he suggests that models of moving across cultures might help Muslim readers to engage seriously with the Bible. His argument is that the observations Muslims make about the form and content of the Bible reveal how different it is to the Qur'an. Attention to their questions can help Christians better understand the way in which the Bible functions as the Word of God.

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

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

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

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

Part III: Analogical explorations

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

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

We begin with the chapter that explores a deliberately chosen analogical theme: Dwight Swanson's chapter on purity. In terms of our `analogical' model, we can see Swanson as setting out the three overlapping circles of Torah, Gospel and Qur'an on the subject. His approach is to see `purity' in the context of the overall narratives of the relevant texts, which means that the model can offer analogical insights into the relationship between the scriptures as well as into the particular ideas of purity which they contain.

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

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

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

The above two analogies emerged from comparative intertextual conversations. In our next three chapters, concepts that can be described as `analogical' are used to discuss key theological questions that often emerge in discussions between Christians and Muslims. The questions have to do with human propensity to sin, with the transcendence of God, and with the nature of revelation. The theological differences between Muslims and Christians on these issues underlie difference on the nature of scripture, and they will inform my Christian reflection in the last part of this chapter.

Michael Lodahl offers a reading of Romans 1 that deals with the question of the human propensity to sin: a perennial area of disagreement between Muslims and Christians which underlies, on the one hand, questions about how sin can be dealt with and, on the other hand, questions about the doctrine of `isma that features so strongly in this

volume. Typically, a Muslim says that humans are born in a state of fitra, that is, in a state of innocence in which Islam is natural to them, and a Western Christian will say that, since Adam, humans have been born `fallen', that is, not in the original state in which God made humanity. This is why, Christians say, not even prophets can be sinless, and guidance cannot be sufficient.

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

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

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

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

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

This brings us to the theological heart of debates between Christians and Muslims: the relationship between God and God's Word. What is `God's Word', and how can we understand God as having a Word without infringing divine transcendence? Dan Madigan addresses this issue through a reading of John's Gospel that offers the possibility of moving from standard debates towards mutual understand¬ing. He develops the analogy between Jesus as God's Word and the Qur'an as God's Word. However, he leaves open the question that haunts this whole volume: how, then, do we understand the Bible?

Like Lodahl, Madigan opens up the text by identifying questions that are shared by Muslims and Christians, in this case how God's Self relates to God's Word, and how that Word enters the created world — in the Qur'an or in the Messiah. Madigan takes these questions to the prologue of John's Gospel and uses the results as a key to reading the rest of the Gospel, developing conversation with the world of the Qur'an and with

Muslim readers throughout. This opens fresh understandings of the text for Christian as well as for Muslim readers: it is a pointer towards the fruitfulness of the conversation with Islamic context in developing Christian readings of biblical texts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have arranged the three methods in order of decreasing levels of Islamic faith commitment, starting with the most zealously committed one. The first method differs from the other two in that, for its practitioners, its intellectual pedigree is divine, not human, since it can be traced to a revealed and therefore supremely authoritative source, the Qur'an. The Islamic scripture is normatively interpreted by the tradition of Muslim exegesis as condemning the (alleged) corruption and amplification of a divine original, a simple if not rather stereotypical affirmation of an uncompromisingly Abrahamic monotheism, found even earlier in the ministries of Noah and indeed Adam, the first man and first prophet.

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

descriptive stance which brackets assessment of the truth of competing religious truth-claims.

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

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

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

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

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

Let me evaluate this classical and normatively influential Islamic method of engagement with the Bible. It must appear to even sympathetic Christian readers that the Qur'an misunderstands the orthodox contents of the Trinity and confuses it with tri-theism. The Qur'an directly orders Christians to desist from identifying the Messiah Jesus with God and from tri-theism (see Q4:171-2 and 5:72) and, moreover, often rejects the Christian dogma of Jesus as the Son of God, while condemning Arabian polytheism which venerated the daughters of God (see, for example, Q25:2-3; 19:88-93; 112). Such beliefs were to be rejected as straightforwardly idolatrous. We read a didactic dialogue between God and Jesus, on the day of resurrection, where Jesus is harshly interrogated about encouraging people to take him and his mother as gods in addition to the one true God, Allah (see Q5:116-120). Muslims often put Christians on the defensive in interfaith conferences when they ask the Christian participants to prove that they are indeed monotheists. The accusation is that the Trinity is a disguised form of tri-theism, that Christians are indeed guilty of shirk (pagan associationism), the one irremissible sin in Islam. That would be a harsh verdict.

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

Godhead than Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Method 2 — Deadlocks multiply: respect for agnosticism grows

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

Surprisingly, a form of the agnostic position is found in the Qur'an itself. In Q2:145-8, the Qur'an acknowledges, in the aftermath of the change of the direction of prayer (qibla) from Jerusalem to the Meccan haram, that Jews and Christians do not accept each other's doctrines and rituals and that they both reject the Muslim view just as Muslims are now instructed to reject their previous affiliation. Elsewhere too, the Qur'an admits that human differences will endure until the next world: you shall dispute in front of your Lord, until the day of resurrection. This is no incidental emphasis but a persistent one. Thus, only a post-mortem eschatological verification shall enable us to break this deadlock. In the meantime, the Qur'an shifts the focus towards achieving an interim ethical consensus. Thus, its command to all monotheists is to vie with one another in the pursuit and performance of charitable and honourable deeds.

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

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

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

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

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

and evil people must live in close proximity, where darkness hath fellowship with light.

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

Method 3 — Suspension of belief

I used this third method requiring suspension of faith when confronted by a practical dilemma in my life as an activist. As part of my 'jihad' during the Muslim campaign, conducted in 1989-1992, against the ideas of Salman Rushdie, I had sought a dispensation, from the local Muslim authorities in Bradford, to enable me to read The Satanic Verses — but solely for educational purposes.' It absolved me of any sin incurred during a perusal of its sustained blasphemous contents. The principle I espoused was that while most Muslims have not and need not read such a work, those who consider themselves qualified to debate the matter must do so. The case of the rest of the believers is like that of a judge who is not required to witness a murder in order to pass a sentence. Evidence from others, especially eye-witnesses, suffices.

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

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

In my current work, I have applied this third method. While writing an Islamic commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians (and, more broadly, while investigating the New Testament, in general, including the Gospels) I have felt morally obliged, in the interests of intellectual honesty and religious integrity, to adopt and develop this stance of suspension. It enables me to inculcate intellectual patience as I read a seminal Christian text such as Paul's letter to his Galatian disciples. I attempt to suspend my own Islamic belief long enough to comment on Paul's epistle and on the accretions of the devoutly Christian tradition of commentary that ambushes its margins.

I comment on both the Pauline text and on normative Christian uses of it. Nonetheless, I do so from within the very centre of my Qur'an-directed framework of thought and therefore, even to sympathetic Christian assessors and critics of my work, it must appear that I move rather effortlessly from relatively courteous and open-minded remarks to rather judgmental if not polemical ones, sometimes within the space of a single paragraph! But I have tried to understand first the faith I seek to critique later. It is sympathetic understanding

achieved via suspension of my faith — followed by a return to the commitment I have suspended temporarily. The net result is that I have avoided slandering 'the people of the Gospel' (ahl al-in]īl, uniquely at Q5:47). I do not offer a caricature of Christian doctrine and morals before critiquing both from an Islamic angle. That would be hardly an original achievement. Thus, for example, it is slander to suggest that Christians think a saved believer can behave as he or she wishes, sinning casually since salvation has been assured. Rather, the motto, put in colloquial terms, is: `Christ will save — but you must behave!' Again, it is easy for non-Christians to mock and to deliberately and maliciously misrepresent Christian dogmas, given their inherent complexity.

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

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

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

Let me conclude here by mentioning my conclusions as these relate to our modern situation in the secular world. The key reason that Christianity is not equipped any longer to confront an aggressively secular humanism is that this requires the bulwark of an independent law — one transcending state law and indeed above state law in a conflict. Christians have, especially since the Reformation, come to regard the law as merely temporal, secular and therefore inferior to the religious gifts of grace and truth (see John 1:17). Secular humanism, understood as an autonomous worldview with atheistic foundations rather than as a liberal political ideology compatible with religious faith, could only have emerged out of a dispensation divested of sacred law, thus giving us

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

I shall now leave aside these Galatian and New Testament particulars to return to a further consideration of the third method. Even the temporary suspension of one's own dogmatic belief can never be total or complete. It might be operative only initially or partially or intermittently. In this way, its duration is determined by its motivation: it resembles the Cartesian method of professional scepticism, adopted solely for the sake of conducting the project of purely academic inquiry. One tries to — pretends to — doubt everything that one can coherently doubt. One even attempts to doubt the existence of an external world or the presence of other sentient beings with minds. But some beliefs are sufficiently axiomatic, indeed foundational, that one cannot, assuming one is sane, coherently, let alone reasonably, suspend one's belief in their truth. Analogously, for many committed religious believers, the suggestion of a suspension of one's deepest convictions about God would be anathema. During my decade-long tenure as a professor of philosophy and religious studies in an American university, I recall asking my Christian students, taking an advanced level course on the New Testament, to suspend their Christian faith for a mere three hours on every Thursday evening for one semester. All of them refused to comply with my request, some citing parental authorization for their stance.

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

The objection is that the results of one's research are not a Muslim reading of the Bible but rather an agnostic reading of the Bible — by a Muslim. I can, at best, defend only partly my chosen method against such a plausible charge. My method prevents any short-circuiting of critical inquiry, any premature dismissal of a rival claim. It does so long enough for me to produce a body of scholarship which might, once it has appeared, still be judged defective, undeniably unsatisfactory and limited. The problem is created by the unnegotiable and unavoidable fact that Muslim views of the Bible are, for Muslims, constrained by the self-asserted and freely chosen authority of the Qur'an. This is no different from the analogous truth that, for committed Christians, their Bible dictates the range of biblically permissible views of the Qur'an. Thus, the Qur'an must appear as morally misguided in its teachings, and doctrinally deficient if not outright false in all essentials aspects, attaining to some truth, occasionally and coincidentally, like any preacher who, in preaching the Word of God, must get a few things right simply in virtue of his office, not his own claims to inspiration and authority.

This third method does not merely require one to show scholarly courtesy or a display of open-mindedness. For that attitude can conceal a false courtesy, a pretence that one is a genuine seeker and the quest has not ended. One has to actually suspend one's belief in certain relevant ways to enable an inquiry whose conclusions are not pre-determined or foreclosed. The interest in the rival must not be merely utilitarian and pragmatic while merely parading as a genuine quest for free inquiry. What scope can there be for free inquiry if God has already entrusted one with the whole

truth, via revelation? There are certainly no specifically qur'anic resources for encouraging Western-style free inquiry into matters of religion.

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

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

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

The hermeneutic, then, that begins by declaring one's own commitments and presuppositions and admits that these are inescapable is better than any pretence to complete neutrality or total objectivity. One can be self-aware and confess one's stance so long as this confession does not prevent one from a patiently conducted rational scrutiny and assessment of a rival set of claims. This is certainly superior to a simple juxtaposition of sacred texts — and an attempt to treat all as equally authoritative for any given reader.

Autobiographical postscript and final assessment

Let me record my progress as a Muslim who is a philosopher of religions. I started by judging biblical Christianity by Islamic standards. The result was my The Light in the Enlightenment' in which I argued that many Christians had made a wrong move in trying to accommodate secular humanist objections to the biblical outlook (rather than confronting secular options and discarding them as false). I defended Soren Kierkegaard's stance that much biblical exegesis was dishonest and devious: it sought to soften the existential impact of biblical

imperatives and thus, I concluded, agreeing with Kierkegaard, that such tactical concessions and the liberties of thought that accompanied them had together effectively reduced the keen-bladed impact of the demands and commands of Christian discipleship.

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

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

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

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

Why then, to return to our final method, do we need a dramatic suspension of commitment? I admit that this attitude privileges intellectual inquiry over devotional conviction — but only temporarily and in the limited context of academic work. This method is the most promising since one seeks to understand the rival on its own terms. Only after that does one critique it from the viewpoint of one's own commitment to a rival scripture's truth, integrity and authority. The point of understanding the rival on terms indigenous and domestic to that faith is to avoid the accusation that one is dealing merely in polemic, in shallow combativeness and debate-style point-scoring. There is plenty of that in both Muslim and Christian popular literature, especially available on the increasingly ubiquitous internet.

The third method differs from the second only in that it is an active version of the agnostic stance, requiring a courageous commitment to adopt a stance that actively though temporarily suspends, even contradicts, faith. If one suspends, for long

enough, one's belief in the comprehensive authority of one's own scripture, this concession enables objective research of the alien scripture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Excerpt: Awhad al-Din Kirimānī (d. 1238) was one of the greatest and most colourful Persian Sufis of the medieval period; he was celebrated in his own lifetime by a large number of like-minded followers and other Sufi masters, and his popularity most likely contributed to his appointment by the `Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad to the directorship of probably the most prestigious convent in the capital

city. And yet his form of Sufism was the subject of much discussion within the Islamic world, as it elicited responses ranging from praise and commendation to reproach and contempt within a generation of his death.

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

The analysis in this book provides an investigation into Kirmānī the individual, but the story has significance that extends much further. The controversy of his form of Sufism occurred at a crucial time in the evolution of Sufi piety and theology. The research herein situates Kirmānī within this critical period, and it assesses the various perspectives taken by his contemporaries and near contemporaries. Such views reveal much about the dynamics and developments of Sufism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Sufi orders (turūq, s. tarīqa) began to emerge, and which gave individual Sufis a much more structured and ordered method of engaging in piety, and of presenting the Sufi tradition to society at large.

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

[Note: The only work that has been preserved until today and seems to have been composed by Kirmānī is a collection of quatrains. (I use the word "seems" deliberately, for just as the number of Khayyāmic quatrains snowballed in the years after his death, the same phenomenon may also have occurred in those attributed to Kirmānī). See Diwān-i ruba `iyāt-i Awhad al-Din Kirmānī, ed. Ahmad Abū Mahbūb (Tehran: Stiffish, 1987). The quatrains appear in a manuscript from the Ayasofya collection (Istanbul) that is composed of several other `irfānī texts. It was not authorised by the poet himself, as the "editor" states that Kirmanī's writings were scattered here and there, so the task was to assemble them into a coherent form. Thus, the "editor" collected 1,724 quatrains and placed them within twelve subject headings. (Chapter 1: On Unity, Praise of God and Remembrance and a Eulogy of the Prophet and his Followers; Chapter 2: On the Sharī `a; Chapter 3: On Sufism and the Inner States; Chapter 4: On Purity, Cleansing the

Self and Renouncing Lust; Chapter 5: On Good Works and Whatever is Included in a Good Name; Chapter 6: On Love and Witnessing; Chapter 7: On the Approved Qualities; Chapter 8: On Ugly Qualities; Chapter 9: On Journeying and Departing; Chapter 10: On Spring, Wine and Samā ; Chapter 11: On Ecstatic Words [tāmāt]; and Chapter 12: On the Last Wills and the Grief for the Departed, on fanā' and baqā' and Mystical States). See Diwān-i ruba `iyāt-i Awhad al-Din Kirmānī, ed. Ahmad Abū Mahbūb (Tehran: Stiffish, 1987). This Dīwān was republished in 1996 by Wafä'ī with a long introduction (that covered topics such as Buddhism and the rise of Sufism) that was mainly derivative of earlier sources. See Ahwāl wa āsār-i Awhad al-Dīn lHāmid b. Abi al-Fakhr Kirmānī, ed. Muhammad Wafā'ī (Tehran: Mā, 1375/1996). The main interest of Wafä'ī's publication was the inclusion of a mathnawi titled Misbāh al-arwāh (which has been attributed to Kirmānī, although this attribution is generally considered to be incorrect).]

Although it is extremely difficult to assess. Kirmānī's life and impact on Sufism through his quatrains, it is fortunate that a hagiography (mentioned above) was written soon after his death. A single copy of this manuscript was. edited and published by Badī` al-Zamān Furūzānfar in 1969 in the Persian Texts Series under the general editorship of Ehsan Yarshater. [Note: The manuscript, written in black ink, is kept in the Ayasophia Library in Istanbul (referenced as Nafispasha 1199). I am exceedingly grateful to Dr Bruno de Nicola, who provided me with a digital copy of the whole manuscript.] The title of this edition is Manāqib-i Awhad al-Din llāmid Ibn abī'l-Fakhr Kirmānī. Furūzānfar included an informative historical introduction to this edition but did he not investigate the controversy that surrounded Kirmānī. The English translation that forms the second part of this book has utilised both the manuscript in Ayasofya, and also Furūzānfar's edition.

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

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

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

them? All of these kinds of questions have a direct relevance to the study of Kirmānī, whose own life and form of Sufism make such questions so pertinent.

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

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

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

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

expectations, preconceptions, prejudices and values that were held by and about Sufis of the time.

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

In Chapter 1, it was argued that Sufism in Kirmānī's lifetime exhibited remarkable diversity in terms of practice and belief. Such diversity was possible simply because "charismatic" Sufis were able to enjoy the benefits offered to them by the patronage of political and military leaders. Beliefs in the spiritual leadership of some Sufis (walāyat) only served to promote the "legitimacy" of the claims to authority amongst some of the Sufis, which no doubt contributed to political and wealthy individuals bestowing patronage upon them. Moreover, the development of khānaqāhs must have provided such Sufis with space in which they enjoyed the privacy to engage in their preferred forms of practice. In Kirmānī's case, the practice was shāhid bāzī and samā `, as set out in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, which was legitimised with certain Sufi ontological perspectives that many of the non-Sufi scholars found problematic. Chapter 3 outlined the most significant opposition to Kirmānī from three Sufis. An investigation into this opposition is intriguing, as there is no explicit reference to shāhid bāzī and samā ` in any of them. The criticisms of Shams-i Tabrizi appear to be more related to a form of spiritual rivalry with Kirmānī, in addition to the ecstastic/ sober natures of the individuals concerned. The criticism from Rūmī may be understood as more related to shāhid bāzī, however, caution must be observed, as his famous "Kashki kardi va gudhashti" were words penned by Aflaki, the early fourteenth century hagiographer of the nascent Mevlevi order. There is no evidence, other than in Aflākī, that Rūmī uttered these words. To put it simply, was Aflākī seeking to denigrate any potential rival to the pre-eminence of the Mevlevi order? And the third criticism came from Suhrawardi, as reported by Simnānī, who died almost 100 years after Kirmānī. And like Aflākī, Simnānī had a particular form of Sufism that he wished to promote, namely a form of Kubrawi Sufism that rejected the "theo-monism"2 of Ibn 'Arabi who is known to have been an intimate of Kirmānī. Moreover, it is only supposition that the "innovation" that Simnānī has Suhrawardi mention, is in some way related to shāhid bāzī and samā `.

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

Not one specific order appears to have coalesced around Kirmānī's form of Sufism, even though the hagiography provides evidence of the features that became common amongst the orders from the fourteenth century. These have been summarised by Knysh, and include features such as a spiritual genealogy, conditions and rituals relating to admission into the order (such as the shaving of head hair) and absolute obedience to the shaykh, instructions about the dhikr, instructions relating to seclusion, and rules and regulations about communal life. Many of these features appear in the hagiography, although they are not presented in a systematic fashion. However, after reading the

Manāqib it is evident that Kirmānī's from of Sufism could quite easily have developed into an order. So, for example, the Manāqib details Kirmānī's spiritual heritage which connects him with the illustrious Sufi, Abū'l Najib Suhrawardi. The Manāqib also includes many anecdotes in which mention is made of individuals entering Sufism through Kirmānī's instruction, and their heads are shaved and are taught the dhikr-i talqīn or initiatory dhikr. There are also anecdotes that demonstrate Kirmānī's particular rules for communal life within the khānaqāh, such as his rules of eating before performance of the samā ` (which was in contrast to other Sufis),' or his order for his followers to have their own individual candles,' and his habit of asking after followers about their experiences in khalvat.

It is unclear whether Kirmānī or the author of the Manāqib considered these efforts as a conscious attempt to establish a Sufi order. There is an indication that Kirmānī's humility did not endorse such a possibility. One of the first stories concludes with the author of the Manāqib stating that Kirmānī did not issue "letters of permission" which were used by other Sufi shaykhs to verify that their aspiring dervishes had reached a sufficient level of knowledge to teach their texts. This would have been one way to promote one's Sufi message, or a Sufi order. But, it seems that an order did not emerge after Kirmānī. A number of reasons may help to explain this. The first possibility is that he did not leave behind a sufficiently recognised literary or philosophical or pedagogical legacy, such as those of Rūmī, Ibn 'Arabi or Suhrawardi. All of the later had orders emerge (although in the case of Ibn 'Arabi there was no formal order), the members of which celebrated their written works. Second, it is possible to point to many of the "successful" orders being those which were given some direction by the family members of the eponymous founder, or at least his close disciples. This does not seem to have been true for Kirmānī, who died in Baghdad. Kirmānī's son seems to have resided elsewhere, and so he was unable to establish a shrine or place of visitation for Kirmānī, where such an order might have taken root. Third, Baghdad already had its fair share of eminent Sufis whose spiritual legacy was shaped into the form of an order, including 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī and Suhrawardi, so perhaps there simply was not sufficient space for yet another. The three reasons for the establishment should not be considered necessary for the creation of an order, as it is possible to point to other orders, such as the Qalandariyya, which had none of the above-mentioned points. And the fact that a Kirmaniyya order did not take root should not suggest that Kirmānī and his form of Sufism was of little significance in the history of Sufism. It is to be speculated that the practice of shāhid bāzī and samā ` (along with seclusion) were amongst the practices that made Kirmānī's form of Sufism so distinct. Some Sufis (and also non-Sufis — as argued in Chapter 4) considered this problematic. It is to be speculated whether this was yet another form of Sufi diversity that was pushing the boundary of what should be considered an acceptable face of Sufism. Chapter 1 illustrated the great diversity in forms of Sufism and, for example, how different Sufis adopted various perspectives in relation to ādāb and sharī `a. Was it the case that the seemingly ever-expanding diversity of Sufism during this period, to which Kirmānī contributed, was a contributory factor in the establishment of Sufi orders? Was it as a result of the controversy over practices such as shāhid bāzī (licit or illicit), the antinomian ways of the Qalandar Sufis, and the mystic-philosophical speculative ideas of Ibn 'Arabi, to mention a few, that made many Sufis realise that self-regulation and control was necessary in order for the Sufi movement to represent something meaningful to Muslims? Was it recognized by many Sufis that the sheer diversity of the thirteenth-century Sufi movements had the potential to spiral out of control and leave the Sufi movement without a recognizable core? It is perhaps here that it is possible to find one of the major significant historical contributions to Kirmānī's hagiography. Aside from revealing the deep-rooted spiritual and pious leanings of the community, it demonstrates certain social and political tensions within the Sufi movement itself and also at large. It demonstrates how wide-ranging were the controversies of the age, which included specific issues, such as times for eating, to more encompassing problems (who could participate in Sufi gatherings which touches on gender and also the possibility of widening the Sufi

gates for the masses), and it also reflects on issues relating to inter-religious perspectives, demonstrating an unquestioning acceptance of the superiority of Islam during a period when the political hegemony of Islam was being severely questioned. The hagiography then, is a genre that offers much to historians, and while there is a need to sceptical about the historical veracity of such literature, read carefully, such works yield much important information by which it is possible to reconstruct the history of the tradition from which they emerged.

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

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

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

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

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

Turkey, like many other contexts, illustrates the contested nature of contemporary Sufism. For instance, many urban Muslim professionals in Turkey are rediscovering Sufism as an alternative to both conventional secularism and traditionally patriarchal forms of religious practice. Meanwhile, visitors to Turkey often return home with tokens of Sufism, such as little statuettes of Sufi "whirling dervishes." There is a certain irony in Sufism's popularity as a symbol of Turkish culture, as Sufi orders remain officially banned in the country, a carryover of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's (d. 1938) sweeping secularization of Ottoman society. Sufi orders were integral to the Ottoman imperial state and military structures, in addition to the empire's cultural and intellectual traditions. Hence, Sufism was something that Ataturk believed needed to be abandoned and even repressed for Turkey's modernization to be effective. Nevertheless, Sufism has been recognized by Turkish officials as a popular cultural heritage that acts as a ready source of tourism income, making the whirling dervish a contemporary Turkish icon. Sufis continue to operate in Turkey, though they often register as cultural organizations or centers of religious dialogue to avoid the legal problems associated with the official ban on Sufi orders.

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

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

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

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

'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri (d. 1883) was a Sufi leader and head of the Algerian military resistance against the French invasion of the 1830s. He rose to global fame due to his remarkable success on the battlefield, despite being significantly out-gunned by the modern French military, in addition to his qualities of chivalry and generosity. He was ever willing to engage in prisoner exchanges and truces and ensured the humane treatment of French captives. 'Abd al-Qadir became a hero not only to Algerians and Muslims but even to Americans, who read about his exploits in popular magazines, and who shared a cultural memory of their own fight against a European empire with the American Revolution. After his French capture and exile to

Damascus, however, 'Abd al-Qadir's fame truly came into its own. Anti-Christian riots broke out, and 'Abd al-Qadir requested French arms to help protect local Christians, working to safely channel thousands to safety. When he died, The New York Times lamented the loss of "one of the foremost of the few great men of the century." Considering his popularity among Americans, it is perhaps not surprising that an American town was named after 'Abd al-Qadir. His legacy, as in all of these other examples, brings us to the crossroads of contemporary Sufism and its many complexities.

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

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

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

The structure of this book

The book begins by providing a genealogical overview of the production of knowledge on contemporary Sufism. We offer a survey of the field as reflected in the English-language scholarship, produced largely in Europe and more recently in North America. Following this introductory overview, the work is divided into three main sections, which are thematic in nature. Although we could have selected a variety of dynamics shaping the contemporary expressions of Sufism, we have chosen three that have been formative to the global transformations taking place in Sufism today.

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

toward Islam's most sustained and influential anti-Sufi theology, Wahhabism.

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

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

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

Part I Sufism and anti-Sufism in contemporary contexts

Chapter 2 explores the historical roots of one of the most visible theological debates playing out in the contemporary world. This debate is fundamentally a contest between two sorts of Islam — one grounded in Sufism, and the other vehemently opposed to Sufism as a corrosive heresy. The contest between Sufi and anti-Sufi Muslims is playing out in almost every Muslim-majority society and local Muslim community, the outcome of which is shaping the future of Islam. Although the majority of medieval Muslim jurists and theologians affirmed Sufism's orthodoxy, there were notable opponents of Sufism in the premodern period. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), in particular, believed that philosophical Sufism was an extra-Islamic contagion weakening Islamic civilization from within. Ibn Taymiyya's views remained on the margins of Islamic thought for centuries, though they were revived in 18th century Arabia by the reformer Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1798). Ibn'`Abd al-Wahhab took the trajectories of Ibn Taymiyya's anti-Sufism further than Ibn Taymiyya had, condemning Sufi Muslims as apostates who should be fought and killed by his followers, who he believed were the only true Muslims on earth. Labeled "Wahhabis" by other Muslims, this initially violent movement would be domesticated and consolidated in Eastern Arabia,

laying the groundwork for a new sort of Islam, one with an unprecedented opposition to Sufism. Wahhabism would have an influence far beyond the borders of Arabia, eventually coinciding with and in some cases amplifying the theology of influential South Asian Islamic movements, including the Deobandi and Ahl-i Hadith, and the Salafiyya movement in the Middle East. The collapse of traditional forms of religious authority during the colonial period facilitated the spread ofWahhabi Islam, and its derivatives, globally. Simultaneously, the disintegration of Muslim empires that were closely intertwined with Sufism left Sufis without a base of material or political support, and vulnerable to attack. These developments then set the stage for the current contest between Sufis and anti-Sufis over the nature of Islamic theology, practice, authority, and authenticity.

With the historical background of the current Sufi/anti-Sufi conflict in place, Chapter 3 begins with the global proliferation of Wahhabi thought and activism in the 20th century. This development was sponsored by the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi—Wahhabi religious establishment used the influx of petro-dollars to fund the export of Wahhabi missionaries, scholarship, and literature around the world. Muslim communities found themselves inundated with a new version of Islam, radically critiquing Islam's classical formations, and Sufism in particular, as deviant. Branding themselves "Salafis" in reference to Islam's first generations, Wahhabi scholars and their works have radically marginalized Sufism in contemporary Islamic discourse, with Sufi teachings, practices, and sites coming under concerted attack. The now frequent destruction of Sufi shrines, whether in Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, or Syria, by Salafi—Jihadi groups, is an outgrowth of the spread of Wahhabism globally. Sufi-oriented Muslims have responded by reasserting Sufism's centrality to Islamic theology and practice. In North America, for example, popular Sufi Muslim authorities such as HamzaYusuf, Hisham Kabbani, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Omid Safi all oppose the well-funded efforts of Salafi organizations to rewrite Sufism out of Islamic history and thought, though each comes from different intellectual backgrounds, ranging from traditionalist to reformist or progressive.

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

Just as Muslims were questioning Sufism's place in Islam, European colonialists were situating Sufism as a phenomenon outside of Islam, a perspective that would further influence anti-Sufi movements. According to these early colonialists, the poetic tradition of love-intoxication that Sufi poets such as Rumi metaphorically evoked were not Islamic in nature but rather set apart from Islam. Islam was thought to be too legalistic to foster such mystical illuminations. It also meant that Persian literary traditions were privileged as being Sufi, while Arabic and Turkish Sufi literary traditions were often discounted. Both Johann Wolfgang Goethe's (d. 1832) and Ralph Waldo Emerson's (d. 1882) enthusiasm for the Sufi poetry of Hafiz are exemplary here. It is Hafiz's understanding of Sufism as a universal phenomenon that influenced Goethe, the German philosopher, poet, and diplomat, and his masterwork, the West-östlicher Divan (West-Eastern Divan). This universal understanding of Sufism would then spread to America through the works of Emerson, the poet who led the Transcendentalist movement in the middle of the 19th century. It was such spiritual and philosophical tendencies that were already percolating in America that led to the reception of the South Asian Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan (d. 1927) and his ministry to the West. This chapter, then, situates how colonial encounters with Sufism through travel and poetry have resulted in popular perceptions of Sufism as solely outside of the theological or legalistic traditions of Islam, in many ways setting an historical precedent to the contemporary popularization of Sufism and the Rumi phenomenon in the 21st century.

The seeds of Western interest in Sufism were planted in the colonial era, and led to the iconic status of historical Sufi personalities such as Hafiz, Sa'di of Shiraz (d. 1292), and Khayyam in the West today. Rumi's fame has skyrocketed in North America because of publications, endorsements, and the commodification of Rumi poetry, which has manifested widely in popular and material cultures. The popularization of Rumi in the West raises philosophical queries on the nature of Sufism. Is Sufism an esoteric system deeply dependent upon Islamic theology and law and/or is it an ever-

transforming, fluid reality that is based on a fundamental principle of universalism? Correspondingly, is the popular material culture surrounding Sufism in the contemporary West antithetical to classical Sufism that denudes Sufism and thus Islam of its true nature? Regardless of how one answers these questions, such diverse productions of Sufism have nonetheless struck a chord in Western cultural contexts, and have generated interest in classical Sufis and their philosophical understandings, particularly in more universalist expressions.

Part III Gendering Sufism: Tradition and transformation

The question of Sufism's legitimacy is not only unfolding with the proliferation of figures like Rumi in popular culture in the West. It has also emerged in terms of the relationship between Sufism and women's roles. Some premodern Islamic discourses have marginalized women as deficient in intellect and religion, and relegated most women to the private sphere. As a result, Sufi women did not typically occupy public leadership roles in the more institutionalized forms of Sufi practice. However, a wide range of Muslim women have been recognized as saints or inspirational figures.The veneration of Sufi female saints can be found throughout Islamic history. Rabi`a al-Adawiyya (d. 801), sometimes described as the first Muslim saint, played a profound role in infusing Sufi spirituality with an ethos of self-abandonment through love for God. Sufism offered women opportunities for religious status and influence that transcended social and cultural limitations, with some even considered to be "men" in their spiritual accomplishment. Chapter 6 explores the philosophical and metaphysical discourses underlying diverse views of women and the feminine in Islam. It further explores diverse examples of female Sufi personalities, from classical through to colonial periods, considering the ways in which their legacies inform contemporary Sufi practice and thought.

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

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

Recognizing the contested nature of Sufism, in terms of authority, authenticity, and gender, this study brings to light the historical, interpretative, and conceptual frameworks that shape the views of Sufism's friends and adversaries, admirers and detractors. In the process, we seek to help readers better understand the diversity of Sufism, the pressures and cultural openings to which Sufism has responded in modern times, and the many divergent opinions about contemporary Sufism's relationship to Islam. In what follows, we illustrate the varied dynamics that contemporary Sufis encounter, using localized examples to bring to light global issues. Before considering these issues, particularly in terms of anti-Sufism, popular culture, and gender, we begin by offering a historical overview of the production of knowledge on Sufism as it has developed in the West. In considering the various kinds of literature produced in the English language on Sufism, we contextualize this work by mapping the broader academic and popular

discourses from which it emerges. The following chapter, then, consciously though not comprehensively, points to the kaleidoscopic diversity of writings on Sufism, which together constitute the literary manifestations of contemporary Sufism in English-speaking contexts.

Key findings of chapters

Chapter 1 situates this work within the broader history of knowledge production on Sufism that has taken place in Western contexts, both academic and otherwise. We began by providing an historical outline of European encounters with Sufi texts and traditions, focusing on the formative role played by Western forms of knowledge on Sufism that developed during the early colonial period (late 18th and early 19th centuries). It was during this period that Western study of the East crystalized as an intellectual discipline (and broader cultural phenomenon) known as Orientalism.The Orientalist framing of Sufism tended to filter it through a Western perennialist lens, largely separating Sufism from Islam.This separation, rooted in racialized theories of mysticism and the limited number of Persian texts to which early Orientalists had access, would help foster a broaderWestern embrace of Sufism as a perennial wisdom transcending religion and Islam, allowing a de-Islamicized Sufism to find a place in Western spiritualities, art, and literature. By the early 20th century, however, scholars like Nicholson and Massignon, with greater access to Sufi sources, revised earlier theories of Sufism and acknowledged its Islamic origins and character. During this period, we also saw the development of lineages of Sufi practice in the West. Just as early academic treatments of Sufism were shaped by perennialism, so too were the first forms of Sufi practice: whether we think of Inayat Khan's Theosophically framed universal Sufism or Guénon's Traditionalist understanding of Sufism as the esoteric aspect of Islam, Western Sufism tended to be premised on a conception of universal truth shared across religious traditions. Academically, Islamic and Sufi Studies took shape in the mid-20th century, shifting to North America with the establishment of area studies departments and later religious studies departments, a trajectory represented in part by Schimmel. The later 20th century would see a turn in scholarship to studying lived Sufism, as opposed to an exclusive textual focus, one inherited from Orientalist approaches. It is out of this turn that the field of contemporary Sufism emerges, which then set the scholarly backdrop to situate the three broader themes addressed by the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, we offered a genealogical overview of the roots of one of the most profound and far-reaching developments within the historical Islamic tradition. The rise of anti-Sufi movements in almost every Muslim context within the past 200 years has set off a global debate among Muslims concerning the place of Sufism within Islam. This has largely resulted in an historically unprecedented marginal-ization of Sufi modes of thought, practice, scriptural interpretation, and religious association. Although unprecedented in its scope, anti-Sufism has been a significant aspect of the Sunni Islamic tradition since its coalescence in the 10th and 11th centuries. Followers of Ibn Hanbal perpetuated a suspicion of esoteric readings of the Qur'an, innovative rituals of remembrance, and theologies of love, intimacy, and the omnipresence of God. The anti-Sufi elements of Hanbali thought were brought together acutely in the 14th century by Ibn Taymiyya, who directed many of his polemics toward the school of Ibn al-`Arabi, which had come to represent for Ibn Taymiyya a pernicious, transgressive force threatening the coherence of Islamic doctrine. Combining a suspicion of interpretive pluralism, non-Arabs, and un-Islamic contaminations, Ibn Taymiyya created a body of work that would be resurrected and amplified in the 18th century by the progenitor of contemporary anti-Sufism: Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Unlike any prior thinker, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab sought not to reform or limit Sufism, but to erase it completely from Islam. The Wahhabi movement presented an exclusivist, puritan Islam devoid of poetry, philosophy, and most significantly and vehemently, Sufism. Tones of Wahhabi anti-Sufism were picked up by Salafi reformers like `Abduh and more strongly Rida. Their use of print technology and international networking helped spread and normalize Wahhabi theological critiques of Sufism, alongside their own suggestions

Chapter 3 built upon this historical overview by delving deeper into the ways in which anti-Sufism contrasts with Sufi modes of theology, scriptural interpretation, pedagogy, and religious practice, and breaking down these opposing "grammars" of religiosity as the underlying structure of this debate

over Sufism within contemporary Islam. Following this, we offered an account of how the grammar of anti-Sufi Islam was mobilized as part of a global movement to change the face of contemporary Muslim thought and practice. The British—Saudi alliance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries allowed for the Wahhabi tradition to gain political traction within Islam's heartland in Arabia, and the discovery of oil in the 20th century allowed for Wahhabism to be not only consolidated within Arabia but also promoted and disseminated throughout the world.This spread of anti-Sufi Islam in places like Nigeria,Yemen, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Europe and North America has put Sufis on the defensive in the 20th century. This defensive footing and marginalization has been one of the most significant dynamics of contemporary Sufism, affecting its presentation and practice globally.

Contemporary dislocations inspire a search for a singular, authentic, stable Islam, and Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn `abd al-Wahhab's promotion of just such a variety of Islam has a timely appeal. This, combined with the financial resources in the Gulf needed to promote such a perspective, means that supply and demand correspond, and hence the spread of a monolithic, Arabic-oriented Islam as the only real or authentic version. This allows for little in the way of diversity, contradiction, or ambivalence, and little room for Sufism — whether expressed in Arabic, Persian, or any other language. Sufism is seen as the quintessential "other" to this pure Islam, something inevitably local and cultural in manifestation, disconnected from the textual tradition. Public and private backing, supported by oil wealth, has further propelled anti-Sufi sentiments. In their most extreme manifestations, anti-Sufi sentiments have been expressed in the destruction of Sufi shrines by Islamist jihadi movements, such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

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

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

These early representations of Sufis permeated the broader imaginary of European culture which was then influential in the literary and artistic productions of the era, especially of the Romantic movement. Exemplary here are the figures of Hammer-Purgstall and Goethe. Both figures were dynamically inspired by Hafiz's poetry, thus indicating, as was the case with Jones, that the reception of the literary traditions of Sufism by non-Muslims did not simply transform Sufism in the West but also transformed Western interpreters of it. Eventually, these same literary traditions made their way to America, further influencing movements such as the Transcendentalists. Figures like Emerson and Whitman were enamored with the works of Hafiz. For instance, Emerson placed Hafiz on par with other writers such as Homer and Milton, and praised him as the prince of Persian poets. In America, poets such as Hafiz, Khayyam, and Rumi were receiving much positive reception in literary and spiritual circles to the extent that clubs were formed; the Omar Khayyam Club even sold chocolates and tobacco, an early example of commercialization of Sufism in the West. The reception of Sufi literary figures by an American audience, just like the European and Orientalist examples, illustrates the role of European and American audiences in not only the reception of Sufism but also its redefinition. This conceptualization of Sufism by non-Muslims took place within a universal framework wherein Sufism was not solely an Islamic tradition but one that existed beyond the confines of Islam. Framed as a universal tradition beyond Islam, Sufism provided a

ready source of influence for European and American spiritual and literary movements. Sufism was not only passively received in the West but also actively embodied and transformed by its Western enthusiasts and practitioners. The preeminent example of this active reception and vernacularization of Sufism today is the ever-growing popularization of Rumi in the West.

Chapter 5 contextualized this Western popularization of Rumi as part of the broader trajectory of the historical reception of Sufism by non-Muslims.This chapter examined the expansive popularization of Rumi through film, music, architecture, cafes, social media, and much more, and in so doing it critiqued the perception that the commodification of Rumi in the global West has adulterated Sufism's purity. Instead of this commonly held critique of the popularization of Rumi, this chapter illustrates how, as was historically the case, Sufism was not relegated only to the private mystical experience but permeated public spheres. In the process, it was also commodified and vernacularized in diverse cultural milieus. As such, the example of Rumi's popularity in the West is representative of the historical and sustained role that Sufi poets (Hafiz, Khayyam, and Sa'di) have played in various contexts, including in the construction of a contemporary plural spiritual landscape in America. Movements like Theosophy and Transcendentalism, in addition to some of their New Age successors, have all engaged with Sufi poetry as a spiritual resource. Thus, the question of Rumi and of Sufism in the West is not simply of whether these manifestations are new, but how they reflect a continuity of translation, transmission, and transformation of Sufi texts, philosophies, and traditions. Still, is that which is being translated and commodified Sufism?

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

In Chapter 6, we explored women's involvement and leadership in Sufism through examples of how Sufi women throughout history have actualized the classical principles of insan al-kamil (perfected human) and walaya (friendship of God).We began our discussion by describing each principle, noting aspects of both the absence of gender from these concepts and gendered qualities expressed by them. We went on to provide a brief historical overview of Sufi women. This overview observed that while institutions and literature about Sufism tended to amplify men's voices, women actively participated in Sufi culture and practice — albeit, often within the socially sanctioned roles of their times. We then offered short biographies of Sufi female saints and ascetics from the formative period, such as Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, Fatima of

Nishapur, Mu'adha al-Adawiyya, Hafsa bint Sirin, and Hukayma or Halima of Damascus; Sufi female teachers, mentors, and poets from the medieval period, including Shams, "Mother of the Poor," Nunaah Fatima bint Ibn Muthanna, Lala Aziza of Seksawa, Aishah al-Ba'uniyah, Zaynab bint al-Rifa`i, Fatima bint al-Rifa`i, and Lady Jahanara; and Sufi women who resisted colonial occupation, namely Nana Asma'u and Lalla Zaynab bint Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abi al-Qasim. We concluded that these women illustrate how Sufi ideas about spiritual egalitarianism have also been lived by women who subverted social constraints about gender and became foundational in transmitting Sufism through their leadership and spiritual guidance.

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

Concluding thoughts

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

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

Unpredictability has long been a characteristic and even a valued virtue among Sufis and the larger tradition of Sufism itself. We can think of the teaching tales of Rabi`a, where she surprisingly upstages a renowned ascetic and scholar, or tries to burn down paradise and put out the fires of hell to secure the worship of God for her own sake. Or we can recall al-Hallaj, whose travels, political engagements, and public statements were so unpredictable as to be considered dangerously shocking, warranting his execution in the minds of political and religious authorities threatened by what he might say or do next. Sufism itself is something that, in small and often marginalized teaching circles of 10th-century Khorasan or Baghdad, would not have seemed much of a contender to define the Islamic tradition for almost a millennium thereafter. And yet the medieval period witnessed just this prominence, the effects of which reverberate to the present day. The second painting team's method of burnishing their canvas into a mirror also captures the unpredictability that has characterized Sufism. According to Ibn al-Arabi, God Himself is by definition totally unpredictable, as God's Self-disclosures in the cosmos are never repeated, always being totally new — or contemporary. If the essence of reality is by definition beyond the human mind's capacity to predict, then the forms that spring from this source will be multiple and dynamic. Sufism too can be thought of in this way, historically, as a tradition with an essence that is by definition unpredictable. Change and diversity appear inherent to the tradition itself, and need not be conceptualized as deviations from a stable, unchanging essence. Rather, the essence by nature is engaged in a perpetual pattern of dynamic disclosure. Put otherwise, humans are constantly acting as the nexus where principles are synthesized with circumstances, leading to ever new syntheses that express the same principles in potentially unlimited forms.

If Sufism, like the cosmos, can be characterized by unpredictability, then past is precedent: just as Sufism has surprised observers and scholars historically, its future manifestations cannot be easily anticipated, and scholars are arguably best situated to address Sufism if receptive to the ways that this living tradition surprises with its dynamism and variety, without thereby failing to perceive the threads of connection and continuity that remain.

Contemporary Sufism is a living tradition, constantly vernacularized by its interpreters in ways that reflect the living dynamism of human reality more broadly. As our shared reality is always escaping categorization, academic frames, no matter how sophisticated, will always fall short of capturing the living dynamism of our world, both external and internal. Scholars of Sufism, like scholars of any field, can best respond to this condition by humbly acknowledging the inherent limitations of any analytical framework, pointing to rather than defining, suggesting rather than dictating, the meaning of a phenomenon that escapes a final word.

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