

the conditions under which a book might be borrowed and for how long. We are given a real sense of the librarian's struggle to control his stock. The second is the impact of the scriptural reliance emphasized by the Akhbārīs. This, Moazzen tells us, "gave lay people direct access to the most sacred texts and provided them with the possibility of individual interpretation" (p. 167), which was, of course, very much the impact of Islamic reform in the Sunni world with its renewed emphasis on the Quran and hadith. Especially in South Asia, but also elsewhere, it opened the door to individual interpretation. Thirdly, the rise of Akhbārism led to considerable discouragement of the Islamic rational sciences (*ma'qūlāt*). Ironically, this took place just when, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Iranian achievements in this fields were leading to a major flowering of *ma'qūlāt* scholarship in northern India.

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The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barraġān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century. By YOUSEF CASEWIT. Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization. Cambridge: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. xvi + 353. \$100, £95.

This long-awaited book is a most significant and welcome contribution to the study of medieval Islamic mysticism, particularly as it developed in al-Andalus. It will likewise be of interest to specialists in the field of Quranic Studies as well as to historians of Muslim Spain.

Abū l-Ḥakam 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Barraġān of Seville (born ca. 450/1058, d. 536/1141) was a renowned mystic and eminent religious scholar in al-Andalus who mastered diverse disciplines, ranging from Quranic exegesis and variant readings (*qirā'āt*) to Arabic grammar and poetry. He was a revered teacher who attracted many students; his writings played an important role in the development of Islamic mystical thought, Quran exegesis, and the science of hadith. Previous studies on Ibn Barraġān have typically presented a very partial picture at best of his life and thought, and often produced a distorted account of his place in the history of Islamic mysticism. This unfortunate fact stems from an over-reliance on biographical dictionaries and an incomplete reading of Ibn Barraġān's writings, which have remained until recent years in manuscript (pp. 1, 8–9). Misconceptions regarding the nature of Andalusī mysticism and its relation to Eastern Sufism have also hindered scholars from properly understanding and accurately contextualizing Ibn Barraġān's teachings. Yousef Casewit's book successfully corrects this situation: it is the first comprehensive study of Ibn Barraġān's life and thought, based on a close reading of all his works (in manuscript and print alike) and on an impressive array of other primary and secondary sources.

The book is voluminous, comprising eight chapters, not including the introduction and conclusion. These chapters can be neatly divided into two: the first four deal with Ibn Barraġān's life and works and their historical background, while the remaining four provide in-depth analyses of his teachings. More specifically, pp. 14–21 in the introduction and chapters one and two discuss the political, social, cultural, and religious history of al-Andalus that is relevant for understanding Ibn Barraġān's biography and intellectual-spiritual project. This discussion includes a wide range of topics, such as, inter alia, the "rise and demise" of the Almoravid regime, the history of renunciants and mystics in Muslim Spain, and their relations with rulers and state-sponsored scholars or jurists, which more often than not were quite tense. Much attention is naturally given to Ibn Barraġān's predecessor Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931) and to Ibn Barraġān's contemporaries Ibn al-'Arīf (d. 536/1141) and Ibn Qasī (d. 546/1151)—all of whom were Andalusī mystics—as well as to the influence of the renowned al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) on their teachings and on the Andalusī intellectual scene in general. Chapter two ends with two additional discussions: one on the applicability of the label "Sufi" to the aforementioned Andalusī mystics, and the other on the development of "institutional Sufism" in the Maghrib, beginning with the celebrated Abū Madyan (d. ca. 594/117), several of whose teachers were disciples of Ibn Barraġān. The author's main claims regarding these various matters will be summarized below.

Chapter three provides a detailed and meticulous account of Ibn Barrajān's life: his early years and education, his students and disciples, his positions on a number of religio-political issues of the day, his falling afoul of the authorities, and his tragic end. Ibn Barrajān's biography well reflects the turbulent times in sixth/twelfth-century al-Andalus. His persecution at the hands of the exoteric ulema and the Almoravid government and his ensuing death in Marrakesh reveal the perennial tension between mystics and state-sponsored jurists in addition to the fears and perhaps weakness of the declining regime. Casewit's analyses of such phenomena are well balanced and insightful and should serve as an important point of reference for the socio-political dynamics in Muslim Spain during that century.

In chapter four, the author examines Ibn Barrajān's works, namely, (1) *al-Irshād ilā subul al-rashād* (The guidebook to the pathways of guidance [all translations are those of the author]), on the concordance between the Quran and hadith. Although this work is presumably lost, excerpts from it are found in the writings of the Mamluk scholar al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392); (2) *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* (A commentary on Allāh's most beautiful names), Ibn Barrajān's major mystical treatise; (3) *Tanbīh al-afḥām ilā tadabbur al-kitāb al-ḥakīm wa-ta'arruf al-āyāt wa-l-naba' al-ʿaẓīm* (Alerting intellects to meditation on the wise Book and recognition of the signs and the tremendous tiding [of Judgement Day]), Ibn Barrajān's longer Quran commentary; and (4) *Īdāh al-ḥikma bi-aḥkām al-ʿibra* (The elucidation of wisdom according to the principles of the crossing), Ibn Barrajān's minor Quran commentary, which has been recently edited by Casewit and Gerhard Böwering (Brill, 2016). One should note that in terms of their actual contents, both Quran commentaries are no less mystically oriented than *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*. The author provides full details on the general structure and style of these four works and discusses their contents, an estimate of when they were composed, their textual history, and their influence on later writings in their respective genres (information concerning the manuscripts and editions is also given in the bibliography at the end of the book).

Chapters five and eight (which should be read together) deal with the "divine descent" and the "human ascent" respectively, that is, with the relationship between God and creation as seen from both the aspect of divinity and its mode of operation in the universe (chapter five) and the perspective of human beings, who aspire (or should aspire) to ascend back to their divine source (chapter eight). This downward and parallel-upward movement is, of course, a hallmark of mystical teachings inspired by Neoplatonic thought. Ibn Barrajān's views on the intimate connection between divinity and creation are reflected in two of his most important cosmological theories: that of the "universal servant" (*al-ʿabd al-kullī*), which foreshadows or heralds the concept of the "perfect human being" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) developed by his younger compatriot, the great mystic Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240); and the theory of the "reality upon which creation is created" (Casewit's translation of *al-ḥaqq al-makhlūq bihi al-khalq*). Both theories, which are analyzed in chapter five, have wide-ranging implications in the domains of cosmogony, cosmology, and eschatology. Another of Ibn Barrajān's ideas that bears on issues of cosmology and sacred human history is that of the "divine command" (*amr*) (pp. 280–94). As for the human perspective, Casewit presents Ibn Barrajān's *iʿtibār* (pp. 199–205, 269–79), a key concept and a leitmotiv in his mystical writings. The Quranic term means "to take warning," "to regard, consider, ponder over." In Ibn Barrajān's teachings, it denotes a meditative-contemplative practice by which the believer attempts to decipher the miraculous signs or "verses" (*āyāt*) in creation and in the Quran alike in order to discover the unseen spiritual dimension, including the realm of the hereafter. By performing *iʿtibār*, one "crosses" in one's mind or "passes" from the visible into the invisible realm (*al-ʿibra min al-shāhid ilā al-ghāʾib*); following Ibn Masarra's elaboration of this concept, Ibn Barrajān often envisions *iʿtibār* as an ascent to the upper spiritual worlds.

Chapters six and seven are devoted to Ibn Barrajān's hermeneutical approach to both the Quran and the Bible respectively. The author gracefully elucidates Ibn Barrajān's complex understanding of the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions and succeeds in pinpointing Ibn Barrajān's unique teachings, which set him apart from earlier Sufi exegetes and from other Muslim scholars who, like himself, were engaged with the Bible. For instance, Ibn Barrajān believes that like the universe, the Quran has various dimensions that correspond to the cosmic levels stretching from the uppermost echelons of existence down to the lower realm of the sublunary world. Accordingly, the word of God is gradually revealed through a process of cosmic differentiation; by means of *iʿtibār*, the mystic is able to progressively ascend to the nondifferentiated roots of the divine text. Ibn Barrajān's distinctive thought is like-

wise reflected in his essentially positive attitude toward the Bible, which is quite different (as Casewit emphasizes) from the polemicizing approach of his compatriot Ibn Ḥaẓm (d. 456/1064).

The main conclusions or claims of the author regarding Ibn Barraĵān and his place in the overall history of medieval Islamic mysticism can be summarized as follows (see especially pp. 1–8, 307–14). First, the mystical tradition in al-Andalus, which began with Ibn Masarra in the early fourth/tenth century and culminated two centuries later with Ibn Qasī, Ibn Barraĵān, and Ibn al-ʿArabī, was much more “indigenous” than hitherto recognized—not an offshoot of Eastern Sufism but a unique tradition that developed in its own right. Although Eastern Sufi teachings and writings along with Ashʿarī theology informed Andalusī mystics, their discourse is distinct. They espoused instead

a symbiosis of Qurʾānic teachings and Sunnī Hadīth with the Neoplatonizing treatises of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-ṣafā), the writings of Ibn Masarra, and, through indirect contact, Fāṭimī Ismāʿīlī cosmological doctrines circulating in the intellectual milieu of al-Andalus. As such, exponents of this symbiotic mystical discourse were more interested in cosmology, the science of letters, cyclical notions of time, and the principle of associative correspondence between heaven and earth than in Sufi wayfaring, ethics, and the psychology of the soul. (p. 2)

The younger Andalusī scholar and mystic Ibn al-ʿArīf, who was in contact with Ibn Barraĵān and in fact looked up to him, was nevertheless closer in his thought and writing to the Eastern Sufi model.

Second, the writings of al-Ghazālī had less of an influence on Ibn Qasī, Ibn Barraĵān, Ibn al-ʿArabī (see p. 90), and even Ibn al-ʿArīf than has been assumed. Third, the Andalusī mystical tradition was carried on by several Iberian and North African figures, e.g., Ibn Sabʿīn (d. ca. 668/1269) and al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), who eventually emigrated to the East, where Andalusī teachings—as formulated primarily by Ibn al-ʿArabī (himself an immigrant to Eastern lands)—enjoyed tremendous prestige. Back in the Maghrib, a more institutionalized, Sufi-oriented tradition developed. This Western *ṭarīqa*-style tradition, with its emphasis on devotion, piety, and renunciation, was much less philosophical or Neoplatonic in nature than the mysticism of Ibn Masarra, Ibn Qasī, Ibn Barraĵān, and Ibn al-ʿArabī. Furthermore, in the biographical and hagiographical works that were produced by members of this Western tradition, the distinctiveness of Ibn Barraĵān and his fellow Andalusī mystics was blurred and their figures were made to fit Sufi standards and conceptions. Hence the danger in reconstructing the history of Andalusī mysticism solely on the basis of Maghribī biographical and hagiographical literature.

The Mystics of al-Andalus is a remarkable work and an important contribution to our understanding of Andalusī mysticism and its relation to other mystical movements in Islam, primarily Sufism. It will assist scholars in reconstructing the intellectual “prehistory” or background of the great Ibn al-ʿArabī, which has yet to be undertaken in a comprehensive and satisfactory manner. Like Ibn Qasī, Ibn Barraĵān has been somewhat overshadowed by the towering figure of *al-shaykh al-akbar*, despite the latter owing much to the teachings of his Andalusī predecessors.

The Mystics of al-Andalus is written in a fluent, unpretentious, and engaging language. This is not to be taken for granted, given that Ibn Barraĵān’s writing can be quite difficult to understand. Moreover, it is an excellent example of how a sober and meticulous philologico-historical approach can be combined with a sympathetic and passionate reading of mystical texts; academic writing in the field of Islamic mysticism does not always exhibit such a careful balance. Additional praise could easily be given but I would rather conclude with two remarks.

First, Casewit refers throughout to the Andalusī mystical tradition as the “*muʿtabirūn* tradition”; according to him, Ibn Masarra, Ibn Qasī, and Ibn Barraĵān self-identified as *muʿtabirūn* (“contemplatives/contemplators” or “practitioners of *iʿtibār*”; see, e.g., pp. 3, 10, 24, 36, 39, 59, 71, 73–76, 312). However, although *iʿtibār* stands at the center of Ibn Masarra’s and Ibn Barraĵān’s works, and echoes of this concept can be found in Ibn al-ʿArabī’s oeuvre, there is no concrete evidence that Andalusī mystics other than Ibn Barraĵān related to themselves thus. If, on the other hand, it is an “external” label being applied to Andalusī mystics in an attempt to distinguish them from Eastern Sufis, then it is worth asking whether it is useful, given that *iʿtibār* is not at all central to the teachings of Ibn Qasī and Ibn al-ʿArabī, at least in comparison with Ibn Barraĵān. Broader and more common terms like “theosophical” (as used in the contemporary academic study of Kabbalah), “mysticophilosophical,” “philosophical Sufism,” or “philosophical mysticism”—all mentioned by Casewit himself (e.g., pp. 2, 9, 22, 39, 69, 71, 90)—are

perhaps more suitable, though naturally they have their own drawbacks and scholars tend to favor one term over the other.

My second remark concerns the impact of Neoplatonic thought on Ibn Barrajān and on the Andalusī intellectual scene at large. It seems to me that in relation to the Ikhwānian-Neoplatonic background of Ibn Barrajān's thought, there is still much comparative work to be done. Casewit correctly emphasizes that from Ibn Masarra's time onward, Andalusī mystics (including Ibn Barrajān himself) were very much inspired by Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's *Rasā'il* and perhaps also by other Ismaili works or Ismaili oral teachings. Key cosmological doctrines in Ibn Barrajān's writings as mentioned above; the idea of parallel worlds and the belief that a correspondence exists between man (the microcosm), the universe (the macrocosm), and the Quran; the view according to which the invisible-spiritual and the visible-corporeal worlds are ontologically connected; the concept of *amr* and cyclical perceptions of time; and, last but not least, the very idea of *i'tibār* in its mystical formulation—these notions were no doubt derived *inter alia* from the Ikhwānian corpus. As Casewit correctly remarks, Ibn Barrajān adapted and modified these notions, and was no less inspired by other sources as well, primarily the Quran and hadith. Yet what exactly are the similarities and differences between the Ikhwānian Neoplatonic worldview and Ibn Barrajān's teachings? Can we trace Ikhwānian terms (or Neoplatonic expressions in general) in Ibn Barrajān's writing, or are they replaced by an entirely different nomenclature, and if so, in what manner and why? Are Ibn Barrajān's approach and method in this context different from those of Ibn Masarra, Ibn Qasī, and Ibn al-ʿArabī? These weighty questions could not be treated in such an already exhaustive book as *The Mystics of al-Andalus*, but it is to be hoped—and looked forward to—that the author will address these issues in the future.

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Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhānate of Iran. By MICHAEL HOPE. Oxford: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. x + 238. \$90, £60.

A large number of studies have recently appeared on various aspects of the history of the Mongol World empire as well as of the post-1260 Mongol *oecumene*, along with a focus on its component parts. In particular, the Ilkhanate successor state, in Iran and surrounding countries (ca. 1260–1335), has received a healthy amount of attention. We have now important discussions on a wide range of subjects from Ilkhanid history—intellectual and cultural developments, relations with the indigenous populations (Muslim and otherwise), the role of the local bureaucratic elites, religious interaction and conversion, economic history, international relations (with both other Mongol and non-Mongol states), military history—but lacking was a comprehensive examination of the flow of political events (although Boyle's long article from 1968 in vol. 5 of *The Cambridge History of Islam* was an excellent start), along with a reasonable attempt to explain their dynamics and underlying logic. This new book by Michael Hope has attempted to fill this gap.

The basic theme of Hope's study is that Mongol history, in the formative period of Chinggis Khan's reign (from the late 1100s to his death in 1227), the subsequent generation of the united Mongol empire (until ca. 1260), and the ensuing Ilkhanid state in Iran, underwent alternating phases of patrimonialist and collegial rule. In the former we find a powerful ruler, supported by loyal senior officers and bureaucrats; in the latter are weaker sovereigns and policy largely determined by a group of *noyat* (pl. of *noyan*), high-ranking officers who each commanded a division (*tümen*) and worked more or less in concert. This group of influential grandees, along with the princes, was referred to as *aqā-nar* (sing. *aqā*, lit. "older brother"). As delineated by Hope, Chinggis Khan's rule was not surprisingly patrimonialist, while those of Ögödei (1229–1241) and Güyük (1246–1248) were clearly collegial. Möngke (1251–1259), on the other hand, created a strong patrimonialist regime. His brother Hülegü (reigning from ca. 1260 as a *de facto* independent ruler until his death in 1265) was unable to establish such a