

lation; *al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya* actually means “Governance of Cities.” Its alternate title is *Principles of Beings*).

This could be a plausible interpretation of Farabi’s work, and Mahdi’s close readings of these treatises, constituting the bulk of the book, would be useful (if one disregarded their tortured argumentation and occasional degeneration into numerology—e.g., on pp. 67–68), had he not left unanswered certain objections to this view. First, in trying to understand and explain revelation, Farabi had recourse not to Plato’s and Aristotle’s political writings but to Aristotle’s theory of the soul, the intellect and imagination—a subject that Mahdi touches on only cursorily (pp. 134–36, 157–66; but cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* [1958], also not consulted). Second, and because of the first, political philosophy cannot be forced to mean study and interpretation of the revealed law, however this study is conducted (which explains the quotation marks in my references earlier). If it did, all the exegetes of religious traditions would be political philosophers. And third, there is absolutely no indication in any of Farabi’s or anybody else’s writings that he had an activist agenda and that he intended those two books as “mirrors for princes” (or that they were actually taken as such), like their contemporary work known as the *Secret of Secrets* (*Sirr al-asrār*).

But in the final analysis, the refutation of Mahdi’s interpretation comes from the philosophical tradition in the Islamic world itself. No philosopher ever saw Farabi’s work as described by Mahdi, and even worse, Ibn Khaldun, the real founder of political philosophy in Islamic civilization, expressly denied such an interpretation (*Muqaddima* II, 138 Rosenthal). So it is not a mystery that Farabi’s followers did not continue with his allegedly activist political agenda: there was none there to begin with. What there *was*—prophecy and revelation explained in terms of the Aristotelian theory of the soul—they adopted. This does not mean that Farabi did not deal with political issues, but these were details (though necessary—Farabi was nothing if not meticulous) to the main body of his work, details that were disregarded by all subsequent philosophers and that reappeared, as mere lists of forms of government, in the ethical literature of later centuries, starting with Tusi’s *Akhlaq-e naseri* (cf. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 9:221–22).

All these elements—unrevised older articles and outdated (or non-existent) bibliography indicating disinclination to take differing views seriously, speaking *ex cathedra* in authoritarian voice and in terms of a grand theory divorced from historical context and verisimilitude, and the hyperbolic and orientalist claims of the prominence of political philosophy (in the sense given by Mahdi) in the classical period of Arabic philosophy—make the book an antiquated curio, of interest only to historians of American intellectual currents in the middle of the 20th century.

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FRITZ MEIER, *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, trans. John O’Kane, *Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Wadad Kadi, vol. 30 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999). Pp. 772. \$195.00.

REVIEWED BY TODD LAWSON, Montreal

Of the four or five names one associates with the founding of the modern study of Islamic mysticism, Fritz Meier’s is perhaps the least appreciated in North America because most of his seminal contributions to the subject have remained in their original German, and since the end of World War I North Americans have been not inclined to give Islamicist scholarship in this language its due. Such foundational works as Nöldeke and Schwally and Goldziher in Qur’anic studies, Ritter on ‘Attar, and the present author on Kubra and Baha al-Walad, remain untranslated and insufficiently studied or even referred to by recent generations of scholars and specialists.

It is perhaps, in this instance, a case of Muhammad going to the mountain—or, at least, being transported there through the diligent and expert translation of fifteen of Meier's "articles" by John O'Kane. The articles appear in the volume in the order they were written, spanning the forty years between 1954 and 1994. Both the translator and the editor are well known to specialists in Islamic mysticism for their previous efforts, individually and as a team. Bernd Radtke was a student of Meier's and was therefore able to draw the author himself into the production of the book. We are told that Meier, who died on his birthday in 1998 at age eighty-six, approved the entire translation (having added comments and bibliographic references) just days before his death on 10 June.

The scholarship gathered here is of course exemplary. The articles deal with a vast array of topics, exploiting a bewildering variety of sources in numerous languages to describe, analyze, interpret, and in some instances offer editions, in their original language, of primary texts for the study of Sufism. There is a conspicuous absence of theorizing about the "big picture" apart from one or two instances, such as "Sufism is very multilayered and despite numerous common features cannot be made to conform to one pattern" (p. 63). The articles deal with *Samā'*, Sufi *adab*, or *sulūk* (here we have the Arabic text of Qushayri's *Tartīb* that Meier first published in 1963); a detailed discussion of an important manuscript anthology; a study in the periodization of the history of Sufism; the life of a statement attributed to the Prophet forbidding mourning; an edition of the Persian text of a correspondence between a shaykh and his disciple of the late 12th century; a study of the genealogy and practices of the Damascene branch of the Qadiriyya known as the Sumadiyya; Ibn Taymiyya on Sufism and predestination; a simply thrilling philological and historical study of the Almoravids and the institution of the *ribāt*; the description of a forgotten work on Muslim saints in the west during the 12th century; the study of Suyuti's ideas about the postmortem life of the Prophet; the tradition of invoking blessings on the Prophet; the Muslim-cum-Sufi teaching of *ḥusn-i zann*, thinking well of others, as an efficient force for good in the world; and finally a study of the relationship between a text and a specific social practice, the institution of the *mahyā* communal night prayer vigil.

In addition to the articles, there is a Preface (pp. vii–ix) describing the genesis of the volume, a full bibliography of Meier's work (pp. xi–xx), a useful Introduction by the editorial team (pp. 1–21) in which each of the articles is summarized, and several indexes (pp. 681–750).

There is no room here to look at each one of these miniature monographs separately. They are all the product of a certain faith in the so-called philological method of textual scholarship, and the conclusions and analyses arrived at reflect this. At a time that this kind of research may be thought old-fashioned, the publication of this book will demonstrate to the reader just how lively and pertinent (not to say daunting) it actually is in the hands of such a highly cultured man as this master. There are unavoidable *longueurs*, and there are some surprising absences in the critical apparatus and the author's additions at the end of most of the articles. For example, both of the editors and the author take the trouble to proclaim the importance of Sulami's *tafsīr* (pp. 11, 186) yet make no effort to alert the reader to Böwering's edition of Sulami's *Minor Qur'an Commentary* (1997). The same scholar is ignored again on page 472. And of the vast array of subjects covered, Shi'ism is not one of them (cf. the index where the word "Shi'a" has one entry). It is unclear, incidentally, what is meant by an "unsuccessful Shī'ite ḥadīth" (p. 555); nor is the work of French Islamicist Henry Corbin ever mentioned by the author in the course of his articles. This, of course, indicates a dramatic difference in scholarly tastes and preoccupations, pointing up the truth of Meier's statement, quoted earlier, that Sufism is not one thing. But it is mysterious why the recent work on Sirhindi by ter Haar is not referred to at the appropriate place (p. 597). There are other omissions, as well.

Glimpses of the personality shine through the text. Meier does not like Luther (pp. 315, 546). He is either altruistic or sarcastic: "since de Beaurecueil was at the time engaged in looking after orphans in Afghanistan, it is understandable that he was not familiar with my preliminary

study.” He has feet of clay, actually citing Wehr’s dictionary (p. 445), whereas the usual lexicographic authorities are frequently manuscripts of the classical works.

It would be impossible to praise this publication too highly, and all involved should be congratulated on a job exceedingly well done. The editors remind us that books have their own fate. Let us hope that in this case, part of that fate will include its use in the preparation of undergraduate courses on Islam.

Naturally, in such a complex publication, which is remarkably free of errors, there will be lapses and mistakes. Some of these are matters of English usage, although it is recognized that the original German can be “eccentric,” as the editor points out (p. 4). In such cases, it might have been useful to supply in a footnote the distinctive phrase or sentence in the original. Questions thus arise from the following: “eliminating decisions of the ‘self’” (p. 9) could be “eliminating consciousness of the self.” “Gradation” (p. 10) does not seem to be the correct translation of *tartīb* in this context; “progress” or “pedagogy,” or simply “the stages,” might have been better, even if this is not a literal translation of the title of Qushayri’s work. Another feature of the text (*passim*) is what will appear to an English readership as an overuse of “etc.” (e.g., p. 18, l.4 forward); “presently known” should be “now known”— this adverbial lapse occurs throughout the book (e.g., pp. 23, 136, 503, but cf. 254 for the correct usage); “inwardly as well” (p. 25) should be “withdrew inwardly as well”; “still know” (p. 56) probably should be “now know”; “shammer” (p. 74) should be “sham”; “tiro” (p. 99) should be “novice”; “commentary to” (p. 149) should be “commentary on”; “usufruct” (p. 179) is much too legalistic in diction to translate the Qur’anic *mutāʿ* / enjoyment; “his face on the shaykh” (p. 205) should be either “his eyes on the shaykh” (unlikely) or, best, “his face toward the shaykh”; “in short a kind of ‘Prussians’” (p. 214) should be “in short, an Iranian equivalent of ‘the Prussians’”; “moribund person” (p. 232) should be “dying person”; the sentence “In *Documents* translated as couvents ‘cloisters’ which does not fit with *diyār misriyya*” (p. 339) is unclear; inconsistencies in translating German quotations are found on pages 347 and 403; “eye sockets free” (p. 400) should be “eyes uncovered”; “Grimm Brothers” (pp. 536, 693) should be “Brothers Grimm”; “for our ideas” (p. 564) should be “in our view”; “the Arabic language disposes over” (p. 590) is unclear; “his two-hundred-year-earlier predecessor” (p. 596) should be “his predecessor by two hundred years”; “Already Muhammad” (p. 605) should be “Even Muhammad”; “work himself into the attributes” (p. 646) could be “work the attributes into himself”; “artfully” (p. 650) should be “artistically,” and “for artful stylistics” should be “as an artistic stylist”; from l. 2 forward, “the possessor” (p. 656; as a translation of *sāhib* or the like) should be “the occupier”; “text-form” (p. 667) could be “textual tradition”; “friendly communication” (p. 679) should be “personal communication”.

A few of the several typographical errors are: on the inside dust cover, no. l.11, “de,” should be “the”; on the contents page (p. v), “Mourning of the Dead” should be “Mourning the Dead” (this is corrected on p. 221); “text edition” (p. 1) should be “edition”; “ideologists” (p. 4) could be “ideologues”; “al-Safadī” and “Arab-ic” (p. 17, *passim*) should be “al-Sadafī” and “Arabic”; the word is “multilocatio” (p. 18, l.20); the last sentence on page 21 appears to duplicate, in error, the first part of the last sentence beginning on page 20; “Trimignham” (p. 29) should be “Trimingham”; “ecstaty” (p. 38) should be “ecstasy” (although it is not clear that one must know how to spell it correctly before experiencing it); “Tabarsi” (p. 68, *passim*) should be “Tabrisī”; “ad-aptation” (p. 183) should be “adap-tation”; the plan of the rest of the book is abandoned on p. 267 in the absence of an actual heading announcing an addition by the author at the end of an article; words and letters are irregularly spaced (p. 349, ll. 13, 14); a number of Latin phrases (p. 355) need italics (these are inconsistently applied in foreign words and phrases throughout the book); “existing one” (p. 398) should be “existing ones”; “naivety” (p. 409) should be “naïvety”; “homoioteleuton” (p. 445) should be “homoeoteleuton”; “aready” (p. 458) should be “already”; error in page layout (p. 510); “Kulīnī” (p. 517, *passim*) should be

“Kulaynī”; “*raptus*” (p. 525) should be “*raptus*”; “Paradies” (p. 544) should be “Paradise”; “supplication” (p. 555) should be “supplication”; “innumberable” (p. 556) should be “innumerable” or “unnumbered”; “hmslf” (p. 558) should be “himself”; “efficacy” (p. 561) should be “efficacy”; “vizualizing” (p. 578) should be “visualizing”; “respone” (p. 588) should be “response”; “Cigar, Nevill 353” (p. 689) should be deleted, and “Cigar, Norman 370, 480, 606” should be “Cigar, Norman 353, 370, 480, 606”.

In the cause of domesticating German scholarship to the English language, an abbreviations key might have helped the reader decipher the frequent acronyms, including “WKAS,” “WZKM,” “ZDMG,” and “ZNTW,” as well as the French “BIFAN” and “JA” and the British “BSOAS.” It is difficult to know what scheme guided the editor, here since many of the titles of journals and reference works are given in full.

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KLAUS SCHIPPMANN, *Ancient South Arabia: From the Queen of Sheba to the Advent of Islam*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001). Pp. 181. \$39.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ODED BOROWSKI, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Program in Mediterranean Archaeology, Emory University, Atlanta

Klaus Schippmann, who teaches archaeology at the University of Göttingen, has participated in several archaeological excavations in southern Arabia. As he states in the Introduction to the book, “very little is known on the subject” of the history of ancient southern Arabia, and he outlines the reasons for this. His aim is to present to a broad audience, including Orientalists, historians of ancient history not concerned primarily with this region, archaeology students, and the general reader, “a consolidated overview of the current state of knowledge” on topics related to the history and culture of South Arabia. The book was originally published in German in 1998; corrections and updating were introduced in the English edition.

The book is divided into ten chapters covering a broad range of topics. Chapters 1 (pp. 3–7) and 2 (pp. 9–17) are devoted to geography and sources and the peoples of southern Arabia. In addition to the geography and topography of the region, the author recounts the development of the terms “Arab” and “Arabia” through a brief survey of ancient sources. He evaluates the possibility of population estimates in the present and in antiquity and presents information concerning the history and make up of the local population. Chapter 3, a very short chapter (pp. 19–22), deals with the different dialects and languages extant in ancient southern Arabia and with the history and different forms of writing there, and Chapter 4 (pp. 23–30) describes the exploration history, devoted mostly to the collection of epigraphic material.

The “meat” of the book is in the next chapter. Chapter 5 (pp. 31–69), which is divided into several subchapters, covers the history of southern Arabia from the prehistoric period to the 7th century A.D. The main discussion here is about the ancient southern Arabian civilization of approximately 1400 years’ duration, from the 8th century B.C. to about 600 A.D. A brief discussion is devoted to the 10th century B.C., including the episode of the Queen of Sheba (pp. 53–54). Schippmann also describes at length the multiple problems related to the early chronology, taking into consideration factors such as paleography, C-14, historical records, numismatics, and more. Perhaps it was felt beyond the scope of the present book, but the author does not bring into the discussion the development of the Proto-Sinaitic alphabet and the abecedy from ‘Izbet Sartah, which might tip the scale in favor of what he terms the “Long Chronology” of southern Arabia. Following that is a discussion of the different kingdoms that occupied the region, including the kingdoms of Saba’, Ma’in, ‘Ausan, Qataban, Hadramawt, and Himyar, with attention paid to chronology, inter-relationships, and geographical location.