would expect, provides the Arabic along with a transliteration, and includes just enough material to be useful and not so much as to be unwieldy. The references are helpful, and this would indeed be a useful book to have when dealing with Arabic philosophical material.

One of the entertaining tasks of any reviewer of a dictionary is looking for omissions, and there are indeed some surprising gaps. It is always difficult to know how firmly to separate philosophy, theology and law in Islam, since they interact so extensively, and there are plenty of theological and legal terms included here, and that of course makes one wonder why others were omitted. For example, there is *ḥadīth qudsī*, but no other category of *ḥadīth*, apart from the general term of course. There is no *khums*, a frequent concept in Shia literature, no *riba* or *gharar*, and a really significant omission, no *maqāsid* as in *maqāsid al-sharīʿa*, although there is certainly plenty on *sharīʿa* itself. The idea of the law having basic principles is certainly often raised by philosophers, as is the theory that only God can tell who is a believer or otherwise, yet there is no *irja* in the dictionary. There is no *lutf,* and very surprising, no *mawt*, yet plenty of Islamic philosophers write about death and it is hardly a minor philosophical topic. There are many *ʿulūm* in the entry on *ʿilm* but no *ʿilm al-tasawwūf*. Derivatives are not always mentioned, there is *kawn*, for instance, but no *kun*. There is no *nutfa* and no *islah*. *Nawʿ* comes after *nazarī*, something wrong there.

These cavils aside, this has to be acknowledged to be a very worthwhile book and it surely ought to be translated into other languages, English in particular. It would be very useful for anyone working with philosophical texts without a good grasp of the technical vocabulary. Each technical term is transliterated and then followed by the Arabic and the meaning; and for the more significant terms a reference or two to literature on it. These explanations are clear and point the reader in the appropriate directions. The reference material provided here is helpful and would guide the reader onto the straight path (yes, the term is in the book) to wider knowledge. Although this is only a *dizionarietto* and not a *dizionario* it is both a rich source of information and a stimulating read.

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JOEL BLECHER:
Said the Prophet of God: Ḥadīth Commentary across a Millennium.
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Muslim tradition (*ḥadīth*) has captivated scholars of early and medieval Islam ever since Ignáz Goldziher published the pathfinding second volume of his *Muhammedanische Studien* (1890). Western academia pondered over *ḥadīth* authenticity, modes of *ḥadīth* transmission, dating and reconstructing of the traditions' substantive content (*matn*), earliest *ḥadīth* collections, and the role of *ḥadīth* in legal and theological debates. Comprehensive as they were, these reflections largely overlooked *ḥadīth* commentary (*sharḥ al-ḥadīth*). Joel Blecher's monograph *Said the Prophet of God: Ḥadīth Commentary across a Millennium* aims at filling this scholarly gap. With an admirable expertise and impressive knowledge of minute detail,

Blecher traverses the exegetical reception and commentarial re-enactment of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* across space and time. His journey begins in fifth/eleventh-century Andalusia and ends in present-day India, Pakistan, and Syria.

Blecher posits three methodological premises as the basis of his treatment of the topic (pp. 13–18). First, he challenges the notion that *ḥadīth* commentary is only a literary practice. His perusal of Islamic sources reinforced by personal experience with live commentary leads him to assert that commenting al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* amounted to "multisensory experience" (pp. 14, 146, 147, 151, 154) comprising recitation sessions, lively debates, and oral lessons in public. Second, Blecher is attentive to the material benefits and social influence sought by *ḥadīth* commentators in their interaction with political authorities and wider audience. Third, he is careful not to let sociological analysis overshadow his study at the expense of the scholarly aspects of *ḥadīth* commentary. Although bearing on the scholars' fortunes and wellbeing, *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* may not be relegated to a mere pursuit of social prestige, political patronage, and material gains. It carries along a high intellectual value, or "interpretative excellences" as Blecher calls the commentators' striving for scholarly creativity and methodological perfection.

The book opens with a vivid description of the controversy caused by Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī's (d. 474/1081) assertion that, towards the end of his life, the Prophet was able to write (pp. 21–9). This affair, which broke out during a public lesson by al-Bājī in Dénia, is illustrative of the hermeneutical tension between *ḥadīth*, in this case a tradition from al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* outwardly suggesting the Prophet wrote by hand in the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya (6/628), and theology, which holds that he was illiterate. Blecher shows how al-Bājī was able to reconcile the literal understanding of *ḥadīth* with the doctrine of the Prophet's illiteracy derived from the Quran, by considering the event at al-Ḥudaybiyya as one of the Prophet's miracles, which, moreover, occurred after the illiteracy verses had been sent down and was, therefore, not at odds with the chronology of revelation. By this "double movement", to use Blecher's expression, al-Bājī was not only saving his life and preserving his scholarly reputation, but he was also addressing methodological issues arising from disputes with Ẓāhirī literalists about the ways to understand and interpret *ḥadīth*.

The famous commentator of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) is no less prominent in Blecher's book than al-Bukhārī himself. In the third chapter (pp. 49–64), Blecher dwells on the composition of Ibn Ḥajar's capacious *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, which remains until now the most outstanding commentary of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The reader learns how commentators of the Mamluk era went about their work, and senses its scholarly and social significance. As personal rivalries were prominent in the ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo scholarly landscape, Blecher pays close attention to the feud between Ibn Ḥajar and Badr al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451), in which both intellectual and political stakes ran high, and specific conceptions of authorship and scholarly creativity came into play.

The controversial Shāfiʿī chief justice Shams al-Dīn al-Harawī (d. 829/1426), who was of non-Arab extraction, stands out in the fifth chapter of the book (pp. 80–97). Blecher shows how concepts of ethnic identity, scholarly excellence, and rhetorical accomplishment were intertwined with pursuit of personal benefits before the political elite. By comparing Ibn Ḥajar's lively autobiographical account of his encounter with al-Harawī with the same account in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Blecher casts a rare glimpse into how genre boundaries impinged upon the contents, style, and purpose of the same report.

Blecher's treatment of *ḥadīth* commentary by a combination of methods from the fields of social history, intellectual history, and social theory is commendable, as is

his aspiration to foreground the performative and interactional aspects of the commentator's activity. This approach yields excellent results where our textual sources preserve references to performative life settings, as in the case of al-Bājī and the lively commentarial sessions in ninth-/fifteenth-century Cairo. In other cases, as, for instance, al-Suyūṭī's short and dry commentaries (pp. 129–39), such sessions are not attested in the sources. Their absence, noted by Blecher (p. 131), as well as the exegetically demanding treatment of al-Bukhārī's cryptic chapter headings (pp. 111–28), suggest that *ḥadīth* commentary might be restricted to a narrower and properly trained audience, away from the trappings of public performance whereby scholarly excellence and rhetorical mastery were harnessed in pursuit of social capital.

In the end, Blecher has contributed to both understanding and endorsing the canonicity of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Transregional and transtemporal in its sociological value and intellectual appeal, this *ḥadīth* corpus has become an essential part of Muslim identity and modern scholars' drive to understand it.

A few errors crept into the book: p. 4: the Prophet died in the year 11/632, not 10/632 as stated by Blecher; p. 72: *salāf* should be *salaf*; pp. 75–6, and 223, note 31: *maratayn* should be *marratayn*; p. 85: *al-iṣṭilāḥ al-miṣriyya* should be, according to the author's transliteration conventions, *al-iṣṭilāḥ al-miṣrī*; p. 95: *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* is a work associated with Mālik b. Anas, not Anas b. Mālik; p. 145: *al-nūr al-sāfir* stands for "revealing light" rather than "travelling light"; p. 259: *al-Jāmʿi al-ṣaḥīḥ* should be *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*.

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CHRISTIAN C. SAHNER:

Christian Martyrs under Islam: Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World.
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doi:10.1017/S0041977X19000478

As the word "Making" in the title suggests, this excellent monograph is only concerned with the early centuries of Islam, more specifically the period *c.* 660–860. Although a number of the sources used in this book have been around for a long time, the fact that they are in a variety of different languages and often published in obscure places means that there has been no previous attempt to consider them as a whole, let alone to seek to place them in the wider context of the emerging Muslim World. A few of the relevant texts are to be found in chronicles, but for the most part they are in the form of hagiographical narratives, a genre notoriously problematic for the historian. In his Introduction Sahner offers some eminently sensible guidelines on how best to approach these texts. In classifying the different types of martyrdom, three main categories are distinguished: martyrdom on reversion to Christianity after a Christian had converted to Islam; on conversion from Islam to Christianity; and as a result of openly insulting Islam.

The first of these categories comprises the largest number of martyrs, and contains several subgroups, among them slaves and prisoners of war, the latter contributing the highest numbers; in the case of individuals, their conversion to Islam was