

Anatolia seem to have migrated of their own free will, responding to socioeconomic and political pressures in Anatolia. However, while the central administration was far from in control of these population movements, it was not slow, at least from the second half of the fifteenth century onward, to adapt to and even to alter, in some instances, the new demographic configuration. As for relations between the so-called colonizing dervishes and the Ottoman state, the latter did not seem to have initiated, and even less controlled, dervish groups, but rather these mystical enterprises tried actively to negotiate tax exemptions and other privileges once they had settled in a new area. While initially the presence of Islam was much associated with newcomers from Anatolia, by the mid-sixteenth century, according to Antov, Islam had become a culturally internalized part of the Balkan religio-cultural landscape; local-born Muslims participated in and patronized urban Islamic culture, and the Sufi cult of saints was able to produce its own leading figures – the sixteenth-century saint Demir Baba, born in Deliorman, being the most prominent example. While treating the *res vitae* of these saints imbued with supernatural elements, Antov convincingly narrates in chapter 6 the arrival of Istanbul-based and orthopraxy-minded new Sufi brotherhoods at the expense of the local ones.

Students of conversion and the growth of Islamic communities in the early modern period will benefit from this book, which ties together evidence from various sources and offers a detailed analysis of differentiation at the meso-level. Antov's command of the primary and secondary sources is notable and this enables him to resituate societal processes of diverse nature and explain them convincingly. Since the treatment of supernatural elements together with the official documents and chronicles interest both Ottomanists and scholars from other disciplines, Antov's contribution is of considerable interest not just for its treatment of several forms of Islamic presence in early modern Bulgaria, but also a good example of what rigorous and circumstantial analysis of sources can achieve in the field of Ottoman history.

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ATA ANZALI:

“Mysticism” in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept.

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For scholars interested in the exchange of philosophy, mysticism, and religious polemic, the intellectual debates found in Shiism in the early modern and modern periods might be considered the veritable motherlode. Indeed, the Iranian religio-philosophical sphere from 1500 onwards operates with such a wide range of notions and conceptual language that it has been difficult for scholars to engage in this topic without falling into traps of reductionism and naive fundamentalism. Part of the challenge is the fact that the terms, vocabulary, and general operating language used by religious scholars, jurists, Sufis, and philosophers to discuss “mysticism” shift constantly in meaning and application across time and place. Into this field ventures Ata Anzali in his thoughtful and deliberative study, *“Mysticism” in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept*. Across six chapters, Anzali introduces the

reader into the world of *'irfan* and how this notion – often rendered as “mysticism” – assumed a pivotal role in the ongoing religio-philosophical landscape of Iran and neighbouring “Persianate” lands, most notably Mughal India. Anzali’s objective is significant: to provide *'irfan* with a conceptual space that is ontologically unique, and in doing so, follow and track its shifting morphology among premodern scholars and intellectuals who dominated philosophical and religious debates in the public sphere from 1500 (Safavids) until now (the Islamic Republic of Iran).

Anzali’s introduction opens with a 2011 debate between two prominent public intellectuals, and how a conservative (Mahdi Nasiri) employed the term *'irfan* as an intellectual pejorative against his arguably more liberal opponent (Mohsen Gharaviyan). Anzali was clearly struck by the oddity of this situation in which a rich and venerable intellectual tradition that had shaped scholarly discourse in the medieval and early modern periods could be the subject of such abject scorn and ridicule. Indeed, Ayatollah Khomeini himself was a devotee of the study of *'irfan*, and Anzali clearly sees the current brand of conservative fundamentalism – essentially approved and encouraged following Ahmedinejad’s 2005 election win and the rise of the Basij – as an alarming societal trend focused against “New Age” mysticism or anything else which smacked of ecumenical leanings. In this way, his book is a tale of redemption and salvation for a concept increasingly under threat in the IRI, as well as a corrective for those who naively synonymize Sufism and *'irfan*.

Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the development of *'irfan* during the medieval period (“*'Irfan in the Pre-Safavid period*”) and into the sixteenth century under the Safavids (“*The Safavid opposition to Sufism*”). Without a doubt, the term itself was not widely used until Ibn ‘Arabi looked to hadiths like the “Hidden Treasure” tradition to define the notion of a hidden divine beauty and its manifestation through epiphany (*tajalli*) on multiple planes of existence. In these chapters, Anzali makes note of other pre- and early Safavid philosophers (Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Ghiyath al-Din Dashtaki) who discuss *'irfan* explicitly, but he does not discuss the popularity of *'irfan*, for instance, in poetical traditions leading up to the Safavid period. The great mystical poet Fakhr al-Din ‘Iraqi (d. 1289) wrote about the idea of *'irfan* in his *Lama’at*, so much so that ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492) wrote a commentary on ‘Iraqi (*Ashi’ at al-lama’at*, c. 1481) which in turn likely inspired *'irfan*-centric verses in his *Silsilat al-zahab* and his *masnavi* poem, *Salaman va Absal*. The issue of *'irfan* certainly becomes complicated as the Safavids came to power and instituted policies of repression against Sufi brotherhoods; but the persecution of public, antinomian Sufi *tariqahs* should not necessarily be equated with the suppression of *'irfan*-inspired intellectual discourse. I would argue that part of *'irfan*’s resilience amongst writers, poets, and scholar-bureaucrats is also a result of the Safavid and Mughal adoption of the Timurid intellectual and courtly tradition in the early sixteenth century. However, the author is right to foreshadow the imminent showdown between orthodox Twelver Shiism and *'irfan*, as the latter was popularly associated with the Sunni tradition.

Anzali moves into deeper and more complex waters in his third chapter, “The Sufi response”, which examines how intellectuals, philosophers, and scholars in the mid-seventeenth century engaged with the *'irfan* tradition. This is, to be sure, a variegated chapter in that the author discusses a number of different authors and their sources in this period (Mu’min Mashhadi, Shaikh Husain Zahidi, Mu’azzin Khurasani, Najib al-Din Reza) and which then breaks into specific discussions of appealing scholarly models offered in recent studies by the likes of Peter Berger in *The Sacred Canopy* and Said Arjomand in *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*. The book assumes a more direct course in chapter 4 (“The invention

of 'Irfan") which focuses on the foundation built up by key Shiraz-based scholars and intellectuals in the seventeenth century like Mulla Sadra and his student Mulla Muhsin Fayz Kashani; this foundation, in turn, was expanded and elaborated by the likes of Shah Muhammad Darabi (d. 1718), 'Ali-Naql Istahbanati (d. 1714), and Sayyid Qutb al-Din Nayrizi (d. 1760). By the close of the eighteenth century, 'irfan was understood to be a unique mysto-philosophical approach to understanding the unique hidden Truth enshrined not necessarily in institutional Sufism (*tasawwuf*), but within Twelver Shiism. This appropriation of 'irfan by Twelver Shiite intellectuals was a profound development, and the remainder of Anzali's book examines (in chapters 5 and 6) how this epistemological shift was concretized and institutionalized across Iranian madrasas, *hauzas*, and other intellectual discursive spaces through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Ata Anzali's book is an invaluable contribution in that it not only sheds light on a complicated tradition being debated and contested among philosophers and Sufi-theosophists but it also contextualizes the importance of 'irfan in religio-political discourse during the earlier Pahlavi period and as contemporary Iran plots its post-revolutionary future. Additionally, we must applaud the author for underscoring the importance of approaching terms like 'irfan as more than simple synonyms for mysticism, or Sufism, but as complex notions which themselves can be moulded, defined, and applied differentially on the basis of a wide array of contexts.

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MÓNICA COLOMINAS APARICIO:

The Religious Polemics of the Muslims of Late Medieval Christian Iberia: Identity and Religious Authority in Mudejar Islam.

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The survival of Islamic culture in Christian territories has attracted the interest of scholars for a long time. Muslims who remained in the Hispanic kingdoms (known as *Mudejars*) maintained in many cases both their Islamic faith and their cultural productions, which were expressed in Arabic and in Spanish, written mainly in Arabic characters (*Aljamiado*).

The book under review deals with one of those elements of Mudejar culture which has not received the scholarly attention it deserves: anti-Jewish and anti-Christian religious polemic. The main features of the religious discussion of the Mudejars are already known; however, a deeper analysis of the main works of Mudejar polemic is still necessary. Colominas' book not only addresses the revision of religious controversy as dogmatic confrontation, but also analyses these works within the Mudejar universe. She tries to discern how Mudejar authors articulated ideas about their own identity as Muslims, how the religious leaders built their authority, and also how the socio-economic and political elements which affected the Mudejars were reflected in their religious controversies.

After a historiographical review of Mudejar works of polemic, the four most significant are introduced: the *Kitāb Miftāh al-Dīn* by Muhammad al-Qaysī, written in