Review

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Published by: University of Chicago Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/596091
Accessed: 29-02-2016 18:32 UTC

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connection between formal religious prescription and popular religious practice.

In sum, Li Guo’s expertise in preparing these documents provides yet another critical step in the ongoing process of understanding Quseir al-Qadim by the combined efforts of archaeologists, philologists, and historians. *Commerce, Culture, and Community* will prove to be essential reading for these scholars, whether they are interested in economic, social, or cultural issues; maritime arcana; or technical aspects of Middle Arabic. As a compilation of textual evidence, this book will be a necessary addition to their libraries. The one limitation of the book is that the four plates of sixteen photographs of documents are too small to be legible, although they give a clear impression of the challenge involved; however, this problem, the responsibility of the publisher rather than the author, does not detract from the value of the book. As a unitary whole, Guo’s community, like Goitein’s society, has provided not just a “pastiche,” to use the author’s modest expression, but a very effective ethnographic view of the lives of people in medieval Quseir al-Qadim.

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It is in the last two decades that scholarship has begun to make serious and consistent inroads into the study of Sufi *tariqa* activity in the post-Mongol Islamic world. No doubt this accelerated rate and extended scope was altered considerably by the opening up of Soviet Central Asia in the 1990s, but there appears to be a realignment as of late in terms of how historians of Sufism choose to define the field. In turn, the dominant construct of a hermetic, ascetic Sufi culture—framed to some extent by hermeneutics and philology—is being supplemented, if not replaced, by a presentation of Sufi activity that privileges the notion of socioeconomic activism and cultural agency.

A good example of this realignment is Dina Le Gall’s *The Culture of Sufism*. This is a lively account of the Naqshbandiya *tariqa* and its various permutations in the Ottoman Empire, and Le Gall brings a strong historiographical agenda to the table. She maps out her methodological and teleological concerns in the introduction, chief among them being the “scholarly privileging” of the later nineteenth-century Mujaddidiyya and Khâlidîyya movements at the expense of the earlier Naqshbandiya. Provocatively, she asserts that Sufi and Islamic historiography suffer from a teleological bias whereby scholars are unduly influenced by the paradigm of mystical networks as harbingers of resistance to nineteenth-century European colonial hegemony. While this in itself could be debated, Le Gall is certainly correct to suggest that the binary construct of orthodox Islam and Sufism is unhelpful in the early modern context, and her treatment of the Naqshbandiya purports to understand how such Sufi movements were adept at combining “self-image and public image” in terms of maintaining *Sharî‘a*-conformity and mystical excellence (p. 7).

The narrative of the Naqshbandis’ arrival from Central Asia to Ottoman dominions is a rich one, and Le Gall details the industrious network of *khalîfâs* and disciples—many of whom had studied with the most famous Naqshbandi shaikh, Khwâjah ‘Ahrâr—and their magnetic attraction to Istanbul, Anatolia, and Rumeli. We see this activity chiefly through the careers of early Naqshbandi *khalîfâs* such as Ahmad Buhkârî, ‘Abd Allâh Îlîâhî, and Ahmad Şâdîq. Underutilized sources such as Îlîâhî’s *Meslek et-tâlîbîn* (Staatsbibliothek [Berlin], Or. quart. 1471.2) and the Istanbul waâf register of 953/1546 (published by Barkan and Ayverdi in *İstanbul Vakıflarî Tahrîr Defterî: 953 [1546] târîhî* [İstanbul, 1970]) allow Le Gall to present the Naqshbandiya as a successful coterie of intellectual Sufis who based themselves in Istanbul but by and large “eschewed communal leadership and campaigns of mass recruitment” (p. 58). The author moves from the megalopolis of Istanbul to provincial areas of the Ottoman world such as Anatolia and
cases, we find that Naqshbandi such “orthodox” elements is less than clear, and with Ottoman authorities to vilify Shi’a conservatives who worked occasionally in tandem with the Qizilbash. Leadership of Kadir Efendi predicated with the Shafi’i-minded communities of Mecca and Medina.

The second half of the book (“Politics and Culture of a Tariqa”) is dedicated to navigating a multitude of discourses that preoccupied the Naqshbandi community in Istanbul and its various capillary tekkes in the Ottoman provinces. Chap. 5 (“Devotional Practice and the Construction of Orthodoxy”) is focused chiefly on the issue of silent dhikr and the orthopraxic/orthosoritical implications of internalizing rituals that normally have a strong performative quality. Le Gall delves into this debate of ritual piety with considerable dexterity and argues convincingly that Naqshbandis indeed subscribed to traditional Sufi pietistic practices such as dhikr, murâqaba, and râbi’ta, but, by and large, these were governed by the principle of khalwat dar anjuman (“solitude within society”). Thus the Naqshbandis negotiated a middle path that allowed them to internalize the traditional ascetic impulse associated with Sufism, while concurrently interacting with civil society through a “Sharî’a-minded sobriety” (p. 119). Of course, this all speaks to the traditional characterization of the Naqshbandis as conservatives who worked occasionally in tandem with Ottoman authorities to vilify Shi’ite movements in the Anatolian eastern peripheries. To this point Le Gall dedicates her sixth chapter (“Politics of Sunnism, Battles over Orthodoxy”), on two of the more prominent “political” battles of this period: the purported Naqshbandi involvement in the suppression of the Qizilbash heresy and the later spate of conservative moral activism of the 1620s under the leadership of Kâdîzâde Mehmed Efendi. In both cases, we find that Naqshbandi association with such “orthodox” elements is less than clear, and any suggestion of a concrete partnership between the Naqshbandis and the Ottoman state seems to be a later construct of modern historians. Here, Le Gall takes particular aim at Irfan Gündüz, who posited a “mobilization of the Naqshbandis” against the Qizilbash and their Safavid sponsors in eastern Anatolia (p. 140).

Lastly, Le Gall examines the organizational framework of the Naqshbandiyya phenomenon in the early modern Ottoman context (chap. 7—“Organizational and Cultural Modes”) and the degree to which such organization was governed by traditional Sufi irshâdi leadership rationales. The scope and intensity with which Naqshbandis proselytize, establish new tekkes, and maintain contacts with the state are all underscored by the principle of nonhereditary succession among generations of Sufi shaikhs. This nonhereditary ethos permitted a level of peripateticism and dynamism that few Sufi tariqas could rival, and, as a result, the Naqshbandis emerge as significant transmitters of such features as Ottomanism and Persian-Islamic literary culture.

Dina Le Gall has produced a monumental work in The Culture of Sufism. Her industrious reading of a wide range of underused manuscript and archival sources has opened a new chapter not only in the Naqshbandi narrative but in early modern Ottoman studies as well. Her conscientious footnoting and an enviable writing style combine to make this particular work a must-read for students/scholars of both Sufism and Ottoman history.

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As universities continue to develop their Middle East/Islamic Studies programs and their course offerings become more sophisticated, the academic study of Sufism seems destined to grow by leaps and bounds. In terms of standardized...