

***Sufism, Black and White : A Critical Edition of Kitāb al-Bayād wa-l-Sawād by Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī (d. ca. 470/1077)***, edited by Bilal Orfali and Nada Saab (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 94) (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), xii + 60 + 510 pp. (Introduction in English & Text in Arabic), ISBN: 978-90-04-21677-8; €147.00 / \$196.00 (hb)

Most of the works that constitute the earliest Sufi corpus of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries have been lost in their original forms, leaving large gaps in the source material available to contemporary scholars carrying out research in the field. Many Sufi concepts can only be examined in the works of later authors, such as al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990), al-Makkī (d. 386/996), Abū Nu‘aym (d. 430/1039), al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074), and al-Hujwīrī (d. ca. 465/1072). Orfali and Saab’s edition of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī’s 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century collection of early Sufi sayings, *Kitāb al-bayād wa-l-sawād min khaṣā’iṣ ḥikam al-‘ibād fī na‘t al-murīd wa-l-murād*, is one of the sources in this category that can be used to reflect and reconstruct the earliest treatments of Sufi concepts and figures.

Little is known about al-Sīrjānī’s life and works. His *nisba* indicates that he was from Sīrjān, the largest city of Kirmān province. His name is recorded by two of his contemporaries: ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī and ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481/1089). They write that al-Sīrjānī was one of the sheikhs of Kirmān.

In his brief introduction to his *Kitāb al-bayād wa-l-sawād*, al-Sīrjānī states that in this work he would like to present a collection of wise sayings and anecdotes of the Sufis. These Sufis have adhered to the Qur’ān exoterically and esoterically, in mind and heart. They have followed the Prophetic practice in speech and action as well as in good manners and morality. Al-Sīrjānī arranges his quotations according to their subject matter, without providing the names of their transmitters (*asānīd*).

The work consists of seventy-three chapters (*bāb*) and many of the chapters are divided into further subdivisions (*faṣl*). The chapters cover a wide range of topics on the theoretical and practical aspects of Sufism. Many chapters include two main parts: First, the idea of the subject matter is introduced. Then, those who put this idea into prac-

tice are mentioned (e.g., *maʿrifā-ʿarīf*, *īmān-muʿmin*, *ʿaql-ʿuqalāʾ*, *waraʿ-mutawarriʿ*, *zuhd-zāhid*, *faqr-fuqarāʾ*, *taqwā-muttaqī*, and *tawakkul-mutawakkil*). The chapter headings include the following: On *ḥikma*; On the spiritual strivings of the Sufis, their moral conduct and mystical states; On the establishment of the name *taṣawwuf*; On the essence of Sufism and the purity of the Sufis; On their understanding of gnosis (*maʿrifā*) and the reality of the gnostic (*ʿarīf*); On faith (*īmān*) and the virtue of the believer (*muʿmin*); On belittling this world and the unawareness of this-worldly people; On the mention of intellect (*ʿaql*) and the virtues of those who possess it; On repentance (*tawba*) and the endeavor of the repentant; On moral scrupulousness (*waraʿ*) and the merits of those who possess it; On asceticism (*zuhd*) and the nearness of the ascetic (to God); On poverty (*faqr*) and the honor of the poor; On chivalry (*futuwwā*) and the generosity of those who practice it; On the affirmation of the Sufi states (*aḥwāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*); and On miscellaneous questions.

Most chapters open with Qurʾānic statements. These are followed by Sufi commentaries, which are primarily adopted from Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī’s (d. 412/1021) *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*. Many chapters also contain Prophetic traditions, wise sayings, and verses of poetry. For instance, in the chapter on wisdom (*ḥikma*), al-Sīrjānī begins his elucidations with the Qurʾānic verses 2:269 and 2:212: “He (God) gives *ḥikma* to whomever He wants, and whoever is given *ḥikma* has been given much good” and “He (God) provides whomever He will without reckoning.” Al-Sīrjānī continues his remarks through citations from the Prophet Muḥammad: “*Ḥikma* is the stray camel of the believer (*ḍāllat al-muʿmin*); he takes it wherever he finds it” and “Whoever becomes an ascetic toward this world God settles *ḥikma* in his heart and makes his tongue speak through it.” Then, he presents quotations on the subject of *ḥikma* from earlier authoritative Islamic figures in general and Sufi figures in particular. Among these figures are ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ, Abū Bakr al-Warrāq, Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz, and Yaḥyā ibn Muʿadh. Al-Sīrjānī also cites lines of poetry that address *ḥikma* in his treatment of the concept.

Although al-Sīrjānī does not explicitly name all of the sources that he uses in *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād*, his quotations from al-Sarrāj’s *al-Lumaʿ fī l-taṣawwuf* indicate that the structure and content of *al-*

*Luma*<sup>c</sup> influenced al-Sīrjānī's work. Occasionally, al-Sīrjānī refers to his primary source as al-Sarrāj. However, many other times, he does not do so. Al-Sīrjānī's omission of transmission chains might be a result of the influence of al-Sarrāj's style on the author in this respect. In his introduction, al-Sarrāj states that he has omitted the names of the transmitters from most of his quotations. After *al-Luma*<sup>c</sup>, al-Sulamī's *Ḥaḡā'iq al-tafsīr* seems to be the second main source used by al-Sīrjānī, particularly in the case of Sufi Qur'ān commentaries. Al-Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* was likely also a source for al-Sīrjānī for the statements of earlier Sufis. It seems that al-Sīrjānī quotes only from written sources. He never says "so-and-so said such-and-such to me." In this respect, *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād* differs from *al-Luma*<sup>c</sup> and al-Qushayrī's *al-Risāla*, for especially in the latter case, al-Qushayrī frequently refers to the oral statements of his teacher and father-in-law Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq (d. 405/1015).

If we move beyond the work itself to the edition under review here, it is notable that we have seen two recent editions of al-Sīrjānī's *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād*. These two editions were apparently produced independently. In addition to Orfali and Saab, al-Sīrjānī's work has been edited by Mohsen Pourmokhtar and published by the Iranian Institute of Philosophy & Research Unit Intellectual History of Islamicate World of the Freie Universität Berlin (Tehran, 2011). Although Orfali and Saab mention Pourmokhtar's studies on *Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-sawād*, they do not refer to his complete edition of the work. Orfali and Saab's edition is based on three manuscripts: Landberg 64 (Yale University), Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī 117, and British Library Board Or. 12632. Additionally, Pourmokhtar uses Malek Library (Tehran) 4251. Orfali and Saab's edition aims at presenting an authoritative text of the work.

The editors provide lists of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic statements cited in *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād* and indices of geographical names, proper names, poems, and technical terms. They document in footnotes major variations between the manuscripts and add meters in parentheses for the verses of poetry.

Although this edition is not an annotated edition of *Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-sawād*, the reader would like to see a certain degree of annotation in the edition. For instance, s/he would like to see the addresses of the ḥadīth narrations in the primary ḥadīth collections and be able to identify and cross-reference al-Sīrjānī's primary

sources throughout his quotations, at least in the case of written sources that are easily available to us today, such as al-Sarrāj's *al-Luma'* and al-Sulamī's *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*. The scholarly level of this edition could have been enhanced through such annotations.

In the introduction in English, the editors provide information about al-Sirjānī and *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād*, and they discuss the work's construction and content. However, throughout this section, their translations from the work are of a quite loose and incomplete character. Particularly in the case of the chapter headings, the editors provide their personal interpretations of the headings rather than the actual translations. For instance, chapter ten is translated as "Disregard for this world and its people," while the original phrase reads, "On belittling this world and the unawareness of this-worldly people" (*bāb taṣḡbīr al-dunyā wa-ghaflat ablib<sup>a</sup>*). Chapter eleven is translated as "The human mind and its achievements," although the actual wording reads, "On the mention of intellect and the virtues of those who possess it" (*bāb dbikr al-ʿaql wa-manāqib al-ʿuqalā<sup>b</sup>*). Chapter thirteen is translated as "Abstinence and self-denial," whereas the original text reads, "On moral scrupulousness and the merit of those who possess it" (*bāb al-waraʿ wa-karāmat al-mutawarri<sup>c</sup>*). Chapter twenty-two is translated as "The Sufi idea of time and mystical moments," although the original phrase reads, "On what has been said about the moment and keeping it" (*bāb mā qīla fī l-waqt wa-ḥifẓib<sup>d</sup>*). Chapter thirty is translated as "False claims and their insignificance," whereas the actual wording reads, "On disclosing pretentiousness and the insignificance of pretentious people in the eyes of the men of the Truth" (*bāb al-kashf ʿan al-daʿwā wa-qillat kbātar ablib<sup>a</sup> ʿinda abl al-ḥaqq<sup>e</sup>*). In addition, chapter fifty-six is translated as "Satisfaction and being content with God," although the original text reads, "On satisfaction and the rank of the person who is satisfied" (*bāb al-riḍā wa-darajat al-rāḍī*).

In any case, al-Sirjānī's *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa-l-sawād* is an invaluable source for the study of Sufism, and we feel fortunate to have this critical edition in front of us with the comprehensive indices that it includes. This edition will certainly provide a foundation for further studies in the field and is a welcome contribution to the growing literature on early Sufi texts.

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