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An Early Modern South Asian Thinker on the Rise and Decline of Empires: Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi, the Mughals, and the Byzantines*

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IN the eighteenth century, Western intellectual history witnessed the production of a rich body of writing on the origins and decay of human civilization and the emergence and fall of empires, exemplified by such monumental works as Baron de Montesquieu's (1689–1755) *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (Reflections on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline, 1734), Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) *Scienza Nuova* (New Science, 1745), and Edward Gibbon's (1737–1794) *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). The quest to identify the forces that shape social evolution and the factors involved in the formation and decline of the state is not a phenomenon unique to the Western intellectual scene, however. In the eighteenth-century Mughal context, Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī (1703–1762), an eminent Sufi and theologian, propounded a theory of civilization and the

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origins and downfall of social organization that has much in common with Montesquieu's, Vico's, and Gibbon's models and lends itself, as I will show, to a cross-cultural study of ideas on imperial formation and decay.¹

Shāh Walī Allāh's father, Shah 'Abd ar-Rahīm (1646–1719), was one of the founders and teachers of the Madrasah-i-Raḥīmīyah in Delhi.² Shāh Walī Allāh received his early education in the *tafsīr*, *hadīth*, Qu'ranic sciences, and logic from his father. He subsequently taught at his father's school and then left for Arabia in 1730 to pursue higher education. When he returned to Delhi in 1732, he worked to spread knowledge about Islam, attracted a number of illustrious disciples, and produced a number of writings in Persian and Arabic. While the bulk of his oeuvre is devoted to theological questions, in certain sections of his principal philosophical works, notably the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* (The Conclusive Argument from God)³ and his *Al-Budūr*

¹ For an intriguing comparison of Shāh Walī Allāh's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) ideas, see Jacques Berque, *L'islam au temps du monde* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984), chap. "Un contemporain islamo-indien de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," pp. 113–146. Early modern European perceptions of the Mughal Empire are surveyed in Frederick G. Whelan, *Enlightenment Political Thought and Non-Western Societies: Sultans and Savages* (New York: Routledge, 2009), esp. chap. "Burke, India, and Orientalism," pp. 103–129.

² On Shāh Walī Allāh's life and works, see Mawlavi M. Hidayat Husain, "The Persian Autobiography of Shāh Waliullah bin 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Dihlavi: Its English Translation and a List of His Works," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 8 (1912): 161–175; as well as Jens Bakker, *Shāh Walī Allāh ad-Dihlawī (1703–1762) und sein Aufenthalt in Mekka und Medina: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des islamischen Reformdenkens im frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2010); Ghulam H. Jalbani, *Life of Shah Waliullah* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978); Fazle Mahmud, "An Exhaustive Study of the Life of Shah Wali Allah Dehlavi," *Oriental College Magazine* 33 (1956): 1–45; as well as the following articles in M. Ikram Chaghatai, ed., *Shah Waliullah (1703–1762): His Religious and Political Thought* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2005; henceforth *SWRPT*): Marcia K. Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh" (pp. 11–14); A. S. Bazmee Ansari, "Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi" (pp. 15–18); Bashir A. Dar, "Wali Allah: His Life and Times" (pp. 19–50; first published in *Iqbal Review* 6, no. 3 [1965]: 1–36); Abdul H. Siddiqi, "Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi" (pp. 51–77; first published in Mian M. Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands* [Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1966], 2:1557–1579); and Alessandro Bausani, "Note su Shāh Waliullāh di Delhi (1703–1762)," *Annali dell' Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, n.s., 10 (1960): 93–147. Also broadly on the intellectual climate in Shāh Walī Allāh's time, consult Saiyid A. A. Rizvi, *Shāh Walī-Allāh and His Times: A Study of Eighteenth Century Islām, Politics and Society in India* (Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1980), esp. pp. 111–202; and, in general, Peter J. Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Seema Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³ Shāh Walī Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Rahīm, *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1978); English trans.: *The Conclusive Argument from God: Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi's Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, trans. Marcia K. Hermansen (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996; repr.,

al-Bāzighah (The Full Moon Rising on the Horizon),⁴ he formulates an intriguing theory about the genesis of human civilization and the decay of social organization.

A substantial body of literature on Shāh Walī Allāh's political doctrines exists. But his theory of empire has been much misunderstood or neglected, due to a persistent tendency of previous scholarship to extrapolate and reconstruct Shāh Walī Allāh's ideas on the "decline" of the Mughal Empire by focusing on his vitriolic polemic against the proliferation of Hindu practices as expressed in his letters and portray Shāh Walī Allāh as an ardent apologist of *jihād* in the South Asian context.⁵

One of the main purposes of this paper is to show that Shāh Walī Allāh's position is much more complex than has been hitherto assumed. I propose to challenge the standard reading of Shāh Walī Allāh's private writings as mere jeremiads against Hindu influences or part of a program designed to invigorate or revivify Islamic rule in a state enervated by constant conflicts. In particular, I call attention to certain aspects of his political theory as set forth in his philosophical treatises, and I argue that he pursues an agenda that is not confined to the politi-

Islamabad: International Islamic University, Islamic Research Institute, 2003). I have relied on the English translations of some of the Arabic, Persian, and Byzantine sources mentioned throughout this paper with some amendments not indicated due to space limitations. On the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, see the following chapters in *SWRPT*: Marcia K. Hermansen, "Shah Wali Allah's *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*" (pp. 529–552); Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi's *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*: Tension between the Universal and the Particular in an Eighteenth-Century Islamic Theory of Religious Revelation" (pp. 597–614; first published in *Studia Islamica* 63 [1986]: 143–157); Sabih A. Kamali, "The Concept of Human Nature in *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* and Its Relation to Shāh Waliy Allāh's Doctrine of *Fiqh*" (pp. 553–596; first published in *Islamic Culture* 36, no. 3 [1962]: 207–224; 36, no. 4 [1962]: 256–274); as well as Fazle Mahmud, "Shah Wali Allah's *Hujjatullahil balighah*," *Journal of the Arabic and Persian Society of the Panjab University* 5, no. 4/6:1 (1960/61): 1–28.

⁴ Shah Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, trans. Ghulam N. Jalbani, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2005); *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon: English Translation of Shah Wali Allah (Al-Budūr al-Bazighah)*, trans. Johannes M. S. Baljon (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1990). On the *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah* as a source of Shah Walī Allāh's political ideas, see Saeeda Khatoon, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Philosophy of Society—an Outline," *Hamdard Islamicus* 7, no. 4 (1984): 57–67, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 421–431; Ghulam N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shāh Waliyullah of Delhi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1967; repr., New Delhi: Nusrat Ali Nasri Lor Kitab Bhavan, 1988), pp. 126–147; Muhammad 'A. Baqi, "Theories of State and Problems of Sociology as Expounded by an Indian Muslim Divine of the Eighteenth Century," *Islamic Review* 38 (1950): 9–14. A comparative study of the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* and *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah* remains a desideratum.

⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 40–57. Consider also Muhammad T. Mallick, "Rationale of *Jihād* as Expounded by Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 34 (1986): 14–25.

cal and social realities that prevailed in late Mughal India. Although I do not mean to dissociate Shāh Walī Allāh's private writings from his philosophical works and will occasionally include references to his letters, my goal is to uncover the broader political program that he articulates, one that extends beyond Mughal political realities. As such, my analysis contrasts sharply with the traditional image of Shāh Walī Allāh as the representative of a rabid trend of anti-Hinduism and the harbinger of revivalist movements in South Asia.⁶ I show that his rationalistic approach to the dynamics of social life and mechanics of power reflects a nuanced understanding of the process of state⁷ formation that heretofore has not found its due place in modern narratives of imperial state building and decline.⁸

⁶ See, for example, Mahmood A. Ghazi, *Islamic Renaissance in South Asia 1707–1867: The Role of Shāh Walī Allāh and His Successors* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute/International Islamic University, 2002); Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750–1850," *Journal of the American Historical Society* 113 (1993): 341–359; Muhammad al-Faruque, "Some Aspects of Muslim Revivalist Movements in India During the 18th Century: The Activities of Shāh Walī-Allāh of Delhi," *Islamic Culture* 63 (1989): 19–41; Shafi A. Khan, "Nationalist 'Ulama's Interpretation of Shāh Walī Allāh's Thought and Movement," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 37 (1989): 209–248; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Agra: Agra University Press, 1965; repr., New Delhi: M. Manoharlal, 1993).

⁷ Shāh Walī Allāh uses the Arabic term *madīnah*, which literally means "city" and is roughly equivalent to the Greek *polis*, in the sense of a political entity that encompasses a number of cities and is characterized by an administrative and governmental organization similar to that of the modern state. Accordingly, Shāh Walī Allāh envisions the caliphate as incorporating a multiplicity of existing states and political units. On the meaning of *madīna* and its derivatives in medieval Arab political writing, see Soheil M. Afnan, *A Philosophical Lexicon in Persian and Arabic* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1969; repr., Tehran: Nashr-i Nuqrih, 1362 [1983]), s.v. *madīna* (278–279); Dimitri Gutas, "The Meaning of *madīnah* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy," in *The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Emma Gannagé et al. (= *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*; 57; Beirut: Dār el-Machreq, 2004), pp. 259–279. For a useful orientation to the various definitions of the concept of "empire," consult Kathleen D. Morrison, "Sources, Approaches, Definitions," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. Alcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1–9, esp. 1–3.

⁸ Given the enormous amount of scholarship on imperial ascendancy and decline, I confine myself to mentioning some of the most important studies I consulted in the process of writing this paper: Niall Ferguson, "Complexity and Collapse: Empires on the Edge of Chaos," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2010): 18–32; Peter Turchin, *Historical Dynamics: Why States Rise and Fall* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Alexander J. Motyl, *Imperial Ends: The Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Motyl, "Thinking about Empire," in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, ed. Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 19–29; Charles Tilly, "How Empires End," in Barkey and von Hagen, *After Empire*, pp. 1–11; Emil Brix et al., eds., *The Decline of Empires* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik; Munich: Olden-

In the first section of my article, I discuss how Shāh Walī Allāh's theory of the state relates to a broader scheme about the emergence and evolution of civilization. In particular, I focus on his ideas on the origin of communal life, the constituents of efficient rulership, the duties and attributes of a rightful ruler, the modes of conduct necessary to preserve social order, and the conditions for strong and lasting imperial rule. I will also identify potential sources and explore how Shāh Walī Allāh's theory relates to previous Islamic accounts of social origination—particularly the *akhlāq* tradition as represented by Ṭūsī and Dawwānī—as well as Indo-Islamic political literature, notably Baranī's, Abū'l-Faẓl's, and Najm-i Sānī's works.⁹ In the second part of the article I engage in a detailed analysis of Shāh Walī Allāh's views on the decline of the state and empire/caliphate and investigate how they relate to the political and social realities that prevailed in late Mughal India.

In the concluding section, I suggest ways in which the findings of

bourg Verlag, 2001); Richard Lorenz, ed., *Das Verdämmern der Macht: Vom Untergang grosser Reiche* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer TB Verlag, 2000); Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); Joseph A. Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986); Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., *The Economic Decline of Empires* (London: Methuen, 1970); Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Decline of Empires* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967); Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963; repr., New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993); and Geir Lundestad, ed., *The Fall of Great Powers: Peace, Stability, and Legitimacy* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1994). For stimulating reflections on the history of empires and its relevance to current debates on the role of the United States as a global power, see Craig Calhoun et al., eds., *Lessons of Empire: Imperial Histories and American Power* (New York: New Press, 2006). The phenomenon of state failure is discussed in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004). On the theme of decline, consult, e.g., Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012); Reinhart Koselleck and Paul Widmer, eds., *Niedergang: Studien zu einem geschichtlichen Thema* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980); Peter Burke, "Tradition and Experience: The Idea of Decline from Bruni to Gibbon," in *Edward Gibbon and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Glenn W. Bowersock et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 87–102; Randolph Starn, "Meaning-Levels in the Theme of Historical Decline," *History and Theory* 14 (1975): 1–31.

⁹ On the sources of Shāh Walī Allāh's political ideas, see the remarks by Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200–1800* (London: Hurst, 2004), pp. 50, 171–173; as well as Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Islamic Research Institute, 2001; repr., New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2004), pp. 33–43; and Saiyid A. A. Rizvi, "The Political Thoughts of Shāh Walī Allāh," *Abr-Nahrain* 16 (1975/76): 91–107, 91–92, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 277–308. A general treatment of Shāh Walī Allāh's political theory can be found in Mahmood A. Ghazi, "State and Politics in the Philosophy of Shah Waliy Allah," *Islamic Studies* 23 (1984): 353–371, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 225–241.

this article might be of more than historical relevance for the study of Shāh Walī Allāh's political thought. I specifically examine how Shāh Walī Allāh uses the examples of the Sassanians and Byzantine empires as heuristic devices to illustrate the process of decay of Mughal power. I also point to parallels between Shāh Walī Allāh's ideas on the economic dimensions of imperial decay and the ways in which Byzantine statesmen and literati theorized remedies for the weaknesses of Byzantine society in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

I. THE RISE OF THE STATE

The Origins of Social Life

The pivot point of Shāh Walī Allāh's social theory is the concept of *irtifāq*. The term bears connotations that cannot be adequately rendered by any single English term, but it generally refers to various stages in the process of social genesis.¹⁰ In the first *irtifāq*, people engage in tillage, create languages, learn how to cook food, and a man chooses one woman as his partner. The second *irtifāq* witnesses the emergence and evolution of sciences acquired through experience, elegance, delicate living, and comprehensive view (*al-ra'y al-kullī*).

Shāh Walī Allāh names five types of wisdom: (1) the wisdom of living (*al-ḥikmah al-ma'ashiyah*), which deals with human conduct and practical knowledge about eating, drinking, dressing, and so forth; (2) the wisdom of domestic life (*al-ḥikmah al-manziliyah*), which concerns the organization of the household; (3) the wisdom of earning a livelihood (*al-ḥikmah al-iktisabiyah*), which refers to functional specialization and the various crafts and professions which people practice according to their skills; (4) the wisdom of mutual dealings (*al-ḥikmah al-ta'amuliyah*), which pertains to commercial operations (*mu'āmalāt*); and (5) the wisdom of cooperation (*al-ḥikmah al-ta'awuniyah*), which deals with partnership and commercial enterprises.¹¹ But social evils

¹⁰ For a similar interpretation, see Johannes M. S. Baljon, "Social and Economic Ideas of Shah Wali Allah," in *Readings in Islamic Economic Thought*, ed. Abul Hasan M. Sadeq and Aidit Ghazali (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 2006), pp. 356–368, 358. The term *irtifāq* (literal meaning: support) derives from the Arabic root *r.f.q.*, which signifies kindness or gentleness. For further discussion, see Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. xviii–xix.

¹¹ Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 48–49; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 56–58. See further Abdul A. Islahi, "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Al-Irtifaqat (Stages of Socio-Economic Development)," *Journal of Objective Studies* 1–2 (1990): 46–63, 51 (repr. in Fazlur R. Faridi, ed., *Aspects of Islamic Economics and the Economy of Indian*

such as avarice and envy soon creep in, giving rise to social tensions and disputes, and some men seek to overpower others or are naturally inclined to plunder and kill. Hence, the members of the community feel compelled to appoint a ruler, who possesses abundant resources and is able to attract wise men from other countries, to correct and punish evildoers and collect taxes. In the fourth *irtifāq* a caliph is appointed to merge together and rule over preexisting states and kingdoms.¹²

All men need food, drink, and shelter. In Shāh Walī Allāh's view, every species has a law implanted into the breasts of its individuals, and all creatures strive to meet their needs. But man has three capacities that are not found in other animals. First, he possesses a comprehensive view: while animals are directed to an objective perceived through the senses or to an imagined objective driven by their physical needs such as hunger, thirst, and lust, man is uniquely endowed with the ability to perceive and strive after a rational benefit that has no motivation in his physical nature. This prompts human beings to establish a social order, perfect their character, and seek mutual affection. Second, while animals desire things such as food to fulfill their needs and protect themselves against the cold, man has been equipped with aesthetic sensibility (*zarāfah*). He thus tries to move beyond the level of bare necessity and aspires to aesthetic and emotional delight and elegance, a beautiful partner, delicious food, good clothing, and a comfortable house. Third, man is characterized by *takāmul*, that is, an inner drive toward self-perfection. Men of intelligence discover and develop the appropriate supports of civilization, look for water resources or dig wells and store water, learn which seeds are edible and figure out how to cook or store them; those who are unable to discover those supports on their own perceive their utility and follow what the "wise" propose to them.¹³

Shāh Walī Allāh comes very close to Montesquieu when he acknowledges that differences in temperaments and social mores exist

Muslims [New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 1993], pp. 73–93); as well as Sabih A. Kamali, "Shah Waliy Allah's Doctrine of *Irtifaqat*," *Iqbal* 11, no. 3 (1963): 1–17, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 401–420.

¹² *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:39; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 117–118.

¹³ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:38; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 115–116; Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 22–23; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, p. 32. See also the discussion in Johannes M. S. Baljon, "The Ethics of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī (1703–62)," in *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. Albert Dietrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), pp. 66–73, 67–69, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 397–405.

among various peoples and explains that the three capabilities unique to men are not found in equal measure in all nations. On one level, he explains, are primitive societies such as the Bedouins, who live on mountain peaks and in regions far from sound climates. On another, higher level are settled populations and the urban centers of healthful regions that are inhabited by people endowed by nature with superior virtues and produce wise men.¹⁴

The Emergence and Evolution of Human Civilization

Science takes root during the second *irtifāq*, as men explore ways to go beyond the mere satisfaction of needs. It specifically examines and tests developments of the first *irtifāq* and lays down criteria for the selection of attitudes that bring benefit. People with the best temperaments are predisposed toward superior virtues, and they communicate these virtues and morals to one another through social interaction. The refinement of morals concerns the proper manner of drinking, walking, sitting, and clothing, and every nation develops a style and set of manners and habits according to its own temperament and habits.¹⁵

Language serves as a means of expressing and designating acts, attitudes, and bodily movements associated with a particular sound through onomatopoeia and causal connection. Sounds are imitated and then used to derive forms that correspond to various meanings. Arts and crafts follow, such as agriculture, digging wells, cooking, making pots, domesticating and taming animals, creating shelter from heat and cold in caves and huts, and producing clothing from animal skins or trees.¹⁶ A male is guided to select a mate and not share her with anyone else in order to alleviate his lust, perpetuate his lineage, and receive assistance in domestic needs and in raising and educating children. He is also guided to create tools for cultivating, planting, digging wells, and domesticating animals, and soon the exchange of goods and cooperation take place. The wisest and strongest men subjugate others and become leaders, and people need to devise methods for settling quarrels and disputes, restraining malefactors, and repelling external enemies. The members of every nation contribute differently to the

¹⁴ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:39; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 117.

¹⁵ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:40; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 121.

¹⁶ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:39–40; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 119; Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 53–54; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 61–63.

evolution of civilization: one might love beauty and luxury; another might excel in such qualities as courage, magnanimity, eloquence, or intelligence; and others might aspire to fame or higher ranks.¹⁷

The second phase of social development signals the emergence of the art of economic transactions, that is, the science that concerns the exchange of products, cooperation, and the means of earning. As people become more refined and seek pleasures and luxury, the crafts and professions expand and become more diverse. Every man pursues a single occupation that suits his natural disposition and skills.¹⁸ For example, a courageous person enters the military and an intelligent man with a good memory goes into accounting. Sometimes coincidence plays a role, as when a son or neighbor of a smith finds the art of smithing easier or when a person who lives by the sea practices the art of fishing. However, some people lead parasitic lives or engage in activities harmful to society, such as robbery, gambling, and begging.¹⁹ Men exchange property for property or property for usufruct, that is, hire and lease. Goodwill and mutual affection among the members of society are essential conditions for domestic stability and prosperity. They develop practices for contracts and conventions and establish guidelines for share-cropping, partnerships, and hire and lease. They also lay down rules for borrowing and entrusting money and redressing financial fraud; subsequently, witnessing, the composition of legal documents, and mortgages take place and a monetary system comes into being.²⁰

The second *irtifāq* gives rise to division of labor and aesthetics as well. People agree among themselves that each one will pursue a distinct occupation and will attain expertise in the use of its tools. When many people simultaneously desire the same object, it becomes necessary to develop conventions for commissioning and paying for goods, and gold and silver are used as means of exchange because of their small size, portability, homogeneity, and suitability to adorn the human body and be used as currency. Following the emergence of the main occupations—that is, agriculture, herding, and distribution of products, and crafts, such as carpentry, iron smithing, and weaving—

¹⁷ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:40; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 119–120.

¹⁸ Compare Plato, *Politeia*, 372A–374E.

¹⁹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:41–42; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 127.

²⁰ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:43–44; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 128.

trade evolved into distinct professions, as did the administration of the affairs of the city.²¹

Shāh Walī Allāh's discussion of the third *irtifaq*—that is, the science that investigates ways to preserve and strengthen the bonds among the inhabitants of the city—is his longest. Pursuant to his notion that human society arises from the aggregation of persons who live in proximity to one another and engage in mutual collaboration although they dwell in separate houses, Shāh Walī Allāh conceives of the state as a single individual composed of distinct parts that share a common attitude and work together toward a common purpose. But as the equivalent of a living organism, human society also suffers from disorders, disturbances, and illnesses. Shāh Walī Allāh sees strife and conflict as endemic to social life: because human society comprises a large number of individuals, agreement on how to maintain the just practice is elusive. Moreover, it is difficult for one man to rebuke others unless he is distinguished by rank; anything else risks infighting and killing. Thus, the majority of influential people agree to obey a person who has his own circle of supporters and enough force to contain disorder and punish those who are greedy, violent, or prone to anger and killing.²²

The Ideal Ruler

Shāh Walī Allāh elaborates on the practicalities of government, the qualities required in the paradigmatic ruler, and the relations between the sovereign and his subjects, staff, and subordinate officials. A ruler who lacks courage, valor, and fortitude in combat and prowess to confront those who attempt to subvert his rule will incur the contempt of his subjects. At the same time, if he is not forbearing and lenient, he will crush them through his strength, and if he lacks wisdom, he will be unable to discover the best ways to administer the affairs of the city. The ruler should be in full possession of his mental faculties, of mature age, free, and male, and have the senses of sight, hearing, and speech intact. People must agree on his nobility and that of his ancestors; he should display praiseworthy skills and must convince the people that he will not spare any effort to uphold order in his realm.²³

Shāh Walī Allāh devotes particular attention to the skill sets necessary for a ruler to gain the confidence of his people. The exemplary

²¹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:42; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 127.

²² *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:45; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 129.

²³ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:45; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 132.

ruler is expected to epitomize superior leadership virtues such as courage, wisdom, generosity, forgiveness for malefactors and evildoers, and should be driven by the desire to promote the public welfare. He should also have a keen insight into human nature, exhibit sagacity and the ability to discern the secrets in men's hearts, and refrain from procrastinating, especially if he detects animosity toward himself or attempts to undermine his position and erode his power. To illustrate how the sovereign ought to deal with his subjects, Shāh Walī Allāh employs the metaphor of the hunter who studies a gazelle in the forest and deliberates on the best strategy, remaining in his position and lying in wait until he sees that his quarry is not paying attention, at which moment he quietly crawls toward it or tries to lure it with music and throw it a fine decoy. Similarly, the ruler ought to cultivate bonds of love with the people and display the attitude that people like in clothing, speech, and manners. He should approach them humbly, offer them advice, and show affection in a way that is not frivolous. But until he feels that they are convinced of his superiority and preeminence and commands their loyalty and respect, he must constantly remind them that no one is equal to him. Then he should strive to keep them in this condition and grant them favors.²⁴

Shāh Walī Allāh also discusses how the sovereign should deal with animosity and threats to his rule. He should compel obedience and punish the unruly. He should also raise the rank or increase the salary of those who excel in war or in the collection of taxes or management and shun and reprimand those who display treachery, opposition, or disobedience by reducing their salaries and demoting them. Although the ruler is entitled to lead a more comfortable or luxurious life than the people, he should not assign them too difficult tasks, such as cultivating wasteland or guarding a remote district. He should not hesitate to punish malefactors, but only after there is sound evidence adduced by officials and for the sake of the common good.²⁵

A substantial part of Shāh Walī Allāh's treatment of the principles of effective leadership is devoted to the criteria for the selection of the various officials: the ruler needs people to assist him in fulfilling his tasks and administering financial resources to sustain the military and

²⁴ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:45–46; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 132–133; Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 79–81; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 86–88.

²⁵ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:46; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 133.

remunerate his aides.²⁶ Able and loyal administrators protect the ruler from evil just as the hands carry weapons and protect the entire body. They also proffer advice to the ruler just like the mind and the senses provide information to the human organism. The ruler's ministers must be trustworthy, carry out orders, and bear goodwill both in private and in public. The ruler must be quick to dismiss any official who strays from these principles.²⁷

Shāh Walī Allāh enumerates five principal aides and court functionaries: (1) the judge (*qāḍī*); (2) the commander of the armed forces ('*amīr*) in charge of selecting and training soldiers, deploying spies, and gathering intelligence about the plans of potential enemies; (3) the governor of the city (*sā'īs*), who is in charge of appointing a leader for each group; (4) the revenue collector (*'āmil*); and (5) the minister (*wakīl*), whose function is to administer the income and expenditure and minister to the ruler's daily needs.²⁸ In the *al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, Shāh Walī Allāh provides an expanded list that includes another two offices: (1) the head of religious affairs (*shaiikh-ul Islām*) in charge of propagating religion and providing spiritual guidance, and (2) the sage (*ḥakīm*) who possesses expertise on medicine, poetry, astrology, history, mathematics, and letter writing.²⁹

The ruler should have the ability to distinguish between those who pretend to love him out of fear or greed and those who genuinely support his rule. He should also be able to discern each person's merits, monitor the conduct and activities of the state officials, and keep abreast of new developments. He must select a number of assistants proportionate to the needs and the size of the state and must determine their salaries. Shāh Walī Allāh recommends that the ruler adopt a just system of collecting land taxes without burdening the people; taxes should be levied on those who possess large property and wealth derived from husbandry, agriculture, and commercial pursuits.³⁰

In his exposition of the modes conducive to stable and lasting rule,

²⁶ Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 77–78; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 85–86.

²⁷ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:46; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 134.

²⁸ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:46–47; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 135–136; Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 94–96; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 99–101.

²⁹ Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 94–95; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, p. 100.

³⁰ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:46; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 134–135.

Shāh Walī Allāh devotes special attention to the ruler's relationship with the military, using the analogy of a skilled and experienced riding master who knows all of his horse's gaits and bad habits, and the best way to train it: the trainer closely observes the horse and, when it displeases him or disobeys his orders, he tames its impetuosity in a way consistent with the horse's nature. He does not aim to perplex the horse's mind, for the horse cannot understand the trainer's motives; instead, he seeks to engrave the image of what he teaches in the mind and heart of the horse. Once he has made sure that the horse will perform the right acts and refrain from reprehensible ones, the trainer continues his training until he is sure that the desired mode of behavior is habitual for the horse, so that even without his whips the horse will desist from actions that do not conform to the desired goal. Likewise, the ruler as the trainer of the military must know the best methods for taking action and for using the things that will serve as a warning to them.³¹

The Caliphate

The fourth *irtifāq* signals the apex of political organization. In each city a ruler is appointed, courageous persons gather around him, and wealth is collected in the form of taxes. The differences in the temperaments and abilities of the kings elicit friction: certain rulers attempt to conquer another's territory or fight one another for unimportant reasons, such as desire for wealth or land or due to envy, greed, resentment, and malice. Thus, the kings were compelled to appoint a caliph or to obey a single ruler who has the authority of the caliphate (*khilāfah*). The true caliph holds undisputed sway over his realm and possesses so much military might and equipment that it is almost impossible for another person to challenge him. Just as the head of the state soothes or remedies social tensions, the fourth *irtifāq* is the science that examines the policies of the cities and their rulers and the means whereby collaboration among people of various regions can be fostered. And just as political authority within the first political communities originates in a primordial compact the caliph is appointed upon the consent of the rulers of existing states. The caliph must be on guard against all factors that can jeopardize his authority: emergencies, natural calamities, disarray and factious commotion, the expenditure of large amounts of money, and wicked individuals who plunder

³¹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Balighah*, 1:46; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 135.

the property of the people, incarcerate their sons, and dishonor their wives.³²

One of Shāh Walī Allāh's novelties is that he offers one of the most analytically refined accounts of the origin, nature, and function of the caliphate. Shāh Walī Allāh goes beyond previous Islamic writers such as al-Fārābī, who envisage the caliphate as the pinnacle of a constant process of associational evolution starting from the creation of simple types of political organization.³³ As al-Fārābī puts it, the increase of human needs leads to more complex forms of social organization and culminates in the creation of a universal state encompassing all existing nations. In order to secure the means for his subsistence, man by nature needs various things that he cannot acquire by himself, so he relies on mutual aid and is compelled to live in association with others. The increase of men results in the formation of communities, some of which are perfect, some of which are imperfect. The imperfect types include the union of people in a village, a quarter, a street, or in a house. The perfect types can be classified into small, medium, and great: the small one is the union of the inhabitants of the city in the territory of any nation, the middle one results from the formation of one nation in a certain region, and the great one signals the union of all the communities of the inhabited world.³⁴ Just as people living in a city strive for those things that allow them to attain ultimate perfection through mutual collaboration, the excellent nation is one in which all of its cities aspire to felicity. Accordingly, the excellent universal state can come into being when all the nations that compose it work together to reach felicity.³⁵

³² *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:45; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 137. See also Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 97–98; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 101–103.

³³ On the reception of al-Fārābī's political ideas in the Indo-Islamic world as mediated by Tūsī's *Nasirean Ethics*, see Saiyid A. A. Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign, with Special Reference to Abu'l Faẓl (1556–1605)* (New Delhi: M. Manoharlal Publishers, 1975), pp. 355–357.

³⁴ *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's Mabādī' āwā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*. A revised text with introduction, translation, and commentary by Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; repr., Chicago: KAZI Publications, 1998), Arabic text p. 228, English trans. p. 229. Consider also Al-Farabi, *The Political Writings: Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 23–26, 46. For further discussion, see Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 177, 260–261, 343; Shlomo Pines, "The Societies Providing for the Bare Necessities of Life According to Ibn Khaldūn and to the Philosophers," *Studia Islamica* 34 (1971): 125–138, repr., in Pines, *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, vol. 3, *Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Sarah Stroumsa (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), pp. 217–230.

³⁵ *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, p. 230/231, as well as pp. 424, 432–433, 497.

Shāh Walī Allāh provides a more detailed distinction among three types of caliphate:³⁶ caliphate in a special sense (*khilāfat-i khāṣṣa*); caliphate in the general sense (*khilāfat-i ‘amma*); and tyrannical caliphate (*khilāfat-i jābira*).³⁷ When humankind was in a state of sin and anarchy, God sent the Prophet Muḥammad for its guidance, and the function of the first four special caliphs was to complete the mission of the Prophet. The general caliphate is a human-made institution that emanates from human agreement and the opinion or judgment (*rā’y*) of a particular group of men. The caliph in the general sense, then, is an ordinary human being and as such he is susceptible to human weaknesses; therefore his rule can easily slide into tyranny. As I will discuss later, Shāh Walī Allāh refers to the Sassanian and Byzantine empires as exempla of the caliphate in the general sense. The tyrannical caliphate comes into being when the caliph breaks his obligation to enforce religious precepts and fails to wage *jihād* and apply the *sharī‘a* or, when he applies Islamic law, does so erroneously.

The caliph ought to determine the purpose of war, suppress interstate conflict, restrain malefactors, repel enemies, and crush those who ignite seditious activities by intimidating them, assassinating or arresting their leaders, or seizing their property. But at the same time, Shāh Walī Allāh cautions against the caliph’s setting goals beyond his capacity and resources or seeking to acquire wealth by murdering his supporters. The caliph should try to gain support from resourceful people and the notables. In war, he should inspire awe in his enemies and attempt to erode their power. In case he suspects that his former enemies engage in intrigues, he should levy heavy land and poll taxes,

³⁶ The following account is based on Abdur R. Bhat, *Political Thought of Shah Waliullah (An Analytical Study)* (New Delhi: Delhi, Rightway Publication, 2002), chap. “Shah Waliullah’s Political Theory in Islamic Context,” pp. 65–73; Aziz Ahmad, “An Eighteenth-Century Theory of the Caliphate,” *Studia Islamica* 28 (1968): 135–144. Consider also Johannes M. S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, 1703–1762* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), pp. 121–125, 195–196.

³⁷ A precedent of this distinction can be found in the *Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī (Precepts on [World] Rulership)* of Ziyā’ al-Dīn Baranī (1284–1356), a confidant of the sultan of Delhi Muḥammad bin Tughluq (ca. 1300–1351, r. 1325–1351) and major historian of fourteenth-century India: Baranī distinguishes two forms of justice, one that aims at general equality (*‘adl-i musāwāt-i talabī-yi ‘ām*) and one concerned with special equality (*‘adl-i musāwāt-i talabī-yi khāṣṣ*). The former is the ideal form of justice, can be realized only in the Islamic setting, and was exemplified by Caliph ‘Umar (ca. 586–644, r. 634–644). The latter was applied by the Persian king Anūshirwān (Chosroes I, r. 531–579) and presupposes the existence of a ruler acting as an arbitrator and settling disputes. For further references and comment, see Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, pp. 38–39.

destroy their strongholds, and take all possible measures to neutralize their power.³⁸

*Medieval and Early Modern Islamic Sources
on the Emergence of Social Life*

It will be instructive here to briefly explore Islamic accounts of the origins of social life and identify possible sources of Shāh Walī Allāh's thought. One such source might be Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (1201–1274) *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (The Nasirean Ethics), an ethical-political treatise that had an enduring influence on Syriac, Persian, and Indo-Islamic political writing. Affinities to Shāh Walī Allāh's ideas may also be found in the writings of Dawwānī, especially in his *Jalalian Ethics*, as well as in Abū'l-Faḍl's *Institutes of Akbar* and Najm-i Sānī's *Admonition of Jahāngīr*.

Ṭūsī operates on the Aristotelian idea that humans are political by nature³⁹ but also stresses that they need crafts to meet their needs. He reckons that divine wisdom has ordained disparity in the aspirations and opinions of the members of society and that each person is inclined to a different occupation. The diversity of the aptitudes and interests of the members of human society generates internal disorder and division. Since mutual aid depends on a diversity of crafts, which results from the diversity of ends, the perpetuation of social life is contingent on the existence of a set of rules and a ruler in charge of enforcing justice and suppressing internecine strife.⁴⁰

In keeping with his idea that man is by nature formed to live in a society, Ṭūsī holds that man by nature needs a "civilized life." But the motives and ends of human actions differ. So, if men are left to their own natures, no cooperation can result, because the powerful will seek to exploit and oppress the others and the greedy will covet the property of the others. As soon as strife sets in, men engage in mutual destruction and injury. Ṭūsī infers from this that government is a certain type of management that is required to render what is deserved to each

³⁸ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:48–49; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 138–139.

³⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a1–3. On the following, see also Vasileios Syros, "Shadows in Heaven and Clouds on Earth: The Emergence of Social Life and Political Authority in the Early Modern Islamic Empires," *Viator* 43, no. 2 (2012): 377–406.

⁴⁰ Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (Lahore: Punjab University, 1952), p. 242; *The Nasirean Ethics* by Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī, trans. from the Persian George M. Wickens (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 189. See also Guang-Zhen Sun, "Nasir ad-Din Tusi on Social Cooperation and the Division of Labor: Fragment from *The Nasirean Ethics*," *Journal of Institutional Economics* 5 (2008): 403–413.

individual, to restrain each individual from encroaching upon the rights or disturbing the function of the others, and to ensure that each member of the society carries through the specific duty at which he is adept by nature.⁴¹

Ṭūsī's narrative of social genesis was reproduced in Muḥammad Dawwānī's (1426/7–1512/3) *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (The Jalalian Ethics), a revised and expanded version of the *Nasirean Ethics* that enjoyed wide dissemination in the Mughal world.⁴² Like Ṭūsī, Dawwānī holds that humankind's sustenance depends on food, clothing, shelter, arms, and the ability and methods to acquire the tools essential to the crafts, such as carpentry and blacksmithing. Men need to live together in such a way that each individual pursues a distinct task and engages in cooperation with others so as to obtain all things necessary to sustain life.⁴³

Dawwānī restates Ṭūsī's doctrine that man is by nature inclined to civilization, which is derived from the term "city" (*madīnah*).⁴⁴ At the same time, however, he warns of the danger of social havoc and disruption, should a central authority within human society cease to exist. Dawwānī's justification of political authority rests on the idea of disparity in the dispositions and claims of the members of human society. Men cannot be left to their own natures, because each one of them would pursue his own interest and would cause injuries to the other. Hence, some provision must be made for rendering all individuals content with their rightful portion and restraining them from causing mutual harm. This provision is a government, and to this end there must be rules, an executive, and a currency.⁴⁵ The ruler is a person endowed with divine

⁴¹ Al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, p. 243; *The Nasirean Ethics*, pp. 190–191.

⁴² [Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī], *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, trans. W. F. Thompson (London: W. H. Allen, 1839; repr., Karachi: Karimsons, 1977); *The English Translation of the Akhlak-i-Jalali: A Code of Morality in Persian composed by Jalal-ud-Din Mohammad Alias Allama Dawwani*, trans. S. H. Deen (Lahore: Sh. Mubarak Ali, 1939). Scholarly discussions of Dawwānī's political ideas include Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), chap. "Al-Dawwānī: Application and Integration," pp. 210–223; Mohammed-Taqi Danishpazhouh, "An Annotated Bibliography on Government and Statecraft," trans. Andrew Newman, in *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 213–239, esp. 221–222; Muhammad A. Haq, "A Critical Study of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī's Contribution to Social Philosophy" (PhD diss., Aligarh Muslim University, n.d.).

⁴³ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, pp. 318–320, 245–250; Deen, *The English Translation of the Akhlak-i-Jalali*, pp. 161–162, 126–128.

⁴⁴ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, p. 321; Deen, *The English Translation of the Akhlak-i-Jalali*, p. 163.

⁴⁵ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, p. 322; Deen, *The English Translation of the Akhlak-i-Jalali*, p. 163.

support in order to satisfy the interests of the various segments of the body politic and uphold domestic stability and order.⁴⁶

Ṭūsī's and Dawwānī's views on social genesis had a distinguished *Nachleben* in the Indo-Islamic context and penetrated Mughal political discourse through the circulation of copies of the *Jalalian Ethics* by former students of Dawwānī in the Deccan and Gujarat.⁴⁷ Similar ideas occur in the *Ā'im-i Akbarī* (The Institutes of Akbar), written by Abū'l-Faḥr 'Allāmī (1551–1602), the famous vizier of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542–1605; r. 1556–1605). By Abū'l-Faḥr's time the influence of the old Aristotelian doctrine about human sociability seems to have withered away: in his exposition of the genesis of social life, Abū'l-Faḥr builds on the *akhlāq* tradition⁴⁸ but dispenses with the standard formula that man is by nature a gregarious creature destined to live in association with others. He highlights instead the diversity characterizing human nature and sets forth the vision of the state as consisting of heterogeneous parts. These considerations form the basis for Abū'l-Faḥr's vindication of kingship as the guarantee of social stability: *pād* stands for stability and *shāh* indicates that the ruler is the source of stability. The absence of authority gives rise to strife and selfish ambitions, causing humankind to lapse into a state of anarchy and lust. By the light of imperial justice, Abū'l-Faḥr argues, some men follow with cheerfulness the path of obedience, whereas others abstain from violence through fear of punishment.⁴⁹

Shāh Walī Allāh's more immediate precursor was Muḥammad Bāqir Najm-i Sānī (d. 1637), who served as governor in various parts of the Mughal Empire under Jahāngīr (1569–1627, r. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahān (1592–1666, r. 1628–1658). According to Najm-i Sānī's *Mau'izah-i Jahāngīrī* (Admonition of Jahāngīr or Advice on [the Art] of Rulership, 1612/13), the defining characteristics of royal rule are

⁴⁶ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, pp. 324–325; Deen, *The English Translation of the Akhlak-i-Jalālī*, pp. 164–165.

⁴⁷ Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, p. 50; Alam, "State Building under the Mughals: Religion, Culture and Politics," in *L'Héritage timouride: Iran-Asie centrale-Inde XV^e-XVIII^e siècles*, pp. 105–128, 111–117; Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, pp. 355–356, 366–369.

⁴⁸ In the administrative manual (*dastūr al-'amal*) issued by Akbar in 1594, the *Nasirean Ethics* was included in the standard readings for Mughal officials—see *Mukātabāt-i-'Allāmī (Inshā'i Abū'l Faḥr)* Daftar I: *Letters of the Emperor Akbar in English Translation*, ed. Mansura Haidar (New Delhi: M. Manoharlal Publishers, 1998), p. 79.

⁴⁹ Abū'l-Faḥr 'Allāmī, *Ā'im-i Akbarī*, trans. Henry Blochmann, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927), p. 2.

exalted rank and high station. Unless the ruler regulates the affairs of the people and acts as the refuge of the vulnerable members of human society, clandestine rebels and insurgents, who are driven by tyrannical feelings and engage in contumacious and aberrant conduct, will seek to disturb the nobility and the common people.⁵⁰

A salient theme in Shāh Walī Allāh's theory of the state is the variety of ways whereby domestic balance can be maintained and harmonious interaction among various social groups can be ensured. Shāh Walī Allāh evokes the "circle of justice" formula in medieval Islamic political literature. And these ideas are rooted even further back in history, in the works of ancient political thinkers, such as Plato, and Iranian ideals of rulership.

According to Shāh Walī Allāh, the various parts of the state are interrelated; the preservation of balance and harmony is like salt seasoning food.⁵¹ The third *irtifāq* necessitates the appointment of a ruler in charge of maintaining social balance and domestic tranquillity; with the multiplication of cities and states, in the fourth *irtifāq* a caliph is appointed to erase interstate conflicts.⁵² Shāh Walī Allāh is particularly emphatic about the caliph's function in maintaining balance among opposing and conflicting elements and purging the body politic of excesses. The ideal caliph ought to be on his guard against revolutionary activities and subversive tendencies, must create an extensive network of spies and informers, and must effectively employ perspicacity about human character. As soon as he sees a faction forming among his men, he should swiftly form another group and ensure that it will not connive with the rebels. It is vital that this new group obey the caliph's commands, show goodwill toward him, and pray for him, acclaiming his glory in large assemblies and on coins bearing his name.⁵³

The ruler's duty to uphold the delicate equilibrium among the various segments of the body politic is compared in medieval Islamic writing to the physician's function in maintaining the equilibrium (*i'tidāl*)

⁵⁰ Muḥammad Bāqir Najm-i Sānī, *Advice on the Art of Governance: An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes (Mau'izah-i Jahāngīrī)*, ed. and trans. Sajida S. Alvi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), Persian text p. 147/English trans. p. 45.

⁵¹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:44; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 129–130. See also Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 85–86; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 91–93.

⁵² Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 49–50; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, p. 58.

⁵³ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:49; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 139.

in the human body.⁵⁴ Moderation is important both as a means for moral perfection but also in the context of the ruler's role as the healer of the social organism who, like a skilled physician, diagnoses diseases and applies remedies.⁵⁵ As Shāh Walī Allāh phrases it, the city is not merely the presence of walls, markets, and high buildings but constitutes a bond among the various orders of human society. In the progress of civilization, different groups engage in mutual dealings and become woven together like a single body. Shāh Walī Allāh deduces from this the need for a physician (i.e., ruler) to preserve the healthy condition of the city and to treat maladies. By the same token, on a transnational level, the caliph is the physician of states that suffer from corruption and factional discord.⁵⁶

Shāh Walī Allāh here stands in a philosophical tradition that can be traced back to the "circle of justice" concept in medieval Islamic political writing. The "circle of justice" or "circle of power" maxim⁵⁷ has its roots in two popular dicta imputed to Aristotle and Ardashīr, king of Persia (r. 224–241 C.E.) and founder of the Sassanid dynasty.⁵⁸ In the saying ascribed to Aristotle, the world is parallel to a large gar-

⁵⁴ For further discussion on the use of medical metaphors in early modern Islamic political writing, see Vasileios Syros, "Galenic Medicine and Domestic Stability in Early Modern Florence and Islamic Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* 17, no. 1 (2013, forthcoming).

⁵⁵ Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, pp. 47, 57–58, 61, 140; A. J. Halepota, *Philosophy of Shah Waliullah* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, [197-?]), p. 166.

⁵⁶ Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 49–50; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, p. 58. See also Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, p. 173.

⁵⁷ Antony Black, *The West and Islam: Religion and Political Thought in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 58, 104–105; Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 53–54, 111.

⁵⁸ My discussion of the "circle of justice" is based on the following studies by Linda T. Darling: "Islamic Empires, the Ottoman Empire and the Circle of Justice," in *Constitutional Politics in the Middle East: With Special Reference to Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Saïd Amir Arjomand (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2008), pp. 11–32; "Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38 (2008): 505–531; "Medieval Egyptian Society and the Concept of the Circle of Justice," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10 (2006): 1–17; "Do Justice, Do Justice, For That Is Paradise": Middle Eastern Advice for Indian Muslim Rulers," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 22 (2002): 3–19; as well as Jennifer A. London, "The 'Circle of Justice,'" *History of Political Thought* 32 (2011): 425–447; Maria E. Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin: Aspects de l'histoire culturelle de l'Iran médiéval* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2002), chap. "Le cercle de justice: l'éthique dans le gouvernement," pp. 53–76; Joseph Sadan, "A 'Closed-Circuit' Saying on Practical Justice," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 325–341; Ann K. S. Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962): 91–119, repr. in Lambton, *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government* (London: Variorum, 1980), no. 4.

den which is administered by the state; the state signifies authority founded on the law; the law is a way of ruling applied by the king, who acts like a shepherd; the king is supported by the army, the sustenance of which depends on tax revenues; tax revenues are sustenance procured by the subjects; the subjects are slaves procured by justice, which is the element that guarantees the proper function of the world. Ardashīr is reported to have said that government is contingent on the existence of men, men in their turn need money, money comes from cultivation of the land, and cultivation can take place only if there is justice and salutary rule.⁵⁹ The “circle of justice” concept assumes that the ideal social organization can be achieved by ensuring that each part of society confines itself to its allocated duties and does not encroach upon the functions of the others. Integral to the “circle of justice” is the notion that the state encompasses diverse functional groupings with competing interests. The satisfaction of these varied desires and interests is seen as a prerequisite to social stability, and often the various social groups are perceived as analogous to the four elements and humors of the natural body.

The “circle of justice” had a pervasive influence on the *akhlāq* and Indo-Islamic political writing. Ṭūsī, in the *Nasirean Ethics*, takes his cue from the old Irano-Islamic division of social groups and sets forth a scheme of social organization based on four main parts: (1) men of the pen, such as the masters of the sciences, jurists, judges, secretaries, accountants, geometers, astronomers, physicians, and poets, who correspond to water; (2) men of the sword, that is, soldiers, who are the counterpart of fire; (3) men of transactions, merchants, masters of crafts and professions, and tax collectors, who are like air; and (4) farmers, who correspond to earth. Ṭūsī describes the ruler’s principal function as upholding the balance among these groups, just as a balanced temperament depends on the equilibrium of the four elements. Ṭūsī also points out that just as the domination of one element over the others is likely to upset the equilibrium of the human body, in similar fashion the predominance of one segment over the rest would upset the equilibrium of the body politic.⁶⁰

In his *Jalalian Ethics*, Dawwānī follows Ṭūsī and proposes a four-

⁵⁹ Ihsān ‘Abbās, ed., *Ahd Ardashīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Šādir, 1967), p. 98; Mario Grignaschi, “Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide conservés dans les bibliothèques d’Istanbul,” *Journal Asiatique* 254 (1966): 1–142, 46–90. For another set of maxims on rulership that bears the title *Ā’m-i Ardashīr* and has been ascribed to Ardashīr, see Grignaschi, “Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide,” pp. 91–133.

⁶⁰ Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Naṣīrī*, p. 303; *The Nasirean Ethics*, p. 230.

fold division of the populace into: (1) men of knowledge—theologians, jurists, secretaries, fiscal officials, geometry experts, astronomers, physicians, and poets, whose task is to perform religious duties; (2) warriors; (3) merchants, artisans, and craftsmen, who procure the needs of life; and (4) farmers, who produce food.⁶¹ Like Tūsī, Dawwānī points to the detrimental effects of the domination of one of these groups over the others. As long as every class retains its proper place, carries out the specific tasks assigned to it, and receives the merits and rank due to it, the temperament of the social organism remains in a state of equilibrium. But as soon as one passes beyond its proper measure, domestic balance is disturbed, leading eventually to the disintegration of the state.⁶² Just as the equipoise of bodily temperament depends on the proper mixture of the four elements, the equipoise of a well-formed body politic is contingent on the balance among the four classes.⁶³ And just as a physician must be acquainted with the causes of disease and their proper treatment and must seek to preserve the equilibrium of the human temperament, one of the first duties of the king as the world's physician is to know the reasons and remedies for the political and social maladies and emergencies or misfortunes that might befall his domain.⁶⁴

The impact of the “circle of justice” is discernible in the political literature of the Delhi Sultanate period too. Baranī proposes in his *Fatāwa-i Jahāndārī* (Precepts on [World] Rulership) a social division among farmers, traders, soldiers, and government officials. Baranī advocates the strict regimentation of the populace and warns of the potential hazards deriving from mobility among the various social groupings. A prime condition for the stability of the state for Baranī is that each person confines himself to his assigned profession. Baranī, like Shāh Walī Allāh, emphasizes the economic factors that account for the devolution of the state. He specifically advocates low prices so that each occupational group can devote itself to its prescribed tasks. He also maintains that high prices can create social chaos because they

⁶¹ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, pp. 388–390; Deen, *The English Translation of Akhlak-i-Jalali*, pp. 201–203. See also Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, p. 185.

⁶² *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, pp. 384–385; Deen, *The English Translation of Akhlak-i-Jalali*, pp. 199–200.

⁶³ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, p. 388; Deen, *The English Translation of Akhlak-i-Jalali*, p. 201.

⁶⁴ *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, pp. 325–326, 383–384; Deen, *The English Translation of Akhlak-i-Jalali*, pp. 165, 199.

compel people to abandon their own profession and station, leading soldiers to turn to agriculture, farmers to take up trade activities, traders to aspire to high offices, shopkeepers to try to become officers, men of noble birth to become merchants, and merchants to seek government and army posts.⁶⁵

In like manner, Abū'l-Faḥr reckons division of labor to be the hallmark of a well-ordered society and defines the principal duty of the ruler as entrusting the citizens with specific functions and monitoring the operation of the segments of the body politic. The ruler should put each of these in its proper place. Drawing on the “circle of justice,” Abū'l-Faḥr outlines a scheme of four occupational classes that correspond to the four elements: (1) warriors, who represent the element of fire and combat rebellions and strife; (2) artisans and merchants, who may be compared to air; (3) the learned—philosophers, physicians, scholars of arithmetic, geometricians, and astronomers—who resemble water; and (4) farmers and laborers, who are the equivalent of earth.⁶⁶

II. THE DECLINE OF STATES AND EMPIRES

The Disorders of the State

Shāh Walī Allāh does not confine himself to mapping out the various developmental stages of civilization; he also offers an extensive account of emergencies:

- a. A number of wicked individuals who possess power form a group and pursue their interests; they subvert just practice either out of desire to usurp the wealth of others or to harm others out of hostility, malice, or the desire to dominate.

⁶⁵ Mohammad Habib and Afsar U. S. Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate (Including a Translation of Ziauddin Barani's Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī, Circa, 1358–9 A.D.)* (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, [1961]), pp. 38, 97. On Barani's ideas on social organization, see also Iqtidar A. Khan, “Medieval Indian Notions of Secular Statecraft in Retrospect,” *Social Scientist* 14 (1986): 3–15, 6–7. Barani's views on price control are discussed in Najaf Haider, “Justice and Political Authority in Medieval Indian Islam,” in *Justice: Political, Social, Juridical*, ed. Rajeev Bhargava et al. (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2006), pp. 75–93; Irfan Habib, “Ziya Barani's Vision of the State,” *Medieval History Journal* 2 (1999): 19–36; and Habib, “The Price Regulations of 'Alā' uddīn Khaljī—A Defence of Zia' Barani,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 21 (1984): 393–414.

⁶⁶ Abū'l-Faḥr 'Allāmī, *Ām-i Akbarī*, p. 2. On Abū'l-Faḥr's use of medical analogies, see also the discussion in Peter Hardy, “Abul Fazl's Portrait of the Perfect Padshah: A Political Philosophy for Mughal India—or a Personal Puff for a Pal,” in *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, vol. 2, *Religion and Religious Education*, ed. Christian W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1985), pp. 114–137, 133–135.

- b. An offender injures another person or abuses his family by molesting his wife, daughters, or sisters or tries to tamper with his property by violence or secret theft; or one person impugns the honor of another person by slandering or offending him.
- c. Persons engage in activities that disrupt social order, such as using black magic or poisons, spreading evil habits, fomenting dissent and discontent, or encouraging people to challenge the ruler, servants to plot against their masters, and wives against their husbands.
- d. The propagation of noxious habits, such as homosexuality and bestiality, and modes of conduct that can give rise to disputes and friction, such as a number of men desiring the same woman or addiction to wine. This results in disregard for the necessary supports of civilization.
- e. Persons engage in transactions harmful to the city, such as gambling, lending at interest, bribery, cheating in the sale of commodities, high prices, and hoarding commodities.
- f. People get embroiled in controversies and vacillate between different positions as long as the situation has not been clarified.
- g. The community reverts into nomadic life or a condition similar to the first *irtifāq*, when people migrate to other cities or engage in activities harmful to the city, as is the case when most people turn to trade or make their living through warfare and agriculture declines.
- h. The stampede of wild animals and the spread of vermin.⁶⁷

In addition to proposing special measures for each of the emergencies mentioned above, Shāh Walī Allāh recommends a series of general measures intended to enhance the defense of the state. For example, he counsels the construction of walls, forts, and bridges; the appointment of border garrisons; and the creation of markets. He also recommends securing water supplies, discovering water springs, building wells, and facilitating the transportation of merchandise through the construction of docks at the shores of rivers. Shāh Walī Allāh's program for dealing with extraordinary circumstances is not confined to prescriptions of practical nature but extends to the moral aspects of domestic unity and the modes of interaction between the ruler and his subjects. The sovereign should cultivate bonds of friendship among the people and interact in a friendly manner with merchants and foreigners; this

⁶⁷ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:44; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 129–130; Waliyullah, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzighah*, pp. 85–86; Baljon, *Full Moon Appearing on the Horizon*, pp. 91–93. For earlier Indo-Islamic ideas on emergencies, see Vasileios Syros, "Indian Emergencies: Baranī's *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, the Diseases of the Body Politic, and Machiavelli's *accidenti*," *Philosophy East and West* 62, no. 4 (2012): 545–573.

will prompt them to visit his realm more often. He should also make sure that farmers do not leave the land uncultivated and should offer incentives for artisans to improve their work. Finally, the ruler should encourage the people to acquire skills such as calligraphy, arithmetic, history, medicine, and methods of advancing knowledge. Protective measures include being able to distinguish immoral from moral habits, identify which citizens are in need of support, and employ the best craftsmen.⁶⁸

Imperial Decline

Shāh Walī Allāh's theory about the caliphate in the general sense revolves around the two major factors which, in his view, account for imperial decline in his own day: (1) the depletion of the public treasury, and (2) parasitism, or the fact that many people seek to secure income by serving as soldiers or by becoming 'ulamā' (religious scholars), ascetics, and poets and by receiving gifts from the rulers. The latter causes heavy taxation on farmers and traders, then the constant increase of taxes leads to the ruin of the productive classes and incites those who survive to stand up against taxation and rebel against the government.⁶⁹

In his private writings and letters, Shāh Walī Allāh berates the fact that wealth came to be concentrated in the hands of Hindus.⁷⁰ But, more importantly, he construes the malfunction of the Mughal government as a sign of moral decadence and overall failure to implement the teachings of Islam. In an eleventh-hour attempt to save the Mughal state from ultimate downfall, Shāh Walī Allāh called on the Afghan ruler Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī (d. 1772) to invade India. He offers fulsome praise of the Afghan warlord for his bravery and foresight and urges him to launch a full-scale operation against the Marathas and Jats and to wipe out polytheistic practices.⁷¹

Shāh Walī Allāh's epistles on Mughal political disintegration should be read against the background of a series of events that led to

⁶⁸ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:44-45; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:40; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 131.

⁷⁰ Khalid A. Nizami, ed., *Shāh Walī Dihlavī ke siyāsī maktūbāt* (Delhi: Nadvat al-Musanifin, 1969), pp. 102-105.

⁷¹ Nizami, *Shāh Walī Dihlavī ke siyāsī maktūbāt*, pp. 15, 52. See also Jalbani, *Teachings of Shāh Waliullah of Delhi*, pp. 114-117.

the gradual decay of Mughal rule:⁷² the incursions by Maratha, Jat, and Sikh forces;⁷³ the invasion of the army of the Iranian ruler Nādir Shāh (1688–1747, r. 1736–1747) in 1739, which struck a blow to the stature of the emperor and strained the Empire economically and militarily; a devastating military debacle of the Mughal forces at the battle of Karnal on 24 February 1739 and the massive slaughter of residents of Delhi perpetrated by soldiers that gave rise to popular resentment; and the constant plots and intrigues of the nobles and courtiers. The situation came to a head when, after the death of the Mughal ruler Muḥammad Shāh (d. 1748), his son and successor Aḥmad Shāh Bahādur (1725–1775, r. 1748–1754) became a pliant tool in the hands of influential ministers and nobles, which rendered the Empire's capital vulnerable to assaults by rebels.

Shāh Walī Allāh reproves the imperial administration for its inability to suppress sedition. He points to the Jats' taking over Gujarat and Malwa; the rulers' luxurious way of life, profligate spending, and self-aggrandizement; the irregular and disrupted flow of revenues from the provinces; the corruption of local governors and tax agents in the collection and administration of revenue; and the oppression of the lower social strata of the population. In addition to the letters which he sent to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī, Shāh Walī Allāh made a direct appeal to the emperor and the nobles and spelled out an elaborate program intended to ensure the stability and continued existence of the Empire:⁷⁴

⁷² On Mughal "decline," see, e.g., Douglas E. Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2011), pp. 283–287; Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707–48* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr., 1997); Andrea Hintze, *The Mughal Empire and Its Decline: An Interpretation of the Sources of Social Power* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Karen Leonard, "The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21 (1979): 151–167; John F. Richards, "The Imperial Crisis in the Deccan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 35 (1976): 236–256, repr. in Richards, *Power, Administration and Finance in Mughal India* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), no. 12; M. Athar Ali, "The Passing of Empire: The Mughal Case," *Modern Asian Studies* 9 (1975): 385–396, repr. in Ali, *Mughal India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society, and Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 337–349; Saiyid A. A. Rizvi, "The Breakdown of Traditional Society," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2A, *The Indian Sub-continent, South-East Asia, Africa and the Muslim West*, ed. Peter M. Holt et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; repr., 1980), pp. 67–96.

⁷³ See, in general, Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chap. "Challenging Central Authority, 1650–1750," pp. 225–255.

⁷⁴ The following account is based on Islahi, "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Al-Irtifaqat (Stages of Socio-Economic Development)," pp. 48–49; Fazl-e-Mahmud Asiri, "Shah Wali Allah as a Politician," *Islamic Literature* 7 (1955): 35–41.

- a. He cautions against the policy of appointing a large number of *jağirs* (fief lords) who end up shirking their duties to the army and rent out their lands. He recommends assigning large pieces of land to nobles and reintroducing Shāh Jahān's practice of paying the lower members of the nobility in cash.
- b. He impresses upon the government the need to ensure that soldiers receive a regular salary, because delays in paying salaries compels soldiers to rely on loans at high rates of interest and neglect their duties.
- c. He exhorts the emperor to expand the state property (*khālīṣa*) to the region surrounding Delhi, Hisar, and Sirhind.
- d. He suggests that the central administration reassert its authority and regain its capacity to gather revenues.
- e. He urges the emperor and nobles to give up their extravagant and luxurious way of life.

Shāh Walī Allāh stands forth as an intimate observer of the political events of his time.⁷⁵ His interest in Mughal politics can partly be explained by his affiliation with the Naqhsbandi order.⁷⁶ The order advocated the active involvement of leading Sufi figures in politics, with the aim to influence the policies and decisions of rulers and thereby affect the lives of Muslims.⁷⁷ In the context of the central

⁷⁵ For a similar interpretation, see A. J. Halepota, "Shāh Waliyullāh and Iqbāl, the Philosophers of Modern Age," *Islamic Studies* 13 (1974): 225–233, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 649–656; Halepota, "Affinity of Iqbāl with Shāh Walī Allāh," *Iqbal Review* 15 (1974): 65–72; Fazlur Rahman, "The Thinker of Crisis Shah Waliy-Ullah," *Pakistan Quarterly* (1956): 44–48.

⁷⁶ Shāh Walī Allāh's political activities are discussed in A. Sattar Khan and Zulfiqar Anwar, "The Movement of Shah Waliullah and Its Political Impact," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 32, no. 4 (1995): 13–23; Freeland Abbott, "The Decline of the Mughal Empire and Shah Waliullah," *Muslim World* 52 (1962): 115–123; Aziz Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideas of Shāh Walī-Ullāh of Delhi," *Muslim World* 52 (1962): 22–30, esp. 28–30, partly repr. in Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 201–209; Franco Coslovi, "Osservazioni sul ruolo di 'Sāh Waliullāh Dihlawī' e 'Sāh 'Abd al-'Azīz' nella 'Naqšbandiyya' Indiana," *Annali dell' Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, n.s., 29 (1979): 73–84, esp. 73–81; Irfan M. Habib, "The Political Role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah," in *Indian History Congress: Proceedings of the Twenty-third Session Aligarh—1960*, pt. I (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 209–223; Sh. Muhammad Ikram, "Shah Waliullah (I) (Life and Achievements in the Religious Sphere)," in *A History of the Freedom Movement (Being the Story of Muslim Struggle for the Freedom of Hind-Pakistan, 1707–1947)*, vol. 1, 1707–1831 (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1957), pp. 491–511; Khaliq A. Nizami, "Shah Waliullah (II) (His Work in the Political Field)," in *A History of the Freedom Movement*, 1:512–541; Nizami, "Shah Wali-Ullah Dehlavi and Indian Politics in the 18th Century," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 133–145, repr. in *SWRPT*, pp. 143–157; 'Ubaidullah Sindhi, *Shah Wali Allah and His Political Movement* [in Urdu] (Lahore: Sindh Sagar Akademy, 1952).

⁷⁷ On the history of the order, see Butrus Abu-Manneh, *The Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya Sufi Order* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 2008); Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2007);

and eastern Islamic empires, rulers often had to muster the support of the order to legitimize and consolidate their rule and secure popular support.⁷⁸

Shāh Walī Allāh on Byzantine Decline

What gives particular poignancy to Shāh Walī Allāh's theorizing about imperial decline is his use of the Persian and Byzantine paradigms as a heuristic device to trace the root causes of the decay of Mughal power. Shāh Walī Allāh castigates the Sassanian ('*ajam*)⁷⁹ and Byzantine (*rūm*) empires, noting that their failure to collect sufficient revenues and build up necessary defenses was the principal factor that led to their collapse. Their rulers had passed on hereditary kingship for many

Sajida S. Alvi, "The Naqshbandī Mujaddidī Sufi Order's Ascendancy in Central Asia through the Eyes of Its Masters and Disciples (1010s–1200s/1600s–1800s)," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 418–431; Elisabeth Özdalga, ed., *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity* (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet Istanbul, 1999); Marc Gaborieau et al., eds., *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman* (Istanbul: Isis, 1990); Richard Foltz, "The Central Asian Naqshbandī Connections of the Mughal Emperors," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7 (1996): 229–239; Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica* 44 (1976): 123–152. A number of seminal essays dealing with Sufi influences on medieval Indian society have been reprinted in Raziuddin Aquil, ed., *Sufism and Society in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010). Consult also Raziuddin Aquil's introduction to *Sufism and Society*, pp. ix–xxiv.

⁷⁸ Jürgen Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Naqshbandiyya in Mittelasien im 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991), chap. "Politische Tätigkeit," pp. 208–244; and Jo-Ann Gross, "Khoja Ahrar: A Study of the Perceptions of Religious Power and Prestige in the Late Timurid Period" (PhD diss., New York University, 1982). The role of the Naqshbandi order in Mughal political life is discussed in Muzaffar Alam, "The Mughals, the Sufi Shaikhs and the Formation of the Akbari Dispensation," *Modern Asian Studies* 43 (2009): 135–174; David W. Damrel, "The 'Naqshbandi Reaction' Reconsidered," in *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, ed. David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp. 176–198; Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); Muhammad Farman, "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Mian M. Sharif (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1966), 2:873–883; Khaliq A. Nizami, "Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics," *Islamic Culture* 39 (1965): 41–52; Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, "The Naqshbandis," pp. 176–201; and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "The '*ulamā*' in Indian Politics," in *Politics and Society in India*, ed. Cyril H. Philips (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 39–51.

⁷⁹ The Arabic term '*ajam*' generally refers to a foreigner (non-Arab), but is often used to designate an Iranian/Persian as is the case with Shāh Walī Allāh's discussion of Sassanian political history. See, in general, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Contested Memories of Pre-Islamic Iran," *Medieval History Journal* 2 (1999): 245–275.

generations and had become so engrossed in the pleasures of this world that they neglected the next world. They became deeply immersed in comforts and derived pride from possessing them; in fact, scholars came from far lands to learn the arts associated with fine living. The Persians and Byzantines pursued life's pleasures with increasing enthusiasm; their rulers competed and showed off to one another until they used to rebuke those rulers who did not wear beautiful clothes or who wore a girdle or crown whose value was less than a hundred thousand *dirhems* or who did not reside in a lofty palace that included bathtubs, bathing pools, gardens, swift riding animals, and handsome servitors, or those who were not generous in distributing food. This emphasis on luxury and pleasure penetrated their lives to such an extent that it was like an incurable disease that caused their markets and cities to perish.⁸⁰

Luxurious living papered over mounting expenditures, and to make up for draining the state budget, rulers imposed exorbitant taxation on the peasantry and traders and oppressed them to the point that if they refused to pay taxes they were subjected to torture, and if they obeyed they became like donkeys and cattle, which are used for farming according to their master's needs and whims. Consequently, greed and luxury set in, and the people were so desperate in such a state of depredation and misery that they totally neglected religion; they were concerned solely with material comforts, and they abandoned the principles of the professions upon which the order of the world is based. Some people ingratiated themselves with the rulers; others emulated the habits of their leaders but did not perform what was necessary and tried instead to merely subsist; still others engaged in parasitic activities by becoming poets, ascetics, and Sufis, relying on gifts and financial aid from the emperors; and some of these groups ended up oppressing and exploiting others and sought to make their living by befriending or flattering the rulers.⁸¹

Shāh Walī Allāh's statements on Byzantine decline point to a

⁸⁰ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:105; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, p. 306. For references to Byzantine and Sassanian political history and royal practices in earlier Indo-Islamic political literature, consider, e.g., Afsar Afzal ud-din, "The Fatawa-i-Jahandari of Zia ud-din Barni, Translation with Introduction and Notes" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 1955), pp. 107, 152–153, 417–418, 424–429, 450–451, 466, 484–491.

⁸¹ *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, 1:105–106; Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, pp. 306–307.

major lacuna in scholarship. Previous studies rarely address medieval and early modern Islamic views of the political organization of the Byzantine Empire and the ways in which Byzantine historiography and political writing perceived the rise of Mongol rule and the spread of Islam in central and south Asia.⁸² Medieval Islamic literature is characterized by the tendency to refer to political leaders and methods of government before the advent of Islam or in non-Muslim lands in the context of discussions on the conditions for salutary rule according to

⁸² Byzantine views on the Mongols and the emergence of the Islamic empires of central Asia are discussed in, e.g., Antonis K. Petrides, "Georgios Pachymeres between Ethnography and Narrative: Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι 3.3–5," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 49 (2009): 141–164, esp. 295–296, 316–317; Nikolaos Nikolouides, "Byzantine Historians on the Wars of Timur," *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 8 (1996): 83–94; Alexis G. K. [C.] Savvides, "The Knowledge of the Byzantines about the Turkish-Speaking World of Asia, the Balkans and Central Europe through Name Giving," in *Communication in Byzantium*, ed. Nikos G. Moschonas (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, 1993), pp. 711–727 [both in Greek]; Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols, A.D. c. 1192–1237* (Thessalonike: Center for Byzantine Studies/University of Thessaloniki, 1981); John W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969), Appendix XVIII: "Byzantine Relations with Timur," pp. 504–509. Also of note are John S. Langdon, "Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids: An Introduction to the Byzantino-Mongolica," *Viator* 29 (1998): 95–139; Angeliki E. Laiou, "On Political Geography: The Black Sea of Pachymeres," in *The Making of Byzantine History*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), pp. 94–121, 112–121; Bruce G. Lippard, "The Mongols and Byzantium, 1243–1341" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1983); Maria-Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne de Timur en Anatolie (1402)* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională, 1942; 2nd ed., London: Variorum Reprints, 1977); Andreas Graf, "Die Tataren im Spiegel der byzantinischen Literatur," in *Jubilee Volume in Honour of Prof. Bernhard Heller on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Alexander Scheiber (Budapest, 1941), pp. 77–85; Fedor I. Uspensky, "Byzantine Historians on the Mongols and the Egyptian Mamluks," *Vizantiysky Vremennik* 24 (1923–1926): 1–16 (in Russian); Ottokar Intze, "Tamerlan und Bajazet in den Literaturen des Abendlandes" (Erlangen: E. Th. Jacob, 1912), pp. 5–9. On Byzantine perceptions of Islam and the Arabs, see Wolfram Brandes, "Der frühe Islam in der byzantinischen Historiographie: Anmerkungen zur Quellenproblematik der *Chronographia* des Theophanes," in *Jenseits der Grenzen: Beiträge zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Andreas Goltz et al. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 313–343; Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, "The Image of the Arabs in Byzantine Literature," in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: A. D. Caratzas, 1986), pp. 305–323; Speros Vryonis Jr., "Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam during the Late Middle Ages," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971): 263–286, repr. in Vryonis, *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans: Reprinted Studies* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1981), no. 8; Alain Ducellier, "Mentalité historique et réalités politiques: L'Islam et les Musulmans vus par les Byzantins du XIII^e siècle," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1972): 31–63; John Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 114–132; and Wolfgang Eichner, "Die Nachrichten über den Islam bei den Byzantinern," *Islam* 23 (1936): 133–162 and 197–244.

the tenets of Islam. The earliest references to pre-Islamic rulers occur in the Qu'rān, in which the term *malik* (king)⁸³ is applied to the pharaohs of ancient Egypt to signify unrighteous political conduct and arbitrary and unjust rule,⁸⁴ although later Arab authors took a more favorable stance toward ancient Egyptian kingship and commended

⁸³ For medieval Islamic ideas on kingship, see, e.g., Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Politics* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997); Saiyid A. A. Rizvi, "Kingship in Islam: Islamic Universalism through the Caliphate," in *Patterns of Kingship and Authority in Traditional Asia*, ed. Ian Mabbett (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 108–130; Rizvi, "Kingship in Islam: A Historical Analysis," in *Kingship in Asia and Early America*, ed. Arthur L. Basham (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1981), pp. 29–82; Tilman Nagel, *Staat und Glaubensgemeinschaft im Islam: Geschichte der politischen Ordnungsvorstellungen der Muslime*, 2 vols. (Zurich: Artemis, 1981); Roy P. Mottahedeh, "Some Attitudes towards Monarchy and Absolutism in the Eastern Islamic World of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries A.D.," *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980): 86–91.

⁸⁴ For further discussion, see the following studies by Bernard Lewis: *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 55, 93, 96–97; "Malik," *Cahiers de Tunisie* 35 (1987): 101–109; "Usurpers and Tyrants: Notes on Some Islamic Terms," in *Logos Islamikos*, ed. Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), pp. 259–267, both repr. in Lewis, *Political Words and Ideas in Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: M. Wiener Publishers, 2008), pp. 77–86 and 49–58, respectively. Note also Fred Halliday, "Monarchies in the Middle East: A Concluding Appraisal," in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*, ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), pp. 289–303, 292–293; Ami Ayalon, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East: The Evolution of Modern Political Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), chap. "Sultans, Kings, Emperors," pp. 29–42; Ayalon, "Malik in Modern Middle Eastern Titulature," *Die Welt des Islams* 23/24 (1984): 306–319, esp. 307–312; Heribert Busse, "Herrschartypen im Koran," in *Die Islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1979), pp. 56–80, esp. 67–71; Arent J. Wensinck [Georges Vajda], s.v. "Fir'awn," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill; London: Luzac, 1965), vol. 2, pt. 2: 917–918. Medieval Islamic perceptions of ancient Egypt are surveyed in Konrad Hirschler, "The 'Pharaoh' Anecdote in Pre-Modern Arabic Historiography," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 10 (2010): 45–74; Ulrich Haarmann, "Medieval Muslim Perceptions of Pharaonic Egypt," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), pp. 605–627; Haarmann, "Das pharaonische Ägypten bei islamischen Autoren des Mittelalters," in *Zum Bild Ägyptens im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance*, ed. Erik Hornung (Freiburg [i. U.]: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1990), pp. 29–58; Hans R. Roemer, "Der Islam und das Erbe der Pharaonen: Neuere Erkenntnisse zu einem alten Thema," in *Ägypten—Dauer und Wandel* (Mainz am Rhein: P. v. Zabern, 1985), pp. 123–129; Michael Cook, "Pharaonic History in Medieval Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 57 (1983): 67–103. Consider also Adam Silverstein, "The Qur'ānic Pharaoh," in *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* 2, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 467–477; and Reuven Firestone, "Pharaoh," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane D. McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 4:66–68. For a general treatment of medieval Islamic views of the pre-Islamic era, see Monika Springberg-Hinsen, *Die Zeit vor dem Islam in arabischen Universalgeschichten des 9. und 12. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Echter; Altenberge: Telos-Verlag, 1989).

the pharaohs for such virtues as generosity, piety, and dedication to the welfare of their subjects.⁸⁵

One of the first references to Byzantium (*al-rūm*) appears in the Qur'ān in the context of the Byzantine-Sassanid war at the beginning of the seventh century.⁸⁶ Just like Shāh Walī Allāh, a number of Arab writers saw Byzantine emperors (*qayṣar*) and Sassanian kings (*kisrā*) as exemplifying a form of royal rule incompatible with the principles of Islam.⁸⁷ However, whereas the Persian Empire proved very vulnerable to Muslim attacks and quickly fell under the sway of Islam, Byzantium in the aftermath of the Arabs' efforts to capture Constantinople, especially in the tenth century, came to be widely perceived as a resilient political and military power that posed a formidable and lasting challenge to its Arab neighbors and that would perish only with the coming of the Day of Judgment.⁸⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ (781–869) notes that Mu'āwiyah's (602–680, r. 661–680) ascension to power as the first Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty marked a period of oppression and violence in which the imamate mutated into a kind of kingdom as the one during Chosroes's reign and the caliphate degenerated into a tyranny that only pertained to a caesar (\approx Byzantine emperor).⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Okasha El-Daly, *Egyptology: The Missing Millennium: Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings* (London: UCL Press, 2005), pp. 122–126.

⁸⁶ On the etymology and use of the term *rūm* and its derivatives in medieval Arabic writing, see Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, 2004), pp. 21–33; as well as Nikolai Serikoff, "Rūmī and yūnānī: Towards the Understanding of the Greek language in the Medieval Muslim World," in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context—Contacts—Confrontations*, ed. Krijnie Ciggaar et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), pp. 169–194, esp. 172–183.

⁸⁷ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 86–87. On Byzantium's image in medieval Islam and Byzantine-Arab relations, see in addition to El Cheikh: Olof Heilo, "Seeing Eye to Eye: Islamic Universalism in the Roman and Byzantine Worlds, 7th to 10th Centuries" (diss., University of Vienna, 2010); Ulrike Koenen and Martina Müller-Wiener, eds., *Grenzgänge im östlichen Mittelmeerraum: Byzanz und die islamische Welt vom 9. bis 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2008); Michael Bonner, ed., *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Ahmad M. H. Shboul, "Arab Islamic Perceptions of Byzantine Religion and Culture," in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 122–135; Shboul, "Arab Attitudes towards Byzantium: Official, Learned, Popular," in *KAΘΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey for her 80th Birthday* (Camberley, Surrey: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), pp. 111–128; and Speros Vryonis Jr., "Byzantium and Islam, Seven–Seventeenth Century," *East European Quarterly* 11 (1968): 205–240, rept. in Vryonis, *Byzantium: Its Internal History and Relations with the Muslim World: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1971), no. 9.

⁸⁸ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 70; David Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihād," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996): 66–104, esp. 83–96.

⁸⁹ Hasan al-Sandūbī, ed., *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ: Wa-hiya rasā'il muntaqāt min kutub lil-Jāḥiẓ lam tunshar qabl al-ān* (Cairo: Yuṭlab min al-maktabah al-Tijāriyah al-Kubra, 1933), p. 117;

Arab authors also denounced luxury, wasteful extravagance, pomp, and overtaxation as symptoms of the devolution of Byzantine authority. The geographer and traveler Ibn Ḥawqal (tenth century) reports that in an effort to cover the expenses of his military expeditions against the Muslims Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (912–969, r. 963–969) imposed heavy taxes instead of using his own funds and provoked popular discontent and agitation which led to his assassination.⁹⁰ Such an assessment persisted down to the fourteenth century as indicated by the characterization of the Byzantines as ungenerous and self-conceited in al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) history of the Mongol conquest of Syria.⁹¹ Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) likewise observes that whereas Muslims were originally averse to royal decorum and pomp, the caliphate gradually mutated into royal rule and Muslims paid increasing attention to splendor and developed a penchant for luxury, especially after interacting and mingling with Persians and Byzantines who displayed to them their ways of ostentation and luxury.⁹² Finally, an interesting precedent to Shāh Walī Allāh's ideas on the Byzantine practice of imperial power may be found in the *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-khiṭābah li-Aristū* (Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric) of the famous Arab philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126–1198): elaborating on Aristotle's typology of the various regime types, Ibn Rushd distinguishes between cities that are ruled according to fixed and immutable laws, as is the case with the Islamic law, and cities whose laws change according to what is most expedient, as is the case with many of the laws in Byzantium.⁹³

Assessing the veracity of Shāh Walī Allāh's account of Byzantine decline would require a closer survey of the image of the Byzantine Empire in medieval and early modern Islamic writing, especially in the central and eastern lands of Islam, that exceeds the scope of this arti-

Charles Pellat, "La Nābita de Djāhiz: Un document important pour l'histoire politico-religieuse de l'Islām," *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* 10 (1952): 302–325, 314. See also El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 87; Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, p. 55.

⁹⁰ Abī al-Qāsim ibn Ḥawqal al-Naṣībī, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ard* (Beirut: Manshurat Dar Maktabat al-Hayāh, [1963]), p. 181; Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la terre (Kitāb Surat al-ard)*, trans. Johannes H. Kramers and G. Wiet (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1964), 1:194.

⁹¹ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 197.

⁹² Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 2:50.

⁹³ Averroës (Ibn Ruṣd), *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d'Aristote*, ed. and French trans. Maroun Aouad (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 2:70. For further discussion, see *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique*, 3:35; as well as Rémi Brague, *The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, trans. from the French Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 122–123.

cle.⁹⁴ It is possible that Shāh Walī Allāh's intention is to alert Mughal rulers to the imminent fall of the empire by invoking Byzantium as a negative example of a great imperial state that collapsed due to an economic crisis very similar to the one that afflicted eighteenth-century India.⁹⁵ Even so, Shāh Walī Allāh's statements attest to a keen awareness and appreciation of the economic factors involved in the decline of Byzantine power and the affinities between Mughal and Byzantine political realities and calls for a comparative study of Mughal and Byzantine reactions to the phenomenon of imperial decline.

As noted earlier, a number of medieval Islamic accounts of the Byzantine Empire centered around excessive taxation as one of the major flaws of Byzantine imperial administration. Just like Ibn Ḥawqal,

⁹⁴ General accounts of the decline of the Byzantine Empire include Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010); John F. Haldon, "The Byzantine Empire," in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, ed. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 205–254; Motyl, *Imperial Ends*, pp. 59–61; Franz Georg Maier, "Byzanz: Selbstbehauptung und Zerfall einer Großmacht," in *Das Verdämmern der Macht: Vom Untergang großer Reiche*, ed. Richard Lorenz (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), pp. 44–59; Peter Schreiner, "Schein und Sein: Überlegungen zu den Ursachen des Untergangs des byzantinischen Reiches," *Historische Zeitschrift* 266 (1998): 625–647; Donald M. Nicol, "Der Fall von Byzanz," in *Das Ende der Weltreiche: Von den Persern bis zur Sowjetunion*, ed. Alexander Demandt (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1997), pp. 61–73; Nicol, "Der Niedergang von Byzanz," in *Byzanz*, ed. Franz G. Maier (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1973; repr., Augsburg: Weltbild-Verl., 1998), pp. 348–406; Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium: The Birkbeck Lectures, 1977* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; repr., 1993); Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Der Untergang einer Großmacht. Thesen und Hypothesen zur Stellung von Byzanz in einer vergleichenden Niedergangsgeschichte von Staaten und Gesellschaften," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 37 (1989): 890–904; Franz Tinnefeld, "Zur Krise des Spätmittelalters in Byzanz," in *Europa 1400: Die Krise des Spätmittelalters*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt and Winfried Eberhard (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 284–294; as well as Ivan Dujčev, "Die Krise der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft und die türkische Eroberung des 14. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 21 (1973): 481–492; Peter Charanis, "Economic Factors in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire," *Journal of Economic History* 13 (1953): 412–424, repr. in Charanis, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire*, no. 9; Dionysios A. Zakynthinos, *Crise monétaire et crise économique à Byzance du XIII^e au XV^e siècle* (Athens: L'Hellénisme contemporain, 1948); Rodolphe Guiland, "Vénéralité et favoritisme à Byzance," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 10 (1952): 35–46; and, in general, Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997); Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). A detailed discussion of the role of the Byzantine Empire in Mediterranean trade appears in Angeliki E. Laiou [Thomadakis], "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System; Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980/81): 177–222, repr. in Laiou, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1992), no. 7. Consider also Lazaros Houmanidis, *Byzantine Commerce, the Impact on It of Arab Expansion and of the Rise of the Italian Cities* (Thessalonike, 1968).

⁹⁵ I am grateful to Professor Anthony Kaldellis for discussions on this point.

who ascribed the social tensions that arose during Nikephoros Phokas's reign to high taxation and the exploitation of the people, John Skylitzes (late eleventh century) mentions in his *Synopsis Historiōn* (A Synopsis of Histories) that Phokas, who was vilified by some of his contemporaries as a belligerent ruler, incurred the hatred of his subjects by imposing excessive taxation and turning a blind eye to the abuses of the military and the plundering and pillage of the people's property. Skylitzes denounces Phokas's policies to create additional sources of revenues and raise supplement taxes: in particular, he criticizes the Byzantine emperor for abrogating some of the financial benefits of the members of the senate on the pretext of lacking funds to sustain the war effort, terminating the financial aid offered to religious houses and churches, and passing a law that prohibited the expansion of ecclesiastical property. Last but not least, the emperor caused the devaluation of the existing currency (*nomisma*) by introducing an additional form of currency, the *tetarteron*.⁹⁶

The degeneration of Byzantine political strength was visible as early as the eleventh century,⁹⁷ as evidenced by Michael Attaleiates's (1020/1030–1085) references to misgovernment and venality in the imperial administration as the prime causes of Byzantine decadence especially in the aftermath of the Byzantine army's defeat by Seljuq

⁹⁶ Hans Thurn, ed., *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973), pp. 273–274; John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, trans. John Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 262–264. Skylitzes's views on Phokas's reign are discussed in Eirene-Sophia Kiapidou, *John Skylitzes' Synopsis of Histories and Its Sources (811–1057): A Contribution to Byzantine Historiography during the 11th Century* [in Greek] (Athens: Kanakes, 2010), pp. 345–359. See, in general, also Rosemary Morris, "The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 83–115. On the *tetarteron* in particular, consult Cécile Morrisson, "Monnayage et monnaies," in *Économie et société à Byzance (VIIIe–XIIe siècle): Textes et documents*, ed. Sophie Métivier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2007), pp. 157–165, 163; Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 506–508; Hendy, "Light Weight Solidi, Tetartera, and The Book of the Prefect," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 65 (1972): 57–80, repr. in Hendy, *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium* (Northampton: Variorum Reprints, 1989), no. 9; Hélène Ahrweiler[Glykatzil], "Nouvelle hypothèse sur le tétartèron d'or et la politique monétaire de Nicéphore Phocas," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 8 (1963): 1–9, repr. in Ahrweiler, *Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1971), no. 3. Gustave Schlumberger's *Un empereur byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et cie, 1890) is an older study, but still valuable for its insights into Byzantine-Arab relations during Phokas's reign.

⁹⁷ An extensive treatment of critiques of Byzantine leadership as articulated in Byzantine historiography in the period between the sixth and thirteenth centuries appears in Franz Hermann Tinnfeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich: W. Fink, 1971).

forces at the battle of Mantzikert (Malazgirt, 1071) and the Turkish occupation of a large part of Asia Minor.⁹⁸ In his *Historia* (History) Attaleiates berates the Byzantine rulers and court officials for engaging in impious and illicit activities in the name of the public welfare. Attaleiates also outlines the process whereby Byzantine military fortunes reached a low ebb as the army leaders were concerned solely with making profit and shirked their duties and the soldiers imitated the conduct of their commanders, behaving in an unjust and cruel manner toward the people and seeking to destroy, usurp, or plunder their property as if they were the enemies of their own country.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ For further discussion, see Paul J. Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes," *Speculum* 37 (1962): 339–357, 356–357, repr. in Alexander, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London: Variorum, 1978), no. 3. The process of economic decline in twelfth-century Byzantium has been studied by Alan Harvey, "Economy," in *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History*, ed. Jonathan Harris (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 83–99, esp. 91–96; Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Michael F. Hendy, "Byzantium, 1081–1204: An Economic Reappraisal," *Transactions of The Royal Historical Society*, ser. 5, 20 (1970): 31–52, repr. in Hendy, *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and Coinage of Byzantium*, no. 2. For other aspects of the decay of Byzantine power during the same period, see Vassiliki N. Vlyssidou, ed., *The Empire in Crisis (?): Byzantium in the 11th Century (1025–1081)* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, 2003); Judith Herrin, "The Collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Medieval Economy," *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12 (1970): 188–203; Speros Vryonis Jr., "Byzantium: The Social Basis of Decline in the Eleventh Century," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 2 (1959): 157–175, repr. in Vryonis, *Byzantium: Its Internal History and Relations with the Muslim World*, no. 2. On the erosion of Byzantine identity and the spread of Islam in Asia Minor, see Speros Vryonis Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971; repr., 1986); and, in general, *Manzikert to Lepanto: The Byzantine World and the Turks 1071–1571* [= *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1991)], ed. Anthony Bryer and Michael Ursinus (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakker, 1991); Alexis G. Savvides, *The Turks and Byzantium*, vol. 1, *Pre-Ottoman Tribes in Asia and in the Balkans* [in Greek] (Athens: Domos, 1996). For the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see George Georgiades Arnakis, *The Early Osmanlis: A Contribution to the Problem of the Fall of Hellenism in Asia Minor (1282–1337)* [in Greek] (Athens: N. Frandjeskakis, 1947; repr., Athens: Archipelagos, 2008). Finally, Muslim reactions to the Byzantine defeat at Mantzikert are covered in El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 178–181. Also of value are the following studies by Speros Vryonis Jr.: "A Personal History of the History of the Battle of Mantzikert," in *Byzantine Asia Minor (6th–12th cent.)* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, 1998), pp. 225–244; "The Greek and Arabic Sources on the Battle of Mantzikert, 1071 A.D.," in *Byzantine Studies: Essays on the Slavic World and the Eleventh Century*, ed. Speros Vryonis Jr. (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1992), pp. 125–140; as well as Claude Cahen, "La campagne de Mantzikert d'après les sources musulmanes," *Byzantion* 9 (1934): 613–642.

⁹⁹ Miguel Atalíates, *Historia*, ed. and parallel Spanish trans. Immaculada Pérez Martín (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), pp. 144–145; Wladimir Brunet de Presle and Immanuel Bekker, eds., *Michaelis Attalioetae historia* (Bonn: Weber, 1853), pp. 195–198. An English translation of Attaleiates's *History* by Anthony Kaldellis

The steady increase of costs for the administration and sustenance of the Byzantine army, for luxury, finery, and pomp, coincided with Venice's and Genoa's dominance in Mediterranean trade. With the Turkish menace looming large in the mid thirteenth century, some of the protagonists of late Byzantine intellectual and religious life engaged in sustained reflection on the causes and effects of the factional strife that raged through the empire. Tirades against profit making, injustice, and rampant corruption were common. Similar to Shāh Walī Allāh, who identified tax burdens laid on the peasantry and the parasitic activities of religious figures as two of the major reasons for imperial decline, a number of Byzantine political theorists blamed the economic problems of the empire on the exploitation of the productive classes and on the tax privileges of the monasteries.¹⁰⁰

and Dimitris Krallis for the *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* series is currently in preparation. On Attaleiates's views on the military disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, see Speros Vryonis Jr., "The Eleventh Century: Was There a Crisis in the Empire? The Decline of Quality and Quantity in the Byzantine Armed Forces," in Vlyssidou, *The Empire in Crisis* (?), pp. 17–43, 18–34. Attaleiates's political ideas are discussed in Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012); Krallis, "'Democratic' Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates's 'Republicanism' in Context," *Viator* 40 (2009): 35–53; Anthony Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 14 (2007): 1–20; and Alexander Kazhdan, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1984), "The Social Views of Michael Attaleiates," pp. 23–86.

¹⁰⁰ The economic aspects of Byzantine decay are examined in Angeliki E. Laiou and Cécile Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 228–230; and, in general, the studies by Angeliki E. Laiou, "Economic Thought and Ideology," and "The Byzantine Economy: An Overview," both in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), pp. 1123–1144 and 1145–1164, respectively. Consider also Christos P. Baloglou, "Economic Thought in the Last Byzantine Period," in *Ancient and Medieval Economic Ideas and Concepts of Social Justice*, ed. S. Todd Lowry and Barry Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 405–438; Alexander N. Diomedes, "Economic Vicissitudes of the Decaying Byzantium," *Revue des Sciences Économiques et Financières* 8 (1939): 277–303 [in Greek]. For heavy taxation as a cause of Byzantium's fall, see notably Peter Schreiner, "Zentralmacht und Steuerhölle. Die Steuerlast im Byzantinischen Reich," in *Mit dem Zehnten fing es an: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Steuer*, ed. Uwe Schulze, 2nd ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1986), pp. 64–73. Critiques of monastic property are discussed in Peter Charanis, "The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948): 53–118, repr. in Charanis, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1973), no. 1. On tax exemptions, see Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, 1996). Consider also Emil[i]o Herman, "Zum kirchlichen Benefizialwesen im Byzantinischen Reich," *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris* 3 (1937): 253–264. For late

Amidst a famine in Constantinople in the 1300s, the then Patriarch of Constantinople (1289–1293 and 1303–1309), Athanasios I (1230/35–ca. 1323), addressed a number of letters to the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1259–1332; r. 1282–1328) in which he makes an impassioned plea for the fair distribution of food supplies:¹⁰¹ just as the sun radiates warmth, so too is one of the emperor's prime tasks to uphold security and justice. Athanasios specifically calls upon the emperor to restrain those who, driven by greed, seek to profiteer by hoarding for themselves public revenues and inflict poverty¹⁰² and recommends drastic measures against those who receive

Byzantine debates on decline, see, e.g., Speros Vryonis Jr., "Crises and Anxieties in Fifteenth Century Byzantium: The Reassertion of Old, and the Emergence of New Cultural Forms," in *Islamic and Middle Eastern Societies*, ed. Robert Olson (Brattleboro, Vt.: Amana Books, 1987), pp. 100–125; Jan-Louis van Dieten, "Politische Ideologie und Niedergang im Byzanz der Palaiologen," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 6 (1979): 1–35; Ihor Ševčenko, "The Decline of Byzantium Seen through the Eyes of Its Intellectuals," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961): 169–186, repr. in Ševčenko, *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), no. 2; Franz Dölger, "Politische und geistige Strömungen im sterbenden Byzanz," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 3 (1954): 3–18; Hans-Georg Beck, *Theodoros Metochites, die Krise des byzantinischen Weltbildes im 14. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1952).

¹⁰¹ The factors that led to the famine are surveyed in Angeliki Laiou, "The Provisioning of Constantinople during the Winter of 1306–1307," *Byzantion* 37 (1967): 91–113. On Andronikos's rule in general, see Angeliki Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282–1328* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); Ursula Victoria Bosch, *Kaiser Andronikos III. Palaiologos: Versuch einer Darstellung der byzantinischen Geschichte in den Jahren 1321–1341* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1965).

¹⁰² *The Correspondence of Athanasios I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials*, ed., trans., and comm. Alice-Mary Maffry Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1975), Letter 93 (Greek text p. 242, English trans. p. 243). On Athanasios, see *Correspondence of Athanasios I*, "General Introduction," pp. xv–xxxix; as well as Emmanuel Patedakis, "Athanasios I Patriarch of Constantinople (1289–1293, 1303–1309): A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary of Selected Unpublished Works" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2004); John L. Boojamra, *The Church and Social Reform: The Policies of the Patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993); Boojamra, "Social Thought and Reforms of Athanasios of Constantinople (1289–1293; 1303–1309)," *Byzantion* 55 (1985): 332–382; Boojamra, *Church Reform in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Study of the Patriarchate of Athanasios of Constantinople* (Thessalonike: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1982); Demetrios J. Constantelos, "Life and Social Welfare Activity of Patriarch Athanasios I (1289–1293, 1303–1309) of Constantinople," in *Byzantine Ecclesiastical Personalities*, ed. Nomikos M. Vapori (= The Byzantine Fellowship Lectures; 2) (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1975), pp. 73–88; Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Politik und Kirche im spätbyzantinischen Reich: Athanasios I., Patriarch von Konstantinopel 1289–1293; 1303–1309," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig: Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 15 (1966): 479–486, repr. in Matschke, *Das spätbyzantinische Konstantinopel: Alte und neue Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte zwischen 1261 und 1453* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2008), pp. 89–113; and with an eye to the relations between Athanasios and Andronikos, Joseph Gill, "Emperor Andronikos II and the Patri-

bribes and slander the Church.¹⁰³ He advocates tight central control over the purchase of grain and bread¹⁰⁴ and the judicious selection of revenue collectors.¹⁰⁵ He also calls for strict monitoring of the bakers and of the transportation and delivery of grain so that cargoes do not end up in the hands of grain dealers and profiteers but are distributed to those who are in need of food,¹⁰⁶ and he threatens to excommunicate all grain dealers.¹⁰⁷

Economic inequities and the outbreak of the Zealot revolution in Thessalonike, the empire's second most important city after Constantinople, provoked intense debates on the political and social maladies that afflicted the Byzantine state in the first half of the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Following Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos's (1296–1341,

arch Athanasius I," *Byzantina* 2 (1970): 13–19; and Nicolae Bănescu, "Le patriarche Athanasie Ier et Andronic II Paléologue: État religieux, politique et social de l'empire," *Académie roumaine. Bulletin de la section historique* 23 (1942): 28–56. Consider also Joseph Kalothetos's (fl. 1336–1341) biography of Athanasios: "Vios kai politeia tou en agiois patros emōn archiepiskopou Kōnstantinoupoleōs Athanasiou," in *Ioseph Kalothetou Suggramata*, ed. Demetrios G. Tsames (Thessalonike: Center for Byzantine Studies, 1980), pp. 453–502.

¹⁰³ *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople*, Letter 65 (152/153).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter 93 (242/243).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter 68 (160 and 162/163 and 165). On the transportation of grain supplies and food provisions in the Byzantine Empire, see Johannes Koder, "Maritime Trade and the Food Supply for Constantinople in the Middle Ages," in *Travel in the Byzantine World*, ed. Ruth Makrides (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 109–124; John L. Teall, "The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330–1025," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959): 87–139; Georges I. Brătianu [Bratianu], "Nouvelles contributions à l'étude de l'approvisionnement de Constantinople sous les Paléologues et les empereurs ottomans," *Byzantion* 6 (1931): 641–656; Brătianu, "La question de l'approvisionnement de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine et ottomane," *Byzantion* 5 (1929/30): 83–107.

¹⁰⁶ *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople*, Letter 100 (256/257). See also *ibid.*, Letter 106 (266/267).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter 106 (266/267).

¹⁰⁸ Vasileios Syros, "Between Chimera and Charybdis: Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Views on the Political Organization of the Italian City-States," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 451–504, 467–472; Angeliki E. Laiou, "Economic Concerns and Attitudes of the Intellectuals of Thessalonike," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 [= *Symposium on Late Byzantine Thessalonike*] (2003): 205–223; Laiou, "Social Justice: Exchange and Prosperity in Byzantium," *Proceedings of the Academy of Athens* 74 (1999): 107–132 [in Greek]; Peter Charanis, "On the Social Structure and Economic Organization of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later," *Byzantinoslavica* 12:94–153, repr. in Charanis, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire*, no. 4. On the Zealot revolution, see John W. Barker, "Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A Second City's Challenges and Responses," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 5–33, esp. 14–21; Donald M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk*, c. 1295–1383 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 45–83; Konstantinos Kotsiopoulos, "The Zealots of Thessalonike and their Popular Basis," *Ta Vyzantina* 18 (1995/96): 277–284 [in Greek]; Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Thessalonike und die Zeloten: Bemerkungen zu einem Schlüsselereignis der spätbyzantinischen Stadt- und Reichsgeschichte," *Byzantinoslavica* 55 (1994):

r. 1328–1341) death in June 1341, his chief minister, John Kantakouzenos (1292–1383), served as the effective regent for John V (1332–1391), Andronikos's infant son, and proclaimed himself emperor four months later. In 1342, a political group that called themselves Zealots and were led by the grand duke (= commander-in-chief of the Byzantine navy) Alexios Apokaukos (late thirteenth century–1345) set up a popular regime in Thessalonike. The conflict touched off a series of revolts in other cities, with the nobility backing Kantakouzenos and the middle and lower classes supporting John V and the Zealots. The Zealot regime came to an end when Kantakouzenos recovered Thessalonike in 1350.

Nikephoros Choumnos's (1250/55–1327) speech *Thessalonikeusi sumvouleutikos peri Dikaiosunēs* (Exhortatory Oration on Justice) provides intriguing insights into the background of the events surrounding the Zealot movement and a vivid description of the poverty conditions

19–43; Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion in Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert: Konstantinopel in der Bürgerkriegsperiode von 1341 bis 1354* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1971); Daphne Papadatou, "Political Associations in the Late Byzantine Period: The Zealots and Sailors of Thessalonica," *Balkan Studies* 28 (1987): 3–23; Peter Charanis, "Internal Strife in Byzantium during the Fourteenth Century," *Byzantion* 15 (1941): 208–230, repr. in Charanis, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire*, no. 6; Oreste Tafrali, *Thessalonique au quatorzième siècle* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1913); repr., Thessalonike: Idryma Meleton Hersonesou tou Aimou, 1993; and in general Günter Weiss, *Johannes Kantakouzenos—Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch—in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1969); Franz Dölger, "Johannes VI. Kantakouzenos als dynastischer Legitimist," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 10 (1938): 19–30, repr. in Dölger, *Παράπορα: 30 Aufsätze zur Geschichte, Kultur und Sprache des byzantinischen Reiches* (Munich: Buch-Kunstverlag Ettal, 1961), pp. 194–207. On the intellectual life of late Byzantine Thessalonike, consult Costas N. Constantinides, "The Origin of the Flourishing of Learning in Thessaloniki during the Fourteenth Century," *Dōdonē* 21 (1992): 133–150 [in Greek]; Daniele Bianconi, *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi: Le pratiche intellettuali nel riflesso della cultura scritta* (Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2005); Franz Tinnefeld, "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 153–172; Vassilis Katsaros, "Literary and Intellectual Life in Byzantine Thessaloniki," in *Queen of the Worthy: Thessaloniki, History and Culture*, ed. Ioannes K. Hassiotis (Thessalonike: Paratiritis, 1997), pp. 305–332; Constantine N. Constantinides, "The Beginnings of the Intellectual Acme in Thessalonike in the 14th Century," *Dōdonē* 21 (1992): 133–150 [in Greek]; Ioannes E. Anastasios, "Education in Thessalonike in the 14th Century," *Vuzantina* 13 (1985): 909–921 [in Greek]; Donald M. "Thessalonica as a Cultural Centre in the Fourteenth Century," in *Ē Thessalonikē metaxu Anatolēs kai Duseos* (Thessalonike: Etairaia Makedonikōn Spoudōn, 1982), pp. 121–131, repr. in Nicol, *Studies in Late Byzantine History and Prosopography* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986), no. 10; as well as the articles in *Macedonia during the Palaeologan Era* (Thessalonike: Aristotle University of Thessalonike, 1992), esp. Basiliki Papoulia, "Intellectual Currents in Macedonia during the Fourteenth Century" (pp. 63–73) and Alkmini Stavridou-Zafrika, "The Physiognomy of Thessalonike as the Second City of the Byzantine Empire during the Palaeologan Era" (pp. 75–84) [both in Greek].

and inequality in late Byzantine Thessalonike.¹⁰⁹ Choumnos, a distinguished scholar and prime minister (*mesazōn*) of Emperor Andronikos II, served as governor of Thessalonike in 1309/10.¹¹⁰ The speech, written most probably around 1284/85,¹¹¹ was originally intended for the citizens of Thessalonike, but it was never delivered in public and circulated within Choumnos's circle of friends and associates.¹¹² Choumnos castigates the rich for contriving to take over the property and houses of the poor in order to build their luxurious multi-storey residences and points out that the poor in their turn, though initially trying to negotiate, become desperate and succumb to the demands of those who, driven by covetousness and cupidity, seek to seize their property.¹¹³

Similar sentiments are echoed in *Tois Thessalonikeusi peri omonoias* ([Oration] to the Citizens of Thessalonike on Concord),¹¹⁴ an exhortatory speech composed by Thomas Magister (or Magistros, also known by his monastic name Theodoulos, ca. 1280–1350/51), an eminent classical scholar and theologian.¹¹⁵ The speech draws to some extent

¹⁰⁹ Jean F. Boissonade, *Anecdota græca e codicibus regis* (Paris: Excusum in Regio Typographeo, 1830; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), 2:137–187.

¹¹⁰ On Choumnos, see Ihor Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos: La vie intellectuelle et politique à Byzance sous les premiers Paléologues* (Brussels: Byzantion, 1962); and Jean Verpeaux, *Nicéphore Choumnos: Homme d'État et humaniste byzantin (ca 1250/1255–1327)* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1959).

¹¹¹ Verpeaux, *Nicéphore Choumnos*, p. 35.

¹¹² Tinnefeld, "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," p. 165.

¹¹³ Boissonade, *Anecdota græca e codicibus regis*, 2:168–169. See also Zakythinis, *Crise monétaire et crise économique à Byzance*, pp. 46–47.

¹¹⁴ The text was first edited by Vasileios Laourdas, "Thoma Magistrou *Tois Thessalonikeusi peri omonoias*," *Epistēmōnikē Epetērīs Scholēs Nomikōn kai Oikonomikōn Epistēmōn Aristoteleiou Panepistēmīou Thessalonikēs* 12 (1969): 751–775, 753–768, and has been reprinted with facing modern Greek translation (pp. 66–115) and commentary (pp. 116–140) in Sotiria Triantari-Mara, *The Political Thought of Fourteenth Century in Thessaloniki: Oration to the Thessalonians on Concord by Thomas Magistros; an Approach on the Contribution of Political Philosophy to Modern Times* (Athens: Herodotos, 2002). Surveys of Magister's life and oeuvre include Sotiria A. Triantari, *Politics, Rhetoric and Communication in the Fourteenth and the Twenty-first Century: Oration about Kingdom and about State of Thomas Magistros* [in Greek] (Thessalonike: A. Stamoulis, 2009), pp. 17–37; Bianconi, *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi*, pp. 72–90; and Stephanos K. Skalistes, *Thomas Magistros: His Life and Œuvre* [in Greek] (Thessalonike: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1984).

¹¹⁵ For Magister's contribution to the reception and study of the classical legacy, see Niels Gaul, *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantische Sophistik: Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 2011); Gaul, "Moschopoulos, Lopadiotes, Phrankopoulos (?), Magistros, Staphidakes: Prosopographisches und Methodologisches zur Lexikographie des frühen 14. Jahrhunderts," *Super alta perennis* 4 (2008): 163–196, 184–190; Gaul, "The Twitching Shroud: Collective Construction of *Paideia* in the Circle of Thomas Magistros," *Segno e Testo* 5 (2007): 263–340; Vasileios Laourdas, "Classical Philology in Thessalonike in the Fourteenth Century," *Étaireia Makedonikōn Spoudōn. Idruma Meletōn Hersonesou tou Aimou* 37 (1960): 5–20 [in Greek]. On late

on ancient Greek models, especially Aelius Aristides's (117 C.E.–after 181) orations, and captures the sense of anguish and the political decadence that prevailed in Thessalonike in the wake of the civil wars between Andronikos II and his grandson Andronikos III over the succession to the throne during the years 1321–1328 and on the eve of the Zealot revolution.¹¹⁶ Magister also wrote two treatises on the proper qualifications for kingship (*Peri vasileias* [On Kingship]) and the duties of citizens (*Peri politeias* [On the Commonwealth]),¹¹⁷ in which he makes an urgent appeal to the civic body of Thessalonike to restore unity and uphold justice, and alerting readers to the deleterious effects of sedition and factional discord (*stasis*).

The theme of economic injustice was seconded by Alexios Makremvolites (d. after 1349), who offers a prescient analysis of the fall of the Byzantine state as the result of a decision of the world-governing

Byzantine philologists in general, see Sophia Mergiali, *L'Enseignement et les Lettrés [sic] pendant l'époque des Paléologues (1261–1453)* (Athens: Société des Amis du Peuple, Centre d'Études Byzantines, 1996), pp. 49–59.

¹¹⁶ There is no scholarly consensus as to which of the two events Magister is referring to. I am inclined to the view that Magister alludes to both the conflict between Andronikos II and his grandson Andronikos III and the events that precipitated the Zealot revolt. For a similar interpretation and review of previous scholarship, see Triantari-Mara, *The Political Thought of Fourteenth Century in Thessaloniki*, pp. 37–53. On the conflict between Andronikos II and his grandson, see Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, chap. “The Question of the Succession and the First Civil War,” pp. 151–166; as well as Leonidas Mavrommatis, *The First Palaiologoi: Problems of Political Praxis and Ideology* (Athens: Syllogos pros Diadosin ton Hellenikon Grammaton, 1983), pp. 52–78; Konstantinos P. Kyrris, *Byzantium in the 14th Century* (Nicosia: Lampousa, 1982) [both in Greek].

¹¹⁷ *Patrologia Græca*; 145, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne and Garnier, 1904), pp. 447–495 and 495–547; partial English trans. in *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium, from Justinian I to the Last Palaeologus; Passages from Byzantine Writers and Documents*, trans. Ernest Barker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 163–168 and 168–173, respectively; modern Greek trans. and commentary in Triantari, *Politics, Rhetoric and Communication in the Fourteenth and the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 166–403; Italian trans. Toma Magistro, *La regalità*, ed. and trans. Paola Volpe Cacciatore (Naples: M. D'Auria, 1997). Scholarly treatments of Magister's political ideas include: Sotiria [A.] Triantari[-Mara], *Politics, Rhetoric and Communication in the Fourteenth and the Twenty-first Century*, pp. 75–164; Triantari, *The Political Views of Byzantine Thinkers from Tenth to Thirteenth Century* (Thessalonike: Herodotos, 2002), pp. 167–257; Triantari, “Political Views in Thomas More's *Utopia* and Thomas Magistros's *On Kingship* and *On the State*,” *Parnassos* 44 (2002): 317–338 [all in Greek]; Christos P. Baloglou, “Thomas Magistros' Vorschläge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik,” *Byzantinoslavica* 60 (1999): 60–70; Ioannis G. Leontiadis, “Untersuchungen zum Staatsverständnis der Byzantiner aufgrund der Fürsten- bzw. Untertanenspiegel (13. bis 15. Jahrhundert)” (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1997), pp. 107–149; Léon-Pierre Raybaud, *Le gouvernement et l'administration centrale de l'empire byzantin sous les premiers Paléologues (1258–1354)* (Paris: Sirey, 1968), pp. 24–35. For a study that situates Magister in the history of late Byzantine advice literature, see Konstantinos D. S. Paidas, *The Byzantine Mirrors of Princes of the Late Period (1254–1403): Expressions of the Byzantine Royal Ideal* [in Greek] (Athens: Grigoris, 2006).

Providence that causes the fluctuations in the affairs of the world and transfers sovereignty from one people to another. In the fictional *Dialogos plousiōn kai penētōn* (Dialogue [between] Rich and Poor, ca. 1344), Makremvolites captures the feverish strife and social rifts that convulsed the Byzantine world in the thirteenth century and points to the suffering of the poor, who were at the mercy of the wealthy.¹¹⁸

Another major late Byzantine intellectual who witnessed the repercussions of the Zealot episode and got embroiled in contemporary debates on the economic and social ills that plagued the empire was Nikolaos Kavasilas (ca. 1322–ca. 1390), a cleric and scion of a prominent noble family from Thessalonike. In his *Peri tokou* (On Interest), an oration addressed to Anna of Savoy (Palaiologina, 1306–ca. 1365) that was written around 1351, he expresses unqualified disdain for the rich who, as he observes, engage in unjust actions, seek profit by ruining others, and behave like robbers, thieves, and wild animals.¹¹⁹

In his *Logos kata tokizontōn* (Oration against Usurers), Kavasilas

¹¹⁸ Ihor Ševčenko, "Alexios Makrembolites and His *Dialogue between the Rich and the Poor*," in *Zbomik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 6 (1960): 187–228, 213, 225, repr. in Ševčenko, *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), no. 7. Makrembolites's social ideas are discussed also in Dimitrios G. Magriplis, "Sociological Approaches to Byzantine History: Conclusions from the Study of Alexios Makremvolitis' *Dialogue between the Rich and the Poor* (14th Century)," *Vyzantinos Domos* 15 (2006): 107–124 [in Greek]; Klaus-Peter Matschke and Franz Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz: Gruppen, Strukturen und Lebensformen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), pp. 344–347; Eva de Vries-van der Velden, *L'élite byzantine devant l'avance turque à l'époque de la guerre civile de 1341 à 1354* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1989), pp. 251–289; and Costas P. Kyrres, "Éléments traditionnels et éléments révolutionnaires dans l'idéologie d'Alexios Makrembolites et d'autres intellectuels byzantins du XIV^e s.," in *Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), 2:177–188.

¹¹⁹ Rodolphe Guillard, "Le Traité inédit 'sur l'usure' de Nicolas Cabasilas," in *Eis mnēmēn Spyridōnos Lamprou* (Athens: Epitropē Ekdoseōs tōn kataloipōn Spyridōnos Lamprou, 1935), pp. 269–277, 274; Laiou, "Economic Concerns and Attitudes of the Intellectuals of Thessalonike," p. 217; Matschke and Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz*, pp. 347–349. See further Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "Hésychasme et palamisme," in *Histoire du christianisme*, vol. 6, *Un temps d'épreuves (1274–1453)* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1990), pp. 557–563, 508–510; Christos P. Baloglou, "Kavasilas' Economic Thought," *Byzantiaka* 16 (1996): 191–213 [in Greek]; as well as Niketas Siniouoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 359–369; Peter Charanis, "Observations on the 'Anti-Zealot' Discourse of Cabasilas," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 9 (1971): 369–376, repr. in Charanis, *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byzantine Empire*, no. 7. For Kavasilas's life and works, consult Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, *Correspondance de Nicolas Cabasilas* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), pp. xi–xvii; Yannis Spiteris and Carmelo G. Conticello, "Nicola Cabasilas Chamaetos," in *La Théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, vol. 2, XIII^e–XIX^e s., ed. Carmelo G. Conticello and Vassa Conticello (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 315–410; Yannis Spiteris and Patrizia Morelli, *Cabasilas, teologo e mistico bizantino: Nicola Cabasilas Chamaetos, e la sua sintesi teologica* (Rome: Lipa, 1996); Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, "The Career and Writings of Nicolas Cabasilas,"

offers an extensive treatment of lending at interest and hoarding of resources onto which he has grafted patristic and legal definitions of usury. He also points to the moral dimensions of usury, which he equates with other kinds of crimes such as adultery, murder, and theft, with the only difference that these crimes entail a certain degree of risk, whereas usury is a more detestable form of crime because it is free of risks.¹²⁰ Kavasilas specifically denounces laws that associate interest rates and the character of the lender and forbid clerics from loaning at interest or allow nobles to charge only low rates while permitting wicked and morally corrupt individuals to charge high interest rates.¹²¹

If the Zealot rebellion was construed by both pro- and anti-Zealot intellectuals as a portent of Byzantium's fall, in the first half of the fourteenth century the political disintegration of Byzantine rule due to the wrongs and injustices perpetuated by the imperial administration, a long series of economic crises, and the advances of the Turkish forces came to be broadly regarded as a *fait accompli*. A number of Byzantine thinkers felt despondent about the process of Byzantine decline, explaining it as a manifestation of divine wrath for misrule or a divine punishment for the Byzantines' refusal to endorse the union of the churches.¹²² But George Gemistos Plethon (d. 1452), a towering

Byzantion 49 (1979): 414–427; George T. Dennis, “Nicholas Cabasilas Chamaëtos and His Discourse on Abuses Committed by Authorities against Sacred Things,” *Byzantine Studies/Études Byzantines* 5 (1978): 80–87, repr. in Dennis, *Byzantium and the Franks, 1350–1420* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982), no. 11; Horst Müller-Asshoff, “Beobachtungen an den Hauptschriften des Gregorios Palamas und Nikolaos Kabasilas,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 70 (1977): 22–41; Athanasios A. Angelopoulos, *Nikolaos Kavasilas Chamaetos, His Life and Work (A Contribution to Macedonian Byzantine Prosopography)* [in Greek] (Thessalonike: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1970); Séverien Salaville, “Quelques précisions pour la biographie de Nicolas Cabasilas,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Athens: Myrtides, 1958), 3:215–226; as well as the following studies by Ihor Ševčenko: “Nicolas Cabasilas’ ‘Anti-Zealot’ Discourse: A Reinterpretation,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957): 81–171; “The Author’s Draft of Nicolas Cabasilas’ ‘Anti-Zealot’ Discourse in *Parisinus* Gr. 1276,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960): 181–201; “A Postscript on Nicolas Cabasilas’ ‘Anti-Zealot’ Discourse,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 403–408, all three repr. in Ševčenko, *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium*, nos. 6, 5, and 4, respectively. A survey of Byzantine attitudes to interest appears in Lazaros T. Houmanidis, “On Usury during the Byzantine Era,” *Vuzantinai Meletai* 6 (1995): 104–122 [in Greek].

¹²⁰ *Patrologia Graeca* 150: 727–750. See also Laiou, “Economic Concerns and Attitudes of the Intellectuals of Thessalonike,” p. 213; Matschke and Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz*, pp. 349–355.

¹²¹ Laiou, “Economic Concerns and Attitudes of the Intellectuals of Thessalonike,” p. 215.

¹²² For further references and discussion, see Jonathan Harris, “Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the Rise of Ottoman Turks,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 27 (2003): 153–170; Harris, “The Influence of Plethon’s Idea of Fate on the Historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles,” in *Proceedings of the International Congress on Plethon and His Time*, Mystras, ed.

figure of late Byzantine intellectual life and purveyor of ancient Greek and Byzantine learning in Renaissance Italy, pinned his hopes for survival on the organization of the Peloponnese as an autonomous political entity that would serve as the last refuge for Byzantines of “Hellenic” stock, as shown in the two memoranda which he addressed to Theodoros II Palaiologos (1396–1448, r. 1407–1443), Despot of Mystra, in 1416,¹²³

Linus G. Benakis and Christos P. Baloglou (Athens: International Society of Plethonian and Byzantine Studies, 2003), pp. 211–217. Eschatological interpretations of Byzantine decay are discussed in Siniosoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium*, pp. 356–361; Paul Magdalino, “The End of Time in Byzantium,” in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 119–133, esp. 132–133; Magdalino, “The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda,” in *The Making of Byzantine History*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), pp. 3–34; Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, “Byzance et la fin du monde. Courants de pensée apocalyptiques sous les Paléologues,” in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople*, ed. Benjamin Lellouch and Stéphane Yerasimos (Paris: Harmattan, 2000), pp. 55–97; Agostino Pertusi, *Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo: Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e in Occidente*, ed. Enrico Morini (Rome: Nella Sede dell’Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 1988); Gerhard Podkalsky, “Der Fall Konstantinopels in der Sicht der Reicheschatologie und der Klagelieder. Vorahnungen und Reaktionen,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 57 (1975): 71–86; Podkalsky, *Byzantinische Reicheschatologie: Die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20): Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Munich: W. Fink, 1972); C. J. G. Turner, “Pages from Late Byzantine Philosophy of History,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 57 (1964): 346–373; and Alexander A. Vasiliev, “Medieval Ideas on the End of the World: West and East,” *Byzantion* 16 (1942/3): 462–502.

¹²³ *Exhortatory Address to Despot Theodore about the Peloponnese*—Spyridon P. Lampros, *Palaiologea kai Peloponnēsiaka* (Athens: V. N. Gregoriades, 1972), 4:113–135—partial English trans. in Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium*, pp. 207–212. Compare the nineteenth-century English translation by the Scottish historian George Finlay (1799–1875) in Christos P. Baloglou, “George Finlay and Georgios Gemistos Plethon. New Evidence from Finlay’s Records,” *Medioevo greco* 3 (2003): 23–42, 26–35, repr. in Baloglou, *Meletēmata peri Geōrgiou Gemistou-Plethōnos* (Athens: Eptalofos, 2011), pp. 100–119. For further discussion of Pletho’s memoranda, see Siniosoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium*, part 3, “Mistra versus Athos,” pp. 327–392; Giorgio Gemisto Pletone, *Trattato delle virtù*, intro., Italian trans., notes, and apparatuses Moreno Neri (Milan: Bompiani, 2010), pp. 47–73; Peter Garnsey, “Gemistos Plethon and Platonic Political Philosophy,” in *Transformations of Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 327–340, esp. 334–338; Christos P. Baloglou, *Georgiou Gemistou Plethōnos peri Peloponnēsiakōn pragmatōn* (Athens: Eleftheri Skepsis, 2002), pp. 97–127; *Proceedings of the International Congress on Plethon and His Time*, esp. Savvas P. Spentzas, “The Military Organization of the Peloponnese: G. Gemistos Plethon’s Economic, Social and Fiscal Proposals,” (pp. 243–265) [in Greek]; Anastassios D. Karayiannis, “Georgios Gemistos Plethon on Economic Policy,” (pp. 306–310); Christos P. Baloglou, “The Institutions of Ancient Sparta in the Work of Pletho,” (pp. 311–326; first published as “The Institutions of Ancient Sparta in the Work of Pletho,” *Antike und Abendland* 51 [2005]: 137–149); Yannis Smarnakis, “A Contribution to the Archaeology of Modern Utopian Thought: History and Utopia in Plethon’s Oeuvre,” *Historiein* 7 (2007): 103–113, esp. 106–109; Vryonis, “Crises and Anxieties in Fifteenth Century Byzantium,” pp. 120–122; Christopher M. Woodhouse,

and Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1350–1425, r. 1391–1421) in 1418.¹²⁴

The ideal form of regime envisioned by Plethon is one with a strong monarch with a moderate number of educated men drawn from the middle class acting as his advisers. Plethon also advocates abolition of private property, regulation of commercial activities with an eye to local needs, and strict currency control.¹²⁵

CONCLUSION

In this article, I elucidated the central premises of Shāh Walī Allāh's theory of the state and human civilization and engaged in a closer discussion of the ways in which his political ideas relate to previous Islamic political discourse, notably the *akhlāq* (Ṭūsī, Dawwānī) and Indo-Islamic strands of political thought (Baranī, Abū'l-Faḍl, Najm-i Sānī). I demonstrated that Shāh Walī Allāh articulates a naturalistic approach to the phenomenon of social genesis and posits the goal of meeting human needs as the prime motivating force behind the formation of human society.

I also reconstructed Shāh Walī Allāh's theory about the factors that account for the decline of the state and the empire and of his program for dealing with a broad range of emergencies. I argued that Shāh Walī

George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986; repr., 2000), pp. 92–109; N. Patrick Peritore, "The Political Thought of Gemistos Plethon: A Renaissance Byzantine Reformer," *Polity* 10 (1977): 168–191; Johannes Irmscher, "Die Wandlungen der Staatsidee im ausgehenden Byzanz," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 19 (1977): 446–450; J. Duncan M. Derret, "Gemistos Plethon, the Essenes, and More's Utopia," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 27 (1965): 579–606; John Mamalakis, "The Impact of Contemporary Events on George Gemistos' Ideas," in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. Kyriakides et al. [in Greek] (Athens: Typographeion Myrtidi, 1956), 2:498–532, esp. 504–511; Johannes Draseke, "Plethons und Bessarions Denkschriften über die Angelegenheiten im Peloponnes," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur* 27 (1911): 102–119; and Henry F. Tozer, "A Byzantine Reformer," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 7 (1886): 353–380.

¹²⁴ Georgios Gemistos to Manuel Palaeologus concerning the Affairs in the Peloponnese—Lampros, *Palaiologeia kai Peloponnēsiaka*, 3:246–265—partial English trans. in Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium*, pp. 198–206. Consider also Finlay's translation in Baloglou, "George Finlay and Georgios Gemistos Plethon," pp. 36–42.

¹²⁵ Lampros, *Palaiologeia kai Peloponnēsiaka*, 3:263. Plethon's economic ideas are discussed in Christos P. Baloglou, "Economic Thought in the Last Byzantine Period," pp. 405–438, 424–430; Baloglou, *Georgios Gemistos-Plethon: Ökonomisches Denken in der spätbyzantinischen Geisteswelt* (Athens: Historical Publications St. D. Basilopoulos, 1998); Savvas P. Spentzas, G. Gemistos Plethon, *the Philosopher of Mystra: His Economic, Social and Fiscal Views* [in Greek] (Athens: Ekdoseis M. Kardamitsa, 1987).

Allāh's statements on the causes of Mughal decay open a window into the intellectual atmosphere in the last centuries of Mughal rule, but also bear intriguing affinities to the ideas expressed by earlier thinkers on the economic aspects of imperial decline. Shāh Walī Allāh's use of the Byzantine paradigm as an instrument of analysis of the sociopolitical conditions that prevailed in his contemporary India brings him close to a number of Byzantine authors who perceived the eclipse of Byzantine rule as the outcome of social inequalities, oppression of the lower strata of society, and overtaxation.

Moreover, the findings of the preceding analysis of Shāh Walī Allāh's political thought call for a reassessment of Bernard Lewis's thesis that the decline of the Islamic world occurred due to intrinsic flaws in the Islamic tradition, notably the status of slaves, women, and unbelievers,¹²⁶ and cultural obstinacy and aversion to secularization.¹²⁷ Shāh Walī Allāh is in substantial agreement with Byzantine thinkers on the primacy of economic factors in the process of imperial decline. His references to the Byzantine and Sassanian empires reflect a vivid awareness of the importance of maladministration and financial corruption as universal causes for the decay of any type of state organization that extends well beyond the Islamic context.

While previous scholarly attempts to study the history of the Mughal Empire from a cross-cultural perspective have primarily focused on comparisons with the Roman and Ottoman empires,¹²⁸ the

¹²⁶ Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Perennial, 2003), chap. "Modernization and Social Equality," pp. 82–95.

¹²⁷ Lewis, *What Went Wrong?*, chap. "Secularism and the Civil Society," pp. 96–116.

¹²⁸ See, for example, the following two collections of essays edited by Peter F. Bang and Christopher A. Bayly: *Tributary Empires in Global History* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and *Tributary Empires in History: Comparative Perspectives from Antiquity to the Late Medieval* [= *The Medieval History Journal* 6, no. 2 (2003)]. The comparative study of the Roman, Mughal, and Ottoman empires is the subject of the international research project "Tributary Empires Compared" at the SAXO Institute at the University of Copenhagen. A comparative investigation of the decline of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires can be found in Rohan D'Souza, "Crisis before the Fall: Some Speculations on the Decline of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals," *Social Scientist* 30 (2002): 3–30. See also in general: Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Francis Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997): 151–184; Halil Berktaş, "Three Empires and the Societies they Governed: Iran, India and the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 18 (1992) [= *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History*, ed. Halil Berktaş and Suraiya Faroqhi: 247–263; I. Metin Kunt, "The Later Muslim Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals," in *Islam: The Religious and Political Life of a World Community*, ed. Marjorie Kelly (New York: Praeger, 1984), pp. 113–136.

results of this article highlight the need for a detailed investigation of Indo-Islamic attitudes toward the political history of the Byzantine Empire and a comparative study of the Byzantine and Mughal patterns of imperial organization. They also call for a critical reevaluation of Shāh Walī Allāh's political ideas and philosophy of history that will help place him in conversation with eighteenth-century Western thinkers (Montesquieu, Vico, Gibbon) and revisit the relevance of his ideas to ongoing debates on the economic dimensions of state decline.