Chapter 2

The Middle Period: Islamic Axiality in the Age of Afro-Eurasian Transcultural Hybridity

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> […] taking a global perspective does not imply that the world has always been an interconnected one with a single center from which development and progress spread to less-developed regions. Instead, it makes much more sense to think of the world in 1400 as having been composed of several regional systems, or in other words to have been "polycentric" each with densely populated and industrially advanced cores supplied from their own peripheries.
> Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World* (Marks 2002: 15)

In his seminal article "the Interrelations of Societies in History," published in 1963, Marshal Hodgson registered a ground-breaking argument against the Eurocentric conception of the past, which traced history in terms of an unfolding development from Mesopotamia and Egypt to Greece and Rome, and finally to the Christian of northwestern Europe, where the medieval life paved the path to modernity (Burke III, 1993: 3-34). In it, he posited the claim that from a global historical perspective the development of civilization is an Asian-based phenomenon, and that it played a crucial role in the rise of the modern world. He also argued that the history of the intersecting stretches of agrarian urbanite societies, which extended across the entire Afro-Eurasian complex – what he called, following Toynbee, the Oikoumene – , was an interrelational one with persistent and interconnecting traditions, from which interaction between these traditions radiated incessantly into wide regions.

According to Hodgson, an understanding of history in interrelational hemispheric terms would allow us to overcome a "classic ethnocentric dichotomy in the main part of the world-ourselves and the others, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, "West" and "East" (Burke III 1993: 7). In a sense, the history of societies, understood in interrelational terms, acknowledges a mobile and an interactive sphere of cross-regional complex, wherein cultures have continuously

depended on the course of development of the Afro-Eurasian civilizational complex as a whole.

If we accept, following Hodgson, the notion of interconnection of societies in history, it is reasonable to claim that the period from the 9th/10th centuries to the 13th/14th century marks a crucial phase in an increase of global interconnection and integration, involving socio-cultural crystallization of historical significance. Through communication, trade, travel, war and nomadic formations – including, not least, the histories of migration – in the context of rural and urban relations, this period encompasses a set of deep-seated transformations across Afro-Eurasian landmass. Manifested in different forms and yet appearing with an intense degree of mobility and mobilization, fusion and integration, such era of increasingly civilizational intermingling marked a transcultural age of hybridity.[1]

The term "transcultural" refers here to the liminal complexes that signify an intricate set of interdependent and cross-fertilizing constant historical processes in the production of spaces of exchange and negotiation, encounter and communication, travel and migration.[2] The history of transcultural dynamics is an account of global interaction between nomadic rootlessness and urban sedentary complexes, maritime expedition tied to land-based socio-cultural patterns of commercial urbanity and development of cited civilizations. In particular, the term "hybridity" underscores an ongoing historical process of constant fusion between social complexes in such that encounters between different civilizations through the process of cultural encounter leads to processes of identity formation and new ways of communication. As result, such process constitutes the incorporatation of different (already hybridized) structures of consciousness.[3]

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1 My claim here is akin to Björn Wittrock's idea of "Ecumenical Renaissance." See Wittrock (2001). However, Wittrock's use of the term "Ecumenical Renaissance" automatically elicits comparison with an earlier ecumenical period, failing to identify the unique significance of this historical epoch. My use of the term "transcultural age of hybridity," however, is more akin to Armando Salvatore's argument that encounter between the Islamic traditions and modernity has constituted of what he refers as "a transcultural Euro-Mediterranean space." See Armando Salvatore (2001).

2 I borrow the term "transcultural" from A. Höfert and A. Salvatore's (2000) provocative argument that historical flows of people between Europe and the Middle East, inclusive of the elites and masses, have constructed "transcultural" processes in which identity-alterity structures increasingly become dependent on in-between, liminal situations. The notion, they argue, "demonstrates the potential to alter the demarcating boundaries, not only in the sense of displacing them, but also through recomposing markers of identity and alterity in a way that makes it impossible, and even irrelevant, to trace back the original root of a certain identity" (Höfert/ Salvatore 2000: 17).

3 This assertion may also be articulated as the intensification of worldwide social relations in terms of global mélange, pervading from the center to peripheries. With respect to dynamics of culture, hybridization can also be defined as the way in which civilizations become differentiated from existing practices, fuse and remerge

In this view, the age of transcultural hybridity did not mark a sudden or radical redrawing of the outlines of the Afro-Eurasian landmass. Rather, it inaugurated a period in the escalation of shifts in civilizational dynamics towards hemispheric integration, fusion and cross-fertilization that brought about an impressive degree of intense creativity and exceptional broadening of cultural horizons. Increase of contact between societies led to the proliferation of myriad forms of public spaces, social organizations, institutions and new political orders. Yet the upshot of such transcultural interactive zone was determined by conflict, rivalry, exchange, encounter and chronic collision between competing forms of political orders that, in turn, led the way to complex hybridization processes of intercivilizational significance.

The particular case of the Islamic world in the Middle Period (945-1503) serves as an example of such hybridization historical process: an era marked by distinct political fragmentation, cultural cross-fertilization and vernacularization of intercivilizational significance. In the following discussion my primary concern will be to draw a general outline of the global interconnective patterns in the emergence of a transcultural hybrid civilizational complex in the Eurasian landmass from $9^{th}/10^{th}$ to the $13^{th}/14^{th}$ centuries. I will then focus on the Islamic world from the 10th to the 14th centuries and discuss the revolutionary significance in the emergence of new Islamic civilizational complexes with the successive waves of Turkish tribal migration from the steppe grass lands of Central Asia to the settled regions of the Anatolian-Mediterranean and Irano-Mesopotemian plateaus.

While elaborating on certain interconnected patterns of global history, without presuming linearity of historical development or ubiquitousness of cultural hybridities, my argument will evolve around the notion of intermingling of cultures, involving momentous shifts along dimensions of reflexivity and modes of communication. The notion of the "Middle Period Islamic Axiality" denotes, then, a crucial civilizational rupture in Islamic history from 10th to the $13^{th}/14^{th}$ centuries which generated new forms of reflexivity, new world views and imaginative ways in articulating self, knowledge and reality, based on the notion of transcendence. As a result of such civilizational encounters, this age identifies the production of new cultural sites situated in increasing processes of global mélange.

The Afro-Eurasian complex: from $9^{th}/10^{th}$ to 13th centuries

When in 1137-38 Ramisht, a rich Muslim merchant on his way to Mecca, visited his hometown of Sirâf, the bustling Iranian port-city on the Persian Gulf repre-

with new forms in new practices. Culture, in its hybrid form, is therefore not a coherent system but a process that is generated, maintained and transmitted into new forms in constant process of formation (Hannerz 1987).

sented a cosmopolitan commercial center with a thriving trading basis for merchants to trade directly with China and east Africa (Stern 1967: 10). The port city of Sirâf was matched by an abiding ability for commerce to cities, bustling commercial centers, and maritime urbanities like Aden, Alexandria, Baghdad, Cairo, Constantinople, Guangzhou, Kiev, Quanzhou, Suhâr and Venice, wherein long-distance trade was prevalent to help shape myriad zones of economic exchange and cultural encounter.

Muslim merchants of the 12th and 13th centuries, along with Chinese, Indian and east/north African merchants, in part, unleashed a global system of commerce that signaled the increasing integration of the world into common yet diverse commercial networks of production and exchange. Whereas links with the Mediterranean lands remained sporadic prior to the late 9th century, the centuries that followed the Arab conquest of northern Africa and Iran-Mesopotamia regions saw a quickening of contacts within the Afro-Eurasian zone of cultivation and urban life. Prior to the "rise" of the West to preeminence in the 16th century, by the turn of the first millennium a system of commerce and cultural interaction emerged that reached its apogee toward the end of the 13th century (Abu-Lughod 1989). First, based in Song China, the 11th century witnessed the appearance of a "world economy" with ramifications on a transregional scale. Likewise, the years between *circa* 1250 and 1350 saw a period of expanding international commerce in the regions between China and northwestern Europe, entailing economic growth and cultural developments in the newly integrated areas.

The increase of trade drew Japan, Southeast Asia and Middle East closer together, while a rise in the use of camel caravans led to an expansion of communication with sub-Saharan Africa (Bentley 1998). In the Asian subcontinent, for instance, an extensive commerce reached southern India by land, and mostly around the coastal maritime routes, from Coromandel shores north to the Ganges Delta, to Burma, Vietnam and beyond. Divided in diverse zones of transactions, mainly defined by language and religion, and dominated by imperial and core urban settings, as well as hinterland-less commercial enclaves, interaction between cities became possible by sealanes, rivers and caravan routes. Ports, like Sirâf, and river-based cities, like Baghdad and Cairo, served the important function of bringing goods and people from long distances, enhancing mobility and interaction.

Moreover, along with developments of maritime and land trade, an increase of travel, migration, campaigns of imperial expansion, crossregional religious war (Crusades) and conversion inaugurated an age of long-distance mobility and transportation, as well as large-scale subordination and conquest. Though the expansion of Europe into northeast Germany was a continuous movement that originated with the campaigns of Charlemagne, the 11th century marked the religious conversion and political colonization of the Baltic European settlement to the northwestern and northeastern Europe. From the 1066 Norman conquest of England by Duke William of Normandy to the Spanish campaigns of the Christian knights, from the expedition of the Scandinavian navigators into the northern

seas to the Latinization of Hungarians and eastern Europe, the growth of Europe, especially, in the 12th century identified an age of intense interconnection between Germanic, Slavic and Latin Mediterranean-based cultures. "The birth of Europe as a Eurasian phenomenon," in this fashion, brought about an integrated Europe made up of northwestern France, Flanders, lowland England, Spain, northern and southern Italy (Moore 1997). While travel provided the new integrated-hybrid civilization of Europe with the incentive of economic adventure, especially, in the 13th century (Marco Polo), proliferation in European travel writings reflected the increasing importance of movement across homeland as a prelude to further conquest of the new territories.

China experienced similar processes of integration under the Song dynasty (960-1279), as elite culture grew more uniform and political systems became more unified with the continue growth of the imperial urbanite civilization through military-building and interational trade (Haegar 1976). The expansion of the examination system, and the growth of bureaucracy saw the concentration of power in the hand of the emperor – a process that accelerated in later dynasties. Yet the remarkable growth of commercialization and industralization (Hobson 2004: 51) under the Song dynasty opened up the Chinese society to flow of goods, movements of persons, cultures and ideas across Eurasia.

Similarly, in western Asia, in the 10th century the Byzantine-Russian complex ceased being on the defensive and began to aggressively advance its borders east and westwards at the expense of Bulgars, increasingly heading towards greater cultural integration through contact with neighborhing civilizations. Through land and, most important of all, martime routes that reached Constantinople, the Byzantime-Russian civilization grew closer to the Islamic and Latin Christian cultures.

When in 1279 the Mongols, under the leadership of Genghis Khan's grandson, Kubla Khan, defeated the last outposts of resistance in Song China, the newly established nomadic empire signaled the emergence of a huge imperial network in the Eurasian landmass. This further connected the Islamic world with Southeast Asian societies, a historical process that eventually led to the Islamization of south Asian regions – like the case of Indonesia in the 16th century. Accordingly, in Central and Western Asia before the end of the 13th century most of the khans had become Muslim, and hence initiated a process of blending Central Asian shamanistic religions and Tibetan form of Buddhism with Islamic practices. Although the Mongol conquest of China and Islamdom did not amount to any serious interruptions in the Chinese and Islamic civilization, since it remained essentially a military occupation, the Steppe nomad warriors creatively adapted to the traditional Chinese and Abbâsid administrative systems.[4] This

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4   Later in the 14th century, when the Mongols showed signs of weakening, the emperor reintroduced the examination system and accommodated Chinese participation in bureaucratic positions.

nomadic imperial process of adaptation is crucial to the transcultural period since it marked a historical event which, according to the W. Barthold, ushered in a turning point in the construction of a creative synthesis between Chinese and Islamic political orders (Barthold 1928).

The rise of nomadic empires in this manner played an important role in the age of transregional integration. This is so since nomadic imperial orders placed high value on trade and diplomacy, which ultimately resulted in, according to Janet Abu-Lughod, an "explosion" that effectively paved the path to "world history" (Abu-Lughod 1989: 154). As Bentley has argued, in the half-millennium from 1000 to 1500 large imperial states, like the Mongols, continued to promote transregional interaction, embarking both on a remarkable set of empire-building processes that expanded from the seas of China to the River Nile (Bentley 1998: 244-45). By linking China with the outside world, mainly through trade networks in Central Asia, the impact of the Mongol conquest facilitated communication over long distances, as nomadic political orders encouraged the spread of religions, the acquisition of knowledge and technological exchanges across inner, eastern and western Asia. In addition, with the centralization of the Mongol state from tributary to sedentary systems of taxation, diverse sectors of economy, namely, agricultural, commercial and pastoral, grew closer together with the advancements in the size of the military and the centralization of administrative control over both sedentary and rural regions. As Di Cosmo explains, "So called steppe empires created fluid environments, suitable for travel and trade that allowed the peripheral civilizations to come into contact with one another" (Di Cosmo 1999: 4). Nomadic conquests identified a major epoch in the greater interrelation of societies not only in Eurasian terms, but also on the rural-urban and nomadic-sedentary scales.

As an outcome of trade, migration, conversion and conquest, such global transformations also involved major breakthroughs of civilizational importance. Similar to the original Axial age civilizational transformation in human reflexivity (roughly from the eighth to the 4th/3rd century B.C.E.), the 9th/10th to the 13th centuries displayed a momentous shift in reflexive consciousness on an Afro-Eurasian scale.[5] The transcultural age identifies, in a sense, an extension of the original Axial transformation on fundamental basis of human reflexivity and historicity "to reflect upon and give expression to an image of the world as having the potential of being different from what it was perceived to be here and now" (Wittrock 2001: 8). This mode of reflexity and communication ultimately entailed a new way of conceptualizing and articulating the self and reality in terms

5 By Axial age civilizations, Eisenstadt explains, "we mean those civilizations that crystallized during the half-millennium from 500 BCE to the first century of the Christian era, within which new types of ontological visions, conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders emerged and were institutionalized in many parts of the world" (Eisenstadt 2000: 2).

that go beyond the everyday mundane realities. With the increasing hybridization of consciousness (i.e. ways of reflexivity and modes of communication) through contact, exchange and conversion the period, then, saw the emergence of distinct of cultures, ethos and historical consciousness that intensified creative attempts to fuse the gap and, accordingly, overcome the tension between transcendental and mundane realities with the construction and regulation of social interaction.

In the 11th and 12th centuries the gradual appearance of new civilizational complexes in northwestern Europe, in what had previously been a marginal region of the Mediterranean-based civilizations, and the expansion of Italian maritime cities inaugurated a revolutionary development of tighter organization of the church, state and urbanization. The so-called feudal, urban, papal and intellectual revolutions manifested deep-seated changes in economic, political and religious institutions that, consequently, entailed cultural shifts of societal epistemic importance. With the rise of universities, for instance, the intellectual revolution not only introduced education to laymen, but also facilitated the acquisition of Greek knowledge through the intellectual advances made by the Muslims.

In close connection to the urban revolution and the triumph of papal monarchy between 1050 and 1300, the growth of "popular culture," sectarian and monastic orders (like the spread of the Cistercian movement in the 12th century), ushered in an age of carnivalesque practices and mystical movements, which ultimately culminated in the attempt to fuse the mundane and transcendental worlds within mass-popular and church-autonomous fields of social interaction. Although, as Moore argues, the "revolutionary" characteristics of the period between the 9th and 12th centuries were profoundly political in nature, the European experience of the transcultural age entailed transformations that went beyond state-organizational and class structural levels (Moore 2000). In this regard, the proliferation of pluralistic institutions – Church, nobility, city-state, and guilds – led to the formation of cultural spaces that increasingly separated the official from the non-official spheres of publicity.

In the Indic world, until the late 10th century Hindu rajas controlled Afghanistan and parts of eastern Persia to the upper Indus, while Gujerat maritime power limited the colonization of Islam from the sea along Indian Ocean shores. But when in the beginning of the 11th century northern India saw the southward invasion of the Gazna Turks, who owed allegiance to the Sâmânî rulers of Khurâsân, the Indic world began to undergo centuries of civilizational fusion. The 10th to the 12th centuries in this manner marked a crucial phase in the Southeast Asian civilizations, a period that involved a transition from pan-Indic to three interactive civilizations of Hinduism, Indo-Islam and Theravada Buddhism (Krejcí 1990). The transition involved cultural and vernacularization transformation, "a process of change by which the universalistic orders, formations, and practices of the preceding millennium were supplemented and gradually replaced by localized forms" (Eisenstadt/Schluchter/Wittrock 2001: 41). This process of vernacularization not only created new localities of distinct vernacular cultures, but also

saw an unprecedented growth of textual production that was unique in its "combination of antiquity, continuity, and multicultural interaction."[6] Central to this Indic case of civilizational interaction was primarily the exchange of Islamic and Hindu vernacular cultures that generated implicit dogmatic and ritualistic intermingling, to which the eventual emergence of the Sikhism in the 15th century would best represent this hybrid historical process.

As for China, the Neo-Confucian movement ushered the reaffirmation of the virtues and the continuity of the Confucian tradition, with its canocial system of belief, in the context of dynamic processes of the centralization under the Song dynasty. Central to the movement was the pursuit of the ideals of sainthood and self-cultivation, a spiritual quest that entailed the overcoming of selfishness and the enchantment of noble virutues inherent to human beings. Moreover, the synthesis of Buddhist dogma (and Daoist metaphyics) with Confucian philosophy created a new body of thought that underscored the creativily paradoxical process of preservation of tradition through the transformation of tradition.[7]

In the puzzling case of Japan, where the country enjoyed the natural protection of its insular position from foreign nomadic incursions, the samurai class, the landed lord and warriors, began to develop a distinct form of "honorific culture" in the 11th and 12th centuries (Ikegami 1995: 72-8). During this period, the samurai's military pride generated the construction of a community of honor, which set up the tradition of honorific individualism of self-discipline to produce a new consciousness on both individual and collective dimensions. As a consequence to the formation of samurai elite collectivity as a formidable ruling class, the emergence of a samurai honorific culture ushered the establishment of Shogunate political order that lasted for the next six and one-half centuries (1192-1867). Japan represents a distinct yet complicated case for the age of transcultural hybridity. As a non-Axial civilization, set apart from the Axial ones (mainly China, India and the Middle East), the dynamics of the Japanense culture was tied to the transformation of the samurai elite and its honorific culture, which effected state-building processes from the medieval to the early modern periods.

Perhaps in its most dynamic center of transcultural age, the Mediterranean

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6 As Pollock explains, the expansion of literary and political textual production, which "began in South India, Sri Lanka, and Java around 900 and reached maturity by 1200 occurred in northern India at a somewhat later date under conditions of political change different from what obtained in the south" Eisenstadt, Schluchter and Wittrock, 2000: 45-53). Similarly in China, this process of literary production saw its apogee under the reign of Song rule, during which the development of literary vernacular culture marked one of the high point in the history of Chinese literature. Also consider the case of Southeast Asian regions, like Vietnam, that, starting in the 1300s produced similar developments in the production of literary texts.

7 Consider, for instance, the case of Zhu Xi. His attempt to synthesize Buddhism and Confucian philosophy highlights interesting similiarties to Aquinas' fusion of Christian theology with Greek philosophy.

complex emerged to represent networks of commercial exchange, marking a cornerstone of the intercivilizational hybridity. Inseparable from the European agricultural revolution with the emancipation of the serfs, which resulted in the growth of trade and the burgeoning of towns, the budding Mediterranean urbanite civilizations provided an alternative seaborne route of conquest, pilgrimage and trade to traditional land-based means of transportation. Especially through trade and warfare, the region included a heightening of long-term structural conflict between vying local powers and complex exchanges of culture and religion.

This proliferation of encounter was twofold. First, with the growth of cities-states of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice, and the spread of trade, Christianity saw an increase of contact with Islamdom in northern African and eastern Mediterranean coastlines (Ashtar 1983: 3-63). The availability of traversing sea routes not only provided a new route for import of "Oriental" artifacts, but it also served to facilitate the existence of shared taste in architecture and cultural practices, vocabularies, meanings and interests that cut across localities.[8] Second, the pan-European expansionist Crusades, which originally began in France in 1095 and saw its most decisive defeat with the conquest of Acre by the Mamlûks in 1291, opened western Europe to the Islamic world by bringing the Iberian Peninsula, the Muslim north Africa and eastern Mediterranean shores closer together.[9] War and conquest in this fashion brought about commercial activities in such that not only supplied war and colonization materials to the warring regions, but also allowed the western Christian forces to take an active part in the importation of ideas, texts and cultural materials from the Moslem Levant to northern and southern Europe.[10]

At the heart of this Levantine interrelation between South European, North African and Mesopotamian regions was the greater fusion of Christian and Islamic civilizations, as symbols, rituals and popular expectations of imminent transformation, in the form of millenarian cultures, spread throughout the region in unprecedented ways. The consequence of this process of exchange by the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, as has been noted by Cornell Fleischer, was the in-

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8   Consider, for instance, the case of Venice. The Arabic influence on Venetian architecture, which in part was heavily influenced by Byzantium, is a powerful reminder of the interregional complex of the Mediterranean realm (Howard 2000: 2-5).

9   The first Crusade started in Clermont with the speech of Pope Urban II in 1095, which called for the conquest of Jerusalem.

10   As a result of the crusades, certain Muslim customs spread into late medieval Western Europe. Dress codes and general taste were imported from the Muslim world (mainly Muslim Spain, Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus) to the northern shores of eastern Mediterranean cities. But the momentum of exchange primarily involved ideas, philosophies and "oriental romance" from "Byzantium, Georgia, Armenia and Arabia/Persia" (Cardini 2001: 84). The first translations from Arabic texts into Latin, for instance, were completed around 1150 in Spain. As Cardini notes, this "was to change the face of Western learning" (Cardini 2001: 84).

terconnection of the northern and southern Mediterranean shores, sharing certain cultural traditions that mainly included common traits of millenarian expectation.[11] In extension, as has been argued in a seminal article by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, the 1500s saw the crystallization of pan-civilizational exchange of millenarian symbols, myths and traditions that helped to develop imperial projects from the Middle East to Southeast Asia (Subrahmanyam 1997: 735-62). In the first-half of the millennium, the Mediterranean domain provided a creative setting for the intermingling of cultures, involving momentous shifts along dimensions of reflexivity in terms of apocalyptic attempts to redefine the relationship between the mundane and transcendental worlds.

The notion of "connected history," coined by Subrahmanyam, invites us to consider the circulation of ideas, myths and rituals, in which cultures relentlessly maintain close proximity in hybrid spaces, wherein identity and alterity vie for power with unyielding intensity. Respective to the broader intercivilizational historical perspective from the 9th/10th to the 13th/14th centuries, the intracivilizational Islamic experience in the transcultural age of interconnected histories was mainly manifested with the emergence of the Turko-Persian Islamicate cultures, a point that I will expand upon in the following section.

The Turko-Persian ecumene and the rise of sûfî-brotherhoods

When non-Arabs became the rulers and obtained royal authority and control over the whole Muslim realm, the Arabic language suffered corruption. It would almost have disappeared, if the concern of Muslims with the Qur'ân and the Sunnah, which preserves Islam, had not also preserved the Arabic language. This (concern) became an element in favor of the persistence of the sedentary dialect used in the cities. But when the Tartars and Mongols, who were not Muslims, became the rulers of the East, this element in favor of the Arabic language disappeared, and the Arabic language was absolutely doomed. No trace of it has remained in these Muslim provinces: the non-Arab Irâq, Khurâsân, Southern Persia, eastern and western India, Transoxania, the northern countries, and Anatolia. The Arabic style of poetry and speech has disappeared, save for a (remnant) in the provinces of the non-Arab Irâq and beyond to the East, no trace or source of (the Arabic language) has remained. Even scientific books have come to be written in the Persian language, which is also used for teaching in Arabic classes (Ibn Khaldûn 1965: 295).

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11 Since *A Mediterranean Apocalypse* has not yet been published, I refer to Sanjay Subrahmanyam's brief description of Fleischer's work in "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* (Subrahmanyam 1997: 750).

So wrote Ibn Khaldûn in his famous *Muqddimah*. What characterizes the above-statement is the recognition of the widespread expansion of the Persianate culture in the 14th century, an expansion that caused Ibn Khaldûn to lament as the popularity of Persian replaced Arabic as the *lingua* franca of Islamdom. Although, as Ibn Khaldûn correctly notes, the Mongol conquest of the mid 13th century greatly helped the ongoing vernacular transformations away from Arabic in the Islamicate world, the shift in the choice of making literary and political texts in neo-Persian (*darik*) was, however, first undertaken around the 10th century at the Sâmânî court (819-1004.) in Transoxiana, which later expanded under the rule of Buyids (932-1062) and Persianized Turks, like the Ghaznavîds (989-1149).[12] The rise of the Muslim Persian states as representatives of Arab-Iranian cultural synthesis in the post-High Caliphate age (692-945) characterizes a major shift of civilizational importance; this development signaled the extraordinary efflorescence of the Islamized Persianite cosmopolitan culture that expanded over large areas of Anatolia, Transoxania and western India, where an exemplary instance of Arabic-Persian creolization and vernacularization took place.

Two centuries earlier, Abû-l-Rayhân al-Bîrûnî (973?-1048), the famous Khârazmian-Iranian scientist, in his *Kitâb al-Hind* dates the reign of Sabuktigîna at Ghaznah, Afghanistan, as the 'the days of the Turks' ('*ayyâm at-turk)*, a term that underlines an increase of interconnection between Iran-Mesopotamian, Anatolian-Mediterranean and Central Asian regions with the – gradual – migration of the Turks (Al-Biruni 1953: 16).

To all appearances the 11th century was a time when relations between the sedentary civilizations and the (semi) nomadic populations of Central Asia crossed a major threshold, whereby migration, conquest and conversion set off a critical socio-political and cultural organizational changes in the Islamdom; a process which reached its apogee with the Mongol incursion in the 13th century when nomad power reached the full capacity of its political organizational potential in Eurasia (Lewis 1988: 33-34; 88-89; Saunders 1982: 141). The emergence of the Turkish people, in their both detribalized (Ghaznavîds and Mamluks) and tribalized form (Seljuqs), ultimately opened the way for the establishment of the Persianized-Turkic powers, such as the Ottomans and the Safavis, in Asia Minor and Iran-Mesopotamian steppes, and the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi in the 13th century in the Panjab and most of the Gangetic plain (Hindustân).

The appearance of the Turkish and Persianate cultures in the Middle Period (945-1503), to use Hodgson's periodization, marks an era of unprecedented po-

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12 Neo-Persian was a simplified literary form of Pahlavî language (Middle Persian) from the Sâsânian era, written mainly in Arabic scripts. By raising this point, I am not ignoring the 'Abbâsid debt to the Sâsânîan Persian system of administration and government. Rather, I am merely indicating how it was under the Sâmânî power that the neo-Persian language emerged as the idiom of administration and court literary culture.

litical fragmentations and cultural creolization in the context of nomadic and sedentary relations.[13] According to Hodgson, the period of genesis (c. 600-945) saw the replacement of Syriac and Pahlavi ("Irano-Semitic") traditions by an Arabic culture on post-axial, agrariante and urbanite civilization; underpinning an inclusive Muslim community between the Nile and Oxus river developed on this basis. By contrast, the Middle Period was marked by a widening gap between state and society, the diffusion and pluralization of Sûfîsm and the expansion of neo-Persian as a literary language throughout a large part of the Afro-Eurasian landmass. In an article published posthumously in 1970, Hodgson described this period as an age of great cosmopolitan creativity that reached its height by the 16th century, when the main region of Islamdom came under the control of empires (Ottoman, Mughal and Safavi), administrated by military patronage states.[14]

The most critical threshold of the transcultural age in the (early) Middle Period of Islamic history was the Turkish migration from Central Asia. The successive waves of the Turkish migration from the steppe grass lands of Central Asia to the settled regions of Anatolia and the Iran-Mesopotamian plateaus began in the 9th century, when Turkish slaves were recruited in order to create a new military order, loyal to the Byzantine and the early Caliphate state.[15] The Turkish sociomilitary institution, in its various forms, had been in a sense the backbone of Caliphate, at least, from the end of the 9th century onwards. With the rise of the Ghaznavîds, military slave elites of Turkish origin emerged as heirs to the Caliphate political order.[16] The Saljuqs suzerainty in the 11th and the early 12th centuries,

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13 Hodgson lists six periods of Islamic history: the formative (to 692), the High Caliphate (to 945), the International Civilization (to 1258), the Age of Mongol Prestige (to 1503), the era of Gunpowder Empires (to c. 1800) and Modern Times, with the emergence of nation-states. The "Middle Period" groups together the third and fourth periods of this list (Hodgson 1974, 1: 98).

14 This was the fifth phase of Islamicate history, namely the era of "Gunpowder Empires." In this article, Hodgson argues that egalitarian and cosmopolitan elements in Islam, incorporated and institutionalized in the civilization of the Irano-Semitic societies, have made a lasting impact on interregional developments on a hemispheric-wide base (Hodgson 1970: 99-123).

15 Although they primarily served in the Muslim armies as early as 674 C.E. the systematic introduction of Turkish slaves into the Caliphate army occurred under the reign of Al-Mansûr (745-75) (Pipes 1981: 152). However, the creation of the slave soldier institution consisted of both free mercenaries recruited abroad and captured Turks among the tribes in Transoxnia, known in the Muslim world as Mamlûks (Crone 1980: 74-80).

16 It is important to note that the Persianization of Turkish people was a process already in the making with the rise of the Central-Asian trade in the 5th and early 6th centuries, when the Turks were in constant contact with the pre-Islamic Sâsânîd culture. Apart from pastoral nomads, the pre-Islamic Turkish society was never wholly nomadic; culturally and economically, it also included certain urban elements that had been shaped by commercial interests (Kwanten 1979: 32; 39-40; Cahen 1968: 5-7).

however, marked the establishment of the first non-slave Turkish nomadic empire that led the way to the revival of Orthodox Sunnism. The establishment of a non-military slave Turkish power with vast expansionist aspirations represents the first major nomadic conquest movement with religious renewalist dimensions.

In a sense, the migration of the tribal Turks to the Anatolian regions at the beginning of the 11th century, led to major demographic transformations.[17] This occurred in two major successive historical phases. The Saljuq victory over the Byzantines forces at the battle of Manzikert in 1071 inaugurated the first decisive stage, with major political consequences: the establishment of Turkish-speaking principalities in the western borderland marches as a way to challenge Byzantine control over Anatolia and the Islamic heartland. The ascend of the Tughil to the Caliphate seat of Baghdad in 1055, in this context, marked a combination of decisive leadership and military prowess as well as a deteriorating political and economic situation within the Islamic territories that enabled the first tribal Turks, the Saljuqs, to make themselves the dominante force in the Iran-Mesopotamian plateau. This socio-demographic process, known as "Turkicization," entered a second phase of development with the Mongol invasion of 1258, which intensified the Turkman migration to the western regions of Anatolia, replacing the Greek-Christian peasant population with Turkish groups of nomadic origin. Though sporadic movements occurred throughout the 11th to the 13th centuries, the 14th century highlights the finalization of a major demographical shift in Anatolia that involved radical changes of socio-cultural significance.

The transition from the early to the late Middle Period, as seen in the context of successive Turkish migrations to Anatolia, can be regarded as a revolutionary phase in two important ways. At one level, the complex process of hybridization of Arabic, Persian and Turkish cultural elements from the end of the High Caliphate to the establishment of the Ilkhânâte era in Iran in the 13th century, represents a new period of intense civilizational hybridization, and a new stage of the Turko-Persian ecumene. (Canfield 1991: xiv). The Turko-Persian Islamicate culture that had crystallized in eastern Iranian margin in the 11th century, and was later exported to cultural zones of south Asian India, was a product of intercivilizational encounters and open to further developments of that sort. In the particular case of Turkization of Anatolia from the 11th to the 14th centuries, the regional mixture of agrarian, nomadic tribal and urban settings was particularly favorable to cultural blending.[18] Accordingly, the fusion of Arabic-scriptural, Byzantine-

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17 Though non-nomadic Turkish settlers were already living in Khurâsân, Khwarazm and Transoxania by the time of Arab conquest in the seventh and eighth centuries, the most expansive southward migration of the Turks, as settlers and pastoralists, occurred mainly in the 11th century, which changed the ethnic composition of the Middle East.

18 Although Claude Cahen has argued that it is obviously impossible to give any figure for the Turkish immigration into Asia Minor, evidence indicates a long-term

Greek, Turkish-nomadic and Persianate-lettered traditions of the Middle Period paved the way for the creation of new cultural complexes.

At another level, this "mixed borderland civilization" also became a meeting ground of different religious traditions (Wittek 1996: 20). With regard to the interdependent process of migration and encounter, the blending of steppe (instrumental) religious practices of the Turkish nomads with the world (soteriological) religions of Iran-Semitic and Byzantine-Greek societies represents the crystallization of new cultural milieus, where nomadic and settled civilizations had to some extent been amalgamated;[19] this leveling of cultural and religious capacities opened the way for the breakdown of civilizational frontiers between steppe and sown. With the Islamization of Turks and the Turkization of Islam, shamanist ritual practices, performances to attain a trance state in order to communicate with the world of spirits for the purpose of fertility, healing, protection and aggression, were creatively fused with Islamic eschatology and the soteriological practices of divine guidance to pass reckoning on judgment day towards salvation.

From the 11th century onwards, the most original expression of this cross-fertilization between shamanistic and soteriological traditions was the emergence of Anatolian Sufism. In its distinct shamanistic form, Darvish Islam or "Islamicized shaman" (*Bâbâ* Islam) marked a dominant aspect of the daily life of the Turkish nomadic population, and indeed the main factor for the conversion of rural Asian Minor to Islam.[20] The strong popularity of spiritual leaders called *Bâbâ*s (whence the name *Bâbâi*s for their followers) reflected the widespread tendency of combining certain elements of Shi'i, Sunni, Persianiate ethos of chivalry (*javânmardî*) and Christian beliefs with shamanistic practices, in which *Bâbâ* Islamist groups like the *Bektâshî* Darvishism best attests (Köprülü 1978: 123).[21] As H.R. Roemer writes, the period marked an age of religious configura-

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process of conversion of the natives to Islam with the migration of Turkish Muslims to the region from the 11th to the 13th centuries (Cahen: 1968: 143; Levtzion 1979: 52-67).

19 The difference between instrumental and soteriological religions is primarily based on their experiential orientation towards the supernatural: whereas the former type represents the belief in salvation manifested in practices directed towards appeasing the supernatural with the aim of redemption, the later is directed towards making specific things happen in the world through magical practices of shamanism and spirit-possession. In this sense, instrumental religions are not based on faith, but rather on the notions of efficacy of spiritual experience to control the supernatural (Gellner 2001: 69-72).

20 As Kortepeter notes, the notion of "Islamized shaman" was also synonymous with the Turkish term of "bagiji" or sorcerer, which could imply the supernatural ability to illicit magic involving the use of medicines in order to harm others (Kortepeter 1991: 19)

21 The warrior ethos of *Javânmardî* was an ideal life, involving chivalry spirit based on physical masculine strength. Such ethos, originating from the pre-Islamic Per-

tions, in which a "popular religiosity became widespread […] These included a marked willingness to believe in miracles, a cult of saint with the growth of much frequented places of pilgrimage, and even the veneration of 'Alî, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad […]" (Jackson/Lockhart 1968, 6: 192). Correspondingly, the popularization of Shi´i saintly figures, like 'Alî as a source of mystical veneration by various Islamic sects, especially the Sûfî-Sunni orders, generated what has been called by C. Cahen as the "Shi´itization of Sunnism."[22]

Although by the 11th century Sufîsm had already played a considerable role in the development of the Islamic faith, leading up to al-Ghazali's legitimation of Sufîsm with his greatest work *The Revivification of the Religious Sciences* in the 12th century, this variegated mystical movement experienced a growth of popularity with the rise of *Bâbâ* Islam. The fusion of Sûfîesque Shi´isectarianism and millenarian movements in the later Middle Period can in part be credited to this process of religious hybridity, whereby Shi'i, Sunni and Sûfî practices and creeds intermingled in close proximity and at times overlapped in the shifting spaces of everyday interaction.[23] But with the emergence of the Turkish Sûfî-brotherhood orders – the so-called "*ghâzî*" warriors" – such movements gave a political expression to this civilizational fusion. It was at this stage that Sufîsm began to be transformed from loose associations into organized religious orders (*tariqa*) with their own distinctive cultural practices, forming spiritual brotherhoods in the form of popular mass movements whose leaders where some of the greatest political and religious reformers of Islam.

The origins of these brotherhood associations traces back to the 8th century small ascetic brotherhoods on the island of Abadan in the Persian Gulf (Ayoub 2004: 153) and, later in the 10th century, to the urban-based "pure brethren" of the Qaramati movement. The Qarmati brotherhoods played a great role in the development of the Islamic guilds in the 10th century, and the *futuvvat* associations that were revived under the reign of Caliph An-Nâsî in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, as a consequence of the expansion of trade and revival of towns under the Saljuq rule (Lewis 1937: 20-37).[24] In the early Middle Periods, these rela-

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sianiate culture, was later incorporated into the *futuvvat* fraternal circles of Middle Period Islamic history (Babayan 2002: 168-69).

22 Quoting C. Cahen in Arjomand's *Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Arjomand 1984: 67).

23 For the best exposition of Sûfî history of later Middle Period, see Arjomand (1981). It is important to note, however, that Sûfîsm and Islamic messianic movements (especially in its Shi'i form of Mahdîsm) existed in earlier periods of Islamic history, and that they were not essentially inclusive of each other. The histories of Abbâsîd and the Isma'ilî (Fâtimîd) revolutions in the 8th and the 10th centuries, for instance, are replete with apocalyptic and messianic beliefs in the Mahdî that "spread widely beyond other extremist Shiite groups" (Amanat & Bernhardson 2002: 114).

24 Although they were consolidated under An-Nâsî, according to Arnakis however, the *futuvvat* associations first appeared in the 9th century in the form of "volunteer war-

tively autonomous movements, in the form of popular militia and volunteer Sûfî-guild associations, played a crucial role in the local governance of eastern Islam-dom, which reached maturity as a political and social force from the 11th to the 14th centuries.[25] With their own Sûfî mystical ceremonies and chivalric ritual practices, the *futuvvat* associations combined ethical codes of egalitarianism, in the Persianate form of *Javânmardî* and the *Mazdakî* notions of piety, with non-egalitarian charismatic elitist ethos of master (*pîr*)-disciple and patron-client rela-tions.[26] Ties of blood and kinship affiliations were less important than competi-tion for the sacred status of leadership in the clubs, manifested in the paradoxical notion of "first among equals," which reflected the brotherhood spiritual charac-ter of the associations.

Especially in the later Middle Period, 1200-1501, after the Mongol invasion, culminating in the conquest of Baghdad in 1258 and the disintegration of the ´Abbâsid Caliphate, the *futuvvat* associations began to merge with the Anatolian-Sûfî orders, a process that during the 14th century spread further into the Islam-dom with the increasing intermingling of rural and urban relations as a conse-quence of migration and nomadic incursions (Lewis, 1937: 27-28).[27] The blend-ing between *futuvvat* and the Anatolian-Sûfî orders created the *akhîyat al-fityân* or *akhî* movements, which tended to fuse the horseback warrior culture of Cen-tral Asia with the sedentary Iran-Semitic Messianic traditions. Recruited mainly among the craftsmen, and composed of associations of young men organized as guilds in Anatolia in the 13th and 14th century, the *akhî*s shared the basic rules of *futuvvat* (Cook 1970: 16-17). Built around the warrior ethos of steppe regions and the Qura `nic notion of justice, the brotherhoods lived by a strict code of masculine honor, an ethic of bravery, embedded in a culture of reference for spiritual sacred persons (shaman) and belief in the potential to unite the mundane

rior guilds" (Arkakis 1953: 232-47). The literal meaning of the term "*futuvvat*" is youthfulness and by implication chivalry (Keyvani 1982: 25). But the term is also associated with the Middle Persian word of *javânmardî* or chivalry (Kâshifî 1983: 9).

25 As Hodgson notes, by the end of the Middle Periods, the *futuvvat* had become the mystical expression of urbanite guild associations with their own political and reli-gious authority (Hodgson 1974, 1: 130-131).

26 The *Mazdakîs* were a Zoroastrian gnostic movement that emerged as a sectarian movement in sixth century pre-Islamic Persia. They advocated radical egalitarian values with strong this-worldly inclinations. The precise influence of the late Sâssâniân tradition of *javânmardî* and *Mazdakîs* on the *futuvvat*, which also in-cluded similar youthful masculinist ritual practices and ethical ideals, is unclear. For a good description of the *Mazdakî* movement, see Babayan (2002: 170, 265-271).

27 It is important to note that such process appears to have already occurred with the first wave of Turkish migration to Anatolia and Iran-Mesopotamian regions. The emergence of the Qalândarî-e movement in eastern Khurâsân and western parts of central Asia in the 10th century serves as a good example in the rise of Sûfî-brotherhoods in the early Middle Period (Karamustafa 1994).

with the supernatural world through ritual, ceremony and, above all, war. Throughout Islamdom, the brotherhood orders began to organize themselves with a hierarchy, evolving around the charismatic leader, his deputies *(khalifâh)* and ordinary followers (*murîds*). With relative autonomy, they constituted a counter political culture that created its own political conception of Islamic justice, contravention of the *sharî´a*, distinctive ceremonies (i.e. dance-trance rituals of *zîkr*), clothing, public spaces (*takkiyah*) and incorporation of various "heterodoxical" beliefs and doctrines, based on what Karamustafa calls "an uncompromising antinomianism" (Karamustafa 1994: 17).

The emergence of the Sûfî-brotherhoods in the 14th century identifies a fascinating example of this civilizational experimentation, a process that led to the formation of new political orders with the establishment of the Ottoman and Safavi Empires from the 14th to the early 16th centuries, reshaping the political cultural landscape of Islamdom. But, with the emergence of the Turko-Persian Islamicate cultures, this new historical configuration also created new ways of reflexivity and modes of communcation, marking a new Axial condition that generated new types of eschatological, cosmological and symbolic realities in vernacular hybrid terms. The Middle Period Islamic Axiality, in this regard, idenitifies an integral part of the transcultural age, in which through encounter, emerging societies reformulated new expressions to defining self and other, knowledge and reality by transcending pre-existing social and cultural boundaries, and integrating new institutional arrangements in transcendental terms.

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