CHAPTER FIVE

IMPERIAL AND OTHER PROJECTS

According to a license of audition (jāzat al-samā‘) written on the verso of the first leaf of the earliest known copy of the ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif the text was transmitted along with al-Suhrawardī’s manual for pilgrims to Mecca, the Ḥīyat al-nāsik fi ‘l-manāsik, and his ten-chapter creed, the A‘lām al-hudā wa-‘l-aqīdat arbā‘ al-tuqā, to the copyist and owner of the manuscript, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mālinī, sometime before 605/1208–1209 when it was dictated to a group of students in the Rībāt al-Marzubāniyya by Suhrawardī’s disciple and personal secretary Najm al-Dīn al-Tīflīsī (d. 631/1234).1 Although not specifically mentioned in this particular jāzat, other licenses of audition evince that the ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif was not the only text transmitted in Suhrawardī’s ribāṭ, and it is reasonable to assume that the A‘lām al-hudā was transmitted in the shaykh’s majlis alongside other texts such as his polemic against Peripatetic philosophy.

1 MS. Süley., Lâlâ İsmail Ef. 180, fol. 1a. This occurred in the same year when Suhrawardī returned from his mission to the Ayyubids, his ostentatious entry into the city resulting in his being stripped of the mashyakha of the ribāṭs which al-Nāfi had formerly granted him as well as his removal from the position of Tuesday preacher at the Bādrist al-Sharīf Gate (see Chapter Two, s.v. “An Indiscretion”). A Sufi, poet, and muhaddith who distinguished himself through his knowledge of jurisprudence and its fundamentals (al-ulūm), Arabic, traditions (ṣiḥḥāt), poetry, and Sufism (ṣalāk), Tīflīsī would assist his master by correcting the mistakes which he found in his writings. It is not clear how long al-Tīflīsī stayed with Suhrawardī, but according to al-Mundhirī—who expresses regret over not having met him but did hear some of his poetry from Najm al-Dīn’s companions—he is said to have gone to Egypt as an emissary of the caliphal court (al-dīwān al-wāṣīq), perhaps accompanying his master on his diplomatic mission to the Ayyubids in 604/1207–1208. At some point al-Tīflīsī left Baghdad for good, journeying to Syria. Ibn al-Mustawfī met him in Irbil in 612/1215, saying that he settled down at the Junayniyya Khānaqāh for a time and composed poetry there. His final stop, however, was Damascus, where he served as the shaykh of the Asadiyya Khānaqāh, becoming known as an expert in Sufism and poetry, occupying himself, as his biographers say, with the ‘pursuit of knowledge in the sciences of the shari‘a and tariqā’. Known for his good hand, al-Tīflīsī’s collection of books were bequeathed to the Shumaysīṭīyya Khānaqāh upon his death, in Damascus, on the 17th of Jumāda I, 631/18 February, 1234. He was buried in the graveyard of the Sufis. He is one of the disciples for whom Suhrawardī wrote a wasiyya. On him, see TI, 1:258–260 (no. 157); TW, 6:102 (no. 2529); Dkh, 162 (anno 631); al-Dhahabi, Ishārat, 333 (anno 631), and, Tbl, 52:57–59 (anno 631, no. 16); and, Nihat, 6:286.
the *Kashf al-fadā‘iḥ al-yūnāniyya wa-rashf al-naṣā‘iḥ al-īmāniyya*, and his Qur’ānic commentary, the *Nughbat al-bayān fi tafsīr al-qur‘ān*.2

As discussed in the first chapter of this book, to participate in the transmission of texts in such a manner was an important enunciation of affiliation and identity, the transmission event itself, whether occurring in a madrasa or Sufi ribāṭ, being framed by a well-established complex of behaviors, practices, ideas, and symbols which defined and regulated the transmission of religious learning and the very social relationships through which it was effected. Authority was literally written in the act of transmission itself. For those who might have happened to be present in a majlis during which the shaykh was transmitting his *Aš‘ām al-hudā, after what must have been many hours of dictation, one of the final statements which they would have transcribed in their own copies is the creed’s penultimate article of faith, an affirmation which while neither novel nor unusual, is possessed of a certain potency when read against both the creed as a whole and Suhrawardī’s quite public relationship with the individual who financed the very ribāṭs in which such transmissions took place:

We believe (nā‘aqidū) that the caliphate resides with the Quraysh until the Day of Resurrection and that it will not be bestowed upon anyone else other than them. We believe in the necessity of obedience to the Imam of the time, who is from the Abbasids, and who grants the right to rule to those who govern on their behalf, and we deem fighting one who revolts against the caliph (ināmū) as necessary.3

Followed as it is with an affirmation of his adherence to the collective consensus (ijmā‘) of the broader Sunni community (*ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a*), Suhrawardī’s affirmation of this article of faith is telling. Referencing the juridical configuration of authority particular to the *siyāsa sharī‘ya* works, Suhrawardī clearly enunciates that the particular *Personengruppe* on whose behalf he speaks fully supports the so-called

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2 al-Suhrawardī, *Rashf al-naṣā‘iḥ*, MS. Suley., Reisülküttap 465a, fol. 1a (transmitted over a series of sessions in the Ribāṭ al-Ma‘mūniyya which ended on Thursday, the 16th of Shawwāl, 621 / 31 Oct., 1224; idem, *Nughbat al-bayān*, MS. Aleppo, al-Madrasa al-Uthmānīyya 25 (currently Asadiyya 14769), fol. 2a & 282a (autographed *tulqīn al-dhikr* ījāzā for the text, and an ījāzā ‘umma granted to his disciple Jalāl al-Dīn al-Tabrīzī (d. 641/1243); and, ibid., MS. Suley., Hacı Beşir Ağa Eyyüb 24, fol. 1a (autographed ījāzā in which al-Suhrawardī records the transmission of both this copy of the *Nughbat al-bayān* as well as *Iṣfahānī’s Hitṣat al-a‘liyya* to al-Tīfīzī in 610/1214).

3 *AH*, 91; cf. idem, *Idālat al-qiyān ‘alā l-burhān*, MS. Bursa, Ulu Cami 1597a, fol. 85a–85b (not the best copy, but the most complete manuscript).