
With this translation of Ibn ‘Atā Allāh’s Ḥikam and Anšārī’s Munājāt the Paulist Press introduces the Islamic section of its series, The Classies of Western Spirituality. The volume combines short works of two Sufi authors and Islamic mystics, who flourished some two centuries apart in widely disparate lands. Anšārī (d. 1089) was a šāfi‘ī pīr who lived on the Iranian plateau at Herat and recorded his mystical prayers in beautiful Persian prose. Ibn ‘Atā Allāh (d. 1309) was a learned Mālikī shaykh, active on the banks of the Nile at Alexandria and Cairo, who couched his spiritual aphorisms in forceful Arabic prose.


Danner’s present translation is a reprint of his previously published text, without making any reference to that fact. Thackston’s translation acknowledges earlier renderings and accomplishes both a more accurate translation that Arberry’s highly poetic version and a more reliable rendering than those of Singh and Morris/Sarfeh. However, neither Danner’s nor Thackston’s translation is based on a critically edited text. Thackston is aware of working on a text of the Munajāt that is neither edited nor standardized in its many Persian versions. His choice of the Teheran lithograph of 1940 and Mīr ‘Imād’s calligraphic reproduction of 1955 as the basis for his translation appears to be most
judicious under the circumstances. Danner uses two manuscripts of the Hikam (mss. Escorial 763 and 786) and one unreliable Arabic text that is appended to Ibn 'Ajiba's Iqāṣ al-himam fi sharḥ al-hikam. Cairo (no date). However, he does not appear to consult Nwyia's excellent edition of the Arabic text that has been published side by side with the latter's French translation.