

be found, which is an achievement in current publishing. All chapters are clearly structured with an introduction outlining the aim of research, its transparent implementation, and explicit final conclusions. Very useful are the numerous tables attached to the different chapters that show the financial aspects of land and its assignation to *al-diwān al-mufrad*, the types and geographic distribution of state land that was turned into private and *waqf* lands, the office holders in the management of “waqfized” lands, and others. This is a very good study of available sources and an important presentation of the state of the art of one of the pivotal moments in Islamic history.

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Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love. By JOSEPH E. B. LUMBARD. SUNY Series in Islam. Albany: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS, 2016. Pp. x + 259. \$80.

Until recently the less famous of the Brothers Ghazālī had attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. Turns out that growing up even posthumously in the long shadow cast by one of the most revered Muslim sages of all, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), is hard. This new study by Joseph Lumbard sheds welcome light on the younger Aḥmad (d. 1123), revealing a remarkably creative thinker and author who has at last begun to hold his own under the glare of scholarly interrogation.

Lumbard’s chief accomplishments in this study are three. First, he has extracted from a wide range of sources the first (to my knowledge) coherent version of Aḥmad’s personal religious history. I found Lumbard’s thoughtful acknowledgment and critique of the hagiographical dimension of Aḥmad’s larger narrative particularly interesting. After years in the reflected glow of Abū Ḥāmid, Aḥmad not only outshone his sibling in the reverential estimation of some, but became a benchmark against whose spiritual qualifications even earlier stalwarts suddenly found their reputations slipping. More importantly, Lumbard does a very credible job of redressing the lack of historical detail that for so long created a vacuum that only effusive and suspiciously credulous adulation could fill. Lumbard’s survey of “Primary Sources for al-Ghazālī’s *Vita*” is excellent. The breadth of his coverage of corroborating material, not only regarding hagiographical themes, but across the board, is impressive both in historical sweep and the diversity of authorities he explores. His evaluation of the importance of accounts of Aḥmad’s “sessions” in rounding out the shaykh’s image is noteworthy. Emerging from the welter of evidentiary material is a rich but critically evaluated biography that follows Aḥmad from

his early years in northeastern Iran, through his gradual westward migration as far as Baghdad, and his continued regional peregrinations as an itinerant preacher that brought him back to northwestern Iran toward the end of his life. Studying with a variety of mentors along the way, both in the “exoteric” religious sciences broadly and Sufism in particular, Aḥmad also developed and taught his own distinctive brand of spiritual/psychological discernment.

Second, Lumbard has situated Aḥmad in a broader intellectual history, from influences on his life and thought, through his own appropriation and integration of both the theological and literary contributions of his forebears, to key aspects of his reception history and impact on subsequent generations. Lumbard sifts through the rather meager previous scholarly debate on works attributed to Aḥmad to produce a well-substantiated catalog of his actual output. Of particular interest, and pedagogical utility, is Lumbard’s concise and highly informative overview of already-classical sources from which Aḥmad drew as he developed his distinctive views on the centrality of the much-debated notion of love. Lumbard argues persuasively that Aḥmad’s bold take on love was a “watershed event in Sufi history, the impact of which has shaped Persian Sufi literature to this day” (p. 149).

Third, Lumbard has analyzed in arresting detail both the literary and epistemological aspects of Aḥmad’s unique contribution to the “metaphysics of love.” Al-Ghazālī’s sophisticated appreciation of the relationships between form and meaning builds upon his familiarity with masters of classical Arabic and Persian lyric poetry. He refines for his theological purposes (as other Sufi authors before and after him) ore from the rich veins of metaphor earlier tapped by “secular” poets, resulting in imagery all the more striking for that provenance. Lumbard deftly describes Aḥmad’s integration of the aesthetic and affective meanings of the interwoven concepts of spirit, heart, beauty, and suffering love into the complex process of transformative spiritual journeying.

Lumbard’s work makes a welcome contribution by filling in a major lacuna in the historical study of Sufism and medieval Persian (and Arabic) religious literature. It will also make for an excellent teaching tool in graduate or advanced undergraduate courses. Given the relative technical density of the text, the inclusion of a glossary of Arabic and Persian terms would have facilitated the latter purpose.

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