



BRILL

‘Ayn al-Qudāt between Divine Jealousy and Political Intrigue

Mohammed Rustom

Carleton University (Canada)

mrustom@connect.carleton.ca

Abstract

Modern scholars have been interested in the great Persian Sufi martyr ‘Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) for over six decades. Despite this fact, many aspects of his life and thought still remain *terra incognita*. Our knowledge of the circumstances surrounding his death is a case-in-point. Although we have a fairly good understanding of the factors which led to ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s demise, there are other “causes” which simultaneously complement and problematize this understanding. Chief amongst these are the underlying reasons for ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s critique of the Seljuk government, as well as something which ‘Ayn al-Qudāt saw as a more subtle cause for his death several years before his anticipated state execution.

Keywords

autobiography – ‘Ayn al-Qudāt – causes – execution – heresy – Persian Sufism – Seljuks

1 Introduction

Since the appearance of the pioneering work of Raḥīm Farmanish and ‘Afif ‘Usayrān on the famous Sufi and legal judge ‘Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) over six decades ago,¹ scholarship has proliferated on this important figure,

1 Raḥīm Farmanish, *Aḥwāl wa-āthār-i ‘Ayn al-Qudāt* (Tehran: Chāp-i Āftāb, 1959). ‘Usayrān published critical editions of three of ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s five extant works under one cover, along

particularly in Iran.² In the Euro-American academy contributions have been few and far between. There are however some excellent studies published in English, such as Peter Awn's analysis of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's satanology, Toshihiko Izutsu's penetrating explication of his metaphysics and epistemology, Leonard Lewisohn's masterful treatment of the theme of death and annihilation in 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, and Omid Safi's subtle reading of the historical and political factors which were directly responsible for his imprisonment and execution.³ In French, particularly noteworthy is Christiane Tortel's translation of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's masterpiece the *Tamhīdāt* (*Preparatory Remarks*),⁴ and Salimeh Maghsoudlou's award-winning study of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's engagement with the traditions of Islamic philosophy and scholastic theology which preceded him.⁵

As for the two books that are available on 'Ayn al-Quḍāt in English,⁶ they have given us something of a window into the originality and complexity of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's life and thought, but have also rightfully been criticized for

with a lengthy introduction, as *Muṣannafāt-i 'Ayn al-Quḍāt* [also under the title *Zubdat al-ḥaqā'iq*], ed. 'Afif 'Usayrān (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1962).

- 2 The best-known titles include Ghulām Riḍā Afrāsiyābī, *Sultān-i 'ushshāq* (Shiraz: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Shīrāz, 1993); Najib Māyil Hirawī, *Khāṣṣiyyat-i āyinagī: naqd-i ḥāl guzārayi ārā wa-guzida-yi āthār-i fārsī-yi 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī* (Tehran: Nashr-i Nay, 1995); Nasrollah Pourjavady, *'Ayn al-Quḍāt wa-ustādān-i ū* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭir, 1995). Māyil Hirawī's book is particularly helpful in that it presents a carefully selected anthology of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's Persian writings.
- 3 See, respectively, Peter Awn, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption: Iblīs in Sufi Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 134–50; Toshihiko Izutsu, "Creation and the Timeless Order of Things: A Study in the Mystical Philosophy of 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani," *Philosophical Forum* 4, no. 1 (1972): 124–40; Izutsu, "Mysticism and the Linguistic Problem of Equivocation in the Thought of 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani," *Studia Islamica* 30 (1976): 153–70; Leonard Lewisohn, "In Quest of Annihilation: Imaginalization and Mystical Death in the *Tamhīdāt* of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadhānī," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (vols. 1–3) and David Morgan (vol. 3) (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 1:285–336; Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 158–200.
- 4 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Les Tentations métaphysiques*, trans. Christiane Tortel (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1992). Readers would also do well to consult Hermann Landolt's review (in French) of this translation: "Review of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Les Tentations métaphysiques*, translated by Christiane Tortel," *Bulletin critique des Annales islamologiques* 11 (1994): 86–7.
- 5 Salimeh Maghsoudlou, "La pensée de 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī (m. 525/1132), entre avicennisme et héritage gāzālīen" (PhD diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2016). See also her detailed study, "Étude des doctrines du nom dans *al-Maqṣad al-asnā* d'al-Ghazālī et de leur origine théologique et grammaticale," *Studia Islamica* 112, no. 1 (2017): 29–75.
- 6 Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadhānī* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999) and Firoozeh Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death: Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadhānī* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

their careless handling of the primary source materials and idiosyncratic interpretations.⁷ Without a doubt, one characteristic feature of much of the scholarship in contemporary Iran and these two books in English is that ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s writings have not been studied in their entirety. Failure to do so has resulted in serious, impartial readings and ultimately faulty interpretations of the key concepts which animate ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s worldview.⁸

A close reading of all of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s works presents us with a much more accurate picture of his central ideas, technical terminology, understanding of history, and his own self-perception as a legal judge, spiritual guide, and martyr-in-the-making. This latter point shall be the focus of the present article. A careful study of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s works confirms the observations that have already been made concerning the level of political intrigue involved in bringing about his state-sponsored execution.⁹ At the same time, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s writings also give us a window into his own understanding of the deeper, more subtle causes for his death. One in particular was a phenomenon known in Sufism as the “divine jealousy” (*ghayra*), to which we shall return in due course.

At present, it shall suffice to note that, amidst the constellation of outward, historical factors which were responsible for ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s death, he also anticipated this occurrence well before he was sent to prison, and this on account of his falling victim to the dynamic of divine jealousy which lay behind these more perceptible, causal phenomena. But before delving into the politics of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s execution and what he saw as its “vertical” cause, we shall turn to his life and autobiography, as well as the accusations made against him and his subsequent imprisonment in Baghdad.

7 For a thorough critique of Dabashi’s book, see Joseph Lumbard, “Review of Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt Hamadhāni*,” *Muslim World* 96.3 (2006): 532–4. Critical assessments of Papan-Matin’s study can be found in Bernd Radtke, “Review of Firoozeh Papan-Matin’s *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt al-Hamadhāni*,” *Oriens* 41, no. 1–2 (2013): 194–205 and Mohammed Rustom, “Review of Firoozeh Papan-Matin’s *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt al-Hamadhāni*,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 213–16.

8 This problem is overcome in a forthcoming work, which offers a careful reading of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s thought along with over five hundred passages from his writings in translation: Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit: The Mystical Theology of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt* (Albany: SUNY Press, forthcoming). For a listing of secondary scholarship on ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, see the bibliography in this work, s.v. “Studies on ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt.”

9 See Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 182–200.

2 Biography and Autobiography

Abū'l-Ma'ālī 'Abd Allāh al-Miyānjī, more commonly known as 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, was born in the Western Iranian city of Hamadan in 490/1097.¹⁰ His family originally hailed from Miyāna, Azerbaijan. The sources all point out that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was born into a family of learning. Both his grandfather (also a martyr) and his father were judges in Hamadan. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt may have had a son named Aḥmad.¹¹ If this was the case, we do not have any information concerning his son's whereabouts after the demise of his father.

'Ayn al-Quḍāt received his legal training in the Shāfi'ī tradition, and his training in theology in what was by his time the most widely available form of rational theology (*kalām*), namely Ash'arism. Some sources mention that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was the student of the great philosopher and mathematician 'Umar Khayyām (d. ca. 517/1124), but it is rather difficult to ascertain the accuracy of such statements.¹² It is clear from his writings that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt excelled in all of the Islamic sciences, and had an especially strong attachment to Arabic language, poetry, and literary culture (*adab*) in general. We are not sure when 'Ayn al-Quḍāt received his title of distinction ("Ayn al-Quḍāt" literally means "the most eminent of judges"), although it indicates that he rose to some level of prominence in his function as a judge and religious figure at some point in his short life and career. It can fairly be surmised that this must have been when 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was still a young man, perhaps before he was twenty, since he had already begun writing books in the Islamic intellectual sciences around that age.¹³

We know from an autobiographical note in his Arabic work *Zubdat al-ḥaqā'iq* (*The Quintessence of Reality*) (written in 514/1120 at the age of twenty-four) that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt had gone through a period of intellectual crisis, in roughly 506/1112, on account of his preoccupation with rational theology. He

10 Landolt, *El3*, s.v. "Al-Hamadānī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt (part 1)."

11 Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative*, 75–6, questions whether 'Ayn al-Quḍāt actually had a son. He mentions a certain "*farzand Aḥmad*" three times in his writings, and always with the prayer, "God preserve him," which he does not use with reference to anyone else. The contexts in which these references occur lean in favour of Aḥmad being 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's biological child. See 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, ed. 'Alī Naqī Munzawī (vols. 1–3) and 'Afif 'Usayrān (vols. 1–2) (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭir, 1998), 1:363, § 605; 2:151, § 221; 2:438, § 676.

12 This claim is rejected in Māyil Hirawī, *Khāṣṣiyat-i āyinagī*, 31. For a study of Khayyām's life and work, see Mehdi Aminrazavi, *The Wine of Wisdom: The Life, Poetry and Philosophy of Omar Khayyam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005).

13 He mentions a work that he wrote, at the age of twenty-one, on the demonstrative proof of prophecy. See 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat al-ḥaqā'iq*, in part II of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Muṣannaḥāt*, 4.

credits a close to four year period of immersion in Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) writings, presumably the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*)¹⁴ in particular, as having rescued him from his predicament and for compelling him to turn more fully to Sufism:

My excuse for plunging into every science is clear: the one drowning clings to all things, hoping for salvation. Had God, out of His bounty and generosity, not delivered me from it, I would have been on the edge of a pit of fire. This is because I used to study the books of theology, seeking to lift myself from the lowland of blind-following (*taqlīd*) to the summit of insight (*baṣīra*). But I did not obtain my goal from these books. In fact, I became so confounded by the foundations of the schools of theology that I fell into predicaments which cannot be recounted....

After God's bounty, nothing other than a study of the books of the Proof of Islam Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī revived me from my down-trodden state. I studied his books for almost four years. In this period of my preoccupation with the sciences [of Sufism], I saw many wonders which are amongst the things that saved me on the path from unbelief, error, bewilderment, and blindness.¹⁵

Yet 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's eventual "turn" to Sufism might have been precipitated by his earlier contact with a certain Shaykh Baraka (d. ca. 520/1126), whose company he kept for some seven years.¹⁶ We do not know exactly when 'Ayn al-Quḍāt met Shaykh Baraka, or even the exact date of the latter's death; what we do know is that Shaykh Baraka was unique in that he could barely recite the Quran and had no formal learning, but was spiritually very advanced.¹⁷

14 For a new interpretation of the nature and function of this work, see Kenneth Garden, *The First Islamic Reviver: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and His Revival of the Religious Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–5.

15 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat*, 6. Cf. the translation of this passage in Lewisohn, "In Quest of Annihilation," 1:291. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. It should also be noted that my translations of passages from the *Quintessence* differ in every instance, and sometimes quite substantially, from Omar Jah's translation: *The Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh* [sic] *al-Hamadānī* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2000). A new translation of this work (with parallel Arabic text) is forthcoming: *The Quintessence of Reality*, trans. Mohammed Rustom (New York: New York University Press).

16 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:46, § 52. For Shaykh Barakah, see Pourjavady, *'Ayn al-Quḍāt wa-ustādān-i ū*, 95–133. At p. 105, Pourjavady deduces from evidence in 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's writings that Shaykh Baraka would have died at some point between 520/1126 and 524/1130.

17 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 2:51, §§ 50–1.

In 513/1119,¹⁸ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt became the disciple of Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī’s younger brother and one of the foremost Sufi masters of his day, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), during one of the latter’s visits to Hamadan.¹⁹ After explaining the manner in which Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s *Revival* led ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt to “see many wonders,” he goes on to recount his attendant spiritual situation, and the eventual meeting with Aḥmad al-Ghazālī:

Suddenly, the eye of insight (*‘ayn al-baṣīra*) began to open. Lest you be deluded in your thought, I do not mean the insight of the intellect. The eye of insight opened, little-by-little.... I remained like this for almost a year. Thereafter, I did not fathom the reality of the situation that I was in during that year until destiny brought my Master, the Shaykh, the most illustrious leader, the sultan of the Path and interpreter of reality, Abū’l-Futūḥ Aḥmad al-Ghazālī to Hamadan, my birthplace.²⁰

In all likelihood, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī had some formal tie to Hamadan, perhaps even having had a Sufi lodge (*khānaqāh*) or at least a gathering-place of sorts in the city. Although ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt also speaks admiringly of other important teachers, namely the aforementioned Shaykh Baraka, Muḥammad b. Ḥamūya al-Juwaynī (d. 530/1137),²¹ and one Shaykh Faṭḥa,²² it is under the guidance of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt received a great spiritual opening which left an indelible mark upon his soul:

In the service (*khidma*) of Shaykh Aḥmad, the veil of bewilderment was lifted from the face of this situation in less than twenty days.... Then something dawned on me which caused neither myself nor my seeking other than that thing to remain, except as God wills. For the past few years, and even now, I have had no other occupation other than seeking annihilation in that thing.²³

18 Pourjavady, *‘Ayn al-Quḍāt wa-ustādān-i ū*, 104. Farmanish, *Aḥwāl wa-āthār*, x, gives a possible date of 515/1121, but with little substantial evidence.

19 For an excellent study of the life and thought of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, see Lombard, *Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2016).

20 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat*, 7. Cf. the translation of this passage in Lombard, *Aḥmad al-Ghazālī*, 26–7.

21 Landolt, *El3*, s.v. “Al-Hamadāni, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt (part 1).”

22 See ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, ed. ‘Afif ‘Usayrān (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Manūchīhrī, 1994), 315, § 525; *Nāmāhā*, 2:439, § 690; 2:403, § 227. According to Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 132, Shaykh Faṭḥa was the master of Shaykh Baraka.

23 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat*, 7. Cf. the translation of this passage in Lombard, *Aḥmad al-Ghazālī*, 26–7. For the “thing” in question, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 12.

‘Ayn al-Quḏāt continued to receive instruction from Aḥmad al-Ghazālī even after he left the city, which is evidenced by a series of correspondences between them which reveal their mutual love and affection for one another.²⁴ On account of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s significant accomplishments on the Sufi path under the formal guidance of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī and through his ties with the likes of Shaykh Baraka and Shaykh Faṭḥa, he himself was appointed by Aḥmad al-Ghazālī as one of his spiritual successors. Given the fact that Aḥmad al-Ghazālī died in 520/1126, and assuming that ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt took up his assigned function after the death of his master, he would have been around twenty-nine years of age when he became a spiritual master.

We can safely surmise that ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt earned his livelihood as a legal judge, even after he became a spiritual guide. We know that he operated a Sufi lodge in Hamadan, where he would train his disciples.²⁵ At the same time, he also taught daily classes in the Islamic sciences to a wider audience; at times, he tells us, these classes numbered seven or eight a day.²⁶ Another means through which ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt trained his Sufi disciples was by way of formal correspondence. Amongst his extant writings, we have a precious collection of nearly 160 letters, collectively referred to as the *Nāmahā* (*Letters*), that he wrote to his students in response to their spiritual and intellectual questions.²⁷ These letters offer us a wealth of autobiographical and biographical information, and give us an extremely valuable window into ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s social and political context.²⁸

With respect to his *tarbiya* or training of disciples along the Sufi path, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s letters reveal the manner in which he offered them very direct and practical counsel. Consider the following examples:

“O friend! If you want to reach these realities, you must undertake way-faring (*sulūk*) and give yourself entirely to it”;²⁹ “Know with certainty that you have no task other than arriving at repose, inasmuch as you can;”³⁰ “Should you have major sins (*kabā’ir*) which fill the heavens and

24 See Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, *Mukātabāt-i Khwāja Aḥmad Ghazālī bā ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt Hamadānī*, ed. Nasrollah Pourjavady (Tehran: Khānaqāh-i Ni‘matullāhī, 1977). In total, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt mentions Aḥmad al-Ghazālī some fourteen times in his writings: eight times by name, and the other times as “Our Shaykh.”

25 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 3:407, § 236.

26 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 3:407, § 236.

27 For a thorough description of the *Letters*, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 1.

28 For a careful reading of the *Letters* with an eye on ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s immediate context, see Safi, *Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam*, 158–200.

29 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:86–7, § 117.

30 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:87, § 117.

the earth, God's mercy is more than them. And should you have acts of obedience which fill the heavens and the earth, next to His justice, they are but specks of grain";³¹ "Keep your hearing and sight pure from what is inappropriate until you hear the Beginningless Word and see the Beginningless beauty. Keep your tongue pure from sins until you can read the Quran. Keep your heart pure from inward sins until you understand the eternal Word";³² "Do not be heedless of your duty, for being heedless is not the work of man";³³ "*Invoke God with frequent invocation* (Q 33:41)³⁴ means that your entirety (*hamagī*) should be an invoker (*dhākir*)—not a single speck of your make-up (*nihād*) should be left."³⁵

Another important feature of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's letters is their ability to give readers a window into their author's self-perception and the heavy emphasis he placed on his disciples' companionship with him:

O chevalier (*jawānmard*)! Were one of the deniers to keep my company, there is no doubt that, after ten days, his denying would be removed. Since the Companions used to keep the company of Muṣṭafā, see what their state was like! Over the last two years, have you not sat in twenty sessions (*majlis*) with me? Look at how your faith is now, and how it was before. Thus, know how it is with my noble companions, all of whom have kept my company for ten years. The first time you saw me, you were not as you are today, and were you to keep my company for ten years, your state would not be as it is right now.³⁶

'Ayn al-Quḍāt also tells us that his "companionship," this time in the form of written guidance as enshrined in his letters, is the result his tasting or *dhawq*: "Whatever I have written in this letter³⁷ and the other letters, I have done so all out of tasting (*dhawq*). In my letters there are only a few teachings which

31 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:114, § 164.

32 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:149, § 217.

33 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 2:469, § 730.

34 In this article, all translations of Quranic passages are taken from *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperOne, 2015).

35 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 2:433, § 683.

36 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:52, § 62.

37 The specific letter in question is one of several letters where 'Ayn al-Quḍāt advances his theory of the corruption (*tahrif*) of other religions. For more on this teaching in 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, see Nicholas Boylston, "Writing the Kaleidoscope of Reality, the Significance of Diversity in 6th/12th Century Persian Metaphysical Literature: Sanā'ī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt and

are based on transmission and hearing.”³⁸ Even when a student of his claims to have “understood” one of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s letters, the author reminds them that this understanding is not the result of the disciple’s understanding; rather, it is by virtue of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s understanding that that student can comprehend the letters’ content:

You write that you now better understand the letters which have been written. Where have you reached by this point? You should keep my company for ten or twenty years—then you will know what color knowing has, and you will know that you have never known! What do you think my letters are? Whatever you can understand of them does not belong to you—indeed, it is not your understanding. It is my understanding. If it is not my understanding, what do you think it is?³⁹

3 Accusation and Imprisonment

Based on ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s testimony, we know that at some point in his career, perhaps in 521/1127, certain accusations were made against him by the local population in Hamadan, likely on the instigation of some scholar or another. In a passage in his *Preparatory Remarks*, he tells us that his close friend and student Kāmil al-Dawla⁴⁰ wrote to him and told him that the specific accusation that was being levelled against him concerned his supposed claim to divinity. Some people in Hamadan, presumably a group of scholars, were having a *fatwa* or legal edict issued against ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt with this specific charge in view. ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt explains the matter as follows:

Kāmil al-Dawla wa’l-Dīn wrote to me. He said that in the city they are saying that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt is making Godly claims (*da’wā-yi khudā’ī*), and they are issuing a *fatwa* for my execution (*qatl*). O friend! If they want a

‘Aṭṭār” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2017), chapter 7 and Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapters 5 and 12.

38 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:308, § 465; see also *Nāmāhā*, 3:278, § 3. For helpful treatments of *dhawq* in Sufism, see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Maḥmūd Shabistarī* (Richmond: Curzon: 1995), 176–8 and Eric Ormsby, “The Taste of Truth: The Literary Structure of the *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* of al-Ghazālī,” in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, ed. Wael Hallaq and Donald Little (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 129–48.

39 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 3:302, § 42.

40 Kāmil al-Dawla is the recipient of thirteen different letters from his master. For more on him, see Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 190–1.

fatwa from you, then give a *fatwa*! I gave everyone this advice, namely that they write this verse on the *fatwa*: *Unto God belong the Most Beautiful Names; so call Him by them, and leave those who deviate with regard to His Names. Soon they shall be recompensed for that which they used to do* (Q 7:180). I myself pray for this execution! Alas! It is still far away. When will it be? *And that is no great matter for God* (Q 14:20).⁴¹

Anyone familiar with ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s writings and “persona” would understand why some people may have been put off by his words and style. Surely ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt would also have been seen by some as arrogant, or as making grandiose spiritual claims, which would not be unrelated to the charge of his so-called claims to divinity. Some typical examples of his “mode” of communication include his statement to the effect that, “Whoever wants to hear of the divine mysteries without an intermediary, say, ‘Hear it from ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt.’”⁴² On another occasion, he says, “On the path to God, I have seen it all.... Without doubt, you do not know because you have not arrived. I know, because I have arrived.”⁴³

‘Ayn al-Quḍāt often writes and speaks in a manner which can be characterized as “drunken,” and his own writings even reveal that he had been endowed with the ability to perform miracles, such as bringing the dead back to life:

One night, I, my father, and a group of leaders from our city were present in the house of a certain Sufi *muqaddam*.⁴⁴ We began to dance while Abū Sa‘īd Tirmidhī was reciting a few verses. My father carefully looked and said, “I saw Khwāja Imām Aḥmad Ghazālī dancing with us. His garment was like this and like that.” And he made some gestures. Shaykh Bū Sa‘īd said, “I am unable to recite. I wish I were dead!” I said, “O Bū Sa‘īd, die!” Immediately, he lost consciousness and died. A local mufti (*muftī-yi waqt*)—you know who he is—said, “Just as you caused the one who is

41 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 250–1, §§ 328–9. The wording in the passage is somewhat vague. It can mean that he was claiming to be God, or that he was making God-like claims. Cf. the translations in Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative*, 248; Lewisohn, “In Quest of Annihilation,” 1:302; Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death*, 37–8; Radtke, “Review of *Beyond Death*,” 199.

42 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 300, § 394.

43 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:25, § 34.

44 A Sufi *muqaddam* is an advanced Sufi who has been designated by his master (literally, “put forward”) to fulfil the master’s charge with respect to leading the formal Sufi gathering (*majlis al-dhikr*) and the spiritual direction of the master’s disciples (and, in many cases, the initiation of new disciples), all the while remaining under the master’s authority. See John Renard, *Historical Dictionary of Sufism*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 47.

living to die, so too cause the dead one to live.” I said, “Who is dead?” He replied, “Maḥmūd, the jurist.” I said, “O God! Bring Maḥmūd the jurist back to life!” Immediately, he came back to life.⁴⁵

Since ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt was an unapologetic follower of the Sufi martyr Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), we can also assume that this raised the eyebrows of at least some local scholars. And, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt tells us, that some individuals had also thought of him as a sorcerer and a magician, which would presumably represent yet another case of his “claim” to divinity: “People do not listen to me, and call me a sorcerer (*sāḥir*). Just as Jesus had been given miracles (*muʿjiza*) ... so too is it the case with the Friend of God—but they are charismatic gifts (*karāmāt*). This helpless one is also like this.”⁴⁶

If we were to venture into more of the accusations against ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, his consequent imprisonment in Baghdad, and his eventual death, we would be going down an all-too-familiar path in the secondary literature (which derives in part from the classical hagiographic sources⁴⁷): ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, like Ḥallāj, was a martyr, a “heterodox” thinker who was above his contemporaries in terms of perspective and intellectual vision, and someone who had to pay for his nonconformist views and beliefs by being killed. The details of his death then take on a proportionately exaggerated form: ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt was imprisoned in jail, perhaps starved by his will, and eventually brought back to his homeland of Hamadan only to be flogged, doused in oil, and then burnt alive, or hung, or skinned alive in front of the school in which he taught his “dangerous” ideas.⁴⁸ Yet taking these kinds of accounts at face value does a gross injustice to the other factors which were at work in bringing ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt to his demise—factors which are corroborated by external historical sources and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s own writings.

There is no doubt that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt was accused of “heresy” and that this was the ostensible means on account of which he was killed. But what was so “heretical” about his views? Not surprisingly, the charges laid against him had

45 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 250–1, § 328. This passage is also to be found, with some adjustments, in *Nāmāhā*, 1:374–5 (it is translated in Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death*, 14, with an alternative version and helpful contextualization in Radtke, “Review of *Beyond Death*,” 197). Cf. my translation of the account in *Preparatory Remarks* with those of Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative*, 213; Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), 111; Radtke, “Review of *Beyond Death*,” 199 (a partial rendering can be found in Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death*, 13).

46 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 250, § 327. Cf. the translation in Lewisohn, “In Quest of Annihilation,” 1:293. See also *Tamhīdāt*, 234, § 304; 247–8, § 325.

47 See the observations in Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 197–200.

48 Cf. the discussions in Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative*, 500 and Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 165.

nothing to do with what would seem like the more eyebrow-raising aspects of his doctrine, such as his exalted view of Satan, or his unique understanding of the Quran, or his open support for the ecstatic utterances (*shataḥāt*) of such early Sufi figures as Ḥallāj and Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī (d. ca. 260/874).⁴⁹ Even those aforementioned accusations to the effect that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt was claiming divinity or that he was a sorcerer were not mustered forth as the reasons for his death. Rather, the explicit charges laid against ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt had to do with some statements that he made in the *Quintessence*. However, as we shall see below, of all of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s writings the *Quintessence* would be the one book which one would *not* want to draw on if he were attempting to construct a convincing case against him in support of the charge of heresy.

The only contemporaneous record that we have of the kinds of accusations levelled at ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt are featured in his *Shakwā al-gharīb* (*The Exile’s Complaint*), which he wrote in prison in defence of these charges.⁵⁰ These accusations by those who wanted to see ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt executed were clearly made haphazardly. For one thing, and somewhat ironically, the *Quintessence* itself is very much in line with statements made by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who was championed by the very state that had ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt killed. This is precisely the same point that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt makes in *Exile’s Complaint*.⁵¹

According to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, the accusers said that he (1) upheld some kind of problematic view concerning God’s being the “source” (*maṣḍar*) of existence while also (2) not knowing particulars (*juz’iyyāt*) but only universals (*kullīyyāt*). A related charge to (1) was that (3) ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt approved of Ismaili teachings, which was even reflected in his emphasis on the absolute dedication of the Sufi disciple to his spiritual master. Finally, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt was accused of (4) claiming that the friends of God are above God’s prophets and messengers, and this because he believed that (5) there was a stage beyond the “intellect” (*mā warā’ ṭawr al-‘aql*) to which the friends of God—presumably himself included—were privy.

Although ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt presents a very convincing case in refutation of these claims, often paraphrasing his points made in the *Quintessence* itself,⁵² his other writings also reveal a number of instances in which these kinds of

49 For all of these key teachings in ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapters 4–12. A very useful analysis and contextualization of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s ecstatic utterances can be found in Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, 125ff.

50 A fine English translation of this work is available: Arthur Arberry (trans.), *A Sufi Martyr: The ‘Apologia’ of ‘Ain al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī* (London: Keagan and Paul, 1969).

51 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Shakwā al-gharīb ‘an al-awṭān ilā ‘ulamā’ al-buldān*, in part III of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Muṣannafāt*, 10–11.

52 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Shakwā*, 10–11.

accusations are completely untenable. Yet in *Exile's Complaint* ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt provides us with something of a sanitized inventory of his writings,⁵³ and suppresses any mention of his *Preparatory Remarks* and *Letters*, from whose contents a charge of “heresy” could much more easily have been constructed. The case presented by ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt in his defence is a strong one. But if he had occasion to directly cite passages from the *Quintessence*, it would have been even stronger. We can thus infer that he did not have a copy of the *Quintessence* with him when he was in prison writing *Exile's Complaint*.

In one passage in the *Quintessence*, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt explains why God must be regarded as the “source” of existence. In this same text, the author also sides with a view of God’s knowledge of particulars that goes against the Avicennian doctrine of God’s inability to know particulars qua particulars:

The share of the intellect (*‘aql*) is to merely demonstrate His existence by way of the existence of existent things, and after this, to realize—without doubting it!—that God knows particulars (*juz’iyyāt*). For when the intellect realizes the dependence of [all] existents upon Him, and, after that, realizes His knowledge of particulars, it will become clear to it—without doubt!—that the existentionation (*ijād*) of the Necessary, given His knowledge of existentionation, is a necessary attribute (*ṣifa*) of the existence of His Essence (*dhāt*), just as pre-eternity (*qidam*), for example, is a necessary attribute of It. And, just as it is impermissible for the Necessary to not be pre-eternal, so too is it impermissible for Him to not be the Origin (*maṣḍar*) of creation.

Thus, the statement of the one who says, “Why is He the Origin of existence?” is like his saying, “Why is He pre-eternal?” Were the Necessary not pre-eternal, He would not be necessary. Likewise, were He not the Origin of existence, He would not be necessary. He who realizes the dependence of existence upon Him will undoubtedly say that existentionation is an attribute of His, and will thus say that this attribute, if necessarily existing for Him, entails that the question “why?” is folly. For this would be like asking why He is pre-eternal. But if [the attribute of existentionation] is other than necessarily existing for Him, it would be an accidental attribute, external to His Essence. And accidents are contingent upon causes, while the Necessary, by virtue of His Essence, cannot be⁵⁴

53 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Shakwā*, 39–41.

54 Lit., “refuses to be.”

contingent upon things. For if this were not the case, He would not be the Necessary.⁵⁵

The question of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s adherence to Ismaili teachings is also clearly rejected in *Exile’s Complaint*.⁵⁶ Furthermore, in one of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s letters where he discusses the Ismailis,⁵⁷ he argues against the notion of “authoritative instruction” or *ta’līm*.⁵⁸ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt does not attach any particular importance to the notion of infallibility, and in the context of his disagreement with Ismaili doctrine notes that infallibility is not a condition for the correct transmission and reception of knowledge.⁵⁹ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt also extends this to the Sufi master—the “ripened master” (*pīr-i pukhta*)⁶⁰ is not infallible, and infallibility is not a condition for being a master.⁶¹

With respect to the allegation that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt maintains a view in which the friends of God (*awliyā*) are superior to the prophets and messengers by virtue of the notion of the “scope beyond the intellect,” there are a number of passages in ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s writings which squarely contradict it. One statement from the *Quintessence* shall suffice: “Prophecy is an expression of the stage beyond the intellect, and [that which is] beyond this stage.... Friendship (*walāya*) is that which is manifest after the intellect, while the stage of prophecy is not manifest except after friendship.”⁶² Surprisingly, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt does not explicitly identify this notion with Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who is a direct source for ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt here as he discusses the “scope beyond the intellect” doctrine several times in his writings.⁶³

55 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat*, 19.

56 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Shakwā*, 10.

57 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:113–28.

58 For a study of this letter, see Landolt, “Early Evidence for Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Poetry in Sufism: ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s Letter on the Ta’līmīs,” in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Alī-de-Unzaga (London: I. B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 369–86.

59 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:124, § 182.

60 For ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s exposition of the nature and function of the spiritual master, see Forugh Jahanbakhsh, “The Pīr-Murīd Relationship in the Thought of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī,” in *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshṭiyānī, Hideicho Matsubura, Takashi Iwami, and Akio Matsumoto (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 129–47 and Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 7.

61 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:124, § 182.

62 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Zubdat*, 31. A discussion of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s epistemology can be found in Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 8.

63 See Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, eds. Kāmil ‘Ayyād and Jamīl Ṣalībā (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1967), 111, and *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 37.

Yet even if ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt could have marshalled these kinds of proof texts in his favor, his was a self-defence that was to fall upon deaf ears, and the tone of *Exile’s Complaint* from the very beginning is one of a clear recognition of this fact on the part of the author.⁶⁴ He nevertheless writes, and by all accounts, the degree of eloquence of this work, in terms of the quality of its Arabic prose and poetry, ranks it amongst the great masterpieces of Arabic literature.

While in prison, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt also wrote a letter to one of his disciples, and somehow managed to show him a copy of *Exile’s Complaint*.⁶⁵ The student was disappointed with its contents because ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt expressed a longing for his homeland in the treatise which the student deemed to be below the dignity of an accomplished spiritual master. The particular statement that the student had taken issue with seems to be where ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt says that he is

an exile from his homeland, afflicted by the passage of time and its trials. His eyelids are ever beset by sleeplessness, and trepidation is the constant companion of his pillow, with prolonged weeping, sighs, and lamentations; worry grips the whole of his heart and augments his distress.... His heart, consumed by the fire of separation, burns out of yearning for his loved ones and brothers; the burning pangs of love ever blaze in his bowels, and its marks appear ever more clearly with the passing of days.⁶⁶

Elsewhere in *Exile’s Complaint*, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt defends his longing for his homeland, arguing that it is in accordance with the Prophetic saying, “Love for one’s homeland is a part of faith,” which he glosses to mean that “love for one’s homeland is kneaded into man’s primordial disposition (*fiṭra*).”⁶⁷ Although the notion of longing for one’s homeland is a standard trope or literary artifice in classical Arabic literature,⁶⁸ while still imprisoned ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt sought to address this student’s concerns in what was likely his last written letter. In a sense, this letter amounts to a “second defence” against another kind of accuser, this time ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s concerned and loving disciple.

In a modest voice, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt says that the longing expressed for his homeland is on account of his impatience, since patience is a spiritual quality

64 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:358, § 555.

65 For an analysis of this letter, see Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death*, 48ff.

66 Translation taken, with modifications, from Arberry (trans.), *A Sufi Martyr*, 21–2.

67 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Shakwā*, 5.

68 See Beatrice Gruendler, “Longing for Home: *al-ḥanīn ilā l-awṭān* and Its Alternatives in Classical Arabic Literature,” in *Representations and Visions of Homeland in Modern Arabic Literature*, ed. Sebastian Günther and Stephan Milich (Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 2016), 1–41.

that he has not yet attained.⁶⁹ Another line of argument that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt presents is to cite Q 5:75 alongside Q 19:23 with reference to Mary’s truthfulness and her labour pangs respectively. He uses these Quranic passages to bolster his argument that the human act of sighing and longing is a natural part of one’s constitution when one is under duress, and thus implies that such longing is not on account of a spiritual deficiency on his part:

O dear friend! Concerning Mary, it is said, *And his mother was veracious* (Q 5:75). Despite that, she complained of her labour pangs: “*Would that I had died before this and was a thing utterly forgotten!*” (Q 19:23). You say, “What is this sighing for Hamadan?” If I love Hamadan, should I say that I do not love it?⁷⁰

4 The Politics of Execution

Safi has convincingly demonstrated that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s death was intimately bound up with his unrelenting critique of the Seljuk regime’s corrupt administrative practices. After all, had he been a sideline critic of the Seljuk regime, that would have been one thing. But he was a man with significant social standing⁷¹ and, as his letters reveal, many of his own disciples occupied high positions at the Seljuk court. ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt often uses very harsh language to characterize their relationship with the Seljuk authorities, particularly the young Sultan Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Malikshāh (d. 525/1131), more commonly known as Sultan Maḥmūd II. He thus inveighs against one of his students:

What do you see and know? “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman.” You have gone so many thousands of parasangs⁷² in service of the Sultan. But you still say, “I have faith in the statement of Muhammad, ‘Seek knowledge, even unto China.’” “Modesty is a part of faith.” I am ashamed to say that you follow a person who says, “Seek the world, even unto China”! If even today the Sultan were to say to

69 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:357, § 554.

70 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:361, § 561. A part of this text is translated in Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death*, 52–53.

71 See the poignant observations in Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 198–9.

72 One parasang or *farsakh* corresponds to approximately six kilometers. See Walther Hinz, *Islamische Maße und Gewichte: Umgerechnet ins metrische System* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 62.

you, “Go to Marv” or, “O so-and-so, do such-and-such,” you wouldn’t dare offer any excuse!⁷³

In one letter to a disciple who was a Seljuk courtier, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt demonstrates just how disappointed he is with this student, severely chastising him for what he took to be open excesses and even affronts to the pact this disciple had taken with him.⁷⁴ On one level, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s criticisms are consistently straight-forward in his letters: the Seljuks in general and Sultan Maḥmūd II in particular were not really defenders of Islam and were morally corrupt;⁷⁵ therefore, service at their court was not an option for those on the Sufi path since it would negatively affect their spiritual lives:

What virtue is there in being proud of serving a sinful administrator, one of the human satans, and one of the enemies of God and the Messenger? Dust upon the heads of the server and the served! *Truly God is beyond need of the worlds* (Q 29:6). I mean, what pleasure do you derive from this service? What do you lack by way of daily bread or clothing? Even if you were to live a hundred years, you have so much that it would be sufficient for you and your children.

Why do you not devote yourself to sandal-service (*khidmat-i kafshī*)?⁷⁶ Perhaps it will deliver you from the flood⁷⁷ of destruction. Shame on you

73 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmāhā*, 1:157, § 232. Cf. Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 188 and ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmāhā*, 1:90, § 122.

74 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:150–1, §§ 220–1.

75 For a discussion of the Seljuq sultans’ religiosity, see Deborah Tor, “Sovereign and Pious’: The Religious Life of the Great Seljuq Sultans,” in Christian Lange and Songül Mecit, *The Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 39–62. Cf. A.C.S. Peacock, *Early Seljūq History: A New Interpretation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 99–127. A fine social history of the evolving relationship between the Seljuq sultans and the Abbasid caliphs during this time period can be found in Vanessa Van Renterghem, “Baghdad: A View from the Edge on the Seljuq Empire,” in Edmund Herzig and Sarah Stewart (eds.), *The Age of the Seljuqs* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 74–93.

76 That is, serving the Sufi master, and in this particular situation, serving ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt himself. See also ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmāhā*, 2:388–9, § 609: “Unveiling (*kashf*) comes about by way of sandal-service to the men, not by way of service to the court of the Sultan!” Cf. *Nāmāhā*, 2:414, § 653.

77 I read *ghamra* (flood) here instead of *ghamza*, which would make no sense in the present context (i.e., “the wink of destruction”).

for this occupation of yours! ... I advise you in accordance with your intelligence, or, rather, your lack of intelligence!⁷⁸

This above passage illustrates an important element in ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s criticisms of his students’ service at the Seljuk court. Not only does the company of kings and worldly court officials corrupt the students’ souls, but their *reason* for working at the court is itself based on a major ethical and spiritual shortcoming, namely their view that service to the Seljuk king will provide them with financial security. Such a view in ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s eyes was false because it stems from what is known in Sufi nomenclature as *hamm al-rizq* or “worrying over one’s sustenance,” which is informed by and itself weakens the supreme virtue of trust (*tawakkul*) in God:

Are you not ashamed that you are wasting your life away in the pursuit of desires? *They enjoy themselves and eat as cattle eat* (Q 47:12). What virtue is there in being like beasts? *Worship your Lord who created you* (Q 2:21). He sends you your sustenance, but you do not rely on Him! He says, *There is no creature that crawls upon the earth, but that its provision lies with God* (Q 11:6). Have shame! You rely on the assurance (*damān*) of someone who was created from a filthy fluid (*nuqṭa qadhira*),⁷⁹ but you do not rely on the assurance of the Lord of lords, the Causer of causes, and the Creator of the earth and the heavens! Why don’t you abandon your ignorance?⁸⁰

O chevalier! How long will you be in the service of the king? Why do you not serve God, who created you and the king from a drop of fluid (*āb*)?⁸¹ *Truly those whom you worship apart from God have no power over what provision may come to you. So seek your provision with God* (Q 29:17). *Truly those whom you call upon apart from God are servants like you* (Q 7:194). Do you imagine that there is something in the king’s hands? *“They have no power over what benefit or harm may come to themselves”* (Q 13:16). What can he do with you?⁸²

78 ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, 2:375, § 584; translation taken, with significant modifications, from Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 185. Cf. this passage with ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, 3:406, § 233.

79 Cf. Q 32:80 and Q 77:20.

80 ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, 3:212, § 243. This passage has a number of similarities with the advice given at *Nāmahā*, 2:339, § 519 (translated in Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 183), including the identification of Sultan Maḥmūd II (mentioned here by name) with a “filthy fluid.”

81 Cf. Q 75:37, Q 76:2, and Q 86:6.

82 ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, 3:212, § 242.

Since on the Sufi path, concern with anything other than God is tantamount to associationism (*shirk*), a fortiori, seeing one’s daily bread as coming from other than God is all-the-more problematic for the spiritual wayfarer:

O chevalier! Do you think that you can be king, that you can have a kingdom, and that withholding and giving will belong to you? From the perspective that this is your thought, He says to you, *Who shall lend God a goodly loan ...?* (Q 2:245; 57:71). For the recognizer (*‘arif*),⁸³ this thought is all association (*shirk*) because only He is the giver, only He is the withholder, and only He is the existent. Because of this, in the Quran He says, *And most of them believe not in God, save that they are associaters* (Q 12:106)⁸⁴

A careful reading of ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s letters reveals that one virtue he consistently extols is the giving of charity and the feeding of the poor.⁸⁵ The following two passages typify his approach in this regard:

O friend! I have written a piece of advice, namely that you give something in charity every day, and not merely by way of habit (*‘adat*).⁸⁶

Obey God, however much you can. And charity is the best form of your obedience: *and they spend from that which We have provided them* (Q 2:3; 8:3). You have wealth, fame, power, the pen, and speech. “Show mercy to those below you, and the One above you will show mercy to you.” Spend whatever you have so that what you do not have will be spent upon you.⁸⁷

Alongside ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s criticisms of his students’ mistaken view that they will financially benefit from service at the Seljuk court, his position against the Seljuks is informed by another, financially-informed perspective: in contrast to ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s emphasis on the merits of charity stood the Seljuks’ open

83 For an argument in favour of rendering the term *‘arif* as “recognizer” instead of “gnostic,” see William Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 231–2.

84 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:234, § 385. See also *Nāmahā*, 1:46–7, § 54.

85 See, for example, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:48, § 58; 87, § 118; 106, § 149; 114, § 165; 2:211, § 314. At *Nāmahā*, 2:169, § 253–4, Matthew 6:3–4 is reworked into Arabic in the context of making the point that one’s giving with his right hand should be so discrete that it is not even “known” to his left hand.

86 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 1:106, § 149. For the key concepts of “habit” and “habit-worship” in ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 6.

87 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Nāmahā*, 2:211, § 314.

hoarding of peoples' wealth and property.⁸⁸ This was particularly true of one Seljuk Vizier, Qawwām al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim Dargazīnī (d. 527/1133).

Amongst all of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's disciples who worked for the Seljuk state, a certain 'Azīz al-Dīn Mustawfī (d. 527/1133) was a bitter foe of Dargazīnī.⁸⁹ It was thus in the best interest of Dargazīnī to discredit Mustawfī's teacher who was already critical of the Seljuks and was undoubtedly seen as a "corrupting" influence upon Mustawfī, a Seljuk state employee. This was a carefully thought-out strategy which, as Safi explains, had a "double effect": (1) if 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was accused of heresy, his disciple Mustawfī would have been further discredited; and (2) the death of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, who was an influential public figure insofar as he was a judge in Hamadan, meant that Mustawfī would have been all-the-more vulnerable.⁹⁰ Dargazīnī successfully had Mustawfī imprisoned and put to death two years after the execution of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt.⁹¹ Ironically, shortly thereafter Dargazīnī was himself brutally put to death on charges of Ismaili affiliations by the Seljuq ruler Tughril of Āzarbayjān.⁹²

After a brief period of imprisonment in Baghdad in 524/1130, where 'Ayn al-Quḍāt wrote *Exile's Complaint* and the aforementioned letter to his disciple, he was returned to his native Hamadan, still as a prisoner of the state. He was publicly executed on the order of Sultan Maḥmūd II on the evening of the 6th/7th of Jumādā Thānī, 525, which corresponds to the 6th/7th of May, 1131.⁹³ He was thus aged thirty-five (lunar years)/thirty-four (solar years) at the time of his execution. The historian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 723/1323), to whom we are indebted for the dating of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's birth, mentions that he made a pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's grave in Hamadan, and that it was

88 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was not unique among the '*ulamā*' of his time in castigating the Seljuqs for their corrupt financial practices. Given the questionable nature of the Seljuq's sources of income, some scholars were reticent (our outright refused) to work at the Nizāmiyya colleges funded by the Seljuqs. See Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 44. Ghazālī, for one, made a famous vow not to take money from the rulers of his day; see Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 40ff for Ghazālī's complicated relationship with the Seljuqs, both before and after his turn to the Sufi path.

89 See Lutz Richter-Bernburg (trans.), *Der syrische Blitz: Saladins Sekretar zwischen Selbstdarstellung und Geschichtsschreibung* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1998), 29–34 and Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 191ff.

90 Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 194. See also Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, 114.

91 Christian Lange, *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 94.

92 See Lange, *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination*, 65–6.

93 Landolt, *EI3*, s.v. "Al-Hamadānī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt (part 1)." For the administration of punishment under the Seljuqs, see Lange, *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination*, 61–98.

commonly visited by others.⁹⁴ Although ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s tomb was destroyed in the Safavid period,⁹⁵ a large complex in Hamadan was recently established in his honor.⁹⁶

5 Jealousy, Divine and Human

Thus far the external elements in ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s imprisonment and execution have been recounted. Alongside the injustice of these charges and the level of political intrigue involved to bring ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt to his death was ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s own assessment of his predicament. As he tells us in *Exile’s Complaint*, one of the outward causes for his death sentence had to do with the jealousy and envy (*ḥasad*) that many scholars had against him on account of his exceptional acumen, which resulted in his writing books at a young age that scholars could not produce even in their old age.⁹⁷ To be sure, this would be an indirect cause—when the real political reasons for ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s death were presented in the form of an accusation of heresy, the envious scholars to whom this accusation was brought then gave their tacit approval for his death.

Yet there is also another “cause” for ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s death which is preserved in the pages of his *Preparatory Remarks*. It goes back to his own assessment of things, and it precedes his execution by at least four years.⁹⁸ Perhaps with this certain “cause” in mind, he exclaims, “Tomorrow, a time will come when you will see how ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt has found this success:⁹⁹ he will offer his own head in sacrifice, and will find joy! I indeed know how the matter will be!”¹⁰⁰ Such a sacrifice is of no concern to our author since death for him entails life: “You think that being killed on the path of God comes as an affliction or is

94 Landolt, *EI*3, s.v. “Al-Hamadānī, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt (part 1).”

95 Landolt, *EI*3, s.v. “Al-Hamadānī, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt (part 1).”

96 For photos of the ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt complex, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, figures 8 and 9.

97 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Shakwā*, 26–7. See also the observations in Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 296. Cf. Mas‘ūd Kīmīyā’ī, *Ḥasad: bar zindaḡī-yi ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt* (Tehran: Nashr-i Thālith, 2009).

98 *Preparatory Remarks* was completed on roughly the 9th of Rajab, 521, which corresponds to the 21st of July, 1127.

99 For the “success” in question, namely death, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 11.

100 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 236, § 306. Cf. the translation in Lewisohn, “In Quest of Annihilation,” 1:333. Cf. also Ḥallāj’s cryptic prediction, different readings of which can be found in Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 3:51–2 and Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 277, no. 25.

an affliction? No, in our path being killed is life! What do you say? Does one not love to give his life?!"¹⁰¹

In several instances, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt makes rather cryptic allusions to what, from the divine perspective, was the true reason for his impending death. When we put the pieces of the puzzle together, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's understanding for why he had to die had something to do with his disclosing the secret of lordship (*rubūbiyya*). This idea is informed by a famous early Sufi saying, often attributed to Ḥallāj, to the effect that, "Disclosing the secret of lordship is unbelief."¹⁰² As 'Ayn al-Quḍāt explains it, "Alas! I dare not speak! Have you not seen the Law, how it has become a watchman for those who speak about lordship? Whoever speaks about lordship during the reign of the Law, his blood will be spilt!"¹⁰³

Although fully aware of the need for silence, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt also tells us that there were moments when he could not contain himself, and had to reveal the secret of lordship: "Although on account of this discussion my blood will be spilt, I have no care, and I shall speak, come what may!"¹⁰⁴ The secret of lordship, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt maintains, is guarded by nothing less than the divine jealousy (*ghayra*):

Alas! Look at how much tale-bearing and spying I have done, and how many divine secrets I have placed out in the open,¹⁰⁵ even though speaking about these secrets is unbelief—"Disclosing the secret of lordship is unbelief"—and even though His jealousy will imprison His creatures, lifting them away!¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 235, § 305.

¹⁰² 'Ayn al-Quḍāt cites this saying, without attributing it to Ḥallāj, a couple of times: *Nāmahā*, 2:197, § 291 and *Tamhīdāt*, 269, § 353. We will momentarily have occasion to cite the latter text. For a typical usage of this Sufi maxim, see Ghazālī, *Niche*, 2.

¹⁰³ 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 230, § 299.

¹⁰⁴ 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 266, § 350. The discussion to which 'Ayn al-Quḍāt is referring has to do with the true nature of the Prophet—is he the fruit of the tree or the tree itself? For a preliminary inquiry into 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's "Muhammadology," see Rustom, "Everything Muhammad: The Image of the Prophet in the Writings of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt," *Sacred Web* 39 (2017): 33–40.

¹⁰⁵ Lit., "in the desert" (*ṣaḥrā*).

¹⁰⁶ 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 269, § 353. The last clause is somewhat unclear. Literally, it reads, "even though His jealousy will be the imprisoner, lifting away the creatures!"

In Sufi literature, God’s *ghayra* demands that His servants devote themselves to Him exclusively.¹⁰⁷ The Arabic word *ghayr* and the noun *ghayra* indicate that the issue here has to do with “others” who stand between the lover and the Beloved. As William Chittick puts it, “the function of God’s jealousy is precisely to destroy the soul’s relationship with anything other than the One.”¹⁰⁸

The secret of lordship is therefore guarded by the divine jealousy in the sense that the latter does not allow “others” to come between the servant and the Lord. When discussing the highest rank of those on the Path, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt hints at his position by citing a *ḥadīth qudsī* or “sacred saying.” The people in question are those “who have reached the core of religion, have tasted the reality of certainty, and are in the protection of the divine jealousy: ‘My friends are under My robe—none knows them but Me.’”¹⁰⁹

What then is the “secret of lordship”? It has to do with the essential nothingness of the lover and the sole reality of the Beloved, before whom the lover is naught, like a moth before a flame:

If you want me to give an example of this, listen! The moth, who is a lover of the fire, has no share at all of it so long as she is distant from the fire’s light. When she throws herself into the fire, she becomes self-less and nothing of moth-hood remains—all is fire.¹¹⁰

O dear friend! He Himself knows Himself, and He Himself recognizes Himself. When the moth becomes the flame, what measure, share, and portion can the flame take from the flame? But when the moth is distant from the flame, how will it take its share, and how will it make do with otherness? The intellect does not reach here. If you have something beyond the intellect (*warā-yi ‘aql*), you will know what I am saying.¹¹¹

In other words, the secret of lordship is the reality of *tawḥīd* or God’s oneness. This secret, when disclosed in human language, naturally entails dualistic language and conceptual categories, and thereby problematizes the illusory

107 For *ghayra* and translations from some key Persian Sufi texts which discuss this concept, see Chittick, *Divine Love*, 396–416. Chittick subsumes his treatment of *ghayra* under the poetic subtitle, “The Sword of Jealousy.”

108 Chittick, *Divine Love*, 396.

109 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 42, § 59. For the phenomenon of the *ḥadīth qudsī*, that is, a saying of God reported by the Prophet but which is not a part of the Quran, see William Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (The Hague: Mouton, 1977).

110 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 242, § 316.

111 ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 283, § 367. Thanks go to William Chittick for his help in rendering this passage.

subject-object barriers and distinctions which govern ordinary, human frames of referencing.¹¹²

One consequence of revealing the secret of lordship is the onset of trials and tribulations in one's life: "Some of them speak in a drunken state, and are killed for it, while others are tried by God's jealousy, as will be the case with this helpless one. But I do not know when it will be. Right now, it is far."¹¹³ Then follows the employment of metaphorical and symbolic language, such as that of *ḥulūl* or "incarnationism," which itself creates other linguistic and even theological dilemmas that will doubtlessly be understood by various listeners in accordance with their own intellectual and spiritual capacities.¹¹⁴

Reworking a passage from the first Persian commentary upon the divine names, the *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* (*The Repose of Spirits*) of Aḥmad Sam'ānī (d. 534/1140), the great Sufi Quran-commentator Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (d. ca. 520/1126) explains the link between disclosing the secret of lordship and the divine jealousy with reference to the martyrdom of Ḥallāj:

Shiblī¹¹⁵ said, "On the night they killed Ḥusayn Manṣūr Ḥallāj, I whispered secretly with the Real all night until dawn. Then I placed my head down in prostration and said, 'O Lord, He was a servant of Yours, a man of faith, a *tawḥīd*-voicer, a firm believer, numbered among Your friends. What was this trial You brought down upon him? How did he come to be considered worthy for this tribulation?"

"Then I dreamt, and it was as if I was shown this call of exaltedness reaching my ears: 'He is one of Our servants. We informed him of one of Our secrets and he disclosed it, so We sent down upon him what you saw. It is fine for a green-grocer to call out about his vegetables, but absurd for a jeweler to call out about a night-brightening pearl.'"¹¹⁶

112 This latter point is intimately tied to 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's elaborate metaphysics of the Muhammadan light and his defence of Satan on the one hand, and his understanding of faith and unbelief on the other. For the main texts in which 'Ayn al-Quḍāt explicates these complementary ideas, see, respectively, Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapters 10 and 12.

113 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhidāt*, 206, § 265. Cf. the translation in Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, 79.

114 An exposition of the different types of *ḥulūl* in 'Ayn al-Quḍāt can be found in Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 12.

115 That is, the great early Sufi Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334/936). For a study of his life and teachings, see Kenneth Avery, *Shiblī: His Life and Thought in the Sufi Tradition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014).

116 Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, *Kashf al-Asrār: The Unveiling of the Mysteries*, partial trans. William Chittick (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2015), 345. A study of Maybudī's Sufi *tafsīr* can be found in Annabel Keeler, *Ṣūfī Hermeneutics: The Qur'ān Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn*

Not surprisingly, ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt also offers a version of this story in his *Preparatory Remarks*.¹¹⁷ In his account, when Ḥallāj is taken to prison, Shiblī asks God how long He will kill his lovers. God replies that He will do so until the *dīya* or bloodwit is given, namely His meeting His lovers and their attaining the beauty of encountering Him. ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt then says that God will place him in the path of trial so that others will preserve God’s secret. Here, he is clearly implying that he will suffer the same fate as Ḥallāj.¹¹⁸

We are now in a better position to cite two more texts, both of which are rather curious incidents reported by ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt:

Alas! For one month this helpless one remained in the holy Garden (*jan-nat-i quds*) of which I speak, such that people imagined that I had died. With complete unwillingness, I was sent to a station in which I had been another time. In this second station, I committed a sin which entails punishment.¹¹⁹ You will see a time when I will be killed on account of this sin. What are you saying? The one who prevents the lover from reaching the Beloved—watch what tribulation comes to him! In this sense, pain has fallen upon this helpless one. I do not know whether or not he will ever find a remedy!¹²⁰

I fear that ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt will take a piece from the storehouses of the treasures of *and We taught him knowledge from Our Presence* (Q 18:65) and will strike it against the hearts of some of his own friends.¹²¹

Maybudī (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007). A complete translation of Sam‘ānī’s *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* is forthcoming: *The Repose of the Spirits: A Sufi Commentary on the Divine Names*, trans. William Chittick (Albany: SUNY Press).

117 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 235–6, § 306.

118 The classic study of Ḥallāj’s life, teachings, martyrdom, and legacy, is Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*. For his image in ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt’s writings, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Spirit*, chapter 10 and passim. An analysis of how ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt fits into the Ḥallājian mold can be found in Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, 73–84. Cf. Asmā’ Khawālidiyya, *Ṣar‘ā al-taṣawwuf: al-Ḥallāj wa-‘Ayn al-Quḏāh* [sic] *al-Hamadhānī wa’l-Suhrawardī namādhij* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dīfāf, 2014), 135–72.

119 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt could be referring to an incident, vaguely recounted in *Zubdat*, 86, where he enters God’s court and, after an event which he says he cannot describe, God asks him to leave, granting him permission to communicate his experience at the divine court to others.

120 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 231–2, § 301.

121 ‘Ayn al-Quḏāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 300–1, § 394. Thanks again go to William Chittick for his help in rendering this passage.

The divine jealousy is what guards the closest confidants at the divine court in their realization of the essential oneness of reality. But when the secret of lordship is made known to “others,” it implies alterity and distinction on the conceptual level as much as it results in the disclosure of the secret between the lover and the Beloved to those who are unworthy of hearing it. The very robe that is the divine jealousy, which protects the likes of Ḥallāj and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt, is thus lifted when the secret of lordship is revealed, thereby entailing that it is now out there for “others,” who are unworthy, to know it. Thus, the robe necessarily comes down, but this time it envelops the lover who revealed the secret, suffocating him in the divine embrace.

6 Conclusion

We have examined a number of causes to which one may point when investigating the circumstances surrounding ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s death. To the familiar trumped-up charges of “heresy” and Dargazīnī’s very real attempts to silence one of the Seljuk government’s fiercest opponents, we also come away with a sense of the nature of ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s criticisms. Those of his students who worked for the Seljuk government were harming their spiritual lives by placing their trust for financial sustenance upon Sultan Maḥmūd II and his entourage rather than on God. This was unacceptable to a Sufi master who taught his students to have total reliance upon God in all of their affairs. And it would have been doubly unacceptable, owing to the fact that the Seljuks were also money-hoarders, whereas ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt insisted on alms-giving and caring for the poor. Note also that, of the two politically motivated causes, namely the charges of heresy and the machinations of Dargazīnī, in *Exile’s Complaint* ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt appears to only be aware of the first of them.

Yet ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt also saw two other factors at work in what would be his eventual state-sponsored execution. One of these was some of the religious scholars’ plain old jealousy on account of his exceptional intellectual gifts. As already noted, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt makes note of this fact in *Exile’s Complaint*. Yet, in this work he does not mention the other reason for his death, namely his disclosing the secret of lordship. Be that as it may, the cited selections from ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s *Preparatory Remarks*, which were completed well before he was imprisoned, seem to suggest that the author was aware of, and even warmly welcomed, his impending death. Viewing ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt’s death as the result of certain divine causes, which is how he saw things, does not necessarily nullify the fact that there were real political circumstances which led to his execution.

But seeing the reasons for 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's death as he saw it does present us with one distinct advantage. It allows us to discern a major Ḥallājīan motif also embodied in 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's own life and death. As far as 'Ayn al-Quḍāt was concerned, despite the outward circumstances and political intrigue that led to their respective executions, both he and Ḥallāj were martyrs slain by the sword of divine jealousy.

Acknowledgement

Thanks go to William Chittick, Leonard Lewisohn, Joseph Lumbard, Atif Khalil, Oludamini Ogunnaike, and *JSS*'s two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on this article.