

centuries, and private libraries were common, as evidenced by the codicological data extracted from a large number of manuscripts spanning various disciplines, time periods, and locations.

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‘AYN AL-QUDĀT, “*The Essence of Reality*”: A Defense of Philosophical Sufism, ed. and trans. MOHAMMED RUSTOM. (Library of Arabic Literature.) New York: New York University Press, 2022. Pp. xxx, 241. \$35. ISBN: 978-1-4798-1659-0. doi:10.1086/736382

MOHAMMED RUSTOM, *Inrushes of the Heart: The Sufi Philosophy of ‘Ayn al-Qudāt*. (SUNY Series in Islam.) Albany: State University of New York Press, 2023. Pp. xxvi, 373; color and black-and-white figures. \$99. ISBN: 978-1-4384-9429-6. doi:10.1086/736382

In the quest for a thicker description of Islamic intellectual history in the middle period, not least on the intersections of philosophy, theology, and Sufism, there is a growing interest in the category of “philosophical Sufism,” or rather works of Sufi spirituality, exegesis, and metaphysics that engage other philosophical works and arguments and present them in relationship with Sufi ideas. Perhaps one of the most important figures of the twelfth century was ‘Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī (d. 1131), an intriguing thinker engaged with the classics of philosophy, the reception of Avicenna (d. 1037), and the critiques of Avicenna articulated by Sufis and theologians like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and his brother Aḥmad (d. 1123, who was a teacher and spiritual master of Hamadānī). Thus far we have had little attention paid to Hamadānī: a few stray articles, a chapter in Omid Safi’s book on Seljuk intellectual history, an excellent but unpublished Paris dissertation by Salimeh Maghsoudlou that locates his thought within the philosophical and theological milieu, a couple of sparkling studies by Toshihiko Izutsu, a rather unusual book by Firoozeh Papan-Matin that focuses on his “mystical” teachings and their reception in India, and a monograph by Hamid Dabashi that defies categorization.

In this context, it is welcome to find these two volumes produced by Mohammed Rustom, one a translation of perhaps Hamadānī’s most important work into English, *The Essence of Reality*, and the other a sourcebook on his thought, *Inrushes of the Heart*, that follows the time-honored tradition in the study of Sufism (associated most particularly with William Chittick) of allowing the thinker to speak through copious translated passages (over 800 passages, as the author says). Such a study allows the possibility of using the text for teaching—and thus supplementing the recent publication of the first volume on metaphysics and theology of Peter Adamson and Fedor Benevich’s *The Heirs of Avicenna* (2024)—which should certainly excite those interested in medieval thought and philosophy. *The Essence* was previously translated into English by Omar Jah as part of his McGill doctorate and published in Malaysia; Rustom acknowledges its excellence—but one would like to see a further justification for a new translation.

Hamadānī was a precocious thinker and writer executed at the age of thirty-four. In his apology (*Shakwā l-gharīb* [The Exile’s Complaint]), he defended himself against some charges of impiety and heresy, some of which seem to have been conflated with accusations against the Avicennians (such as the denial of God’s knowledge of particulars and the denial of *creatio ex nihilo* in time). In fact, he rigorously denied these accusations, so it seems the real (perhaps political, perhaps social?) reasons are occluded from us—just as are the reasons for the execution of the anti-Avicennian philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191) a generation later. Rustom’s presentation of Hamadānī through his translation of *Zubdat al-ḥaqā’iq* [Essence of Reality] and his sourcebook study is very much an attempt to take seriously Hamadānī’s

own claim of divine inspiration (“writing under inspiration,” “inrushes of the heart”) and make sense of his critique of Avicennian philosophical metaphysics and his espousal of the “path of love” Sufism associated with his teacher Aḥmad Ghazālī. It is common for middle period writers to claim not to be original by referring back to authority but also by claiming divine inspiration for what they consider to be their own contribution. But the motif of inspiration often distracts one from the classic question of influences; after all, no writer exists in an intellectual or spiritual vacuum.

While Rustom does not draw attention to the coincidence, it is clear that he structures his work to follow closely the structure and intention of Hamadānī’s *Tambīdāt*, his major Persian work whose title is translated as *Paving the Path*. Hamadānī’s text comprises ten chapters which begin with the metaphysics of God, his revealed text, the Qur’an, and the Prophet Muḥammad in terms of light, then move on to consider the moral psychology of humans on the spiritual path by contemplating those divine lights, and then traverse that path of love toward the Beloved. The goal of the text, and indeed one could say of his thought, is a close understanding of the human and the desire to attain God. Rustom similarly begins with the person of Hamadānī and his reflection on theology (the divine essence and attributes, the possibility and limitation of the human intellect to grasp God and the nature of divine light as guidance through the Qur’an and the Prophet), the human (as an expression of divine providence, moral compatibilism, an Avicennian-Neoplatonic approach to the question of evils both natural and moral), and the complementarity of the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the path to the divine Beloved (and in that he presents the well-established theme of commenting upon the “arcana” or the spiritual meaning and reality of required ritual practice as well as the significance of spiritual imagination in making concepts and things present and real) through the reversion to love and devotion to the reality of the Prophet. One stark aspect of this path is Hamadānī’s rehabilitation of Satan as a “dark light,” a term often associated with the hidden aspect of the divine essence, and in its “unreality” connected to his position on the relational and privational aspect of evil. In his faithful refusal to bow to Adam, Satan becomes the symbol of the pure monotheist as well as the pure lover only seeking the divine Beloved. This positive “satanology” stands in a tradition from al-Ḥallāj (d. 922) and Aḥmad Ghazālī through to Hamadānī and other Sufis. Both the Hamadānī text and Rustom’s sourcebook culminate with love and its identification with faith and fidelity on a spiritual path that follows the Prophet. Love is alike the origin of all there is, its unfolding, and its culmination, and in that sense one could argue that love is a synonym for existence that is, in Rustom’s reading, singular for Hamadānī—unity of love as well as oneness of existence. Both texts are deeply qur’anic in the way in which they engage the sources of knowledge and illumination.

The Essence of Reality is somewhat different: it is a less qur’anic text and engages with the arguments of philosophers (such as rejecting the Aristotelian proof for God as the unmoved mover while accepting the Avicennian account of God as necessary existent) and those of rational theologians—even as Hamadānī rejects the validity or utility of their efforts. At times, Rustom notes the influence of Avicenna, or rather its possibility; for example, Hamadānī’s version of divine simplicity in which names and attributes are relations within the godhead seems continuous with Avicenna—but also prefigures Ibn ‘Arabī a few generations later. As Hamadānī says in his introduction, the *Essence* is concerned with the metaphysics of God, prophecy and the nature of Muḥammad, and the afterlife. He uses and rehabilitates in this and other texts the monistic—or rather nondualistic—ideas associated with the early Sufi martyr al-Ḥallāj (famous for his ecstatic utterance, “I am the Real/God”) and Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī (d. c. 874). Although he was writing before Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240) and his later school’s exposition of the notion that only God is pure existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), his notion that God is the ground of existence alongside the utter contingency of creation, his notion of the reality of Muḥammad as the complete manifestation of the divine names, and his notion

of the nature of God's presence with creation all seem to prefigure the later tradition—and Rustom explicitly locates Hamadānī in that nondualist tradition. His spiritual hermeneutics of the letters of the Qur'an as well as his path of love certainly influenced later Sufis, especially in India. One, however, wonders whether the desire to "read" Ibn 'Arabī or themes from philosophy and theology into Hamadānī are fully defensible in terms of the text or whether one often wishes to find them so that we can locate Hamadānī within larger narratives about the nature of metaphysics or the path of love or spiritual hermeneutics. The temptation to find key terms and to read eisegetically is all too great. Still, one would like to see more that is argued and evaluative; when is Hamadānī drawing upon Avicenna, when is his reading mistaken, and where does that mistaken reading lead to a creative step in intellectual history (one of the key turns in the history of thought as articulated by the late Pierre Hadot)?

Inrushes of the Heart will certainly become the standard study of Hamadānī, and alongside the *Essence* it is ideal for the classroom. Hamadānī was an exciting figure—if perhaps not quite a "great figure" like Ghazālī or Avicenna, or even Suhrawardī and Ibn 'Arabī. Nevertheless, his position of nondualism on the nature of the divine, his thoughtful anthropology, and his hermeneutics of language and the Qur'an can all be profitably read to gain a richer understanding of the pivotal twelfth century, in which philosophical schools, theological traditions, and Sufisms came into their mature positions, setting the agenda for the early modern and even modern periods. And it is always good to see a writer reading and engaging seriously with scholarship produced in Persian and other languages to transcend our English monolingualism.

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GIOVANNA BALDISSIN MOLLI, FRANCO BENUCCI, MARIA TERESA DOLSO, and ÁGNES MÁTÉ, eds., *Luigi il Grande Rex Hungariae: Guerre, arti e mobilità tra Padova, Buda e l'Europa al tempo dei Carraresi*. (Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae: Roma 8.) Rome: Viella, 2022. Paper. Pp. xxxii, 566; color and black-and-white figures. €60. ISBN: 979-1-2546-9204-2.

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This volume is the fruit of the cooperation between Hungarian and Italian historians on a common part of their medieval history, when branches of the Angevin dynasty were reigning in both countries. The second Angevin king of Hungary, Louis "the Great" (r. 1342–82), intervened much in Italian politics. He conducted two military campaigns against the Kingdom of Naples (1347–48 and 1350) as vengeance for the murder of his brother Andrew (d. 1345), husband of Queen Joan I of Naples. Louis wanted to become King of Naples and to unite the two Angevin kingdoms under one ruler. His claim was not recognized by the papacy, and he withdrew from Italy, but a part of his troops remained there as mercenaries for decades, intervening in various local conflicts, mostly as allies of the Papal States. And his conflict with Venice for the domination of the cities of Dalmatia extended over the period of his entire rule. The present volume concentrates on one of the last episodes of this latter intrigue, the participation of Louis in the North Italian conflicts of the 1370s, opposing Padua and Venice.

There was a special occasion for the gathering of this impressive group of Italian and Hungarian scholars (also a Polish and a Croatian colleague) at a conference in Padua in 2021, whence the twenty-five studies of the volume originated. The conference is a laudable example of how the preservation of artistic monuments can generate a complex historical inquiry. In 2007, during the restoration work on the Castello Carrarese in Padua, used as a

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