

***Ḥanafī-Māturīdīsm Trajectories of a Theological Legacy, with a Study and Critical Edition of al-Khabbāzī's Kitāb al-Hādī***, by Ayedh A. Aldosari (Sheffield: Equinox, 2020), 695 pp., ISBN: 978-1-78179-425-8 (hb) & 978-1-78179-509-5 (ePDF), £95.00 / \$125.00

The historical neglect of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition of Islamic theology in comparison to other schools, especially its closest rival Ashʿarism, is well rehearsed. A price has been paid for the absence of reliable Arabic editions and translations of many texts, as well as the failure to study the development of the tradition on its own terms and in its interactions with other interlocutors. This state of affairs is starting to change with an increase of scholarly productions emerging in English and German, as well as an extremely dynamic period of Turkish scholarship. Ayedh Aldosari's new volume, based on his 2012 doctoral dissertation, should be seen in the context of this development. He thus seeks to contribute to the field in two distinct ways: to produce a critical edition of a noted classical Māturīdī text, the *Kitāb al-Hādī* of Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292) and to provide not only a thorough study of the author's life and times, but of the entire prior development of Ḥanafī-Māturīdīsm.

That Aldosari has produced two books in one is obvious from the structure. After a short introduction, mainly distinguished by twelve "claims" to investigate in the course of the work, the book is laid out as follows. Part One consists of (1) the authorship of *al-Hādī*, (2) al-Khabbāzī's personal details, and (3) his life and times. Part Two covers (4) the early Ḥanafī elements of Māturīdīsm, (5) the Sunni Ḥanafīs after al-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Māturīdī, (6) the rise of the school to wider prominence, and (7) the contents and significance of *al-Hādī*, the manuscripts used for the edition, and the editing process. This is followed by a conclusion, two appendices of photocopies of *al-Hādī* and other miscellaneous documents, references, and an index. Upon reaching Part Three, the edited text, on page 379, one is instructed to turn to the back of the volume and to read the remainder of the book

in Arabic up to page 695, which includes its own set of notes, references and index.

Given the book's attention to the sweep of the formative and classical Māturīdī tradition, especially up until the end of seventh/thirteenth century, as well as the detailed presentation of the life and works of a mostly forgotten representative, al-Khabbāzī, it would have been better to switch the order of the first two parts. Study of the tradition could have provided the historical context to appreciate the significance of al-Khabbāzī and began the book with content of greater interest to a wider audience. Chapter 7, concerning the text *al-Hādī* and details on the production of the edition, makes sense where it is, but would be more coherently preceded by the author-focused details of the first three chapters. This means that my suggested reading order for the English content of this book is Chapters 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 7.

As it is printed, in Chapter 1 the reader gets bogged down in exhaustive details that establish al-Khabbāzī's authorship of *al-Hādī* without yet properly knowing what is at stake or where he fits into the tradition. In fact, the chapter does not center on al-Khabbāzī at all, but on another figure, ʿUmar al-ʿAqīlī, who some have suggested is the true author of *al-Hādī*. The amount of space devoted to the discussion of tangential questions, such as the correct names of al-ʿAqīlī's first, second and third great-grandfathers (p. 10-12), would be hard to justify even if he had a serious claim to authorship. But it turns out that the first person to attribute the text to him was a modern scholar, Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (d. 1976). Aldosari's careful sleuthing to correct this error is impressive—including documenting calls to public and private manuscript collections (p. 41, n. 149, p. 46, 193)—but this investigation could have been seriously cut down, saved for a dedicated article, or at least placed in a later chapter.

The decision to take the importance of al-Khabbāzī to Māturīdī theology as self-evident for most of the book is a shame, because in the middle of Chapter 7, Aldosari shows that he does have an argument for this, and it is one worth quoting:

If we wish to recognize the status of *al-Hādī* in the Māturīdī tradition, we can consider its heritage as comprising three stages. The first founding stage is represented by al-Māturīdī's book *Al-Tawḥīd*. Second is *Tabṣīrat al-Adilla*, the grandest and most important book in the Māturīdī tradition. This is the stage of explanation, elaboration, and supporting of the founder's thought. The third is the stage of

summarizing, refining, and simplifying the earlier ideas. *Al-Hādī* is one of the most important books of this third stage, as it is evident that first and foremost it comprises the best of the content of *Tabṣīrat al-Adilla* and, secondarily, the content of other books. Whereas Maymūn al-Nasafī and other Māturīdī scholars arguably failed to write a summarized volume that represented this school, al-Khabbāzī succeeded (p. 257).

Aldosari here suggests that *al-Hādī* represents the best synthesis of Māturīdī theology in the mature classical period. Al-Khabbāzī produced a medium-sized textbook suitable for teaching in the madrasah, which was the use that he put it to as the foremost Ḥanafī scholar in seventh/thirteenth-century Mamlūk Damascus. Apart from his skilful abridgement of *Tabṣīrat al-adillab*, the paradigm for classical Ḥanafī texts in the period, the main quality of *al-Hādī* that Aldosari highlights is the excellence of its arrangement. For instance, he argues that al-Khabbāzī differs from most previous works by placing discussion of the attribute of God's creative activity (*takwīn*) after His will, because the former is not shared by rival schools. He also differs from other Māturīdīs in discussing God's wisdom prior to human obligation, and capability before prophethood, because such arrangements provide better rational grounding for his theological positions (pp. 248-49).

In a book of this length, it would have been good to have seen this comparative angle developed further. First, more substantial analysis and documentation would be needed to vindicate the claim that *al-Hādī* is superior to similar works of the period. Second, *al-Hādī*'s relative obscurity raises the question of why other medium-sized Māturīdī texts and commentaries on shorter creeds became more popular in various pedagogical settings. But Aldosari does a good job of introducing the text and its author, setting the stage for others to address these debates in the light of wider social and intellectual developments in the classical and late classical periods.

In terms of the longer historical lens leading up to al-Khabbāzī, Aldosari argues that the classical Māturīdī school was formed from two main strands of Ḥanafī thought: a tradition of rational theology that can be traced back to Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) and one of creedal traditionalism from Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933). Although the existence of these trends is well known and has been explored by previous scholars, such as Wilferd Madelung and Ulrich Rudolph, their development through *kalām* works and authors has not

been properly mapped out in the English language. In Chapter 5, by examining fifteen scholars, from al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī (d. 342/953) to Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī (d. 652/1254), he charts the rise of scholastic theology in the Ḥanafī tradition. Whereas traditionalist Ḥanafism remained common in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, the next two hundred years saw the supremacy of the classical Māturīdī theological approach. Of particular interest in Aldosari's account are his summaries of later figures outside of Transoxiana: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghaznāwī (d. 593/1197) of Aleppo, Ibn al-Mawṣilī (d. 629-30/1232-33) of Damascus and Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī of Baghdad (pp. 190-94). They seem to have been the earliest in the tradition to write commentaries on al-Ṭaḥāwī's creed (though Aldosari does not mention al-Ghaznāwī's text). One could hypothesize that commentarial activity on such a well-respected creed was significant in expanding the reach of Māturīdī theology to Ḥanafīs beyond its heartlands and into regions with stronger traditionalist theological roots.

A related question is when the name *Māturīdī* was first used by Ḥanafīs to describe their theological school. Previous scholarship in English has established that this was a relatively late development, but Aldosari seems to be the first to pin down the earliest named scholar to mention the term. This is Mankūbars al-Nāṣirī who quotes from an anonymous predecessor that the name—as is often the case—was initially used by opponents, here the Muʿtazilah (p. 193).

Another of Aldosari's achievements is his identification of manuscripts of the creed penned by the early traditionalist Ḥanafī Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhī (d. 419/1027), which is known as *al-ʿItiqād fī ʿitiqād abl al-sunnah wa-l-jamāʿah* or *al-Kbiṣāl fī ʿaqāʾid abl al-sunnah* (pp. 172-74, 198, n. 86). Aldosari has also published a separate Arabic edition and study of the work (Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 2020). This makes an important early creed accessible to scholarship and demonstrates the continuation of traditionalist Ḥanafism in Transoxiana into the fifth/eleventh century.

Aldosari has gathered and carefully read many relevant sources: Arabic *kalām* treatises (many in manuscript form), classical Arabic biographical and historical literature, and contemporary Arabic and English studies (he neglects Turkish scholarship, which is a lacuna, albeit an understandable one given the language barrier). Chapters 4-6 provide the best showcase of Aldosari's deep reading and documentation of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition between the fourth/tenth and seventh/thirteenth centuries. My main criticism of

Aldosari's use of primary sources is his omission of the early Samarqandī Ḥanafī school from his narrative.

Aldosari claims that Muḥammad (Abū l-Yusr) al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1097) is the first known figure to mention al-Māturīdī by name and to adopt his theological views (pp. 178, 194). Al-Bazdawī is doubtless of central importance for the consolidation and transmission of his teachings and may be one of the first to single him out as the leading figure of the Samarqandī Ḥanafī tradition. Nevertheless, there are extant writings that mention al-Māturīdī's name and adopt many of his positions from theologians in the three generations immediately after him: theological responsa from his student Abū l-Ḥasan al-Rustughfanī (d. ca 345/956), the *kalām* manual *Jumal<sup>m</sup> min uṣūl al-dīn* by his grand-student Abū Salamah al-Samarqandī (fl. mid-late fourth/tenth century), and a commentary on this text by Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Bashāgharī (fl. late fourth/tenth century).

The Arabic critical edition of *al-Hādī*, which takes up just under half of the printed text of *Ḥanafī-Māturīdism* is a notable contribution to the field. Aldosari has collected ten manuscripts, which he argues are the total extant copies of the text. Having discarded four as incomplete or inferior, he bases his edition on the remaining six, specifying as original the manuscript in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah in Cairo, which was copied in a Ḥanafī madrasah in Damascus four and a half months before the author's death (p. 261). Aldosari's edition of *al-Hādī* is primarily based on this manuscript with variations in footnotes and missing text from the other copies added in parentheses. As well as 3644 short footnotes, Aldosari refers the reader to 252 endnotes over forty pages of small Arabic typeface. These provide definitions of key *kalām* terminology, individuals and groups, as well as referencing for ḥadīths mentioned in the text. These features make his edition not only superior to that published by Adil Bebek (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2006) from three manuscripts, but more useful for scholarly work, especially when combined with the detailed study in the remainder of the volume.

Any final verdict on *Ḥanafī-Māturīdism* deserves to be given individually to each of its two main elements. For the reasons stated in the previous paragraph, the critical edition of *al-Hādī* is a triumph. Although the discursive study does not fully succeed as a historical monograph due to its questionable structure, pacing and focus, the book still works remarkably well as a vade mecum, that is, a guide to

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sit on the desk of serious researchers of the tradition. As the history of Māturīdism continues to be written, it should be regularly consulted.

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