It is quite fitting that Bangura’s conclusion (Chapter 8) should end with the identification of the minimum requirements of a critic interested in the study of African literature of Islamic inspiration. These include a rigorous interdisciplinary competence in Islam and the linguistic skills necessary for understanding Islamic doctrines in their original. There is little doubt that Bangura himself meets these criteria very well. Proficient in Arabic, the language of Islamic revelation and ritual (as well as in both English and French), his book is clear evidence of his deep understanding of Islam, its doctrines, history, and sociology. And partly as a result of these credentials, Bangura has produced an original and pioneering study that is likely to define the critical tradition of African literature of Islamic orientation for many years to come.

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Apostasie und Toleranz im Islam: Die Entwicklung zu al-Ġazālīs Urteil gegen die Philosophie und die Reaktionen der Philosophen

Apostasy and tolerance are closely linked ideas that, nevertheless, vary according with culture, place, or time. The present work (a slightly revised version of the author’s Ph.D. thesis) surveys almost six centuries of Islamic thought on this issue, indicates several important developments, and presents al-Ġazālī’s position as the standard one in Islamic circles. Starting from the Qur’ān itself, especially its distinction between ʿīlām and ʿīmān, passing through ḥadīth and kalām (both Muʿtazilī and Ashʿarī), Griffel comes to al-Ġazālī and his condemnation of the philosophers as apostates. He shows that al-Ġazālī rejects the claim that philosophy surpasses religion, and states—more specifically in his Faysal—that one may not alter the wording of the Revelation, unless one can offer a very convincing rational argument. In the last part of the book, Griffel deals with the influence of and the reactions to al-Ġazālī’s theory in twelfth-century Islamic Andalusia. In all this, one can discern a change from a (comparatively) broad concept of tolerance (exemplified in the fact that in early times the execution of an apostate was only allowed after istiṭāba, i.e. an explicit invitation to repent and recant) to a more limited one (when any public deviation from the official ‘dogmatic’ line sufficed to declare someone an apostate).

This rudimentary outline of the work does not do justice to the many topics and authors it deals with. To attempt to do that in any serious way would require a review of many pages, and—even then—several interesting matters would perhaps be overlooked. It seems right therefore to advise
scholars to read the book for themselves—specialists in the Qur’ān, fiqh, kalām, or falsafā, will all find worthwhile information and argument. Also, the book has a most impressive bibliography of thirty-six pages.

Such a large-scale project is not without risks, specially for a young scholar. It is hardly surprising that many minor details need improvement or correction. Let me give a few examples: the Active Intellect, not God, is most probably to be identified with Avicenna’s notion of the Dator formarum (p. 138); the concept of ‘necessary existent’ was not derived by ‘Abd al-Jabbar from Avicenna (p. 152), since it already circulated in kalām before Avicenna (Griffel refers to D. Gutas, Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition (Leiden, 1988), pp. 261 ff., but Gutas explicitly states (p. 262) that ‘the concept was very much in circulation in the Eastern parts of the Islamic world during Avicenna’s philosophical formation’); al-Mawardi’s attitude regarding the philosophers cannot be derived solely from a supposed parallel with the thought of Abū Ya’lā (p. 239), but needs at least a more substantial argumentation; al-Ghazzālī, in his Mankhūl, does not examine the māhiyyat al-‘ulūm but the māhiyyat al-‘aqīl (p. 264 and n. 18); and so on.

Griffel’s interpretation of al-Ghazzālī’s attitude towards philosophy, and especially the philosophy of Avicenna, seems to be open to a more fundamental questioning:

First of all, there is the delicate problem of the precise nature of Maqṣūd and Tahāfut and, then (if such exists) their mutual relationship. With E. Graf, Griffel believes (p. 269 and n. 19) that the former work was written after the latter was finished. Al-Ghazzālī’s students would have found the Tahāfut (too) difficult to understand; thus the Maqṣūd was written in order to facilitate the reading of the Tahāfut. But such a hypothesis simply overlooks the fact that the two works are of a quite different nature, and that the Avicennian matter quoted in the Tahāfut appears to be from Avicenna’s most ‘Aristotelian’ texts (see my ‘al-Ghazzālī’s Tahāfut: Is It a Real Rejection of Ibn Sīnā’s Philosophy?’ JIS 12.1, pp. 1–17), contrary to the Dānesh-Nāmeh, which constitutes the very basis of the Maqṣūd (the latter surely not a ‘presentation’ (Darstellung) of peripatetic philosophy, as Griffel characterizes it—see p. 324 n. 14).

Secondly, why does al-Ghazzālī (as indicated by Griffel, p. 273) accept, with Avicenna, the interdiction on communicating deeper religious truth to the common people? Even more importantly, why is he as, again, Griffel recognizes (p. 280 n. 49) under Avicenna’s influence in developing a deterministic ontology, which limits God’s power? In both these matters, he clearly deviates from his Ash’ārī kalām colleagues and the traditionists. Moreover, the first point seems to imply that al-Ghazzālī not always can and/or will overtly communicate the truth.

Thirdly, Griffel seems to be unaware that al-Ghazzālī copied pages and pages of his predecessors’ works in his different works, as well as of his own earlier works in later works. No serious evaluation of his personal contribution is possible while these sources and copies remain undetermined.
Thus, there is more than a similarity (see p. 425, n. 39) between the Mihakk and the introduction to the Mustasfa (pp. i. 10–55); based on the Cairo editions (the former undated, the latter dated 1937), one can indicate the following correspondences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mustasfa</th>
<th>Mihakk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. 1–12. 3</td>
<td>4. 7–6. 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. 4–27. 5</td>
<td>92–115</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. 6–28. 12</td>
<td>130. 6–133. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. 3–30. 6</td>
<td>6. 14–8. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. 7–37. 16</td>
<td>9–29. 9 (with a few small omissions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. 17–40. 12</td>
<td>31. 4–37. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. 13–54. 12</td>
<td>39. 4–68. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. 13–55. 9</td>
<td>70. 6–72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, only the section on sophism of the Mihakk has not been copied. The rest, except for a few variants and/or smaller omissions, is almost verbatim the same. Now, the Mihakk expresses in a fiqh terminology what in parts of the Miya¯r had been articulated in the classical logical language of philosophy (al-Ghazzâlî uses both Avicennian and Farabian texts—see my ‘Al-Ghazzâlî’s Miya¯r al-ilm fi fam al-mantiq: Sources avicenniennes et farabiennes’, forthcoming in Archives Doctrinales et Littéraires du Moyen Age). From all this it is obvious that al-Ghazzâlî accepts Avicenna’s logic as a fundamental tool in fiqh. But if such is the case, it becomes doubtful that he would no longer understand burhân in its strictest Aristotelian sense, i.e. ‘apodeictic argument’ (see p. 300, n. 24). This is true not only in logical matters, but also in ethical questions (in his Mfon, large parts of which are copied in Ibya, b. XXI, al-Ghazzâlî bases himself mainly on an ethical treatise of Avicenna recently discovered by B. Karliga and on a few pages of the Najît) and cosmological questions (see some recent studies of R. Frank, especially his Creation and the Cosmic System: Al-Ghazalî and Avicenna (Heidelberg, 1992)). When one wants to determine al-Ghazzâlî’s exact attitude towards philosophy, and—more particularly—Avicennian philosophy, all these derivations need to be examined in the smallest detail.

Fourthly, Griffel is right to indicate a close link between al-Ghazzâlî’s criticism of ‘philosophy’ and ‘batînism’. But what, in such contexts, does he mean exactly by ‘philosophy’? The major criticism of the Bâtînites is their fundamental attitude of taqlid. Moreover, when mentioning the philosophers in the Munqidh, al-Ghazzâlî does not refer to al-Fârâbî or Avicenna, but to the Ikhwân. Hence, a careful clarification on this point is essential.

Finally, what Griffel presents as al-Ghazzâlî’s core doctrine is explicitly so expressed only in his Faysal. Al-Ghazzâlî seems to hold a somewhat different opinion both in the Ibya (see p. 314, n. 36: ‘Der Glaube an die eschatalogischen Verkündigungen ist hier noch kein herausragendes Element der Glaubenslehre’) and in the Mustasfa (see p. 429: ‘Al-Gazal betont darüberhinaus, dass nur derjenige bestraft wird, der den Glauben an Gott und
seine Propheten verlässt, nicht wer in der religiösen Spekulation oder in der Beweisführung vom Konsensus der Muslime abweicht').

If the difference between Ihya‘ and Faysal can be explained in terms of doctrinal evolution, that is no longer the case with the Mustasfa‘, unless one accepts a return to an earlier point of view, but then the Faysal no longer expresses al-Ghazzâli’s final understanding. The way Griffel establishes an agreement between the latter two works, namely by interpreting the so-called vagueness of the Mustasfa‘ through the prism of the strong affirmation of the Faysal, looks rather questionable.

Notwithstanding these fundamental questions, this is an important, most valuable book, a pioneering work that focuses attention on a very difficult issue—a considerable achievement of great value to the scholarly community.

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The Epistle of Sa‘lim Ibn Dhakwân

The Sırat Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân, an early Ibaḍî epistle about the political views of various Khârijî and Sunnî sects and movements, has attracted considerable scholarly attention ever since Michael Cook edited, translated, and discussed the section from it on the Murji‘a in his book on Early Muslim Dogma (Cambridge, 1981). In this volume, P. Crone and F. Zimmermann present a meticulous critical edition of the full text, based on three manuscripts from Oman; a careful, copiously annotated English translation; and a wide-ranging study of the text and its historical background and implications. The question of the authorship, provenance, and date of the epistle, much debated since Cook’s book, is thoroughly re-examined.

Previous suggestions for dating the epistle had ranged from 72/691 to the early ‘Abbasid age. Crone and Zimmermann for the first time draw attention to a Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân mentioned in the Tārikh-i Sistân, who was captured by the conquering Arabs at Bust in Sistân in the year 30/650 and later rose to prominence among the local Muslims. The Ibaḍîs in the Maghrib preserve the text of a letter of Ja‘bir b. Zayd al-Azdî, the chief of the Ibaḍî community in Basra from 61/680 to between 93/711 and 104/722, addressed to a Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân in answer to a letter of his concerning some points of religious law. The authors envisage the possibility of Ja‘bir’s correspondent Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân being identical with the Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân of Sistân, but leave the question open. In discussing the local provenance of the epistle, however, they come out in favour of Khurāsân and Sistân and suggest that the Sa‘lim b. Dhakwân known to the Sistânîs is likely to be the same person to whom the epistle is ascribed (p. 286). They discard the possibility that the Sistânî Sa‘lim b.