

ABSTRACT

The *Maḍnūn* of al-Ghazālī:
A Critical Edition of the Unpublished *Major Maḍnūn*
with Discussion of His Restricted, Philosophical Corpus

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How medieval Islamic authors produced a religiously acceptable synthesis of the Greek philosophical/scientific traditions and the established Muslim religious disciplines is very important for the whole subsequent history of Islam. The work of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), a leading religious scholar and philosopher of the twelfth century (and of all periods of Islamic thought), provides an outstanding example. The thesis investigates his esoteric philosophical writings, the *Maḍnūn*, previously unstudied as a corpus, and identifies and interrelates the authentic writings that this difficult and complicated *oeuvre* comprises. In that process, the problems of the *Maqāṣid*(s) and the “*Qawā'id al-ʿaḳā'id*” are resolved. Problems of authorship, textual transmission, structure, and contents of the *Maḍnūn* had formed a strong barrier against scholarly use of those works, but the *Maḍnūn* has now been placed within the authenticated body of al-Ghazālī’s work. The first critical edition of the most advanced and technically philosophical manual among the *Maḍnūn* works, the *Major Maḍnūn*, is presented here along with a survey of most of the unpublished manuscripts of the corpus.

The worst gap in Ghazālīan scholarship has been filled. The *Maḍnūn* corpus can now be used in contextualizing and assessing al-Ghazālī’s philosophical endeavours and his career overall, and it will enable much more accurate analysis of the role of the rational tradition in Muslim thought. The *Maḍnūn* shows how al-Ghazālī, who belonged to the Ashʿarī school of theology (*kalām*) and is famous in the Islamic world for being *the* refuter of the Greek-derived philosophical and scientific tradition in Islam (*falsafa*), made effective use of Aristotelian ideas from—especially and extraordinarily—the *Metaphysics* and the *De Anima*, as modified by the Peripatetic thinker, Avicenna (d. 428/1037). In the *Maḍnūn*, al-Ghazālī demonstrates how greatly his theologizing came to rely on the philosophical and scientific tradition even while it continued to be expressed in traditional, religious terms. His *Maḍnūn* project reveals the ways of intellectual synthesis in medieval Islamic culture and society and illuminates the history of philosophy and science, religion and secular culture there—not least by showing that philosophy/science and religion were mutually relevant and interactive in a rich variety of ways. Easy generalisations are not profitable here; and individual, densely contextualised studies are what are valuable.