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courier
Humanities Quadrangle
320 York Street, 4th Floor
New Haven CT 06511

Call for Papers

30 years after Richard M. Frank: Al-Ghazali and Avicenna in Post-classical Islam

7-8 April 2023

In 1992 and 1994, Richard M. Frank published two books that would change the study of Islamic intellectual history. In *Creation and the Cosmic System: al-Ghazālī & Avicenna*, Frank portrays Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī as a thinker who was deeply influenced by the philosophy of Avicenna. He thus deconstructed the myth of the Ash‘arite theologian’s ferocious and uncategorical animosity to philosophy. Two years later, Frank followed up with his monograph *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School* where he analyzes several of al-Ghazālī’s late works and sheds new light on his complicated relationship with his fellow Ash‘arite theologians. The two books’ novel approach and ground-breaking theories initiated a conversation among scholars of *falsafa* and *kalām* in the West that resulted in a paradigm shift away from the narrative of decline espoused and popularized by 19th and 20th centuries orientalists. In addition to their special place within Richard M. Frank’s oeuvre, these two books denote one of the earliest instances of a neoteric disciplinary habitus that continues to undergird much of today’s vanguard research in the fields of Ghazalian studies and post-classical *falsafa* and *kalām*.

2023 marks three decades since the publications of *Creation and the Cosmic System* as well as *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School*. In celebration of these books and of Richard M. Frank’s contributions to the field of Islamic Studies Yale University’s Departments of Religious Studies and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, together with the Council on Middle East Studies (CMES), is pleased to host a conference April 7-8, 2023, on the reception of Avicenna and, more emphatically, of al-Ghazālī in Post-classical Islam. This call for papers solicits contributions on the impact of al-Ghazālī and Avicenna on post-classical Arabic and Islamic intellectual history, especially within the domains of *falsafa* and *kalām* and their intersection with Sufism, the natural and occult sciences, and the philosophy of law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).

Keynote Speaker

Jon McGinnis, University of Missouri, St. Louis

The conference will host a special panel featuring leading scholars in the field to discuss the contribution of Richard M. Frank to the study of Islam in Western scholarship.

Abstracts of no more than 350 words should be submitted to either Michael Lessman (michael.lessman@yale.edu) or Aseel Alfataftah (aseel.alfataftah@yale.edu) by April 15, 2022. Invitations for selected participants will be sent out by July 15, 2022.