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Trust, Trusting and Trustworthiness in Ethical Discourse

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Abstract

In literary genres concerned with an ethics of character, scholars in the third through fifth/ninth through eleventh century wrote about social trust. In this article I examine the ethical thinking of four such scholars: Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), al-Kharāʾiṭī (d. 327/939), al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Locating conceptualisations of the ethical concerns related to trust and mistrust, trustworthiness, trusting and misplaced trust, in a semantic field including the vocabulary of *amāna*, *tawakkul*, *thiqa* and *ḥusn al-ẓann*, I identify and discuss in this article some of these concerns, and I analyse in what ways the scholars' respective conceptualisations of issues related to trust are similar, and how they differ from each other. While some scholars explicitly conceptualise the ethical value of trust in the concept of *amāna*, the juxtaposed social and spiritual aspects of the concept of *amāna* is more implicit with other scholars.

Keywords

Trust – *amāna* – *thiqa* – *ḥusn al-ẓann* – virtue ethics – *makārim* – Ibn Abī l-Dunyā – al-Kharāʾiṭī – al-Māwardī – al-Ghazālī

الأمانة والثقة وحسن الظن في الخطاب الأخلاقي

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الخلاصة

اعتنى العلماء بين القرنين الثالث والخامس الهجريين/التاسع والحادي عشر الميلاديين بالأمانة الاجتماعية في مصنفاتهم ذات الصلة بالأخلاق. أدرس في هذا المقال التفكير الأخلاقي لأربعة من هؤلاء العلماء: ابن أبي الدنيا (ت. 894/281)، والخراطي (ت. 939/327)، والماوردي (ت. 1058/450)، والغزالي (ت. 1111/505)، وذلك من خلال ضبط المفهومات الأخلاقية ذات الصلة بالأمانة أو عدمها، وحسن الظن، والأهلية للثقة وعدمها، ضمن حقل دلالي يشمل مفردات الأمانة والتوكل والثقة وحسن الظن - من بين مفاهيم أخرى -، فأعريفها وأناقشها في هذا المقال، مع تحليل مدى التشابه والاختلاف بين العلماء في ضبط مفهومها، ففي حين يبرز بعضهم صراحة الثقة كقيمة أخلاقية في مفهوم الأمانة، تبدو الأبعاد الاجتماعية والروحية لمفهوم الأمانة أشد صميمية لدى آخرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الثقة - الأمانة - أمانة - حسن الظن - أخلاق الفضيلة - مكارم الأخلاق - ابن أبي الدنيا - الخرائطي - الماوردي - الغزالي

1 Introduction

In this article, I investigate positions on social trust in some works concerned with an ethics of character. My point of departure is the Qurʾānic notion *amāna* which, as I have argued elsewhere (Eggen 2011; Eggen 2014), pertains to two partly overlapping conceptual fields: the idea of a Divine trust (Q 33:72) and the idea of trust as a socio-ethical value (Q 4:58; 8:27; 23:8; 70:32). The notion of *amāna* is in this article inscribed into a broader conceptualisation of the ethical values of trust, trusting and trustworthiness, located in the literature in a number of lexical items which constitute a semantic field I identify by the metaterm “trust”. Other than the notion *amāna*, which may refer to the abstract noun “trust”, to the concrete noun “entrusted goods”, or to the quality “trustworthiness” (opposite *nifāq* “hypocrisy”, *khiyāna* “treason”), these include

the notion of *tawakkul*, which refers generically to “trust” and as a technical term to “trust in God”, the notion of *thiqa* which refers generically both to the abstract noun “trust” and the attribute “trustworthy”, and finally the composite *ḥusn al-ẓann* which may be translated “good assumption”, or “trust” (opposite *sū’ al-ẓann* “bad assumption” or “mistrust”).¹

The material investigated in this article pertains to the general field of an ethics of character (*‘ilm al-akhlāq*), concerned with character building through learning and habituation. As a generic notion, dispositions (*akhlāq* sing. *khuluq*) are qualified by positive attributes such as *makārim* (honourable) and *ma’ālī* (excellent), or negatively by attributes like *sifṣāf* (inferior) *sayyi’* (bad), glossed respectively as virtues and vices (Farès 1937, 414). Norms of praiseworthy conduct through nurturing virtues and restraining vices, are explored in different literary genres. The material investigated here consists of *makārim al-akhlāq* works of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894) and al-Kharā’iṭī (d. 327/939), and of the analytical ethics of al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).

Within the genre of *makārim al-akhlāq*, some 3–4th/9–10th century writers developed a virtue ethics calling for a practical manifestation of the ontological bond between God and the human being, through explicitly emphasising the ethical value of trust epitomized in the concept of *amāna*.² Writers of a more analytically oriented virtue ethics literature in the 4–5th/10–11th century would share a theologically based motivation for moral conduct, would draw on similar source material, and would appreciate the value of trust in different parts of their ethical theories. However, the concept of *amāna* was in this literature typically allotted a less prominent place. Without concluding decisively on the development of the use and understanding of the concept of *amāna*, I argue that the systematisations and conceptualisations inspired by the Greek philosophers may have contributed to this lesser prominence, and the intersection of Divine trust and social trust in the works investigated in this article, was articulated in implicit rather than explicit ways.

1 The semantic field is identified with reference to the lexicographical literature and constructed through the extensive cross-referencing between the relevant lexical items in this literature (Ibn Fāris 1979, 1:133–6, 2:231, 3:462, 5:454–6, 6:85; Ibn Manẓūr 1992, 10:359 and 371, 11:734, 12:272, 13:21–23 and 144; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1998, 36, 405, 527; [Ibn] al-Anbārī 1987, 14; al-Sikkīt n.d., 108; al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī 1971, 37, 68, 77, 127). Cf. Eggen 2012, 38–56.

2 It should, however, be noted that this is not necessarily a general characteristic of the genre. Two other surviving *makārim*-works, of the traditionist Abū l-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Ayyūb b. Muṭayyir al-Lakhmī l-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) (al-Ṭabarānī 1989) and of Raḍī l-Dīn al-Ṭabarsī (fl. mid-6th/12th century) (al-Ṭabarsī 2004) hardly touch upon concepts related to trust. In Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha’ālibī’s (d. 429/1039) work, the concept of *amāna* is referred to in the chapter on keeping secrets (*kitmān al-sirr*) (Orfali and Baalbaki 2015, 72–73).

2 *Makārim al-Akhlāq* Writers: Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿīṭī

Among the earliest extant writings in the *makārim al-akhlāq* genre are the works belonging to Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894) and al-Kharāʿīṭī (d. 327/939) (Orfali and Baalbaki 2015, 3–5). Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī l-Baghdādī), was a respected Ḥanbalī traditionist and teacher in Baghdad writing for a broad readership (Kimber 1998; Schoeler 2002; Librande 2005). This productive scholar, sometimes compared to both al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868–9) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), made an impact on later authors, and his writings have attracted both popular and scholarly interest. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kharāʿīṭī, a *ḥadīth* scholar in Damascus, originally from Samaria, was likewise a scholar with a Ḥanbalī orientation (Vadet 1960; Giffen 1998). He is renowned for his contributions to the early theories of love (Gruendler 2004), as well as for his writings on ethics.

Both Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿīṭī aimed at inciting a certain moral behaviour, although their authorial voice is limited to the selection and presentation of the material, and to a particular organising principle providing an interpretational framework through the section headings. The bulk of the material in both *makārim*-books is transmitted sayings from the Prophet and the Ṣaḥāba (Companions),³ and both compilations are distinctly informed by a Qurʾānic terminology. Additionally, a general acknowledgement of the heritage from the pre-Islamic Arabic culture is expressed, especially in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's book.⁴ Differences in the selection and organisation of the material suggest that the similarity between them is generic, rather than genealogic.

3 Trust in the *Makārim al-Akhlāq* Works

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿīṭī both introduce their accounts with lists of practically oriented virtues, such as the following list attributed to ʿĀ'isha (d. 58/678):

The noble dispositions are ten: truthfulness in speech, truthfulness in the fortitude of obeying God, giving to the suppliant, repaying good deeds,

3 Notwithstanding that both writers seek to authorize their texts by providing chains of transmission, they must be considered men of letter (*adībs*) rather than *ḥadīth* scholars. As my concern here is not the historicity of the narratives, I omit *isnāds* and reliability discussions.

4 Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 39. The concept of *makārim* was known in the pre-Islamic culture (Farès 1937, 415; Izutsu 1966, 22).

keeping ties of kinship, fulfilling the trust (*adā' al-amāna*), protecting the right of the neighbour, protecting the right of the companion, hospitality to guests, and the foremost one is modesty.

IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ 1989, 41, no. 36⁵

With this list as an overall organizing framework, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā develops a virtue ethics of trust emphasising trustworthiness, approaching the concept of *amāna* from different perspectives. His selection of material in the chapter on trust (*bāb al-amāna*) seems to be guided by a terminological choice, evoking the Qur'ānic concept of *amāna*. The double import of the notion referred to above, gives two potential levels of meaning in several of the sayings: In the sense of trustworthiness the notion addresses the socio-moral attitude of being trustworthy. Referring to trust more generally the notion evokes the primordial covenant-trust between God and man, and hence the broader picture of the role and responsibility of the human being. Thus, the moral responsibility to cultivate a trustworthy character, and thereby contributing to a general climate of social trust, is grounded in this covenant-trust between God and man (cf. Eggen 2014; Lombard 2015). The individual property of the virtues is emphasised; they are neither inherent nor inherited (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 42). Likewise, al-Kharā'itī starts from a variant of 'Ā'isha's list, as well as a similar list attributed to the Prophet on the authority of Mu'ādh b. Jabal (d. 18/630) (al-Kharā'itī 1999, 53, no. 115; 65, no. 154). His chapter on trust and betrayal is also mainly guided by a terminological choice, but occasionally he includes reports with thematic, although not lexical, relevance. Out of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's 16 and al-Kharā'itī's 33 reports on the issue, only two are identical in the two collections, but several are similar. In the following I let Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's account serve as an organizing principle for my presentation of the two authors.

In the first entry, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā reports from the Prophet: "The first [qualities] to be taken away from this community is modesty and trustworthiness, so ask God for these two" (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 190, cf. al-Kharā'itī 1999, 74). With this eschatological perspective, a sense of urgency is set.⁶ Decline in trustworthiness among people is paralleled with a general moral decline, which is considered a sign of spiritual and moral weakness of the Muslim community intimately connected to apocalyptic accounts. The levels of trust and

5 Cf. transl. Bellamy 1973, 2 from which my translation differ in a number of points, notably that Bellamy translates *adā' al-amāna* with "returning deposits entrusted to one for safe-keeping", while I retain the more inclusive "fulfilling the trust".

6 Ibn Abī l-Dunyā took a special interest in eschatology with at least sixteen works on matters pertaining to death and Resurrection Day (Kinberg 1994, 28 ff.).

trustworthiness become an indicator not only of the moral condition of the individual, but of a moral state of mankind associated with a certain phase in human history. al-Kharāʾiṭī cites a *ḥadīth* drawing up the eschatological image even more univocally: “Among the signs of the Hour is that the betrayer (*khāʾin*) will be trusted and the trustworthy (*amīn*) will be mistrusted” (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 77). In this future situation, people will be performing their worshipping rituals without fulfilling their social commitments, thereby losing their religion (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 191 f., cf. al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 72–73).

Similarly, both trustworthiness and mercy (*rahma*) are related to another theologically framed social action: giving alms (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 192). Again, the outward praxis will endure, but the spiritual content and meaning is, along with the Divine blessing, withheld as long as there is no trustworthiness or mercy: “Whoever is not trustworthy has no religion (*lā dīna liman lā amāna lahu*)” (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 69, cf. variant Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 193). Thus, trust is from the very outset construed as a relational value, and the social import is fully appreciated, as in a Prophetic report urging everyone to the swift and safe returning of whatever is entrusted to him, or else he

will then take it and carry it on his shoulder and ascend with it through the hellfire, until when he finds himself having brought it out, it slips and falls and he will be pursuing it for ever and ever. And trust is in prayer, trust is in fasting, trust is in ablution, trust is in speech, and weightier than all this, in deposits (*wadāʾi*).

AL-KHARĀʾIṬĪ 1999, 69⁷

Another type of human interaction is consultation, a topic al-Kharāʾiṭī introduces with the Prophetic report: “The consulted is entrusted (*al-mustashāru muʾtamanun*)” (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 254). This responsibility includes a meta-perspective of self-assessment, and built into the normative concept of trust is a responsibility to uphold it in accordance to one’s capacity. Knowingly doing the opposite, amounts to betrayal, as follows from another Prophetic precept: “Whoever gives advice to his brother knowing that there are others more sensible than himself, has betrayed him” (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 254).⁸ This suggests that the scope of trust encompasses both an outreaching social perspective, and an inward self-directed responsibility. The relational character of this ethics

7 Whereas *amāna* is treated as a general term, *wadāʾi* (sing. *wadʿa*) is a specific term in the *fiqh* literature referring to a formally contracted *amāna*; an object of material value intentionally placed under someone’s custody (al-Kaffawī 1998, 176; 187; 434).

8 al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 254.

allows, however, for pragmatic solutions, al-Kharā'īṭī explains. For instance, if someone owes you money and refuses to pay it, and it then happens that some payments are due to him on your account at a later stage, then there is no harm in you holding back from him whatever he took from you, before returning the rest. Nevertheless, the principle of reciprocity needs to be guided by a moral obligation of a higher order, and the moral duty to be trustworthy is not conditioned on the other person's trustworthiness (al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 73–76).

4 Trustworthiness, Trustfulness and Faith

Trustworthiness (*amāna*) is in these accounts correlated to other virtues, such as truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and neighbourliness (*yuḥsin jiwārahu*) by which the love of God and His Messenger may be earned (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 190). Both trustworthiness and truthfulness are in turn correlated to decency (*iffā*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 193, cf. al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 70). In a widely circulated Prophetic saying, truthfulness is correlated to trustworthiness and contrasted to lying (*kadhib*) and hypocrisy (*nifāq*): “The signs of the hypocrite are three: If he speaks, he lies, if he makes a promise, he breaks it, and if he is entrusted with something, he will betray the trust” (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 99 f.). Again, the reader is reminded of the superiority of the virtues. Actions like these, contradicting the virtues and enacting vices, will mark a person as hypocritical even if he still prays and fasts and claims to be a Muslim (al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 78; Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 194).

Considered of utmost importance is the sanctity of entrusted life: “Whoever kills someone who had trusted him with his life, will on judgement day carry the banner of treason” (al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 74).⁹ Ultimately, trustworthiness is the complement of faith, as conveyed from Anas (d. between 91/709 and 93/711) that the Prophet would repeatedly say: “A person who cannot be trusted has no faith (*lā imāna li-man lā amānata la-hu*), and a person who does not keep his pledges has no religion (*dīn*)” (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 196 f.; al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 70). Trustworthiness is, however, not understood to be absolute, nor a constant quality, rather it is proportional to faith: “Whenever the trustworthiness of a person decreases, his faith decreases” (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 197). The implication is that faith is nurtured from habituation, in combination with the Divine grace which the believer is urged to seek through prayers such as this: “God, I

9 A variant offered by al-Kharā'īṭī specifies that the norm extends to a non-believer: “Even if the killed one is a non-believer” (al-Kharā'īṭī 1999, 74).

ask you for health and decency (*iffā*), trustworthiness (*amāna*) and good disposition, and contentment with the measure” (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 71).

Moving beyond the social import of nurturing trust, observing trustworthy conduct and resisting betrayal qualify for rewards in the hereafter, as in the Prophetic report: “Guarantee me six from yourselves, and I will guarantee for you Paradise: Speak the truth when you speak, be faithful when you pledge, return whatever you are entrusted with, guard your genitals, lower your gazes and restrict your hands” (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 97 f., cf. with variant al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 77–78). While Ibn Abī l-Dunyā focuses on the potential delights of the hereafter, al-Kharāʾiṭī, on the other hand, points to the potential frightful outcome for not complying with this moral ideal, as tricksters, deceivers and betrayers are destined for the fire (of the hereafter) (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 72–73). Thus, the opposite of trustworthiness, betrayal, leads to destruction with both societal and eschatological implications. The manifestation of social trust or lack thereof plays, according to these accounts, a vital role in the historical course of mankind, and eventually serves as an eschatological sign. At this point, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā conveys a piece of advice regarding the loss of trust in a society:

Sahl b. Saʿīd al-Sāʿidī said that the Messenger of God one day said to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr: ‘What about you if you remain with a batch of people who have spoiled their pledges and trusts and have diverged so they became like this,’ and he entangled his fingers. He replied: ‘God and His Messenger know.’ He said: ‘Act on what you know, leave what you don’t know, and beware not to alter God’s religion (*dīn*). Mind yourself and leave the general public.’

IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ 1989, 195 f.

With this reference, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā seems to endorse an individualising perspective, focusing on the individual’s responsibility to contribute to public morality with one’s actions and attitudes. al-Kharāʾiṭī, on the other hand, moves beyond this general moral discourse, and indicates that there may be legal consequences involved in betraying an *amāna*, as in a case where someone puts aside for his personal benefit something of the spoils of war without reporting it to the chief in command. With this reference, al-Kharāʾiṭī points out the relevance of trust to the ethics of action (*al-fiqh*), in cases where liability applies (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 71).

5 Placing Trust

Neither Ibn Abī l-Dunyā nor al-Kharāʾiṭī delve into the question of whether there are any limits to trustworthiness, nor do they address possible dilemmas resulting from situations where being trustworthy may conflict with other moral obligations. On the question of where to place or where not to place trust, on the other hand, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and even more so al-Kharāʾiṭī, have some insights to share. Both writers emphasize the normative position that the primary object of trust should be God, not fellow humans. In one saying traced to the Prophet, ideas of trusting are conceptualised in the notion *tawakkul* and the notion *thiqa* (conjugated for the comparative form):

Whoever desires to be the most noble of people should fear God. Whoever desires to be the strongest of people should trust (*fa-l-yatawakkal ʿalā*) God. Whoever desires to be the richest of people should trust what is in God's hand more (*awthaq min*) than what is in his own hand.

IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ 1989, 8f.¹⁰

Accordingly, nobility should be sought in God-fearing consciousness (*taqwā*), as well as in personal integrity and in a certain prudence towards people, including towards oneself (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 45). al-Kharāʾiṭī takes this issue up to a fuller treatment in a few short chapters treating the topic of placing trust in others, with a certain warning against misplaced trust. In a chapter on prudence (*ḥazm*), vigilance and willingness to learn from one's mistakes is construed as inherent to faith, with the Prophetic quote: "The believer is not stung from the same burrow twice" (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 306). However, prudence should not lead to mistrust (*sūʾ al-ẓann*). The narrative illustration offered here is that the Prophet once identified his female companion to a bypassing man, whereupon the man assured him that whoever he had thought it might be, he had not made any improper assumptions. To this, the Prophet answered: "Shayṭān rolls in the blood of the sons of Ādam" meaning bad and improper assumptions might befall a human being more easily than he is willing to acknowledge (al-Kharāʾiṭī 1999, 159). Just as trust is relational and reciprocal, so is mistrust, and according to a saying attributed to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), every individual is responsible to avoid suggestive behaviour: "Whoever puts himself in a state of suspicion, should not blame anyone who

10 Ibn Abī l-Dunyā treated trust in God in two separate works: *Ḥusn al-ẓann bi-llāh* and *Kitāb al-Tawakkul* (Weipert und Weninger 1996, 429 f. and 450 f.). See also Meier 1999 on the concept of *ḥusn al-ẓann*.

mistrusts him” (al-Kharā’iṭī 1999, 161). Finally al-Kharā’iṭī is balancing off his account of prudence when acting on trust, with several sayings and narratives and a line of poetry:

Take precaution from your friend, not from your enemy
For only with the friend rests all your secrets.

AL-KHARĀ’IṬĪ 1999, 302

6 Trust as a Means and an End

Ibn Abī l-Dunyā concludes his exposition of *amāna* by defining the concept in a single word: “Trust (*amāna*) is sufficiency (*ghinā*)” (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1989, 197 f.). In his book *Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā describes *ghinā* as a step in the process of preparing oneself to meet God.¹¹ Paying attention to one’s actions (*ihtimām bi-l-‘amal*), the sincere believer enters into a series of causally linked states of being, finally resulting in the meeting with God (*liqā’*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1993, 23). In another report in the same book, the term *ghinā* is said to refer to both material and spiritual sufficiency, and is ultimately related to certainty (*yaqīn*) and insight (*ma’rifā*), out of which grows trust in God (*tawakkul*) (Ibn Abī l-Dunyā 1993, 26, cf. Librande 2005, 28). A conceptual link is thus in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā’s work established between insight, certainty, trust in God, and social trustworthiness (*amāna*). The latter is construed as a virtue essential not only to a sound societal fabric, and not only instrumental in the sense that applying this virtue leads to heavenly rewards, but more importantly it becomes a spiritual virtue, preparing the human being for his final and unavoidable meeting with God.

7 Trust in Analytical Virtue Ethics

In the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh century a number of contributions to a different literary genre of ethics appeared. In this period, the notion *‘ilm* (“knowledge”) was generally taking on a technical meaning of “discipline”, and the narrative approach was to a certain extent replaced by technical terminologies, definitions and taxonomies (Rosenthal 1970, 176). In ethics, one trend replaced the overall narrative structure with an analytical approach. Moreover,

11 In the absolute sense, the term only applies to God (Q 31:26), while when applied to human beings, it means to have few needs (Q 93:8) (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1998, 368).

a pronounced authorial voice places these writings in genres of authored works rather than as collections. The authors were nurtured by a common stock of material which they developed in distinct directions, and direct influence between them may sometimes be demonstrated or suggested. This common stock of material included the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth* and narrative or explanatory texts transmitted from early Muslim authorities, as had been the case with Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʾiṭī. However, additional material, notably from the Greek philosophers, was equally evoked.

Of utmost importance for this trend was the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle (d. 322 BC), by the tenth century translated into Arabic and widely commented upon ([Aristotle] 2005, cf. Woerther 2019). Influential writers like Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), adapted for their ethical treatises the main Platonic-Aristotelian typology of four cardinal virtues: wisdom (*ḥikma*), decency (*ʿiffa*),¹² courage (*shajāʿa*) and justice (*ʿadl*). Neither author introduces the concept of *amāna* in their ethical theories. al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's (d. early 5th/11th century) exposition is a more explicitly theologically based discourse, as he discussed the relationships between the norms (*aḥkām*) and virtues (*makārim*) of the Divine normative order (*sharīʿa*).¹³ However, his taxonomy follows on the whole the Greek schema: Through cultivating the cardinal virtues (*faḍāʾil*): rationality (here *ʿaql*), courage, decency and justice (here *ʿadāla*), with the additional virtue generosity (*jūd*), the human being may obtain humanity, freedom and nobility (*insāniyya*, *ḥurriyya*, *karam*), and on these he will in turn base his faith (*islām*, *īmān*, *taqwā*, and *ikhhlās*). In other words, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī starts from the Greek schema and nomenclature, to reach the familiar set of Qurʾānic virtues. However, he only briefly mentions trustworthiness (*amāna*), as a virtue in prolongation of and as a result of decency (*ʿiffa*) (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 2007, 115, 121).¹⁴

Two prominent writers were heavily influenced by this trend: al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Although neither of these authors thematise trust in separate sections, the following account demonstrates that

12 The term has in the context of analytical ethics been translated with among others “abstinence” (Griffith 2002, 29), “temperance” (Winter’s translation, see al-Ghazālī 1995, 20; Mohamed 2006, 246) and “purity” (Donaldson 1953, 126). The translation “temperance” is in keeping with the conventional translation of the Greek *sophrosyne*, translated with *ʿiffa* in the Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* ([Aristotle] 2005, 153 and passim). However, for consistency, I retain the translation “decency” throughout this article.

13 Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī discussed in his *Kitāb al-Dharīʿa ilā Makārim al-Sharīʿa*, the relationships between norms (*aḥkām*) and virtues (*makārim*) in the Divine normative order (*sharīʿa*) (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 2007; cf. Fakhry 1991, 176–185; Mohamed 1995; Mohamed 2006).

14 Cf. Eggen 2012.

they in different ways outline an ethics which include considerations on trust in both implicit and explicit ways.

8 Al-Māwardī's Theory of Ethics

The Shāfi'ī influential scholar and eventually chief *qāḍī* in Baghdad, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī, developed in his *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn* a general theory of ethics with the twofold aim to inspire people for this life and the next (al-Māwardī 2003, 3; cf. Donaldson 1953, 84–87; Fakhry 1991, 158–167; Arkoun 1973). Al-Māwardī notes that while improvement of the mundane conditions leads to happiness in this life, soundness in religion leads to worship, which will secure the next life. Organised in four parts, *Adab al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn* deals with religious conduct, mundane conduct and individual conduct, following an introductory part dedicated to a discussion on the relationship between rationality, knowledge and religion. From the outset al-Māwardī emphasises rationality (*'aql*), contrasted to caprice and stupidity, as the very basis of the virtues (*faḍā'il*) and good behaviour, with reference to the Qur'ān (al-Māwardī 2003, 5; cf. Q 67:10).¹⁵ He presents his theory analytically, with taxonomies and definitions, substantiating and exemplifying his theoretical claims with quotations and narratives from a host of sources, including the Qur'ān and transmitted material from the Prophet and the Ṣaḥāba, sayings of earlier prophets (such as 'Īsā and Ibrāhīm), named and unnamed Greek philosophers (referred to as men of wisdom, *ḥukamā'*), Persian men of wisdom (as Chosroes I, known as Anūshirwān), Alexander the Great, rhetoricians (*bulaghā'*), men of letters (*udabā'*), Sufi sages, and the occasional personal experience. The narratives are here didactic tools used in order to reach the hearts, which are “eased in a variety of ways” (al-Māwardī 2003, 3). Of equal importance in this account of ethics, is the concept of humanity (*murū'a*) identified with good disposition (*khuluq*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 5).¹⁶

15 In the last part of the book, dealing with personal conduct, he notes however that the *'aql* has a limited role in training for personal conduct.

16 In a later section on *murū'a*, al-Māwardī states that conditions for *murū'a* is support (*mu'āzara*), facilitation (*muyāsara*) and generosity (*ifḍāl*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 292). In addition to reaffirming the ancient Arab virtues of *murū'a* in this statement, he also reconceptualises *murū'a* with a reference to the Qur'ānic discourse, as “truthfulness in speech, beneficence towards one's brothers and remembering God in all places” (al-Māwardī 2003, 294). Mohammed Arkoun suggests translating *murū'a* into French as “plénitude morale” which would signify a state of morale completeness (Arkoun 1973, 266). As Arkoun notices, this is, however, not to be confused with the concept of the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) with its universalistic pretensions. Rather al-Māwardī presents,

Virtue is by al-Māwardī defined as the mean between two extremes, substantiated by the reported Prophetic saying that the “best of things is their middle course” (al-Māwardī 2003, 12). Exceeding a praiseworthy quality beyond the proper limits will turn it into a blameworthy one, except for exceeding in rationality which entails exceeding in knowledge. Following this definition al-Māwardī cites a poem attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), enlisting ten virtues (*makārim*): Rationality, religion, knowledge, forbearance, generosity, beneficence, piety, patience, thankfulness and gentleness (*‘aql, dīn, ‘ilm, ḥilm, jūd, ‘urf, birra, ṣabr, shukr* and *līn*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 14).¹⁷ The idea of the virtue as a means, is likewise attributed to the Greek philosophers listing the cardinal virtues of Greek philosophy: wisdom, courage and decency following justice, and completed with additional virtues (al-Māwardī 2003, 119).¹⁸ Throughout the book, virtues from both lists are described, defined and exemplified, as are other virtues and ethical concepts. We find several discussions on trust, with different approaches. For instance, al-Māwardī warns against a type of self-trust tending towards delusion. In order to obtain inner peace (*riyāḍ al-naḥs*), the human being should stop one’s heart from loving mundane life and trusting this world (*āminan la-hā*): This world is by nature a volatile place, so having confidence in it (*al-rukūb ilayhā*) is danger, and trusting it (*al-thiqa bi-hā*) is a risk (al-Māwardī 2003, 89). However, trust seems in this text to be appreciated as a self-evident value, and is neither defined nor conceptualised in a more distinct way.

9 Social Trust in Communal Life

As a basic premise, al-Māwardī asserts the necessity for communal life. The prosperity of this communal life is conditioned by multiple factors, such as established religion (*al-dīn al-muttabaʿ*), a powerful ruler (*sulṭān qāhir*), widespread justice (*‘adl shāmil*), public security (*al-amn al-‘amm*), prosperity (*khiṣb*), and hope (*amal*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 107–111). Social trust between members of the community plays a decisive role on many levels, as manifested

according to Arkoun, one way, possibly out of several, to fulfil one’s humanity within the Islamic scheme (Arkoun 1973, 265).

- 17 These virtues are not identical to the *makārim* listed by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿī, however al-Kharāʿī mentions the notion *līn al-kalām*, which is a more specified virtue than the *līn* mentioned by al-Māwardī.
- 18 The additional virtues are: calmness (*sakīna*), fervor (*ghayra*), grace (*ẓarf*), humbleness (*tawāduʿ*), generosity (*sakhāʿ*), forbearance (*ḥilm*), affection (*mawadda*), modesty (*ḥayāʿ*) and dignity (*waqār*).

explicitly or implicitly. At the level of governance, al-Māwardī notes that the truthfulness of the ruler is crucial in order to avoid general mistrust (*sū' al-ẓann*) in society.¹⁹ Mistrust is, by implication, understood as an impediment to a prospering community, and al-Māwardī emphasises the crucial role of the governing body to secure a general climate of moral good. Thus, the improvement of mundane life is both a governmental and an individual responsibility, and abundance of trust (*amānāt*) and apparent piety (*dīyānāt*) will secure societal well-being, while corruption will spread through less trust and weak piety (al-Māwardī 2003, 110). However, if the general condition of a society is decisive, so is the perception of this general condition (al-Māwardī 2003, 119). In other words, the perceived state of affairs is equally important as the factual state of affairs. There must not only be a state of public security, but a state of public security which people have confidence in, a produce of justice, and contrasted to oppression. Likewise, a productive and fertile society leads to sufficiency (*ghinā*), and sufficiency produces trust (*amāna*) and generosity (*sakhā'*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 121). Social life is, on the other hand, necessary to avoid the delusion of self-sufficiency (*tuḡhyān al-ghinā*). Hence, *ghinā* has potentially both positive and negative connotations; positive as in the saying attributed to the Prophet by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā: "Trust (*amāna*) is sufficiency (*ghinā*)" (see above), and negative as in al-Māwardī's own reference to the Qur'an: "But man exceeds all bounds when he thinks he is self-sufficient (*istaghna*)." (Q 96: 6–7).

10 Social Trust in Personal Relationships

At an individual level, al-Māwardī underlines that morally the individual should be true to his good senses, while emotionally his affection (*ulfa*) will attach people to him, and pragmatically material sufficiency will give him ease (al-Māwardī 2003, 123). Affection is cultivated in different ways, and relationships growing out of affection are all influenced by social trust. Friendships, mostly referred to by al-Māwardī with the theologically charged notion "brotherhood" (*mu'ākhāh*), either grow out of a common understanding or are intentional and chosen (al-Māwardī 2003, 136).²⁰ The first type of friendship is the

19 Al-Māwardī's ideas on trust and politics is developed more fully in the treatise *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyya* (see Eggen 2012).

20 This may be compared to how Mishawayh describes different kinds of friendship following the Aristotelian categorisation of friendships of pleasure, of utility and of good. The only friendship to be trusted (*thiqa*), that is to be lasting, is the friendship built not on pleasure or utility, but on good (Miskawayh 1966, 144; cf. Aristotle 2002, 210, §1156a; [Aristotle] 2005, 431 ff., §1156a).

most definite and solid, but in both types of friendships there is a certain degree of choice involved. The company one keeps reflects one's own preferences, as in the Prophetic saying: "The human being keeps close to the one he loves" (al-Māwardī 2003, 140), and it reflects on other relationships, as in the saying: "Friendship with villains will result in mistrusting (*sū' al-ẓann*) good people" (al-Māwardī 2003, 142). It seems like al-Māwardī sees trust as a prerequisite for friendship, as well as a characteristic of it.

Of particular importance for personal relationships, al-Māwardī notes, is keeping secrets (*kitmān al-sirr*).²¹ A rational person will only confide in a trustworthy (*amīn*) person, and be very particular in his choice. Differentiating between domains of life, al-Māwardī holds that it might very well be that a person who is trustworthy when it comes to property management, should not be trusted with personal secrets (al-Māwardī 2003, 266). In the book *Kitāb Tashīl al-Nazar wa-Ta'jīl al-Ẓafar*, al-Māwardī refers to a general advice attributed to the Prophet, in which the preferred attitude is neither one of naivety nor one of scepticism, but rather one of reflection: "Be cautious of the one you trust (*tathīqu bi-hi*) as you are cautious with the one you do not trust" (al-Māwardī 1981, 94). The trustworthy with regard to secrets (*amīn al-sirr*), is naturally discreet as well as reasonable, pious, sincere and serious. This is why unwelcome publicity is the worst affliction to befall a person, because when information is publicly known, it is known by both the trustworthy (*thiqa*) and the dubious (*ẓanīn*), and shared by both the betrayer (*khā'in*) and the trustworthy (*amīn*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 268; al-Māwardī 1981, 97). Moreover, a truly trustworthy person would not pursue entrustments, because "the one who looks for deposits is a betrayer and the one who seeks entrusted goods (*al-amāna*) is dubious" (al-Māwardī 1981, 94).

11 Trusting as Thinking Well of Others (*Ḥusn al-Ẓann*) and Mistrusting as Thinking Ill of Them (*Sū' al-Ẓann*)

In several instances, al-Māwardī discusses attitudes related to trust within the framework of the conceptual pair *ḥusn al-ẓann* and *sū' al-ẓann*. He defines *sū' al-ẓann* as "mistrust (*'adam al-thiqa*)²² in whom [trusting] is due", which amounts to misplaced mistrust (al-Māwardī 2003, 158). Accordingly, he lists this as a vice together with other blameworthy dispositions (*akhlāq madhmūma*),

21 See also the chapter "Kitmān al-sirr" in his *Kitāb Tashīl al-Nazar wa-Ta'jīl al-Ẓafar* (al-Māwardī 1981, 89 ff.).

22 *'Adam al-thiqa* is more literally translated with "absence of trust."

like greed (*hirs*), avidity (*shara*) and withholding rights (*man' al-huqūq*). In expounding on the definition, al-Māwardī offers a psychological insight to the way a person's self-image determines his opinion of others: "The assumption a person has about others is in accordance with his view of himself. If he sees some good in himself, he sees it in others, and if he sees some bad in himself he will think ill of others" (al-Māwardī 2003, 158). Consequently, mistrust is not a position from where one starts to investigate a matter, but a state where one is already infused with biases hindering any fruitful investigation. On the other hand, in response to an alleged claim of unnamed philosophers that prudence (*ḥazm*) amounts to mistrust (*sū' al-ẓann*), al-Māwardī holds that prudence is a result not of assuming ill, but of avoiding being too relaxed (*qillat al-istirsāl*). By implication, whereas misplaced mistrust is destructive, prudence is, in al-Māwardī's account, not. Rather, prudence is a precaution against misplaced trust.

In a section of the *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn* dealing with personal conduct, the conceptual pair *ḥusn al-ẓann* and *sū' al-ẓann* is construed in a different way. al-Māwardī holds that in order to become a moral individual, every human being, with the exception of prophets, must be trained, first by their parents and then by self-disciplining (al-Māwardī 2003, 197). Entrusting moral training to the intellect, or trusting (*tawakkulan 'alā*)²³ that good behaviour will come about by itself, is hazardous. Rather, good conduct is achieved by exercise and habituation. Accordingly, trust and mistrust towards the self takes on a function opposite to trust and mistrust in social relationships. The first step in reforming the self is to avoid assuming too well of oneself (*ḥusnu l-ẓanni bi-nafsīhi*), because, al-Māwardī points out with a Qur'ānic reference (Q 12:53), the self is indeed inclined towards its desires (*shahawāt*) (al-Māwardī 2003, 200). However, he objects, not everybody holds that one must necessarily mistrust the self. Some people will hold that just as unproportioned self-trust will make a person blind of his own mistakes; overly mistrusting the self may obstruct the acknowledge of positive traits, which is a fundament for building a moral self.

As demonstrated here, considerations on trust pervade al-Māwardī's ethical theory. The connection between this obviously important and partly theologically argued value of trust, to the Divine order manifest in the concept of the *amāna*, is however implicit more than explicit.

23 This is a rare example of the notion *tawakkul* being used generically.

12 Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Ethics

Similarly to al-Māwardī, the prominent Ṭūsian scholar Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), took inspiration from a large variety of sources, including both foundational Islamic sources and the reception the Greek philosophers, following writers such as the above mentioned Ibn Ibn Sīnā, al-Miskawayh and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī.²⁴ Al-Ghazālī explored these currents in different ways in various parts of his work, developing his systematic virtue ethics in the *Mizān al-ʿamal* (al-Ghazālī 1964),²⁵ and with some variations in the “Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs wa-tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa-muʿālat al-qalb” of the *Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:178 ff., trans. al-Ghazālī 1995, 3–101).²⁶ As an opening remark to the treatment offered in the *Ihyāʾ*, al-Ghazālī refers to the Prophet saying: “I was sent to complete the noble dispositions (*makārim al-akhlāq*)” (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:172). No listing of virtues is offered in this connection. However, a few pages later a typology of four “mothers of dispositions” (*ummahāt al-akhlāq*) is presented, in accordance with the familiar Greek scheme: wisdom (with reference to Q 2:269), courage, decency and justice (al-Ghazālī 1964, 263 f.; al-Ghazālī 1993, 3: 177 f.). Virtue (*faḍīla*),²⁷ is defined in the Aristotelian manner as the praiseworthy middle course between two blameworthy vices (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:178, trans. al-Ghazālī 1995, 20, also al-Ghazālī 1964, 262, cf. Aristotle 2002, 117; [Aristotle] 2005, 172 f.). When writing about how to obtain and maintain virtue, al-Ghazālī again refers to keeping a middle course (*wasat*), now cast in the Qurʾānic concept “the straight path” (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) (al-Ghazālī 1964, 268; al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:190).

24 Al-Ghazālī's ethics has been described and analysed in Abul Quasem 1975; Sherif 1975, cf. also Winter 1995; Mohamed 2006. Likewise, al-Husayn 1426h takes inspiration from, among others, al-Ghazālī in his explorative study on trust as a societal value.

25 The title *Mizān al-ʿamal*, refers to two concepts central to al-Ghazālī's ethical theory. The first is the accountability of the human being, conceptualised in the Qurʾān with the notion of *mīzān* (balance, cf. Q 7:7–8, 21:47, 23:102–3, 101:6–11), the second is the importance of action (*ʿamal*) (Sherif 1975, 33).

26 The authenticity and dating of the *Mizān* has long been a controversial question in the scholarly literature (Watt 1952a, 38 ff.; Hourani 1959, 228; Hourani 1984, 294; Sherif 1975: 170 ff.; Abul Quasem 1975, 37 footnote 26; Fakhry 1991, 193; Janssens 2008, 137). However, it does not seem like the differences between the *Mizān* and the *Ihyāʾ* are substantial in the particular segment of text describing a systematic virtue ethics aimed at refining the character. As my concern here is not to identify a potential evolution of his thought, I read the *Ihyāʾ* and the *Mizān* in view of each other.

27 In the *Mizān*, *faḍīla* is synonym to *khayr* (good) and five types of excellent qualities are listed, following a similar typology as al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī in his *Kitāb al-Dharʿa ilā Makārim al-Sharʿa* (cf. Mohamed 2011).

Good character is, according to al-Ghazālī, neither the action itself, nor the ability to act or the insight into the moral quality of the act, rather it is a firm condition and inner aspect of the soul (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3: 177).²⁸ Good and bad dispositions are defined by the Divine norm (*sharʿ*), and by the mores of conduct of the Prophet (al-Ghazālī 1964, 262). In the *Mizān*, al-Ghazālī argues that virtuousness is obtained through different means; either naturally, by habituation, or by learning. In a virtuous person these means are integrated, and the virtues internalised (al-Ghazālī 1964, 258).

Subordinate to the four virtues, and their opposite vices, al-Ghazālī lists a range of respectively virtues and vices from which only one virtue is identical to any of the *makārim* listed above, namely modesty (*ḥayāʿ*), which is described as subordinate to decency (al-Ghazālī 1964, 280; al-Ghazālī 1993, 3: 179). Included in this list is not the concept of *amāna*, but trickery (*makr*) and deception (*khidāʿ*), which may be construed as opposite to trust, are listed as vices opposite to wisdom (al-Ghazālī 1964, 264; al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:178). In the *Iḥyāʿ*, al-Ghazālī justifies this typology with a reference to the Qurʾān 49:5:

Therefore, faith in God and His Emissary which is free from doubt is powerful certainty, which is the fruit of the intellect and the utmost limit of Wisdom. Striving with one's wealth is generosity, which comes from controlling the appetitive faculty, while striving with one's self is Courage, which proceeds from the use of the irascible faculty under the control of the intellect and with just moderation.

AL-GHAZĀLĪ 1993, 3:179, trans. al-Ghazālī 1995, 23

Throughout the *Iḥyāʿ*, al-Ghazālī discusses virtues and vices within the conceptual framework of obediences (*ṭāʿāt*) and (*munjīyāt*), disobediences (*maʿāṣī*) and perilous (*muhlikāt*).²⁹ The signs of good character are summed up with concepts we recognize from the previous discussions on the *makārim*, such as modesty (*ḥayāʿ*), truthfulness (*ṣidq*), patience (*ṣabr*), gratefulness (*shukr*), satisfaction (*riḍāʿ*), forbearance (*ḥilm*) and decency (*ʿiffa*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:198, trans. al-Ghazālī 1995, 69). No concept directly related to trust, trusting or

28 According to Timothy Winter this definition refers back to Galen, and was received by al-Ghazālī through Miskawayh (al-Ghazālī 1995, 17 footnote A; cf. Aristotle's definition in the Arabic translation of the virtue (*faḍīla*) as a state (*ḥāl*) ([Aristotle] 2005, 169; Aristotle 2002, 116).

29 This order is outlined in "Kitāb al-tafakkur" (al-Ghazālī 1993, 6:49 ff.), and it serves as an overall structure for *Iḥyāʿ Ulūm al-Dīn*. I have in my translation here somewhat strained the English idiom, in order to accommodate the Arabic ambiguity as to whether the *ṭāʿāt*, *munjīyāt*, *maʿāṣī* and *muhlikāt* refer to actions or dispositions.

trustworthiness is included in the vocabulary of virtues. However, among the vices, mistrust (*su' al-ẓann*) is mentioned as one of the destructive characteristics of the heart (al-Ghazālī 1993, 6:51). It is not clear whether al-Ghazālī refers to *su' al-ẓann* in a general, in a spiritual, or in a more specifically social sense, as the notion is not further qualified in this context. Discussing the rights of Muslims and the rights of neighbours, al-Ghazālī lists the *makārim* from the sayings of 'Ā'isha and the Prophet (cited above), but in neither instance is the concept of *amāna* discussed (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:291; 2:312).³⁰

13 Trustworthiness in Friendship and Marriage

Al-Ghazālī does, however, discuss trustworthiness (*amāna*) within the framework of the rights of brotherhood and friendship. The exemplary gathering practices of the Prophet are described as being distinguished by modesty (*ḥayā*), humbleness (*tawāḍu'*) and trust (*amāna*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:283). Prophetic *ḥadīths* are referred to on the importance of trust for the general atmosphere of a social sitting, as well as on the sanctity of information conveyed in an atmosphere of confidentiality (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:268). This commitment of trust is furthermore emphasised as an essential element in any intimate meeting between two persons. Nevertheless, there are, according to al-Ghazālī, cases where an obligation of a higher moral order must take precedence before trustworthiness towards an individual, again with reference to a Prophetic report: "Gatherings are by trust, except three: a gathering where illicit blood has been shed, a gathering where illicit sexual parts have been misappropriated and a gathering where money has been misappropriated without consent" (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:268).

Al-Ghazālī also notes the importance of trust in his discussion on how to choose a friend, as he holds that not everybody is suited for a religiously beneficial friendship (*fawā'id dīniyya*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2: 258 f.).³¹ The qualities to look for are sound rationality and a good disposition, and one should avoid transgressors, heretics and someone preoccupied with worldly affairs. There

30 There existed a tradition of reckoning *amāna* as a virtue in the Sufi circles. Al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), who was the teacher of al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074), who in turn taught al-Ghazālī's teacher Abū 'Alī l-Fārmadhī (d. 477/1084), maintained on the authority of al-Sarī l-Saqatī (d. 251/865–66) that the four qualities (*khiṣāl*, sing. *khaṣla*) of a mystic would be: knowledge, good conduct, trustworthiness and decency (*'ilm*, *adab*, *amāna* and *'iffa*) (al-Sulamī 1998, 20, cf. Rosenthal 1970, 174).

31 The friend that can provide worldly benefit (*fawā'id duniyawiyya*), such as property or fame, is not his concern here.

is no benefit in the friendship of an untrustworthy or volatile person, rather a friendship must be rooted in fear of God: “From whoever does not fear God, you cannot feel safe (*lā tuʿmanu*). Do not trust (*wa-lā yūthaqu*) his friendship, for he will change according to his changing interests” (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:259; substantiated by Q 18:28). Likewise, al-Ghazālī notes that trustworthiness is a quality sought for in marriage (al-Ghazālī 1993, 2:73), and children are referred to as being entrusted to their parents (*al-ṣabīyu amānatun ʿinda wālidihī*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:200). Finally, in the “Kitāb al-ʿilm” al-Ghazālī highlights the point that the most basic knowledge impressed upon even people of lesser intellectual capacity, is the tenants of worship (*ʿibādāt*) and the importance of trustworthiness (*amāna*) in their professional activities (al-Ghazālī 1993, 1:77).

14 The Divine Trust (*Amāna*) as Human Responsibility

From these scattered remarks in al-Ghazālī’s ethical writings, it seems clear that he considered trustworthiness (*amāna*) of social importance, although it is not explicitly labelled a virtue nor translated into a fuller account of an ethics of trust. However, when commenting on Q 33:72, al-Ghazālī states that the human heart is distinguished by both the ability and willingness to undertake the Divine trust (*amāna*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 3:127). In this context, he defines this *amāna* as being “insight into and recognition of Divine unity” (*al-maʿrifa wa-l-tawhīd*).³² In the “Kitāb al-ʿilm”, rationality is also put forward as the faculty enabling people to accept the responsibility of this trust (al-Ghazālī 1993, 1:22). Here he treats *amāna* as an epistemological and theological concept, with the ethical implication that it represents a responsibility entrusted to the human being. This responsibility encompasses insight and declaration of Divine unity (*tawhīd*), which in turn is the foundation of trust in God (*tawakkul*) (al-Ghazālī 1993, 5:118).³³ Thus, although not explicitly articulated as such, an underlying

32 For al-Ghazālī’s understanding of *mʿarifa* as insight in a spiritual sense, see Shah-Kazemi 2002: 174.

33 In the book “Kitāb al-tawhīd wa-l-tawakkul” trust in God is treated with the notions *tawakkul*, trust in the Trustee (*thiqat al-wakīl*) and the heart’s confidence in the good discernment of the Protector (*tumaʾnīnat al-qalb ilā ḥusn al-naẓar al-kafīl*). Trust in God is listed by al-Ghazālī as one of the so-called mystical virtues. In this part of his ethical theory, al-Ghazālī built extensively on, and occasionally acknowledged, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) and al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī d. (243/857) (cf. Smith 1936; Abul Quasem 1975, 178 ff.; Sherif 1975, 105; Winter 1995, xxvi; Mohamed 2006, 21 f.). On al-Muḥāsibī, see Librande 1983. Al-Wakīl is listed by al-Ghazālī as one of the *al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā* (the most beautiful names) (al-Ghazālī 2001a, 158; cf. al-Ghazālī 1992, 126), whereas al-Kafīl is not, although al-Ghazālī is clearly referring to God (cf. Q 16:91).

premise to the ethical discourse may be construed as the primordial, Divine trust (*amāna*) taken up by the human being (cf. Q 33:72), encompassing insight and recognition of Divine unity, leading in turn the human being to trust God (*tawakkul*), hereby completing a full conceptual circle of trust.

15 Concluding Remarks

Evolving around the main trust-related notions *amāna*, *tawakkul*, *thiqa* and *ḥusn al-zann*, writers on ethics have included reflections on social trust to various degrees and in various ways. The *makārim al-akhlāq* works by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharā'itī, dedicated separate sections to the concept of *amāna*, calling for a continued process of building and cultivating trust through exercising trustworthy behaviour, and granting the concepts of trust and trustworthiness (*amāna*) a prominent space as a concept and virtue of cosmic import. With later authors taking an analytical approach, such as al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī, trust is more rarely forwarded as an ethical concept in its own right, although these scholars include reflections on trust-related issues. Contrary to the *makārim*-accounts, these writers did not label *amāna* as a virtue in their systematic accounts of virtues. It seems like one reason for this may be the influence of the Aristotelian scheme of virtues, in which this concept is not given a prominent nor specific status.

The notion *amāna* and derivatives, was in the Arabic reception of Aristotle suggested as the translation of Greek *pistis* and respective derivatives (Endress and Gutas 1992-, 4:406; Rosenthal 1970, 101 footnote 2). However, in the capacity of a virtue ethical concept in the Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *pistis* was translated with *qunū'*, a term which denotes cognitive conviction while being semantically related to spiritual contentment (*qanā'ā*) ([Aristotle] 2005, 419, 486, 533, 569).³⁴ Although these terms are not included in the Aristotelian discussion on decency in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (translated as *iffā*),³⁵ al-Ghazālī lists contentment as the subordinate virtue of decency. In the *Mizān* he explains contentment as “making a living without swindling” (al-Ghazālī 1964, 282). The conceptually related notion *amāna* is, however, not mentioned in this context. Whereas al-Ghazālī's predecessor

34 In other parts of the corpus of Aristotle translated into Arabic, *pistis* is translated *taṣḍīq* (Rosenthal 1970, 199).

35 In the Arabic translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *iffā* is a moral response to the bodily condition, a virtue placed as a mean between pleasure and pain (Aristotle 2002, 118; [Aristotle] 2005, 176 f.).

al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī had formed a theory which cursory, but explicitly, integrates an Aristotelian inspiration with Islamic references through his including the concept of *amāna* in the discussion on decency (see above), the Ghazalian gloss of contentment only implicitly contains such an element of trust.

Notwithstanding that *amāna*, together with most of the other virtues labelled as *makārim* in the reports referred to by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿī, is not designated explicitly as an ethical virtue, both al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī were concerned with issues related to trust from a psychological and psycho-sociological point of view. In thematising issues of trust in personal relationships, insights are offered on mechanisms of trusting (*thiqa*) in the sense of being subjected to another individual's discretion, and in the sense of holding an attitude of initial good will towards others (*ḥusn al-ẓann*), as well as the potentially constructive versus destructive function of trusting (*ḥusn al-ẓann*) versus mistrusting (*sūʿ al-ẓann*) oneself and others. On the other hand, while Miskawayh had taken an Aristotelian approach to friendship and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī followed a similar approach while reworking the expression, al-Ghazālī discussed friendship and the role of trust in friendship within the framework of the Qurʾānic concept of *amāna*. Thus it may seem like the impact of Aristotelian thought on al-Ghazālī at this particular point, is less significant than in other parts of the ethics.

Another recurring trust-related motive is the obligation to keep secrets, by some of the writers labelled *kitmān al-sirr*.³⁶ al-Māwardī sees the secret as an *amāna*, and he describes keeping a secret as a decisive trait of character. Whoever keeps a secret (*amīn al-sirr*) will evidently hold other qualities as well, such as being discreet, reasonable, pious and sincere. Likewise, al-Ghazālī holds that whatever is disclosed in a private meeting is an *amāna*. However, he modifies this absolute moral claim by the necessity of disclosing illicit behaviour. In this case a consideration of a higher moral order supersedes the moral obligation of the *amāna*, emphasising a certain relative feature in the social aspect of this moral claim. al-Ghazālī offers the insight that the obligation of being trustworthy is a human responsibility, not only to maintain sound social relations, but to maintain them within the boundaries of the Divine trust (*al-amāna*).

36 Among the earlier writers on ethics, both al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868–9) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) paid attention to the topic. See “Risālat kitmān al-sirr” (al-Jāhīz 1979, 1:137 ff., cf. Khan 2009) and “al-Sirr wa-kitmānihi wa-iʿlānihi” (Ibn Qutayba 2009, 1:96 ff. in “Kitāb al-sultān”).

Although most conceptualisations of trust in all these accounts are related to the obligations of the entrusted person, the act of trusting receives some attention. For both al-Kharā'īṭī and al-Māwardī, trust (*thiqa*) is connected to vulnerability, and therefore prudence is a prerequisite of successful human life. Nevertheless, al-Māwardī lists misplaced mistrust as one of four vices. However, he holds that a degree of self-scrutinising self-mistrust is necessary for moral enhancement, although exaggerated self-doubt may turn into a psychological impediment. Trusting and mistrusting seem, in al-Māwardī's account, to be the two mutually interdependent poles in a constant psychological process, which is also influenced by the surrounding social environment. He holds for instance that keeping bad company will prevent recognising good people, and consequently one will end up mistrusting what, and who, is actually good. To al-Ghazālī, mistrust is one of the perilous characteristics of the heart (*muhlikāt*), but this labelling suggests that al-Ghazālī here refers to mistrust of a spiritual rather than social nature (cf. *sū' al-ẓann bi-llāh*).

The virtues highlighted within the different accounts of virtue ethics are more or less universally celebrated, but there are some tensions between different ethical systems. Many of the values and virtues presented in the accounts considered here are traced to the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition. However, the analytical trend of virtue ethics more often than not let their ethical discourse be framed by a conceptual apparatus inspired by Greek philosophy. It has been observed that al-Ghazālī is one of the writers who moved freely between traditions filling gaps in one of them with complementary elements of the other (Sherif 1975, 163). However, as we have seen, the concept of *amāna* may only implicitly be construed as one such complementary element. On one hand, *amāna* is introduced as a crucial concept with regards to an ethics of human responsibility and accountability, with reference to the Divine trust in the Qur'ān (Q 33:72). Yet the concept of *amāna* is only mentioned in a few instances of practical ethics, and in the systematic virtue ethics, the concept is hardly mentioned, neither when al-Ghazālī reproduces his variant of the Greek virtue ethics, nor when he is listing the signs of good dispositions otherwise clearly inspired by a Qur'ānic spirit.³⁷

Among the four scholars examined here, the *makārim*-writers were both affiliated with the Ḥanbalī school of thought, while al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī were affiliated with the Shāfi'ī school of thought, and Timothy Winter has

37 As Abul Quasem notes, there are in al-Ghazālī's account two different kinds of virtues, with different aims seen from respectively a perspective of man's social relationships and of man's relationship to God. However, both these sets of virtues and dispositions pertain to the social ethics (Abul Quasem 1975, 190 footnote 6).

suggested that the inclusion of Greek elements was more acceptable in the training within the Shāfiʿī than in the Ḥanbalī schools of thought (Winter 1995, xlvii f.). With regards to the source material and nomenclature, both al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī include foundational Islamic sources as well as the Greek philosophical tradition, and in Aristotelian ethics, trust is not one of the most central concepts, although it is referred to especially in the topic of friendship. Trustworthiness is not recognized as a cardinal or immediate subordinate virtue. This abundance of methods and sources may be the reason why their thinking has been labelled a composite theory or a synthesis. Al-Ghazālī justified for instance the four cardinal virtues of the Aristotelian tradition with the Qurʾān (Q 49:15), and this interpretation must be understood as a deliberate choice on al-Ghazālī's part.³⁸ However, on the level of detail and as far as a conceptualisation of trust is concerned, a lexically and semantically informed microanalysis suggests that the theory of virtues is not so much a synthesis, as it consists in different accounts of virtue ethics operating side by side within the same work.

In the writings of both Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and al-Kharāʿī, accounts of the Divine trust (*al-amāna*) and the human obligation to fulfil the trust (*adāʾ al-amāna*) are, within the framework of *makārim al-akhlāq*, moulded into an integrated key concept in the ethical virtue of trustworthiness (*amāna*). Thus, in the *makārim*-accounts here analysed, trustworthiness (*amāna*) is construed as a social virtue, while its motivation and urgency is prompted by the religious obligation of eschatological significance, to fulfil the Divine trust.³⁹ In the analytical virtue ethics of al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī, although more sophisticated and theoretically developed, the input from Greek philosophy may seem to have been included at the expense of a more articulate appreciation of the key Qurʾānic concept of *amāna*.⁴⁰ Although the general impulse indisputably is theologically motivated, the juxtaposed social and spiritual aspects of the concept of *amāna* are with these authors conceptualized implicitly rather than explicitly.

38 In another of his late works, the *al-Munqidh mina l-Ḍalāl wa-l-Maṣūl ilā Dhī l-ʿIzza wa-l-Jalāl*, al-Ghazālī demonstrates that he is conscious of the possible implications of such fusions with the writings of the philosophers, finding them problematic from two perspectives, as one risks both refuting truth and accepting falseness on unjust grounds (al-Ghazālī 1967, 84 ff., trans. Watt 1952b, 39 ff.; al-Ghazālī 1980, 78 ff.).

39 Likewise, *amāna* was generally recognized in Sufi literature as a fundamental virtue (Rosenthal 1970, 174).

40 Abdul Haq Ansari holds that the inability of the Greek scheme of virtue to express the entire gamut of Islamic virtues was caused by the Greek concept of man, in which man was seen as a rational and moral being, where religion was not considered part of the essence of man (Ansari 1989: 85).

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