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Zaydite *ḥadīth* Literature and Thought

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I. Introduction

The formation of the Zaydite community is to some extent related to the emerging *ḥadīth* scholarship: both have their historical roots in the Iraqi city of Kūfa. This explains why the canonical Sunni *ḥadīth* collections also cite some members of the Zaydite community as transmitters of Prophetic Traditions. Nevertheless, the earliest school of Zaydite jurisprudence produced its own specific corpus of *ḥadīth* and fixed it in its legal literature. These books include also transmissions of sayings of the first Zaydite Imāms and, more generally, of the descendants of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*). The collected sayings of the Imāms consist primarily of legal opinions. Unlike the Imāmites, the Zaydites do not give these traditions the same status as the one attached to Prophetic *ḥadīth*. With the spread of Zaydism to northern Iran and Yemen, two additional Zaydite legal schools emerged alongside the 'school of Kūfa': the Qāsimī-Hādawī school, which regarded the two Imāms al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860) and al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq (d. 298/911) as the founding figures of their tradition, and the Nāṣiriyya named after the Imām al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917). The Nāṣiriyya was rather inclined to a 'Traditionalist' or 'scripturalist' methodology, and so the sayings of the Prophet and his descendants were the principal fundament of the school's doctrinal teaching. On the contrary, the Qāsimī-Hādawī school adopted a rational approach and claimed that knowledge in creedal matters can be achieved by rational proofs. During the fourth/tenth century, Zaydite scholarship in the city of Rayy and northern Iran increasingly used Sunni *ḥadīth* transmissions as authoritative sources in its legal literature. In Yemen, however, Sunni *ḥadīth* remained widely unknown. This changed only over the course of the sixth to the seventh/twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, when the two communities of northern Iran and Yemen came to accept the same Imām as their political and spiritual ruler and, as a result, the legal and theological literature of the northern Iranian Zaydites were transmitted to Yemen. Around the same time, Yemeni Zaydite scholars increasingly engaged with scholars patronised by the Sunni dynasties of Yemen, and these contacts further stimulated the dissemination of the canonical Sunni *ḥadīth* collections. From the ninth/fifteenth century onwards, a new Zaydite trend rose in Yemen that can be described as the 'Sunnisation' of Zaydism (a term that was first proposed by Cook 2000: 247–51). This new inner-Zaydite reform movement established itself alongside the predominant Hādawī tradition. Its protagonists propagated a focused study of the primary sources, that is, apart from the Qur'ān, the corpus of Sunni *ḥadīth*. These sources, they claimed, should constitute the foundation in legal scholarship and in

creedal matters. For the republicans of the 1962 revolution, the legacy of this trend constituted a main source of ideological inspiration. In addition, the reform movement was also instrumentalized by Wahhābī-Salafī propaganda, that came to form a radical and militant opposition against the Hādawī inspired spectrum of Zaydism during the second half of the twentieth century.

II. Doctrinal strands in Zaydism

Zaydism constitutes the third major community within Shī'ite Islam, after Twelver Shī'ism (or Imāmism) and Ismā'īlism. Its origin is traced back to the followers of Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 122/740), a great-grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad and son of 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. 94/712–13). The latter is, after 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660), al-Ḥasan (d. 50/669–70) and al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680), the last Imām unanimously recognised by the three Shī'ite communities. According to the Zaydites' self-understanding, their community's germ was constituted of Zayd b. 'Alī's Kūfan supporters in a revolt against the Umayyad caliphate, which they considered as illegitimate. The uprising was suppressed and Zayd b. 'Alī was killed. With his eventual recognition as Imām, the Zaydites separated from the other Shī'ite groups. The fact that the Zaydites trace their origin to a revolutionist movement should be of some importance for their theory of the imamate, which is distinct from other Shī'ite doctrines.

Kūfa, the scene of Zayd b. 'Alī's rebellion, was also the cradle for the emergence of the Zaydite community. Historical reports identify two groups among the supporters of Zayd b. 'Alī's imamate in the city: the Batriyya and the Jārūdiyya. The sources relate that, between the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries, these two groups competed for predominance over the early Zaydite movement, a struggle that was eventually won by the Jārūdiyya. An alternative history of the genesis of Zaydism considers this narrative as a heresiographical construct. It proposes to interpret the two mentioned groups as subsequent stages in the community's early development. Accordingly, the Batriyya would have been the community's most ancient layer. Their members would have largely shared the religious beliefs and convictions of the 'proto-Sunni' Traditionalists of Kūfa—with the mere exception of supporting the political aspirations of the 'Alids in the Kūfan revolt led by Zayd b. 'Alī. However, they would not have possessed a distinct sectarian identity. Such an identity would have developed only with a gradual increase of militancy and a growing convergence with 'proto-Shī'ite' positions, specifically in legal matters. This transformation would have lasted until the middle of the third/ninth century, when the movement took eventually the form of what was labeled as the Jārūdī orientation (Haider 2011).

This sceptical reading of historiographical sources on Zaydite origins raises however several questions. First, if the community's supposed early stratum, the Batrīs, were part of the 'proto-Sunni' milieu of Kūfa, it would actually make little sense to date the emergence of Zaydism before the rise of Jārūdism. If this was however the case, the revisionist account of the Zaydiyya's emergence has not provided a plausible explanation why this 'proto-Sunni' community should have separated from the majority and developed a Shī'ite sectarian identity. In addition, the claim that Jārūdism emerged only at a later historical period is challenged by some evidence that Jārūdī activities can actually be traced back to the community's early stages. Such indications include most importantly the figure of Abū Khālid al-Wāsiṭī (d. after 145/762). He left some of the earliest traces of Zaydite literature that reflect some of the major lines of the Jārūdiyya's doctrines. After Abū Khālid al-Wāsiṭī, significant contributions to the formulation of the Jārūdīs' doctrinal and

legal teachings were made by such scholars as Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd (d. 247/861) and Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī (alive 252/866). Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā is described by the Zaydite sources as a qualified candidate for the imamate. Yet he had no aspirations to claim political leadership and rather focused on religious teaching. Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā’s legal teachings were transmitted by Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī, who collected them in the work entitled *Amāli Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā*, which will be presented below as an important early Zaydite *ḥadīth* compilation.

In their doctrinal teachings, the Jārūdiyya and the Batriyya divided primarily over the question of who is qualified to lead the community. It was the position formulated by the Jārūdites that came to be the predominating Zaydite doctrine in this issue and that came to be the principle to which the majority of the Zaydites eventually subscribed. They believed that the first three Imāms ʿAlī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn had been designated by the Prophet as his successors. However, unlike the Imāmites, they accepted after al-Ḥusayn any descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad’s daughter Fāṭima (d. 11/632) as a legitimate pretender to the imamate—provided he retains the allegiance of the community through calling for his cause (*daʿwa*) and armed rising (*khurīj*) against oppressive rulers. It is this anti-quietist element that relates their theory of the imamate to the community’s revolutionary origin.

The Jārūdites’ belief in the designation of the first three Imāms was rejected by the Batrīs. Indeed, they regarded ʿAlī as the most excellent among the Prophet’s companions, but they did not consider the first two caliphs Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as illegitimate. For them, the legitimate Imām should be elected by consultation (*shūra*). In addition, the Batrīs attributed no superior knowledge to the members of the Prophet’s family and regarded religious knowledge as equally distributed among the entire Muslim community. This also explains to some extent why the Batrīs were so close to the ‘proto-Sunni’ Kūfan Traditionalist school. The Jārūdiyya came to be the predominant strand of Zaydism around the turn of the second to the third/beginning of the ninth century.

The early Zaydite literature exposes a line of thought that deviates significantly from later mainstream doctrines, specifically once the Zaydiyya came under the impact of Muʿtazilism—a development we will discuss below in some more detail. Examples for these disagreements include a strict rejection of human freedom of action. It was argued that if God would not impose His will on His creation, this would infringe His absolute omnipotence. Also, their teaching on God’s attributes and on the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān were hardly compatible with the Muʿtazilite notion of God’s oneness. The early Zaydites in Kūfa also appear to have engaged in discussions about the fate of Muslims who commit grave sins, an issue that was part of a wider theological debate between theological movements. The most radical positions were taken on the one hand by the Khārījites, who considered the grave sinner as an unbeliever, and the Murjiʿites, who denied that even the most serious sin invalidates the belief of whoever commits it. The Muʿtazilites gave him an intermediary position between believers and unbelievers. Early Zaydite scholars proposed a distinct answer to this question: they consider the grave sinner as an unbeliever, but not on the same level as polytheists or atheists. Rather, the grave sinner is regarded by them as an ‘unbeliever by ingratitude’ (*kāfir niʿma*), because he repudiates God’s commands and reliefs (Griffini 1919; Strothmann 1923; Madelung 1965:53–85; Haider 2011:17–21; Madelung 2014).

The abovementioned Abū Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā and Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī, as well as one al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd (d. 267/880–81)—a younger contemporary of al-Murādī—significantly contributed to laying the foundations for the community’s earliest school of jurisprudence, the so-called ‘school of Kūfa’. These foundations entered the literary corpus of Zaydite Traditions, which can

be considered to some extent as the counterpart of the Sunni and Imāmite collections of *ḥadīth*, and whose specific characteristics will be further described in the following. The legal corpus of the ‘school of Kūfa’ largely relies on reports attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Zayd b. ‘Alī, and notably also on sayings transmitted, among others, from the fifth and the sixth Imām in the Twelver Shī‘ite succession of Imāms, that is, Zayd’s brother Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/735) and the latter’s son Ja‘far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765). As it happens that the transmitted opinions of these authorities sometimes disagreed over specific issues, the early Kūfan jurists developed the concept of the ‘consensus of the family of the prophet’ (*ijmā‘ ahl al-bayt*). This consensus remained a central idea in the Zaydite literature over the centuries to follow (Ansari and Schmidtke 2019). Because of its origin in Kūfa, the ‘school of Kūfa’ was also to some extent influenced by the so-called *ahl al-ra‘y*, that is, the proponents of individual legal reasoning, who can be largely identified with the emerging Ḥanafite school, whose historical cradle the city of Kūfa was.

Apart from the ‘school of Kūfa’, additional new tendencies in Zaydite legal and theological thought were soon to appear. One of these strands relies primarily on the authority of the two Imāms al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm and his grandson al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq. Al-Qāsim came from a Medinan family, and he merely appears to have qualified himself for the Zaydite imamate by his erudition. In fact, the Zaydite intellectual traditions depict two different pictures of al-Qāsim. The reason is that he had a number of students from the Kūfan milieu—most importantly Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī—who grounded al-Qāsim’s authority merely in his descent from the Prophet’s family. In the Qāsimī-Hādawī tradition, al-Qāsim’s role is in turn much more fundamental: rather than being just one among other authorities from the Prophet’s family, he was regarded as the founding figure of this intellectual strand, and the prevailing picture of him was that of a rational thinker. Al-Qāsim spent significant time of his life in Egypt, where devoted himself to the study of theology. He met with *kalām* theologians and discussed with a sceptic inclined to *fal-safa* as well as with Coptic theologians. It was during this period that he developed his position on human free will and that defending God’s absolute transcendence became of central concern to him. Considering that these two principles were shared by the Mu‘tazilite school of theology, scholars have asked whether or not al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm was himself influenced by Mu‘tazilite doctrines. This was actually suggested by B. Abrahamov (Abrahamov 1986; Abrahamov 1990; Abrahamov 1996). And in fact, there are some historical reports about interactions and political contacts between Zaydites and Mu‘tazilites in Kūfa. However, W. Madelung objected that explaining al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm’s theology by the impact of Mu‘tazilite teaching raises several problems. For example, al-Qāsim held some positions that were hardly compatible with the idea that God’s justice and His treatment of mankind obeys an objective ethics—and this was in turn a very central and incontrovertible principle for the Mu‘tazilites. In addition, Madelung argues that al-Qāsim avoided any clear statement in support of the thesis that the Qur’ān is created. As is well known, the Mu‘tazilites’ position in this question was that the createdness of the Qur’ān was a logical corollary of God’s oneness, and they consequently strongly supported this idea. Madelung also claims that specifically those treatises that are most inclined to Mu‘tazilism are actually unauthentic and were rather written after the Imām’s death. He therefore suggests that the theory of Mu‘tazilite influence on al-Qāsim is unlikely. Rather, he concludes that al-Qāsim formulated his positions under the impact of his disputations with Christian theologians, whom he encountered whilst residing in Egypt: his doctrines resemble in particular those of the well-known Melkite bishop of Ḥarrān in Northern Mesopotamia, Theodore Abū Qurra (d. c. 830). However, even if al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm cannot be considered as a Mu‘tazilite theologian, he paved the way for a new doctrinal orientation that should significantly shape the community’s later development (Madelung

1965: 86–152; Madelung 1989; Madelung 1991).

Al-Qāsim's teachings found significant support in the region of Ṭabaristān in northern Iran. Missionary activities successfully promoted the Zaydite cause in this region, to such extent that in 250/864 a Zaydite state was established at the southern coast of the Caspian sea. Some fifty years later, a second Zaydite state was founded by al-Qāsim's grandson al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq (d. 298/911) in the northern highlands of Yemen, with Ṣa'da as capital. In 284/897, al-Hādī came from the Ḥijāz with a sizeable number of supporters of the Zaydite mission (*da'wa*).

Al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq is the second major authority of what came to be the Qāsimī-Hādawī strand of Zaydism. Unlike his grandfather, al-Hādī was, however, definitely a Mu'tazilite theologian. His works include a book entitled *Kitāb al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*, which opens with the author's commitment to the five doctrinal principles of the Mu'tazila, that is, God's unity (*tawḥīd*), His justice (*'adl*), the irreversibility of Divine promise and threat (*al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd*), the duty to advocate good and forbid evil (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), and the definition of the grave sinner as being in an intermediate position between believers and unbelievers (*al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*). It is not entirely clear how precisely al-Hādī got acquainted with Mu'tazilite doctrines. Some few reports relate that he studied with a major representative of Mu'tazilism, namely the head of the school of Baghdad, Abū l-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931) (Madelung 1965: 164). While these reports cannot be confirmed or disproved, they are at least consistent with the fact that in specific theological questions, al-Hādī was inclined to the teachings of the Baghdadi school of the Mu'tazila and consequently disapproved of the solutions offered by their Basran peers to some doctrinal problems. For the following generations of Yemen's Imāms and Zaydite theologians, the writings of al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm and al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq remained authoritative. Despite some disagreements between the two, their teachings were largely identified with each other and considered as one consistent system of thought (Madelung 1965: 164–67; Ansari, Schmidtke and Thiele 2016: 473–75).

The third influential strand of Zaydism besides the Kūfan and the Qāsimī-Hādawī tradition bears the name 'Nāṣiriyya', because it was founded by the Imām al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh. Al-Nāṣir ruled in Ṭabaristān in northern Iran. His school of thought had various sources of influence. One of them was Imāmite teaching. This had to do with al-Nāṣir's family background. His father himself as well as his brother transmitted Imāmite *ḥadīth*. The impact of Imāmite teaching is specifically visible in the field of law: this is illustrated, for example, by the fact that al-Nāṣir adopted Imāmite law of inheritance, and that he also prohibited the irrevocable triple repudiation of the wife. It is consequently not surprising that al-Nāṣir was even claimed by some later Imāmites to have been a member of their own community, or that his thought was at least of interest to them. A prominent example for the later Imāmite echo was al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), a prominent Twelver Shī'ite theologian, who was, in addition, a descendant of al-Nāṣir. He wrote a treatise, entitled *al-Nāṣiriyyāt*, in which he explores the commonalities and differences between al-Nāṣir's and the Imāmites' teachings. Moreover, al-Nāṣir's legal system was profoundly influenced by the Kūfan tradition of Zaydism, as it relies significantly on legal reports transmitted via Abū Khālid al-Wāsiṭī and Aḥmad b. 'Īsā. Al-Nāṣir studied these traditions with Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī himself. In theology, al-Nāṣir was also guided by the Kūfan tradition, as can be seen in his *Kitāb al-Bisāt*. The approach to theological question which is found in this work is clearly distinct from that of *kalām* theologians. The primary foundation of al-Nāṣir's doctrinal positions was not dialectical reasoning, but rather scriptural evidence and oral traditions, many of which he cites on the authority of al-Murādī. In accordance with this approach, he was an outspoken opponent of Mu'tazilism, and specifically questioned the legitimacy of their methodology. According to

al-Nāṣir, the Muʿtazilites’ attempt to resolve theological problems by rational inquiries violates God’s prohibition to endeavour in such speculations. By doing so, the Muʿtazilites would illicitly claim insights that are not corroborated by revelation and actually go beyond the limitations of man’s intellectual capacities. Doctrinally, al-Nāṣir distinguished himself from Muʿtazilite teaching by approving of the definition of grave sins as actual unbelief by virtue of ingratitude towards God—as opposed to the intermediate position between believers and unbelievers, that is granted to such offenders by the Muʿtazilites. Al-Nāṣir established this doctrine on the authority of his Kūfan teacher al-Murādī. It is however striking that al-Nāṣir deviated from the teaching of the Kūfan school in a very central issue: he rejected the earlier Kūfan Zaydite belief in divine determinism and rather approved of the principle of free will—and consequently agrees with al-Qāsim and al-Hādī. This makes al-Nāṣir an interesting case for the history of Muslim theological thinking in general: while being methodologically inclined towards the approach of the *ḥadīth* folk, he adopts a position generally associated with rational *kalām* theology in the controversy on human acts (Madelung 1965: 159–61; Madelung 2002).

All three strands of Zaydism continued to exist along another for several centuries. The first school to disappear was that of Kūfa. It was kept alive by the city’s Zaydite community until as late as the seventh/thirteenth or even the eight/fourteenth century. The Nāṣirī school survived until the tenth/sixteenth century in the north Iranian province of Gīlān (Ansari and Schmidtke 2011: 205–6). Even before their disappearance, they were partly absorbed by the Qāsimī-Hādawī strand of north Iran. The Zaydites of north Iran experienced a cultural flourishing during the rule of the Būyids (fourth to fifth/tenth to eleventh c.). In this period, the contacts between them and their Yemeni co-religionists were fairly limited.

The Yemeni Zaydites’ intellectual tradition was shaped by al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, his grandson and founder of Yemen’s Zaydite Imamate al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq, as well as the successors of al-Hādī. Their teachings dominated for several centuries, and they were also the starting point for the emergence of some messianic and pietist movements in Yemen, who interpreted the Imāms’ writings in their own way. To a large extent, the religious teaching in Yemen took place in quasi-isolated mountain villages, so-called *ḥijras* (‘abodes of emigration’). It was only during the sixth/twelfth century that the remoteness of the Yemeni Zaydites from their Iranian co-religionists gradually decreased. Changes began with the reign of Abū Ṭālib *al-akhīr* Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Muʿayyad bi-llāh al-Ḥārūnī (d. 520/1126), who successfully claimed the imamate in 502/1108 in Gīlān and was little later, in 511/1117, also recognised by Yemeni Zaydites. He was consequently the first to establish his authority over both regions, and so the two communities were united for the first time in their history under a single rulership. Abū Ṭālib and even more his successors al-Mutawakkil ‘alā llāh Aḥmad b. Sulaymān (r. 532–66/1137–70) and al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥamza (r. 593–614/1197–1217) attempted to promote a common doctrine and consequently put much efforts into the transmission of the literature and scholarship from northern Iran to Yemen. Since the unification of the Caspian and the Yemeni communities under a single spiritual and political rulership, the Zaydite Imāms resided in Yemen, and the Caspian Zaydiyya gradually lost its importance. In Yemen, however, the Qāsimī-Hādawī school has survived down to the present day.

The co-existence of the three distinct Zaydite schools did not mean that scholars were not moving between these traditions. An instrumental figure in the transmission of the Kūfan *ḥadīth* legacy to Iran—and, indirectly, via his students even as far as Yemen—was the Iraqi Abū Zayd al-ʿAlawī (d. 326/937–38). He had studied for some time with Muḥammad b. Manṣūr al-Murādī in Kūfa, and later he settled in Rayy where he spent teaching for most of his life. Abū Zayd al-ʿAlawī was a *ḥadīth* scholar and *kalām* theologian. He is

credited to have written the first Iranian Zaydite refutation of the Twelver Shī'ite notion of the imamate and also a polemical tract against the Ismā'īliyya. Abū Zayd al-'Alawī was the teacher of Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī (d. c. 352/963), who came to Rayy and studied with al-'Alawī law and *ḥadīth*. As we will see in the following section, al-Ḥasanī was a scholar of central importance because he made significant contributions to the trajectory of the Qāsimī-Hādawī school (Ansari 2016).

III. The role of *ḥadīth* in Zaydite scholarship

The character of the Zaydite *ḥadīth* corpus is specific as compared to other strands of the Muslim tradition, in that it overlaps partly with Sunni and Imāmite transmissions but also possesses its very own particularities. The Zaydite corpus of *ḥadīth* collects primarily Prophetic Traditions that were transmitted by members of the *ahl al-bayt*, that is, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad via the family line of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his wife Fāṭima. As opposed to the Imāmite corpus, the dicta, opinions and sayings of the Imāms themselves play a comparatively minor role. To be sure, the Zaydite literature also contains traditions about the opinions of the *ahl al-bayt*, including 'Alī, Zayd b. 'Alī, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja'far al-Šādiq, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762–63), and some others. They are quoted alongside Prophetic Traditions, but unlike the Imāmites, Zaydites would not consider these reports as having the same status as *ḥadīth*. Intense intellectual exchanges of major Zaydite scholars with the Sunni and particularly the Ḥanafī legal tradition eventually lead to an increasing incorporation of Sunni *ḥadīth* into the Zaydite tradition.

The transmission and collection of Zaydite *ḥadīth* was part of the emerging Muslim scholarly activities in the city of Kūfa, which has fundamentally contributed to the compilation of Prophetic Traditions in general. Therefore Zaydite *ḥadīth* transmissions have also found their way into the canonical Sunni collections of Prophetic Traditions—but of course not as a specifically Zaydite corpus, but rather as reports transmitted and collected by authoritative Kūfan specialists in *ḥadīth*.

The earliest Zaydite compilation of *ḥadīth* that has come down to us was attributed to Zayd b. 'Alī himself, but its authenticity is doubtful. It is known under two alternative titles, namely *al-Majmū' al-fiqhī* and *Musnad Zayd*. Rather than being a work by Zayd himself, it appears that the earliest recension of this collection of legal Traditions was made by Abū Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī. Abū Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī's original version of the collection has not survived, but a later version was passed on via more than one line of transmission and is found embedded in several works of Zaydite law. One version is preserved in the literature of the Zaydite community of Yemen, and its line of transmission goes back to compilers of Kūfa. This version was also the textual basis of what E. Griffini edited as the allegedly oldest surviving work of Muslim law (Griffini 1919).

An additional line of transmission of Abū Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī's collection is found in two important Zaydite *ḥadīth* works by Kūfan scholars. One is from the third/ninth century, entitled *Amālī Aḥmad b. 'Isā b. Zayd*. In fact, this work was not compiled by Aḥmad b. 'Isā himself, but rather by his companion Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī. Most of Aḥmad b. 'Isā's legal opinions are based on the one hand on Abū Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī's transmissions from Zayd b. 'Alī and on the other hand on Abū l-Jārūd's reports from Muḥammad al-Bāqir. In the *Amālī*, al-Murādī furthermore quotes regularly al-Qāsim al-Rassī and other 'Alids. Al-Murādī's *Amālī* are also known under other titles, such as *Kitāb 'ulūm Āl Muḥammad* and *Badā'ī' al-anwār fī maḥāsīn al-āthār*. It is considered as the most important collection of sayings of the Prophet and his family (*ahl al-bayt*), and it became one of the

most authoritative works (along with al-Hādī's *Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, which is discussed below) in Zaydite law (Madelung 1987: 359).

The legal doctrines of the founding figures of the 'school of Kūfa' were later collected in a fifth/eleventh-century compendium entitled *al-Jāmi' al-kāfi*. This multi-volume work was compiled by the Kūfan Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-'Alawī (d. 445/1053). It became the most comprehensive legal work for the 'school of Kūfa'—hence the alternative title *al-Jāmi' li-'ulūm Āl Muḥammad*. The *al-Jāmi' al-kāfi* focuses on legal traditions. A particularity of the work consists of the fact that only parts of the reports are introduced by chains of transmissions. For others, al-'Alawī provides a list of his sources at the beginning of his work. This list includes some thirty works by al-Murādī, and the latter is actually among the most important transmitters cited by al-'Alawī. In addition, al-'Alawī also relies on such authorities as al-Qāsim al-Rassī and the Kūfan Zaydite legal scholar al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd (Madelung 1987: 359).

If both the Kūfan and the Qāsimī-Hādawī school considered al-Qāsim al-Rassī as an important authority, his legal traditions were transmitted by two different ways. Al-Qāsim had several students from Kūfa who studied with him in Medina, and it was because of these personal relations that al-Qāsim's legal teachings found their way into the literature of the Kūfan school. The Qāsimī-Hādawī school relied, in turn, on oral and written transmissions that were passed on within his own family via his grandson, the founder of the Zaydite imamate in Yemen al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq. These two different lines of transmission also explain why the legal opinions attributed to al-Qāsim are in some cases not identical in the two schools. Both were to some extent influenced by the local scholarly contexts, in which these legal reports were collected and compiled: the Kūfans tended to be inclined to the city's predominant Ḥanafī tradition, whereas al-Qāsim's family was rather under the impact of the Medinan legal practice.

Al-Qāsim al-Rassī's grandson al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq has not left any proper compilation of *ḥadīth*. Al-Hādī's transmissions of *ḥadīth* were collected only centuries later by the Yemeni scholar 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ḥamza b. Abī l-Najm al-Ṣa'dī (d. 647/1249) in a work entitled *Durar al-aḥādīth al-nabawiyya bi-l-asānīd al-Yahyawīyya*. Apart from this work, al-Hādī's systematic legal treatise, the *Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, cites a significant amount of Prophetic Traditions, along with many of al-Qāsim's legal opinions. It is yet noteworthy that for two centuries after the establishment of the Zaydite imamate in Yemen, we hardly possess testimonies of any significant preoccupation of the community with *ḥadīth*. Several seemingly inter-related factors might explain this phenomenon. *Ḥadīth* literature, including the Sunni canonical works, did for long not circulate among the Zaydites of Yemen. These texts were inaccessible probably not only because of the community's geographical remoteness. Additional reasons were the Zaydites' opposition to Sunnism and also to some extent their inclination towards Mu'tazilism, that was certainly not conducive to their scholars' engagement with *ḥadīth*. Yet the situation among the north Iranian adherents to Qāsimī-Hādawī teaching was somewhat different, and it is worth reviewing these evolutions before we come back to the developments in Yemen.

Al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq's aforementioned *Kitāb al-Aḥkām* was subject to several later commentaries. They offer some information as to when al-Hādī's book was transmitted from Yemen to northern Iran and more particularly to the region of Daylamān. The earliest of these Iranian commentators was Abū l-'Abbās al-Ḥasanī. As previously mentioned, Abū l-'Abbās al-Ḥasanī was a student of the theologian and *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Zayd al-'Alawī. Apart from commenting on al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq's *Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, he also collected legal traditions and opinions transmitted from al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq in his *Kitāb al-Nusūṣ*, a book that has not survived but that was much quoted in the later literature. Abū l-'Abbās al-Ḥasanī's work on the *Kitāb al-Aḥkām* remained unfinished. The version that we possess today under

the title *Sharḥ al-Aḥkām* is in fact the work of his student ‘Alī b. Bilāl al-Āmulī. It is based on al-Ḥasanī’s unfinished commentary, but also includes orally transmitted material from al-Ḥasanī’s lectures and al-Āmulī’s own additions (Ansari 2005).

Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī’s work was not limited to merely collecting the Imāms’ dicta and legal opinions. He rather paved the way for new methodological approaches to the use of *ḥadīth* in Zaydite legal scholarship. As a transmitter of numerous Prophetic Traditions, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī significantly contributed to an increasing use of Sunni *ḥadīth* material. This approach was specifically followed by his highly influential students, as we shall see in the following. The interest in Sunni *ḥadīth* material consisted primarily in using them as evidence to prove and confirm the legal opinions of al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq in his fundamental works in law. The second major innovation introduced by Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī was a methodology labelled in the technical language as ‘extraction’ (*takhrīj*). (The term *takhrīj* is also used in the Sunni context, however the two notions are unrelated.) The methodology of *takhrīj* can be described as a form of *ijtihād* that is strictly limited by the specific principles and pattern of reasoning established by the Imāms: based on a concrete legal norm A of the Imām, the jurist derives by analogical reasoning a legal norm B or, in the absence of an authoritative opinion, a legal opinion is derived from the primary sources of law according to the methodology of the Imām. The rise of the practice of *takhrīj* can be seen as a response to the fact that the scale of legal dicta transmitted from al-Qāsim al-Rassī and al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq was relatively limited, specifically if one compares it to the extensive textual material found in the sheer masses of Sunni *ḥadīth*. One can easily imagine that the Qāsimī-Hādawī corpus was far from comprehensively covering the range of legal questions that arose to the jurists. Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī’s solution to this deficiency consisted in expanding the original corpus by deducting via analogical reasoning what the legal opinion of the two authorities in Qāsimī-Hādawī law would have been in case they had discussed these issues. Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī introduced these hypothetical legal dicta by the formula al-Qāsim or al-Hādī ‘would have said’ (*‘alā madhhabihū*). The methodology of *takhrīj* established a hierarchy of authorities that settled on the so-called *ahl al-nuṣṣ* (Haykel and Zysow 2012: 340–41): al-Hādī, his grandfather al-Qāsim, his uncle and his two sons. If they appeared to contradict each other, *takhrīj* was used as a technique to bring coherence in their opinions. Whenever this exercise brought no answer to a legal problem, the next sources to look at were the teachings of the earlier Imāms: in fact, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī used the so-called principle of the ‘consensus of the Prophet’s family’ (*ijmā‘ ahl al-bayt*) very prominently in his legal teaching. It is in this context that the corpus of Kūfan transmissions was specifically relevant to him, because it was precisely the *ḥadīth* texts and legal opinions collected in this corpus that were to be examined for consensual legal opinions among the descendants of the Prophet and early Imāms. Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī regarded the consensus as a legal ‘proof’ (*ḥujja*), and he operated with it in particular whenever no other legal principle could possibly be applied.

The Zaydite scholarly tradition recognises only very few authorities as being qualified for analogically deducing legal norms. These so-called *aṣḥāb al-takhrīj* (‘the practitioners *takhrīj*’) include, after Abū l-‘Abbās al-Ḥasanī himself, only two of his students, who were profoundly influenced by their teacher’s methodological approach: namely the Imāms of the Hārūnī family al-Mu’ayyad bi-llāh Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 411/1020) and his younger brother al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā (d. 424/1033). Both al-Mu’ayyad and al-Nāṭiq hailed from northern Iran, where they studied the legal and theological teachings of the different Zaydite doctrinal strands, including the Nāṣirī tradition. Their educational horizon further expanded during their studies in Baghdad, where they attended the teaching sessions of the towering Basran Mu’tazilite scholar Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī (d. 367/997) in Ḥanafī law, *kalām* theology, and legal methodology. This for-

mation constituted the basis upon which al-Mu‘ayyad and al-Nāṭiq further developed the Qāsimī-Hādawī legal tradition. As a result of the two Imāms’ acquaintance with Sunni *ḥadīth* (each of them left important *Amālī*, that is, collections of *ḥadīth*, with a significant proportion of Sunni material), the trend towards using such material as proofs in Zaydite law even increased. Moreover, they partly absorbed the Nāṣirī tradition and recognised both al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq and al-Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh as legal authorities. Altogether, al-Mu‘ayyad and al-Nāṭiq left profound marks on the Zaydite intellectual tradition: they significantly contributed to approaching the community’s legal system to Ḥanafism, to the acceptance of Sunni *ḥadīth* as authoritative legal proofs, and to the consolidation of the Mu‘tazilites’ doctrinal system (more precisely its Basran strand) and legal hermeneutics as the Zaydites’ principal guideline in theology.

These developments even opened scholarly careers off the beaten track. It is worth mentioning here the case of Abū Sa‘d al-Sammān (d. 445/1053), who incidentally died in the same year as Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Alawī, the author of the abovementioned monumental collection of Zaydite Traditions entitled *al-Jāmi‘ al-kāfi*. Al-Sammān was a Zaydite from the generation after the Hārūnī brothers, and he studied with a towering theologian of the Mu‘tazilite school, the *qāḍī* ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (415/1025). Al-Sammān reconciled his theological and legal inclinations towards Mu‘tazilism and Ḥanafism with a passionate devotion to *ḥadīth* scholarship. He reportedly heard Traditions from more than 3000 transmitters and collected them in his *Amālī*. Notably, this work contains only a small portion of Zaydite and Shī‘ite material from the Kūfan milieu, whereas most of the material included therein is actually Sunni (it does not contain Traditions that are in conflict with his Mu‘tazilite beliefs, though). Very similar in this respect are the *ḥadīth* collections of his student, the Zaydite Imām al-Murshad bi-llāh al-Shajarī al-Jurjānī (d. 479/1086–87 or 499/1106): his two popular works *al-Amālī al-ithnayniyya* and *al-Amālī al-khāmisīyya* also contain a significant amount of Sunni *ḥadīth* (Ansari 2012).

The works of al-Mu‘ayyad and al-Nāṭiq remained popular for centuries among the Zaydites of northern Iran and also reached Yemen by the late fifth/eleventh century. Their legal books, including *al-Taḥrīr*, *al-Tajrīd* and their respective autocommentaries, were much read and further commented on by Zaydite scholars. Citing *ḥadīth*—including Zaydite, but predominantly Sunni Traditions—was considered in these works as a valuable instrument to support Zaydite doctrine, and so the north Iranian scholarship was used to accept this textual material as authoritative.

This attitude towards Sunni *ḥadīth*, if not to *ḥadīth* in general, was unparallel to that of their Yemeni co-religionists. The two communities had developed in different directions and even scholarly exchanges between the Iranians and the Yemenis appear to have been very limited. In theology, they had indeed some common ground that was constituted by Mu‘tazilite doctrines. Beyond this consensus, however, there were many divergences, even in theology: the Yemenis were rather inspired by the Mu‘tazilite school of Baghdad (as had been their founding Imām al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq), whereas the Iranians were inclined towards Basran Mu‘tazilism since the Hārūnī Imāms. Whereas the legal thought of the Caspians experienced a profound impact of Ḥanafism, this was not the case with the Yemenis, for whom the field of legal methodology was not of any central concern. And Sunni *ḥadīth* does not appear to have been accessible to the Yemeni-Zaydite scholars.

This disparity was only bridged from the sixth/twelfth century onwards, when starting with Abū Ṭālib *al-akhīr* a single Imām retained the allegiance of the majority of the Caspian and the Yemeni community. Under these new circumstances, scholarly contacts between the two regions intensified significantly and triggered an extensive transmission of the Caspian literature to Yemen. A major focus was given to *kalām* literature, and it is thanks to this endeavour that many Mu‘tazilite texts have survived in Yemen. To lesser

extent, though, the developments were also instrumental for the dissemination of *ḥadīth* in Yemen: one of the central figures in this process, the *qāḍī* Ja‘far b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Buhlūlī (d. 573/1177–78) travelled not only to northern Iran, but also spent some time in Mecca and Kūfa, where he heard *ḥadīth* from members of the local Zaydite community.

The literature that was transmitted in this period to Yemen also included the legal treatises of the two Hārūnī Imāms. These texts were instrumental in raising the Yemenis’ attention for the potential use of Sunni *ḥadīth*. Other works that reached Yemen around the same time, and which had a similar effect, include texts by the Twelver Shī‘ite Ibn al-Bīṭrīq (d. 600/1203–4 or 601/1204–5): he used Sunni *ḥadīth* specifically to support the cause of the ‘Alids. The earliest evidenced for the transmission of the Sunni canonical *ḥadīth* collections, such as al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, also falls into this timeframe: more precisely, the presence of al-Bukhārī is first documented among Yemeni Zaydites during the time of the reign of al-Manṣūr bi-llāh (Ansari and Schmidtke 2013). Two texts are particularly worth mentioning to illustrate here the impact of this process. The first work is the Imām al-Mutawakkil ‘alā llāh Aḥmad b. Sulaymān’s *Uṣūl al-aḥkām fī l-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām*. In this text, whenever al-Mutawakkil discusses one of the Hādawī legal opinions, he cites Prophetic *ḥadīths* as proof (*dalīl*) for corroborating al-Hādī’s opinion. For this method (which we already found in al-Ḥasanī’s approach) al-Mutawakkil also exploits Sunni *ḥadīth* transmissions. The second example is ‘Alī b. Ḥumayd al-Qurashī’s (fl. 7th/13th c.) *Musnad shams al-akḥbār*. Unlike the previous text, this is not a legal work, but it treats *ḥadīth* in a broader sense. Al-Qurashī begins the work with a list of his sources, which is particularly valuable for reconstructing the bulk of works relevant to *ḥadīth* that were transmitted to Yemen in the sixth to seventh/twelfth to thirteenth century. *Musnad shams al-akḥbār* was to become one of the most popular *ḥadīth* works in Zaydite circles. Last but not least, interactions between the Zaydites and their Sunni neighbours from southern Yemen increased in this period (we know about these encounters, for example, from polemical tracts) and this contributed also to the dissemination of Sunni *ḥadīth* among Yemeni Zaydite scholars. From a later period we possess, for example, a work entitled *al-Falak al-dawwār fī ‘ulūm al-ḥadīth wa-l-fiqh wa-l-āthār* written by Ṣārim al-Dīn b. al-Wazīr (d. 914/1508). He wrote it to ‘emphasise the role of the Shī‘ites in general and the Zaydiyya in particular in the field of *ḥadīth* studies and to show the endeavours of the Zaydite Imāms as compared with the interest of the revelation and the Sunna.’ In this book, Ṣārim al-Dīn outlines the history of scholarly engagement with *ḥadīth* among the Zaydites. His overview includes most of the works that have also been described in the present chapter, from Zayd b. ‘Alī over the Kūfan collectors of Traditions, the Imām al-Qāsim al-Rasī and al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq, to the Caspian Zaydite authors of *Amālī*, and also a historical sketch of the reception of canonical Sunni *ḥadīth* collections among the Zaydites.

IV. The ‘Sunnisation’ of Zaydism

The developments of the sixth/twelfth century had a significant impact on Yemeni Zaydite scholarship. As a result of the transmission of Mu‘tazilite literature scholars engaged profoundly with metaphysical reflections. The new theories were received enthusiastically by certain intellectual milieus, but also encountered much skepticism. The controversial theological discussion between these milieus achieved a fair degree of sophistication.

Yet the Zaydites from northern Iran had also produced a rich legal literature, and when these texts came to Yemen, they equally triggered legal scholarship. This gave rise to significant new activities in the two fields of legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and law (*fiqh*). A

quantitative impact on the literary production within this field can be seen during the reign of the Imām al-Manṣūr bi-llāh, that is at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century. One example from this time is al-Amīr ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā’s (fl. 7th/13th c.) *Kiṭāb al-Luma‘ fī fiqh ahl al-bayt*, a work in four volumes that can be seen as an attempt to collect the knowledge from different disciplines. In the ninth/fifteenth century we eventually see the production of voluminous encyclopaedic works that can be considered as canonical, because they were much read and commented during the following centuries. Among these books, it is specifically worth mentioning several works by the Imām al-Mahdī li-Dīn Allāh Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1436–37), namely his *Kiṭāb al-Azhār*, his *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār al-jāmi‘ li-madhāhib ‘ulamā’ al-amṣār* (this work contains also biographies (*ṭabaqāt*) of Mu‘tazilite theologians and sections on *kalām* theology) as well as Ibn al-Murtaḍā’s own commentaries on these works.

What was the role of *ḥadīth* in this context? The corpus of Kūfan-Zaydite traditions and of collections of Sunni *ḥadīth* that were available since the sixth/twelfth century were continued to be used by scholars of law. Yet the purpose of quoting these texts was primarily to use them as evidence to corroborate the legal opinions of the major authorities of the Hādawī school. For example, they were cited as proofs for so-called *ikhtiyārāt*. As the name itself indicates, these *ikhtiyārāt* were selections of legal opinions that were generally chosen by the Imām, who was the Zaydite community’s highest legal authority and leader of the community. These selections were made from the legal opinions of earlier authorities. Consequently, the Imām when treating a legal problem would examine the legal opinions of previous Zaydite chief authorities and choose what appeared to him the most appropriate solution in his time; he would, however, not issue new legal opinions. This practice gave also rise to a specific literary genre, called *Ikhtiyārāt*, which collects and justifies the Imām’s choice. The Zaydite legal practice gave only a very limited room to *ijtihād*, that is, the practice that constituted a central role for the continuous renewal of Islamic law. If the room for adaptations and changes was quite narrow for the Imāms, it was even more restricted for professional jurists and judges, who were not considered as qualified for practicing *ijtihād* and rather confined themselves to discussing and assessing the Imāms’ choices.

There was consequently little room for innovation and for the adaption of Zaydite law to a changing reality. This was at least the perception of some Zaydite scholars. The first to prominently articulate this critique was Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Wazīr (d. 840/1436). In Ibn al-Wazīr’s lifetime, the Yemeni Zaydites were increasingly exposed to a diversity of theological and legal strands. The presence of the neighbouring Sunni dynasty of the Rasūlids had considerably contributed to a multilayered intellectual landscape. This plurality is also echoed in Ibn al-Wazīr’s education: he was instructed by Zaydite teachers, who encouraged the study of the Sunni *ḥadīth* collections, and Ibn al-Wazīr also studies *ḥadīth* directly under Sunni teachers. It was in this milieu of Sunni *ḥadīth* scholars that Ibn al-Wazīr also got to know some of the writings of the Traditionalist scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).

In response to the diversity of intellectual strands to which he was exposed, Ibn al-Wazīr developed an inclusive approach to theology and law: rather than granting a specific school of thought exclusive correctness, Ibn al-Wazīr sought intellectual stimulation from all of them. This approach was underpinned by an epistemology that defined a common ground of sources whose validity was acknowledged by the Zaydites as well as other schools of thought. Apart from sense perception and experience, they include most importantly the primary sources, that is the Qur’ān and the Sunna. Ibn al-Wazīr claimed that it was only from these sources that certain knowledge can be gained. In addition, he considered that the primary sources only contain the central tenets of religious belief.

However, unlike the Mu'tazila-inclined Zaydites, Ibn al-Wazīr insisted that knowledge of God which is based on such general beliefs is sufficient. What is more, he claimed that more detailed inquiries into God's nature actually surpass human cognitive faculties. Therefore, he criticised *kalām* theology as it was practiced over centuries by Zaydite scholars and specifically its major preoccupation with examining subtle metaphysical and doctrinal issues. He formulated his critique in line with the foundations of his epistemology, which restricts certainty to knowledge achieved from the abovementioned sources. This excludes rational inquiry (*nazar*), the chief methodology of the practitioners of *kalām*: in Ibn al-Wazīr's view, conclusions reached on the evidence of reasoning always imply a degree of doubt, and thus cannot generate knowledge that leads to belief. He harshly criticised the century-old Mu'tazilite leaning of Zaydite scholarship and specifically its major preoccupation with examining sophisticated metaphysical and doctrinal issues. In principle, this criticism was not entirely new. A significant number of earlier Zaydite scholars had already disapproved of the adoption of Mu'tazilite teachings, and specifically those of the Basran Mu'tazila since the sixth/twelfth century. There were however few who had formulated their criticism as radically as Ibn al-Wazīr.

However, this did not mean that Ibn al-Wazīr disapproved of rational investigation categorically. Rather, he limited it to the realm where he considered that mere probability was the highest degree of certainty that can possibly be achieved. This was for him the field of law. Ibn al-Wazīr's starting point was a theory that had been acknowledged among the Zaydites from at least as early as the sixth/twelfth century, and that regards all legal interpreters as infallible (*kull mujtahid muṣīb*), meaning that all results of *ijtihād* practiced by qualified scholars are acceptable, provided that the methodology of their reasoning was sound and valid. As a corollary, it was not the correctness of the result itself but rather of the performance of *ijtihād* that was considered as measurable, and so it was also coherent for Ibn al-Wazīr to accept that scholars, whenever they practice *ijtihād*, come to diverse conclusions. This 'epistemology of ambiguity', as D. Wilmers calls it, was also of central importance for Ibn al-Wazīr's justification of the use of Sunni *ḥadīth*: if it was a scholar's professional skills rather than his theological inclination that mattered, if arguments of and literary sources from all schools of thought were worth examining and conceivably acceptable, it was only consistent from Ibn al-Wazīr's perspective to rely in his writings on Zaydite *ḥadīth* works, such as *al-Jāmi' al-kāfī*, and to make at the same time extensive use of the Sunni *ḥadīth* collections. Finally, Ibn al-Wazīr's role went beyond calling for a revival of *ijtihād* based on Sunni *ḥadīth*. He also wrote several works in the field of the science of Prophetic Traditions, including *Tanqīḥ al-anzār fī ma'rīfat 'ulūm al-aḥbār* and *Mukhtaṣar muḥīd fī 'ulūm al-ḥadīth* (Ansari 2011; Hoover 2015; Bori 2018; Wilmers 2018; Zouggar 2018).

Ibn al-Wazīr's teaching had a profound impact as his line of thought was subsequently adopted by an important number of Zaydite thinkers. Later prominent representatives of this Sunni-inclined current in Yemeni Zaydism include al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Jalāl (d. 1084/1673), Ṣāliḥ b. al-Mahdī al-Maqbil (d. 1108/1696), and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Ṣan'ānī, also known as Ibn al-Amīr (d. 1182/1769).

Eventually, this trend reached a culmination with Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1834). Al-Shawkānī served as supreme judge under several Imāms of the Qāsimite dynasty. He was born into a scholarly family that was rooted in the Hādawī intellectual tradition. However, al-Shawkānī gave little credence to this school of thought and identified himself with the lineage of Zaydite scholars that had emerged with Ibn al-Wazīr. And, above all, he criticised the conservatism of previous generations of Zaydite scholars, who, in his view, uncritically relied on and times and again repeated what previous authorities had written before. This criticism was directed on the one hand to the scholarship in *kalām* theology, whose methodology al-Shawkānī considered as unsound, because it relied

on invented concepts and terminology. On the other hand, it was also directed to the scholarship in law that, according to al-Shawkānī, closely adhered to mere opinions of the school's authorities. In order to overcome this situation, he claimed, scholars had to give up uncritically imitating previous scholars (*taqlīd*) and to explore the primary sources themselves, namely the Qurʾān and the Sunni canonical *ḥadīth* corpus. And finally, based on these reliable sources, scholars in law should elaborate independently their own legal opinions, that is, they should practice *ijtihād*. These claims were embedded in a discourse that appealed to scholars to overcome the traditional confines of schools of thought (*madhāhib*). Al-Shawkānī's attack against the Hādawī school of thought from which he himself had grown is perhaps best illustrated by his refutation of one of the most important works in Zaydite law ever written, namely Ibn al-Murtaḍā's *Kitāb al-Azhār*. Al-Shawkānī's ostentatious break with traditional Zaydite authorities and scholarship raised fierce opposition. Yet despite the controversial assessment of his legacy and tense inner-Zaydite discussions about his intellectual project, al-Shawkānī has left a deep impact on Yemen's intellectual history (Haykel 2003). His legacy became highly prominent in modern Yemen and established itself alongside the Hādawī tradition. However, we should not imagine these two intellectual currents as hermetic milieus. Rather, scholars were educated in both intellectual traditions (Schmidtke 2018).

After the revolution in 1962 interest in al-Shawkānī's intellectual project even grew. His appeal for the republican movement is echoed in a new picture that was depicted of al-Shawkānī: he was portrayed as a progressive thinker, a predecessor of inner-Zaydite reform and modernization; his criticism of the blind acceptance of traditional authorities was re-interpreted as a deliberate attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the institution of the Zaydite imamate, whose millennium-old rulership was abolished by the revolution. In short, al-Shawkānī represented in republican eyes no less than the arch-intellectual of their political, social and religious agenda. However, the republican picture was not the only modern re-invention of al-Shawkānī. He was, in addition, instrumentalized by the emerging presence of Wahhābite propagandists in Yemen. Since the rise of Saudi Arabia as the strongest power on the Arabian Peninsula in the second half of the twentieth century, the export of Wahhābism became part of the Saudi Kingdom's strategy to exert its hegemony in Yemen. From the 1970s onwards, numerous institutions have been established primarily in northern Yemen but also in the rest of the country in order to propagate anti-Shīʿite thought, which condemns Hādawī-inclined Zaydites as *Rawāfiḍ*, *Jārūdis*, or even infidels (*kuffār*). In an attempt to legitimize this propaganda as an indigenous intellectual tradition rather than a foreign importation, reference to al-Shawkānī plays a central role. The confrontation between the two rival camps in Yemen has significantly contributed to the gradual escalations in the country since the 1990s and the unprecedented crisis in the 2000s (Haykel 2003: 190–229; vom Bruck 2010).

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