Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra

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*Edited by*

Maribel Fierro (*Madrid*)
M. Şükrü Hanioğlu (*Princeton*)
Renata Holod (*University of Pennsylvania*)
Florian Schwarz (*Vienna*)

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# Theology and Society
# in the Second and Third Centuries
# of the Hijra

*A History of Religious Thought in Early Islam*

*By*

Josef van Ess

*Translated from German by*

Gwendolin Goldbloom

BRILL

*Fritz Meier*
*on his 80th birthday*
*(10 June 1992)*

*Rudolf Sellheim*
*on his 65th birthday*
*(15 January 1993)*

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**PART C**

*The Unification of Islamic Thought and the Flowering of Theology*

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# Baghdad

With the foundation of Baghdad Islamic intellectual history reached a decisive turning point. This statement will sound banal to anyone looking at the development retrospectively; for the contemporaries, however, what was taking place was too complex to be perceived consciously and described in these terms. They recorded how carefully Manṣūr planned the external appearance of the city, how, maybe with reference to east Iranian models, he had it built perfectly circular, and how he parcelled it within the walls according to clear geometric principles, but also with a view to strict security. They also noted that he, being superstitious like most rulers, had his court astrologer Nawbakht calculate the precise moment for laying the foundation stone. But they did not notice, or if they did, they did not transmit it, the revolutionary consequences this would have for social structures and how they would influence intellectual life and alter consciousness.

After all, the depth of the historic caesura had by no means been evident from the very first. The Abbasids had moved their residence several times already. After Saffāḥ had proclaimed himself caliph in Kufa, he had first lived near Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra halfway between Kufa and the future Baghdad, and then moved into a newly established palace complex near Anbār. Manṣūr had settled near Kufa, presumably in a town which, like Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra, had been built by the last Umayyad governor. As we know, the caliphs did not stay in Baghdad very long either; a century later they moved to Samarra, a good 125 km (75 miles) away. Baghdad, however, was not abandoned by its inhabitants and left to be washed away by the rains like the earlier centres, which historians list as 'Hāshimī dwellings' (Hāshimiyya). On the contrary, the city grew quickly to become a metropolis, surviving the temporary absence of the court and civil servants.

Texts by native geographers are collected in O. V. Tsikitišvili, *K istorii Bagdada* (Tbilisi 1968); cf. e.g. Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān* 238, 20ff., or Ibn al-Faqīh, *Akhbār al-buldān*, Facsimile of MS Mashhad 5229 (*Collection of Geographical Works*, Frankfurt/Main 1987), p. 55ff. = Tsikitišvili, Ar. Part 3 ff. = ed. by Ṣ. A. al-ʿAlī entitled *Baghdād madīnat al-salām* (Paris/ Baghdad 1977). The foundation of the city was described in detail by Ṣ. A. al-ʿAlī in the extensive work of the same title *Baghdād madīnat al-salām*, vol. I: *al-Jānib al-gharbī* (Baghdad 1985). Cf. R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse,

*Mohammed, Charlemagne and the origins of Europe* (Ithaca/London 1983), p. 126ff., for further information on this subject, and concerning its economic significance. On the layout of the city cf. H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* 9ff. (Baghdad as a 'cosmic city'); B. Brentjes, *Die Stadt des Yima* 62f. (Baghdad as a city in the shape of a wheel with the palace as its square hub); O. Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* 67ff.; and in particular J. Lassner, *Shaping of the Abbasid Rule* 164ff. (esp. p. 169ff., a more detailed – and perhaps too sceptical – discussion of earlier theories which assumed foreign models). It would be advisable to refer to Ibn al-Faqīh's town map in Tsikitišvili, plate II (between pages 56 and 57) for confirmation. R. Levy, *A Baghdadi Chronicle*, presents the history of the city written in a popular style.

Regarding the part played by the astrologer Nawbakht cf. Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān* 238, 14f., and *Mushākala* 23, 9f.; before the decisive battle against Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh (AH 145), Manṣūr had him cast his horoscope (Ṭabarī III 317, 11ff.; also Pingree in: EIran I 369a). In his *Taʾrīkh*, Yaʿqūbī also lists the birth horoscope of every caliph.

On the subject of the Abbasids' frequently changing early residences cf. Lassner in: EI² III 265f. s. v. *Hāshimiyya*.

## 1.1      Local Tradition. Madāʾin

Before it caught the caliph's eye, Baghdad had been only a small village.[1] The
nearest larger place, nearer at least than Samarra would later be, and certain-
ly nearer than Kufa, was Madāʾin, ancient Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Some of the
Sasanids' administrative and representative buildings had survived the first
sack of the city.[2] Ziyād turned the *īwān Kisrā*, the great audience hall, into a
mosque; later the governors would live there.[3] Unlike in Basra or Kufa, the ear-
liest settlers were not the conquering troops but members of the Azd[4] who,
however, did not side with the Khārijites but with the Shīʿites: Kufa was bring-
ing its influence to bear. When ʿAlī expelled ʿAbdallāh b. Sabaʾ from Kufa, the
latter is said to have found refuge there.[5] This was the reason why the Azraqites
attacked the city in 68/687, inflicting significant losses on the Muslim popu-
lation.[6] It is likely, however, that the majority of the inhabitants were long-
established members of other religions, who had little inclination to fight for
the Muslims, and who were probably spared by the Khārijites as well. They
lived on the western bank of the Tigris, the Jews in Māḥōzā,[7] the Christians in
Kōkhē. Before the foundation of Baghdad, this was where the Jewish exilarch
as well as the Nestorian catholicos[8] resided; even the head of the Manichaeans
returned here again.[9] This is one of the reasons why the Arabic sources men-
tion the city so infrequently. Muslims who settled there were unlikely to escape
assimilation, while in Basra or Kufa they were among themselves.

The clearest example of this assimilation was the community surrounding
the gnostic ʿAbdallāh b ʿAmr b. Ḥarb al-Kindī, who came from a non-Muslim
family himself. He sought to establish the myth of the fall or decline of the soul
within Islam. Souls, he said, are heavenly lights that were obscured to shad-
ows (*aẓilla*) in punishment. In order to be granted salvation, they must first
live in various physical forms. Those humans who do not prove themselves in

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1   Regarding the etymology of the name *Baghdād* cf. Eilers in: Abh. Bayer. Ak. Wiss., Phil.-Hist.
    Kl. 1982, no. 5, p. 13.

2   Concerning this as well as the following cf. the article *Madāʾin* in: EI² V 945f.

3   Morony, *Iraq* 76. Regarding the place of prayer under Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ see vol. 1, p. 32 above.

4   Morony 251.

5   Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 143, 9ff. (after Jubbāʾī); Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB V 6 ult.

6   Ṭabarī II 755, apu. ff.

7   For more information on this place cf. J Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonien* 161ff., and
    Morony 310.

8   Concerning the Nestorian community cf. Fiey, *Topographie chrétienne de Mahozé* in *Les com-
    munautés syriaques, no. IX.*

9   Cf. vol. 1 491 above.

the course of this process will be changed into ugly creatures, dung beetles or cockroaches.[10] The commandments expressed in the Quran, too, were clearly interpreted as punishment by this group; the sect was living in a latent state of antinomianism at all times. ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya found many followers in these circles;[11] when his career in Kufa was finished, Madāʾin paid homage to him. It is quite probable that the sect survived much longer, even though we do not hear any more about it. Characteristically, the cult of Salmān al-Fārisī emerged in Madāʾin; his grave is revered there to this day.

Regarding the Ḥarbiyya cf. Halm, *Gnosis*, 65ff. and 69ff.; also in Der Islam 58/1981/16ff. (identical in passages). Also Madelung in EI² IV 837b. The historian Aḥmad b. ʿUbaydallāh al-Thaqafī, called Ḥimar al-ʿUzayr, knows of a second gnostic from Madāʾin named ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣabra al-Hamdānī (Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB V 7, 6); it is, however, impossible to elicit more information about him. Ibn Ḥarb is said to have converted to the Ṣufriyya later (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 187, pu. ff.). This also happened in other cases (see vol. II 250 above), but may be only a legend in this instance. What it does prove is that moderate Khārijites found support in Madāʾin.

Kufan influence continued into the Abbasid era as well. From early on, men from among Abū Ḥanīfa's disciples were appointed as judges, the first one, at the beginning of Hārūn's caliphate, apparently being

Abū Zayd Ḥammād b. Dulayl

who had attended Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy's lectures as well,[12] and who, significantly, transmitted a hadith from Ṣufyān b. Thawrī according to which Muḥammad during his night journey (*isrāʾ*) had seen God in his 'most beautiful form' and had been touched by him – presumably in Jerusalem, not in heaven as during the *miʿrāj*.[13] He was probably easily compatible with the Shīʿa. All the same, he did not last long; he defied an order of the caliph's and had to flee to Mecca[14] where he traded in silk,[15] another aspect in which he resembled

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10    For a more detailed discussion of the concept of the migration of souls cf. p. 464ff. below.

11    See vol. II 702 above.

12    *Mīzān* no. 2247. Concerning Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ cf. vol. I 283ff. above.

13    TB VIII 151ff. no. 4253; in more detail ch. D 1.2.1.2 below.

14    Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* III 304, –6ff.

15    TB VIII 151, 3; misspelt IAW I 225 no. 562.

Abū Ḥanīfa. Later he lived in Baghdad, but by that time he had already gone blind.[16] In Madāʾin his successor was apparently

> Abū Saʿīd Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyāʾ b. Abī Zāʾda Khālid b. Maymūn,

d. c. 183/799 at the age of 63.[17] He, too, had grown up in Kufa; his father, *mawlā* of a woman of the Banū Wādiʿa of the Southern Arab Hamdān, having transmitted hadith there already.[18] He is said to have taken lecture notes on behalf of Abū Ḥanīfa's other students.[19] He was the author of a *K. al-sunan*,[20] and also knowledgeable in the field of reading the Quran, having studied the subject with Aʿmash.[21] In his exegesis he quoted Mujāhid's *Tafsīr* on Ibn Jurayj.[22] Theologically he was closest to the Murjiʾa.[23] – It seems that there had been Murjiʾites in the place before; certainly

> Abū Bishr Warqāʾ b. ʿUmar b. Kulayb al-Yashkurī,

d. after 160/777, who, in Abū Dāwūd's opinion, was a Murjiʾite,[24] had settled there. Later, people were not entirely sure where he came from; Khorasan was mentioned – more precisely: Marv – but also Khwārazm or Kufa.[25] He became known as the Iraqi transmitter and presumably redactor of Mujāhid's *Tafsīr* with which Ibn Abī Najīḥ had entrusted him in Mecca.[26] Ibn Ḥanbal thought him entirely orthodox (*ṣāḥib sunna*);[27] after all, the Meccan Mujāhid school

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16    ᴛʙ 152, 11.

17    '183' in ɪs vɪ 274, 11ff.; Khalīfa, *Taʾrīkh* 730, 8; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ṭab.* ɪɪ 370 no. 3838; Ibn al-Nadīm 282, apu. ff.; '183 or 184' in Khalīfa, *Ṭab.* 399 no. 1306; '182' in *Mīzān* no. 9505. 'Jumāda 180' in ɪᴀʜ ɪᴠs 144 no. 609.

18    For more information on him cf. ᴛᴛ ɪɪɪ 329f. no. 616; also vol. ɪ 265, n. 16 above.

19    ɪᴀᴡ ɪɪ 212, 2; more generally Ṣaymarī, *Akhbār Abī Ḥanīfa* 150, 8ff.

20    Ibn al-Nadīm, ibid.

21    Ibn al-Jazarī, ibid.

22    Ṭabarī ɪ 75, 19ff.

23    Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif* 625, 5; also Kaʿbī, *Qabūl* 216, 10. Cf. besides Bukhārī ɪᴠ₂ 283f. no. 2974; ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʾafāʾ* ɪᴠ 401 no. 2023; ᴛʜ 267f. no. 252; ᴛᴛ xɪ 208ff. no. 349.

24    ᴛʙ xɪɪɪ 486, 18f. > *Mīzān* no. 9340; ᴛᴛ xɪ 113 no. 200. Regarding the date of his death cf. ᴛʜ 231, 1f.

25    ᴛʙ 484, ult. f. and 485, 11ff.; also Bukhārī ɪᴠ₂ 188 no. 2648 and ɪᴀʜ ɪᴠ₂ 5of. no. 216.

26    ᴛʙ 486, 6ff.; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ṭab.* ɪɪ 358 no. 3799; also ɢᴀs 1/37f. and Azmi, *Studies* 206. Regarding his hadith see Azmi 76 and 88.

27    ᴛʙ 486, 4.

had by no means been Murjiʾite, but on the whole close to the Qadariyya.[28]
Warqāʾ had certain Murjiʾite preferences – which may be explained by his ori-
gins – as is suggested by the fact that this tendency became fully apparent in
his pupil

> Abū ʿAmr Shabāba b. Sawwār al-Fazārī al-Madāʾinī,[29]

d. between 204/819 and 206/822,[30] and led to fierce attacks on the Shīʿites.[31] He
took the wind out of the sails of all those who could not imagine faith without
actions (*ʿamal*) by stating that professing the faith was already an action in
itself; Ibn Ḥanbal resented this greatly.[32] He was a *mawlā* of the Fazāra and
had arrived in Madāʾin via Baghdad; he had reached the capital together with
the troops from Khorāsān to whom he was linked by clientage. In Madāʾin he
kept himself to himself – presumably because of the constant troubles with
the ʿRāfiḍitesʾ. In due course he travelled on to Mecca where he spent his re-
maining years.[33] He passed the ʿTafsīr of Warqāʾ, namely the latter's notes from
Mecca influenced by Ibn Abī Najīḥ, on to Ibn Maʿīn.[34]

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28    See vol. ɪɪ 721ff. above.

29    ᴛʙ 485, 4.

30    ᴛʙ ɪx 299, 10ff.; Khalīfa, *Ṭab.* 769, 5 says ʿ206ʾ. The information in Ibn Ḥajar, ᴛᴛ ɪv 302,
      1ff. is fanciful as it is based on misreadings. This is the source for the date 255 quoted in
      Brentjes, *Imamatslehren* 49.

31    ɪs vɪɪ₂ 66, 11ff.; *Maʿārif* 527, 7; Karābīsī in Kaʿbī, *Qabūl* 216, –4; ᴛʙ ɪx 297, 17 and 299, 2ff.;
      *Mīzān* no. 3652; ᴛᴛ ɪv 301, 1ff.

32    Khallāl, *Musnad* 268, 10ff.; cf. also ᴛʙ ɪx 298, 19.

33    *Maʿārif* 527, 7ff.

34    ᴛʙ ɪx 289, 13f.; Horst in: ᴢᴅᴍɢ 103/1953/296. Cf. also Thaʿlabī, *Kashf*, intro. 28, 4.

## 1.2    Religious Policy under al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī

We should not assume that Baghdad was influenced significantly by Madā'in.
Manṣūr had brought his people with him from elsewhere, the soldiers from
Khorasan, perhaps some civil servants from Kufa. In the case of a few of them
we even know where he settled them: deserving army leaders and his close
associates received plots outside the walls of the 'circular city'; soldiers could
build their homes in the suburbs (*arbāḍ*).[1] The city centre was mainly reserved
for the palace district and official buildings; besides the caliph the people who
lived there were mainly high officials and dignitaries. To the west were the
markets of Karkh where Aramaic-speaking Christians had always lived; they
were now joined by Muslims, in particular Shī'ites.[2] Consequently the intel-
lectual life of the city took place on several levels which did not communicate
with one another easily: at court, within the 'circular city', and also beyond
the walls, where soon it would not be restricted to the villas of aristocrats and
officials, but spread to the houses of the immigrant merchant class, who tradi-
tionally took an interest in religious matters. Eventually it would even take root
among the ranks of the petite bourgeoisie and the working class.[3] The court
created opportunities for an exchange of ideas that had not existed previously.
The caliph's round table (*nudamā'*) brought together intellectuals from the
most varied backgrounds; there had been religious debates from al-Mahdī's
time onwards, and increasingly under the Barmakids. People were more open
to Hellenistic thought than previously; religion encountered logic and meta-
physics. The city was as open and multi-faceted as it was lacking in history.
'The good thing about Baghdad', said Ibn al-Faqīh, 'is that the authorities can
be safe from some school leader gaining the ascendancy there, like the 'Alids
frequently overcome the Kufans with the aid of the Shī'a. For in Baghdad the
opponents of the Shī'a live with the Shī'a, opponents of the Mu'tazila live with
the Mu'tazila, and opponents of the Khārijites with the Khārijites; each party
keeps the other one in check and prevents it from appointing itself ruler.'[4] Of

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1   Cf. EI² I 896a s. v. *Baghdād*; in detail El-Ali (Ṣāliḥ al-'Alī) in: *The Islamic City*, ed. by Hourani
    and Stern, p. 92ff.

2   Cf. EI² IV 652f. s. v. *al-Karkh*.

3   Concerning the development of the merchant class and the petit bourgeois movements cf. –
    for a general overview – Sabari, *Mouvements populaires*; regarding merchants e.g. p. 19ff. and
    37ff. Regarding the tensions between the values of the court and the city's version of Islam cf.
    Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies* 122ff.

4   Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, facs. Frankfurt/M. 105, 4ff. = *Baghdād madīnat al-salām*, ed. by Ṣ. A. al-
    'Alī, 80, 8ff.

course this development by no means followed a straight line. The religious policy of the early Abbasids ranged from laissez-faire to sudden harsh interventions. As far as theology was concerned, they hardly ever supported particular schools, but rather particular individuals. The interventions were mainly aimed at freeing themselves from the inheritance of the revolutionary beginnings and gaining a new, more moderate profile. They had accomplished the revolution by letting themselves be carried by the Shīʿites' ambitions and visions; they could consolidate it only by winning the Sunnis over. When Yaʿqūbī summarised the tendencies of Manṣūr's caliphate in a few catchy phrases, the first thing that came to his mind was that this caliph was the first to distinguish between Abbasids and Ṭālibids, i.e. ʿAlī's descendants.[5] This decision was taken on several fronts, with the liquidation of Abū Muslim and the Iranian utopians following his banner[6] as well as with the extermination of the opposition in Medina under al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. It was vital everywhere to curb the chiliastic expectations that had given the impetus for the overthrow, or to guide them onto the right track. One characteristic instance was the clash with the Rāwandiyya.

### 1.2.1    *The Rāwandiyya*

Their behaviour was so conspicuous that even non-Muslim observers like Theophanes (or his sources) could not help noticing it; also, in fact, because the Rāwandiyya spread beyond Iran and Iraq nearly to the Byzantine frontier. Theophanes reports that in the year 758, i.e. AH 141, some people near Aleppo sold their entire possessions and then climbed naked to the top of the walls to throw themselves down. They believed, he says, that they could fly to heaven. Sixteen ringleaders were executed by the governor.[1] Muslim sources confirm this, albeit usually without giving the date: the Rāwandiyya had talked some dunderheads into believing that they were angels; therefore they sewed themselves wings of silk into which they had stuck birds' feathers. When they tried to glide down a hill (*tall*) in Aleppo – (the castle hill?) – they broke their necks to a man.

Maqdisī, *Badʾ* V 132, 1ff.; more concise Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-Mawsil* 173, apu. f.; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab* I 59, 10ff. (= Freytag, *Selecta ex historia*

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5    *Mushākala* 22, pu. ff.; see Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 300.
6    Regarding Sinpādh in Hamadān cf. e.g. vol. II 28 and 708 above.

1    Theophanes 430, 23ff. (transl. Breyer) in: *Byz. Geschichtsschreiber* VI 75 (here, 'Beroia' and 'Chalkis' refer to the area of Aleppo and Antioch).

*Halebi* 15, 12ff.). See also Friedländer in JQR, NS 2/1911–2/513f.; the silken garments on which Friedländer reflects with reference to Ibn al-'Adīm ibid. 505, n. 122, are probably misinterpreted silken wings. Cf. also the philosopher al-Jawharī's attempts at flying (Yāqūt, *Irshād* II 269, 2ff.) and especially those of the Spaniard 'Abbās b. Firnās (Vernet, *Cultura hispanoárabe* 28). Among the Arab sources, only Ibn al-'Adīm gives the date 141, in addition to the remark that the Rāwandiyya was also found in Ḥarrān.

This spectacular event indicates the despair that was the culmination of a longer development. A few years earlier, 136/754 or 137/755,[2] the 'day of the Rāwandiyya'[3] had taken place in Hāshimiyya, when al-Manṣūr had for the first time deployed troops against them. The roots, however, were in pre-Abbasid times, in the *da'wā* in Iran. Ever since asserting their claim, the Abbasids had worked with Kaysānite ideas; which later historiography would not deny, either.[4] Till well into the second century, the Kaysāniyya was the dominant force in the Iranian and Iraqi Shī'a.[5] The proof of the legitimation of the Abbasid line was in the will which Abū Hāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Hanafiyya, had made shortly before his death during a visit to Ḥumayma, appointing Muḥammad b. 'Alī, the grandson of 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, his heir.[6] Bukayr b. Māhān, the Abbasids' first *dā'ī* in Iran, relied on this document.[7] However, the caliphs not only adopted a political claim, but also the speculations and hopes linked to it. The two banners under which the troops of the revolution gathered were called 'shadow' and 'cloud'; the reminiscence of God's 'shadow' and of the cloud in which 'Alī or the *mahdī* would appear was certainly no

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2  Thus Ṭabarī III 129, 12f., after an unnamed source. If he himself dates the event to the year 141, this is probably in accordance with the incident in Aleppo mentioned previously. Still, due to the extensive history of the movement (see below) there is no real reason to link the two instances. Balādhurī dates the event to the year 139 or early 140 (*Ansāb* III 235, 9ff., which is, in fact, based on the same sources as Ṭabarī). Dīnawarī records further unrest during AH 142 (*Akhbār ṭiwāl* 384, 1ff.).

3  Ṭabarī III 118, 19; Balādhurī III 208, 4.

4  *Akhbār al-'Abbās* 165, 2ff.; also F. 'Umar, *Ṭabī'at al-da'wā al-'Abbāsiyya* 113.

5  See vol. I 352ff. above.

6  EI[2] III 574. It is not necessary to discuss in this place the issue of whether the will was genuine. Cf. Moscati in RSO 27/1952/28ff.; Nagel, *Untersuchungen* 45ff.; Sharon, *Black Banners* 121ff.; F. 'Umar, *Buḥūth* 53ff.; Lassner in IOS 10/1980/78ff.; now also in *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory* 55ff.

7  Pseudo-Nāshi', *Uṣūl* 30f., para.46. Regarding him EI[2] I 1292f.; Daniel, *Khurasan* 29ff; Sharon 147ff.

mere coincidence, no matter how the names would later be interpreted.[8] Abū
Salama, who went to Khorasan as an envoy in 127/744, is said to have been
regarded as a prophet by certain groups.[9] In the early years of the *daʿwā*, some
time between 117/735 and 120/738, Asad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qasrī[10] had a certain
Ablaq and his followers crucified. Ablaq, who suffered from leprosy and was
called – presumably because of it – 'piebald', had claimed that through ʿAlī
the spirit of Jesus had entered Ibrāhīm, the son of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī whom
the Abbasid *duʿāt* called the 'imam' at that time. According to Ṭabarī's account
from which we learn this, this was the beginning of the Rāwandiyya.[11]

It does, of course, depend on how one interprets this. To the heresiogra-
phers 'Rāwandiyya' was a common denominator under which all those en-
thusiasts were subsumed who emerged around Abū Muslim.[12] However, the
process of ideological clarification was still entirely in flux. Asad b. ʿAbdallāh
had not only Ablaq executed, but also Khidāsh, who appears to have restored
the imamate to the Hāshimites.[13] Abū Muslim had certainly raised his troops'
expectations very high; he would later be regarded as the prophet of al-Manṣūr,
passing on the latter's divine message and consequently knowing the future
and everything hidden (*al-ghayb*).[14] But as late as AH 135, after the revolution,
'Rāwandites' in Ṭālqān were showing solidarity with Ziyād b. Ṣāliḥ al-Khuzāʿī,
the victor of the Ṭarāz river, who had risen against Abū Muslim.[15] The extrem-
ists who came forward in Hāshimiyya on the 'day of the Rāwandiyya' did not
talk about the spirit of Jesus, as Ablaq had done before them, but of the spirit
of Adam, which in their understanding did not manifest itself in the caliph
but in the commander of the caliph's household troops, ʿUthmān b. Nahīk.[16]

8       Ṭabarī II 1954, 2ff. Regarding the term 'shadow of God' as an honorific of the Abbasid
        caliphs cf. F. ʿUmar, *Buḥūth* 234ff.

9       For instance by one Hāshim, not otherwise known, from Marv (Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* II 353,
        pu. ff.).

10      Regarding him see vol. II 573 and 577, n. 31, above.

11      III 418, 10ff.; also Lassner in: Clover/Humphreys, *Late Antiquity* 252f.

12      Thus Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa* 41, pu. ff.; Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VI 26, 4ff./IV 61 no. 2259 etc. To
        this effect also F. ʿUmar, *Ṭabīʿat al-daʿwa al-ʿAbbāsiyya* 120ff. and 232ff. = id., *The ʿAbbasid
        Caliphate* 192ff. Regarding this movement see also Cahen in: Revue Hist. 230/1963/331f.;
        Laoust, *Schismes* 62; in detail but slightly vague Lassner, *Shaping* 109ff. and 159f.

13      In the year 118/736; concerning him Sharon in EI² V 1ff. Vloten (*Recherches* 49ff.) already
        pointed out the coincidence of Ablaq and Khidāsh.

14      Nawbakhtī 56, 15ff. > Qummī 69, –4ff.

15      Ṭabarī III 82, 4ff. In more detail cf. Daniel, *Khurasan* 111f.; also Massignon, *Passion* ²I 217ff./
        I 174ff., and Lassner, Shaping 273, n. 49.

16      Ibid. III 129, 17.

This is hardly the mark of uniform doctrine. Still, the man after whom the sect was named was a member of the highest nobility in Khorasan. ʿAbdallāh al-Rāwandī had been one of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī's *duʿāt*;[17] after the foundation of Baghdad he received property in the most distinguished quarter of the city.[18] His son Ḥarb b. ʿAbdallāh was presented with a country estate near Baghdad. He was stationed in Mosul with 2000 horsemen in order to defend the fortifications (*rawābiṭ*) against the Khārijites;[19] he fell during a campaign in Armenia and Georgia in 147/764.[20] His grandson Naṣr b. Ḥarb served in Manṣūr's household troops[21] and was presumably appointed governor of the frontier wall (*thaghr*) of Fārs in 158/775, probably in defence against the Daylamites.[22]

This shows the events in Hāshimiyya in a different light, for when shortly after Manṣūr's accession people felt inspired to circle the caliph's palace in a procession as if it were the Kaʿba, callling him their Lord God (*rabb*), these were not, as we have to assume, pilgrims from the east, but troops stationed in the city,[23] presumably members of the caliph's bodyguard. Selecting elite soldiers from among the 'extremists' made perfect sense, and the tradition continues to this day; nobody would be more fiercely loyal to the caliph than they were. ʿAlī seems to have proceeded in the same fashion: Aṣbagh b. Nubāta had been police commandant,[24] Rushayd al-Hajarī may have been one of the *shurṭat al-khamīs*.[25] Abū ʿAmra Kaysān, after whom the Kaysāniyya was named, commanded Mukhtār's bodyguard.[26] Furthermore, the fact that the Rāwandites in Aleppo threw themselves off the castle hill of all places may have been more than just using a suitable place for gliding: probably only members of the garrison were allowed into the *qalʿa*.

Their fellow believers in Baghdad thought the idea of the divine spirit that passes from one person to another during the course of history through to its logical conclusion. Just as for Abū Muslim, for them, too, Manṣūr was God

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17    Cf. Madelung in EI² IV 837 b.

18    Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī, *Baghdād* I₁ 81.

19    Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-mawṣil* 194, ult. f.; also Ṭabarī III 206, 10f.; cf. ʿUmar, *Caliphate* 197.

20    Ṭabarī III 328, 11ff. His property would later give an entire quarter of Baghdad its name (cf. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī, *Baghdād* I₂ 165ff.)

21    Ibid. III 413, 16f.

22    If the Naṣr b. Ḥarb al-Tamīmī mentioned by Ṭabarī (III 384, 18) is indeed the same as our Naṣr b. Ḥarb b. ʿAbdallāh al-Rāwandī.

23    Confirmed in Ṭabarī III 365, 9. Also ʿUmar, *Caliphate* 195, and Kennedy, Caliphate 65; Lassner, *Shaping* 11f. and 159f. holds a different opinion.

24    See vol. I 337 above.

25    Ibid. 290, n. 3.

26    Cf. Dixon in EI² IV 836 a.

himself, 'the Lord who grants us food and drink' and the 'King of glory'. They saw Gabriel, the messenger of God,[27] in Haytham b. Muʿāwiya al-ʿAtakī from Khorasan who became governor of Mecca and Ṭāʾif in 141/758–9,[28] and they believed ʿUthmān b. Nahīk to be the spirit that emanated from God but was not God himself anymore.[29] In parallel they called Manṣūr the creator (*khāliq*) and giver of the daily bread (*rāziq*); of course, *rāziq* could also be the one 'who pays the soldier'.[30] To those who believed in him he had absolute power: he could move mountains, and he could have asked them to turn their backs on the *qibla*.[31]

This last sentence makes the listener take note, for Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ used it in his *Risāla fī l-ṣaḥāba* with reference to the slavish obedience of some of Manṣūr's generals.[32] It is possible that he, too, was thinking of members of the Rāwandiyya here. At that time Abū Muslim was still alive;[33] if he shared these generals' blind faith, we might have found an explanation of why he, despite his political wisdom and military power, gave himself into Manṣūr's hands in such a foolhardy way. Saffāḥ had acceded to government at the 'divine' age: he was 33 years old when he died and he had, as was only proper, thick and curly hair.[34] The concept that Abū Muslim was the 'prophet' of the Abbasids originated in eastern Iran. The guards in Hāshimiyya were not pledged to this idea. To the caliph's relief they focussed on Muʿāwiya and ʿUthmān b. Nahīk, creating the best possible preconditions for the attack on Abū Muslim. Afterwards, however, the

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27  Could he possibly have been the caliph's chamberlain who received the visitors at that time?

28  Ṭabarī III 137, 16f.

29  Ṭabarī III, 16ff. (transl. Muth 47ff.). Concerning 'king of glory' (*rabb al-ʿizza*) cf. Ṭabarī III 132, 6.

30  Maqdisī, *Badʾ* V 131, −5ff. Elsewhere we read that they addressed the caliph with the famous formula *anta anta* 'You are the one who counts' – or, more informally 'You are the man' (Ṭabarī III 418, ult. f.; corresponding to the mystics' *huwa huwa*). However, the report is too general, and the details it contains are very suspicious. Thus it refers to the *topos* of the attempts at flying and then states, they had jumped off the green dome (*al-khaḍrāʾ*) – surely in Baghdad! Cf. the attempts at interpretation in Lassner, *Shaping* 182 and 284, n. 68. Concerning al-Manṣūr's deification see also Nawbakhtī 46, pu. ff. Shortly afterwards the followers of Muqannaʿ demanded to be shown him as God personified (Daniel, *Khurasan* 144).

31  Thus according to the parallel version in Balādhurī III 235, 12, where Haytham b. ʿAdī is named as one of the sources.

32  PELLAT para. 12; regarding the passage cf. vol. I 57 above.

33  Cf. vol. II 24f. above.

34  Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh* 339, 5ff.; cf. vol. I 406 above. The Shīʿites also imagined the *qāʾim* like this (Nuʿmānī, *Ghayba* ²125, ult.).

situation became dangerous. Manṣūr himself destroyed his image on the 'day of the Rāwandiyya'. When he had a number of the 'ringleaders', probably low-ranking officers, arrested, it probably came as a complete surprise to those concerned. They outwitted their guards by staging a funeral cortege.[35] The caliph wanted to enter into negotiations with them, but he was held back by an Arab noble, Maʿn b. Zāʾida al-Shaybānī. And when he spoke to them on the caliph's behalf, ʿUthmān b. Nahīk was indeed fatally wounded by an arrow.[36]

Maʿn b. Zāʾida, who had recognised how incalculable the situation was, earned the caliph's gratitude by stepping in. He had actually been a faithful follower of the Umayyads and had consequently had to go into hiding after the revolution; even now when he intervened, his face was covered by a veil.[37] That he ventured out into the open at this moment at all must have been because being an Arab he had no sympathy with the scenes of madness that met his eyes: to him, these Khorāsānian rioters were simply louts (*ʿulūj*).[38] The caliph, on the other hand, must have been aware that he had assumed power promising change (*dawla*), a change that would not be a mere revolution but a trans-valuation of all values, and maybe even, by putting an end to the corrupt past, bring about the end of times.[39] The fighters of the early days, who were now stationed in Iraq, called themselves *abnāʾ al-dawla*, and it was from their ranks in particular that the Rāwandiyya had emerged.[40] If the rebels really were members of Manṣūr's bodyguard, there is no way around the assumption that the caliph knew their ideas, and had probably approved of them at first.

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35  They had, as Balādhurī (III 235, 15) specifies, pretended to be burying a woman but in fact put weapons on the bier. Of course, it had to be a woman to avoid anyone becoming curious. Nagel mistakenly sees this episode as a parallel to the worship of ʿAlī's throne under Mukhtār (in: *Geschichte der arab. Welt*, ed. Haarmann 115). His account, like that of Scarcia-Amoretti in CHI IV 494, also loses some conviction due to reducing the complex events to one single episode.

36  Ṭabarī III 131, 1ff. Ibid. 131, 9, and 271, 18f. confirm that all this took place in Hāshimiyya.

37  Tanūkhī, *Faraj* IV 54, 2ff.; for general information concerning him see Kennedy in: EI² VI 345, also vol. I 516 above. Because of his proverbial generosity he even became the subject of two tales in the Arabian Nights (transl. Littmann III 87ff.).

38  Ṭabarī III 133, 5.

39  For more information see Nagel, *Untersuchungen* 9f. Regarding the term *dawla* in general cf. F. Rosenthal in EI² II 177f.; Lewis in: Belleten 46/1982/418ff. and, more recently, *The Political Language of Islam* 35f.; Sharon, *Black Banners* 22ff.

40  See also p. 19 below. For more detailed information on the term *abnāʾ al-dawla* see Lassner, *Shaping* 129ff., who may, however, be making things rather too complicated for himself.

They themselves were convinced of this; being God, Manṣūr was after all able to read their souls.[41] It was true that he had the boldest of them crucified and burnt,[42] but that could be explained away with a little theology: God had not always treated the prophets well, either. As they saw it, Manṣūr had effectively created his own martyrs; he decreed in mysterious ways.[43] Which was, of course, a fairly desperate explanation,[44] although it does show that they survived as a group; the caliph probably could not get away with exterminating every zealot: Rizām b. Ṣādiq, one of their spiritual leaders, was pardoned.[45] This does by no means imply that he would have been a member of the household troops or the army; he might just as well have been a high official.[46] In Kufa they had continued support in any case, which is said to have been one reason why Manṣūr built Baghdad.[47] Still, they resurfaced there, too – among the troops, of course – and we read about clashes by the Bāb al-dhahab, at the heart of the palace.[48] Maybe Muʿtaṣim and his Turkish soldiers left Baghdad in the end because of the unruliness of one of their successor organisations.[49]

Theophanes claims to know that as early as 760, namely AH 143, Abbasid frontier guards near Dābiq, the traditional meeting place for the summer campaign against the Byzantines, spoke of al-Manṣūr's **son** as the God who nourished them. They carried out a bloodbath in a mosque, and are said to have fought their way to Basra where they pillaged and took prisoners.[50] This would be surprisingly early, as Mahdī was barely 15 years old at the time.[51] Of course,

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41    Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shīʿa* 46, ult. f. > Qummī, *Maq.* 69, pu.

42    Thus according to a gloss in the MS of the Qummī text (cf. *Maq.* 70, n. 1).

43    Nawbakhtī 47, 3ff. > Qummī 70, 2ff.

44    Not only because the idea of martyrdom short-circuited, but also because in the Quranic tradition the prophets were not drowned or thrown to the beasts, as was allegedly claimed here.

45    Ṭabarī III 132, 3f. Concerning the Rizāmiyya cf. Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, *Uṣūl* 35f., para. 53f. with additional sources; Składanek, *Doktryny* 163; Madelung in EI² IV 838a. The complete name Rizām b. Sābiq is only recorded in Maqrīzī, (*Khiṭaṭ* II 353, −6).

46    This is Muth's view in *Der Kalif al-Manṣūr* 273f., n. 660. However, he has misidentified Rizām and not considered the heresiographers; our Rizām has nothing in common with Rizām b. Muslim, Khālid al-Qasrī's *mawlā*, who is mentioned in Ṭabarī III 215, ult.

47    Ṭabarī III 271, 18ff.

48    Ibid. III 365, 6ff.; regarding the Bāb al-dhahab cf. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī, *Baghdād* I₁ 306.

49    Cf. Ṭabarī III 1179, 14, where the correct reading is presumably that of the Leiden edition which has *al-Ḥarbiyya* rather than Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm's *al-Khurramiyya* (thus also Töllner, *Türkische Garden* 31).

50    P. 431, 28ff./ transl. in *Byz. Geschichtsschreiber* VI 76.

51    He was born in 127 (see vol. II 334 above).

this is indeed the age which one would imagine the youthful God to be,[52] and it was, after all, only a few years later in 147/764 that his father appointed him heir to the throne.[53] Even shortly before this he appears with the epithet al-Mahdī on a coin for the first time.[54] The Rāwandiyya had probably spoken of the spirit of Jesus because Jesus was expected to return at the end of time as the *mahdī*, which offered more food for the imagination than the 'spirit of Adam', although the latter had more convincing logic on its side.[54a] In addition, the caliph probably had to rely on their support if he wanted to put his plan into practice, as there were among them strong opposing forces which supported ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, al-Manṣūr's nephew, who was ousted from the succession by al-Mahdī. They thought that with all due respect to the imam, he could not reverse a decision once it had been taken. Fortunately it had not been al-Manṣūr's decision but his predecessor al-Saffāḥ's, and the opposition could say that the living imam's will took precedence over that of the dead one, but the schism remained.[55] When al-Manṣūr sent the letter with which he forced ʿĪsā b. Mūsā to resign, he was able to refer to the pressure from the Khorasanian troops,[56] but in all likelihood he had generated this very pressure by once again inflaming their chiliastic expectations.

Manṣūr's priority, however, was something else: he wanted to direct the ideology of the Medinan Shīʿites that had failed so dismally in 145/767 into Abbasid channels.[57] The new heir to the throne was called Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh as well as al-Nafs al-zakiyya;[58] hadiths present him as the climax of the Abbasid caliphs and prophesied that he would prepare the way for Jesus, the lord of the end of time.[59] While unlike al-Nafs al-zakiyya he was the son of a

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52  An alternative to the age of 32 at which Saffāḥ appeared on the scene (see ch. D 1.2.1.1 below).

53  For general information on the subject see Moscati in: Orientalia 15/1946/156ff.

54  Dūrī in: *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 131. On another coin, minted by the governor of Bukhara in 151, also *al-imām al-mahdī walī amīr al-muʾminīn* (*Kat. oriental. Münzen Berlin* I 327, no. 2078).

54a  Not only because Adam was the first person, but also because of sura 15:29, according to which God breathed his spirit into him (cf. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *K. al-rūḥ* 178, apu. ff.). Regarding the 'spirit of Jesus' one could refer to suras 21:91 and 66:12.

55  Nawbakhtī 44, ult. ff.; also Madelung in EI² IV 838a.

56  Ṭabarī III 341, 17f.; also Kennedy in: *Proc. X Congress UEAI Edinburgh* 30f.

57  See vol. I 465f. and II 332f. above.

58  Concerning Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh as the name of the awaited *mahdī* see vol. I 268 and 382 above; al-Manṣūr refers to this in his letter to ʿĪsā b. Mūsā (Ṭabarī III 341, 4f.). He is, however, said to have considered appointing al-Mahdī's brother Jaʿfar heir to the throne at one point as well (ibid. III 400, 7f.).

59  Cf. Madelung in EI² V 1233 b.

slave woman, this detail – which might have been a flaw a short time earlier[60] – was now seen as positive.[61] His appointment was accompanied by portents such as a meteor shower which particularly distinguished the year 147.[62] Poets such as Bashshār b. Burd or al-Muʾammil b. Umayl al-Muḥāribī orchestrated the topic. It also seems that al-Manṣūr adopted his regnal title only at this time: he 'who has been granted victory (by God)' was the one who prepared the way for the *mahdī*.[63] Everyone who is chosen to the caliphate, he said in a hadith which he traced back through his ancestors, is distinguished before he is even created, by God stroking the chosen one's forelock with his right hand.[64] The verb he selected here, *masaḥa*, had already been used by Abū Manṣūr al-ʿIjlī in order to suggest the association with the Messiah (*masīḥ*), i.e. Jesus.[65]

### 1.2.1.1    The 'Abbasid Shīʿa'

Gradually another idea moved to the foreground of the conflict with Ḥasanids and Shīʿites in general, an idea that al-Mahdī would make official doctrine: the precedence of ʿAbbās over the descendants of ʿAlī and Fāṭima. As the prophet's uncle, ʿAbbās was his first heir, certainly with greater title than his cousin. This reasoning was not quite as technical as it might seem. After all, ʿAbbās had outlived the prophet by two decades, and he had not only been the heir but the person who was responsible for the family. For this reason the Medinan jurist Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab is said to have judged him to have priority over Abū Bakr.[1] But for the Abbasids the consequence was that they owed their legitimation not to an ʿAlid's testament any more, but to the actual position of their own ancestor.[2] The Shīʿites who had responded to the Kaysānite model with the sole claim of the *wuld Fāṭima*[3] found no support; subsequently they would be

60    See vol. I 145f. above.
61    Also Zaman in: Hamdard Islamicus 13/1990, issue 1/61.
62    van Vloten in: ZDMG 52/1898/220. The letter to ʿĪsā b. Mūsā also mentions omens (Ṭabarī III 340, 8f.)
63    In more detail Dūrī, op. cit. 129ff.; cf. also F. ʿUmar, *Buḥūth 206ff.*
64    Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 155, 10ff.
65    Cf. my discussion of the subject in: *The Youthful God* 6, and ch. D 1.2.1.2 below.

1     Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XX₂ 113, 12f.
2     Nawbakhtī 43, 6ff.; Nashwān, *Ḥūr* 153, 8ff. et passim. Cf. also van Vloten in ZDMG 52/1898/218ff.; Sadighi, *Mouvements* 210; Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 200ff.; Prozorov, *Reforma xalīfa al-Mahdī I jego rol v formirovanii šiitskoj ideologii*, in: *Arabskie strany. Istorija, ekonomika* (Moscow 1974), p. 92ff.; Lassner in: IOS 10/1980/78ff.; Sharon, *Black Banners* 84ff.; Arazi and Elʿad in: SI 66/1987/36f.
3     Cf. vol. I 446 above.

compelled to change their entire inheritance law to comply with the priority of the daughter.[4] The old formula according to which the community should agree on a candidate from the prophet's family (*al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*)[5] had now cracked as well; 'Abbās' firm title left barely any room for a free 'agreement'. The disadvantage of the new model was that in this way – similar to the Kāmiliyya[6] – all of the first four 'righteous' caliphs were declared usurpers, and it was unlikely that the Sunnites would agree in the long run. This ultimately caused the theory to fail, and wither away into a heresiographical curiosity.

The heresiographers used the term 'Abbasid Shī'a' in this context. Al-Manṣūr had indeed addressed the Khorasanians as his *shī'a*.[7] He was certainly aware of the new legitimation. While his correspondence with al-Nafs al-zakiyya, which contains the sentence that God did not give women equal status with uncles, is not entirely beyond doubt,[8] Rizām b. Sābiq, the survivor of the 'day of the Rāwandiyya', appears to have used the same argument.[9] So, too, did the man to whom the theory was usually ascribed, Abū Hurayra al-Rāwandī from Damascus (not from Khorasan?)[10] who taught the *abnā' al-dawla* in Baghdad. He read a *K. akhbār al-dawla* with them; this was ca. 2,000 sheets thick, and Ibn al-Nadīm later saw a surviving fragment.[11] It is the oldest work of this type that we know, the beginning of a genre of pro-Abbasid historiography that would spread considerably over the next two generations; frequently under the same title. The books contained not only the record of successes of the past but probably – at least to begin with – *mahdī* prophecies.[12] The text edited by Dūrī, whose subtitle *Akhbār al-'Abbās wa-wuldihī* paraphrases its contents, belongs in this series.[13] Al-Haytham b. 'Adī (d. 206/821 or 207/822) wrote on the

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4   Coulson, *Succession in the Muslim Family* 108ff.; *History of Islamic Law* 113 ff.; *Conflict and Tensions* 31f.; also Madelung in: *Society and the Sexes* 74f.; however, the latter would like to put the date forward. For more information on this multi-layered development see ch. D 5.1.

5   Cf. Nagel, *Untersuchungen* 108ff. and Daniel, *Khurasan*, Index s. v.; also vol. II 334, n. 61 above.

6   See vol. I 311ff. above.

7   Ṭabarī III 430, 15f.

8   Ibid. III 211, 8f.; cf. vol. II 335f. above (cf. esp. D. Sourdel in: *Prédication et propaganda* 121f.).

9   Pseudo-Nāshī, *Uṣūl* 35f. para. 53.

10  Nawbakhtī 42, 6ff.; Qāḍī Nu'mān, *Urjūza* 205 v. 2021; Madelung in EI² IV 838 a.

11  *Fihrist* 120, apu. ff. and 257, 18ff., where he is, however, called *al-Rāwandī* only.

12  Cf. Nagel, *Untersuchungen* 11f., who is not, however, aware of Abū Hurayra's work.

13  Intro. 13ff.; cf. also Sharon, *Black Banners* 233ff.

subject[14] as did Madāʾinī;[15] later, and with greater distance, al-Jāḥiẓ did, too.[16] We only know of Abū Hurayra's work because he taught in the same mosque as Shaybānī, and the latter left because of constant disturbances. Shaybānī (132/749 –189/805) appears to have been quite young at the time; presumably the event took place in the 150s. Abū Hurayra is said to have worked for al-Manṣūr earlier.[17]

Under al-Mahdī poets took part in the propaganda here as well; one verse by Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa became famous.[18] And of course hadiths were brought out in force. They were quite blunt, and were weeded out by indigenous experts later.[19] Musayyab b. Zuhayr al-Ḍabbī (d. 175/792 or 176/793), the Baghdad chief of police, took the most straightforward route and transmitted the prophet's word from Manṣūr personally, using the Abbasid chain: "Abbās is my executor (waṣī) and my heir'.[20] It was discovered that the mahdī prophecy had been addressed by the prophet to ʿAbbās: 'The mahdī will (come out of) your offspring and fill the earth with justice and fairness, just as it was filled with violence and injustice before'.[21] The opposing side tried to discredit this by having this hadith (in an even more direct version) presented by the notorious falsifier and heretic Muṭīʿ b. Iyās. When al-Mahdī's brother Jaʿfar heard this, he is said to have undone his trousers and said, pointing downwards: 'If my brother Muḥammad is the mahdī, then this one is the qāʾim min āl Muḥammad!'[22]

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14    Cf. Nagel, *Untersuchungen*, 13ff.

15    Concerning his *K. al-dawla* cf. Rotter in: Oriens 23–24/1974/128ff.

16    In his *K. imāmat Banī l-ʿAbbās*, which probably circulated under the characteristic title of *K. al-mīrāth* as well (cf. Catalogue of Works XXX, no. 50–51; also Pellat in: SI 15/1961/24 and BEO 30/1978/154). Cf. also the names listed by Jāḥiẓ in *Bayān* I 335, 1ff.

17    Qāḍī Nuʿmān, *Urjūza* 205 v. 2021. – At only 14 years of age Shaybānī attended Abū Ḥanīfa's lectures. At the time he as well as Abū Hurayra lived in the same street as Abū Ḥanīfa.

18    *Agh.* X 89, 7; Ṭabarī III 539, 5; cf. Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VI 257, 2ff./IV 180 no. 2464. Cf. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 307f.

19    Cf. e.g. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XX₂ 130, 6ff. (where, as at 113, 13, the name Rāwandiyya is misspelt); Ṣadraddīn al-Ṣadr, *al-Mahdī* (Tehran 1358), p. 190ff.; particularly detailed Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 429, –4ff.; also van Vloten in: ZDMG 52/1898/220ff.; Nagel, *Untersuchungen* 32 and especially *Rechtleitung* 304ff.; Sharon, *Black Banners* 94; Kister in CHAL I 362f.

20    TB XIII 137, 7ff.; a more detailed version is found in Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz* XII 280 no. 1649. A curious passage is found in Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 435, 6ff., where ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd is made to transmit from Manṣūr, presumably remembering an alleged audience (see vol. II 327ff. above).

21    Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, *Uṣūl* 36, 5f.

22    Roughly: 'One who arises from the prophet's tribe'; *Agh.* XIII 287, 1ff.

### 1.2.2    *Persecution of Heretics*

The Rāwandiyya had grown up and become a mainstream force in the state. The extremists were elsewhere. Towards the end of the 150s the Abbasid authorities in eastern Iran attempted for the first time to do away with al-Muqannaʿ;[1] shortly afterwards, in 162, they took action in Jurjān against the so-called *muḥammira*, 'red tunics'.[2] The caliph, who had acceded to power as the *mahdī*, took great pains to conform to this image. He 'filled the earth with justice' by freeing prisoners[3] and once more appointing, for the first time in many years, appeal courts;[4] Bashshār alluded to this in verses of praise.[5] In 159 AH ʿUbaydallāh al-ʿAnbarī pointed out a letter to him that the end of times was near, and advised him to surround himself with wise counsellors, in order to remedy everything that was not as it should be.[6] It is reported that he had mosques restored, clearing away all later additions; the *maqṣūra* was removed and the pulpit scaled back to the type common at the time of the prophet.[7] He took many steps to improve the lot of pilgrims: he had wells and signposts established by the pilgrimage route, and made donations to Mecca and Medina.[8] Furthermore he – and he is said to have been the first one – encouraged the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) to engage in critical dialogue with the heretics;[9] being the *mahdī* his task was to keep the faith pure. These theologians probably came from all manner of backgrounds; we know books against the *zanādiqa* by the Kufan Shīʿite Hishām b. al-Ḥakam as well as by al-Aṣamm from Basra who was presumably closer to the Ibāḍiyya, or by the 'Jahmite' and Muʿtazilite Ḍirār b. ʿAmr.[10] The 'sects' closed ranks for their joint fight against those around them.

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1    Regarding him see Daniel, *Khurasan* 137ff.; Meier in: WI 21/1983/151. He had grown up in Rizām b. Sābiq's Rāwandiyya (Shahrastānī 115, 1f./299, 4f.).

2    Sadighi, *Mouvements* 225ff.; Laoust, *Schismes* 75; Daniel, *Khurasan* 147.

3    Ṭabarī III 461, 10ff.; Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-mawṣil* 236, 7f. This amnesty also included Christians, e.g. the Jacobite patriarch (Michael Syrus, *Chronik* XII 1/transl. Chabot III 3b).

4    Azdī 255, −7ff.; Muʾarrij al-Sadūsī, *Nasab Quraysh* 12, 6f. The *maẓālim* courts originated in Sasanid tradition (Morony, *Iraq* 85f.). Concerning this type of jurisdiction in general cf. the overview in J. S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice* 4ff.; also vol. II 182f. above.

5    F. ʿUmar, *Buḥūth* 292f.; also Dannhauer, *Qāḍī-Amt* 96ff.

6    Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* II 106, 1ff.; also Lassner, *Shaping* 30. Cf. vol. II 181 above.

7    Ṭabarī III 483, 12ff. and 486, 9ff.; Azdī 240, 5f. and 248, 10ff.

8    Ṭabarī III 483, 7ff. and 486, 3ff.; cf. F. ʿUmar in: Arabica 21/1974/139f. and *Buḥūth* 214; also S. A. Al-Rashid, *Darb Zubaydah* 18ff.

9    Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākala* 24, 6f.; Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VIII 293, 7f./V 212, 6f.

10   Catalogue of Works IV c no. 3–4, XIII no. 24, and XV no. 35–38.

Unfortunately we do not know who these respective *zanādiqa* were, but it does seem that the caliph saw them as precursors of that kind of extremism whose face had by now become mainly Shīʿite. Characteristically the first persecutions were in Aleppo in 163, when he received the news of Muqannaʿ's death. The *muḥtasib* ʿAbd al-Jabbār had to deal with the situation and a number of 'heretics' were crucified.[11] A few years later prosecutions continued in Iraq, first in 166,[12] then particularly violently in 167, and also in 169, already under his successor al-Hādī.[13] The position of judge of the heretics (*ṣāḥib al-zanādiqa*) was established and the *muḥtasib* ʿAbd al-Jabbār changed his title. He was succeeded by ʿUmar al-Kalwādhī in 167/783, and after his death in 168 by Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā, called Ḥamdōya. The position continued under Hārūn as well.[14]

We have already looked at the details elsewhere.[15] In the capital the measures taken were mainly aimed at purging the civil service. Many *kuttāb* came from Kufa; it had just happened that way while the caliph was residing in nearby Hāshimiyya. In Baghdad they were isolated from their original environment; investigating them to see whether they were willing to behave in an 'orthodox' manner seemed the obvious course of action. Their class was universally suspected of finding contradictions in the Quran and of believing prophetic traditions to be pure humbug.[16] Of course, there was a lot of slander going on in individual cases, and anti-intellectualism was on the rise.[17] As long as the vizier Abū ʿUbaydallāh Muʿāwiya was the head of the administration he was able to protect his people, but then his own son was denounced and executed.[18] His successor Yaʿqūb b. Dāwūd, vizier since 163, and de facto in power since 161, took a stricter view. In fact 'heretic' poets such as Bashshār b. Burd or ʿAlī b. Khalīl attacked him, and both paid for it.[19] A man like Fayḍ

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11    Ṭabarī III 499, 8ff.

12    Thus according to Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-mawṣil* 247, 15.

13    Concerning this see Vajda in: RSO 17/1938/183ff.; F. ʿUmar, *al-ʿAbbāsiyyūn al-awāʾil* II 140f. and in: Arabica 21/1874/140ff. Regarding al-Hādī cf. Moscati in: Studia Orientalia (Soc. Or. Fenn.) 13/1946, no. 4, p. 7f. Very general also Joel Kraemer in: *Festschrift Nemoy* 167ff., esp. 176ff.

14    Cf. the references in my *Ṭailasān des Ibn Ḥarb* 11, n. 32.

15    See vol. I 488ff. above.

16    Jāḥiẓ, *Dhamm akhlaq al-kuttāb*, in: *Rasāʾil* II 192, 7ff.

17    Owning an incomprehensible book might have been sufficient cause to be suspected (cf. *Agh.* XVIII 187, 16ff.).

18    Vajda in: RSO 17/1938/188f.; Sourdel, *Vizirat* I 100f.; Chokr, *Zandaqa* 99ff.; cf. also vol. II 8 and 18 above.

19    Vajda 189; ʿUmar in: Arabica 21/1974/148f.; also vol. II 7 above.

b. Abī Ṣāliḥ, on the other hand, remained in his post unchallenged, although a later Shīʿite source calls him a *zindīq*.[20] He had studied under Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and been a secretary since 166.[21]

The wider population viewed events with approval. Intellectuals who allowed themselves to become infected with Iranian ideas met with little sympathy from merchants who cultivated hadith. The Manichaeans had themselves maintained a widespread network of trade relations; this was sufficient reason not to support them in any way. People felt they had been infiltrated and assumed that the caliph had acted out of this insight, too. It was said that on the occasion that he had an unrepentant *zindīq* beheaded and crucified, al-Mahdī told his son Mūsā, the future al-Hādī: 'My dear son! When you take the helm one day, do not let this lot[22] get away with anything! For they are a sect (*firqa*) that exhorts people to be righteous, to reject immorality or to renounce the world and live in awareness of the afterlife. Then it will persuade them that to keep free from sin and vice eating meat must be forbidden, particular ritual ablutions must be performed, and animals not killed; even to worship two (principles), namely light and darkness. Eventually it will declare marrying sisters and daughters to be permitted, or washing in urine, or even abducting small children from the streets to save them from the error of darkness to the guidance of the light. Therefore you must erect a gallows (*al-khashāb*) for them, and draw your sword against them; in this way you will be close to God who has no companion! For I have seen your ancestor ʿAbbās in a dream, and he girded me with two swords and commanded me to kill the dualists'.[23]

### 1.2.3 *The Religious Dialogue with the Patriarch Timothy and the Relationship with the Christians*

In order for us to see al-Mahdī's own theological profile, we should look at the accounts we have from the Christian side of a religious dialogue he conducted in 165/781 or shortly afterwards with the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I. The historicity of this event need not be doubted. While Timothy, who always narrates himself – maybe he had a record produced from memory afterwards – never names the caliph but only speaks of 'the king', he does mention in passing that

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20    *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* I 70, pu. f. He might, however, simply have been mistaken for Yazīd
      b. al-Fayḍ (see vol. I 522 above).

21    Sourdel, *Vizirat* 111ff. Regarding the role of the *kātib* in general cf. Mottahedeh in: Abhath
      29/1981/25ff.

22    The narrator adds: 'This refers to the Manichaeans (*aṣḥāb Mānī*)'.

23    Ṭabarī III 588, 8ff.; transl. in Vajda 190 and ʿUmar in: Arabica 144. Regarding the two swords
      cf. Goldziher in: Der Islam 12/1922/198f. = *Ges. Schr.* V 469ff.

the latter's son had taken part in a campaign against the Byzantines and was now encamped outside Constantinople.[1] This refers to the campaign of 165 which Hārūn, still a youth, attended at his father's orders.[2] Thanks to a remark in a letter it also seems certain that it was Timothy himself who reported on the conversation.[3] The question remains of whether this is his genuine account of the course of the discussion, or whether it was edited and amended later by another hand. The Syriac version was transmitted fairly late, and there are also two Arabic versions.[4] As a document the text must consequently be used with caution.[5]

Timothy had not been patriarch for long at that time, having been elected at the end of 779 CE. He praised the caliph as being a 'great philosopher';[6] later he would collaborate with Abū Nūḥ al-Anbārī[7] in the translation of Aristotle's Topics from Greek via Syriac into Arabic for the caliph.[8] At around the same time as the religious dialogue he also debated the concept of God and the trinity with an 'Aristotelian philosopher' at court; it seems that this refers to a *mutakallim*.[9] al-Mahdī also touched on this topic; the Arabic version of the dialogue begins directly with the caliph remarking that someone as learned as Timothy could surely not believe that God had taken a wife and fathered a son.[10] The dialogue, however, is not continued in this style, as the caliph seems to have realised quickly that it did not do justice to the Christian. Other topics come to the fore: prophecies of Muḥammad's appearing and, linked to

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1    Cf. the Syriac text in: Woodbroke Studies II 156/transl. 83ff.

2    EI² III 232 b. Concerning the question of the date see esp. Bidawid, *Lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée* I, p. 63; also earlier 32f. and 60f.

3    Ibid. 33. The letters have also been studied in Th. R. Hurst's dissertation *The Syriac Letters of Timothy I (727–823). A Study in Christian–Muslim Controversy* (PhD Cath. Univ. of America, Washington 1986).

4    The first one was edited and translated by H. Putman, *L'Eglise et Islam sous Timothée I* (Beirut 1975), the second one by Caspar in: Islamochristiana 3/1977/107ff. For more general information cf. Sākō in: Islamochristiana 10/1984/282 and Watt, *Muslim–Christian Encounters* 63f.

5    The caliph frequently plays the part of someone who gives the cues; this has no deeper significance, as his position did not allow him to do more than ask questions.

6    Bidawid 17.

7    Regarding him see vol. II 530 above.

8    Bidawid 35 and 37; Putman 106; Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus* 21. Once again this text does not give the addressee a name but only called 'the king', and in fact Timothy also met Hārūn in person (Bidawid 21 and 37; also 77), but there are many reasons to believe that he is referring to al-Mahdī.

9    Bidawid 32f.; for more detailed information cf. Hurst 35ff.

10   Putman 214.

them, the accusation levelled against the Christians of having falsified Holy Writ in order to dispose of these prophecies,[11] and the Christians' claim to have abrogated the Old Testament but at the same time denying that they themselves have been abrogated by the Quran;[12] also the worship of the cross,[13] and abolishing circumcision.[14] Timothy for his part was able to point out that, unlike the Gospel, the Quran was never confirmed by miracles: the Christians appear to have regarded this as their most powerful argument at the time.[15]

A document barely a decade younger shows how quickly the Muslims took steps to remedy this issue, due to a change in foreign policy. Ever since the campaign of 165/781–2 the Byzantines had been obliged to pay tribute to the caliph. Internally they were divided by the Iconoclastic Controversy, with the result that in 174/790 the young Constantine VI deposed his mother Irene, who had been his co-regent, and had himself proclaimed autokrator by iconoclastic troops and then cancelled the tribute payments. Hārūn, who had by that time become caliph himself, sent a detailed letter threatening to go to war with him if he did not 'pay the poll tax'. The letter was written by a high official who had enjoyed al-Mahdī's trust and was now serving under the Barmakid Yaḥyā b. Khālid: he was Abū l-Rabīʿ Muḥammad b. al-Layth al-Khaṭīb, an Umayyad *mawlā* who was said to be able to trace his genealogy back to the Achaemenids, and who may well have been prepared for the career as secretary by his family tradition. The text survives in its entirety, but so far scholarship has taken hardly any notice of it.

It was recorded by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893) in his *K. al-Manthūr wal-manẓūm*; after this version it was printed in Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab* III 252–324 and in Aḥmad Farīd Rifāʿī, *ʿAṣr al-Maʾmūn* II 188ff. A separate edition is by Asʿad Luṭfī Ḥasan, entitled *Risāla Abī l-Rabīʿ Muḥammad b. al-Layth ilā Qusṭanṭīn malik al-Rūm* (Cairo 1355/1936); he had already considered the text earlier in his *K. al-Islām* (Cairo 1350/1932). Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār also knew the text (cf. *Tathbīt dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* 77, 5ff.); there can be no reasonable doubt of its authenticity. So far D. M. Dunlop is the only one to have discussed it, in the memorial publication for Paul Kahle (*In memoriam Paul Kahle* 106ff.); it is mentioned in passing by Kister in CHAL I 355, by Shboul in: Festschrift Hussey

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11    Ibid. 238ff and 271ff.
12    Ibid. 262ff.
13    Ibid. 251ff.
14    Ibid. 231ff.
15    Ibid. 242f.

116f., and by M. Chokr in his dissertation (*Zandaqa* 141f.) Concerning the author cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 134, 14ff. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* IV 379f. no. 1925 > Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* IX 197. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār calls him *al-kātib al-Qurāshī* (*Tathbīt* 77, 9); after Ibn al-Nadīm he was also called *al-Faqīh*. Because of the great time interval it is not very likely that he was the son of al-Layth b. Abī Ruqaiya, who conducted chancellery business for ʿUmar II and was a client of Umm al-Ḥakam bt. Abī Sufyān, i.e. the Umayyads (Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 53, 2f.). His close relationship with al-Mahdī is documented in the minutes of a meeting between the caliph and his advisers; this was, however, apparently set down only after his death, in 170/787 (*ʿIqd* I 191ff.; cf. ibid. 192, 12f.; 204, 5, and 209, ult.); on the same subject but from a different point of view cf. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 126ff. If we are to believe Yaʿqūbī, al-Mahdī even appointed him vizier after Yaʿqūb b. Dāwūd (*Taʾrīkh* II 483, –6f.; cf. Sourdel, *Vizirat* 111f.) The note preserved ibid. (II 553, 4f.) according to which he was appointed vice-governor of Kufa even under Maʾmūn, i.e. after 204/819, is entirely isolated: he would have lived to a very old age indeed.

Hārūn did of course carry out his threat to go to war, but only once Constantine had in his turn been overthrown by his mother after internal disagreements in 181/797.[16] His letter is brief in this respect anyway;[17] it essentially contains the preliminary invitation – which was a legal requirement – to convert to Islam. To this end Hārūn alleged that the basileus was influenced by his spiritual advisers, the 'bishops', and could not recognise the truth for that reason, adding a detailed set of instructions of how he should, based on the gospel, discuss with them the trinity and Christ's being the son of God.[18] At the beginning of the letter, he listed proof that Muḥammad was indeed the true and final prophet. He quoted prophecies from the Old and New Testaments: e.g. Isaiah 21:6–9, which according to Muslim understanding talks of a prophet riding a camel,[19] and of course John 14:26 which prophesies the appearance of the paraclete.[20] Both

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16    Cf. EI² III 334 d. This, then, is the *terminus ante quem* for the letter.

17    Ṣafwat, *Jamhara* III 321, ult. ff.

18    Ibid. 301, –4ff.

19    Ibid. 309, –4ff; the quotation is much abbreviated, giving the impression that the appearance of the camel rider was concomitant with the fall of 'Babel' and the smashing of the idols (Is. 21:9). Regarding the part played by this idea in Muslim folklore cf. Haarmann in: WI 28/1988/215ff.; also ch. D 4.1 below.

20    Ibid. 309, 3ff., where παράκλητος is interpreted to mean *aḥmad*. Further instances (310, 1ff.) are all from the OT.

texts had already been used by al-Mahdī in his debate with Timothy.[21] What was new in Hārūn's letter was that he named miracles which Muḥammad wrought, attempting to convince the emperor of their factual truth.

He approached the subject with some caution, only mentioning in passing that a tree had called Muḥammad, or that a jackal had spoken to him – this could not be verified anymore, and it was not written in the Quran, either.[22] More space was given to the claim that there, in the revelation, future victory was prophesied to the Muslims at a time when they were still weak.[23] But at the core was the 'legend of the shooting stars': the 'fire-brands' visible in the night sky are used to stone naughty devils.[24] This was not interpreted as a general explanation of a recurring phenomenon, but said to refer to an event in Muḥammad's lifetime which accompanied the Quranic revelation.[25] At that time, we may be permitted to add, there was a particularly remarkable meteor shower;[26] in order to instance it beyond the Quran, scholars would later, said Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, consult the 'books of the Persians'.[27] The prophet, however, did not know the 'books of the Persians'; there was no astronomy in the Hijaz, and he could not even read.[28] He was illiterate (*ummī*)[29] and knew no-one from among the scholars of holy books who might have been his teacher.[30] Consequently, if he mentioned this event in the Quran, he could only have had this knowledge from God. This is our oldest source for the proof of his veracity that would become so self-evident later; in Hārūn's official letter we are looking at the earliest apology of Muḥammad's prophethood. The meteor shower

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21 Ed. Putman 27 para. 134ff./transl. 243, and 23 para 104ff./transl. 238.

22 Ibid. 272, –5ff.; for more information on these miracles cf. Text XXV 18.

23 Ibid. 286, 3ff., especially based on sura 38:11. Ibn ʿAbbās is said to have interpreted this as prophesying the victory of Badr (Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān* 273, 11f.); cf. also Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* ²XXIII 130, 5ff.

24 Ibid. 281, 11ff. with reference to verses 67:5, 15:16ff., 37:6ff., 72:8f etc.; also earlier 279, 6ff. Regarding the 'legend' in general cf. Eichler, *Dschinn, Teufel und Engel im Koran* 30ff.; concerning criticism in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ or in the Manichaean treatise attributed to him see vol. II 35 above.

25 Ibid. 264, 1f.

26 Cf. Bahgdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 182, 10f.; some soothsayers are said to have converted because of this.

27 *Tathbīt* 77, pu. f., probably with reference to *Jamhara* 279, 1ff. Regarding meteor showers being regarded as omens see p. 18, and vol. I 117f. above; also Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdi* 76.

28 *Jamhara* 269, 9ff. and 265, 11ff.

29 Ibid. 274, 5ff.

30 Ibid. 270, 10ff.

would soon be ousted from its position as the prime example: it had been discovered that at least the Quranic explanation of the meteor shower, if not the meteor shower itself, was mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry.[31]

Who, then, is the author of this document? Surely not Hārūn; he had people writing for him. And Muḥammad b. al-Layth was primarily responsible for the form; theological advisers were probably involved in composing the train of thought. It is tempting to believe them to have been Muʿtazilites; the text breathes their spirit. A Muʿtazilite, possibly Muʿammar, is said to have presented it to the basileus.[32] We have seen that Aṣamm defined the prophet's miracle-working in a similar fashion.[33] The praise of God at the beginning of the text uses formulae which would sit well with the Muʿtazila:[34] God is so far removed from all human qualities that not even joy may be attributed to him.[35] Polytheism – this presumably refers to the Christian worship of the trinity – is refuted by the proof of order in creation: only a single God is able to manage his house so well.[36] This is where we find evidence that the master of style Muḥammad b. al-Layth[37] may have been involved in composing the contents of the letter after all, as he did write a *K. al-ihlīlaja fī l-iʿtibār*.[38] But the 'Book of the myrobalan', which we have met as a Shīʿite apocryphon before,[39] contained the identical teleological argument for the existence of God that we come across here; the term most commonly used in this context is *iʿtibār* 'to use (the world) as an instance'.[40] Muḥammad b. al-Layth might thus have been the man to provide the template for this, as well as many other related

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31    Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VI 272, ult. ff.; cf. p. 445f. below. For more general information on the topic cf. Ḥalīmī, *Al-minhāj fī shuʿab al-īmān* I 285, ult. ff.

32    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt* 77, 8f. Philosophers had frequently been employed as envoys during antiquity (cf. Matthews in: Clover/Humphreys, *Later Antiquity* 41ff.).

33    See vol. II 460 above.

34    *Jamhara* 253, 1ff.

35    Ibid. 307, −4f.

36    Ibid. 255, 7ff.

37    Ibn al-Nadīm names him again among the *bulaghāʾ* (*Fihrist* 139, 19). For the vizier Yaḥyā b. Khālid he wrote a book on *adab* (ibid. 134, 18f.) and for Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā a manual on elegant handwriting (*ʿIqd* IV 195, 13ff.; this probably refers to his *K. al-khaṭṭ wa l-qalam*; cf. *Fihrist* 134, 18). Regarding surviving prose passages penned by him cf. Ṣafwat, *Jamhara* 183ff.

38    Ibid. 134, 17.

39    Vol. I 531 and II 550 above.

40    For more information see ch. C 6.2 below.

apocrypha.[41] The epithet *al-Faqīh* reveals that he had more skills than those of a secretary.[42]

The text's dialectic environment can be deduced quite clearly from parts of the text itself. It is not possible, we read, that Muḥammad should have been performing mere magic when he wrought miracles, because if that were the case, the miracles performed by Jesus would be disputed, too (272, apu. ff.). If his 'signs' are mentioned in the Quran, these are no later additions, for the **Gospel** was not altered, either (296, 10ff. and 297, 7ff.). Consequently the *takhrīf* is merely wrong interpretation, not actual interference with the text (309, 1f.). The trinity is refuted using the example of the sun: light and rays are parts of the sun, not identical with the sun (304, 7ff.). This is the *muʿāraḍa* to a well-known Christian analogy, which Timothy referred to as well (ed. Putman 8 para. 11/transl. 215).

The tensions affecting foreign policy as well as the increasing juridification of Islamic thought are likely to have prompted Abū Yūsuf to recall the special provisions, known as *shurūṭ al-ʿUmariyya*, for those under Muslim protection in his *K. al-kharāj* which he wrote on behalf of Hārūn.[43] Abū Yūsuf died in 182/798, one year after the deposition of Constantine VI, but the caliph only had the provisions put into practice a whole decade later, 191/806, when the *ahl al-dhimma* were instructed to wear different clothing to the Muslims.[44] In the meantime Hārūn had been engaged in intense military conflict with Nicephorus I, who had succeeded the empress Irene in 802.[45] He had many churches pulled down, first in the border regions, later even in Basra and elsewhere.[46] As early as 183/799, at Christmas, he had had a high-ranking member of the Quraysh who had converted to Christianity executed in Raqqa; this had

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41   Ibn al-Nadīm says that he was *mutakallim* as well (134, 16). Concerning his *Radd ʿalā l-zanādiqa* see p. 33f. below.

42   Thus also Chokr, *Zandaqa* 141.

43   *Kharāj* 279ff./transl. Fagnan 195ff. and 213ff.; cf. Ferré in: Islamochristiana *14/1988/93ff.*

44   Ṭabarī III 713, 1ff.; Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-mawṣil* 311, ult.

45   Cf. Canard, *La prise d'Héraclée* in: Byzantion 32/1962/345ff. = *Byzance et les musulmans*, no. XVIII.

46   EI² III 233 b; Putman, *Timothée* I 136ff.; Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques* 49. The Christians believed that the situation calmed down again due to the intervention of Hārūn's personal physician Jibrīl b. Bakhtīshūʿ (Mārī b. Sulaymān, *Patriarchengeschichte* 63, 11ff. GISMONDI).

even been a distant relative.[47] However, no political reasons are needed to explain this case. Earlier, in the time of the Barmakids as in the days of al-Mahdī, the pressure had been felt so much, least of all in the higher ranks. The *shurūṭ ʿUmariyya* had, after all, been introduced to protect the Muslims rather than to discriminate against members of other religions.[48]

It is not possible to look at further details here. Concerning certain anti-Christian measures of al-Manṣūr's cf. Fiey in: *Chrétiens syriaques* 26f.; regarding the situation of Christians under al-Mahdī ibid. 30ff. and Moscati in: Orientalia 15/1946/167ff. and F. ʿUmar in: Arabica 21/1974/145f. For information on the forced conversion of the (presumably Melkite) Tanūkh in Syria at the time cf. I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* 422ff.

### 1.2.4    *The Relationship with the Shīʿa and the Increasing Strength of the Sunnites*

The gaps left in the administration by the persecution of the *zanādiqa* had to be filled with more trustworthy persons. The vizier Yaʿqūb b. Dāwūd hoped to find these among the Zaydites: the Shīʿa was not yet altogether discredited. But appointing them as officials everywhere did not do much good;[1] they refused to cooperate, and after al-Hādī's accession in 169/786 the revolt of the Ḥasanid Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī broke out in the Hijaz, ending in the massacre of Fakhkh.[2] al-Mahdī had not trusted the other Shīʿite groups even before this and had a police officer make a list of their names.[3] He particularly disliked the *sabb al-shaykhayn* that had spread among the Rāfiḍites.[4] Mūsā al-Kāzim was ordered to move from Medina to Baghdad where he was kept under honourable arrest for some time, apparently in the house of Rabīʿ b. Yūnus. He was only released once he promised to keep still.

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47    The Christians understood this as martyrdom and embellished it with a legend (cf. Dick in: Muséon 74/1961/109ff.). Theodore Abū Qurra mentions the event as well (cf. Griffith in: JAOS 105/1985/57).

48    Cf., albeit with reference to Syria and Palestine during the Umayyad Era, A. Noth in: JSAI 9/1987/290ff.

1    Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 158, 15ff.; also Ṭabarī III 508, 2ff.; Sourdel, *Vizirat* 106 and 108.
2    EI² II 744f. s. v. *Fakhkh* and III 615ff. s. v. *Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī.*
3    See vol. I 369f. above.
4    See vol. I 360 above.

TB XIII 27, 15; Ṭabarī III 533, 9ff. They did, however, have a guilty con-
science (cf. TB 30, 20ff. > Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Shadharāt al-dhahabiyya* 89, −5ff.).
Ibn ʿInaba's dating this detention to the time of al-Hādī (*ʿUmdat al-ṭālib*
196, 13) is probably due to a misunderstanding. Mūsā is furthermore said
to have sent a letter of condolence to al-Hādī's mother Khayzurān when
he died (*Biḥār* XLVIII 134f. no. 7: dated Thursday 7 Rabīʿ II 170/6 October
786). It is possible that he had been to Iraq as a young man; Shaqīq al-
Balkhī claims to have seen him in Qādisiyya in 149/766 (*Biḥār* XLVIII 80ff.
no. 103). His later visit did not leave noticeable traces in Shīʿite tradition.
[In more detail Kohlberg in EI² VII 645f. and 647 a.]

The Sunnites were victorious. Ever since Baghdad had been founded, the ca-
liph had been unable to pass them over, and their numbers increased. Unlike
the Shīʿites they came from all corners of the empire. al-Manṣūr had already
invited scholars from Damascus, predominantly Qadarites, to Iraq. We know
that al-Mahdī took at least one of them, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Thābit b. Thawbān,
into his own employment; he entrusted him with the system of appeal courts
so near to his heart.[5] Still, the Qadarites were not given entirely free rein, either.
Those who followed their ideas could appear in a bad light at court;[6] al-Mahdī
even summoned a number of Medinan scholars to Baghdad because of this
accusation.[7] At the beginning of his reign he invited Ibn al-Mājashūn into his
circle, a Medinan jurist who held a moderate view with regard to the *qadar*
problem, and who may have expressed the caliph's own views in his admoni-
tions to show reverence to the word of the book, to practise speculative reser-
vation and to reject all intellectual bickering (*jadal*).[8] Traditionists were happy
with him; they thought he would have made a good vizier.[9]

   Ibn al-Mājashūn's career started a trend. An audience or, even better, ap-
pointment at court was every scholar's dream; that there was a price to pay
only became clear later. There was a run on Baghdad; there are detailed records
of numerous traditionists and jurists from Kufa or Basra moving there. Some
of these, such as the Kufan Murjiʾite Abū Muʿāwiya,[10] caused a furore at court

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5    See vol. I 118f. above; also p. 129.

6    Ṭabarī III 490, 3f.

7    See vol. II 771ff. above. This event has led Nagel to conclude directly that there must have
     been anti-Qadarite sentiments at al-Mahdī's court (*Rechtleitung* 109f.).

8    In more detail vol. II 776ff.; also concerning the question of whether the *fatwā*s on which
     these were based originated in Medina or Baghdad.

9    TH 223, 1.

10   See vol. I 248ff. above.

with their knowledge or were, maybe not even noticing this themselves, used by the caliph for his own ends in religious policy.

This development had two weighty consequences. Firstly the brain drain led to the older centres becoming impoverished and provincialized: by the beginning of the third/ninth century Basra's and Kufa's days were over. Secondly, with the scholars leaving their individual environments behind, local differences were levelled. It was not worth a Basran's while to present himself in Baghdad as a Qadarite, nor a Kufan's to claim to be a Murji'ite. At times, it may not even have been advisable: there was not much sympathy for these attitudes in the capital. We have discovered several instances of *muḥaddithūn* known in their home town as representing a particular movement who, when they arrived in Baghdad, were not noticed particularly by anyone.[11] The melting pot of the capital created orthodoxy. Of course there was now not one opinion only; on the contrary, if anything, the competition was increasing. But this was not the old opposition between 'sects' by means of which people distinguished themselves, but a difference of methods: *muḥaddithūn* and *mutakallimūn* were beginning to jostle for the caliphs' favour. As the plurality which evolved in Baghdad encouraged an internal search for shared norms, for orthodoxy, so it confronted the Muslims externally with the question of what would be the best way to present Islam. For some decades, *kalām* was more successful than hadith; it appeared more useful and outward looking in that it was more rational. This explains the success of the Muʿtazila.

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11    See vol. I 149 and II 84f. above.

## 1.3     The Rise of the Mu'tazila

Of course, the Mu'tazila's success did not happen just like that. For a while it even had to be shared with others. al-Mahdī certainly saw the *mutakallimūn* as nothing more than watchdogs against heresy. Not one of them was invited to court; they had to wait until Hārūn's reign when during the first decade and a half of his caliphate the Barmakids gathered all kinds of scholars around themselves. The eschatological spirit had blown over. While Hārūn was still, like his brother al-Hādī before him, apostrophised as the *mahdī*,[1] his power did not need this boost anymore, and Yaḥyā b. Khālid instead sought to show the young caliph the wealth of culture surrounding him. This period of intellectual breadth was immensely stimulating for the theological debate; in addition people learned tolerance or, at the very least, good manners.

The Barmakids were the first to realise what an empire such as the Abbasid one owed to itself.[1a] Ja'far b. Yaḥyā, the vizier's son, introducing paper into Iraq[2] had symbolic meaning: communication was everything. In a sense the *disputationes* that took place at court at that time were an attempt at finding a universal consensus – private councils, as it were. Subjects were probably set by the Barmakids themselves; in fact, it could be imagined that love was one of the topics to be discussed in their presence as if they were presiding over a court of the Muses.[3] The only people excluded from the circle were the 'heretics'; Muḥammad b. al-Layth, the vizier's secretary, wrote a *Radd 'alā l-zanādiqa*.[4]

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1     Cf. e.g. *Agh.* XIII 142, 12 and Abū l-'Atāhiya, *Dīwān* 674 no. 297 v. 2; further instances in 'Umar, *Buḥūth* 219ff. Regarding the title *al-khalīfa al-marḍī* found initially on a few coins and surely intended to recall *al-riḍa min āl Muḥammad* cf. Bonner in: JAOS 109/1988/79ff.; it was used only locally and dropped before long.

1a     Cf. H. Kennedy, *The Barmakid revolution in Islamic government*, in: Festschrift Avery (= Pembroke Papers 1/1990), p. 89–98.

2     Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* I 91, –8f.

3     This fictional text is found in several places: in Mas'ūdī (*Murūj* VI 368, 1ff./IV 236ff. no. 2565–78), Ibn al-'Arabī (*'Awāṣim* II 86, 3ff.), abbreviated in 'Abbās al-Qummī, *Kunā* I 174, 11ff., and frequently excerpts elsewhere; cf. Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love* 142f., Bell, *Love Theory* 109 and 70 (end) as well as 372. The fictional nature of the text is shown up by the fact that the attributions differ frequently (cf. the commentary on text XVII 57, XVIII 23, XIX 17 and XXII 161f.). Von Grunebaum has further found that nearly all the views presented there may also be instanced in 'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf's *Dīwān* (*Kritik und Dichtkunst* 72ff.). The redactor is unknown. One might think of the poet and theologian al-Nāshi' al-akbar; a characterisation of love of his has been transmitted as well (text XXXI 66), and Mas'ūdī was rather familiar with his writings. J. Scott Meisami, who has studied the passage in great detail (JRAS 1989, p. 252ff.) attempts to bridge the chasm between fact and fiction by pointing out the context in Mas'ūdī's text. It is immediately followed by a reference to

They offered the Muʿtazilites protection; thus they were able to reinstate the poet Kulthūm b. ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī in favour after he had been denounced to the caliph for his Muʿtazilite views.[5] However, they were not necessarily themselves Muʿtazilites; they also protected Christians from attacks.[6] The Muʿtazila was not as much at the forefront as it might seem in retrospect. While this was when Muʿammar came to Baghdad,[7] he was still young at the time. The school had not yet been able to gain a foothold in Baghdad itself. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir was in touch with Yaḥyā b. Khālid's son Faḍl,[8] but the father did not ask him to attend the meetings, although it is possible that he had simply not yet come to anyone's notice at that time.[9] The highest degree of interest was shown to people from Kufa, that being the city where theology was then most advanced. The Shīʿites Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and the Ibāḍite ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd came from Kufa, as did a man who was at least very close indeed to the Muʿtazila, and with whom we will now pass from the historical to the systematic part.

### 1.3.1    Ḍirār b. ʿAmr

Abū ʿAmr Ḍirār b. ʿAmr al-Ghaṭafānī was a genuine Arab, a member of the ʿAbdallāh (originally ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā) b. Ghaṭafān,[1] and had apparently travelled widely. It is likely that he was the very Ḍirār who brought the teachings of the 'Jahmiyya' to Sanaa in the 150s.[2] It is certain that towards the end of his life he went on another journey to the Jazīra where he fell ill with

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the love affair between the Barmakid Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā and ʿAbbāsa, Hārūn al-Rashīd's sister: the downfall of the vizier's family is thus part of the overall topic 'love'.

4   Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 134, 17; concerning him see p. 25 above. It does seem that he also refuted the alchemists, although they were regarded as necessary. Consequently Rāzī later wrote against him (Bīrūnī, *Fihrist kutub al-Rāzī* 17, no. 172; Mohaghegh, *Failasūf-i Raiy* 123f.).

5   Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 233, 8ff.; concerning him cf. p. 108ff. below.

6   Michael Syrus, *Chronik* III 1.10. Also Sourdel, *Vizirat* I 179f.

7   Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākala* 25, −4f.; also p. 28 above.

8   See p. 116f. below.

9   When Ibn al-ʿArabi lists eight Muʿtazilites among the participants, including Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (*ʿAwāṣim* II 84, 8ff.), this is clearly his interpretation of the 'symposium' on love; his considering the Shīʿite Abū Malik al-Ḥadramī to be a Khārijite is rather a giveaway (see vol. I 409f. above).

1   Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 249, 1ff.; *ʿIqd* VI 437, ult. ff.

2   Under the governor Yazīd b. Manṣūr (i.e. a son of the caliph) who administered the province of Yemen between 153 and 159 (Rāzī, *Taʾrīkh Ṣanʿāʾ* 393, ult. f.).

furunculosis (*damāmīl*) and died of it at the age of around 70.[3] If it is true that he met Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ, as Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār claims,[4] he would presumably have been to Basra in his youth. The encounter is not impossible, as the Ghaṭafān had settled both in that city and in Kufa,[5] and later he may have taught there for a time before Aṣamm took over the Muʿtazilite academy;[6] probably after 170, when he went to Baghdad. Abū l-Hudhayl remembers from his youth how Ḍirār came to Basra;[7] this is likely to have been during the years between 160 and 170. Ṣafadī's dating his death to around 230[8] is certainly too late. The span of his life would seem to have been between 110/728 and 180/796. This would make him, together with Hishām al-Ḥakam, one of the older members of the Barmakid circle.

We must be careful not to confuse him with other people of the same name. *Adab* texts frequently mention a certain Ḍirār b. ʿAmr b. Mālik al-Ḍabbī, whose place is in the Jāhiliyya, and who was killed during the battle of Qurnatayn.[9] Traditionists, on the other hand, name one Ḍirār b. ʿAmr al-Malaṭī who studied in Basra under Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yazīd al-Raqāshī, and was thus only a decade or two older than our theologian.[10] No hadiths were transmitted from him,

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3    Thus according to *ʿIqd*, loc. cit.; Ibn Ḥazm, op. cit., and above all *Ḥayawān* IV 137, 3ff., where it is described in the greatest detail, have *tisʿīn* instead of *sabʿīn*. The furuncle of which he died was unknown in Iraq outside of the Jazīra; it must have been a peculiar type. The Arabic translator of Dioscorides translates Gr. δοθιήν, meaning 'small blood boil', as *dummal* (*Materia Medica* III 83 = vol. II 100, 1 WELLMANN/Ar. 279, –5 DUBLER. I am grateful to M. Ullmann for this information.).

4    *Faḍl* 163, –4 > Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB VI 273m 10f.; also Baghdādī, *Farq* 16, 7f./22, 4.

5    Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq* 276, 2ff. Abū ʿUbayda from Basra wrote a *K. maʾāthir Ghaṭafān* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 59, apu.).

6    Thus according to the admittedly isolated and slightly problematic reference in Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* 31, 9ff./39, 3ff.; for more information on the subject see vol. II 449f. above. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī gives him the actual nisba al-Baṣrī (*Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 51, 10).

7    Text XV 29, f.

8    *Wāfī* XVI 365, 3f.

9    Concerning him see Kister in: Arabica 15/1968/156ff. and the information I have presented in: Der Islam 44/1968/5.

10   Concerning him and his son ʿAbdallāh b. Ḍirār cf. *Mīzān* no. 3952 and 4391. Traditions from him are found in Ibn al-Mubārak, *Jihād* 144 no. 178; Asad b. Mūsā, *Zuhd* 78 no. 70; Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Mawt* 45 no. 70 KINBERG; Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* II 135, 13ff.; 399, –4ff.; 457, 4ff. Their subject matter shows that identifying him with the Muʿtazilite is out of the question. In *Passion* ²III 223, n. 10/III 211, n. 265, this is Massignon's only basis for his claim that the Ḍirāriyya were pupils of Yazīd al-Raqāshī.

and he was not a supporter of the genre.[11] He was a *qāḍī*,[12] probably based in Kufa. While later jurists did not take any notice of him, he wrote a treatise on the Friday prayer, and probably another one on the will.[13] He was acquainted with Abū Yūsuf who is reported to have rebuked him on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacrifice because he started slaughtering before the prayer for the occasion had been recited. The answer put in his mouth shows that he still had people's sympathies later; compared to the chief *qāḍī* who was entirely loyal to the state, he appears to be a critic of the authorities.[14] Another colleague, however, Saʿīd al-Jumaḥī, who was *qāḍī* on the east bank in Baghdad for some time before his death in 174/790,[15] declared him an outlaw because he was allegedly a 'heretic'. This did not lead to anything, for at the time Ḍirār already associated with the Barmakids.

The event took place between 170/786 and 174/790; for details cf. *Der Islam* 44/1968/6f. I adhere to this date even against the opinion of Madelung, *Qāsim* 40. Fasawī I 165, −6f. confirms that Jumaḥī died in 174 and not as late as 194/196 as Madelung, based on Wakīʿ, assumes. The claim that he was a judge for 17 years has been calculated using the information that he was appointed to his first position in 157 (Wakīʿ III 264, apu. f.; which reads *wulliya* instead of *wulida*). For the rest, traditions about him are defective. Some of the difficulties highlighted by Madelung remain; indeed, some new ones arise. Khalīfa b. Khaiyāṭ's list of *qāḍī*s (*Taʾrīkh* 750, 3ff.) conveys the impression that he died after Abū Yūsuf but still during Hārūn al-Rashīd's caliphate, i.e. between 182/798 and 193/809. His first appointment in 157 would still have been during Manṣūr's reign; Wakīʿ, on the other hand, tells us that it was al-Hādī who first made him *qāḍī*, i.e. more than a decade later, 169/785 or 170/786 (cf. III 264, −5, where the correct reading would seem to be *Mūsā <b.> al-Mahdī*). 162/779 he was vice-governor in Mecca (Fasawī I 150, 11f.), 173/789 *qāḍī* in Jurjān (if Madelung's conjecture on the passage in Sahmī's *Taʾrīkh Jurjān* 173, ult. f. is correct). Indeed, we must ask ourselves whether Jumaḥī was in Baghdad during the assumed time at all.

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11    *Mīzān* II 23, 5ff.; also p. 55f. below.

12    *Mīzān* no. 3953.

13    Catalogue of Works XV, no. 53–54. The title of the *K. al-kharāʾiṭ* alludes to the bags in which the *qāḍī* kept his files; we do not, however, know anything of the contents of the text.

14    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 245, 6ff.; *Fihrist* 214, pu. ff.

15    Cf. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī in: MMʿIʿI 18/1969/192f.

The reason for his verdict was allegedly that Ḍirār had left the question of whether paradise and hell had already been created unanswered (Ibn Rajab, *Ahwāl al-qubūr* 143, 12ff.; Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 545, 6f.; cf. p. 57 below). Still, there is also some confusion in the tradition here. While Ibn Rajab refers to Ibn Ḥanbal in his description, elsewhere we read that according to the latter's autobiographical account, he was a witness to the event himself (*Mīzān* no. 3953); this, if our chronology is correct, is well-nigh impossible. Besides, in a parallel passage in the *Siyar* (X 545, –6ff.) Dhahabī speaks only of anonymous witnesses. In a further account, quoted above, he transmits from a certain Ḥanbal whom we are unable to identify (545, 5ff.). Chronology is once again the obstacle to assuming that this might have been Ibn Ḥanbal's nephew Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq; he died only in 273/886. We furthermore read in this passage that Ḍirār was beaten up by the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* and had to stay in hiding until his death (545, 6f.). The author of the report is said to have visited Ḍirār in Baghdad after he had had a stroke. This, again, disagrees with Jāḥiẓ' information according to which Ḍirār did not die of a stroke but of furunculosis. – For Ḍirār the *zindīq* see also Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā Bishr al-Marīsī* 193, 7ff./548, 11.

### 1.3.1.1      Ḍirār's Role as a Theologian. His Works

There was some amazement at the fact that a Muʿtazilite should come from Kufa.[1] In actual fact it is unlikely that Ḍirār would have had any closer contact with the Muʿtazilite community, the majority of whom were at that time based in Basra. We do not know if Wāṣil's envoy Ḥasan b. Dhakwān had succeeded in founding a circle in Kufa that would survive into the next generation; there are no traces of one.[2] Ḍirār appears to have thought highly of Wāṣil.[3] Above all he believed in the *manzila bayna l-manzilatayn*; he even wrote a book on the subject,[4] but as Kaʿbī pointed out, this is not enough to make him a Muʿtazilite.[5] In many of his views Ḍirār was something of a Jahmite; in Kufa a more obvious association. He belongs in Abū Ḥanīfa's circle; his Jahmite ideas

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1   *Jamhara*, and *ʿIqd*, op. cit. Ḍirār has the *nisba* al-Kūfī, e.g. in Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣāl* III 22, 17, and Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* 101, 9.

2   See vol. II 358f. above.

3   He communicated two verses about Wāṣil's *luthgha* to the grammarian Quṭrub, which are clearly intended to be positive (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 21, pu. ff.; anonymously also Mubarrad, *Kāmil* 923, pu. f.).

4   Catalogue of Works no. 17.

5   *Maqālāt* 75, 4f.; Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* 6, 3ff./transl. Sourdel 252.

were simply very close to the Muʿtazila, and in some areas he distanced himself clearly from Jahm. The only reason why the Muʿtazila did not want to have anything to do with him later is that he did not agree with the Qadarite tradition that originated in Basra. Abū l-Hudhayl and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir excommunicated him for this reason. Later systematists did not really know whether they should continue to count him among the Muʿtazilites against the verdict of that school, or classify him as the head of an independent Ḍirāriyya. The latter would be justified as generations of theologians who were not members of the Muʿtazila would draw on not only his attitude towards *qadar* but also his ontology, about which more below.

Some of Ḍirār's pupils, especially Abū Zufar, continued to be considered Muʿtazilites (see p. 66 below), proving that Ḍirār did originally not distance himself from the Muʿtazila and was probably regarded as a Muʿtazilite by his contemporaries in Iraq. Ibn al-Nadīm spoke of concerns about him within his school, but counts him among the individualists and 'innovators' among the Muʿtazilites (*Fihrist* 214, 1f. and apu. ff.). The earlier pseudo-Nāshī, i.e. probably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, used the same approach in his *Uṣūl al-niḥāl* (55, 14f.). Nawbakhtī who, after all, was an insider, counted Ḍirār among the *uṣūl al-Muʿtazila*, the church fathers, as it were (*Firaq al-Shīʿa* 11, pu. f.). It is not surprising that outsiders should have come to this conclusion; e.g. Malaṭī (*Tanbīh* 31, 6ff./38, ult. ff.), Qummī (*Maqālāt* 12, 4), Mufīd (see n. 5 above); Pazdawī (*Uṣūl al-dīn* 12, 1); Dhahabī (*Mīzān* no. 3953). In his polemical texts Ibn al-Rēwandī assumed Ḍirār's association with the school; Khaiyāṭ dismissed it, as did his pupil Kaʿbī after him, referring to Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's verses (Text XVII 5; cf. also his reaction text XXII 227, g) to this end. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's attitude was, of course, just as dismissive (*Faḍl* 391, 13f.). The Muʿtazilite Maqdisī (V 146, 6) classified the Ḍirāriyya as a separate group, as did Khwārizmī (*Mafātiḥ al-ʿulūm* 20, 4), Pazdawī (*Uṣūl* 241, 15 and 242, 4; as opposed to 12, 1), Baghdādī (*Farq* 201, 11ff./213, ult. ff.), Shahrastānī (63, 6ff./142, 1ff.) and Ibn Taymiyya (*Furqān bayna l-ḥaqq wal-bāṭil*, in: *Majmūʿat fatāwā* XIII 99, –4ff.). Cf. also *Der Islam* 44/1968/10f.

It cannot have been easy to ignore Ḍirār. He was much 'in demand',[6] and his intellectual legacy was formidable. He enjoyed 'advancing arguments and enlightening concerns',[7] and left more writings than any theologian before or

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6    Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 249, 3.

7    According to his own phrase in *ʿIqd* VI 219, 2.

after him until the time of the early scholastics Jubbāʾī and Kaʿbī. In his treatises against 'free thinkers' and 'heretics' he probably allowed himself to be used by the state,[8] but he also wrote for the common people, for all 'responsible Muslims' who were able to use their reason.[9] During the last years of his life he associated with the best society, but he also wrote to (or about?) the Sufis, whoever they might have been at that time,[10] and he married his daughter to a member of the Banū Aslam whom the class-conscious Ghaṭafān considered uncouth louts (*ʿilj*).[11] In the Barmakid circle he came across the *rēsh gālūthā* and the chief *mobād*;[12] this may have given him the idea to write his ten-chapter text against members of foreign religions (*ahl al-milal*).[13] He discovered particular adversaries in the Christians;[14] the Christian theologian ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī took notice of him.[15] He polemicised against the 'sectarians' (*ahl al-ahwā*),[16] against Murjiʾites,[17] Khārijites,[18] and extreme Shīʿites of all kinds;[19] he did not even spare the Jahmites.[20] On the other hand he spared his Muʿtazilite brethren, clearly feeling some solidarity with them after all. Remarkably he even reflected on his own craft, in a *K. ādāb al-mutakallimūn* which may have treated, like later writings on *adab al-jadal*, the etiquette of the *disputatio*.[21]

In his writings we observe for the first time the ideas of antiquity meeting those of Islam. He composed works on the Quran, a *K. tafsīr al-Qurʾān* and a *K. taʾwīl al-Qurʾān* which may have been identical and probably did not contain a complete commentary but only dealt with controversial issues.[22] But he also

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8    Catalogue of Works xv, no. 35–38; cf. also text 36.

9    Ibid. no. 27.

10   Ibid. no. 34. Was he discussing martyrdom here? He did in fact regard it more positively than most later Muʿtazilites; in his view martyrs acted out of genuine enthusiasm, not only because of a sense of duty and perseverance (cf. text XVII 55).

11   Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 249, 2f.; concerning the relation between Ghaṭafān and Aslam cf. Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq* 285, 3f.

12   Kashshī 259, 4f.

13   Catalogue of Works no. 39.

14   Ibid. no. 40.

15   See p. 40 and 238 below; also p. 297.

16   Catalogue of Works no. 28.

17   Ibid. no. 18, 20, 31.

18   Ibid. no. 30–32.

19   Ibid. no. 33 and 24–25.

20   Ibid. no. 19.

21   Ibid. no. 51. Regarding *adab al-jadal* cf. L. Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory* (PhD thesis, Princeton 1984), p. 46ff. and 141f.; also ch. C 8.2.2.2 below.

22   Ibid. no. 46–47. Dāwūdī lists Ḍirār among the Quranic commentators (*Ṭabaqāt* I 216 no. 212). However, he quotes only the article published in Dhahabī's *Mīzān*, which does not

studied Aristotle and composed a refutation of the latter's views on 'substances and accidents'.[23] He probably took a bit too much upon himself, for what we discover about his ontology does not seem to allow the conclusion that he would have understood much of Aristotle. He speaks of 'accidents' in his own system, but uses the word quite differently from Aristotle. If we did not have the title of the book, we could not even be sure that the word *ʿaraḍ* which he uses, and which would later undoubtedly mean 'accident', was already known with that meaning at the time. Still, we do already find it in Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Muqaffaʿ's translation of the *Categories*[24] and in Sibawayh.[25]

### 1.3.1.2    His Ontology

Ḍirār's knowledge of Aristotle may have been based on the *Categories* only, and the philosopher was certainly not a starting point for him. Ḍirār talks of accidents presumably because the Shīʿites in Kufa constantly talked of bodies. In the Shīʿa this is linked to anthropomorphism, of which he did not approve. He composed two texts against the *mushabbiha*,[1] and also debated with them; interestingly one of these debates was reported by Aṣamm, a Basran member of the same school. It shows how coarse the Kufan ideas could be – and how far they could be distorted in Basra: the Kufan, a scholar, he says, was persuaded by Ḍirār to claim that it was possible to meet God in the street.[2] Ḍirār's opinion, on the other hand, was a strictly apophatic theology. God's qualities only appear to have positive meaning: 'God is knowing' means in fact 'he is not unknowing', etc.[3] These are the kind of names used in the Quran; we must not understand them in analogy to names used on earth. Ḍirār composed a separate text on this subject;[4] the Nestorian ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī discussed his theory a generation later.[5]

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even mention a *tafsīr*. There is a lacuna in the MS in this place; it is likely that the two titles from the *Fihrist* which Dāwūdī used extensively, were supposed to be entered there.

23    Ibid. no. 8.
24    11, 6ff. DĀNISHPAZHŪH (several times).
25    Ch. 5, I 8. For general information on the term cf. F. Rahman in EIran II 271ff.

1    Catalogue of Works no. 2–3, if the two titles do not refer to the same work. Also in *K. al-tawḥīd* (no. 1).
2    Text XV 25.
3    Text 23–24.
4    Catalogue of Works no. 4.
5    *Masāʾil* 154, ult. ff.

It seems that Ḍirār accepted every Quranic statement concerning God with this reservation; this might have prompted Abū l-Hudhayl to criticise him for his views on divine wrath (cf. Catalogue of works XV, Refutations a 1). Wrath, as the opposite of pleasure, was one of the divine attributes earliest addressed by theological speculation (see ch. D 1.3 below). Text 24 especially emphasises 'hearing' and 'seeing' probably merely because the doxographer presumed the later distinction between attributes of essence and attributes of act.

God is not a body, and earthly things only to some limited degree. They certainly do not have their own effective force; Ḍirār criticised not only Aristotle but also the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ*, the alchemists and natural philosophers who worked with the assumption of elementary qualities, and ascribed an independent 'nature' to things.[6] There are, of course, bodies: we perceive them with our senses. But this sensualist axiom, which had still been sufficient for Aṣamm in Basra, was not differentiated enough for Ḍirār. After all, what we perceive is not the body itself but only its properties, and these properties are accidents. They constitute the body; there is nothing besides them. Thus the body is ultimately a bundle of accidents;[7] the term 'parts' (*abʿāḍ*) may also be used.[8] The latter term was easily misunderstood once the Muʿtazila, under Basran influence, turned to atomism; that is not what is meant here.[9] While the accidents, just like the atoms, are only 'contiguous'[10] and do not mix,[11] they do not themselves have anything like a shape; they are clearly only impressions one receives of a body.

Consequently they have no existence of their own; they only exist within the body. They only ever 'enter into existence united';[12] by being joined together they begin to exist and establish a body in this way.[13] If they were able to exist on their own, there would be colour as such, without connection to a coloured body;[14] but such a thing has never been seen. Of course, it is important

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6  Catalogue of works no. 9. Concerning the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ* see vol. II 44f. above.

7  Text 1, a; 3, b; 9, and in numerous secondary sources (cf. the commentary on Text 2).

8  Text 1, d, m–n; 2, a; 8, b. But cf. Text 18; for more information see p. 49f. below.

9  Text 3, a–b. The information in Nazwānī, *al-Jawhar al-muqtaṣir* 64, apu., according to which Ḍirār – like Muʿammar – believed in six-sided atoms, is isolated and presumably due to a misunderstanding.

10  Text 2, a; 3, d. This term may have been adopted from Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism.

11  Text 3, e.

12  Text 1, f.

13  Text 1, a–b, e–g.

14  Text 1, h.

to distinguish: only those accidents or properties are constitutive of a body without which it could not exist.[15] Besides these there are others which join it at a secondary level; they find the existing body and it goes on to carry them.[16] Ḍirār appears to have said of these that they 'inhere in the body',[17] while it could be said of the primary accidents that they 'transform' into the body.[18] The latter frequently occur in pairs of opposites: cold and warm, moist and dry, rough or smooth surface, heavy and light, animate and inanimate. One of the two parts of these pairs is always present in a body, and it can be exchanged for the other.[19] Still, this interplay of opposites is merely a convenient means of demonstrating how change takes place; it is not essential for the constitution of a body. Instead of 'heaviness' and 'lightness' one could say 'weight', instead of 'warmth and cold', temperature, etc.[20] Furthermore there are fundamental conditions of the body which occur in more than two variants: colours, or flavours.[21] Others Ḍirār appears to have simplified from the start: e.g. 'health' (ṣiḥḥa), which he may have understood generally as the functioning of a body – although he might then have said: health and illness, functioning and failing.[22] In addition we know pairs of opposites that are by no means indispensable, e.g. knowing and ignorance, which may both be absent without the respective body being damaged in its essence.[23]

Ḍirār called only the primary accidents 'parts';[24] ʿaraḍ is not synonymous with baʿḍ. At least ten of these must join together for a body to be formed.[25] They determine its appearance. If half of them are exchanged, i.e. if it is not

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15    Text 1, c.

16    Text 8, a; also Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 46, ult. f.

17    Cf. Text 1, b with commentary.

18    This is probably how Text 7, a, ought to be interpreted. Ḥajūrī's addition after Kaʿbī (cf. the commentary) does not tell me anything. Ḍirār's pupil Ḥafṣ al-Fard proposed an explanation, which Ashʿarī quotes in detail (Text xv 49), but it does not really add anything beyond stating that it is all due to God's omnipotence.

19    Text 1, c and m.

20    Ḍirār has only the former example (1, c; 2, a).

21    Text 1, c; 2, a; 3, a.

22    Text 1, c. The passage is isolated and in addition burdened with a philosophical crux (cf. the commentary). In comparison to 'health', 'functioning' has the advantage of being applicable to all bodies. One need not take exception to Ḍirār making the transition to living things with this 'accident'; he does not see a difference in principle (see below). But seeing as he listed 'life and death', i.e. animate and inanimate, as fundamental accidents, it does make one wonder why 'health' should still be necessary here.

23    Text 1, d.

24    Ibid.

25    Text 3, c.

warm any more but cold, not moist but dry, not red but black etc., then it is not the same any more.[26] If one of these fundamental constituents is taken away from the body, it, and the other accidents, will cease to exist.[27] But as long as they form a body together with it, they can continue to exist. This is not inevitable; as we have seen, it is possible to replace them with their opposites. But they principally have an excess of life force compared to the secondary accidents, as the latter only ever exist for a moment.[28] Thus contrary to appearances pain, or the capacity to act, which are named as instances of secondary accidents,[29] do not have continuity.

We do not know to what extent and in what detail Ḍirār thought this through. The few surviving doxographical summaries leave out much, and are not always clear in what they do state. There is, for instance, the problem of movement. It does not seem as though Ḍirār saw movement or rest as fundamental accidents of every body; rather, movement occurs when one of the fundamental accidents is exchanged and movement enters the body, causing it to move altogether.[30] It is not quite clear how we should imagine this. Does Ḍirār believe that there is something like moving weight, e.g. when falling? Or does movement enter a previously dead body together with animation? The process is possible the other way around, too: rest is imparted to a body when an accident is exchanged[31] – maybe in the way that a previously warm body cools down and solidifies. We could ask in all seriousness whether movement was indeed an accident in Ḍirār's view. The text which answers this in the affirmative is probably correct, but it would probably be a secondary accident that inheres in the finished body.[32]

Further difficulties of interpretation are due to the fact that comparisons were made with other, later, systems. Abū l-Hudhayl, whose atoms like Ḍirār's 'parts' had no separate existence, abstracted besides them the accident 'composition' (*ta'līf*) or 'unitedness' (*ijtimāʿ*) from the concrete entity, which is necessary for the atoms to form a unit (see p. 241f. below).

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26    Text 1, o–p.

27    Text 1, m–n; also k–l.

28    Text 8 with commentary.

29    Text 1, d.

30    Text 1, q.

31    Ibid., r.

32    Text 2, c. Here we read that movement starts with the body, takes place on the body. But we must not push it; the text is based on a foreign model (cf. the commentary). It is actually more important that movement is interpreted as action (*fiʿl*) here and not (as all the primary accidents are) as a property.

This gave rise to the question whether Ḍirār, who was talking of accidents anyway, did not count this accident among the fundamental components of a body. The question probably needs to be put differently, as Ḍirār's fundamental 'accidents' were not actually accidents in Abū l-Hudhayl's sense. The answers are correspondingly spiritless: it was possible in Ḍirār's system, but not those of his followers (Text 2, d–e); later developments with which people were more familiar could not be interpreted according to Abū l-Hudhayl's model, but the problem had to be left open in the case of Ḍirār. Presumably in his system *ta'līf* was already covered by *ṣiḥḥa*.

Perspective shifted even more when Naẓẓām, who recognised no accident besides movement and regarded all properties as 'bodies', attempted to push his opponents onto Ḍirār's position (more details p. 393ff. below). As they did not accept his view that qualities were always latent within things (*kumūn*), he claimed that they maintained that there was no sweetness in honey, and no bitterness in aloe, and, generalising this in one fell swoop, came to the conclusion that there could consequently not be oil in an olive or a sesame seed (Text XXII 49 b–c). He was well aware that he thus dispensed with the distinction between substances (such as oil) and accidents (sweetness and bitterness), but from his point of view it did not make any difference. Still, even the basic premise was wrong; according to Ḍirār sweetness, a flavour, was contained in honey from the outset. Ibn Ḥazm saw quite clearly that both parties were going too far at the time (Text XV 5, b), but made the same mistake in another place in order to finish quickly with Ḍirār (Text 6). He appears to be relying on Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-ḥayawān*, which states that Naẓẓām accused the Ḍirārites of holding the view that the whiteness of snow only appeared when one looked at it. This led him to conclude that it must have been Ḍirār's opinion that the sweetness of honey only appeared when one tasted it. It is easy to recognise that Naẓẓām was deliberately drawing false conclusions and twisting Ḍirār's concepts in order to present the absurd results as his (Text XV 6 with commentary); we may assume that Ibn Ḥazm knew Jāḥiẓ *K. al-ḥayawān* where these arguments were collected. Zurqān was surely correct in stating that Ḍirār had no trouble assuming that there was oil in an olive (Text 4, a–b). It was only thanks to the polemic discussion that a later Christian author had the idea to attribute the concept that a body consists of joined accidents to the 'sophists' (Israel of Kaskar [?], *Risāla fī tathbīt waḥdāniyyat al-bāri'* 13, 1f. = para. 38 HOLMBERG). Democritus had already had conclusions recalling those of Naẓẓām and Ibn Ḥazm attributed to him with regard to his doctrine of sensory perception (Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Log.* I 135 = frag. B 9 DIELS-KRANZ).

We do have to ask whether Ḍirār was at all interested in the problem yet. The 'accidentalists' who criticised Naẓẓām might have included some pupils of his. Of course, Naẓẓām did not invent the core dogmas of his system: they are older. Thus he may have been correct when he said that Ḍirār did not consider the idea of *kumūn* to be compatible with the dogma of oneness (Text xxii 50, a–b). At the very least this demonstrates a fundamental difference: according to Ḍirār's view the 'parts' did not join of their own accord but were joined by God. Ashʿarī's main treatise on the subject reveals this in one single place (Text xv 1, q; emphasised specifically in Ḥafṣ al-Fard, Text xv 49). It is possible for a human to create a primary accident, e.g. the length, width and depth of a physical object he creates (Text 7, c),[33] but in both cases the qualities do not really emerge from the depths, as it were; they are created anew and confirm the agency of the person who created them. From the way Naẓẓām – and possibly others before him – justified *kumūn*, on the other hand, an 'accidentalist' might have gained the impression that nature was taking the place of God (see p. 74 and 398f. below). While this conclusion was not entirely justified (see p. 363, 370 and 397f. below), there could be no doubt that the approach was quite different.

### 1.3.1.2.1    *The Connection with Antiquity*

Ḍirār's rejection of the concept of nature is significant when we look for the antique models that inspired his ideas. Systems influenced by Aristotle could not function without φύσις and οὐσία. However, the fundamental question is to what degree Ḍirār was concerned with these historical references. If he was familiar with Ibn al-Muqaffaʿs adaptation of the *Categories*, he may have agreed with its definition of accident as 'the property of everything possessed of properties', as well as with the statement that the relation between substance (*ʿayn*) and accident is the same as that between the whole and the part.[1] Muḥammad Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ used both *baʿḍ* and *juzʾ* to denote 'part'; it seems that Ḍirār also employed both terms.[2] It remains, however, most doubtful that the ten parts that constitute a body in his system were inspired by Aristotle's ten categories,

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33    The analogy is probably with a cabinet maker manufacturing a box. Ḥafṣ al-Fard seems to have expressed concerns in this context (Text xv 49, e).

1    *Manṭiq*, ed. Dānishpazhūh, 11, 6f. and 9f.

2    Cf. *juzʾ* in *Manṭiq* 11, 14f., and Ḍirār, Text 3, a, as well as the title at Catalogue of Works no. 7.

as Tritton once assumed.[3] A passage from John Philoponus on Περι γενέσεως καὶ φθοράς comes closer: If we assume that ten parts (μέρη) of warm and cold, dry and moist impart to the honey its full sweetness, then the latter would be diminished in its εἶδος if half of these parts were taken away.[4] Still, the question remains to what degree this parallel will hold.

Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione* became known among the Arabs early on. We will have to bid farewell to the idea that Ibn Bakkūsh's translation dates back to the 2nd/8th century;[5] Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Bakkūsh al-ʿAshshārī was in fact a physician working at the ʿAḍudī hospital in Baghdad in the second half of the tenth century.[6] It is unlikely that John Philoponus' commentary, which was transmitted into the Islamic era,[7] was available in Arabic during Ḍirār's lifetime either. But scholarly tradition had always worked with the text; the existence of an old translation complete with commentary (that by Alexander of Aphrodisias?) is confirmed in the *Kitāb al-Taṣrīf* in the *Corpus Jābirianum*.[8] There is also a Syriac version of John Philoponus' work, which is the basis of the later Arabic one.[9] Consequently Ḍirār might have been informed of something the Christian commentator stated there. It must, however, be taken into account that the passage referred to is rather isolated within the entire text: this is the only instance of Philoponus speaking of a quantitative relation, and he does so with reference to the process of mixing; the problem is thus not the same.[10] Finally, the number ten is not the actual system here but merely an example; the Pythagoreans had already distinguished it specifically.

All the same, it may be worthwhile to pursue this track further. With his theory of mixture, which he supports more generally elsewhere, Philoponus

3     *Muslim Theology* 69.

4     In *De gen. et corr.* 170, 12ff. Vitelli; transl. in Sambursky, *Physikal. Weltbild der Antike* 429 and earlier.

5     Thus Ch. Hein, *Definition und Einteilung der Philosophie* 290 after Sezgin, GAS 4/313. The translation is mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 311, 17; cf. Peters *Aristoteles Arabus* 37.

6     Thus Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 73f. after Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa. Ibn Bakkūsh also edited the *Sophistikai Elenchai*, based on the translation by Ibn Nāʿima, a collaborator of al-Kindī's (*Fihrist* 310. 10f.; cf. Peters 23f. and *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* I 527). This chronology would, however, make Ibn Bakkūsh a contemporary of Ibn al-Nadīm's, in which case it is a little surprising that the latter made only rather vague comments (*wa-dhukira anna Ibn Bakkūsh naqalahū*).

7     *Fihrist* 311, 20; cf. Peters 38.

8     *Rasāʾil*, ed. Kraus, 394, 4ff. and 396, 10ff.; also Kraus, *Jābir* II 322. Cf. also p. 221f. below.

9     *Fihrist*, ibid.

10    Cf. R. B. Todd in: Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 24/1980/166.

stands in the neo-Platonic tradition.[11] This is the same environment from which he draws the thought that individually existing things are a bundle (συνδρομή) of qualities. His contemporary Simplicius held the same view, as did Porphyry and Proclus; it had also been Plato's premise in his *Timaios*.[12] When Philoponus speaks of the standard properties of things, he lists similar phenomena to Ḍirār's 'accidents': hardness, softness, roughness, dryness, moistness, warmth, cold.[13] That these abstract concepts revert into physicality was less of a headache during Antiquity than it is for us; Plato assumes quite freely that triangles constitute sensory qualities, and that, conversely, materiality may be reduced to dimensionality.[14] Consequently there were attempts at linking Ḍirār to the neo-Platonic tradition: to a concrete *esse est percipi*. Material objects are only qualities we perceive; God causes these qualities to join together and thus creates matter. This would place him closest to Gregory of Nyssa, who, however, added an idealistic twist to the theory: qualities (ποιότητες) out of which the bodies (σώματα) develop are ideas which should be imagined as dwelling within the spirit of God.

R. Sorabji pointed out this kinship in his book *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (esp. p. 290f. and 295f.); F. Zimmermann brought the passage from Ḍirār to his attention. He has recently studied the model further in *Matter, Space and Motion* (London 1988) where he also discusses 'bundle theories' of the present day (p. 44ff.: *Bodies as bundles of properties*). He makes the important connection with Job of Edessa who thought along similar lines (p. 56); he was only one generation younger than Ḍirār, but not influenced by him (see p. 361f. and 394 below). In *Didaskalikos*, a summary of Plato's philosophy dating from late Antiquity whose authorship is not certain, we find a synopsis of such a bundle theory which includes the distinction between primary and secondary *sensibilia*, which correspond to the fixed qualities (ποιότητες) and the fleeting accidents (κατά συμβεβηκός) (p. 49; also Lloyd, op. cit. 61); this recalls Ḍirār's distinction between primary and secondary accidents. Epicurus had already contrasted συμβεβηκότα, enduring accidents, and συμπτώματα, which only occur occasionally (C. Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* 301).

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11    Ibid. 159ff.

12    *Tim.* 49–50; also A. T. Lloyd in: Phronesis 1/1955–6/58ff. and 148ff., esp. 62 and 158f.

13    Simplicius, *De coelo* 89, 16 Heiberg.

14    Happ, *Hyle* 114ff. The parallel is not, of course, in the actual subject, but rather in the way of thinking.

### 1.3.1.3    The Image of Man

Ḍirār followed his own path, as may best be seen in his image of man in which he looked to the model described above: humans are constructed out of 'accidents' which make up their body. Namely, one can feel their warmth, see the colour of their skin, smell them, and taste them, but they have no soul.[1] Thus Ḍirār arrived at the same conclusion as Aṣamm, while distancing himself from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[2]

However, a human is not only body; he also acts. The precondition for this is the accident 'living'. But as if that were not enough, the idea that there was a separate capacity to act grew increasingly familiar, giving rise to the question of whether it was a primary or a secondary accident; the sources do not provide a clear answer. It does seem, however, that in Ḍirār's view the capacity to act had permanence and existed, one might say, before and during the action – and even afterwards, as Baghdādī claims.[3] In this case it would be a primary accident, a 'part' of man, and in fact this is confirmed in the majority of instances.[4] On the other hand the most reliable and explicit witness states that the *qudra* is not constitutive, just like pain and some others.[5] Should we assume that Ḍirār was assuming two levels, one general capacity to act that might be identical with *ṣiḥḥa*, the functioning of the human body which the sources call *quwwa* or *istiṭāʿa*, and a secondary, momentary restoration he called *qudra*? This hypothesis is probably too complicated.[6] It is more probable that there is a misunderstanding in our sources: for Ḍirār did not fit into later systems. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir would later say that the capacity to act equalled health (*ṣiḥḥa*), but Bishr linked this to a clear indeterminism, which Ḍirār did not do.

This was the stumbling block for the Muʿtazilites that came after him, for Bishr as much as others. As his theory of the capacity to act shows, Ḍirār considered human action to be real; but he believed it to be created by God at the same time. Both, God and human, have in fact (*fī l-ḥaqīqa*) a part in the action; God allows it to come into being while the human 'acquires' it, i.e. accomplishes it and acts on his own responsibility.[7] And thus a term appears for

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1    Text xv 9–10.

2    See vol. I 432 and vol. II 455 above.

3    Text 12, a, with commentary.

4    Text 12, b; 2, b; 10, a.

5    Text 1, d.

6    In his *K. al-furūq* Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī distinguished between *ṣiḥḥa* and *qudra* in the following way: *ṣiḥḥa* was expressed by individual parts of the body, while *qudra* was expressed by the body as a whole 88, 10ff.). There is an opposite to the capacity to act, namely *ʿajz*, the inability to act (cf. commentary on 12, b), which, of course, does not help us solve the problem at all.

7    Text 13.

the first time that would have a great future: *iktisāb*. It can be traced back to pre-Islamic usage, but changed its meaning over the course of history. Ḍirār still used it as it was intended in the Quran; only from Ghazzālī onwards did theologians understand it in the way that Western interpretation heard it: that the human does not accomplish the action himself but that he 'acquires' it as something created by God. Ḍirār, on the other hand, clearly spoke of two agents; he was a synergist.

Bravmann furnished proof that *kasaba* with reference to action was already used in pre-Islamic poetry (in: Der Islam 36/1961/21ff.). 'Actions are possessions of the acting person'; the object of the verb *kasaba* is the respective action itself. This does not imply that reward or punishment will be earned; Bravmann also rejects it for the Quranic usage. For general information cf. also Pessagno in: JAOS 104/1984/178 and Frank in: Journal of Religious Ethics 11/1983/218, n. 19; the latter translates 'perform'. Concerning the development of the meaning in Islamic theology cf. M. Schwarz in: Festschrift Walzer 355ff. (which covers the entirety of earlier secondary sources); concerning Ḍirār cf. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain* 66ff. Later, the Muʿtazila did not reject the word altogether, as it was not necessarily opposed to the concept of deciding in accordance with free will. While most of the passages to which we can refer are of a doxographical nature and consequently not entirely safe from redaction (cf. Text XVI 53, a, and 67, i, concerning Muʿammar and his school; XXVI 4, c, concerning Shaḥḥām; also IV 44, b, concerning Hishām b. al-Ḥakam), there is at least one original passage extant (Text XXXI 64, d–h concerning Nāshiʾ al-Akbar; cf. ibid. 61, b). Following Muʿtazilite majority opinion Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī rejected *kasb* (cf. the treatise edited by Pines and Schwarz in: Festschrift Baneth 49ff.). For more information see ch. D 2.1.1 below – Gimaret recently argued against translating 'to perform' (*La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* 371, n.1); however, his main concern is not to blur the terminological character of the word.

It now remains to examine how Ḍirār distinguished between the respective competences of God and of humans. Unfortunately this question held barely any interest for the doxographers. We are only able to tease an answer out of them because the next generation of Muʿtazilites, once again above all Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir, discovered the problem of secondary actions or subsequent (secondary) effects (*mutawallidāt*) and went back to discover what these looked like in Ḍirār's model. At first they found only what was basically self-explanatory: namely that in his model *mutawallidāt* may be performed by God

and humans at the same time.[8] He had, in effect, not distinguished between primarily and secondarily produced actions.[9] This proves once more how real human action was in his view: it had effects beyond itself.[10] And of course it only really belongs to the human if he can prevent it at any time, has it under control;[11] in order to acquire it on his own account he must be responsible for it. But an important addition followed immediately: a secondary action has double origin: a causative origin (*sabab mūjib*) and the nature of the thing itself, such as a stone that flies through the air because someone has hurled it, but also because it is heavy.[12]

This sounds rather like Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, even though he allocated the terms slightly differently.[13] While the text is surprising, there is no reason to doubt it. It goes back to Burghūth, who was very close to Ḍirār. In that case, however – as, in fact, in the case of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, the assertion formulated in the text would *mutatis mutandis* apply to every action: the human performs or causes it,[14] and God provides the constituent that originates in the nature of things. Although, of course, in Ḍirār's model there was no place for 'nature' as such. Burghūth appears to have arranged the circumstances in accordance with his own terminology.[15] He probably meant that God creates the natural environment for an action. A human acts, but what happens afterwards is up to God. *Sub specie aeternitatis* it is, after all, only relevant that the human 'acquires' his actions, making them his responsibility. The theory was not devised by a technician or a philosopher, but by a theologian or, more likely, a jurist.

Two more examples are provided. The first one is barely elaborated and may well be mentioned only because it would become a specific issue of *tawallud*: sensory perception. The concept that humans perceive, but God creates perception, is not new.[16] The reflection (in a mirror), however, appears to have

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8     Text xv 16. Ibn Mattōya (*Muḥīṭ* I 428, 16ff. Houben/408, 10f. ʿAzmī) also speaks of *kasb*.

9     Both Ibn Mattōya and Baghdādī noticed this (cf. the commentary on Text 16).

10    Text 17.

11    Text 19, a.

12    Text 18.

13    There the causative element (*al-mūjib li l-fiʿl*) is what **God** contributes to events (see vol. I 433f. above).

14    If we are to believe Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, Hishām had also used the term *iktasaba* to denote the same thing (cf. Text IV 44, b). But this is probably merely retrospective interpretation of a similar systematic approach, as there is no confirmation elsewhere. As the verb was used in the Quran, it would come easy to a Muslim.

15    Cf. ch. C 5.2.2.1 below.

16    Text 15.

required an explanation, as what one sees is not actually the perceived object. Ḍirār said, as we should say, too: what we see in the mirror resembles the object as it is an image (*mithāl*).[17] We do not know whether he was interested in theories on the physics of the matter, as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was.[18] What mattered to him appears to have been that God **created** the image by allowing it to appear.

The second example was chosen by Ḍirār himself, and is discussed in more detail (especially if we assume that another, anonymous passage from Ashʿarī belongs in this context as well): the Quran.[19] One can recite the Quran, write it down, memorise it. All these are actions that carry a reward with them: *iktisāb*.[20] But God creates the recitation one can hear, or the writing one can read: these are not actions one performs oneself. But it can be said of all these that they are 'the Quran'. The peculiarity in this case is that the Quran has existed since the beginning of time on the 'preserved tablet', *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ* in sura 85:22. This is a physical object and the Quran, as Ḍirār had to say in accordance with his ontology, an inalienable accident of it;[21] that is how it was created. And if it is recited, God creates it another time.[22] In a first study I attempted to derive Ḍirār's synergism in its entirety from this example.[23] However, Gimaret is probably correct: it is a special case.[24] The double creation only occurs in the case of the Quran. Ḍirār may have made use of the equivocal nature of the word *qurʾān* which also – and originally – meant 'reading, recitation'; the distinction between *qirāʾa* and *maqrūʾ* may have been introduced only later. His theory, however, holds just as well without the play on words.

Difficulties arose, as always, when it came to sin. Ḍirār pursued the idea that God leaves humans to themselves here (*khadhala*). While one book title seems to indicate that even in that case help might be possible: *Al-maʿūna fī l-khidhlān*,[25] there is no way around the fact that God created sin, and that what he wills, will come to pass.[26] Ḍirār tried to find help in the distinction that when God wills something, this may on the one hand mean that he creates it,

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17    Text 11.

18    See vol. I 429f. above.

19    Text 20–21.

20    Cf. Text 20, b with 21, e and g–h.

21    Text 21, a–b and i.

22    Ibid., f.

23    Der Islam 43/1967/274; Schwarz included in: Festschrift Walzer 367.

24    *Théories* 68, n. 12.

25    Catalogue of works no. 13.

26    Text XV 22, b–d. A parallel in Ibn Bābōya's *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* I 148, −4 ff., has *inshāʾ* as well as *khalq*.

or, on the other hand, that he wills it in that he commands it.[27] This distinction left room for human responsibility, but it did not absolve God from being complicit in evil.

This consequence did not please the later Muʿtazilites. They were outraged at the createdness; the treatises Abū l-Hudhayl and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir wrote refuting it have the words *fī l-makhlūq* in their titles.[28] Ḍirār had provoked this; he had also called one of his texts *K. al-makhlūq* meaning, probably, *anna l-afʿāl makhlūqa*. But then, he had also written a *K. al-qadar*.[29] As with his ontology his opponents assumed that he had written it in order to make simple minds believe that he was different from Jahm b. Ṣafwān.[30] It does indeed seem that the belief emerged among Ḍirār's successors that God only created the actions of humans for the latter to learn a lesson from them;[31] this was very close to Jahm's determinism.[32] The others, who said he created actions for the actions' sake, i.e. because humans perform actions, were probably closer to doing justice to Ḍirār's intention.

Text 14, b. A Ḍirārite argument against the Qadarites may have survived in Marzubānī's *Nūr al-qabas* 65, 14ff. Here the example of a broken piece of wood is used to show that one and the same object can display two different aspects (*maʿnayān*). It is, however, Khalīl b. Aḥmad who is supposed to have said this.

### 1.3.1.4    God's *māhiyya* and Man's Sixth Sense

Posterity laid a second heterodoxy at Ḍirār's door. This time it was not the Muʿtazilites only, but observers from all schools of thought: his theory of God's concealed nature. We know, it states, simply that God exists, but we do not know his individual reality, his *quidditas* (*māhiyya*). It is different in the case of earthly things whose quiddity is accessible to us. But even here it may happen that we do not recognise it immediately: if for instance we hear a noise, we frequently know at first only that someone has caused the noise, but not

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27    Ibid., a. Since Ḥafṣ al-Fard, Ḍirār's school has tried to accommodate this by distinguishing between God's will as an attribute of essence and his willing something as an attribute of act (Text XV 50).

28    Cf. Catalogue of works XV, 'refutations' a 2 and b1.

29    Ibid., no. 11–12.

30    Ibn Mattōya, *Muḥīṭ* I 429, 21/409, 12.

31    Text 14, a.

32    See vol. II 561 above.

what exactly it is.[1] This doctrine is already familiar to us; it originated in Kufa. Besides Ḍirār the sources often mention Abū Ḥanīfa; according to Shahrastānī, the latter is also the source of the *theologia negativa*.[2] The two go together very well, of course; if God's essence is unknowable, the attributes and names the Quran gives him cannot furnish positive information about him. Philo and after him John of Damascus had already come to this conclusion.[3] The term and the doctrine can be attributed more clearly to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam than to Abū Ḥanīfa,[4] only there was some reluctance to mention this as he was regarded as an anthropomorphist. Consequently this concept was detached from its ties to the *theologia negativa*, which may have been the impulse for Ḍirār to present it in a new light. As an anthropomorphist Hishām was convinced that it would be possible to see God in his individual reality in the otherworld; after all, God is a body. This was not acceptable to Ḍirār, but unlike the Basran Muʿtazilites, he set great store by the *visio beatifica*; consequently he had to search for the solution on the human side and postulated a sixth sense which God would grant the faithful in the otherworld allowing them to behold his *māhiyya*.[5]

The idea that there might be a sixth sense had already been proposed by the dualist Ibn Ṭālūt,[6] but he had of course not linked it to the otherworld. And Ḍirār did not really mean the phrase in its strictest sense, he just imagined that the eyes would be given greater strength in order to see differently to before.[7] Abū l-Hudhayl made fun of the idea; he did not believe in the *ruʾya*, as Ḍirār had based his deliberations on sura 7:143, where Moses asked God to be allowed to behold him, only to learn that not even a mountain would be able to withstand this. This was proof to Ḍirār that the eyes alone were not sufficient. After all, Moses, being a prophet and therefore more intelligent than other people, could not possibly have requested mere earthly vision. If normal vision were sufficient, his request would have been legitimate and he would not have had to do penitence before God. If, however, normal vision were not

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1   Text XV 26 and 27, a.

2   *Milal* 63, 6ff./142, 7ff.; cf. vol. I 242 above.

3   Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 224. Christian influence might have been the reason why the Jewish theologian al-Muqammiṣ assumed God to have a *māhiyya* entirely different from that of humans, but for that reason entirely in concord with his own *kayfiyya* (*ʿIsrūn maqāla* IX 3 and X 2 = p. 184f. and 210; concerning Muqammiṣ and his Christian teacher Nonnus of Nisibis see vol. II 500 above).

4   See vol. I 425 above.

5   Text 27, b–c.

6   See vol. I 517 above.

7   Text 28 and 29, g.

sufficient, he would have equated God with other visible objects, and would thus have been an anthropomorphist.[8] Clearly, what he had in mind from the very first was a supernatural vision by means of a 'sixth sense'.[9]

Now Abū l-Hudhayl claims that in his youth, during a visit to Basra, he explained to Ḍirār that this deliberation was by no means inescapable. In fact the argument only impressed someone like Hishām b. al-Ḥakam who regarded a normal *ruʾya bil-abṣār* as possible; it had been devised in Kufan circles. In Basra, on the other hand, it would have been noticed immediately that other alternatives to normal sensory perception were conceivable. Abū l-Hudhayl thought that Moses had requested immediate knowledge. When applied to God, this would not be possible on earth either, where one makes progress only by painstaking thought and is constantly interrupted by misguided ideas (*khawāṭir*) and whisperings from Satan. But knowledge does not have to be based on the senses, and in the otherworld one will indeed be granted knowledge of God as the 'signs' become unmistakeable and do not leave any room for doubt. What Abū l-Hudhayl does not, of course, point out is that he is moving further and further away from the literal meaning of the Quranic verse.

Text 29, h–o, esp. *l* and *n*. I am not sure of the function of *i*. – The idea had been prepared in Aṣamm's writings (cf. Text XIII 21 A), but it seems that he had not yet distinguished clearly between sensory and rational perception. Other opponents of Ḍirār's theory were Nawbakhtī (cf. Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 499, –5ff. in continuation of Text 28) and the author of the *K. al-Yāqūt* who, although considerably younger, may have been a member of the same family; he would later be refuted by ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (*Anwār al-malakūt* 97, 5ff.). Ḍirār's doctrine appears to have been adopted by Kaʿbī, who would become very important for the Baghdad school; Nawbakhtī notes it in his *K. al-ārāʾ wal-diyānāt* (Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 161, 4f.; a different view is proposed in Text XIII 21 A, c). Even in the fifth century a certain Misāḥī in Khwārazm believed that it was impossible to truly perceive and know the divine *māhiyya*; the reason he gave was that God simply existed and was everywhere, 'in every direction' (Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 316, –4ff.). The *K. al-Yāqūt* may have been written around this time (concerning the problem of dating it cf. Madelung in: Le Shîʿisme imâmite 15).

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8　A small group of Muʿtazilites is said to have believed that Moses erroneously believed it was possible to behold God (Yāfiʿī, *Marham* 223, 17f.)

9　This is the meaning of Text 29, b–d, if we take the above context into consideration, as it is hinted at at g. Taken independently the argumentation is nothing less than clear.

### 1.3.1.5 The Sources of True Knowledge

Abū l-Hudhayl mocked that Ḍirār tormented people with this false dilemma for forty years;[1] by that time Ḍirār was indeed an old man. It is unlikely to be coincidence that the second source of confusion Abū l-Hudhayl mentioned in this place was the problem of the criterion of truth, for the entire issue was ultimately also an epistemological problem. Ibn Mattōya believed that Ḍirār thought up the *māhiyya* of God because none of us doubt that God knows himself better than we do.[2] He is directly concerned with himself, while we have to discover him through proof.[3] Ḍirār did indeed assume that rational proof alone was not sufficient. While it would be possible to get closer to God – after all, in one of his writings Ḍirār discussed the 'proof of the finiteness (*ḥadāth*) of things', which he probably understood as proof of God *e contingentia mundi*[4] – only those people to whom the revelation was addressed have an obligation to achieve true knowledge, and only once they have reached intellectual maturity as well as majority. The two are not concomitant: with intellectual maturity, religious knowledge first becomes possible, with majority it becomes necessary.[5] In addition, all prophets proclaimed the same image of God;[6] if the Christians read something different in their revelation than what the Quran says about God and his oneness, this must be due to their reason. Where the revelation is ambiguous, Ḍirār like Aṣamm allowed the consensus as the only criterion.[7] He clothed his scepticism in the reflection that otherwise it would be instance against instance: Quran against Quran, Sunna against Sunna, *auctoritas* against *auctoritas*.[8] Abū l-Hudhayl disagreed: there are many paths to the truth, what matters is to find the right one in each case.[9]

Ḍirār's attitude had to seem entirely paradoxical to later Muʿtazilites. While he thought that simply quoting authorities made no sense, he was no rationalist, either. It is probably another Kufan trait that he did not have too much faith in human intelligence, but his dislike of uncritical quoting of instances

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1  Text 29, a.

2  *Muḥīth* I 154, 19ff. Houben /158, 10ff. ʿAzmī, quoted in Abū Rashīd, '*Fī l-tawḥīd*' 591, 7ff.

3  Shahrastānī 63, 9f./142, 9.

4  Catalogue of works xv, no. 6.

5  Text 37–38.

6  Catalogue of works no. 5. This is why they all are of the same rank (Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 165, 7f. and 297, 13f.; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 77, −5f.).

7  Text 39, a; cf. vol. II 461 above.

8  Text 29, e.

9  Ibid., p–r. Of course even when he relies on the consensus Ḍirār does not rule out the rational proof. He only means that a rational conclusion can only bring certainty if others have arrived at it as well, or if it makes sense to everybody.

was due to difficulties he had had with the *muḥaddithūn*. He wrote about hadith three times,[10] and critically at least twice. The title 'The contradiction (*tanāquḍ*) within hadith' speaks for itself. And the *K. al-taḥrīsh wal-ighrāʾ* 'On fomentation and incitation to discord' showed how individual sects used hadiths to support their heresies.[11] The material Ḍirār displayed here was probably frequently adopted and amended later; first by Naẓẓām who shared his views,[12] then by the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* themselves in order to reject or reinterpret it, by Ibn Qutayba[13] and later Samʿānī.[14] Ḍirār would also have wished that the Quran could be unambiguous. He did not consider the version by Ibn Masʿūd, which was still popular in his home town Kufa, and the version by Ubayy b. Kaʿb. of which a copy was still extant near Basra in the third century,[15] to be revealed, and consequently not canonical.[16] The codex of Ibn Masʿūd did not contain the last two suras, and was probably also missing the first one, while Ubayy's contained at least two additional suras.

### 1.3.1.5.1    *'Scripturalist' Theology*

With all this distrust of hadith it is not surprising that Ḍirār was opposed to the punishment of the grave.[1] This is a Jahmite attitude;[2] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār rushes to assure us that the Muʿtazilites did not follow him in this view. However, proof was not so easy to come by; he probably could barely imagine just how little importance the hadith had had two hundred years earlier.[3] Above all he is silent on Ḍirār's not challenging other eschatological details such as the scales: they were mentioned in the Quran, and he was not a rationalist. In this point he dissociated himself from the Jahmiyya. All the same he was able to argue against the punishment of the grave in the rationalistic fashion that the Jahmiyya is likely to have employed before him: if we look at

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10    Catalogue of works no. 48–50.

11    Thus according to a remark of Ibn al-Rēwandī (*Intiṣār* 100, 2ff).

12    Text XXII 254; cf. my essay in: Festschrift Spies 170ff., and p. 416 below.

13    *Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, Introduction/transl. Lecomte para. 1ff.; Ibn Qutayba says clearly that the instances were collected by the *mutakallimūn*.

14    *K. al-intiṣār li-ahl al-ḥadīth*, quoted in Suyūṭī, *Ṣawn al-manṭiq* 147ff., also 161, 3ff.

15    Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 29, –6ff. The review had gained a foothold in Basra thanks to the authority of Anas b. Mālik: ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd saw his *muṣḥaf* (Bāqillānī, *Intiṣār* 165, 7f.).

16    Text 40; cf. GdQ III 107.

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1    Text 30.

2    See vol. II 569f. above.

3    *Faḍl* 201, –4ff. > Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB VI 273, 10ff.; also Māndkīm, ShUKh 730, 2ff. Cf. on the other hand Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 430, 10 and *Ibāna* 76, 10.

someone who was put to death on the cross, we can see that even after some time, nothing happens to him. And how could the punishment of the grave be applied to someone who was never buried because wild beasts ate him.[4] And after all, the two angels would not fit into the grave in any case.[5]

Ḍirār's scripturalist approach is also evident in his denying the existence of the antichrist; in his opinion the traditions which prophesy his coming cannot be taken seriously.[6] His contact with the Jahmiyya becomes clear once again in yet another characteristic theologoumenon: the finite duration of paradise and hell. And once again Ḍirār shows independence. Jahm b. Ṣafwān had proposed a dual finiteness: *a parte ante* and *a parte post*. Ḍirār adopted only the former: paradise and hell will not enter into existence before the day of judgement,[7] changing the entire structure of the argument. Now the otherworld was not finite because all creation was only one episode in God's existence.[8] We do not know what Ḍirār's motive was. There is evidence in favour of the theory that he wanted to avoid the predestination to evil that would be implicit in the pre-existence of hell:[9] God does not do anything without a purpose.[10] However, this is not expressed anywhere, as the doxographers were interested only in the consequences. And now Ḍirār had to believe what the Jahmites must have thought already: that Adam and Eve were not in paradise, but in a garden on earth.[11]

This kind of opinion could not pass unnoticed in Iraq, as the interest in Quranic exegesis was great, and Ḍirār – or his pupils? – had to defend their views. Only one of the reasons they put forward was clearly Jahmite, and that was warped. 'All things perish, except His Face', sura 28:88 said, and Jahm, being opposed to all attributes, had already interpreted 'His Face' as meaning 'God himself'.[12] But he had concluded that paradise and hell were also doomed to perish, while the Ḍirārites interpreted 'all things' as meaning all of creation

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4    Text 30, commentary.

5    Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 84, 13. This, too, was expressed in a similar way by the Jahmites (vol. II 570, n. 92 above).

6    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* I 109, 13f. and *Uṣūl* I 203, 6, where, interestingly, he is listed among the Khārijites.

7    Text 32, a.

8    See vol. II 568f. above.

9    This is what ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAwn thought (see vol. II 416 above).

10   Cf. my essay in: Festschrift Abel 108ff., esp. 122ff.

11   Text 32, b. Consequently it is probably an error that paradise and hell were created **anew** at the day of judgement, as Ibn al-Dāʿī claimed (Text 31).

12   See vol. II 564 above.

**except** paradise and hell; only because 'all things perish', paradise and hell may begin to exist once everything has perished.[13]

Some of the other reasons are exegetic, some philological. Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree, but according to sura 56:32 there is no forbidden fruit in the paradise in the otherworld. In fact there are no prohibitions there anymore at all: only on earth, i.e. in an earthly garden, would people be bound by laws. Furthermore Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden because they broke the commandment; but in the Quran paradise is called the 'garden of immortality' or, more precisely, 'of eternal duration' (*jannat al-khuld*), because whoever is in it, will remain there forever. And after all, the otherworld is called *al-ākhira*, 'hereafter'; it is later in time, not elsewhere in space. And if it comes after this world, it cannot be in existence yet.[14]

Of course, objections have already been raised. Adam is invited to 'live' in the garden, to abide there (sura 2:35 and 7:19); so it must be a garden of duration. An interesting argument: it does not see the difference between long duration and eternity. The refutation is sophistic, shifting the emphasis from 'dwelling, abiding' to 'garden': if every garden mentioned in the Quran were the garden of eternal duration, this would include the garden in sura 18:35 where someone entered a garden 'wronging himself', i.e. as a sinner.[15] This was easy to refute, but the opposition prevailed only after a lengthy struggle, for there was much to be said for Ḍirār's position.

Ḍirār was not trying to take away from the horror of hell. He wrote a *K. al-waʿīd*,[16] and rejected Muḥammad's intercession (*shafāʿa*), probably from the same motives that made him reject the punishment of the grave.[17] The sinner is a *fāsiq*,[18] and he is in an intermediate state.[19] He protested against the Murjiʾites overusing the term *muʾmin*.[20] We do not know how people really are. Maybe in their innermost heart they are all infidels: we cannot see inside them.[21] Ultimately only God can determine which denotation and qualification

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13    Text 33, b: argument 1.

14    Ibid., argument 5, 4, 3, 2. Concerning the term *jannat al-khuld* cf. O'Shaughnessy, *Eschatological Themes in the Qurʾān* 97f.

15    Ibid., c–d.

16    Catalogue of Works no. 14.

17    Ibid., no. 20–21.

18    Pseudo-Nāshī, *Uṣūl al-niḥal* 54, 20.

19    See p. 37 above.

20    Catalogue of Works no. 18.

21    Text 34. This, too, is a Jahmite idea, but we do not know whether at that time it had already been thought through there (see vol. II 558 above). It should be compared with ʿĪsā b. Zayd's dictum – although this was probably distorted in the report – (regarding him cf.

(*ism wa-ḥukm*) applies to people. He creates unbelief, because he determines that unbelief is evil.[22] And he also creates faith, because faith is human action.[23] This is not predestination, for the evidence of God's grace (*alṭāf*) knows no bounds: should he so wish he could make all infidels convert to Islam voluntarily.[24] Still, it is probably in the Kufan tradition; faith is a gift. Ḍirār combined this with the belief that humans enjoy a certain freedom of action, just as Zurāra had done. However, at the same time he seems to have anticipated a thought of Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's here.[25] It is probably incorrect to assume that (for this reason?) he, as Mufīd claims,[26] did not believe in divine justice.

### 1.3.1.6    Ḍirār's Political Theory

People expressed surprise not only at the Muʿtazilite Ḍirār coming from Kufa, but also at his adhering to Shuʿūbite views although he was a member of the ʿAbdallāh b. Ghaṭafān.[1] This is a reference to his political theory. Before we go further, we must first illuminate its background. Ḍirār had high expectations of a ruler. He should be the educator of his people and teach them the guidelines of religion.[2] In this context the *ʿulamāʾ* play no part for Ḍirār at all, his views being entirely different from Aṣamm's. The ruler comes directly after the prophet;[3] after all he is *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, or indeed *khalīfat Allāh*, as the Abbasids said without scruples.[4] Consequently the best one must always be chosen. Up to this point this is not Shuʿūbite at all, and the reader might believe the author to be the court theologian. This was not only Ḍirār's view,

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vol. 1 284f. above) that he could only show loyalty to ʿAlī superficially, because he might have worshipped 70 other gods besides God (Majlisī, *Biḥār* XXIV 308 no. 10). Islamic law has always insisted that the *qāḍī*'s judgement has to go by the external appearance and that what is 'internal' (*bāṭin*, i.e. motivation etc., e.g. in witness statements) is between human and God only (cf. Johansen in: SI 72/1990/5f. with older sources).

22    Text XXII 227, g.

23    Text 36, c. Faith in this sense includes not only the mandatory acts of obedience but also *opera supererogationis* (Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 87, 10).

24    Text 35.

25    See p. 137 below.

26    *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* 24, pu. f./transl. Sourdel 267.

1    *ʿIqd* VI 438, 1f.; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 249, 2.

2    Text 41, c.

3    Ibid., a–b.

4    Regarding the usage of this title cf. F. ʿUmar, *Buḥūth* 227ff. This was by no means interpreted as being an abbreviation of *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, as is clear from the parallel form occasionally used by poets *khalīfat al-Raḥmān*. More generally cf. Crone/Hinds, *God's Caliph* 8off.

either; many other Muʿtazilites agreed with him.[5] Even the traditionist ʿAlī b. Abī Muqātil, a victim of the *miḥna*, conceded Maʾmūn's right to determine what was permitted and prohibited.[6] The same thought is found in Iranian tradition, e.g. the *ʿAhd Ardashīr*; Maʾmūn had his nephew al-Wāthiq taught using this text.[7]

Ḍirār now gives the idea a characteristic twist: if two candidates are equally good, and one of them is a Quraysh and the other is not an Arab, the latter should be preferred, as he would be only a client without a following, and if he should not administer the duties of his office correctly, he could be deposed without a civil war being the consequence.[7a] Once again Ḍirār differs from Aṣamm. The latter, while he considered the ruler superfluous in principle, would not have countenanced deposing him.[8] Despite their differences, neither of them was a lawyer to the crown. That title can be applied only to Abū Yūsuf with his *al-aʾimma min Quraysh*.[8a]

If this was filed under the heading of Shuʿūbiyya, however, it must be taken with a pinch of salt. Ḍirār had proposed his doctrine, as he put it, 'purely with reference to Islam';[9] there is no evidence that he intended to question his Arab identity.[10] Where he referred to the non-Arab who would overcome the mighty Quraysh, he used the term 'Nabatean', a strong word: a *nabaṭī* was a backwoodsman, a country fellow who spoke Aramaic and was only found in despised professions in the cities, maybe as a sailor in the port of Basra.[11] The

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5    Ibid., d. Cf. also p. 179 below.

6    Ṭabarī III 1127, 3f.

7    Cf. Steppat in: Festschrift ʿAbbās 453. Antique models only became influential later, cf. esp. Fārābī.

7a   Text 42. This could have been written in his *K. al-musāwāt*, if we presume that its subject was the 'equality' of Arabs and non-Arabs (regarding this tendency generally cf. Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.* I 50ff.). Still, Ḍirār is also said to have proposed the theory that all prophets are of the same rank (see p. 55, n. 6 above). Ḍirār also wrote a *K. al-imāma* on political theory (cf. Catalogue of Works 41 and 43).

8    See vol. II 463ff. above. The Zaydite Muwaffaq transmits, entirely isolated, that Ḍirār, too, considered the ruler to be superfluous as long as humans could get along peacefully without him (*Iḥāṭa*, MS Leiden 8409, fol. 54 a, 14f.); this is probably not true.

8a   See vol. I 242f. above.

9    Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, 10, 15 > Qummī, *Maq.* 9, 5.

10   He continued to see himself as an Arab, as can also be inferred from the conversation he had with a Zoroastrian, during which he defended the custom of addressing one another with the *kunya* (Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* II 178, 5ff.).

11   The story Naẓẓām tells in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* V 399, −4ff. is characteristic. More generally cf. Nöldeke in: ZDMG 25/1871/124ff.; Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.* I 156f.; Pellat, *Milieu basrien* 22, 36, 126; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* 169ff.

Arabs looked down on the Nabateans even more than on the Persians; at least the latter had been the ruling class at some point in the past. Religious discrimination was particularly ugly: hadiths call the *nabaṭ* 'devil's spawn' (*awlād al-shayāṭīn*) and 'prophet-killers', they are a 'plague of religion' (*āfat al-dīn*) and not one of them will go to paradise.[12] The Arabs, on the other hand, were proud to have produced the prophet, none more so than the Quraysh.[13] Ḍirār turned the argumentation on its head: the Nabateans are disadvantaged enough by not having had the prophet come from their midst, and after this affliction God would now grant them a bonus by which they would be ahead of the Arabs.[14] Or maybe: a Nabatean who has become a Muslim deserves more respect. The thought is expressed in similar terms in a fictional conversation between Khālid b. al-Walīd and the Byzantine general before the Battle of Yarmūk as transmitted by Ḍirār's contemporary Sayf b. 'Umar, Khālid emphasising that someone who did not know the prophet himself but still converted to Islam was more excellent (*afḍal*) than the original believers.[15] Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

What Ḍirār said was Utopian. History had happened differently. If a 'Nabatean' had been elected in time, the Umayyads would never have taken the helm, for when 'Uthman was to be deposed because he was 'introducing innovations' during the last six years of his rule, his party was too strong and was able to seize power in the long run.[16] This is probably a reference to Mu'āwiya; Ḍirār denied him any right to rule.[17] Due to Ḍirār's Kufan origins he would also have agreed to have 'Uthmān deposed. Still, he did not withdraw his trust altogether, as 'Uthmān had been elected legitimately, and at the time of his accession he had been the most excellent candidate one could have elected. Depending on how one looked at it, Ḍirār was ultimately an 'Uthmānite; in one of his lost works Jāḥiẓ quoted opinions shared by the 'Uthmāniyya and the Ḍirāriyya.[18]

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12    Cf., with further material, the relevant chapter in Ibn al-Faqīḥ's *K. al-buldān*, which only survives in the Mashhad MS (facs. Frankfurt/M. 47ff./ed. A. S. Žamgotchian, Yerevan 1979, p. 163ff.). Cf. there 53, 2f./169, 2f.; 47, −4ff./163, −4ff. and 48, 10/164, −7; also *Mīzān* II 585, 5f. and III 272, 8. I am indebted to M. J. Kister who brought these passages to my attention.

13    *Akhbār al-'Abbās wa-wuldih* 62, 14; also Juda, *Mawālī* 172. *Nabaṭī* as the antithesis of *Qurashī*: e.g. in a poem by Marwān al-Asghar (d. after 240/854); cf. *Agh.* XII 83, 6f.

14    Text 43; also Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.* I 157f. and Norris in CHAL II 40f.

15    Ṭabarī I 2097, 19ff.; also Noth in: Der Islam 47/1971/178f. and vol. I 129f. above. Note the characteristic term *afḍal*.

16    Text 42, d, and 44, 1.

17    Text 47, d.

18    *Ḥayawān* I 11, 12ff.

Ḍirār stood behind Abū Bakr and ʿUmar without any reservations. There was, in his view, nothing to indicate that they had come to power through usurpation. There was no opposition against them, and the nobility of those whom 'the prophet left behind to put his guidelines into effect' meant that one could not possibly assume they would have conspired to suggest a candidate to the community who would not have been better than all the others.[19] Things only became difficult when prophet's companions found themselves on opposing sides during the Battle of the Camel. This was the problem that Wāṣil and ʿAmr had already considered, and Ḍirār followed in their footsteps with his solution. Occasionally the doxographers did not even notice the nuances in which the three theologians differed. Nawbakhtī and Ashʿarī present Ḍirār's position like Wāṣil's: one should act as in the *liʿān*: loyalty must be given to both parties while only one of them raises a claim, but withdrawn when one is involved with both parties at the same time and they testify against each other.[20]

Only the author of the *Uṣūl al-niḥal*, probably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, makes a careful distinction. He tells us that Ḍirār replaced the comparison with the *liʿān* with another one: two Muslim believers are in a house alone together. Suddenly outside the house someone hears one of them saying something that makes it clear he has renounced Islam, but it is not possible to distinguish the voices. When people enter the house, they find both men dead. At this point any kind of loyalty to them is out of the question; it is not even possible when speaking of one of them to say 'May God rest his soul'. The case will never be solved.[21] The difference between this and the *liʿān* example was that in this one, the two parties were dead; and the question of whether one should be loyal to the one as long as the other was not present, was not even asked anymore.

The example is unlikely to have been selected at random. It shows a startling similarity to a historical event that took place in the same year that Wāṣil died. ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Qays al-Murādī and Ḥārith b. Talid al-Ḥaḍramī, two clients who had put themselves at the head of the Hawwāra Berber rebellion, had been found dead, each killed by the other's sword, and it had not been possible to establish who was the guilty party. This had been a sad event for the Ibāḍites in the Maghrib;[22] in the case of an imam the question of loyalty had particular urgency. As there had been quarrels, Abū ʿUbayda had written to them;[23] in

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19    Text 44.

20    Text 46–47, but only the reason given in 46, d, is new. See vol. II 310f. above.

21    Text 45.

22    For more detailed information cf. Rebstock, *Ibāḍiten im Maġrib* 18ff.; Talbi, *Etudes ifriqiyennes* 58ff.

23    Darjīnī, *Ṭabaqāt* I 24, 4f.

this way the case became known in Basra. In the Maghrib, life went on. Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Maʿāfirī was elected imam in 140/757 and united the Ibāḍites in Tripolitania once again,[24] and in the end it seemed preferable for the two dead men to retain everyone's loyalty – after all, they might both have been killed by a third person.[25] In Iraq, on the other hand, people could continue to theorise, and were consequently quite implacable: repudiation, or at the very least ἐποχή, would be the only option. To prove this, the same examples that we have already seen were adduced: the *liʿān*, or the two men who kill one another. ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd and his school developed this doctrine;[26] the Nukkār would adopt it from him later.[27]

There is nothing in the sources concerning the question of whether withdrawing one's loyalty would also invalidate the **traditions** transmitted from the opponents in the Battle of the Camel and their parties (cf. vol. II 310f. above). It does stand to reason; after all, Ḍirār's attitude to hadith was critical (see p. 57 above), and the withdrawal of loyalty did not only affect the protagonists but in fact everyone who took part in the Battle of the Camel (Text 45, a). – Another question arising is whether the Ibāḍite reports of the double murder in Tripoli were not in their turn merely theological construct; this would require further study. However, it would not affect the hypothesis that Ḍirār could have known them.

ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd lived in Kufa, and Ḍirār would have met him at the court of the Barmakids, too, which leaves hardly any room for doubt that they were in contact. It would seem that they influenced one another, as the *liʿān* comparison had already been used by Wāṣil.[28] Maybe Ḍirār used it himself at first, and looked to the Ibāḍite problem only later. In that case the difference between the sources we have stated would acquire its own particular meaning and place him nearer to ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, the latter having supported the *imāmat al-fāḍil* as well, going so far as to deny loyalty to any one of the individual participants

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24     Concerning him see EI² I 134; Rebstock 82ff.

25     Darjīnī I 24, –6ff.

26     Ibid. 25, 1ff, where, however, we read *Zaydiyya* instead of *Yazīdiyya*. The correction, also considered by the editor, is confirmed by the parallel 24, –9ff.; the Zaydiyya has no place in the writings of an author like Darjīnī.

27     Thus according to ʿUthmān b. Khalīfa, *Risāla fī bayān firaq al-Ibāḍiyya*. I viewed the text in Mzab but unfortunately omitted to note down the reference. For a discussion of the problem in Oman cf. Wilkinson in: BSOAS 39/1976/538.

28     See vol. II 310f. above.

in the Battle of the Camel.[29] On the other hand ʿAmr unambiguously declared himself a follower of ʿUthmān, while Ḍirār, like Wāṣil, withdrew his approval of the caliph during the last six years of his reign.[30]

Of course this was not enough for the Shīʿites; they also reported debates with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam[31] and ʿAlī b. Mītham.[32] It is true that Ḍirār annoyed them by coming up with a eulogy (in the same style as they used to list ʿAlī's merits) that Zubayr recited before the Battle of the Camel, and in which he compared himself favourably to ʿAlī. This was a collation of motifs developed by tradition and reflecting the old party rivalry.[33] As the controversy between Sunnites and Shīʿites would soon concentrate entirely on the ranking of the first four caliphs, Ḍirār's intellectual exercise did not have a future and was not taken up by the historians. This makes the text all the more valuable; it shows the idealisation of Zubayr some early signs of which are – probably encouraged by his son ʿAbdallāh's temporary political role – found in hadith and *sīra* was ultimately not developed any further.

### 1.3.1.7    Ḍirār's Pupils
Ḍirār's influence on subsequent generations was much greater than the Muʿtazilites liked to admit. His school probably already spread during his lifetime. Kaʿbī reports Ḍirārites in Armenia, where ʿUthmān al-Ṭawīl had gone as a missionary.[1] Ḍirār himself was probably active in Yemen.[2] His pupil Ḥafṣ al-Fard spread the doctrine in Egypt.[3] Najjār in Basra based his ideas on him;[4] and Kulthūm, the successor of the Murjiʿite Abū Shamir, was familiar with his teachings, too.[5] It seems that despite some contacts with Kufa, Bishr al-Marīsī was less close to him than I used to assume in the past,[6] but

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29    Ibid. 308.
30    Regarding Wāṣil ibid. 273.
31    See vol. i 410 above.
32    See vol. ii 483 above.
33    Text xv 48.

1    *Maqālāt* 111, 4f. > Nashwān, *Ḥūr* 212, 3; cf. ch. C 7.4 below.
2    See p. 34 above.
3    See vol. ii 816 above.
4    See ch. C 5.2.1 below.
5    See vol. ii 208 above.
6    See p. 197 below.

### Sufyān b. Sakhtān

appears to have studied under him in this city;[7] he was a supporter of the doctrine of God's hidden essence[8] and is said, like Ḍirār, to have combined it with the belief in a sixth sense in the otherworld.[9] On the other hand there is the tradition according to which he regarded the *visio* as visual perception, but under different preconditions from that in this world.[10] He was considered to be a Murjiʿite,[11] and apparently a pupil of Abū Ḥanīfa's.[12] He was indeed also known as a jurist, having written a *K. al-ʿIlal*.[13] This presumably dealt with fundamental issues, as a fellow Kufan claimed that it was the source for hadiths used against Shāfiʿī[14] by ʿĪsā b. Abān, a pupil of Shaybānī's, and a powerful man under Hārūn,[15] and judge in Basra for ten years until his death early in 221/836.[16] Hints in *uṣūl* texts allow us to assume that ʿĪsā b. Abān argued with Shāfiʿī on the evaluation of *khabar al-wāḥid*; his opinion, and this applies to all the 'old schools', in these matters was more generous than that of the author of the *Risāla*.[17] This is probably true of Sufyān b. Sakhtān as well. – Mufīd named

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7   The patronymic is of Iranian origin (cf. Justi, *Namenbuch* 48 s. v. *Ātaredāta*; also *Tāj al-ʿarūs* IX 233, 21). It is frequently misspelt as *Saḥbān*.

8   *Intiṣār* 98, 3 > Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 161, 8f.

9   *Maq.* 339, 14ff.

10  Insofar as its object is not a body with firm limits, etc.; cf. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* IV 139, 12ff., and Ḥajūrī, *Rawḍat al-akhbār* 144 b, –6f. Ḍirār, too, was convinced of the visual nature of this perception (see p. 53 above).

11  *Fihrist* 258, –7f.; Khaiyāṭ does not count him among the Muʿtazilites (*Intiṣār* 98, 9f.).

12  Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī adduces him as authority for Abū Ḥanīfa (*Muʿtamad* 950, 4).

13  IAW I 249 no. 645 according to *Fihrist* where, however, the note is corrupt.

14  Wakīʿ II 171, 3; *Fihrist* 258, 14f.; TB VI 22, 3ff. Concerning the author of the report cf. TB VIII 456f. no. 4569.

15  He was able to strike his name next to the caliph's on coins in Raqqa in AH 181 (cf. L. Ilisch in: *Numismatics – Witness to History*, IAPN Publication no. 8, p. 108). Even al-Manṣūr is said to have heeded him, to the degree that he appointed Rabīʿ b. Yūnus his chamberlain (*Fihrist* 258, 18ff.). His father Abān b. Ṣadaqa was treasurer under the same caliph, and also responsible for foreign correspondence (Khalīfa, *Taʾrīkh* 693, 10f.; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 124, 11f.).

16  Concerning him cf. *Fihrist* 258, 13ff.; Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* II 170, –4ff.; TB IX 157ff.; GAS 1/434 etc. Ibn al-Nadīm giving the date of his death as 220 instead of 221 is probably an error.

17  Cf. e.g. Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 643, 5ff. and 654, 20ff.; ʿĪsā b. Abān wrote a *K. khabar al-wāḥid* (*Fihrist* 258, 20). Ibn Murtaḍā, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, mentions him frequently as having independent opinions on the *uṣūl al-fiqh*; he appears to have played a part of some importance in this field. An entire century later Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī was still attacking his understanding of *ijtihād* (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* I 424, 13f.). See also vol. II 343f. above. – I do not maintain the understanding of the above circumstances I presented in: *Der Islam* 44/1968/42f. any more.

Abū Ghayth al-Iṣfahānī

from Isfahan as one of Ḍirār's followers.[18] He thought that God's existence was proven by the consensus of the people; Ḍirār, too, had given priority to the *ijmāʿ* as a criterion.[19] We will have to date him to the beginning of the third century at the latest, as his views were criticised by Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Barqī. The latter, whose name was Muḥammad b. Khālid b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, was one of ʿAlī al-Riḍā's followers.[20] – An informative *nisba* identified

Abū Zufar al-Ḍirārī.

We do have to make sure not to confuse him with Abū Zufar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Makkī, who taught in Nishapur and pointed the way for the Muʿtazilite community there; he is younger and a contemporary of Khayyāṭ.[21] Kaʿbī clearly distinguished between the two.[22] The elder Abū Zufar was cited as an authority by Ibn al-Rēwandī;[23] he had joined Murdār[24] and it may have been through him that he joined the ascetic circles with whom Ibn al-Rēwandī associated.[25] The *nisba* is found only once, in Jāḥiẓ;[26] Muʿtazilite *ṭabaqāt* texts omit it. In another place Jāḥiẓ has had direct reports from him about Ḍirār.[27] – The attraction of Ḍirār's system was based especially on his ontological model; the doctrine of accidents or 'parts' was the clearest alternative for everyone

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18    *Ikhtiṣāṣ* 337, −5ff.

19    See p. 55 above.

20    Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 291f. no. 631, and ʿAlam al-Hudā's commentary.

21    *Faḍl* 303, pu. f. (after Kaʿbī) > IM 93, 12: in the eighth *ṭabaqa*; cf. ch. C 7.5 below for more information. Against Nyberg in n. on *Intiṣār* 50, −4 (no. 59); Ritter, *Maqālāt*, Index 634; Ayman al-Sayyid, Index for Kaʿbī, *Maqālāt* 429, and my own account in: Der Islam 44/1968/11. Cf. also Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 243, n. 18. The Abū Zufar mentioned by Ḥammād ʿAjrad in a poem reviling Bashshār b. Burd (Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* I 242, 8) is probably someone else again.

22    Cf. *Maq.* 74, 11 and 17, as well as the list of names attributed to him in Ibn al-Nadīm 220, n., l. 6f. (where in l. 6 Abū Zufar must be separate from Muḥammad b. Suwayd, as *Maq.* 74, 11 shows). P. Kraus was already aware of the problem, but he instead decided to identify them with one another (in: RSO 14/1933/375f.; adopted by Aʿsam, *Faḍīḥ al-Muʿtazila* 345f.).

23    *Intiṣār* 54, 1.

24    Kaʿbī, *Maq.* 74, 11f.; also Shahrastānī 49, 2/103, 7 and *Faḍl* 284, 1f. (where the name must be corrected) > IM 77, 13f. Khayyāṭ knows him as the source for Murdār (Text XVIII 11, commentary, and *Faḍl* 283, ult. ff.).

25    See p. 143ff. below.

26    *Ḥayawān* IV 137, 3.

27    Text XV 48, m.

who wished to free himself from the corporeal ideas of anthropomorphism. The Zaydite Sulaymān b. Gharīr adapted the idea,[28] as did numerous later Ibāḍites.[29] Among the Muʿtazilites, on the other hand, it was soon replaced by Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism, Naẓẓām's fundamental opposition contributing significantly. Thus

### Shuʿayb b. Zurāra

found himself close to Ḍirār just because people accused him of all those monstrous things that Naẓẓām attributed to the Ḍirārites. He was a contemporary of Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī, living around the turn of the third century.[30] Ibn Mattōya has an account of his teachings:[31] in his opinion there was no heat in the fire, and no oil in the olive: the heat only appears when someone approaches the fire, and the oil, when the olive is pressed. It seems that he was not alone with this view; it was rather a general accusation. Nobody knew the exact circumstances; Ibn Mattōya deliberated whether these theologians were not maybe trying to say that the heat appears in **us** when we approach the fire. The distorted image was probably first drawn by Bishr b. al Muʿtamir, who is reported to have called Shuʿayb an 'ass, son of an ass'. Whether it was all just made up out of thin air is of course difficult to say, for Naẓẓām unearthed another similar extremist:

### Abū l-Jahjāh Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Nūsharwānī

who fought against Naẓẓām's concept of latency by proposing the theory that the dough is not intrinsic in the flour, but rather entirely distinct from it. Splitting a grain results in two entirely new bodies, and proportionately more when the grain is ground. The cycle we observe in which grain becomes flour, flour dough, dough bread, bread then becomes fertiliser from which vegetables will grow once again, should not mislead us to assume that everything is inherent in everything else; these are all abrupt changes. Similarly, someone who is standing up will not be the same person once he sits down.[32] In the context, this does not sound as if it had been complete invention. It probably was a deliberately opposing position. It need not have been inspired by Ḍirār;

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28   Text III 20; cf. Madelung in *Islamic. Philos. Theol.* 126f. and vol. II 545f. above.

29   *Maq.* 109, 4ff.; also Madelung 128.

30   Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* IV 12, 1. Concerning Muḥammad b. al-Jahm see p. 220ff. below.

31   *Tadhkira* 302, 9ff.; there incorrect *Dh.rāra* instead of *Zurāra*.

32   Text XXII 51, t–v. Concerning the last-named example see ch. C 4.2.2.2.1 below.

it might also have been built on Aṣamm's idea of *inqilāb*.[33] Abū l-Jaḥjāh was in touch with Jāḥiẓ; the latter does not seem to have thought him as mad as Naẓẓām did.[34] We do not know whether he is the same as that Jaḥjāh of whom Jāḥiẓ says elsewhere that he regarded lying under certain circumstances as a good thing.[35]

### 1.3.2   *Muʿammar*
The second Muʿtazilite after Ḍirār whom the Barmakids invited to the court gained much greater significance than these rather shadowy intellectuals.

> Abū ʿAmr Abū l-Muʿtamir Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād al-Sulamī

came from Basra where he had lived as a *mawlā* of the Sulaym,[1] and was much younger; he only died 215/830.[2] He had worked for Abū l-Ashʿāth in his youth;[3] like him, he was one of the people who mistrusted beans.[4] He recalled having been beaten in three discussions for no apparent reason, but that the first time he had eaten too many aubergines, the second time, too many olives, and the third time, too many beans.[5] He was an apothecary[6] and thus professionally interested in alchemist literature.[7] He was proud to be a member of the middle class. 'There are three groups of people', he said, 'rich, poor, and those of moderate affluence. The poor are (as good as) dead, except for him whom God has made rich by granting him the strength that comes with

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33    See vol. II 452f. above.

34    Cf. *Bukhalāʾ* 45, 3; *Ḥayawān* III 9, 4; IV 20, 5 and apu.; esp. II 311, 7ff., where we also find the complete name.

35    *Bukhalāʾ* 4, 15; cf. Ḥājirī, ibid. 257f. Also p. 107 below.

1    Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān* 89, ult.; Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* V 55, −5. The *nisba* al-Ḍamrī that Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ gives him (*Shifāʾ* II 1076, 6f.) is entirely isolated and was probably transferred by confusing him with ʿAbbād v. Sulaymān (see ch. C 4.1.2.1 below).

2    *Fihrist* 207, 15f. and 19. Regarding the tradition according to which he was poisoned during Hārūn's time, i.e. before 193/809, see p. 97f. below.

3    He was called Maʿmar, which is why they are occasionally mistaken for one another; see vol. II 42 above.

4    Text II 19, c.

5    *Ḥayawān* V 572, 7ff. Regarding the aubergines see vol. II 202f. above.

6    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 194, 2 and V 55, −5; *Mīzān* II 23, 7. Saksakī, who based his work on Ibn Ḥazm's, mentions Muʿammar's school once as ʿAṭṭāriyya, and then later once as Muʿammariyya (*Burhān* 30, 5ff. and 35, 8ff.)

7    Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākala* 25, −4f.

contentment. The rich are drunk – except for him whom God has protected by making him prepared for the vicissitudes (of fate). The people of moderate affluence usually comport themselves most properly; the poor and the rich the least, due to the foolishness of poverty and the presumption of riches.'[8]

In Basra he had once had a quarrel with the 'heretic' Isḥāq b. Ṭālūt,[9] but the latter had not felt alarmed:[10] there was probably much in natural science that united them. Furthermore, Ibn Ṭālūt was certainly older. Muʿammar had known him before the *disputatio*, while Ibn Ṭālūt had not yet noticed him. His interest in natural science may well have been what recommended him to the Barmakids; after all, Muʿammar had written about the Roman steelyard balance (*qarasṭūn* < χαριστίων) and about mirrors. In his treatise he showed the principle (*ʿilla*) according to which both worked, and was far ahead of all other authors on the subject, certainly where the steelyard balance was concerned.[11] Not until the middle of the third century or just before did the Banū Mūsā study the subject again,[12] followed by Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/901), whose text is the oldest still extant.[13] Theologians, too, found cause to consider this instrument, as a passage in Ibn Mattōya shows.[14] To him the crux of the problem was the so-called *iʿtimād*, the pressure exerted by mass:[15] how could one explain that the sliding weight of the scale whose *iʿtimād* keeps the load balanced, is lighter than the load itself? Muʿammar might have been familiar with the term *iʿtimād* from his Basra days, as it is possible that Abū Shamir used the term before him,[16] although we do not have proof of this so far. The problem, on the

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8    Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* I 331, 7ff.; also Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²v 52 no. 165 (with further parallels in the source texts). Concerning the 'drunkenness' of the rich, cf. the commentary on Text XVII 2 v. 23.

9    Regarding him see vol. I 517 above.

10   *Faḍl* 267, 9ff. Concerning the expression *mā qāma lahū Isḥāq wa-lā qaʿada* cf. Lane 2245 c and Dozy, *Suppl.* II 430.

11   Catalogue of Works XVI, no. 4. Χαριστίων is a steelyard balance made up out of a two-armed lever with a sliding weight (cf. Wiedemann in EI¹ II 810ff. and, considerably poorer, Jaouiche in EI² IV 629; Daiber, *Muʿammar* 53, n. 4; DSB XIII 292 a); concerning the etymology cf. Diels in *Aufsätze* II 577f. Manufacturing it was considered a special skill of the Greeks (cf. Jāḥiẓ, *K. al-akhbār* in: JA 1967, p. 98, apu. f.).

12   *Fihrist* 331, 6. Regarding the Banū Mūsā cf. GAS 5/246ff.

13   Edited with a commentary by Kh. Jaouiche, *Le livre du Qarasṭūn de Thābit Ibn Qurra* (Leiden 1976); cf. the reviews by Hermelink in ZDMG 130/1980/435 and Wieber in OLZ 75/1980/564ff. Also discussed earlier by Wiedemann, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt/M.) 320ff. and 524ff.

14   *Tadhkira* 606, 3ff.

15   See p. 353 below.

16   See vol. II 207, n. 53 above.

other hand, was probably an old one; Jāḥiẓ mentions it in his *K. al-tarbīʿ wal-tadwīr*,[17] where he also holds forth on how mirrors work.[18] As we have seen, this was a subject to which Ḍirār also gave some thought.[19]

Of course, the Barmakids also esteemed Muʿammar as a theologian. He may have been the one who delivered Hārūn's letter to Byzantium.[20] But taken by themselves, especially when compared with Ḍirār's productivity, Muʿammar's theological publications were remarkably sparse. Only three titles survive in this field,[21] and one more whose meaning is unclear.[22] His relationship with the other Muʿtazilites was not good at all. He mocked Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir as a leper and reviled him as a slanderer and, more importantly, in the poem in which he did this, and of which only this verse survives, he insulted the *mutakallimūn* in general.[23] He debated with Naẓẓām in Baghdad,[24] but the latter was not impressed with him, especially because of his dialectics.[25] When he returned to Basra, the local Muʿtazilites brought an action against him with the authorities, allegedly because of his doctrine of infinite regress. He fled back to the capital and is said to have died there in hiding in the house of Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī.[26] The latter was a well-respected man who had enjoyed the Abbasids' favour for a long time and was temporary head of the secret service at that time;[27] Muʿammar could still rely on influential contacts.

As his death occurred during Maʾmūn's reign it seem safe to assume that the authorities held the Muʿtazilites in high respect at that time; that is why the latter were able to bring charges against him. But it is likely that for the same reason the higher echelons were reluctant to initiate a trial

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17    P. 90, 6ff., para. 172.

18    Cf. the translation of the relevant chapter in Wiedemann, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt/M.) 169ff.

19    See p. 50f. above. None of this explains why Muʿammar discussed scales and mirror together.

20    See p. 28 above.

21    Catalogue of Works XVI, no 1–3.

22    Ibid., no. 5.

23    Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 90, 2f.; *Fihrist* 207, 15ff. In the Jāḥiẓ version the verse should be corrected in accordance with Ibn al-Nadīm's version.

24    *Fihrist* 207, 16.

25    *Agh.* VIII 249, 6f.

26    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 194, 7f., where the name should be corrected (cf. Daiber, *Muʿammar* 47ff.)

27    Cf. EI² III 990 s. n. and GIE II 430f.; also Crone, *Slaves on Horses* 194f. no. 43. Regarding his father see vol. II 239 above, and p. 101 below.

for heresy, and he was let go. If we read in Jāḥiẓ that he was in prison once (*Ḥayawān* VI 504, 3ff., which most probably refers to him rather than Maʿmar Abū l-Ashʿāth), this does not necessarily refer to the same date, as twenty years earlier, during Hārūn's al-Rashīd's time, all the Muʿtazilites had been persecuted at one point (see p. 107 below).

As for Muʿammar's name, tradition presents some difficulties. Jāḥiẓ has an instance of the double *kunya* (*Burṣān* 90, 1), which is copied in Kaʿbī (*Maq.* 71, 4). If, then, Ibn al-Nadīm has *Abū ʿAmr* only as a variant (*Fihrist* 207, 15), this similarity of the two forms should not make us too nervous. There are, however, more instances of *Abū l-Muʿtamir* (Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* I 331, 7; Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 194, 1f; *Mīzān* II 23, 7). Still, it seems that *Abū ʿAmr* is the basis for the corrupt forms Muḥammad b. ʿUmar in Yaʿqūbī's *Mushākala* (25, –4f.: instead of *Muḥammad Abū ʿAmr*; the original version is retained without explanation in M.-B. Pathé's translation in: JA 257/1969/372), and *Muḥammad b. ʿAmr* in Ibn Ḥazm's *Fiṣal* (IV 194, 2 and V 55, –5). Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād is confirmed explicitly by Jāḥiẓ (*Burṣān* 89, ult.), by Kaʿbī, Ibn al-Nadīm, and Khwārizmī (*Mafātīḥ* 19, 2). The question remains of whether one should read Maʿmar rather than Muʿammar; after all, this was the name of Muʿammar's mentor Abū l-Ashʿāth. It is difficult to decide. The printed version of Khwārizmī vocalises *Maʿmar*; this may be based on the MS. The philologist Zubaydī (d. 379/989) uses the same form in a verse, where, however, the metre demands it (Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwat al-muqtabis*, 44, 2 > Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* IV 6, 6 ʿABBĀS). But we still know only how Zubaydī would have read it; furthermore where metre was concerned, names were not always retained altogether exactly. Muʿammar must be clearly separated from the M-ʿ-m-r whom Kaʿbī mentions *Maq.* 88, ult. and 90, ult.; that refers to Maʿmar b. Rashīd (d. 154/770). Finally, Muʿammar has nothing to do with the Shīʿite Maʿmariyya sect (Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 11, 14 etc.) which got its name from a certain Maʿmar b. al-Aḥmar, who should be presumed to have flourished around the middle of the second century (Halm, *Gnosis* 209ff.)

Jāḥiẓ counts Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī among the 'philosophers of the *mutakallimūn*'.[28] Jāḥiẓ admired him for his universal knowledge which knew no borders between 'Arab' and Greek sciences; Ibn al-Sindī was well versed in jurisprudence, grammar, and poetry as well as astrology and medicine.[29] Jāḥiẓ compares him

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28    *Ḥayawān* II 140, 9f.

29    *Bayān* I 335, 1f.; cf. also Majlisī, *Biḥār* LVIII 304, 1f. after Jahshiyārī.

with Maʿmar Abū l-Ashʿāth and Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī,[30] who
were not necessarily all Muʿtazilites, but in their versatile and flexible intel-
lectuality they conformed to a degree to the ideal to which the Muʿtazilites as-
pired as well. Muʿammar knew not only Abū l-Ashʿāth and Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī,
one as a teacher, the other more probably as a pupil,[31] but he also expressed an
opinion of Muḥammad b. Jahm that Jāḥiẓ has preserved for us once again.[32]
It is not exactly amiable: he criticises his stinginess and general spitefulness;
Muḥammad b. Jahm is a loner who pays no heed to the opposition between
schools, and who has no principles. As for Muʿammar this proves that he wrote
a very elegant style; he could easily hold his own with the *kuttāb*.[33] Of course
he was not a non-conformist like Muḥammad b. Jahm, but he had absorbed
some of the 'philosophy' that characterised his circle. In those days 'philoso-
phy' was certainly not what later generations understood it to be. It implied
no hint of strict adherence to the doctrine of a particular school: it referred
to intellectual curiosity that opened itself to all foreign knowledge as long as
it could be grasped quickly and promised a certain usefulness. Alchemy and
medicine suited this ideal more than logic or indeed metaphysics.

### 1.3.2.1     Muʿammar's System

Muʿammar left out much that would normally have been of interest to the
Muʿtazilites. He barely ever speculated on the image of God, and did not write
any refutations of people of other faiths, either. In matters of political theory he
followed the Muʿtazilite line without proposing any ideas of his own, as Ḍirār
or Aṣamm did.[1] He was not a jurist, and he does not seem to have been very
fond of hadith; it was said that apothecaries (*ṣayādila*) were bad transmitters.[2]
Still, he did not attack the *muḥaddithūn* or criticise their criteria. For him, the
concept of nature was more important; he sought the immanent causes of
phenomena. Above all, he was an atomist, and his approach to epistemology
was more systematic than people had been used to. This 'specialisation' was
drowned in the abundance of comparative reference material in the extensive

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30     *Ḥayawān*, ibid.; regarding Muḥammad b. al-Jahm see p. 220ff. below.

31     See p. 98 below.

32     *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī* in: al-Kātib al-Miṣrī 5/1947/58,
       11ff. = *Āthār al-Jāḥiẓ* , ed. ʿUmar b. Abū l-Naṣr (Beirut 1969), p. 29, 14ff.

33     Cf. also the aphorism in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* V 191, 2.

1      Cf. Text XV 46–47.

2      TB XI 456, 1. There were several Muʿtazilites among them (Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* V 304, 7).

monograph H. Daiber dedicated to him.[3] Mu'ammar was a very original think-er, but he was no all-round-theologian like Ḍirār or Abū l-Hudhayl.

### 1.3.2.1.1    Mu'ammar's Atomism and His Natural Philosophy

Atomism was a system usually found among the *zanādiqa*,[1] but we do not know how it looked in detail. Within the Mu'tazila the model is most clearly distinct from Ḍirār's in particular. Ḍirār also spoke of 'parts', like Mu'ammar, but he used a different word – *ab'āḍ* instead of *ajzā'* – and he did, in fact, mean something else. While Ḍirār's 'parts' were fundamental constituents, they were not atoms. What is new in Mu'ammar's model is first of all the geometrical structure of bodies composed of atoms: two atoms joined side by side result in length; four joined as a square, breadth, i.e. an area; eight, finally, joined as a cube, result in a body.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl, whose approach agrees with Mu'ammar's in principle, considered six atoms sufficient to create a spatial effect.[3] This reads like a deliberate answer to the question of what would be the smallest number of atoms needed for a body; Abū l-Hudhayl was already trying to improve Mu'ammar's model. He was probably familiar with it from the conversations they had in Basra, but Mu'ammar also wrote a book on the subject.[4] Abū l-Hudhayl would later attract the doxographers' complete atten-tion, which is why Mu'ammar's priority became blurred.

To both these thinkers atomism was in a way also a step away from the sen-sualism that had up to then been uncontested in the field of ontology. While Mu'ammar saw a body as merely a material object perceivable by the senses,

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3  H. Daiber, *Das theologisch-philosophische System des Mu'ammar b. 'Abbād as-Sulamī* (*gest. 830 n. Chr.*); Beirut 1975. Also my review in: Der Islam 58/1981/293ff. and Daiber's response ibid. 310ff. A. G. Chejne's essay *Mu'ammar b. 'Abbād al-Sulamī, a Leading Mu'tazilite of the Eighth–ninth Centuries*, in: MW 51/1961/311ff. was outdated even when it appeared.

1  See vol. 1 518f. above. Further information p. 350 below.

2  Text XVI 2, b and e. Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 47, –4ff. shows that this was the representative opinion later as well.

3  See p. 243 below.

4  Catalogue of Works XVI, no. 2. Here we read clearly *al-juz' alladhī lā yatajazza'* (ἄτομον) in-stead of simply *juz'* (μέρος) as in most doxographical texts (with the exception of XVI 49, a). Clearly there can be no doubt that Mu'ammar was talking about atomism. Whether the contrast to Abū l-Hudhayl should be personalised quite so sharply is doubtful in view of the fact that in his *K. al-juz'* Naẓẓām cited both opinions anonymously and each with a plural referent (Ash'arī, *Maq.* 316, 10ff. [*qā'ilūn*] and 13f. [*ākharīn*]). It would seem that there were entire schools adhering to these views. It is possible that both points of view were already suggested by tradition.

and adopted the definition using length, width and depth', i.e. dimensionality as proposed by Aṣamm,[5] the atoms were non-material, could be grasped only intellectually and not perceived with the senses. Muʿammar did not deny that they possessed substance; he called the atom the 'indivisible individual substance' (*al-jawhar al-wāḥid alladhī lā yanqasim*),[6] nor did he deny that they can carry accidents which are inherent in them. But the accidents only become apparent once the atoms are joined together to form a body.[7] Only then can they be perceived – and only they; the actual body remains hidden from us. It exists, but it differs from the accidents; its formal reality consists in them, i.e. in its warmth and cold, its moistness or dryness.[8] This is an organic development out of the approach we already know from Ḍirār and, with a different conclusion, also from Aṣamm. What is new is that 1) corporeal nature is not interpreted as being material, but spatial,[9] and 2) the accidents appear on a body of themselves, effected by the 'nature' (*ṭabʿ, ṭibāʿ*) of the atoms.[10] They are thus by no means coincidental or expendable; Muʿammar's 'accident' has nothing much in common with Aristotle's συμβεβηκός.[11]

This concept, a matter of course among natural philosophers and physicians, irritated the theologians from the very first. If earthly things could function out of themselves, God seemed disempowered.[12] Ibn al-Rēwandī, who knew Muʿammar's views reasonably well, rubbed salt into the wound, intensifying the antagonism by remarking that, indeed, lifeless bodies unable to

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5    Muʿammar based his view on a sensualist approach as well, as D. Eberhardt demonstrated in his dissertation *Der sensualistische Ansatz und das Problem der Veränderung in der Philosophie Muʿammars und an-Naẓẓāms* (Tübingen 1979), only it lacks any historical perspective. Frank had already referred to 'thoroughgoing "materialism"', and meant something similar (JAOS 87/1967/256).

6    Text 1. The term 'substance' also in Text 10; for more general information cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* V 106, 9f. Pressing the term would do no good; *jawhar* is first and foremost a lexical shell – but the title of the book at Catalogue of Works no. 2 proves that Muʿammar did use the word. It seems that he also used the word *ʿayn* besides (Text 48, a).

7    Text 2, c–d; 3, a–b; also 6, c. Baghdādī exaggerated slightly in 3, a, as the comparison with 2, c–d shows. On the other hand we should be most careful not to say that the accidents are already innate within the atoms virtually; virtuality in the sense of Aristotelian δύναμις does not exist in the world view of Muʿammar and his contemporaries.

8    Text 4–5. Cf. Frank in: Actas IV Congreso UEAI Coimbra 88, n.

9    Thus Eberhardt 9: as a 'geometrically constructed, qualitative totality'.

10    Text 2, c; 3, b; 7, a; 8, b; 10; 13, b and d; 19, b.

11    Text 11, a; 7, d.

12    He wrote a treatise on Muʿammar's 'system' (cf. Catalogue of Works XXXV b, no. 3). This means that the fragments from his *K. faḍīḥat al-Muʿtazila* which deal with Muʿammar must be taken very seriously despite their polemic intention.

think and consequently without the faculty of action, were now supposed to function of their own accord.[13] This is of course deliberately provocative, but it proves with what criteria emotions could be roused. For a long time none of the Muʿtazilites were able to grasp the concept of nature as we see it. Accordingly, Abū l-Hudhayl gave atomism a new direction.[14]

Muʿammar had meant it entirely differently. God was not disenfranchised, for someone had to create the atoms in the first place, and then put them together, and it was not nature doing this, as it was God's prerogative. The sources barely mention this aspect;[15] it was not controversial. It is part of what Muʿammar and Abū l-Hudhayl have in common, but the latter emphasised the axiom more strongly by using the term composition (*taʾlīf*).[16] Thus while God does not cause a body's colour as this is an accident which arises out of its nature, he does cause the colouring, the becoming coloured (*talwīn*), because he anchored the accident in the nature of the body, or of the atom that merges into it.[17] He cannot go beyond this 'predisposition'.[18] Something that comes into existence because of nature cannot come into existence through something else, and we do not want to assume that God gives colour to an object that could not assume a colour by its nature, and would consequently not become coloured.[19] Also: if God caused not only the 'becoming coloured' but also colour itself, then he himself would have to be coloured as the colour would emanate from his 'nature'. Or, analogous: he who can cause movement, 'has power over movement', is himself able to move.[20] Of course, we do not want to make either of those claims about God: he is not of any colour, and he does not move. Consequently this must be due to other forces, and these forces are contained within the bodies themselves. Thus living and lifeless things do indeed possess effective forces;[21] even a corpse performs the action of being dead.[22] Here, too, God only effects letting the person die (*imāta*), and this is

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13  Text 6, a–b.

14  See p. 242 and 246f. below.

15  But cf. Text 6, c; 10; 11, b; also 15, g–i (where, however, the attribution is not clear). Ibn Mattōya says it surprisingly clearly, *Muḥīṭ* II 244, 5f. Cf. Frank in: JAOS 87/1967/255.

16  See p. 242f. below.

17  Text 7, g–h; also 6, d. Plato already states in his *Timaios* (68 D) that it is God who causes colours and not man.

18  Text 6, c. The term is not known to either Muʿammar or our source. It is not until philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā that the term *istiʿdād* is used.

19  Text 7, i–k with commentary on k.

20  Text 11, c; 22, a.

21  Text 7, b, and 13, b.

22  Text 7, c. Muʿammar (i.e. our source) does not distinguish between death and being dead.

no accident.[23] He can will the death, but the path of this act of will runs via nature. Everything that God effects, letting die and making come alive (*iḥyāʾ*), giving colour and moving, is fundamentally only his will: these acts of will are inherent in him as hypostases without having an actual location.[24]

We can guess that that in order to support his theory Muʿammar gave instances selected from natural science, as al-Naẓẓām would do after him, and as even Ḍirār's pupils did, but this aspect of his thought is entirely obscured in our sources. Only one of Jāḥiẓ' texts, which cannot be attributed with certainty, tells us that following his ideas, people would explain sounds with the 'nature' of the bodies causing them: 'when two stones clink together or the tongue touches the inside of the teeth', when air is pushed against itself (as in thunder?) or wind is constricted or fire blazes and crackles. A sound, the text continues, always requires two bodies that collide as well as air mass between the two (and carries the sound?); it also requires a space as it moves from one place to another.[25] Still within the context of the same system, fire is hot wind, and wind, air that moves.[26] Muʿammar also explained dreams according to these principles, as originating out of the nature of the dreaming person, i.e. presumably from physical causes.[27] This is a complete demystification of dreams compared to what was expected of them elsewhere; prophetic dreams would be difficult to explain like this. And he is said to have described even love in these terms: it arises from 'the intimacy of natures, the union of spirits (*arwāḥ*), the harmony of minds and the proximity of inclinations'.[28]

What the sources did preserve with much more interest are those points where the system became a theological problem. We can distinguish – in a way that the *mutakallimūn* themselves would have been unlikely to accept – between a dialectical and a factual level. The first one comprises arguments transmitted in the *kalām* style and constructed in the form of *muʿāraḍa*. Muʿammar's identifying 'being able to effect something' with 'being something' by stating that someone who had power over movement must also be able himself[29] to move did not make sense to many: if God can move something, i.e.

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23    Text 7, g–h; also 11, b.

24    Text 11, d. Cf. (regarding the entire topic) also Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 233f., n. 5–6.

25    Text 15, k and d. For an explanation of sound made by clinking together see p. 387 below.

26    Text 15, l.

27    Text 63. Cf. Strato's explanation in *Placita philosophorum* (Doxographi Graeci 416 a, 10ff. Dɪᴇʟs = Daiber, *Aëtius Arabus* 216f., para. v 2.2).

28    Text 65, d. Of course, this is at best formulated in accordance with his views; the context of the utterance is fictional (see p. 33, n. 3 above).

29    Cf. also Eberhardt 57f.

wills movement, why should he not also have power over movement without being affected himself?[30] Ashʿarī, from whom we know this objection, does not mention who proposed it, but he certainly was not the author, as Muʿammar himself reacted with a counter-argument. If we, he said, really wanted to claim that God has power over pregnancy without having the power to beget off-spring, then we must also say that he has power over injustice without hav-ing the power of being unjust himself.[31] This was directed against someone who did not want to draw the conclusion that God might have the power of injustice: one might think of Naẓẓām;[32] but he was also trying to attack Abū l-Hudhayl through his doctrine, maybe even with reference to the same problem – if, indeed, we may alter the source text to this extent.[33] With regard to Muʿammar we can conclude that he saw pregnancy as something natural; even if humans may not be able to determine when conception occurs, it is not caused by God directly.

When it came to the 'accidents' death and life, things became awkward for Muʿammar, for in this context his opponents could refer to sura 67:2: '(God) created death and life'. To Muʿammar, his interpretation that God effected only 'letting die' and 'making come to life' was probably merely a question of ex-egesis; still, Ibn al-Rēwandī could claim that his intention allowed different in-terpretations. His pupils may well have felt embarrassed by the contradiction between his texts and scripture. Khayyāṭ brushed the matter aside; factually the matter was, after all, quite clear.[34]

There was less agitation regarding the conclusion that in this system the Quran – an accident in Muʿammar's view – had not been directly created by God.[35] Those who did not believe in the *khalq al-Qurʾān* anyway had no criti-cism to make, while the Muʿtazilites were initially satisfied that according to Muʿammar the Quran was created in a figurative sense (*majāz^an*).[36] After all, he did not deny that it originated within time (*muḥdath*),[37] and that had been the intention of the 'dogma' in the first place.[38] Like possibly Jaʿd b. Dirham

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30    Text 11, e.

31    Text 20, b.

32    See p. 438 below.

33    Text 20, c with commentary.

34    Text 17, e–h; cf. also Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 194, 15f.

35    Text 13, a and c–d; 12, a.

36    This phrase is found in Jāḥiẓ in Text 15, a–b. It is doubtful whether Muʿammar said it him-self (see n. 45 on Text 9, b below).

37    Text 12, c; 14, c.

38    See p. 497f. below; also p. 249.

or Jahm b. Ṣafwān[38a] before him he claimed that God's word as Moses heard it in the burning bush was produced by the bush and only indirectly by God; similarly it had been Gabriel who dictated the Quran to Muḥammad and not God himself. Now, however, he gave an ontological reason for it: revelation is an acoustic event and consequently an accident, and accidents are generated by the 'location' at which they occur.[39] We might challenge whether Khayyāṭ is quite correct under these circumstances when he claims that even so, only God addressed humans in the Quran and spoke to them;[40] what he should have said is that God effected the words 'being spoken'. Still, then he would have given the opposition a trump card, as the idea that God spoke directly to humans did by that time not allow of much modification. Muʿammar was satisfied with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's[41] dictum that the Quran was 'neither creator nor created',[42] proving how firmly he was rooted in the past, as this phrase did not even envisage the non-createdness that would be at the centre of the discussion by Khayyāṭ's time. It is interesting to note that Jāḥiẓ felt the need to distance himself from Muʿammar's theory, as some of the Muʿtazila's opponents cited it as their authority.[43]

It is difficult to analyse Text XVI 15, c–l with regard to this subject. It is a passage from Jāḥiẓ' *K. khalq al-Qurʾān*, which only survives in excerpts. Important indications concerning its classifications may have been lost with the context. Furthermore Jāḥiẓ expresses himself far too vaguely, firstly because of his sophisticated literary style and secondly because of the intimate nature of his communication, namely a reply to a letter which has not survived. I have discussed the philological problems in the commentary on the passage. Muʿammar's doctrine is most clearly detectable in *g*, but the Quran is called a body (*c*). The contradiction may not be quite as extreme as it looks at first sight, as the word *qurʾān* was, after all, equivocal. It was an accident in its form as a spoken word emanating from some body; but when regarded not under the aspect of *kalām Allāh*

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38a   See vol. II 515 and 570f. above.

39    Text 13, e–f, and 14, a; also 7, f, where the angel (i.e. Gabriel) and the 'tree' (i.e. the bush from sura 28:30) are named side by side. The stone that is also named may be merely exaggeration on the doxographer's part; or it may be a reference to the legend that near Mecca trees and stones greeted Muḥammad as prophet (Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīra* 151, 6ff.).

40    Text 12, b. It is also rejected by the slightly more radical Text 7, f. Khayyāṭ subsequently has to resort to an *argumentum ad hominem* (12, d).

41    See vol. I 441 above.

42    Text 14, b.

43    Text 15; cf. also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 462.

but as a book, it was of course a body. The question is whether Muʿammar might not have used the term *muṣḥaf* rather than *qurʾān*. Jāḥiẓ places the acoustic realisation of the Quran within the category 'sound' (*ṣawt*), which according to his classification would be an accident (*c–d*).

With this problem complex we have taken the step from the dialectical to the factual level. This is where we must ask another question that became relevant from the opposition's point of view only: the question of *mutawallidāt*. It is not quite as anachronistic with regard to Muʿammar as it was in the case of Ḍirār b. ʿAmr;[44] after all, Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir was Muʿammar's contemporary. It is possible that he commented on the question: there is a passage in Pazdawī that could be interpreted as him accepting the term for convention's sake.[45] But there was no place for the model in his system, mostly because his understanding of the body was a sensualist one, as an individual object at a certain point in time,[46] which is identical with its essence, but only to the extent as the latter affects it directly, and even then only for a moment. What Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir regarded as a 'generated' or caused secondary act, Muʿammar saw as the effect of the body affected,[47] i.e. if someone throws a stone, it flies due to its nature.[48] A living thing cannot effect a phenomenon caused by a lifeless object and affecting a lifeless object.[49]

   In this fragmentary form the theory looks rather backward at first, compared e.g. to what we know of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam,[50] especially when we pursue Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's example and assume that the stone thrown by someone ended up killing another human being. Muʿammar would probably have had to say that the victim 'effects' his death, i.e. dies due to his nature. Thus the aspect of responsibility appears to be excluded.[51] If we believe Khayyāṭ, Muʿammar

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44    See p. 49 above.

45    Text 9, b–c; concerning the problem of attribution see the commentary. Jāḥiẓ claims as well that he allowed certain connections of effects in metaphorical style (Text 15, a–b), but the phrase is so obvious it could easily have occurred to every doxographer.

46    Thus for the first time Frank in: JAOS 87/1967/259; emphasised by Eberhardt (p. 16).

47    Text 7, a; 8, a (using different terminology).

48    I selected this example myself, following Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir.

49    Text 13, b, and 7, b; cf. 48, b. Possibly also hinted at in Text 58.

50    See vol. I 434f. above.

51    Pazdawī presented the event as the effected act being caused by the instrument, in the present case the stone (Text 9, a); but this is probably simply wrongly deduced from the axiom that living and lifeless objects must be strictly separated in their effects. A related problem is touched on in Text 21: how should a case be judged where two agents effect an object? But the reply does not yield anything for us: as in Muʿammar's view the affected

was very much aware of this aspect. He had to come to terms with it when he discussed suffering, which is, in the form of pain, effected by nature, which means that there is no difference in essence between the illness of a human being and the wilting of a plant.[52] God is involved, but only indirectly.[53] This settled the ancient theodicy problem of why God allows innocent children to suffer: their illness is now a purely medical phenomenon.[54] Matters become more complex when a human being causes someone else pain. This is wrong, and the fault lies with the agent, the perpetrator; God has nothing to do with it.[55] Khayyāṭ does not go further into the issue, but we might be justified in assuming that Muʿammar did not rule out that an effect originating in nature can be triggered by a human, which would position him not all that far removed from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. Now the question of the extent to which he found himself in an *aporia* with this approach is the only one that remains.[56]

Ibn al-Rēwandī was of course interested in putting such *aporiai* into relief. He seems to have been particularly successful in the context of a last issue: the miracles. It looks as if he had been the one to point out that miracles normally do not work by generating a new body, but rather by an accident affecting an existing body in a fashion different from the one we are used to. Accidents, however, are beyond God's domain.[57] Of course he can always create new bodies, but it would be necessary to look around to see which miracle could be counted as belonging in that category. Still, we may assume that on the whole miracles were a matter of supreme indifference to Muʿammar anyway. As long as they were reported in hadiths only, they were not yet binding at the time, and if he did believe in the *iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, there was other proof available for it.

### 1.3.2.1.2     The ma'nā Theory

Another, very important problem, on the other hand, Muʿammar approached himself: change. He even wrote a book about it, although it has a different title: *K. al-maʿānī*, *maʿnā* being the term he introduced into the discussion in this context. The question he found himself confronted with was: why does a body

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            body would act entirely of its own accord, it is irrelevant how many agents affect it from
            the outside.

52      Text 17, a, after Ibn Rēwandī.

53      This is rather hazy in Khayyāṭ's answer (17 b–c).

54      Text 16.

55      Text 17, d.

56      *Aporiai* such as this are emphasised very much in Eberhardt's dissertation, but due to the
            scant sources it is hardly ever possible to prove them without doubt.

57      Text 18–19; regarding the part played by Ibn Rēwandī cf. the commentary.

effect sometimes one accident, sometimes another? Why is an object once black, another time white, once moving and another time at rest? This question was not easy to answer from a sensualist point of view. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and especially al-Aṣamm, whom he must have known from his Basra days, had used the term *inqilāb*: God himself creates change, and he could even change a mustard grain into a mountain.[1] For a natural scientist like Muʿammar this was probably no more than a lumberjack's approach to theology. Nature effects phenomena, but Muʿammar did not interpret 'nature' in the sense of the φύσις of Antiquity; it only inheres in one individual body, and can be defined for one moment only. Consequently change was not the same as becoming, effecting not the same as acting over time.[2] Thus the point at issue was not so much – and not exclusively – the question of why one and the same body can be first black and then white, but also why of two bodies that are otherwise identical one is white and the other one black.

Muʿammar found the last question easy to answer: the one body is white because it appears white due to its nature, i.e. the accident of 'being white' is inherent in it as such; and the same is true of the black body. The problem became more difficult in the context of movement and rest, as this question was usually addressed from the perspective of the consecutive sequence of stages affecting one and the same substratum. Consequently the aspect of time could not be excluded altogether anymore. Muʿammar tried his best to maintain the sensualist approach: to us, the body 'is' only ever for a moment, and in this moment it is always at rest. His approach was aided by the atomist understanding of movement which widely, possibly exclusively, dominated thought at the time. Movement is not a continuum but made up out of separate points in time at each of which the moving body is in a different place.[3] One might even say that movement is really no more than a figure of speech.[4] At every moment in it exists and we can see it, the body in motion is in fact at rest; rest, as Muʿammar put it, is the only way to exist.[5] Even when God creates a body, it is at rest;[6] giving it existence does not mean movement is imparted, as the

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1  See vol. I 418 and II 452 above.

2  Thus Eberhardt 15f.

3  Text 24; also 25, where, however, the chronological sequence may be included too much.

4  Text, 23, a.

5  Text 22 and 23, b. *Kawn* 'way of being' must not be over-interpreted metaphysically; it is nothing more than the infinitive of *kāna*, and like all these infinitives (*ʿilm*, *irāda* etc.) it denotes only the realisation of the action at a certain moment, the 'state of being' (see p. 253 below).

6  Text 23, c.

Kufan Shīʿites or antique thought seemed to imply.[7] So far, so good; but some movement is simply necessary. Not only because reality does not obey theory, but because the proof of the world's createdness and contingency is tied to movement; Muʿammar did not want to be without this proof. This, at least is how Khayyāṭ, our oldest authority, sees it.[8]

At this point 'nature' did not provide sufficient explanation anymore, as the structure of the moving body remained the same before and after. The change could only be initiated by a causal determinant, and Muʿammar called this determinant *maʿnā*. He appears to have been the first to employ this word in the context. It is noticeable that the terms *sabab* or *ʿilla* are hardly ever, or never, used in accounts we have of his ideas, although this does not mean that he did not use them: *ʿilla* occurs in the title of his book on the scale, and Khayyāṭ also employed it in the explanation of his *maʿnā* doctrine.[9] *ʿIlla* and *maʿnā* are quite close to one another.[10] *Sabab*, on the other hand, does not work, as the word designates an external cause. A *maʿnā* does not work externally, but from within the thing itself, being the kind of cause a physician or an alchemist would imagine.[11] The word was not necessarily new, and it may have sounded as vague then as it would later – a passepartout to be used when one wished to describe something without knowing, or wanting to say, exactly what it was, the only definite information being that it (a) caused or effected something and (b) was not material in nature. For a material thing one would have said *shayʾ*; the word was not as pale as e.g. French 'chose'.[12] In German, 'Moment (n.)' would seem to correspond most closely, while in English 'causal determinant' might be suggested as one suitable term. Greek πραγμα was similarly vague.[13]

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7     Concerning the Shīʿa see vol. 1 401 and 427 above; regarding Aristotle e.g. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* ⁴II 2, p. 389ff., or Ross, *Aristotle* 82f. For more information on the atomist doctrine of movement and its antique models see p. 251f. below.

8     Text 26, k.

9     Text 26, h.

10     See p. 88 below. Similarly, in fact, in the juristic theory of the conclusion by analogy (cf. Schacht, *Origins* 125, and ch. D 4.3 below.)

11     Frank already spotted that Muʿammar does not discuss the problem of external causality (JAOS 87/1967/257). Cf. also the remarks on *tawallud* above. In the title of the book *ʿIlla* refers to the way in which something works (see above). Regarding the concept in grammar and philosophy cf. EI² III 1127ff.

12     At least not at the time, and not with reference to theology. Dialect usage, however, shows that even at Muʿammar's time it was linked to the interrogative particle *ēsh*; there are instances of it in hadith texts.

13     Which does not mean we have to presume influence of some kind, as Wolfson does (*Philosophy of the Kalam* 115ff.). Frank refers to the similar part played by αἰτία in Origen (Actas IV Congreso UEAI Coimbra 88, n.).

For the time being we should refrain from speculating about the 'origin' of the term. We know far too little of the environment. Grammarians, it seems, have always, and often, used the word,[14] in the sense of 'meaning, that which is intended' as well as more strictly terminologically: infinitives are *maʿānī* as opposed to persons or individual bodies which they called *jawāhir*.[15] Rhetoric also used the term *maʿānī*; as for instance in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's *Dīwān al-maʿānī*. However, grammar and rhetoric were not subjects in which Muʿammar had any particular interest. Tradition going back to Antiquity will have to be kept out of the study even more firmly; otherwise we will end with an equation with two unknowns.[16] This, at least, is what previous experience teaches us.

Much ink has been spilt on the subject of *maʿānī* in Muʿammar's works. It started with the doxographers: they thought the subject exotic. Islamic scholars followed the doxographers' lead, and the fact that less is known about Muʿammar than about most of the other great Muʿtazilites spurred their ambition all the more. Within the framework of history of science, the key was at first thought to be found in Antiquity. Saul Horovitz drew a comparison with Plato's deliberations on sameness and difference in *Sophistes* (254 D ff.) and thought he recognised the εἴδων φίλοι from Soph. 246 in the *aṣḥāb al-maʿnā*.[17] H. A. Wolfson later also presumed a Greek legacy, although he did not postulate Plato but the Church Fathers and tried to trace the development of the term back to speculations about the trinity, which entered Arabic with Theodore Abū Qurra at the latest.[18] The problem with both these studies is that they are unable to prove the missing links; all that can be said of Plato is probably that he initiated a question which then remained alive over centuries in changing guise.[19] Daiber emphasised that when it comes to Antiquity we are dealing with a complex and multifarious situation; he understands *maʿnā* as the 'essence' of a thing.[20] At the same time he attempts to do justice to the opposite side who

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14    Cf. in detail, but deliberately without historical perspective, R. M. Frank in: Muséon 94/1984/259ff.; also Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Furuq* 22, 3ff., which, however, does not contain much that benefits our study.

15    Thus e.g. Ibn Yaʿīsh in his commentary on *Mufaṣṣal*.

16    Cf. also the source material Endreß lists in: *Sprachphilosophie in Antike und Mittelalter* 207ff.

17    Thus already in: Jahresbericht des Jüd.-Theol. Seminars Fränkel'scher Stiftung 1899, p. 95, n. 34; then in: ZDMG 57/1903/180, n. 1; in: Monatsschrift zur Gesch. und Wiss. des Judentums 48/1904/571f., and most recently in his study *Über den Einfluß der griechischen Philosophie auf die Entwicklung des kalām*, in: Jahresbericht 1908, p. 44ff.

18    In: Festschrift Gibb 673ff. = *Philosophy of the Kalam* 147ff.

19    Cf. e.g., around one generation after Muʿammar, Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ in his *ʿIshrūn maqāla* VIII 13ff. = p. 148ff. STROUMSA.

20    *Muʿammar* 79.

tried to explain the term with a text-immanent approach (bearing in mind that text-immanent refers only ever to secondary sources in this case). But Daiber's connection is too simplistic, as the text-immanent method usually implies an entirely different understanding of the system. Horten was the first to point out the moment of immateriality in the concept of *maʿnā*;[21] whereupon Frank, turning to criticise Wolfson, added the term 'causal determinant' to the discussion that we, too, referred to above;[22] at the same time emphasising more clearly than ever before that in Muʿammar's view material reality is all there is of reality, and that consequently his ideas can hardly be compared with systems such as Plato's or Aristotle's. D. Eberhardt's dissertation follows this train of thought, but the chapter on *maʿnā* doctrine suffers from the same mistake as the others, namely that the author focusses entirely on Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt*, interpreting them as if they were an original document.

*Sensualist approach* 71ff. – I do not wish to go into the hypothesis of Indian influence which Horten pursued. While there are indeed related ideas in Indian thought (cf. e.g. the theory of secondary characters in the *Abhidharmakośa* II 46 a–b/transl. de la Vallée Poussin I 224f.), but actual connections are even more difficult to prove. Cf. the overview of the state of research in Daiber 32ff. and 80.

This discrepancy between approaches is of course due to the fact that the sources hardly allow definite conclusions. They are not only fragmentary and secondary but frequently press the material into their own categories. To what degree they do this depends on personal interests. Ibn al-Rēwandī, our oldest witness, deliberately puts Muʿammar's doctrine in an unfavourable light by interpreting the *afʿāl* as 'acts' rather than as 'effects' as Muʿammar did, with the result that he can accuse him of having said that God cannot act unless innumerable *maʿānī* were involved as well.[23] Maybe this is the reason why Khayyāṭ and his pupil Kaʿbī calmly explain the concept of *maʿnā* with the

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21    In: ZDMG 64/1910/391ff.; also in: Archiv für System. Phil. 15/1909/469ff. He does, however, cloud the issue somewhat by afterwards using the word 'Idee'.

22    In: JAOS 87/1967/248ff.; similarly Daiber in EI² VII 259 b. Frank gives only instances for this meaning from later *kalām* texts, especially from the fourth century, and then applied them to Muʿammar retrospectively. He has pointed out the difficulties with this method quite clearly himself (in; Muséon 94/1981/159, n. 1). His hypothesis is, however, supported by Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's remarks on the development of the term within *kalām* in *Mughnī* V 253, 9ff. The difficulty arises most likely because Muʿammar also uses the term with reference to God (see p. 86 below).

23    Text 26, c–d.

single example of rest and movement,[24] as white and black or living and dead could only be understood as 'acts' in the sense of 'effects' of a certain nature. Ashʿarī's adding these examples[25] may be in the interest of re-establishing the original question, of how difference arises in the first place. But it remains astonishing that Khayyāṭ does not say this – at least not clearly; on the contrary, he emphasises that Muʿammar was interested in movement in order to save the customary proof of God's existence.[26] Putting the ontological problem of being different into the foreground is certainly partly the result of a later – and in truth very late – shift of emphasis.[27] On the other hand Ibn al-Rēwandī had already put the issue in general terms when he pointed out the single point at which his contemporaries considered the theory to be vulnerable: infinite regress.[28]

The question of the 'causal determinant', of why something was as it was, generated further questions. The answer that a body moves because it moves could satisfy the sensualist approach only at the first step.[29] So far the accident 'movement' was itself the 'causal determinant' of why something moved; this led later authors like Baghdādī to equate *maʿnā* with *ʿaraḍ*.[30] This, however, led into a spiral that kept spinning: why is this very movement the movement of this thing that moves? And as a momentarily perceived body can only ever carry its cause for being within itself: why is the 'causal determinant' causing this movement to be precisely the movement of this moving thing, the 'causal determinant' for this and not another?[31] The same sequence of steps can be determined for a second body one observes in addition to the first one and which, unlike the first one, is at rest. Obviously the second body's *maʿānī*, beginning as they do with a different accident, rest, are different from those of the first one.[32] The correlations of causation continue into infinity, and still they do not leave the body to which they belong. They are perceived in one

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24    Text 26–27; after them also Ibn Ḥazm (Text 28).

25    Text 29, f–g and i.

26    See p. 81f. above.

27    Thus in Shahrastānī and Fakhraddīn al-Rāzī (cf. Frank in JAOS 87/1967/256).

28    Text 26, a and c.

29    Text 29, a–b; also 26, f.

30    Regarding Baghdādī cf. Wolfson in: *Festschrift Gibb* 677 (and Eberhardt 9of.). One might also have said that a *maʿnā* is inherent in the body (Text 26, f; 29, h). The *movens* causing the movement, on the other hand, is entirely different and situated outside of the body (see p. 91 below).

31    Text 26, g–I; 29, b–c.

32    This is how Kaʿbī sets up the problem in his description (Text 27; similar Ibn Ḥazm in Text 28).

single observation, thus all these infinite numbers of *maʿānī* unfold in a single moment; they are simultaneous.[33]

Muʿammar does not appear to have been bothered by the regress, as the *maʿānī* were not objects,[34] and their purpose was to mark a qualitative identity that never fragmented itself. Furthermore he had to begin by proving the existence of accidents to older contemporaries like Aṣamm, using the *maʿānī* as a code for the phenomenon of particularisation.[35] To normal scholastic thought, and even more so to later theology, regress was the *diabolus in musica*. Infinity was uncanny: Muʿammar's contemporary and opponent Abū l-Hudhayl even believed the number of things in God's power to be finite.[36] God 'counted everything precisely', as sura 72:28 said.[37] Some of Muʿammar's followers are said to have defended themselves with the argument that God has the power to create an infinite number of movements for one and the same body;[38] but if they really said this, it was not actually in keeping with Muʿammar's views. In fact, Abū ʿUmar al-Furātī, who continued Muʿammar's thoughts in the second half of the second century, made a change in this very area: the *maʿānī* are not continued into infinity.[39] In a similar context Juwaynī would later also try to evade the issue.[40]

Muʿammar had himself made things worse by transferring the concept onto God: God, too, possesses attributes only because of a 'causal determinant', and in his case, too, this 'causal determinant' emits others which keep adding together to infinity. There is little evidence for this doctrine, as it was clearly a source of embarrassment to the Muʿtazilites. Still, it was not thought up by malicious opponents but was transmitted by one of Muʿammar's pupils,[41] and it is quite probable in itself. Like Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and other early theologians, Muʿammar saw no difference in principle between the properties of things and the properties of God. He appears to have developed the idea using the example of divine knowledge,[42] which offered him the problem of the object of

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33   Text 29, 3; also Ibn al-Rēwandī in Text 26, c. Cf. Aaron ben Eliyah's remark in JSAI 6/1985/283.

34   Text 28, f–g should not be interpreted like this either. Ibn Ḥazm uses *ashyāʾ* to denote 'entities'.

35   Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity* 184.

36   See p. 279 below.

37   Baghdādī, *Farq* 138, 9f./153, 10f.

38   Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* v 47, pu. f.

39   See p. 99 below.

40   *Shāmil* 174, 12ff.

41   Text 30; cf. p. 99 below.

42   Ibid., a–c.

knowledge in a particular way. If bodies function of themselves and God only
has power over them by creating them, it follows that his knowledge of them
is of the same kind; he is not aware of the *particularia*, as Ibn Sīnā would have
said. This is what Ibn al-Rēwandī said of Muʿammar,[43] and however much the
Muʿtazilites objected,[44] he was probably right. Khayyāṭ suppressed the section
of his *K. faḍīḥat al-Muʿtazila* that contained this, and we only hear about it
from a different source.[45]

   This also explains why people devoted some thought to the question of
what Muʿammar's views were on God's self-knowledge: if God does not im-
mediately discern the functioning of created things, how then does he discern
his own works? Once again it is Ibn al-Rēwandī who can tell us, as he asked one
of Muʿammar's pupils who understood the question as he was meant to be: as
*muʿāraḍa*. But he was forearmed: God is identical to himself, consequently he
does not face himself as an object.[46] Muʿammar appears to have distinguished
(at least up to a point) between what later Christian scholasticism would call
*scientia speculativa* and *scientia practica* with reference to God, knowledge as
the vision of the inner truth of his Self, and knowledge of things in their ex-
ternal facilitation and realisation as willed by him.[47] Ibn al-Rēwandī tried to
hide the connection, making the pupil say that God cannot discern himself
because he cannot be his own object.[48] Khayyāṭ tried to save the concept by
adducing human self-knowledge as a parallel.[49] But he, too, passes the issue
by: in fact, God's knowledge of himself cannot be used as proof or parallel for
God's knowledge of accidents. From the beginning God has had knowledge
only of the bodies he creates; but he only knows the accidents which these
bodies themselves effect at the moment they are generated. How, though, can
we say that he has known of the bodies since the very beginning? Muʿammar
answered as was obvious from his system: by means of the *maʿānī*.

   He gave the same answer with reference to the creation of the world. The
creation is not identical with God's act of will,[50] as it has a cause. As with the
*maʿānī*, this cause is probably not different from the action at first: God creates,

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43   Text 33, a–b; also 32.

44   Text 33, b.

45   Cf. the commentary on Text 32.

46   Text 31, a–c, which must be seen in connection with Text 32.

47   Thus Karl Barth in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik* II, 638.

48   Text 31, a; differently: Pretzl, *Attributenlehre* 23.

49   Ibid., g–h. Still, he does admit that the doctrine presented was transmitted from
     Muʿammar (*e*) – at least if the text has been reconstructed correctly (cf. *f.*).

50   Text 34.

because he creates. But being a cause, it has in turn a cause, and so on forever.[51] This, in fact, is the only place where regress is demonstrated with the term *'illa*, providing further proof how closely related *'illa* is to *ma'nā*. However, the act of creation cannot be the same as that which is created, as the former exists before the earthly object, and it is carried out within God's sphere of influence It is a *ma'nā* of his will, and is amplified as the cause into infinity.[52]

Creation corresponds to perishing. There is no doubt that everything God creates, he will also let perish, although the two are not completely comparable. Once creation has been accomplished, there are bodies that function of themselves. They exist, and exist through the existence that is inherent in them as 'causal determinant',[53] and they perish in the same, natural way;[54] they perish because they perish, in an unending chain of reasons concentrated all in one moment.[55] However, the *ma'ānī* theory only explains the change. It is by no means the case that there is nothing left after perishing. This gave rise to the question of how God could cause the whole world to perish, which Mu'ammar had to solve, for he would have been accused of believing in the eternal existence of the world otherwise. That he was not thus accused shows how elegant his solution was. At the Last Judgment, God creates something to replace the old world, something in which perishing is inherent and encompasses the world in its entirety. This other, new creation is probably the otherworld, which would mean that Mu'ammar believed like Ḍirār that heaven and hell have not yet been created.[56] Of course God could make them perish as well, but if he did he would conjure up infinite regress. Mu'ammar would have regarded this as a purely theoretical possibility.[57] He was probably not much bothered by the implication that God would never again be without a creation;[58] on the contrary: it served to rule out any suspicion that he might be harbouring Jahmite inclinations.[59]

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51    Text 36. I would disagree with Eberhardt 101ff., who sees the reason for this in Mu'ammar's view that God creates the world at every moment, or creates it of necessity. The sources say nothing of this, and it is not an inescapable conclusion from the system.

52    Text 35. Cf. Abū l-Hudhayl's solution p. 302 below.

53    That is probably what is meant in Text 39, a–b.

54    Text 40.

55    Text 38, a, and 39, b. This does not contradict Text 40.

56    Cf. Text XVII 52.

57    This is how I should like to interpret Text 37.

58    Text 37, f; 38, b; 39, c could easily be misunderstood.

59    The train of thoughts is entirely different from that of Maimonides, *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn* I 69 = 178, 1ff. ATAY. There is nothing to support Wolfson's assumption that this is a reference

By presuming non-material 'causal determinants' Muʻammar distanced himself from his predecessors' sensualism, and was consequently able even as a Muʻtazilite to maintain the parallelism of earthly and divine that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had been able to defend much more easily. But he did not write anything about his concept of God. Whatever we find out about it is due to the doxographers inquiring about certain standard topics and then presuming a position for Muʻammar. Consequently we can never rule out that we are looking at later speculation. We are able to verify their claims only with reference to the context of the system, and it stands to reason that they – or Muʻammar's pupils to whom they referred – would have taken that into consideration themselves. However, we are able to go further still and search for conclusions that they did not draw themselves. Thus we ought to assume that in Muʻammar's view God not only does not move, but that he is not at rest either; he can imbue with rest, but does not have it himself for that very reason.[60] His knowledge, his omnipotence etc. are not tied to objects directly, and neither is his will. It remains in the dark behind his creations, and it is not the same as his commandments.[61] Shahrastānī thought that with all these delimitations, nothing positive was left to say,[62] but Jubbāʾī would later proceed in the same way.[63] While the early Shīʻite theologians had regarded God's will as his 'movement' and as one of his most essential characteristics,[64] the Muʻtazilites found this very hard to come to terms with. They did not perceive an eternal will, but rather volition, a unique act. Muʻammar was no exception, either, although he might have thought differently as to him will was not directly identical with the volition of something realised within time. However, it remained an act subsisting as hypostasis, 'not in one place', in God, and as such not eternal.[65]

But then Muʻammar did not regard 'eternity' as a category that would not take him very far with God: it merely expresses a relation. Only since the temporal has existed could God be called eternal.[66] S. Horovitz considered this to be Neo-Platonism: God is beyond eternity and consequently it cannot be

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to Muʻammar (*Repercussions* 188f.). Concerning the entire problem cf. also Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 234, n. 6.

60  Cf. Text 11, c.

61  Text 34.

62  *Milal* 47, 1/99, 4f.

63  Cf. GImaret in: *Livre des Religions* 237, n. 18.

64  See vol. I 401 above.

65  Text 11, d; similar also Abū l-Hudhayl (see p. 302 below). For more general information cf. ch. D 1.3.2.1 below.

66  Text 41–42; cf. Gimaret, *Noms divins* 166.

predicated of him.[67] We must, however, bear in mind that *qadīm* originally did not have the meaning 'eternal'. In Quran and hadith it only ever meant 'old';[68] even Jubbāʾī once defined it as 'preceding in existence, being before', not allowing for the aspect of the beginning and un-createdness.[69] Muʿammar is entirely aware of the peculiarity of the theological usage, and it serves as his justification of the constraint mentioned. As he puts it, *qadīm* is an adjective derived from a verbal root, like for instance *kabīr* 'big, great' from *kabura* 'to be big, great'. *Qaduma* means 'to be old', which is the opposite of 'to be new'. So God may be more than merely 'the old one', but only in comparison with the created things which enter into existence 'new',[70] and this is not the same as imbuing him with temporality.[71] His works occur within time, but he has been and has worked forever.[72]

In his translation of Text 43, b, Daiber connects the grammatical and the ontological levels by interpreting *fiʿl* not only as 'verb' but also as 'effecting'; thus *qadīm*, being derived from *qaduma*, would be the effect of an act and as such only be imaginable as an accident in the context of God (and consequently impossible; *Muʿammar* 151f.). However, he ought to have pursued the same argument in the case of *ʿālim* or *qadīr*, rendering them – as expressions of accidental 'effect' – impossible.

### 1.3.2.1.3    *Anthropology*

If Muʿammar wanted to apply his model to humans he had to modify it. Humans do not function like mere bodies, as humans possess free will. And unlike bodies humans have individuality, they are persons. Personality is what actually defines a human, it is a distinct element in the atomic structure innate in him, an additional atom, as it were. Maybe Muʿammar originally used the term *ʿayn* 'substance' in order to make the special situation even clearer,[1] but the description he provided showed that he intended something indivisible that could not be reduced any further, and the doxographers went on to employ the term

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67    Thus already in: Jahresbericht 1899, p. 35, n. 34; later in: Jahresbericht 1908, p. 45.

68    Gimaret, ibid. 164; cf. also Text XXIX 5.

69    Similarly after him Abū Hāshim; cf. Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* 33.

70    Text 43, a–b.

71    Ibid., c.

72    Ibn al-Rēwandī in: *Intiṣār* 21, 10ff.

1    Text 46 a, with commentary.

'atom'.[2] Muʿammar did not even want to concede that this substance was a whole,[3] as in his view every whole was once again composed of parts. Still, he did admit the wholeness of what he was describing: the unmistakeable core at the centre of every human, his *nafs*,[4] the ego to which he refers with the reflexive pronoun. A human is not identical with his body;[5] here, Muʿammar went far beyond Ḍirār or Aṣamm.

The human body is merely the instrument of this essential core[6] and is directed by it.[7] Only the body moves or is at rest;[8] the 'human' is not located anywhere.[9] Locomotion is a material process, in that a body is lifted or pulled from one point to another, but the driving force is not identical with the body.[10] Consequently Muʿammar emphasised that this essential core is not inherent in the body;[11] only accidents are, but the 'human' has more depth than that. He precedes the body like an atom. Only in the figurative sense could one say that the person, the 'soul' (*nafs*) is within the body.[12] It does not even touch the body,[13] atoms being geometrical constructs to Muʿammar, not particles. And of course the soul is invisible.[14]

Muʿammar moved rather close to the platonic concept of the soul, which al-Naẓẓām would later adopt. But there is one thing which this soul, called 'human being', is probably not: immortal. Being an atom it is part of the body, and even if it is referred to as a *maʿnā* it does not exist forever but rather for a moment only.[15] As it rules the human, it coincides most closely with his will.

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2    Text 47, a; 48, c; 50.

3    Text 46, b.

4    Text 49, a. Zurqān's describing the *nafs* as an accident (Text 60, b) is probably due to the fact that he summarises both Muʿammar and Abū l-Hudhayl and uses his own terminology.

5    Text 45, a; 49, b and e.

6    Text 47, c.

7    Text 46, e; 47, b and g; 48, d; 49, d.

8    Text 49, e; expressed in the negative also 46, c, and 47, e.

9    Text 45, d; 46, d; 47, d–e; 49, c.

10    Text 49, g–h. It is irrelevant whether the body moves of itself or is moved by something else.

11    Yext 46, d; 48, d.

12    Text 49, d. Cf. also Text XXI 121, b, where Muʿammar has been moved too close to Abū l-Hudhayl, though.

13    Text 47, e; 48, d.

14    Text 46, f. In my opinion, Majid Fakhry (Festschrift Anawati/Gardet 110) emphasises the difficulty of explaining Muʿammar's concept from an atomist point of view too much.

15    Text 48, c. The word *maʿnā* is probably used in the unspecific sense, as it occurs with the qualifier 'indivisible', which would never apply to *maʿnā* in the technical sense.

Or, better: if volition is an atom of the body, it is effected by it,[16] but not only volition, but also the absence of it, as well as knowing, power and life – significantly precisely those attributes or acts Muʿammar also allowed in the case of God,[17] the *afʿāl al-qulūb*, as Ibn Mattōya would later put it, using a term probably coined by Abū l-Hudhayl.[18] 'Knowing' is fairly imprecise in this context; the human being frequently has to acquire it first; the faculties effected are deliberation (*naẓar*) and 'comparing' (*tamthīl*). The 'human' atom is not only the soul but also the spirit.[19] Sensory perception is not mentioned – and rightly so, as it requires the senses, and the senses are part of the body.[20]

'Power' at the human level means the capacity to act and freedom of choice (*ikhtiyār*).[21] Muʿammar discussed the capacity to act in a separate book,[22] but we do not learn much about his views. The doxographers often discuss him together with others, which makes their statements less specific.[23] What is distinctive is only that *istiṭāʿa* does not come directly from God,[24] nor, as Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir claimed, can it be identical with health (*ṣiḥḥa*); health is an attribute of the body.[25] It is obvious that it cannot come into effect in the case of something dead.[26] Ibn Ḥazm claimed that it precedes acting,[27] which is probably *grosso modo* correct, although it must be modified in a sensualist model.

All the same, Muʿammar was able to imagine events at the developing stage, as becomes clear when he starts talking about what truly fascinated him in the capacity to act: human volition. He distinguished between the case where an act of will achieves its end immediately, and that where the process takes place in stages. In the first case events are inexorable and are generated of necessity

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16    Text 45, e; 47, g. Emphatic in Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* III 54, apu. ff.

17    Text 47, f.

18    Text 50, also p. 268 below.

19    Text 48, a. Sadly there is no elucidation of how *tamthīl* differs from *naẓẓār*. Maybe the former refers to the 'comparing' that results in the understanding of *maʿnā*, comparing phenomena occurring on objects, in which case the latter might be a kind of free speculation.

20    Cf. Text 61; also 7, e, and XXI 121, a.

21    Thus Text 45, b.

22    Catalogue of Works no. 3.

23    Thus Text 54 and 56; XXX 20.

24    Text 57, a.

25    Text 55. Cf. Frank in: Atti III Congresso UEAI 318f.

26    Text 58. It was more significant that this applied to knowledge/knowing, too, which means that the punishment of the grave was probably ruled out.

27    Text 59.

by the act of will.[28] We must bear in mind that this is not the same as *tawallud*. An event comes into effect in the human being himself; it is merely transferred from the soul onto the body. This is also presumed in the second case. Muʿammar narrows it to the human wishing to move. And it may be that the body does not obey immediately but remains at rest for a moment, but not because the human is engaging in the activity of rest – 'acquiring' it, as the source has it – or deliberately refraining from moving. Rather, this rest has its origin in the structure (*bunya*) of the body, just as burning is part of the structure of fire. This 'structure', as the comparison suggests, refers to physical constitution, and the entire image looks like a scientist's theory. So did Muʿammar formulate a version of the law of inertia here? If the answer were yes, it would only apply to humans. Maybe he was in fact thinking of the numbness that can stop someone from moving immediately when shocked.[29]

In order to understand to what extent Muʿammar's image of the human being opened up new horizons we only need to look at his epistemology: he discovered human self-awareness. He was actually following the trend of the time to classify the types of knowledge. Naẓẓām probably preceded him;[30] Abū l-Hudhayl was an approximate contemporary who distinguished between 'necessary' and acquired knowledge.[31] The latter distinction is not made in the extant text by Muʿammar, where the criterion is the path pursued by knowledge.[32] This approach appears less elegant: while Abū l-Hudhayl summarises sensory perception simply as one category of 'necessary', i.e. immediate, cognition, Muʿammar sees five different kinds depending on the respective sensory organ. But soon the advantage of this view becomes apparent: Muʿammar can add a sixth kind, namely the knowledge of tradition, which did not really have a place in Abū l-Hudhayl's system. An insight such as that Muḥammad was the prophet can be perceived with the ear, but there is the additional aspect that we do not verify it immediately ourselves. The seventh kind of knowledge Muʿammar names is the intuition which tells us when a conversation addresses

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28      Text 52.

29      Text 53. It is not said in so many words that *bunya* is the 'structure' of the **body**; but it becomes clear from the context. Eberhardt thinks that Ashʿarī misses Muʿammar's intention (144f.). Still, the problem is not, after all, language, but the theory itself, which she does not deny him. Muʿammar was presumably more flexible – or less consistent – than she presumes.

30      See p. 413f. below.

31      See p. 271 below. As Frank specifies (MIDEO 16/1983/92, n. 6) this refers to the difference between 'non-inferential' and 'inferential'.

32      Regarding the following cf. Text 64.

or refers to us; once again, this is more than mere sensory perception.[33] This not only touches on the area of self-awareness, Muʿammar even says he really ought to have mentioned it earlier, as it is now in eighth place, while in fact it precedes all sensory perception. A human senses that he is himself even if his senses are not working. Muʿammar calls this 'becoming aware of oneself' (*wujūd li-nafsihī* as opposed to *wujūd li-ghayrihī*). While the coinage makes sense, it does not seem to have taken root.[34]

The ninth and tenth types of knowledge are closely related to one another; indeed, Muʿammar may well have listed them separately only to reach the number 10 that also fascinated Ḍirār so much. Both types appear in the context of proof of God's existence. The human being gains the insight, we read, that he may be either eternal or temporal, and also that in reality he is generated within time. Two things become clear thanks to this last pair of ideas. Firstly, that to Muʿammar knowledge of God is inherent in humans' awareness of their own finiteness. And secondly, that these last two ideas are as predetermined, 'necessary', as the ones listed before. Muʿammar was by no means rejecting Abū l-Hudhayl's classification but rather completing it. Knowledge and insight 'acquired' by means of deliberation were mentioned elsewhere.[35] The latter category surely includes the knowledge of God which to Muʿammar was not itself a priori although derived from a priori insights. The latter do not require further proof as they are supported by the human's self-awareness. The consensus, on which Ḍirār and Aṣamm relied at this point, was not relevant anymore.

We should like to know what conclusions Muʿammar drew from his image of humans with a view to life in the otherworld. He emphasised that it is the 'human being' who retains identity, and presumably also individuality, beyond the resurrection; he will be rewarded and punished in the otherworld, just as he ruled his body in this life.[36] This sounds as if Muʿammar had not been overly convinced by the idea of bodily resurrection, but to the age-old question of what will become of the animals in the otherworld he replied not like al-Naẓẓām that only their souls live on, but entirely in keeping with the Basran tradition: only those animals that please humans, such as horses, gazelles, peacocks, pheasants, would enter into paradise, while the others – flies,

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33  Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār still listed this separately and with the same example (Peters, *God's Created Speech* 214).

34  *Wujūd* in the sense of 'to become aware of' was used also by Junayd and by Kindī (cf. Deladrière. *Junayd. Enseignement spirituel* 152f. and Kindī, *Rasāʾil* I 103, 3, and 106, 5ff., after Daiber in: Der Islam 58/ 1981/312).

35  See p. 92 above.

36  Text 51.

gnats, predators – will go to hell to torment the damned.[37] In that case we may assume that humans in paradise would also have a bodily existence. Presumably the human atom is implanted into a new body.

### 1.3.2.2    Followers

That the sources have a lot of information on Muʿammar's definition of the human being is probably due to the fact that his influence would still be felt in the future. In the longer term his position was regarded as a kind of compromise between Abū l-Hudhayl's 'materialism' and the spiritualism found in Naẓẓām. Those who followed him did not form a 'school'; reports concentrate on this one issue and extend over several centuries.[1] But it is not unimportant for the present study to see which arguments were used to defend his model. The example of a mirror by means of which one can see although it is not part of the person seeing was used as proof that a human who uses his body does not have to be identical with it; just like the mirror it is an instrument.[2] In order to explain that the human being rules the body without himself being localised, people drew a comparison with God: he, too, rules the world but is not anywhere.[3] If pain is felt where it occurs rather than where the 'human' is – which is not a specifiable location – it is because the limbs are the 'human's' instruments.[4] Opponents probably imagined a living spirit (rūḥ) permeating the entire body, as did Naẓẓām.

The *maʿānī* theory did not vanish immediately, either, but it depended on an ontological concept that would soon – and not least due to Naẓẓām's influence – become outdated. In his biography of Muʿammar the *qāḍī* ʿAbd al-Jabbār referred to it with only one sentence.[5] In his view, Muʿammar was still a great Muʿtazilite,[6] but he remained silent on the subject of his doctrine.

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37    Text 44. Later Ibn Qutayba would agree with this opinion as well (*Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* 310, 8ff. = 244, 8ff./transl. Lecomte 271). Cf. Geries in: SI 52/1980/85f. and vol. II 59f. above.

1    More information in ch. D 2.2. It is not very probable that Ibn Bahrīz refers to Muʿammar's teachings in his compendium of logic (ed. Dānishpazhūh 124, 5) due to this author's Christian background.

2    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XI 315, 1f. Muʿammar is known to have written on the subject of mirrors (see p. 69 above).

3    Ibid., 322, 6ff.

4    Ibid., 314, 13f.; where the correct reading is probably *al-mudrik* rather than *al-murīd*. However, the *qāḍī* reports all these arguments purely as theoretical puzzles.

5    *Faḍl* 267, 8 after Ibn Farzōya.

6    In Kaʿbī's eyes as well, who counted him among the first set in the list in *Fihrist* 220, n., l. 4.

The names of pupils are mentioned occasionally, too, but they remain rather two-dimensional in the sources. In the eyes of posterity they may have been merged sometimes, like Muʿammar himself, with those *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ* of whom people had a low opinion.[7] Khayyāṭ continually tried to push Ibn al-Rēwandī into that corner, accepting that this also tarnished Muʿammar.[8] Still, we must not overlook that the sources, even Muʿtazilite *ṭabaqāt* texts, always preferred the heads of schools, and that the pupils of e.g. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir or Abū l-Hudhayl remain just as shadowy. It is more surprising that in Muʿammar's case the lists are not identical, indeed, there are hardly any correspondences. The oldest list of names is recorded in Jāḥiẓ' *K. khalq al-Qurʾān*,[9] where we find not only Thumāma b. Ashras[10] but also a certain ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd about whom nothing is known,[11] and

Abū Kalada

who, as we infer from his remark on the eel,[12] was, like his teacher, interested in medicine and natural sciences. Jāḥiẓ calls on him and others to support the theory that a body functions due to its nature and God is involved as the creator only in the figurative sense. Al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī, on the other hand, stresses that Abū Kalada followed Muʿammar in this point only, but not in his theory of the *maʿānī*.[13] He was probably barely younger than his teacher, as he allegedly lived for over 100 years[14] and Jāḥiẓ survived him by some years. We are told of a conversation he had with the *qāṣṣ* Naḍr b. Ismāʿīl al-Bajalī who died 182/798.[15] He must have been born around the middle of the second century at the very latest. He inclined towards the Murjiʾa,[16] but Jāḥiẓ describes

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7    Concerning them see vol. ɪɪ 44f. above. Regarding Muʿammar cf. Text 61, b.

8    Text 12, d; 18, c. Cf. also Text xvɪɪ 23, h–i.

9    Text xvɪ 15, which, however, does not state explicitly that these are pupils.

10   Regarding him see p. 178 below.

11   ʿUthmān al-Battī had a pupil named ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Salama (*Mīzān* no. 4776); but due to his age, this cannot be the same person.

12   Text xvɪ 66, a–b.

13   *Sharḥ al-uṣūl*, ᴍs Leiden 2584a, fol. 94a, apu. f. > ɪᴍ 58, 9f.; the sentence in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 270, 3f., he refers to is not quite so clear.

14   Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān* 198, 6.

15   Ibid., 198, 7ff.; regarding Naḍr b. Ismāʿīl cf. ᴛʙ xɪɪɪ 431ff. no. 7305, and *Mīzān* no. 9057.

16   Thus at any rate according the Ibn Yazdādh's *K. al-Maṣābīḥ* (*Faḍl* 270, 1> ɪᴍ 58, 10).

him as a Muʿtazilite. He was regarded as an expert in questions regarding sects, especially concerning the Khārijites, and was thus a feared *mutakallim*.[17]

This is probably the reason why he rose to being the hero of a legend with which the Muʿtazilites affirmed their dialectic superiority. It tells the story of how the king of India (*Hind*) asked Hārūn al-Rashīd to send a scholar who could argue in support of Islam at his court. Hārūn sent a traditionist who failed dismally because he used arguments from hadith and Quran that meant nothing to an unbeliever. The king sent him back, asking for a *mutakallim*, but all the *mutakallimūn* in Baghdad were in prison as Hārūn had forbidden disputations. The caliph realised that he had deprived himself of valuable helpers and had them brought before him. Abū Kalada was selected and sent by boat on his journey, but before he arrived he was poisoned – by an Indian who realised that any chance of tackling Islam was lost. Khayyāṭ narrated the story, but his pupil Kaʿbī appears not to have taken it seriously. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār adopted it, and after him al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī and Ibn al-Murtaḍā,[18] the two last-named changing the name to *Abū Khalada*, which was then further corrupted to *Abū Jalada* in the manuscript of Ḥākim's text.[19]

It is not surprising that in a parallel version Abū Kalada was replaced by his teacher Muʿammar, among other slight variations. The traditionist was changed to a Ḥanafite *qāḍī*, and his opponent was a Sumanite who put him on the spot by asking a trick question: can God create his own equal? When Hārūn asked the *mutakallimūn* this question, even a youngster (*ṣabī*) was able to tell him that questions such as this were contradictions in terms, 'absurd' (*muḥāl*).[20] The trend to glorification has been intensified; the attack on the Ḥanafites and the reference to the Sumanite may point to the story's origin in Khorasan. Two things may be gleaned: Abū Kalada came from Basra to Baghdad with Muʿammar,[21] and Muʿammar's school was highly regarded among the Muʿtazilites for a time.

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17    *Burṣān* 198, 4ff. The correct reading is probably *kāna aʿlama man raʾaynā fī l-Khawārij* rather than *min al-Khawārij*; if Ibn Yazdādh confirms that his inclination was Murjiʿite he cannot also have been a Khārijite himself. Regarding his teachings cf. also Text XVI 44.

18    *Faḍl* 269, 1ff. > IM 58, 11ff.

19    Ibid., 269, n. 448. The misspelling seems to be old; *Abū Khalada* occurs in the title of a polemic poem by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (Catalogue of works XVII, no. 40). Might Ḥākim al-Jushamī have known of this?

20    *Faḍl* 266, 4ff. > IM 54, ult. ff. Regarding the 'absurd' question quoted cf. the material in MUSJ 49/1975–6/667, and Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī l-arzaq* in: RAAD 25/1950/204, 1ff.; general information in Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 578ff., and vol. II 544f. above.

21    Jāḥiẓ hints at his Basran origin (*Burṣān* 198, 8).

The story's tendency has been pointed out by Pines (*Atomenlehre* 120, n. 2). In a further variant the Ḥanafite *qāḍī* is identified as Hasan b. Ziyād al-Luʾluʾī and the Muʿtazilite as Thumāma (Ṭūfī, *ʿAlam al-jadhal* 11, 1ff., with mistaken reference to Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār; cf. ibid., 238, 10ff. and before). The narratives may ultimately be linked to Muʿammar's mission to Byzantium (see p. 28 above), if indeed it ever happened. The idea that a theologian might be poisoned by his opponents was known to Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's contemporaries because of the case of Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015; cf. Watt in EI² III 767 a).

The second list is included in the *K. al-intiṣār*.[22] It loses some clarity in that the decisive word *aṣḥābuhū* 'his followers' was inserted by Nyberg, but it is supported by some evidence. It lists Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī in whose house Muʿammar died, as well as two theologians whom we know better as pupils of Abū l-Hudhayl's, Shaḥḥām and Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī,[23] and a certain

> Wahb al-Dallāl,

an agent or intermediary that is, who at times held the position of *muḥtasib*.[24] He had been Muʿammar's assistant (*ghulām*)[25] and was also acquainted with Jāḥiẓ.[26] The last one in this list is

> Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Sīrāfī,

namely a man from the Muʿtazilite stronghold of Sīrāf who was probably the same as Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Sīrāfī al-Naẓẓāmī whom Ashʿarī quotes once as an authority for one of Muʿammar's ideas.[27] Going by the second *nisba* in this text it seems that he later supported Naẓẓām.[28] One has the impression that

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22    Text XVI 31, f.

23    See p. 316ff. and ch. C 4.1.3 below.

24    Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbīʿ* 71, 1 PELLAT/*Rasāʾil* IV 99, 1; transl. Adad in: Arabica 14/1967/181. Also *Bayān* IV 13, 12.

25    Daiber 51.

26    Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *al-Ajwiba al-muskita* 146 no. 879.

27    Text XVI 30. Watt would have liked to identify him with Burghūth (*Free Will* 132, n. 78), but met with opposition (cf. Gimaret in: SI 44/1976/29ff. and my remarks in: Der Islam 44/1968/6of.).

28    He did spread an anecdote on Naẓẓām's visiting Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs, but both the sources his name is given as al-Naẓẓām instead of al-Naẓẓāmī (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* 39, 11; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭab.* 47, 4f.), although the *nisba* as a name seems more obvious.

this rubbed off on his theological ideas as well, as Ashʿarī mentions in great – and in fact quite involved – detail a certain Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā's views on divine omnipotence that would hardly be possible without Naẓẓām, although they also show some kinship to ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān's position.[29] If we should want to bring this Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā into the present context we are faced with the question of whether he could be directly linked to Muʿammar, and indeed this is not at all impossible. While he adopts Naẓẓām's concept that God does not have the power to do wrong, he words it in Muʿammar's style: God does not have the power to cause injustice on behalf of a human.[30] Muʿammar had reacted polemically in this context, and probably precisely against Naẓẓām.[31] – Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Sīrāfī had a pupil, named

> Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad al-Furātī,

in whom Muʿammar's legacy came to the fore once more. He worked with the *maʿnā* model and avoided infinite regress by breaking the *maʿnā* chain off after the first level: a body is moving due to a 'causal determinant', but this movement is not movement to him because of another 'causal determinant'.[32] Furātī lived in the second half of the third century, as he passed the information about Muʿammar he heard from Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā directly to Ashʿarī.[33] He might be identical with Abū ʿAmr (misread for Abū ʿUmar?) Aḥmad b. Khalaf whom Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār names as a follower of Muʿammar's and who should be dated to the same period, as he debated with Ibn al-Rēwandī.[34]

Ibn al-Murtaḍā, finally, claimed that Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and Hishām al-Fuwaṭī as well as the historian Madāʾinī studied under Muʿammar.[35] This, however, is an isolated claim and as yet we do not know his source for it. In the corresponding passage in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's text there is nothing comparable. Factually there is hardly any information in favour of this suggestion.[36]

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29    Text XVI 67 with commentary.

30    Ibid., f.

31    Regarding Text XVI 20, b, see p. 77 above.

32    Text XVI 68. He certainly maintained this opinion not only in the context of movement.

33    Cf. Text XVI 30.

34    *Faḍl* 267, 12f. > Manṣūr billāh, *Shāfī* I 137, –5, and IM 58, 9f. There are four persons of this name in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (IV 134ff. no. 1812–15), but none of them appears suitable.

35    *Ṭab.* 54, 14f.

36    Madāʾinī did serve together with him under Abū l-Ashʿath (see vol. II 42 above).

## 1.4  The Time Following the Fall of the Barmakids

The much-discussed question of why the fall of the Barmakids came about does not concern us here.[1] It is, however, worth mentioning that the Muʿtazilite Thumāma, who was familiar with the court, would later report that it was the secretary Muḥammad b. al-Layth[2] who gave the first impulse when he, in a pillow-book apparently composed at Hārūn's request,[3] pointed out to the caliph that even if he let the Barmakids make decisions on his behalf, he would still have to bear the responsibility on the Day of Judgment. Yaḥyā b. Khālid then neutralised him by casting doubt upon his orthodoxy in front of Hārūn; he was thrown into prison, presumably accused of *zandaqa*. Later Hārūn released him and sought to reconcile him with gifts.[4] It is certain that the religious climate changed as a consequence of the fall of the vizier's family; an end was put to *kalām* for the time being.

### 1.4.1  *Hārūn al-Rashīd and the Shīʿa*

The impending changes had cast their shadows before for some time. This was the fault of the Zaydites. In 175 first reports reached Baghdad that Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan was proselytising in the no-man's-land of Daylam, recruiting followers for his cause.[1] Faḍl b. Yaḥyā, the vizier's son and milk-brother to the caliph, had to deal with the matter. He acquitted himself well. Money talked, and after Faḍl promised him protection Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh returned to Baghdad. However, the caliph's suspicions had been awakened, and he had the ʿAlid put into prison after all, where he died soon afterwards.[2]

The climate of the Barmakids' evening salons was probably disturbed from then on, Shīʿite theologians on all sides getting cold feet at court. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir had been sent to prison temporarily; he had sworn allegiance to Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh, and his theology demonstrated his Zaydite views.[3] The Zaydite Sulaymān b. Jarīr, who was also suspected of collaborating, was said to have been recruited by the Barkmakids – with whom he was quite

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1   Cf. ʿAbbās in EIran III 808.

2   Regarding him see p. 25f. and 33f. above.

3   Ibn al-Nadīm mentions it as *K. ʿiẓat Hārūn al-Rashīd* (*Fihrist* 134, 18).

4   Ṭabarī III 668, 10ff.

1   Ibid. III 612, 7f.

2   Ibid. 613, 2ff.; for more information cf. vol. II 533f. above. According to an account in Ibn ʿInaba (quoted in Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLVIII 18of. no. 24), however, Yaḥyā returned to Medina.

3   van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 290f. > Madelung, *Qāsim* 74; also Sourdel in: REI 30/1962/28f. Cf. p. 116 and 139f. below.

friendly – to assassinate Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh's brother in the Maghrib. This was only a rumour,[4] but it was the only way in which the caliph could be sure of his opponent under the circumstances. Potential adversaries in his power would be placed under supervision in his vicinity. Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā, the son of that ʿĪsā b. Zayd who had found sanctuary with Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy in Kufa during al-Mahdī's rule,[5] was summoned to Baghdad together with Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn's great-grandson.[6] ʿUmar b. ʿAlī's great-grandson, who was Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh's namesake, was sent to prison like the latter and murdered; his son Mūsā, called al-Ṣūfī, suffered the same fate.[7]

When in 179/795 the caliph visited the holy cities outside the pilgrimage season, he brought the imam Mūsā back to Baghdad on his return, allocating him a house there, as al-Mahdī had done before him.[8] While Mūsā was the idol of a different faction, Hārūn probably wanted to be on the safe side. To him, the differences were presumably not as serious as they were for the Shīʿites; and only the Rāfiḍites in Kufa claimed that Mūsā did not get along with the Ḥasanids in Medina. After all, he and his brother were said to have supported al-Nafs al-zakiyya's uprising in their youth.[9] Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh had been a member of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's circle, and had even been named the latter's executor.[10] The caliph was said to have shown Mūsā a scroll (*ṭūmār*) containing information on the Shīʿa which showed, among other things, that the imam collected taxes from his followers. The caliph also asked Mūsā why he had people address him as 'son of the prophet' (*ibn rasūl Allāh*), while the custom was to be named for one's father – Mūsā was the son of ʿAlī who was not the prophet's son, after all.[11] Hārūn appears to have been given the impression that in the Hijaz, revolutionaries grew on trees.

Mūsā al-Kāẓim would have been rich enough to rent or build a house for himself in Baghdad, but this was not what Hārūn had in mind. He found noble hosts for Mūsā, first apparently his former chamberlain Faḍl b. al-Rabīʿ, with whom Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā had already had to stay, and then – and only this is certain – al-Sindī, the father of Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī. It is not necessary to call this

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4    See vol. II 534f. above.

5    See vol. I 284 above.

6    Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 620, 1ff.; Tanūkhī, *Faraj* II 180ff.; Ibn ʿInaba 305, ult. Cf. Madelung, *Qāsim* 8off., and p. 174 below. Incidentally, one of the accounts of Sulaymān b. Jarīr's treason goes back to Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā (see vol. II 534 above).

7    ʿAlī b. Abī l-Ghanāʾim, *Al-Majdī* 281, 13ff., and 282, –5f.

8    TB XIII 27, 15ff.

9    *Maqātil* 252, 9ff.

10    Madelung, *Qāsim* 51 after Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 463, –4, and 464, 1.

11    *Biḥār* XLVIII 121ff. no. 1.

a prison, as the Shīʿites would later; but it was a kind of house arrest. Al-Sindī was the Abbasids' confidant, apparently a former slaver from Punjab who had risen to high status. He had been governor in Syria for a time, and in Baghdad he held the position of police officer for special deployment.[12] The imam died in his custody on 25 Rajab 183/1 Sept. 799.[13] He had been treated well; al-Sindī's sister had looked after him.[14] He was not a young man any more: he had been over 50.[15] Even so the matter was precarious, and lawyers such as Haytham b. ʿAdī as well as notaries (ʿudūl) were called from the Shīʿite quarter of Karkh in order to bear witness to his passing.[16] It was all to no avail; from then on al-Sindī b. Shāhak had a bad reputation among the Shīʿites, and legends grew up around the imam's death.

The time was ripe. Mūsā had been a harmless man and the Shīʿa had not received any specific impulses from him.[17] Still, he was the seventh in the succession of imams, a number that concluded a cycle, as would the number twelve later. In Kufa, but apparently also in Baghdad, people were unable to come to terms with his death.[18] For the first time, renowned scholars in Iraq put pen to paper in order to write a *K. al-ghayba lil-ḥujja*;[19] the community had lost the living proof that the righteous cause was alive on earth. Nobody went to the Hijaz, as they had done after Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's death, to search for the new imam; later, the question would arise of how ʿAlī al-Riḍā had come to know that the position had become his.[20] He was regarded, at best, as the

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12    Cf. Pellat in: EI² III 990 with further details; also vol. II 239. Most important in the present context is that he would later head the measures against the Barmakids. A nephew of his, named Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Salām b. Shāhak is mentioned twice as an authority in Ṭabarī (III 414, 15, and 580, 18).

13    This is the date most reliably transmitted (Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 72, 2, and TB XIII 32, 11 > *Biḥār* XLVIII 1, –6f.). However, *li-khamsⁱⁿ khalawna*, i.e. 5 Rajab/12 Aug. (*Biḥār*, ibid.), is also found besides *li-khamsⁱⁿ baqīna*. Mufīd has *li-sittⁱⁿ khalawna*, i.e. 6 Rajab/13 Aug. (*Irshād* 288, 9f. > *Biḥār* XLVIII 237 no. 45).

14    TB XIII 31, 14ff.

15    He was born in 128 or 129 (ibid. 27, 14f.).

16    Ibid. 32, 5ff., after Sindī's grandson; also Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 504, –5f. (interestingly, Karkh is not mentioned here).

17    This is made clear by his *Musnad* which does not contain a single pro-Shīʿite hadith (cf. Muḥ. Ḥusayn al-Jalālī's edition; Chicago 1389/1968, ³1401/1980).

18    Cf. e.g. Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 28, 9ff. If the tradition in Ṭūsī, *Ghayba* ²19, 8f. is genuine, people believed in Mūsā's immortality even before his death, but it is probably only fiction.

19    Titles listed by Klemm in: WO 15/1984/126f.

20    This was explained as being divine inspiration (Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 381 no. 4 > *Biḥār* XLVIII 247 no. 55).

*khalīfa*, the temporary representative,[21] but that, too, was probably a later development; at first people simply hoped for Mūsā's return.[22] Twice he had gone into occultation, once briefly (under al-Mahdī), and now for longer.[23] We are able to observe how members of the Aʿyan family, who had found fame thanks to Zurāra, circulated traditions along those lines; later, their names would be erased from the Imāmite recollection.[24] ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥamza al-Baṭāʾinī, who had been the blind Abū Bashīr's guide in his youth, was seen as the leader of the party.[25]

The clearest demonstration of the overall mood was the behaviour of the financial administrators who were responsible for Mūsā's fortune and prepared to release the money only once the heir had been determined beyond any doubt. Thus in the eyes of later observers most of them acquired the reputation of being Wāqifites or 'doubters' (*shukkāk*), such as e.g. Ḥayyān al-Sarrāj who was a member of the Kaysāniyya,[26] or ʿUthmān b. ʿĪsā al-Ruwāsī who looked after 30,000 dinars and 5 slave-women in Egypt,[27] and Ziyād b. Marwān al-Qandī from Anbār who held 70,000 dinars in *zakāt* money etc.[28] Ḥusayn b. Qayyāma[29] refused to recognise ʿAlī al-Riḍā even after he had fathered a son, thus allowing to plan for the future; in his opinion, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had miscalculated in the case of his successor (Ismāʿīl), too.[30] The jurist Jamīl b. Darrāj, who had some extravagant ideas when it came to theology,[31] apparently required a miracle in order to agree to follow the new imam.

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21  See vol. I 456 above.

22  In Morocco this belief survived among the Berbers until the sixth century (cf. Madelung in: SI 44/1977/97ff.).

23  Ṭūsī, *Ghayba* 41, apu. ff.

24  Cf. the family tree vol. I 376, no. 41 and 43, above. The fate of some of ʿAlī b. Yaqṭīn's descendants appears to have been similar (cf. Madelung, loc. cit. 90f.).

25  See vol. I 388, n. 95 above.

26  Regarding him see vol. I 353f. above.

27  Regarding him cf. Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ* I 534ff.

28  Regarding him cf. ibid. I 338f. after Kashshī 467 no. 888; Massignon in: ZDMG 92/1938/379; also Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLVIII 206ff., and Watt in: SI 31/1970/295f.

29  Regarding him see vol. II 493 above.

30  *Kāfī* I 320 no. 4, and 354 no. 11; also *Biḥār* XLIX 272 no. 18. A summary in Ṭūsī, *Ghayba* ²42, –6ff. There also was a Wāqifite named Muqātil (b. Muqātil) b. Qayyāma, who may have been his brother or nephew; he, too, took some time to accept ʿAlī al-Riḍā (Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ* II 261f.; also Ḥillī, *Rijāl* 260, 7).

31  See vol. I 393f. above.

Ṭūsī, *Ghayba* ²47, 3ff. For further similar reports cf. *Kāfī* I 353 no. 9, and 354f. no. 12f.; *Biḥār* XLIX 48 no. 46, 48f. no. 48, 53f. no. 62. Kohlberg lists apocryphal dicta against the foolishness of the Wāqifites in: JSAI 7/1986/163. Ṭūsī best preserved original Wāqifite traditions, while later authors mainly expurgated them. Cf. also Goldziher, *Vorlesungen* 227 and, with a divergent opinion in places, Kohlberg in EI² VIII 646f.

It was certainly no coincidence that this was the point at which the gnostics made an appearance once more. In Kufa a certain Muḥammad b. Bashīr, a client of the Asad, claimed to be Mūsā's authorised representative. He was said to have owned a puppet he presented to his followers that spoke in the voice of the imam; after all, most Iraqi Shīʿites were unlikely ever to have seen Mūsā al-Kāẓim. Presumably he, too, only wanted to get his hands on Mūsā's money; he claimed to have the imam's seal,[32] and the continued personal contact made him a *safīr* before the word as such had been coined.[33] However, due to his belief in the migration of souls and his restriction of fundamental commandments – he dismissed the pilgrimage and the alms tax – he was unable to win over the majority; he never seems to have planned an uprising, either. Consequently the authorities left him free rein; they probably had an idea where the money actually was[34] and were not going to waste their time with harmless visionaries. ʿAlī al-Riḍā's later followers found the only plausible explanation in Ibn Bashīr's having won over the caliph in person – although they were not quite sure which one – by building a perpetuum mobile in his garden. And he was indeed able to pass his claim on to his son Sumayʿ; as late as the third century, after ʿAlī al-Riḍā's death, his canvassers travelled around the country.

Regarding him Ardabīlī I 338f. after Kashshī 467 no. 888; cf. vol. I 403f. above, as well as Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLVIII 252f. no. 4f., and 263 no. 19. A general overview ibid. 250ff. and vol. I 456f. above. Might Jābir's texts have circulated among the Wāqifites as well? After the disappearance of the seventh imam the *Corpus Jābirianum* only anticipated non-ʿAlid 'orphans' (*aytām*) who would exert spiritual authority (cf. Lory, *Alchimie et mystique* 96 and 101f.); occult knowledge is not a privilege of the *ahl al-bayt* (ibid. 81). The shift of focus onto the other 'Seveners', the Ismāʿīlites, probably did not cause any problems later as the delimitations had not been drawn firmly at the time. Cf. vol. I 456, n. 30 above.

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32    Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 70, 8.

33    Regarding this institution following the death of the eleventh and the 'occultation' of the twelfth imam cf. Sachedina, *Messianism* 86ff., and Klemm in: WO 15/1984/126ff.

34    See p. 106 below.

In Medina, people were more realistic, although they were even more in the dark. It was claimed that Mūsā was murdered: that the vizier Yaḥyā b. Khālid ordered al-Sindī to roll him up in a carpet, and that the cleaners (*al-farrāshūn*) – Christians, of all people – had then sat on him. Their excuse for having lost touch with him entirely was that Mūsā had had to change his abode so frequently. When he left his house two closed litters went in opposite directions in order to cover his tracks; then he spent a year in Basra, after which he was taken to Faḍl b. al-Rabīʿ in Baghdad. There was also talk of an informer: ʿAlī, the son of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar.[35] Over time the official Imāmite view of history would settle on Yaḥyā b. Khalīd as the one who had the imam poisoned with fresh dates and grapes;[36] clearly, blaming the Barmakids was the least controversial way out. However, people were well aware that this version was not based on any reliable tradition; consequently ʿAlī al-Riḍā was said to have heard it from an angel.[37] Mūsā's grave on the Quraysh cemetery outside Baghdad[38] became a pilgrimage site; in the long term the place was named Mashhad al-Kāẓim, more recently al-Kāẓimiyya or al-Kāẓimayn.[39]

Hārūn or his vizier would have been very foolish to use violence to do away with a man of such low profile. However, there is hardly any doubt that the 'Imāmites' were not doing well at the time. It was expected that they would try to rescue their imam; al-Sindī was believed to have collected the names of his followers.[40] Muḥammad b. Abī ʿUmayr, one of Mūsā's financial administrators, was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy by al-Sindī and only released after paying a large sum of money.[41] ʿAlī b. Yaqṭīn, who had been imprisoned even earlier than the imam, was not released until his death.[42] Ziyād al-Qandī, whom we mentioned above as another of Mūsā's *wakīl*s, lost the office of treasurer he had held for some time under Hārūn; this, however, appears to have been the

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35   Cf. the summary in Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 500, ult. ff., the influence of which can still be seen in Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 160, 2ff. Derenbourg /196, 7ff. (Beirut), and Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-ṭālib* 234, 1ff. It was also frequently accepted in secondary sources (e.g. Sourdel, *Vizirat* 162 and 166). It was probably an accident that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī replaced ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl with Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the ancestor of the Ismāʿīliyya (*Al-shajāra al-mubāraka* 101, –6ff.)

36   Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 67, 8ff.; for general information cf. *Biḥār* XLVIII 206ff.

37   Kashshī 604 no. 1123; quoted in *Biḥār* XLVIII 242 no. 50.

38   *Maqātil* 505, 4.

39   EI² IV 854ff. s. v. *Kāẓimayn*. 443/1051, 260 years after Mūsā's death, the tomb was destroyed by Sunni *ʿayyārūn* together with others (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VIII 150, 14ff.; *Biḥār* XLVIII 239 no. 47; Glassen, *Der mittlere Weg* 32).

40   Ibn Bābōya, *Ikmāl al-dīn* 36, 5ff.

41   See vol. I 451 above. Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 160, 2ff., is probably a reflex of this.

42   See vol. I 456 above.

result of embezzlement rather than because of his Shīʿite connections; further-more, we do not know the date.[43] ʿAlī b. Yaqṭīn was given a state funeral; the crown prince Muḥammad said the prayer over his bier.[44] Clearly the family's services to the revolution were being honoured; ʿAlī's father Yaqṭīn b. Mūsā was still alive.[45] Of course there were many who assimilated; a certain Hishām b. Ibrāhīm was given the sobriquet al-ʿAbbāsī among the Shīʿites because he, although a Rāfiḍite, had been so impressed by the persecution that he started writing books on the imamate of ʿAbbās.[46]

## 1.4.2 *The Influence of Popular Piety*

The advance of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* probably began during this time. After the fall of the Barmakids in early 187/803, they were definitely in the ascendant. Hārūn, who had gone on the pilgrimage shortly before this event, is believed to have met Sufyān b. ʿUyayna and ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām in Mecca and given presents of money to both of them; the aged Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ in par-ticular was said to have made a great impression on him.[1] When it came to dogma, all three of them were men of compromise rather than straightforward predestinarians,[2] but their style was different as they were no intellectuals. The Kufan Abū Muʿāwiya, who was a success at court soon afterwards, also exhib-ited a marked anti-Shīʿite tendency.[3] This had not been without importance even before his time. Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, who was well-known for 'Shīʿitizing',[4] attracted the caliph's displeasure because while Hārūn was in Mecca he

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43    TB I 89, 17ff.

44    Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 279, pu.

45    See vol. 1 456 above. Regarding the family cf. also Madelung in: BSOAS 43/1980/18f., n. 2; Elʿad in: Festschrift Ayalon 83, n. 109; Ashkūrī in GIE II 184f. Concerning Yaqṭīn b. Mūsā's estates cf. Elʿad in: JESHO 35/1992/315ff.; they would later be confiscated.

46    Kashshī 501, apu. ff.; cf. also vol. 1 423 above.

1    Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya* VIII 105, 15ff. > Ibn Qudāma, *Tawwābūn* 157ff. §§ 364–373; Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, transl. Gramlich 471; also Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* III 452, 8ff./III 30f. no. 64.

2    Regarding Sufyān b. ʿUyayna see vol. II 346 above; regarding ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām see vol. II 794f. above; regarding Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ cf. Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Risālat Iblīs* 67, 9f. Regarding the latter cf. for general information EI² II 936; GAS 1/636; Bertels, *Izbrannye trudy, Sufizm i sufijskaja literatura* 188ff. (also 199ff. regarding his meeting with Hārūn); Chabbi in: BEO 30/1978/331ff. The Ḥanbalites esteemed him greatly (cf. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* II 42, –7ff.); they do not seem to have minded that he appeared to be an anthropomorphist (cf. Ibn Khuzayma, *Tawḥīd* 52, –7f.). He had several wives (Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya* VIII 107, –7).

3    See vol. 1 250 above.

4    See vol. 1 271 above.

transmitted that the prophet had lain unburied until his stomach swelled up and his little fingers bent. Sufyān b. ʿUyayna had to intervene on his behalf, stating that it was so hot in Medina that decomposition proceeded rather faster than elsewhere, and that consequently Wakīʿ had never intended to imply criticism of Abū Bakr in his account.[5]

Anyone who applied a system of rationalist inquiry to hadith in those days had to anticipate that the caliph would believe him to be a *zindīq*; Hārūn was said to have imprisoned even his own uncle when he made an ironic remark with the intention of distracting Abū Muʿāwiya during a lecture.[6] After their fall the Barmakids were presented as dualist heretics; it was pointed out that they, like fire worshippers, had had incense placed insided mosques.[7] At the same time Anas b. Abī Shaykh, one of their secretaries, was executed; he, too, allegedly because of *zandaqa*.[8] The *mutakallim* Jahjāh, who may have been close to Ḍirār,[9] had to defend himself before Hārūn because of the same transgression and was said to have requested Abū Yūsuf to vouch for his good reputation.[10] The Muʿtazilites would recall later, albeit in the form of legends, that they had spent those years in prison.[11] The *ahl al-ḥadīth*, on the other hand, reported that Hārūn had said: 'I sought unbelief and found it in the Jahmiyya; I sought idle talk (*kalām*) and strife and found them among the Muʿtazila; I sought lies and found them among the Rāfiḍites, and I sought truth and found it with the traditionists'.[12]

It seems that times became harder even for the poets. The subject of renouncing the world, which had never really been part of the convention and had indeed become slightly offensive since Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs, now

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5    A Rushdie affair in miniature; *Mīzān* II 649, 10ff.

6    Fasawī II 181, 4ff.; Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil* 294, 2ff. The uncle's name is not recorded; regarding the hadith he mocked cf. ʜᴛ 161ff.

7    Ibn al-ʿArabī, *ʿAwāṣim* II 83, 7ff.; after Baghdādī, *Farq* 270, 6ff./285, −5ff. even in the Kaʿba. However, this custom was not considered quite so outrageous elsewhere (cf. Pedersen in ᴇɪ² VI 666a). For a general view of the criticism levelled at the Barmakids cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* III 350, 8ff., and Maqdisī, *Badʿ* VI 104, 11f. The Kufan Murjiʾite Yūnus b. Bukayr, who had been closely acquainted with Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā (because he transmitted Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra*? see vol. I 251 above), was criticised because of it by the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (ᴛᴛ XI 435, 11).

8    Ṭabarī III 681, 4ff.; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif* 382, 8f. Regarding him cf. Ibn al-Nadīm 140, 6f.; Chokr, *Zandaqa* 116.

9    See p. 68 above.

10   Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin* 546, 6ff. This would have had to be before 182/798, the year of Abū Yūsuf's death.

11   See p. 97 above.

12   Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Sharaf aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* 55 no. 110; similar also 78 no. 167.

grew increasingly attractive. Abū l-ʿAtāhiya had been writing *zuhdiyyāt* since around 180/796; indeed, it has been suggested that he, rather like Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ later, was one of the factors that brought about the caliph's change of attitude.[13] Another poet, a Muʿtazilite whom the Barmakids had had to protect from Hārūn in the past,[14] now seemed to turn entirely to the new image and 'dressed in woollen garments':[15]

> Abū ʿAmr Kulthūm b. ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī,

a descendant of the Muʿallaqa poet ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, who probably died in 208/823.[16] His interest in *kalām* had originally gone so far that he even instructed his *rāwī* Manṣūr al-Namarī in this art.[17] This experiment did not, however, turn out to his satisfaction; Manṣūr, who came from the Jazira, too,[18] and was a Ṣufrite at that time, later converted to Shīʿism[19] under Dāwūd al-Raqqī's influence.[20] Due to the changed circumstances it was better not to speak of all this – or, if people did, it was mainly in order to malign one another. Kulthūm did indeed do this in order to rid himself of Manṣūr once the latter had become a rival.[21]

He had by no means been taken seriously as a 'Sufi' from the first. When he first appeared in Hārūn's palace in Rāfiqa near Raqqa dressed like a backwoodsman wearing a fur coat and boots[22] with a coarse tunic (*qamīṣ*) and a shawl (*milḥafa*) but without the by then customary Persian trousers, he was soon shown the door again. He had shocked the distinguished company by

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13    Thus Kafrawy and Lathan in: Isl. Quarterly 17/1973/160ff. I am unable to go into their assumption that an argument between the parties at court was behind this. Regarding the formal framework of the *zuhdiyyāt* cf. Sperl, *Mannerism* 71ff.

14    See p. 34 above.

15    TB XII 488, 7.

16    Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 186, 5ff. For general information on him see EI² I 751 (R. Blachère), and GAS 2/540f.

17    Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 122, ult. KELLER/67, 8f. The passage seems to indicate that Manṣūr was not Kulthūm's only *kalām* student. His connection to the *mutakallimūn* is also mentioned in the story in Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²v 125 no. 390.

18    From Raʾs al-ʿayn, cf. GAS 2/541f.; Kulthūm came from Qinnasrīn (TB XII 488, 4f.).

19    He had met him in Raqqa; cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 302, 2ff.

20    Regarding him see vol. II 547ff. above.

21    Cf. the slightly contradictory accounts in Ibn Ḥazm, ibid., and *Agh.* XIII 149, 6ff. Regarding Manṣūr's Shīʿite interests see also *Agh.* 141, 5, and 153, pu.

22    Regarding this attire see vol. II 608 and 102 above.

eating only bread and salt, and by insisting on sleeping on the floor.[23] Later, things would change. He not only indulged in panegyric addressed to Hārūn, but also wrote verses on religious subjects.[24] He appears to have remained single while at court, abstinence (*ʿiffa*) appearing easier to him than caring for a family.[25] In a letter he exhorted the unknown recipient to be wary of people and seek solitude; one should search one's conscience every day and do a 'reckoning' (*muḥāsaba*).[26] His prose was praised as much as his verse; it is possible that there was more in this style.

He was a *kātib* and thus a writer by profession (cf. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* 262, 12). Ibn al-Nadīm counted him among the *bulaghāʾ* (*Fihrist* 139, −4). Fragments of his *Rasāʾil* are collected in Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab* 474ff.; cf. also GAS 2/541, and Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* [2]v 67f. no. 240 with the parallels in the annotations. Sezgin also lists the titles of his other prose works which are not extant. Regarding his definition of rhetoric cf. Abu'l-ʿAddus in: IC 61/1987/59.

The letter mentioned above was written at a time when 'people were labouring under temptation and confusion' (*fī fitna wa-taḥayyur*).[27] This may be a reference to the civil war that broke out after Hārūn's death, but it seems that Kulthūm went to Khorasan around this time; he had been friendly with al-Maʾmūn for a long time.[28] In Marv and Nishapur he studied Iranian writings and produced copies for his own use – probably of wisdom literature.[29] He spoke Persian, proving that for an Arab from an old-established noble family he had a surprisingly open mind. After entering Baghdad, Maʾmūn is said to have received him with great honours;[30] this seems to have been the occasion

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23    *Agh.* XIII 122, 12ff. and earlier. The composition of the anecdote takes us to an earlier period, as Kulthūm is not yet known to the caliph.

24    Cf. e.g. Yāqūt, *Irshād* VI 214, 2f.

25    *Agh.* XIII 116, 1f. Elsewhere, however, we learn that he was married to a Bāhilite woman. However, if this is true it probably referred to an earlier date (ibid. 123, 12ff.).

26    Preserved, characteristically, by Muḥāsibī, *Masāʾil fī aʿmāl al-qulūb wal-jawāriḥ* 132, 4ff. (read *ʿAmr* instead of *ʿUmar*).

27    Muḥāsibī 132, 5. Here, and elsewhere, the printed version needs to be corrected in accordance with the MS.

28    *ʿIqd* II 100, 3ff.

29    He praised the *maʿānī* they contained, but believed the Arabs to be superior on the field of rhetoric (Ṭayfūr 157, 7ff./86, 3ff.). According to his own records he visited Iran three times.

30    *Agh.* XIII 111, 14ff.; 116, 5ff. etc.

when he refused to debate with Bishr al-Marīsī before the caliph.[31] Tradition about him is too literary to furnish a clear image of his character, but it is significant that a man of his calibre was able to assert himself at Hārūn's court. His Sufi leanings were in keeping with the spirit of the age. Preachers of repentance were in the ascendant, even the caliph listening to their exhortations. We have already mentioned Ibn al-Sammāk in a different context,[32] but the undisputed star was

Abū l-Sarī Manṣūr b. ʿAmmār b. Kathīr al-Sulamī,

a popular preacher who had come to the capital after travelling on foot from his east Iranian home through Syria and Egypt.[33] His oratorical skills had brought him great success in Egypt; he transmitted from Layth b. Saʿd and Ibn Lahīʿa both of whom, he said, had bestowed their favour – and not only that, but also money and gifts – on him. In Baghdad not only the masses flocked to him, but Hārūn's wife Zubayda gave him a lavish present,[34] and the caliph received him in audience. Ibn ʿAmmār later reported that Hārūn asked him why he could speak so beautifully, and he replied that the prophet appeared to him in a dream and spat in his mouth.[35] This was a popular remedy to which the Shīʿites, too, ascribed miraculous powers.[36] It may have been rather too powerful, for the accounts ʿAmmār gave the amazed Baghdadis of his successes in Egypt appear to have been slightly exaggerated.

He had made his entrance there with a grand rain miracle ending a drought. Out of gratitude the two jurists made him a gift of several *feddān* of land, and also money, as he claimed in another context (cf. the differing versions in TB XIII 72, 18ff., and 73, 16ff.; also 72, 12ff. = Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ* 121 no. 275; also Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* 2v 206 no. 718, and VI 47f. no. 126. Cf. also Khoury in: JNES 40/1981/193). ʿUmar al-Kindī mentioned him only briefly in *Faḍāʾil Miṣr* (43, 2). It has not been possible to confirm Tawḥīdī's tentative claim that he was a *kātib* and had already practised this craft in Iraq under al-Mahdī (*Baṣāʾir* 2VI 48 no. 127).

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31    Ibn Baṭṭa, *Al-ibāna al-kubrā* 537 no. 670.

32    Vol. II 371f. above.

33    Regarding him TB XIII 71ff. no. 7052; general information in GAS 1/637f., and Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism* 176f.

34    TB 75, 8.

35    Ibid. 74, 19ff. > Ibn al-Jawzī, *Quṣṣāṣ* 87 no. 176.

36    See vol. I 346 above.

The act of spitting into someone's mouth was considered prophetic *sunna* (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 931, pu. ff.; general information in *Conc.* I 273b s. v. *tafala*). It was remembered especially that Muḥammad performed this custom with the first child born in Medina after the Hijra, namely ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr (Ibn Abī ʿĀsim al-Shaybānī, *Awāʾil* 105 no. 161f.; Reinfried, *Bräuche bei Zauber und Wunder* 24f.). This was a rite of admission; A. van Gennep noted it among the Īsāwā in Morocco (*Les rites du passage* 138f., based on earlier secondary sources). It has its roots in the pre-Islamic custom of *taḥnik* which saw a shaykh rub his designated successor's palate with a chewed date (Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical memory* 27f.; also Madelung in OLZ 84/1989/445, and more generally A. Gilʿadi in: JNES 47/1988/175ff.). It has been reported even in modern times in Egypt in the context of the leaders of mystic brotherhoods (cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Qāsim's novel *De zeven dagen van de mens* 121).

Of course there were people who were jealous of his reputation. Abū l-ʿAtāhiya accused him of plagiarism,[37] while Sufyān b. ʿUyayna was said to have threatened him with his crutch when he heard his views on the Quran: someone from Iran was easily labelled a Jahmite.[38] Ibn ʿAmmār's community was able to do away with this suspicion; he was reported to have written a pithy letter to Bishr al-Marīsī when the latter asked for information about the *khalq al-Qurʾān*.[39] His views on God's sitting on his throne were also recorded; once again, it was apparently Bishr who had asked him, and once again he put him in his place in entirely 'orthodox' fashion, using *bilā kayf*.[40] It is possible that there were in fact some similarities between the two, but those would most likely have been on the field of the definition of faith. Ibn ʿAmmār transmitted a hadith according to which Hell addressed the believer, saying: 'Pass along, for your light extinguishes my blaze'.[41] This is an entirely Murjiʾite train of thought.

In the eyes of matter-of-fact observers, Ibn ʿAmmār was nothing more than a *qāṣṣ*;[42] although the dimensions might have changed. He himself, however, aspired to more. Sulamī, who bore the same *nisba* and may consequently

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37   *Agh.* IV 34, 11ff.

38   ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ* IV 193f. no. 1771 > *Mīzān* no. 8790, with further references, especially of course negative comments on his hadith.

39   TB XIII 75, 13ff., and VII 62, 4ff.; *Ḥilya* IX 326, 3ff.; Bayhaqī, *Al-asmāʾ wal-ṣifāt* 327, 6ff. The *isnād* even includes a son of Ibn Abī Duwād.

40   TB 76, 6ff.

41   *Ḥilya* IX 329, 14ff.

42   Thus TB XIII 72, 8; *Agh.* IV 34, 11.

have felt particularly close to him, included him in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*;[43] Qushayrī followed his example.[44] The brief dicta the two preserved are not very enlightening, as the context is missing, and would have been found in the sermons he published under the title *Majālis*: Ibn al-Nadīm recorded this title.[45] They were no official addresses from Friday prayers, but rather paraenetic discourses. They moved even Abū Nuwās to tears; he, too, called them *majālis*.[46] The edifying story set in the time of the prophet which Sulamī recorded first, is characteristic;[47] demonstrating what it was the audience wished to hear at the time. In a 'meeting' on the subject of the mosquito Ibn ʿAmmār presumably praised the greatness of creation. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad b. Faḍl al-Raqāshī discussed the topic at the same time, but probably with a different accent.[48] Ibn ʿAmmār also campaigned for the fight for the faith;[49] in his day, greater and lesser *jihād* still belonged together.

Just how convinced he was of his mission is illustrated by his telling people that the prophet's blessing passed to him through laying-on of hands across the generations;[50] this is the first step to a *silsila*. According to his version the companion of the prophet in whose succession he saw himself, Wāthila b. al-Asqaʿ, a member of the *ahl al-ṣuffa*,[51] had 'shorn the hair of unbelief' at the prophet's request when he converted to Islam, and performed the ablution using water mixed with juice of the leaves of the ziziphus tree (*sidr*) to point to paradise where the *sidrat al-muntahā* mentioned in sura 53:14 is situated according to the exegetes. Maybe Ibn ʿAmmār intended to introduce this ritual in his circle, too.

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43    P. 130ff.

44    *Risāla* 18, 12ff. (Commentary by Anṣārī I 135, 3ff.). Cf. also *Ḥilya* IX 325ff.

45    *Fihrist* 236, 11ff.; cf. also GAS 1/637f.; also Rennert, *Tawakkul* 102.

46    *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* in the *riwāya* of Ṣūlī 766, 8ff.; according to others these verses were by Naẓẓām.

47    *Ṭabaqāt* 131ff. no. 1; also *Ḥilya* IX 329, apu. ff.

48    *Agh.* IV 34, −6; regarding Raqāshī see vol. II 500 above.

49    He had done this already in the region around Raqqa (cf. Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²VIII 29 no. 70). He was also the author of a *Majlis al-Niqfūriyya fī l-ghazw* probably written in Baghdad. It could not have been written before the accession of Nicephorus in 802 and probably belongs in the context of the two campaigns waged by Hārūn against the Byzantines in 187/803 and 190/806 (cf. p. 29 above). I am not able to say what precisely the feminine form *Niqfūriyya* refers to in this context.

50    TB XIII 72, ff.

51    Regarding him cf. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 1563f. no. 2738.

Some jurists, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal among them, continued to support the
idea that a convert should perform the greater ablution when embracing
Islam (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* 169, 3f.). Manṣūr b. ʿAmmār's son transmit-
ted his father's account to a Sufi. Sulaym continued to live in Baghdad
after his father's death, transmitting in the courtyard (*raḥba*) of the lat-
ter's house (Sulamī, *Ṭab.* 131, 6). It would seem that he had acquired a
substantial property in the city. However, his son was still in touch with
people from Iran. A man from Pūshang near Herat attended his lectures
(TB IX 233, 4), and Ibn Abī Ḥātim would later be interested in his reputa-
tion (ibid. 232, 17ff.).

It is interesting that Ibn ʿAmmār had to face criticism from another Sufi who
also came from the east, but was younger, and who probably settled in Baghdad
during his time,

> Abū Naṣr Bishr b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, called 'the barefoot one'
> (*al-Ḥāfī*),

d. 20 Rabīʿ I 227/7 Jan. 842 at the age of 75.[52] While he was not a true Arab, he
did come from a family who had converted to Islam generations earlier. He
considered the bluster with which Manṣūr b. ʿAmmār surrounded himself to
be pure humbug;[53] it seems that Manṣūr wrote to him claiming that the mate-
rial goods he so obviously enjoyed were an entirely undeserved gift from God.[54]
Bishr was indeed of a different stamp, being, in fact, the first dervish we meet
in Baghdad. It is in this character that G. E. Lessing cast him in his *Nathan der
Weise* (1779); he may have known the name thanks to private conversations
with Reiske.[55] Bishr had been a 'dropout' in his youth; he was said to have been
part of a *futuwwa* group, possibly a roaming gang of youths.[56] In Baghdad he
wore rags, or a garment made of patches;[57] he remained unmarried, as Ibn

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52   TB VII 79, 13ff. He was born in a village near Marv.

53   TB IX 253, 1ff., and XIII 72, 6ff. > Suyūṭī, *Taḥdhīr al-khawāṣṣ* 207, 1ff.

54   Ibid. 74, 9ff.

55   In this and other detail I am relying on F. Meier's most instructive article in EI² I 1244ff.

56   It must be borne in mind that according to Iranian custom young men had to go abroad
     as 'wild men' for a time (cf. Knauth, *Altiranisches Fürstenideal* 75 and 81ff.).

57   TB VII 70, 14.

Ḥanbal noted critically.[58] It seems that he was happy to be kept by his sister.[59] He had in fact studied hadith, but was reluctant to turn his knowledge to making money, and consequently buried his notes. He advised the *muḥaddithūn* to 'pay *zakāt*' out of their traditions, i.e. to apply 2 ½ percent of them in their own actions.[60] He feared nothing more than merely superficial piety, consequently he valued the giving of alms higher than the hajj, as the former might be done in secret. He tried to distinguish himself from the ascetics by wearing a long moustache and thick hair.[61] Of course, he could not escape the danger of being noticeable, as noted in several anecdotes, possibly from a later perspective.[62]

The city in which he lived made him suffer. 'Baghdad is oppressive to those who fear God. No believer should remain in her', he was quoted as saying.[63] His teacher Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ, like him an Iranian,[64] did not stay there any longer: he thought it was impossible to pray there as the ground had been appropriated illegally (*ghaṣb*).[65] This was an expression of the very scrupulousness (*waraʿ*) for which he, as well as Bishr and many others, was known: in order not to lapse into sin it was, so it seemed, necessary to consider things taboo that were merely close to the sin. In Bishr's view this was not so much the city as the people living in it; he kept aloof from them. Ibn al-Mubārak, another east Iranian who visited Iraq from time to time during his travels to the Syrian frontier regions, said that he only ever saw furious policemen, moaning merchants or mentally deranged Quran reciters in Baghdad.[66] He was a businessman himself, but even for him there was too much business in the capital. The city had become a Moloch; people made fortunes quickly there, and there was certainly a proletariat as well.

Bishr al-Ḥāfī did not appoint himself the spokesman of the poor. This would have been another way of putting himself in the way of publicity (*shuhra*). He did, however, show his solidarity with them in his attire; he lived a frugal life like them, without being an outright beggar like other Sufis. We have to make

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58    Ibid. 73, 6. Khallāl's *K. al-ḥathth ʿalā l-tijāra* (p. 12, 1ff.; regarding this text see p. 144 below) proves that the Ḥanbalites remembered him.

59    Sufi tradition later claimed that he manufactured spindles (Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, transl. Gramlich, *Gottesliebe* 575).

60    ᴛʙ 69, 15ff.; cf. also 71, 6ff.

61    Ibid. 70, 13; cf. vol. ɪɪ 393 above.

62    Ibid. 78, 11ff.; Sulamī, *Ṭab.* 47, 1ff.

63    ᴛʙ ɪ 5, 14f.

64    Regarding him see p. 106 above.

65    ᴛʙ ɪ 5, 2ff.

66    Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, transl. Gramlich 751; cf. also ᴛʙ ɪ 6, 10ff. Al-Khaṭīb discusses a hadith directed against Baghdād ibid. ɪ 27ff. in detail.

sure we know to whom we are referring, however. Craftsmen were by no means among the poor. They had always been there and had their assured, if small, income. In addition to them a class of salaried occupations began to spread, such as porters, who were dependent on the merchants and who, frequently in the service and under the protection of the merchants, formed their own self-help groups that would become known as *'ayyārūn* or similar; frequently with militia-like structures.[67] The government had good reason to take them seriously; from this time onwards the caliphs had to be aware in their religious politics that the common people's piety would not stand back any more.

### 1.4.3   *Popular Theology*

It is not surprising that it was around this time that non-Muʿtazilite theologians were first able to settle in Baghdad. Walīd b. Abān al-Karābīsī came across from Wāsiṭ,[1] but their influence increased only later, during the civil war.[2] The Muʿtazilites preceded them with its attempts at popular theology, employing as they did the instrument of *kalām* with greater ease in any case. They were also able to draw on a long-standing missionary tradition; seeing a new field of activity in the mixture of populations that had no intellectual roots of their own and had not really been touched by the intellectual trends emerging at court. The Muʿtazila itself maintained contact with the court, and its expansion into the capital became the precondition for its subsequent agreement with the caliphs' religious policy. However, at first it looked different: its contacts with the people, its exclusion from the palace during Hārūn's last years, and above all the events of the civil war ensured that it assumed an increasingly Sufi appearance in the new environment.

#### 1.4.3.1    Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir

The man acting as trailblazer, who consequently became the founder of the Baghdad branch of the school, was

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67    Cf. Sabari, *Mouvements populaires* 88f. He bases his discussion on the well-known pioneering study by his teacher C. Cahen in: Arabica 5/1958/225ff., and 6/1959/25ff. and 233ff. Cf. also Mixailova in: *Pis'mennye pamjatniki* 86ff. More information p. 158 below.

1     See vol. ɪɪ 496ff. above.

2     See p. 203f. below, also 158f. and 188ff.

Abū Sahl Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir b. Bishr[1] al-Hilālī,[2]

d. 210/825, at an advanced age.[3] He did not pursue a particularly charitable pro-
fession; he was a slave trader.[4] The Muʿtazilite sources suppressed this fact; in
their eyes he was an ascetic whose aim was to call two people 'to God's religion'
every day. He gave edifying lectures in the mosque which he interrupted every
time the tax collector (*shāʿī*) approached – presumably because this minion of
the state disturbed the mood.[5] In this context, 'calling someone to God's reli-
gion' may well mean recruiting people for the *jihād*, as Bishr, like Ḍirār and un-
like later Muʿtazilites, still had great respect for the border fighters; he believed
that the desire to die a martyr's death truly existed.[6] It is even imaginable that
he would have kitted out *mujāhidūn* out of his own resources. He does not
seem to have been an ascetic in the true sense of the word. He mocked Abū
l-ʿAtāhiya for bleeding the poor and orphans for free, saying he did not under-
stand the practice and thus only caused trouble with his asceticism (*nusk*).[7]
He does, however, seem to have been in contact with the Bakriyya in Basra
– although he had only criticism for it, too[8] – and he may have recalled ʿAbd
al-Wāḥid b. Zayd's teachings.[9]

As for his relationship with the state, he had always got along well with Faḍl
b. Yaḥyā. Like the latter, he was an Iranian and had been able to introduce him
to one of his Arab patrons of the Hilāl b. ʿAmr.[10] The fact that he was a Zaydite[11]
did not affect their relationship; Faḍl b. Yaḥyā attempted to win the moder-
ate Shīʿite over to the side of the regime. Hārūn, on the other hand, impris-
oned him once for his beliefs – probably at the time when Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh

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1    Thus only Abū Rashīd, *Ziyādāt Sharḥ al-uṣūl*, MS Brit. Mus. OR. 8613, fol. 30a (regarding
     the identity of the text cf. R. Martin in JAOS 98/1978/381ff.).
2    Thus Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 265, 8. *Al-Naḍrī* in *Lisān al-ʿArab* II 444a, 10, is probably
     only misread for *al-Baṣrī* (thus e.g. Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* X 155, 2).
3    *Fihrist* 205, 14 > *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 33, 9, and Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* X 156, 4.
4    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* III 137, 4; *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 33, 10; Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn* I 115, 6f.
5    *Faḍl* 265, −5ff. > IM 53, 2 (abridged).
6    Text XVII 55, a–c. His insisting, unlike many other Muʿtazilites, that paradise had already
     been created (Text 56) may have been to ensure the martyrs' immediate admission to
     heaven.
7    *Agh.* IV 7, 5ff.
8    See vol. II 132f. above.
9    See p. 134 below.
10   Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VI 90, ult. ff.; *mawālī* does not mean 'clients' here. The context shows that
     he was Persian.
11   See p. 139f. below.

b. al-Ḥasan in Daylam rose up to be independent of the caliph and Faḍl was
on his way there to talk him out of it.[12] Among the Muʿtazilites it was said that
he was released because he wrote a poem rejecting the Rāfiḍites,[13] but this is
probably merely an instance of a quotation from one of his writings having
been worked into an anecdote.[14] As the same version has him persisting in his
Zaydite conviction, it would be difficult to see what exactly would have per-
suaded the caliph to be merciful. Once Faḍl b. Yaḥyā returned to the capital, his
influence was probably enough to turn things around again.

Unless, that is, we date Bishr's imprisonment to the time shortly before
Mūsā al-Kāẓim's death, when al-Sindī b. Shāhak took action against the
Rāfiḍites. However, there was no reason for imprisoning him at that
time, and his Zaydite verses would probably not have helped him at all.
Furthermore Malaṭī (*Tanbīh* 30, 21ff./38, 9ff.) presents events differently
again, this time from an anti-Muʿtazilite perspective with reference to
Muʿtazilite legend.

Two and a half decades later we meet him in Marv in Maʾmūn's entourage. Like
Thumāma b. Ashras and ministers and dignitaries, he was one of the official
witnesses who were present when ʿAlī al-Riḍā was appointed heir to the throne
in Ramadan 201/March 817. His name is listed in the codicil (*dhayl*) to the di-
ploma of appointment in which the imam confirmed his agreement in the ca-
liph's presence; Bishr then affirmed it with his signature.[15] At that time he was
probably not yet suffering from leprosy;[16] he is unlikely to have appeared in
public once his illness reached the visible stage.[17] Consequently there is no
record of Maʾmūn having brought him to his court in Baghdad after 204.

He had studied in Basra, at a time when Aṣamm had not yet achieved im-
portance, under Bishr b. Saʿīd and Abū ʿUthmān al-Zaʿfarānī, two of Wāṣil's

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12    See p. 100 above.

13    *Faḍl* 265, 10ff. > IM 52, 9ff.

14    Text XVII 8.

15    Cf. the copy of the document found in Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* IX 391, –6ff. (392, –5ff.,
      and 393, –6f.), as well as *Maʾāthir al-ināfa* II 325, 8ff.; also Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLIX 148ff. no. 25.
      Thumāma b. Ashras is listed only in Majlisī and in the parallel version in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī,
      *Mirʾāt al-zamān* (quoted in Gabrieli, *Al-Maʾmūn e gli Alidi* 45).

16    Jāḥiẓ, *Bursān* 89, 5; Ibn al-Nadīm 205, 14.

17    It must be borne in mind that ʿAbd al-Malik's brother ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz remained governor
      of Egypt even after he became ill (cf. M. Dols, *The Leper in Medieval Islamic Society*, in:
      Speculum 58/1983/891ff., esp. p. 903).

pupils who were later entirely forgotten.[18] Here he had met Abū l-Hudhayl, who attended the same teachers' lectures,[19] but he did not like him at all, considering him vain and all about appearances: 'He would rather be unknown and known (only) among the people than vice versa, rather be a common lout and esteemed by be people than vice versa, rather look distinguished but have a bad reputation than vice versa. He thinks more highly of hypocrisy than of honesty, and prefers common talk to uncomfortable truths (*la-bāṭil^un maqbūl aḥabbu ilayhi min ḥaqq^in madfūʿ*)'.[20] Some of their later rivalry is expressed in this description; after 204 it was Abū l-Hudhayl who achieved recognition at Maʾmūn's court. Until then, Bishr had been the uncontested leader of the Muʿtazila in Baghdad. Interestingly it was not known whether he was born in Baghdad, in Kufa, or in Basra.[21]

The Muʿtazila had to establish a base in Baghdad, which was not easy before the change of direction under Maʾmūn, as the city was amorphous and the people who flooded into it from all directions were aimless. Several Muʿtazilites were said to have discussed the masses (*al-ʿawāmm*) and the danger they were exposed to by *taqlīd*: simple folk judge by appearances and make the public official (*kātib*) their ideal.[22] When it came to religion, however, the *kuttāb*'s influence could not be expected to be a good one. Bishr viewed the situation with great pessimism. Humans among themselves are like wolves, egotistically looking only to their own advantage,[23] and there is no remedy for stupidity.[24] He wrote a poem advising people to follow the right leaders, but he knew that some never heed good advice.[25]

In other words, his propaganda met with only moderate success. He tried very hard, reworking many of his prose writings in verse for this reason only.[26] In two great *qaṣīda*s he showed how God ordered everything so wondrously in his creation, and how reason can lead humans to understanding of these

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18    Malaṭī, *Tanbīḥ* 30, 18ff./38, 6ff.

19    Ibid. 31, 6ff./38, ult. f.; cf. vol. II 361f. above, and p. 233 below.

20    Jāḥiẓ in Ibn al-Nadīm 205, 15ff., and Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 186, 12ff. In one place I am following the variant found in Murtaḍā.

21    Kaʿbī, *Maqālāt* 72, 13ff., and Ibn al-Nadīm 205, 10f. In Kaʿbī, read *mustajībīhi* instead of *mustaḥibbīhi* (cf. Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 186, 3).

22    Jāḥiẓ, *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, ed. Finkel 44, 8ff. = ed. Hārūn, *Rasāʾil* II 196, 1ff.

23    Text XVII 1, vv. 1–3. The *homo homini lupus* motive is also found in hadith (Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* II 289, apu. f.).

24    Text XVII 4.

25    Text 3.

26    *Fihrist* 184, ult., and 205, 11f.; cf. also Catalogue of Works XVII, section b.

marvels.[27] Consequently it is to be expected that humans will see reason: God looks after them, they have no need to work against one another.[28] Still, Bishr was unable to suppress his resignation: while he is no silly Ibāḍite, or a Shīʿite who believes in such outlandish things as the *jafr*, the masses just do not respond to wisdom.[29] He becomes increasingly angry and rails against ignorance, which makes humans spiteful and evil; humans do not know what they want and are suspicious of everyone. The only remedy is to preserve patience and composure.[30]

Unlike the Muʿtazilites we have discussed so far, Bishr was a poet, but he was a poet in a particular way. While the two long *qaṣīda*s mentioned were composed in the conventional style as far as metre and structure were concerned, in most of his other poems, of which only brief fragments survive, he favoured the form of 'string poem' (*musammaṭ*) or of *muzdawij*.[31] This genre was particularly suited to the didactic poem; furthermore it was considered a popular form. This is the reason why the theoreticians discuss it only marginally and why only few early examples survive; but it also explains why Bishr was so fond of using it. In an early essay von Grunebaum collected the oldest instances of *muzdawij* – or, as it was called at first, *muzāwaj*.[32] Walīd II was said to have delivered a *khuṭba* in this form.[33] Four verses Ullmann uncovered in Ṭabarī are even older, dating to 96/715.[34] A hunting poem in the form of a *mukhammas* would take us even further back in time. Jāḥiẓ quoted two lines about the elephant from this poem, but the case of the author, a certain Khālid al-Qannās whose death Ahlwardt dated to around 90/709,[35] has not been closed.[36] The other examples are by contemporaries of Bishr: Abān

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27 Text 1–2. Reason is emphasised particularly in Text 2.

28 Cf. the commentary on Text 1.

29 Text 1, vv. 46 and 56. Cf. Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²IV 237 no. 836: In order to be successful a reasonable person needs to let go of reason a little bit.

30 Ibid. vv. 49ff. Cf. also the titles in Catalogue of Works no. 14–15.

31 *Fihrist* 184, pu., and 205, 11. Cf. also Texts XVII 5–9.

32 In: JNES 3/1944/9ff.; he vocalises incorrectly *muzāwij* instead of *muzāwaj*. Regarding the development cf. also Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Raǧazpoesie* 46ff., and Reinert in: Saeculum 29/1978/231ff.

33 Cf. the text in *Agh.* VII 57, 14ff. = ed. Gabrieli in: RSO 15/1934–5/44 no. 37; cf. vol. I 54, n. 16 above.

34 *Raǧazpoesie* 50 after Ṭabarī II 1299, 4f.

35 *Katalog der Berliner Handschriften* VI 546 > GAL² 1/57 S 1/93; Grunebaum, loc. cit., refers to this.

36 Ullmann, *Raǧazpoesie* 48; GAS 2/462f.

al-Lāḥiqī and Abū l-ʿAtāhiya, maybe also Abū Nuwās.[37] Jāḥiẓ preferred Bishr over Abān, because the latter only produced verse versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and a few books of logic, while the former also ventured onto much more complex territory – this probably refers to questions of *kalām* – and never avoided a single rhyming letter.[38] With his poems he clearly replaced the diatribes of the *quṣṣāṣ*; like Ephrem the Syrian before him he used the attractiveness of a new literary genre to his advantage.[39]

The number of these theological epistles in verse is impressive. Ibn al-Nadīm lists 24 titles; Ismail Paşa adds another four, although their authenticity is not entirely certain.[40] Five or six are apparently reworkings of prose treatises, the rest discuss new subjects. The vast majority are polemical in character, hardly any opposition group within Islam or outside it was spared these refutations. Muʿtazilite colleagues such as Abū l-Hudhayl and al-Naẓẓām were attacked; controversial figures like Ḍirār or Aṣamm even more. Clearly Bishr used stanzaic poems not only for public enlightenment but also to give greater force to his view in internal disagreements. Only very few of these verse treatises served the factual presentation of religious issues.[41] This is actually surprising as Muʿtazilite tradition claims that Bishr presented his arguments in a *qaṣīda* 300 sheets long;[42] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār even speaks of 40,000 verses.[43] The *qāḍī* also says Bishr refuted all his opponents: polemic appears to have been more suited to his temperament. The tools he thus created for the Muʿtazila would be used for a long time to come. Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Bāhilī (d. 300/913) knew all his poems by heart and used them in his missionary activity.[44]

The two *qaṣīda*s mentioned above, on the other hand, were independent texts. It is no coincidence that they are the pieces extant in their entirety. They are remarkable for the obtrusive abundance of zoological detail, which is how they ended up in the *K. al-Ḥayawān*. One of them Bishr personally recited to

37    Cf. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās* 225ff.

38    *Burṣān* 89, 8ff.; *Fihrist* 205, 12f. Incidentally, Bishr also produced a verse version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (Catalogue of Works XVII, no. 45).

39    Mufīd, *Fuṣūl* II 76, 17f./233, apu. f., emphasises Bishr's pioneering role. Regarding Ephrem the Syrian's (306–373 CE) hymns cf. Colpe in: Neues Hb. der Lit. Wiss. V 102ff.

40    Catalogue of Works no. 21–44 and 46–49.

41    Ibid. no. 21–25.

42    *Fihrist* 205, 13; maybe after Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ* (cf. *Lisān al-ʿArab* II 444a, 13f.). Apparently this was not a 'string poem'.

43    *Faḍl* 365, 9f. > IM 52, 8.

44    *Faḍl* 311, 7ff.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* V 320 no. 1055. The name should be corrected in accordance with *Fihrist* 219, –4.

Jāḥiẓ in the latter's youth.[45] They are by no means 'popular'; if Bishr had meant to convert the masses with them, he would not have given such free rein to his bile. The wonders of creation he lists in both of them are not, in fact, supporting teleological proof of God's existence, but rather demonstrate that 'reason' is much more prevalent among animals than among humans.[46] If animals act 'evilly', there is a deeper meaning behind it,[47] but not in the case of humans. Animals have the instinct that can make weak animals strong and dangerous.[48] Humans have the intellect to this end, but they are unable to use it. The examples Bishr adduces are not related to the tradition of teleological arguments as the Arabs knew it.[49] While some of them correspond with ones listed by Aristotle – Bishr appears to have known the contents of *De partibus animalium* in some form[50] – most of them have their origin in Arab tradition and demonstrate the desert dweller's skill of observation. Without Jāḥiẓ' commentary they would be entirely incomprehensible; much remains obscure even now. Both *qaṣīda*s are highly original in this respect. While they are composed in the tripartite form expected of a *qaṣīda*, and in the first one Bishr begins to talk of himself precisely where self-praise (*fakhr*) should begin according to the standard structure,[51] they are difficult to classify as regards their subject matter. They are linked to wisdom poetry, also in the *waṣf* which has didactic character here, and see themselves as religious poetry – which enjoyed a boost at the time thanks to Abū l-ʿAtāhiya's *zuhdiyyāt*.

Bishr not only circulated his ideas among the people, he also wrote on how to do so most effectively. He was thought to have disagreed with the way in which the *khaṭīb* of the Banū Sakūn taught the art of oratory to the young men of his tribe and to have advised them to follow instead the recommendations he himself had set down for them in a booklet (*ṣaḥīfa*).[52] Jāḥiẓ had access

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45    *Ḥayawān* VI 291, 5. Jāḥiẓ' recollection of having heard a verse by Ruʾba from Bishr (ibid. VI 314, 4f.) confirms that the two did indeed meet in person.

46    Thus especially clearly in Text 2, vv. 37ff.

47    Ibid. vv. 7ff.

48    Ibid. vv. 20ff.

49    Cf. ch. C 6.2 below.

50    Cf. the commentary on Text 2, v. 52; also vv. 48, 59, and 61.

51    Text 1, vv. 45ff.

52    The *khaṭīb*'s name is given as Ibrāhīm b. Jabala b. Makhrama al-Sakūnī. It would be difficult to identify him with the Ibrāhīm b. Jabala b. Makhrama al-Kindī whom Jahshiyārī mentions a number of time as a *kātib* (cf. *Wuzarāʾ*, Index s. n.). The second one was ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā's pupil and a colleague of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ; Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir was so much younger that he could hardly have been his rival. Or was the frame story an invention?

to the text and appears to quote it in its entirety, interspersed with his own commentary, in *K. al-bayān*. The construction is a little vague, and the point at which the quoted text ends and Jāḥiẓ himself begins to speak again cannot be determined with certainty, but the following train of thought may be discerned:

1.  When speaking publicly one must choose the right moment in which one is in a good mood. This is much more profitable than days of practice and drudgery (*Bayān* I 135, apu.–136, 4.).
2.  One should beware of making the subject matter more complicated (136, 4f.).
3.  One should express noble thoughts in noble words to ensure all facts are conveyed correctly (136, 5–8). This is divisible into three distinct levels:

    a)  One phrases one's thoughts so clearly and elegantly that educated as well as common persons are able to understand them. The subject matter discussed is not dependent on the education of the audience but on its appropriateness and usefulness at the right time. If one is able to convey subtle trains of thought to common people by using universally accepted language, one is a perfect rhetorician (136, 9–17).
    b)  Should one not be able to do this, or lack the inspiration at the crucial moment, one must not try and force it. If one is not a professional poet, or is not aiming at a particularly smooth prose style, one cannot be blamed for it. However, if one struggles, one may well attract criticism even from less gifted persons. One should not be precipitate; at a lucky moment one will find the right words, as long as one has some natural skill (*ṭabīʿa*) or gift for this art (137, ult.–138, 11).
    c)  If one is entirely incapable, one must seek a different occupation (138, 12–17).

4.  The way one phrases a speech must be targeted to the audience and appropriate to the situation. A preacher should avoid the *mutakallimūn*'s terminology, unless he is talking of *kalām*, as the *mutakallimūn* are superior to preachers in this art. They have all the appropriate expressions they derived from everyday Arabic, such as *ʿaraḍ* and *jawhar*, *aysa* and *laysa*. They distinguish between *buṭlān* 'becoming nothing' and *talāshī* 'becoming a nothing'; they employ *hādhiyya*, *huwiyya*, *māhiyya* and suchlike. In a

similar fashion Khalīl gave the different metres names that had not been in use among the Arabs previously, and introduced other new terms as well. The same is true of grammar or mathematics (138, pu.–140, 6).

The text enjoyed great popularity. I have noted the following citations of it: Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmda* (ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, ²Cairo 1374/1955) I 212, 13ff. (unabridged until 138, 17; i.e. without the section 138, pu.–140, 6, which is at least in part by Bishr); ʿAskarī, *K. al-Ṣināʿatayn* 134, 6ff. (abridged but based on the text beyond 138, pu., up to 139, 11; more clearly arranged than in Jāḥiẓ); Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *ʿIqd* IV 55, 14ff. (only the beginning up to 136, ult.); Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Muwaffaqiyyāt* 163, 4ff. no. 83 (the same section as in Ibn ʿAbdrabbih); a brief quotation after Jāḥiẓ also in Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* 202, 11ff. The fragment in Zubayr b. Bakkār has been edited by P. Leander in: MO 10/1916/95ff.; I. Kračkovskij supplied corrections and produced a Russian translation in: Izvestije Rossk. Akad. Nauk, 6th series, 13/1919/441–450. Later, Kračkovskij edited and translated the text again following the version in Jāḥiẓ in: *Festschrift S. Oldenburg* = Vostočnije Zapiski 1/1927/26ff. (reprinted in: *Izbrannye Sočinenija* II 309ff./221ff.); he believes the text to end rather earlier than I (at 139, 2).

In *Arab. Dichtung und griech. Poetik* 47f. W. Heinrichs studied the text under the aspect of the lexical pair *ṭabʿ* : *nashāṭ*, 'natural faculty, gift : activity, creative energy' (here = 3b, where, however, the word used is *ṭibāʿ* rather than *ṭabʿ*). It seems to me that he blurred the classifications. He links everything Bishr says to poetry, although this is only referred to at the point he emphasised himself. He considers the two words *ṭabʿ* and *nashāṭ*, which do not occur before this passage (138, 6 and 10f.), to be key terms and projects them back to the beginning of the text which uses the terms *tawaʿʿur* and *taʿqīd* (136, 4). Consequently he links the three levels Bishr distinguishes (3, a–c above) to poetry only. The way in which Heinrichs distinguishes the individual versions of the text in 48, n. 1, is also not entirely correct; it is probable that they were all based on Jāḥiẓ. M. Ajami, *The Neckveins of Winter*, p. 8, uses the same approach – he probably referred to Heinrichs' study. He includes a translation of part of 3b. In her book on Abū Tammām Suzanne P. Stetkevych considers the text as a record of Jāḥiẓ' views, without even mentioning Bishr (*Abū Tammām* 16f.); but her translation starts at 139, 3, the same place where Kračkovskij, too, had the quotation end. – Regarding the contrast between *lafẓ* and *maʿnā* at the beginning of 3 cf. also Kouloughli in: BEO 35/1983/51.

Bishr's deliberations speak for themselves. Their socio-psychological approach anticipates some of what Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca discussed in their *Nouvelle rhétorique*.[53] He understands language, however artfully composed it may be, primarily as a communication process: a text is nothing without the audience's immediate readiness to receive it.[54] Bishr's remarks on terminology are interesting, too. To him, words such as *'araḍ* and *jawhar* are genuinely Arabic; it does not even occur to him that foreign ideas might shine through here, although the vocabulary on which he bases his comments does not correspond with that which we know from the sources. There are no instances of *hādhiyya* in early *kalām* texts; *aysa* and *laysa* are used by Kindī but not by the *mutakallimūn*. Thus the theologians' lexicon was greater than doxographical summaries make it appear, which suggests that they engaged in a lively exchange of ideas with members of other disciplines, probably even non-Muslims, and it speaks in favour of their originality. Bishr is also said to have written a refutation of the 'philosophers'.[55] The text discussed is our oldest witness to an Arabian theory of rhetoric.

There are, however, earlier definitions of rhetoric in the Muʿtazila as well; ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd comes to mind (vol. II 338 and 356 above). If we want to assume that Bishr did indeed instruct young men in the art of rhetoric or the craft of the scribe, we might also adduce his praise of the written word preserved by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī in a related treatise (cf. Rosenthal in: Ars Islamica 13–14/1948/13b and 24b no. 43; also *Baṣāʾir* ²VIII 99 no. 353). Of course the first question to be asked would be whether this dictum is indeed genuine.

### 1.4.3.1.1　*Bishr's System*

The titles of Bishr's prose writings as well as those of his treatises in verse raise some questions. Some of the persons against whom he polemicised are entirely unknown to us,[1] but the overview enables us to judge his interests in general. He does not appear to have been a great innovator; there are no titles on new topics as in Muʿammar's or Ḍirar's case. He wrote about the *manzila*

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53　*Traité de l'argumentation. La nouvelle rhétorique*, ²Brussels 1970.

54　Cf. Abu 'l-ʿAddus in: IC 61/1987/61f.

55　Catalogue of Works XVII, no. 49.

1　Cf. ibid. no. 7, 43, 47; maybe also 44.

*bayna l-manzilatayn*,[2] which would come to an end soon after him. He does not, on the other hand, appear to have had an interest in atomism, not wishing to decide between finite and infinite divisibility.[3] He explained change as being an exchange of opposing accidents, although these do exist until another takes their place.[4] He clearly did not regard these matters *sub specie instantis* as Muʿammar did.

This was not because his understanding of reality was more 'primitive' than Muʿammar's, but there was clearly a system to it. For unlike his most prominent contemporaries and predecessors Bishr did not divide human action into individual moments, looking at it as a holistic process instead. While the capacity to act must precede the act itself, it must still be borne in mind throughout the action.[5] Here, too, we find consistency: humans possess the capacity to act in permanence, for as long as their limbs are sound and they are healthy overall.[6] This corresponded to a similarly holistic image of humans: a human consists of body **and** spirit. Bishr understood spirit (*rūḥ*) as the breath of life; but acting and perceiving, too, were possible only by means of the spirit.[7] With this approach it is easier to understand how Bishr arrived at the theory that is linked to his name everywhere: the doctrine of *tawlīd* or *tawallud*, of the 'generation' or 'activation' of one event by another.

### 1.4.3.1.1.1  The *tawallud* Theory

We cannot say with certainty that Bishr was entering entirely uncharted territory here. He did not write a *K. al-tawallud*, but merely defended his ideas against Naẓẓām.[1] The concept per se, and the term, too, may have been older – Abū l-Hudhayl also employed the word *tawallud*,[2] but Bishr was the

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2  Ibid. no. 11.

3  Text 12.

4  Text 14; also 13. Cf. Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 535f.

5  Text 48; cf. also 44, h.

6  Text 47.

7  Text 45–46. The discrepancy between 45, a, and 45, b, is of a purely definitional nature.

1  Catalogue of Works no. 8.

2  See p. 268f. below. The instance in the *K. al-īḍāḥ* in the Corpus Jābirianum (58, 6 HOLMYARD) cannot be dated with sufficient certainty. Even less helpful is the fact that the term appears in the abridged Arabic version of the religious debate between the patriarch Timothy and the caliph al-Mahdī (Islamochristiana 3/1977/126, 5, and 130, 9), which is probably of quite a late date (see p. 24f. above). The idea of transferable causality is already found in John Philoponus' works – a carpenter's force enters the wood by means of the axe (*In de an.*, CAG XV 329, 33) – but not central to his system and not, more importantly, as clearly defined

one who gave the model a specific shape. What he meant becomes clearest in the examples cited by Ashʿarī.[3] If one cooks a sweet out of sugar and starch, one effects its flavour; if one fires a brick made out of red clay and white lime, one effects its reddish colour.[4] If one shoots an arrow or flings a stone, one effects their movement. If one beats someone, one effects his pain; if one eats something, one effects one's own well-being. Everything thus effected belongs to the agent as his own action. Two things are noticeable in all these examples: (a) the agent effecting something is always human, and (b) he effects 'accidents' of a great variety. The first one is a main feature of this theory: all definitions of *tawallud* known to us have this 'anthropological' character.[5] The second one, on the other hand, is characteristic of the early stage: Bishr does not distinguish between temporary effects such as pain or movement and permanent qualities such as colour or flavour, nor between effects on lifeless items and effects on humans, nor, in the last instance, between what one does to oneself and to someone else. The point at issue is the relation of causality itself – but it must be initiated by a human.[6] Khayyāṭ emphasised this in the context of an ambiguous passage by Ibn al-Rēwandī: of course there is causality even in lifeless nature; but in that case it is not *tawallud*. As long as humans do not affect nature, God is the only agent there.[7]

This was the point at which Bishr differed from Naẓẓām; he did not look to physics but to the human scope of action. In their permanent capacity to act humans own a force that has effects beyond the humans themselves; their actions go further and include items and persons affected.[8] Elsewhere, I isolated the problem of responsibility as being the *nervus rerum*,[9] but now this

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(cf. M. Wolff, *Geschichte der Impetustheorie* 81; also in: R. Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science* 115).

3   Text XVII 17, a. Cf. also the short discussion in Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain* 37, which, however, includes examples transmitted only in connection with Abū l-Hudhayl (e. g. cowardice and bravery; cf. Text XXI 140). One should bear in mind that immediately after the examples mentioned, this text links Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir with them summarily; cf. also the commentary vol. V 435.

4   This example is not documented with certainty; cf. the commentary on the passage.

5   Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 408, 13ff.; clearly emphasised by Dughaym in *Falsafat al-qudar* 139ff. Cf. also *Maq.* 380, 1ff., concerning the question of whether it is possible not to perform 'created' actions.

6   Thus clearly in Text 17, g–h. The human agent must to this consciously, as is made clear in the example concerning perception (see p. 128 below); cf. Wolfson, *Philosophy* 646f.

7   Text 18.

8   Cf. Frank in: *Atti III Congresso di Studi Arabi e Islamici* 320f.

9   In *Erkenntnislehre* 291, and REI 46/1978/253.

does not seem to me to be quite so certain. Bishr is not a jurist, and in cases where genuine responsibility would be generated, he shrinks back: one cannot effect a human's death, nor life; only God can do that.[10] Similarly he does not develop the example of the arrow further: namely that the arrow once shot by a person goes on to hit and kill someone.

It was Abū l-Hudhayl who would take this step (see p. 269 below). While I did already link him and Bishr in *Erkenntnislehre* 291, the record on which I based my claim was in fact too late; it was preserved by Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār who probably heard it from Abū Hāshim. The increase in the numbers and types of examples is demonstrated clearly in *Mughnī* IX 61, off. Bishr did admit that humans were able to 'generate' the exhaling of the breath of life, i.e. the precondition for or concomitant of death (Text XVII 17, a). The general assumption was that humans are not able to generate 'bodies' (Text XXI 140, m); this, too, makes quite clear how far removed we are from purely scientific thought.

In the same account Ashʿarī emphasised two examples in particular. Bishr probably discussed the first one specifically, too: someone breaks his foot, and the physician sets it. The break in this case was effected by the person who caused it, either the sufferer himself, or someone else who caused him to fall; setting it is effected by the physician, but if it is of no avail, the disability was effected once again by the sufferer or another agent.[11] This is probably intended to show that the object will remain the object and does not influence events even in complex processes. Muʿammar would have seen this entirely differently. As for the second example, Bishr did discuss it in detail, but the reason why Ashʿarī listed it separately[12] was that it demonstrated the difficulty of the model: sensory perception.

This is part of the nature of the issue, but terminology also plays a part. If someone is being beaten, his pain is effected by the person beating him. The pain, however, is a sensation, perception, or, as Ashʿarī put it, knowledge (*ʿilm*). This sensation is effected by the person beating; Bishr described it as (*fiʿluhū*).[13] *Fiʿl*, however, also means 'action, acting', and Bishr was indeed intending to say that we are looking at an effect that is due to the action of the beater or, less subtly: that **is** his action. Unlike a brick or a sweet, knowing is also an action,

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10    Text 16, c; also XXI 140, m.
11    Text 17, b. The respective 'causers' are not designated as clearly as one might wish.
12    Text 17, c; in fact a doublet of a.
13    Text 17, d. It is worth comparing this with Muʿammar's terminology.

and one might genuinely wonder whether it was not, in fact, the action of the person knowing. In order to prove that his theory was correct after all, Bishr adduced the case of someone opening someone else's eyes; the former 'generates' the latter's perception, and the action of perceiving is secondary to that of opening the eyes. Opening the eyes is the positive counterpart of blinding.[14]

Jāḥiẓ put this in the context of Bishr's epistemology. Like Abū l-Hudhayl Bishr distinguished between immediate and acquired insight or knowledge: *ibtidāʾī* vs. *iktisāb(ī)* or *ikhtiyār(ī)*,[15] but drew the boundaries differently. 'Acquired' is all that is 'generated', including sensory perception, insofar as we intend it consciously and provide the precondition by activating the respective organ, e.g. opening the eyes. Eyesight alone does not lead to perception, while, conversely, once one has opened the eyes, seeing is unavoidable.[16] Only if a human's eyes are open and he sees something while still in a state of accidental receptivity (*ghafla*) is this effected by God and not caused by the human;[17] *tawallud* only occurs when the human acts consciously. As sensory perception is thus under normal circumstances acquired and secondary, how much more must this apply to all speculative knowledge based on it.[18] This does not mean that any thought must be derivative; Bishr does anticipate, as we shall see, a priori knowledge: the human consciousness of self, and a pre-existing concept of God.[19] Everything that goes beyond this, however, especially on the field of theology, has been acquired in consequence of a conscious decision, above all the profession of God's oneness.[20] While one does perceive the latter with one's ears, this is not the decisive factor. What is important is that one must consider in advance whether one should trust the informant, and according to what criteria.[21] Thus hearing becomes conscious listening and is consequently 'generated'.

What Jāḥiẓ' report leaves open is who generates the listening and the subsequent knowledge. We would probably have to say, in analogy with visual perception, that while the recipient of the knowledge 'acquires'

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14    Text 17, e–f.

15    Text 20, m and d. Cf. also Text 22, b, where the contrast has been captured as *ḍarūrī –
      ikhtiyārī*. Cf. p. 93, n. 31 above.

16    Ibid., h–l.

17    Ibid., e–f.

18    Ibid., g and a–c.

19    P. 137 below; also Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 128, ult. ff. (used in Horten,
      *Probleme* 51).

20    Ibid., g and n–o.

21    Ibid., d. Cf. also Abū Rashīd, *Ziyādāt sharḥ al-uṣūl* 30a ff.

it, it is the informant who 'generates' it; after all, the latter is responsible
for the truth of the information (cf. the discussion of the theory in the
anonymous text BSOAS 14/1952/620, ult. ff.). The analogy between the
two types of sensory perception is not quite complete. Seeing includes
the components eyesight (*baṣar*), opening of the eyes, and perception
(*idrāk*). In the case of hearing, on the other hand, deliberate listening cor-
responds to the opening of the eyes (cf. *e*); i.e. one cannot close one's ears
deliberately. It is, however, possible to see and hear something against
one's will; this was probably the similarity on which Bishr based his idea.

Although the text is detailed, it is not always unambiguous. In her
analysis in SI 37/1973/30ff. M. Bernand glosses over the difficulties, di-
verging occasionally in the translation. The section m–o is particularly
fraught with problems. Jāḥiẓ repeats what he said in b–c: that knowledge
of 'everything concerning which there is disagreement and difference
of opinion' could only be acquired. This, however, is superseded by the
distinction between immediate or 'primary' acquired knowledge, and
secondary knowledge 'caused' by reflection. Both, he says, are the result
of free will, and consequently not 'necessary'. 'Generated' as well as non-
'generated' knowledge is thus *ikhtiyārī* if it relates to something that is
not a priori comprehensible to all humans. This raises the question of the
relation between a priori ('necessary') and 'non-generated' knowledge
in Bishr's view. It seems that the later axiom, that 'acquired' knowledge
could be 'generated' only by means of reflection (cf. my *Erkenntnislehre*
290ff.), had not yet been developed at this point.

It could be due to the fact that 'acquired' knowledge may be 'primary',
after all, that Bishr examined the question of whether the object of
knowledge may be grasped at one and the same moment by means of
more than one act of knowledge. He answered in the affirmative; it is
possible to perceive a body through many acts of knowledge, some of
which will be 'necessary' and others 'acquired' (Text 22, a and c). He may
have been thinking of the case of someone bumping into something and
thus perceiving its existence immediately, while at the same time con-
sciously making sure what the item was. In the case of accidents Bishr
did consider complex knowledge possible, but ruled out an addition of
'necessary' knowledge (22, d–e) – probably because one only comes to
know an accident after the body in which it is inherent. The theory as a
whole was controversial as it implied that one or the other of these acts
of knowledge might not take place, and one would consequently know
something under one particular aspect, but not under another. One had
to ask whether this was in fact still true knowledge: is it possible to speak

of 'knowledge of God' if someone ignores important aspects of the image of God? The problem was provoked by the realistic idea people had of knowledge: knowing is nothing to do with ideas, but with a *maʿlūm* which is a concrete being even when viewed under different aspects. Bishr as well as Abū l-Hudhayl did not see a problem here as long as certain basic preconditions remained in place (Text 21; cf. p. 272 below, and for general information Nāshiʾ, *Awsaṭ* 111, 15ff.). Similar ideas were found in Antiquity in Alexander of Aphrodisias' ideas: one can know several things at once, but one cannot think about more than one thing at the same time (Περί προνοίας, Arab. transl. 17, 7ff. RULAND).

Khayyāṭ also pointed out the ambiguity evoked by the word *fiʿl*,[22] although he was looking at a different case. The prophet was wounded by unbelievers near Uḥud. His injury was caused by them; it was their action that manifested itself on the prophet. This action was a sin, 'unbelief', as it was called.[23] All the same, one had to take care not to phrase this as if unbelief had manifested itself on the prophet.[24] Ibn al-Rēwandī had expressed it like this, and his words sound as if he meant something else still, as he speaks of the prophet's heart, rather than his face where he was in fact injured.[25] Furthermore he referred not only to Bishr but also to Abū l-Hudhayl, Hishām al-Fuwaṭī and other Muʿtazilites.[26] It might be that he was thinking of the awareness of the heathen Meccans' unbelief which grew in the prophet's heart as a consequence of their unbelief, although this was no improvement on his argument. In any case he misrepresented the position of the followers of *tawallud*.[27]

In this context Khayyāṭ also introduced the idea of change.[28] *Tawallud* was indeed a way of explaining change; like Muʿammar, Bishr did not see God as the only author of change. Consequently he had to bring his theory of movement into line as well, but we know hardly anything about it. To him, movement was an accident of the moving body and could thus be caused by something else which does not, however, have to be in motion itself. Conversely something

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22    Text 23, f.

23    Language did not differentiate between the mental attitude of unbelief and the expression this took; either case was referred to as: *hadhā kufr*.

24    Text 23, b–g.

25    Ibid., a.

26    Khayyāṭ's listing 'being murdered' as a 'generated' event in b–c might be linked to this. Bishr had not included death in *tawallud* as such (see p. 126 above).

27    The following – and only – doxographical parallel refers to Naẓẓām, who did not think much of *tawallud* (Text XXII 158).

28    Ibid., c. He says *taghayyur* and not *inqilāb*.

may be caused to be in a state of rest by something else that is in motion. The source, which does not seem to be entirely sure of the tradition, uses the word *tawallud* in this context as well.[29] This gives us pause: movement is caused not only by humans; is the term thus used incorrectly? Still, we must not forget that Bishr is not aware of an independently active nature; besides humans, the only agent is God. The conferred 'generated' accident movement remains with the body until the latter has reached the point to which the movement led it.[30] It is possible, and resembles knowledge in this respect, for more than one unit of movements to be conferred simultaneously: two men might be rolling a rock together. Bishr's explanation is said to have drawn on the current atomist model: the units of movement will be distributed proportionately between the atoms of the rock. This would not have been entirely consistent; he could not decide between finite and infinite divisibility.[31] And it did led him into difficulties, for if one assumed an odd number of atoms it would be impossible for the two men two be exactly equally strong. However, Bishr is said to have rejected this in any case, for if two men push from both sides against a body situated between them, it will not move at all if they are equally strong.

Text 19, after a late source. The argumentation may be distorted. Bishr's proof does not, of course, hold : the two men now exert opposing forces on the object, while in the original example they combined forces in the same direction. Still, this may be proof of its authenticity.

#### 1.4.3.1.1.2      God's Will and His Divine Grace (*lutf*)

Besides the *tawallud* theory there was another of Bishr's teachings favoured by the doxographers: his idea of God's divine grace (*lutf*). It was once again Ibn al-Rēwandī who fanned people's interest. He had claimed that the Muʿtazila had pronounced Bishr to be an unbeliever because of it. Khayyāṭ did not deny this, either: his fellow believers debated the matter with him until he recanted and swore off the idea before his death.[1] This was probably not a formal exclusion from the school; this would have been reported by the biographical sources. It is more likely that the Muʿtazila began to feel embarrassed by this doctrine during the third century and consequently spread the story that they

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29    Text 24, with the introductory formula *ḥukiya ʿan Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir*.

30    Text 25.

31    See p. 125 above.

1     Text 35, a and g; cf. also Kaʿbī in 36, a.

had already admonished Bishr himself because of it.[2] In order to understand his position we have to go into rather more detail.

Characteristically the doxographers emphasise only one detail of Bishr's image of God: his idea of divine will. The key point is not equally visible everywhere. The clearest version is a report Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār copied from Kaʿbī,[3] but the text requires corrections in accordance with a parallel in Shahrastānī, and emendation and modification based on other accounts. In addition it is necessary to restore the historical context blurred by the doxographers' systematic approach. This leads to the conclusion that unlike Muʿammar, Bishr did not see God's will as the core of his being: God's will is not identical with God.[4] Bishr did not regard will, as the Muʿtazila would later, as an attribute of act; rather, he distinguished between eternal and temporal will. Kaʿbī turned this into distinguishing between an attribute of act and an attribute of essence,[5] but this is not entirely true, as eternal will is not, as we have seen, a component of God's essence, either. It does recall the distinction between *mashīʾa* and *irāda* we saw elsewhere,[6] although this was usually found among the predestinarians, and Bishr was not one of them. Consequently he added a second distinction, this time with regard to the objects of volition, depending on whether God's act of will affected unfree creation, or humans who are possessed of free will of their own. The conclusion was: God has willed *for all eternity* everything he plans as creation and what humans will do that is good and just; he has foreknowledge of all this, and as it is good and just, he wills it as well. Volition that takes place *within time* is, insofar as it concerns creation, identical with creating; insofar as it refers to human action, it is identical with God's commandment. Sin was thus excluded: it was not willed either within time or within eternity.[7] God has a part in sin only because he determines what is good and what evil.[8]

This does not necessarily mean that Bishr saw eternal and temporal volition as two different things. It may be that the reason why he did not declare volition to be identical with God was that he felt obliged to presume temporal

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2   This is probably how Ibn Ḥazm regarded the issue (*Fiṣal* III 165, 12f.).

3   Text 30.

4   Text 29, a. Cf. p. 75f. and 87f. above.

5   Text 30, a; thus also 29, b, but not in 26.

6   See vol. II 95, 604 and 649 above.

7   Cf. Text 30, and 29, c–d, and 26, b. Text 27 corresponds to Text 26, but with negative phrasing. Concerning creating see also 31, b, and 32, c.

8   Text 41. Upheld already by Ḍirār (see p. 58 above); noted as the predominant view in the Muʿtazila by Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 227, 13ff., and 261, 10f. (cf. Nāshiʾ, *Awsaṭ* 94, 14f.).

volition as well. And he felt obliged to do so because that was the only way in which he was able to accommodate the act of creating within time. He did not require an act of will on God's part with regard to human action if he did not intend to hold God responsible for evil, and good had been determined for all eternity. Creating to him was a hypostasis; it is impossible to locate,[9] and is by no means an accident of the object created. Indeed, this would be impossible as the act of will precedes the created object.[10] Bishr continued to rank: not only are there two manifestations of divine will which are not identical with God, but temporal volition in turn precedes the act of creation. This is further-more true of every cause.[11] On the other hand creating is not manifested in God's speaking the words of creation 'Let there be'; Bishr did not think it neces-sary to invoke divine speech in this context as well.[12]

But what about sin? Baghdādī would claim later that the Muʿtazilites also condemned Bishr because he thought that if God did not prevent a human action, he ultimately willed it.[13] Maybe this was how Ibn al-Rēwandī reported it, but it would not have been particularly logical, and it certainly was not the whole truth. On the contrary, this is where Bishr's doctrine of *lutf* fits in. If God wills what is right from the beginning of time, it begs the question whether he could have made the unbelievers believe. Of course, he did not want this: expe-rience teaches us that. But he could have done it, by means of a particular con-cession, a favour. The sources mainly use the form *lutf*, pl. *alṭāf*; but we also find *laṭīfa*[14] and the verb construction *tafaḍḍala*.[15] The semantic field *l-ṭ-f* is quite complex; all the more so as there was a clear semantic shift in the early Islamic period. Paret translates Quranic *Allāhu laṭīf* as 'God finds ways and means'; *laṭīf* means not only 'kindly, lovable' but also 'subtle'.[16] There may be overtones of this meaning in Bishr's usage, too: God would 'make things come out all right'. It is unlikely that Bishr invented the term; as far as we can see he did not write a book about it. Ibn Ḥazm already perceived the beginnings of his doctrine in Ḍirār b. ʿAmr's work.

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9    Text 34.
10   Text 32, a–b; also 31, a, and 33, a.
11   Text 43, a. Bishr is said to have compared creating in this sense to the human capacity
     for action; the latter also preceded action itself (Abū Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I
     307, 4f.).
12   Text 31, c, and 33, b.
13   Text 28, b.
14   Text 35, a.
15   Thus only in a paraphrase in Baghdādī (cf. the commentary on Text 35).
16   Sura 22:63, 6:103 etc.

Text XV 35. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd appears to have used the word already, too (see vol. II 112 above). The idea could furthermore be found in the Quran, cf. e.g. sura 10:99: 'And if thy Lord had willed, whoever is in the earth would have believed, all of them, all together'. Other statements take this beyond the limits of faith to any kind of righteousness; cf. e.g. sura 6:149, 13:31, and 32:13. Ashʿarī would later refer to this (cf. Gimaret, *Doctrine* 412f.), which is probably the reason why the law could be called *lutf* (cf. Vajda in: REJ 134/1975/58ff.). Regarding the usage of the term in general cf. WKAS II 698ff., esp. 700 (regarding *laṭufa*), 706 (*talaṭṭafa*), and 726 (*laṭīf*); regarding *lutf* used by the theologians see ibid. 711ff. (with further references). Concerning the later development of the doctrine cf. Vajda, loc. cit. 31ff., Gimaret, *Noms divins* 392ff., and Sachedina, *Messianism* 122ff.

Divine grace as it was expressed here was first and foremost an intellectual game among theologians; after all, the proof did not materialise.[17] Of course, there was no reason why it should have done, as God created all the preconditions required for humans to win heaven for themselves. As Bishr put it, by sending prophets to the unbelievers he 'took away the excuse (*azāḥa l-ʿilla*)' they might have offered, and furthermore gave them the capacity to act and freedom of decision.[18] However, he might just as well have moved people to paradise directly. And he could have someone die at any point, if he knew that this person would lapse into unbelief at a later time.[19] We cannot answer the question of whether he will do this, but it is entirely clear that he is not obliged to do it,[20] as, conversely, he might let someone die in unbelief before he could convert.[21]

This takes us back to the very beginning, but we have discovered that there is more to the issue than a mere intellectual game, after all; *lutf* is not only a theoretical possibility.[22] There is, on the one hand, the *mysterium iniquitatis*, but

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17　　Text 35, a and e–f; 38, a–b.

18　　Text 38, c; also 37, f. This formula was used in the context of the *lutf* theory later as well (cf. Yūsuf al-Baṣīr's text, transl. Vajda in: REJ 134/1975/37; further references ibid. 67).

19　　Text 35, b–c with commentary; cf. Text 55, d–e.

20　　Text 37, b, and 40. The discrepancy with 35, f, and 38, b, which say that he does not actually do this, does not necessarily mean that Bishr's teachings were interpreted in different ways. The latter did not rule out the former; it depended on the point of view from which one looked at the example.

21　　Text 39.

22　　I may have emphasised the theoretical nature of the idea rather too much in REI 46/1978/237.

there is also God's true freedom. The problem had, of course, been focussed; ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, a younger Christian contemporary of Bishr,[23] has a 'denier of God'[24] ask the question of why God does not let someone die in childhood if he knows that once he has come of age he will sin and be evil.[25] The well-known paradox of the three brothers, which was used to explain Ashʿarī's turning rejection of the Muʿtazila,[26] takes this as its starting point.

Bishr was asked a similar leading question, and he appears to have got tangled up in the answer. If God allows a child to suffer, he punishes it; and he is able to do so. And as his actions are not only a theoretical possibility, one has to consider why he may do so. Bishr thought that at the moment a child is being punished thus, it is in fact of age and has consciously committed a deed deserving of punishment. He defended this idea that children can sin against Bakr b. Ukht ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd.[27] In the present case, however, those questioning him were Muʿtazilites, and they were quite justified in considering his reply somewhat unsatisfactory: by causing the child to be of age, God creates the precondition to make an injustice he is about to commit, look just in the end. Ibn al-Rēwandī was only too pleased to be able to cite this argument once more.[28]

Baghdādī has Abū l-Hudhayl as the author of the refutation.[29] As corroboration this is not deserving of trust: it is part of a fictitious discussion between seven Muʿtazilites reducing one another *ad absurdum*, which fulfils a similar function to the story of Ashʿarī's conversion. However, there can be hardly any doubt that Abū l-Hudhayl was indeed Bishr's main opponent here, as in the former's opinion God always does what is most beneficial (*aṣlaḥ*) to humans;[30]

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23  Regarding him see p. 297f. below.

24  *sāʾil min ahl al-juḥūd* (*Masāʾil* 95, 6).

25  *Masāʾil* 116, –6ff.

26  Cf. Gardet-Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane* 53, n. 3; Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought* 23; Gwynne in: MW 75/1985/132ff.

27  Text VI 13; cf. also vol. II 132f.

28  Text 42. I follow Vajda's interpretation of 'punishment' (*taʿdhīb*) as making someone suffer (Oriens 15/1962/79f.). This is not immediately apparent in the text; it might refer to punishment in the afterlife. The word as such is ambiguous, meaning 'to punish' as well as 'to torment' (cf. F. Meier in: Der Islam 50/1973/209ff.). However, 'making someone suffer' is more frequently expressed with the word *īlām* (cf. e.g. Ashʿarī, *Ibāna* 60, 6). This does not change the intention of the argument significantly. – We do not know whether the *K. al-aṭfāl*, which Bishr wrote against the predestinarians (Catalogue of Works no. 10) had anything to do with this. Cf. also p. 152 below with regard to Murdār.

29  *Farq* 187, 6ff./199, ult. ff.

30  See p. 299 below.

consequently divine grace could not be merely a theoretical or concrete possibility, but had to be realised of necessity. The sources frequently follow this directly with the argument Bishr put forth in his defence: the proofs of God's grace are infinite; there is no such thing as most beneficial, as they are all equally beneficial (ṣalāḥ).[31] He was thus referring to God's infinite freedom, demonstrating why he wished to remove God's willing to the eternity before the beginning of time and to separate it from actual events.

Bishr had not lost the round, however much later commentators spoke of his having recanted. He continued to have followers beyond his death, such as Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, who only modified his ideas to the extent that unbelievers who become believers through divine grace alone do not deserve reward for their conversion.[32] We also find numerous arguments which clearly date from later discussions.[33] Petitionary prayers were cited; they only make sense if we expect God to give us proof of his grace.[34] Above all Bishr's school appears to have relied on God's omnipotence. Passages such as 42:27 were adduced as proof that God has the power to create disaster (mafsada) to a degree that everyone would be affected; but he should consequently also have the power to create that which is beneficial in such quantity that everyone may achieve salvation.[35] This had always been the crux of the matter.

### 1.4.3.1.1.3 Faith and Sin

This, once again, was only one side of the matter. God is not only 'benevolent', and he does not give unlimited credit. The purpose of the alṭāf is not to help a human obey the commandments at a certain moment; in fact, in these instances Bishr did not use the word lutf but spoke of walāya 'friendship, support': God grants a human his friendship if the human is a believer. This is complemented by the 'enmity' God displays against unbelief and sin. This concept pair had a long history, having been used by the Khārijites in Khorasan or Sijistān, and by

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31    Thus Kaʿbī in Text 36 (cf. the preceding commentary on 35) and Ashʿarī in Text 37, d–e. In *Maq.* 250, 1f., the mysterious 'other' discussed immediately following Abū l-Hudhayl (at 249, 14f.) is once again Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir. I do not think that Brunschvig's discussion of the issue (in: SI 39/1974/12 = *Etudes* I 240) shows the difference clearly enough. In addition, the aṣlaḥ theory is not expressed in Ḍirār b. ʿAmr's writings, although he may have anticipated the concept of lutf (cf. Text XV 36, d).

32    Text 37, c, with commentary. Cf. ch. C 4.2.2.1 below.

33    Thus in Mānkdīm, ShUKh 521, apu. ff.

34    Ibid. 524, –5ff.

35    Ibid. 524, 7ff.; cf. also earlier 523, ult. f. Even Ashʿarī adopted Bishr's approach for dialectical reasons (*Ibāna* 56, 8ff.).

Zaydites such as Sulaymān b. Jarīr;[1] they, however, had been predestinarians. Bishr, on the other hand, emphasised that God only ever reacts with friendship or enmity; these reactions are never simultaneous with the human's decision to behave in a good or an evil way. On the other hand they are never delayed; they are a reward or punishment humans receive instantly. Still, there must be some allowance; it is impossible to imagine that God, as the Quran says (sura 5:60), would transform someone into a pig or a monkey while that person is still engaged in an act of unbelief. The source does not tell us why it is impossible to imagine, but it might mean that the didactic aspect of the concept would be invalid, as the unbelief would not yet have been perceived. God's curse, with which the unbeliever is threatened in the same verse, is different. It affects the human instantly, but one does not sense it in any case.[2] This train of thought leads to two conclusions: (a) enmity is more than a curse, it is active intervention on God's part (e.g. hardening an unbeliever's heart); friendship must consequently be interpreted as assistance. And then (b) both these behaviours on God's part have their origin within time, and consequently nothing to do with his eternal will or his *alṭāf*.

Still, these cannot be entirely separated. For if faith can manifest itself as *lutf* on an unbeliever, we must ask whether the believers, too, did not ultimately receive their faith from God. It is certain that God helps them to believe,[3] and apparently before any personal commitment – after all, faith is more than mere action. Ḍirār thought that God created faith within humans,[4] and Bishr did not entirely free himself from this idea, either,[5] but gradually people became aware that this allowed a dangerous exception.[6] Like the Basran Ghaylāniyya Bishr presumed the existence of a priori knowledge of God, but in his view it was quite rudimentary, the believer being obliged to give it more concrete form. It encourages people to reflect more, and if they do not, they lapse into guilt, because self-awareness, also a priori, reminds humans of their limitations; everyone can then create his individual theology using these ingredients. There is some respite. Reflection takes time, and during this time, the human

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1  See vol. II 543, 651, and 664, also 631 above; also ch. D 1.3.

2  Text 43 and 44.

3  Text 52, e.

4  See p. 59 above.

5  There were Muʿtazilites who regarded the fact that God helps and commands humans to believe as proof that faith came from God (Nāshiʾ, *Awsaṭ* 94, 11f.).

6  In this context Text 52 must be seen as an aetiological legend. Thumāma appears to have played an important part in the development.

is in an intermediate state and not yet subject to punishment.[7] Consequently a child who infringes on the commandment of *tawḥīd* by speaking a Christian religious formula speaks an untruth, but does not lapse into unbelief.[8]

This intermediate state is an opening for Satan, as reflection – like all other action – means that one makes one's own decision. A decision is made based on an alternative or, in the usage of the time, two impulses for thought (*khāṭirāni*) which lead the human either to good or to evil.[9] It is interesting that Bishr seemed to believe that both came from Satan: the devil turns a clear issue into a problem; he uses the alternative to sow doubt, creating a precondition for sin.[10] In that case it is only right and proper that it should be possible without him. The two impulses for thought are not an absolute condition, as the devil entered this world when one human, Adam, was already there; Adam must have been able to reflect without the devil. Furthermore Satan himself took a decision in favour of sin that was not suggested to him by another devil.[11] This also means that humans elsewhere who, like Adam, have not yet come across the revelation, do not require Satan in order to feel the need to speculate concerning God and their own creaturehood.[12]

Bishr had no sympathy for those who appeared to question humans' responsibility for their own sins. He wrote not only against the 'Mujbira',[13] but even attacked Aṣamm in this context; to say nothing of Ḍirār.[14] He also quarrelled with a variety of Murjiʾites.[15] Quite how strict he was is demonstrated by his assigning only limited value to repentance. God may accept it, but that does not necessarily mean it has erased the sin. In fact, the sin will reappear on the human's account once he commits another grave sin. God only grants forgiveness on the condition that repentance includes a complete mending of one's ways. The same is true of conversion to Islam: it only is valid before God if one really lives as Islam commands. Someone who continues to drink wine will go

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7    Text XXI 44, f–g; cf. my *Erkenntnislehre* 349, and p. 271f. below.

8    Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 89, –6.

9    Regarding this idea cf. Wolfson in: *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to G. Scholem* 363ff. = *Philosophy of the Kalam* 624ff.; also ch. D 2.1.1 below.

10   Text 51, c.

11   Ibid., d–e, and Text 50.

12   Ibid., a–b. This may be different after the revelation, when one side of the alternative has been provided, but Text 50 does not refer to this distinction at all.

13   Cf. Catalogue of Works no. 9–10.

14   Ibid. no. 4–5, perhaps also no. 38; also Text 4. The question of who the *aṣḥāb al-qadar* were against whom he polemicised as well (no. 3) will have to remain unanswered.

15   Cf. no. 33 (Murjiʾa in general), no. 34 (Abū Shamir), no. 18 (the latter's pupil Kulthūm), no. 26 (Abū Ḥanīfa's school).

to hell even as a Muslim.[16] This was in fact a consequence of the Muʿtazilite *waʿd wa-waʿīd*, but became even more harshly puritanical here.

It would thus be ever more important to determine what exactly a grave sin was. We do not know whether the Muʿtazilites ever compiled a catalogue during this time, but there were, after all, the *ḥadd* punishments. The only of these to be discussed was usually the limit of the punishment to be meted out for theft. Bishr thought theft began at a material value of 10 dirhams,[17] in which he was in agreement with Abū Ḥanīfa and his school,[18] but a consensus was only beginning to take shape at the time. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī had been of the strict opinion that there should not be a minimum value, and it seems that the Khārijites still adhere to it.[19] Qatāda mentioned a third of a dirham,[20] ʿUthmān al-Battī increased this to two dirhams,[21] while Ibn Abī Laylā and Ibn Shubruma in Kufa saw five dirhams as the limit.[22] Abū l-Hudhayl, too, was stricter than Bishr,[23] Naẓẓām, on the other hand, considerably more lenient.[24] It is probable that currency depreciation played a significant part in all this.

### 1.4.3.1.1.4 Political Theory

As we have seen, Bishr was a Zaydite. Despite temporary persecution he never made a secret of his views. He wrote a *K. al-imāma* and polemicised against Aṣamm on the same subject.[1] Unlike the latter, he did not have a universal concept; he was not interested in the justification of government as such but only in evaluating ʿAlī correctly. This is an optical illusion to a degree; being a Zaydite he could not challenge the necessity of government at all, as there was no room for doubting ʿAlī's precedence and his claim to the caliphate. What may have been new was the way in which he explained this precedence. He based it on the Zaydite criteria of knowledge and action (*ʿilm wa-ʿamal*) and

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16    Text 53.

17    Text 54.

18    *Musnad Abī Ḥanīfa* 149 no. 315; Abū Yūsuf, *Ikhtilāf Abī Ḥanīfa wa-Ibn Abī Laylā* 152, 3; Faḍl b. Shādhān, *Īḍāḥ* 279, 7; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* II 447, −6. For a general overview see Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law* 179; concerning the hadith basis e.g. Nasāʾī, *Sunan* 259, 5ff.

19    Ibn Rushd, *Bidāya* II 447, 1ff.

20    See vol. II 167 above.

21    Ibn Rushd, *Bidāya* II 447, −4f.

22    Ibid. 447, −5f.

23    His case was, however, rather more complex (see p. 311f. below).

24    See p. 421 below.

1    Catalogue of Works no. 13 and 39.

went on to compare ʿAlī systematically to other companions of the prophet. Action to him was not only bravery, but also renunciation of the world; in addition there was the ancient mark of honour *sābiqa*, the early conversion to Islam. He came to the result that while ʿAlī might not have been the best if all these aspects were taken separately, he still was at the forefront of them all. His precedence was a consequence of the combination, rather like judging a decathlon.

The term used was *muwāzanat al-aʿmāl*. Jāḥiẓ would later regard the way in which Bishr undertook it as being paradigmatic for the Zaydiyya.[2] The report in Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, i.e. presumably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, which follows Bishr's train of thought, is structured in accordance with the ideas of *kalām*;[3] it is possible to imagine that it was directly based on Bishr's *K. al-imāma*. The concept of a catalogue of virtues was, of course, older, and developed out of ancient Arabian *fakhr*. What was distinctive was how it was applied in each case. T. Nagel pointed out a text by the Medinan ʿĪsā b. Dāb which probably became known in Iraq when the author was brought to Baghdad under al-Mahdī and later made a career for himself at court under al-Hādī.[4] Ibn Dāb listed a total of 70 virtues which he supported briefly and individually with passages from tradition, but he did not make a comparison with other companions of the prophet. Knowledge and asceticism are not seen as particularly relevant; the list appears very ancient Arabian.[5] Bishr's method of applying a targeted, partial comparison was attributed to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam by Mufīd, as he was said to have argued like this during a debate in the presence of Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī.[6] This is sure to be fabrication, as Hishām embraced a much harsher standpoint.[7]

Of course Bishr's method presumed that the companions of the prophet were recognised; they, too, had their merits, and in individual cases just as many as ʿAlī. Even for a Zaydite Bishr was extraordinarily moderate. He did not even say, like e.g. Sulaymān b. Jarīr,[8] that the *ṣaḥāba* made a mistake when they chose Abū Bakr; on the contrary, he believed their decision to have been

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2   *Rasāʾil* IV 312, 1ff. = Mawrid 72/1978/233, 5ff.; cf. vol. I 298f. above.

3   Text 58, f–m.

4   Regarding him see vol. II 772 above; also Pellat in EI² III 742.

5   Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 390ff.

6   Mufīd, *Ikhtiṣāṣ* 93, 5ff.; cf. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 392f.

7   See vol. I 377ff. above. There is in fact a second, apocryphal text in which he enumerates ʿAlī's virtues, in the same company but speaking to Ḍirār b. ʿAmr. In that text he does not make comparisons with other companions of the prophet (Majlisī, *Biḥār* XXV 142ff. no. 16).

8   See vol. II 540 above.

the most beneficial solution under the circumstances. After all, ʿAlī had antagonised the Quraysh, having taken blood vengeance on several of them.
Electing him the prophet's successor would have led to discord; consequently
the first community prevented a worse situation and thus acted correctly.[9]
Bishr had nothing in common with the 'Rāfiḍites';[10] he also attacked Hishām
b. al-Ḥakam.[11]

Beyond Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, however, his tolerance came to an end. ʿUthmān
did not deserve any loyalty during the last six years of his rule.[12] Ṭalḥa and
Zubayr were rebels in the sense of *fiʾa al-bāghiya* in sura 49:9; the community
had an obligation to fight them as they had broken their word.[13] The arbitration
trial was called in order to 'win the hearts'; it was not ʿAlī who had done wrong
by agreeing to it: the arbitrators did wrong by disagreeing.[14] Muʿāwiya must be
condemned, just like ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ.[15] The Khārijites were uncouth Bedouins,
their leader Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr not deserving to be compared to any of the great
companions of the prophet like ʿAlī or Ibn ʿAbbās.[16] None of this is in fact new.
The only sign that this was the work of a Muʿtazilite is that not a single hadith
was adduced in corroboration; Bishr argued based on the Quran only.

### 1.4.3.2      Ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila

Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir remained a great name for generations to come. While his
influence was not on a par with that of Abū l-Hudhayl or Naẓẓām, everyone
used the term *tawallud*, and during the following generation Bishr's plea in favour of ʿAlī's precedence became authoritative for the entire Baghdad school.[1]

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9    Text 58, a–e. According to Shahrastānī 116, 7ff./304, 6ff., this, too, was Zayd's doctrine.

10   Cf. Text 8, esp. v. 2; Text 1, vv. 46f.; also Catalogue of Works no. 31. Watt incorrectly calls him
     a Rāfiḍite (JRAS 1963, p. 465).

11   Text 9; cf. Catalogue of Works no. 32. He also polemicised against him because of his
     image of God (Text 10) and because of his theory of the capacity to act (Catalogue of
     Works no. 6).

12   Text 58, n–o.

13   Ibid., p–r, and Text 59.

14   Text 60.

15   Text 8, v. 3.

16   Text 7 with commentary. It is necessary to know that according to Ibāḍite understanding
     Ḥurqūṣ was among those to whom the prophet had promised paradise (see vol. I 26, n. 12
     above).

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1    Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB III 288, ult. ff.; cf. ch. C 4.2.1.1 below, and Ibn al-Iskāfī, *Al-miʿyār
     wal-muwāzana* 89ff.

His doctrine of sensory perception, too, lived on,[2] and his definition of the capacity to act is found in a text attributed to the Zaydite Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm.[3] In *K. al-burṣān* Jāḥiẓ[4] named a number of his pupils most of whom, however, did not receive much attention – as so often happens.

Abū ʿImrān Mūsā al-Raqāshī,

apparently a Basran,[5] was typical of the kind of people who were attracted to Bishr. He took his identity as a Sufi so seriously that he believed the acquisition of money through trade to be forbidden.[6] He regarded the Islamic ecumene as a 'house of unbelief',[7] probably thinking of Baghdad in particular. Like Bishr he strove to employ simple and concise language in order that the 'ignorant' might understand him, too.

Khayyāṭ heard this from two authorities who came from Iran: from a certain al-Balkhī, presumably Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Balkhī, a pupil of Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb (regarding him see ch. C 7.5 below), and from Abū Zufar, probably the Nishapuri theologian of that name (see p. 66 above); thus according to *Faḍl* 283, ult. ff. (read *Zufar* for *Dh-f-r*) > IM 77, 12ff. Whether Abū ʿImrān himself went to Iran and found followers there will remain unanswered for now. He is probably the person referred to in the anecdote told by Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Risālat Iblīs* 43, –6ff., maybe also in that told by Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 469, –5ff. Still, we must be wary of identifications of this kind. If the *nisba* only is recorded, the person referred to is frequently the poet Faḍl b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Raqāshī (such as e.g. Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 404, 1ff.; regarding him see vol. II 194 above). The *kunya* Abū ʿImrān, which is in any case frequently linked to the *ism* Mūsā, may also refer to the ʿMurjiʾite Muways b. ʿImrān (regarding him see p. 207 below).

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2  Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 305, 9ff.

3  *K. al-ʿadl wal-tawḥīd*, in: ʿImāra, *Rasāʾil* I 116, 13ff.

4  89, 5ff.

5  Regarding the Raqāshīs see vol. II 105f. above.

6  *taḥrīm al-makāsib*; *Faḍl* 284, 4 (where *yajmaʿu* must be corrected to *yuḥarrimu*) > IM 77, 16.

7  Ibid.

### Hāshim b. Nāṣiḥ

may have thought along similar lines. He transmitted 'something criticising wealth'.[8] The remaining names do not tell us anything. We find Bishr al-Qalānisī and Abū ʿUbaydallāh al-Afwah, who are also mentioned by Kaʿbī,[9] and a certain Rawḥ al-ʿAbdī.[10] In addition the *qāḍī* ʿAbd al-Jabbār mentions a certain Abū Ṣāliḥ who once debated with Ibn Kullāb on the createdness of the Quran.[11] One or all of them may have been among the *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila* introduced as a separate group by Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, among whom he also counts Abū ʿImrān al-Raqāshī. He also tells us that they supported the *taḥrīm al-makāsib*[12] and points out that their loathing of the worldly doings in the 'house of Islam' led them to deny the legitimation of the authorities. While not every ruler is of necessity a usurper, his function is merely one of guidance. If a punishment has to be meted out, someone with the required authority may be elected, but as long as the people know the laws and follow them, he is superfluous. The ruler (*imām*) is like the prayer leader whose title he shares: he is appointed when it is time to pray, and someone else will be selected the next time. Ultimately, one might actually pray alone.[13]

They believed this liberality to be specifically Islamic. There were 'kings' elsewhere, but not in Islam. After all, the community had been founded by a prophet, not a temporal ruler, and while the prophet enacted all manner of laws, he never said that the reign of any one particular person was a binding divine commandment. On the contrary: kingship leads to power struggles, and when a ruler introduces 'innovations', he can only be removed through bloodshed. This is detrimental to religion, and people will waste their time on things

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8    *Mīzān* no. 9190.

9    *Maq.* 74, 2, where the printed version has *Ibn al-Aqwam* instead of *Ibn al-Afwah*. The parallel in Ḥajūrī, *Rawḍat al-akhbār* (ms Ambrosiana C2, fol. 143b, pu. ff.) confirms that *Ibn al-Afwah* is the correct version; it probably ultimately goes back to Kaʿbī. Are these two the same as Bishr b. Shabīb and Bishr b. al-Sarī al-Afwah, who were believed to be Jahmites? Both of them, however, had their roots in Basra; Bishr b. al-Sarī furthermore bore the *kunya* Abū ʿAmr (see vol. 11 214).

10    He has nothing to do with Rawḥ, the son of the Basran Qadarite ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Maymūna (regarding him see vol. 11 62f. above). There is not much support for the theory that the Muʿtazilite ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Rawḥ al-ʿAffānī (see vol. 11 478 above) was his son, either.

11    *Faḍl* 285, ult. ff.

12    Text XVIII 1, l. Abū ʿUmar al-Bāhilī, who circulated Bishr's poems towards the end of the century (see p. 120 above) was linked to a Sufi circle, too (*Lisān al-Mīzān* V 320, apu. f.).

13    Ibid., a–d.

that are not beneficial to them.[14] Whoever engages in politics will forfeit his soul, just like those who hoard riches. In political theory this was the position of the extreme left. It is not entirely appropriate to claim that these Sufis were Zaydites like Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir; rather, they appear to be closer to Aṣamm's position in some ways.

Of course we must bear in mind that the name *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila* introduced by Pseudo-Nāshī' does not correspond exactly to the school of Bishr. Besides Abū ʿImrān he also mentions Faḍl al-Ḥadathī, who was Naẓẓām's pupil,[15] and a certain Ḥusayn al-Kūfī, whom we do not know at all. The same is true of the *taḥrīm al-makāsib*: while Ashʿarī confirmed that this way of life found followers among the Muʿtazilites – 'people too lazy to engage in trade'[16] – he did of course know that excessive trust in God might lead to this result in any case.[17] Hence it is not necessarily certain that he was referring to Bishr's pupils when he reported that the supporters of *taḥrīm al-makāsib* went begging and only accepted alms in extreme need when tormented by hunger; whatever they were given at such a time they regarded like carrion which a Muslim may also consume in great need. The explanation, however, goes well with the devaluation of the *dār al-Islām*: everything within this world is corrupt and ill-gotten goods. The explanation also takes a Shīʿite turn: buying and selling will only be permitted once 'the imam' takes possession of the world and shares it out.[18] Were they Zaydites after all, who had simply not found an imam? We have come across *taḥrīm al-makāsib* in a Shīʿite context before, albeit in a rather out of the way passage in Abū l-ʿAtāhiya.

See vol. 1 526 above. Reinert's linking the passage discussed to **Imāmite** quietists (*Tawakkul* 188) is probably in association with the reference to the imam. The comparison with times of extreme need has also been mentioned in connection with Shaqīq al-Balkhī (Text XIV 28); presumably it is a *topos*. The fact that Sufis refrained from work because they did not want to become accessories of unjust authorities or 'preserve the system' is also mentioned in Muḥāsibī (*Makāsib* 206, 9ff.). Merchants paid duty to the state (*Mughnī* XI 44, –6f.). From an *ʿaqīda* by Ibn Ḥanbal

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14    Ibid., e–k.

15    Regarding him see p. 473 below.

16    Text XVIII 2, e. They themselves called their way of life *sabīl Allāh*, inner *jihād* (see p. 331 below).

17    Ibid., f; cf. vol. II 613f. above regarding Shaqīq al-Balkhī.

18    Ibid., a–b; in fact this is more closely linked to the Muʿtazilites in *e* than to the 'believers in trusting in God' mentioned in *f*.

we learn that there were also certain *mutakallimūn* who rejected trade (Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* 30, pu. ff.). Ḍirār had already written about – or against? – Sufis (Catalogue of Works XV, no. 34), but we do not know in what context (cf. p. 39, n. 10 above). The most detailed early study of *taḥrīm al-makāsib* is included in Ibn Samāʿa, *K. al-iktisāb fī l-rizq al-mustaṭāb* (?), who was an older contemporary of Muḥāsibī's and appears to have based his work on a text by Shaybānī (GAS 1/435; ed. Cairo 1938, reprint by S. Zakkār entitled *K. al-kasb*, Damascus 1980). Goitein, *Studies* 220ff., and Dasūqī, *Shaybānī* 176ff., discuss it; there is also a brief reference in Cahen, EI² IV 691a s. v. *Kasb*. We have a comparatively short *K. al-ḥathth ʿalā tijāra wal-ṣināʿa wal-ʿamal wal-inkār ʿalā man yaddaʿī l-tawakkul* (pr. Damascus 1348) by the Ḥanbalite al-Khallāl (d. 311/923), but it contains mainly hadiths. The physician al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) and the Muʿtazilite philologist al-Rummānī (d. 384/994) wrote on the subject, but their works have not survived (cf. Bīrūnī, *Fihrist kutub al-Rāzī* 17 no. 177; Qifṭī, *Inbāh* II 296, 3). Concerning the later period cf. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XI 43, 8ff. Texts in which the Sufis themselves express their rejection are not at all frequent, and sometimes quite moderate (cf. the anonymous *Adab al-mulūk* 40, 3ff. RADTKE).

### 1.4.3.2.1  *Murdār*

These tendencies lived on; we will meet them again later in the context of Ibn al-Rēwandī.[1] He, however, traces them back[2] to the one among Bishr's pupils to whom the sources devoted the greatest attention:

Abū Mūsā ʿĪsā b. Ṣabīḥ[3] al-Murdār,

d. 226/841.[4] He was, to quote Ibn al-Rēwandī, 'among the Muʿtazilites like a monk among Christians'.[5] Ibn al-Rēwandī said this a little mockingly, and Khayyāṭ was most outraged by it.[6] However, it was the reference to the Christians he

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1  See ch. C 8.2.2.1 below.

2  Text XVIII 21, d.

3  Or Ṣubayḥ. Both these forms are common (cf. Dhahabī, *Mushtabih* 409, 6ff., and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih* 831, ult. ff.).

4  Regarding this and the following cf. the further references in my essay in: BEO 30/1978/307ff. = Arabica 30/1983/111ff. (French transl., with minor corrections), and in my article in EIran I 347ff. I shall only include notes where I go beyond what has been said there, or deviate from it.

5  Text XVIII 3, d.

6  Ibid., f–g.

found particularly irritating; of course, in the case of someone called ʿĪsā, this was rather personal. The word *rāhib,* on the other hand, did not sound negative to a Muslim at that time; the early Basran ascetic ʿĀmir b. ʿAbdqays was called 'the monk of this community',[7] while the Medinan Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/713) was called 'the monk of the Quraysh' because he prayed so much.[8] Among Murdār's contemporaries, Aḥmad b. al-Muʿadhdhal bore this sobriquet in Basra.[9] The word was pre-Islamic: the grandfather of the companion of the prophet ʿAbdallāh Ibn Ḥanẓala had borne it, too.[10] Consequently Murdār was praised as the 'monk of the Muʿtazila' even by some of his fellow believers.[11] While early sources such as Kaʿbī and Ibn al-Nadīm make no reference to it, we may safely assume that Ibn al-Rēwandī was referring to this predicate.[12]

The fact that he mentioned it at all is due to an anecdote he had narrated earlier. When Murdār lay dying, he was overwhelmed by guilt and left all his possessions to the poor; he believed he cheated them out of it and had enjoyed the profits unjustly throughout his life.[13] This bears all the marks of a legend, as heirs are also mentioned in the text, and in that case Murdār could have disposed freely only of a third of his estate. The intention, however, is described perfectly: like the *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila*, he mistrusted not only possessions but also the authorities; whoever got involved with the latter was an unbeliever.[14] At the same time the story shows that he never suffered want or begged during his lifetime, and he must have come by his possessions somehow. It is also noticeable that among the numerous writings the titles of which survive not one directly mentions asceticism or *taḥrīm al-makāsib* etc.[15] Thus Khayyāṭ

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7     TD, ed. Fayṣal 339, 9f.; regarding him see vol. II 101f. above.

8     IS V 153, 24.

9     Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VIII 184, 6f.; regarding him see ch. C 4.1.4 below.

10    Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 892 no. 1517; cf. M. Gil in: JSAI 10/1987/90f. For general information on the usage of the word cf. Andrae, *Islamische Mystiker* 15ff.

11    *Faḍl* 277, apu. > IM 71, 5; also Baghdādī, *Farq* 151, 6/164, ult. f., and Shahrastānī 48, 11/102, 2f. Abū Muʿīn al-Nasafī refers to him as *nāsik al-Baghdādiyyīn* (Text XVIII 11, a).

12    Kaʿbī's and Ibn al-Nadīm's silence may be the result of a degree of embarrassment; after all, a negative connotation took hold over time, which was confirmed by the hadith *lā rahbāniyya fī l-Islām* (Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 241, n. 3; also Massignon, *Essai*² 145ff., and Nwiya, *Exégèse coranique* 52ff.).

13    Text XVIII 3, a–c.

14    Text 5, b.

15    One might perhaps consider no. 26–27 of the Catalogue of Works; both these recall titles of writings by Muḥāsibī.

modified: Murdār only avoided things or situation whose juristic assessment was not entirely certain (*shubha*).[16]

His dislike of the authorities is also demonstrated in the story of the conversion of his pupil Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb. The latter had been a soldier and mocked Murdār's followers.[17] They came from a poor background; Ibn al-Rēwandī also emphasised this.[18] Even Murdār's name might indicate this, as *murdār* is Persian and means 'carrion'. If we are to believe Ḥākim al-Jushamī, this was the name of Murdār's father; if he had been a courtier this kind of joke would have been out of the question.

Thus Murdār's example, too, shows that the Muʿtazila in Baghdad continued to keep its distance from the authorities during the transition from Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir to his pupils. This attitude was advisable during the period of anarchy that followed the civil war between Amīn and Maʾmūn, which may be the explanation of Ibn al-Nadīm's remark that it was thanks to Murdār – and not to his teacher before him – that the Muʿtazila spread in Baghdad.[19] Like Bishr he went among people; not with poetry any more, but with sermons and edifying stories (*qiṣaṣ*); Abū l-Hudhayl was said to have felt reminded of the days of the early fathers, Wāṣil and ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd. One of these sermons has come down to us in longer fragments; Marzubānī (d. 384/994), himself a Muʿtazilite, recorded it in his '*akhbār al-mutakallimīn*', i.e. presumably *K. al-murshid*. It corresponds to the impression Abū l-Hudhayl had had, according to Khayyāṭ: namely that God's justice and benevolence are emphasised and contrasted with the wickedness of humans.[20] If we look at the text through the eyes of the theologian, we may be disappointed, as it does not present any original ideas. It does, however, convey the fundamentals of Muʿtazilite doctrine convincingly, culminating in a chain of rhetorical questions that recalls the legend of Ghaylān and probably has its origin in the tradition of the Basran Ghaylāniyya.[21] Elsewhere, Murdār also wrote passionately on God's justice and the wrong doctrines the predestinarians spread in that context.[22]

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16 Text 4, c.

17 See ch. C 4.2.2 below.

18 *Intiṣār* 72, ult. = Text XVIII 21, d.

19 *Fihrist* 206, apu.; possibly after the Muʿtazilī al-Ikhshīd (d. 326/938; cf. EI² III 807), if Ibn al-Murtaḍā's remark in *Ṭab.* 70, pu. ff., indeed referred to this.

20 *Intiṣār* 54, 11ff.

21 Cf. Text 6, esp. h; also Text I 1, d; in more detail my analysis in the essay cited in n. 4 above.

22 Catalogue of Works XVIII b, no. 4–9; cf. also the remark in Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Ris. Iblīs* 79, 8ff.

He did not break off all contact with the upper echelons and was acquainted with Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī. We are not entirely sure what their connection was; it may be that the latter summoned him in his capacity as chief of the secret service,[23] as he questioned him concerning the theologians and expressed his astonishment that Murdār had nothing good to say about any of them.[24] It does indeed appear that Murdār smelt unbelief everywhere, committing to the fires of hell everyone who believed in the non-createdness of the Quran, in predestination or in the *visio beatifica*.[25] Even if they recited the profession of faith they did so, he thought, in the wrong sense.[26] Khayyāṭ explained how this came about: he regarded these beliefs as the consequence of a fundamentally false image of God. Someone who thinks that it is possible to perceive God with one's eyes must needs consider God to be created; someone who claims that he predestined sin believes him to be stupid. This is so obvious that one cannot doubt it; consequently whoever doubts the unbelief of these people must be an unbeliever himself, and so on, *ad infinitum*.[27] The argumentation once again recalls the Basran Ghaylāniyya, especially Abū Shamir.[28]

Murdār was reported to have recorded this view in a book as well.[29] We do not know whether this refers to one of the titles preserved by Ibn al-Nadīm, but it is clear that, as in Bishr's case, a disproportionately large number of his works was dedicated to polemic. We have seen him attack the predestinarians repeatedly; he also wrote about the *khalq al-Qurʾān*.[30] He had his sights set on Najjār in particular; the latter now occupied the same position as Ḍirār had in Bishr's eyes.[31] In the context of the Christians, Murdār suddenly becomes more concrete, writing against Theodore Abū Qurra.[32] He probably had cause to do so; the bishop of Ḥarrān on his part had composed a treatise against

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23    See p. 70 above.

24    Text 4, k, and 5, e–f (with commentary). Khayyāṭ knew the story but attempted to dispose of it once and for all as it was completely isolated (4, l). It was presumably not passed on in Muʿtazilite circles.

25    Text 4, a and c; 5, a and c.

26    Text 5, d.

27    Text 4, g–i, also b; in general also Text XXI 47, f.

28    See vol. II 202 above. Cf. also the argumentation presented by Jāḥiẓ in *Radd ʿalā l-mush-abbiha*: one cannot simultaneously claim to know the *tawḥīd* and then proceed to deny it implicitly in a detail (*Rasāʾil* IV 5, 3ff./ed. Geries, *Kitābān* 109, 3ff.).

29    Text 4, d.

30    Catalogue of Works no. 16.

31    Catalogue of Works no. 11 and 19; regarding him see ch. C 5.2 below. This also indicates relations with Basra.

32    Catalogue of Works no. 33; cf. also no. 32.

those who pronounced God's word to be created. In the *khalq al-Qurʾān* the Christian heard a denial of the *logos*.[33] Murdār even ruffled the feathers of his Muʿtazilite colleagues. He wrote against Thumāma, against Naẓẓām and against Shaḥḥām;[34] there were issues concerning which he disagreed with Abū l-Hudhayl just as much as with his teacher Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir.[35] He appears to have argued with the Basran school in general.[36] Baghdādī claims, possibly quoting Ibn al-Rēwandī, that he called all of them unbelievers.[37] Still, he cannot have meant it quite as literally as all that, as he was a guest of Thumāma's who was well-known for always having an open house for his fellow believers.[38] Calling someone a *kāfir* was probably merely an insult among the inhabitants of Baghdad; it was only in small, self-contained communities such as the Ibāḍiyya – and possibly the Basran Muʿtazila – that it had legal and social consequences.[39]

At a time when the *miḥna* was approaching this rigorous adherence to principles was not entirely displeasing to some, as we learn from a poem with which Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī (d. 225/840), the son of Maʾmūn's tutor Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī and the caliph's milk brother,[40] tried to discredit the Ḥanafite *qāḍī* Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī (d. 238/852–3 at a great age). The latter had been Abū Yūsuf's pupil and thus came with the best credentials.[41] In 208/823–4 Maʾmūn had entrusted him with the position of judge in ʿAskar al-Mahdī on the eastern bank in Baghdad; in 210/825 he appointed him *qāḍī* in the Manṣūr city, i.e. the district that included the palace. His judgments, however,

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33  CGAL II 15; also Allard in: *Arabica* 9/1962/383. Abū Qurra's 'Affirmation of the Faith of the Christians' may have been directed at Muslims (CGAL, ibid.); cf. vol. II 499 above and p. 218 with n. 25 below.

34  Cf. Catalogue of Works no. 20, 10, and 21.

35  See p. 152f. and 280 below.

36  Cf. Catalogue of Works no. 29.

37  Text 4, commentary; cf. *Intiṣār* 58, 6ff. Cf., however, p. 153 below.

38  Text XXI 91, c.

39  Thus it can happen that a Muslim's sin is called *kufr* (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Īmān* 43f. no. 129). Among the rural population *kāfir* is to this day a term of social contempt for a Muslim who behaves in an unorthodox fashion (Büren, *Palästinensischer Teilstaat* 46). Regarding the practice in the Muʿtazila cf. Jārallāh, *Al-Muʿtazila* 190f.

40  Regarding the poet and his father cf. GAS 2/610; especially Fleischhammer in: ZDMG 112/1962/300ff.

41  Regarding him cf. TB VII 8off. no. 3518; Shīrāzī, *Ṭab.* 138, 6f.; IAW I 166f. no. 374; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 257, 7ff.

were controversial and he was removed from office in 213/828.[42] Over time he
would be considered not to be faithful to the party line any more. He made
excuses during the *miḥna*; Ma'mūn felt deceived and accused him of being
in league with Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī.[43] He was still persecuted under al-Muʿtaṣim
because he did not profess the *khalq al-Qurʾān* decisively enough.[44] Ma'mūn's
remarks suggest that earlier he had become suspect because of his image of
God in general. This is the point at which Yazīdī joins in the debate. Bishr, he
claims in his verses, allowed 'anthropomorphists' to bear witness, while ex-
cluding others who 'publicly professed what the scripture tells us and what
is written in hadith'. All this despite the fact that 'an anthropomorphist is an
unbeliever in his religion, and those who profess his religion are unbelievers,
too'. Consequently the caliph had better select someone else, maybe someone
respected by Bishr al-Marīsī or, better still – as even Bishr was not entirely or-
thodox due to his determinism and his Murjiʾite concept of faith – 'someone
who unites in himself all good qualities: a mature man (*kahl*) whose teacher
was Murdār'.[45] Clearly Murdār was respected precisely because he stayed
away from the court. However, in the end a 'Jahmite' was appointed Bishr b.
al-Walīd's successor; presumably Bishr al-Marīsī's party prevailed.[46]

Murdār appears to have grown milder towards the end of his life and too
scrupulous to engage with difficult theological issues about which quarrels
arose easily, and within which one might easily lose track.[47] He only wrote
about fundamental questions that regarded everyone and were understood by

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42    TB VII 81, 4ff.; Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* III 272, –6ff., and 282, apu. f. (where *thalāth wa-thalāthīn*
      must be changed to *thalātha ʿashrata* and *al-Jundī* to *al-Kindī*). The chronology is not
      entirely clear in the latter passage. It may have led Sīrāfī to assume in his *Ṭabaqāt al-
      nuḥāt al-Baṣriyyīn*, which include the story as well (46, ult. ff. KRENKOW), that Bishr only
      **became** *qāḍī* in 213.

43    Ṭabarī III 1126, 17ff./transl. Bosworth 215f.; cf. p. 486 below.

44    TB VII 83, 12ff.; general information in Patton, *Ahmed Ibn Hanbal and the Mihna* 70ff. and
      80, as well as Jadʿān, *Al-miḥna* 203ff.

45    *Faḍl* 278, –4ff.; the crucial verse also earlier 278, 4, and *Intiṣār* 54, –7. Sīrāfī (loc. cit.) errone-
      ously names Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī, i.e. the father, as the author of the verses; as does
      Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 206, ult. ff. (where, curiously, the verse concerning Murdār as well as
      the preceding one have been omitted). Sīrāfī's authority also impressed Ḥākim al-Jushamī
      (cf. *Faḍl* 278, n. 519; n. 514 also identifies the poet incorrectly). Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī
      died early, in 202/817. – His son was quite capable of railing against the Muʿtazilites if
      necessary, as is demonstrated by *Agh.* XX 252, 13ff. (cf. Fleischhammer 305).

46    Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* III 282, ult. ff. Regarding the constellation of power cf. also p. 194f. below. –
      In Ibn Baṭṭa's view Murdār was a Jahmite rather than a Qadarite (cf. *Ibāna* 91, 15, and 92,
      3ff.). However, Murdār did write against the Jahmiyya (Catalogue of Works no. 18).

47    Text 7, c.

everyone[48] – above all about God's justice and human responsibility; his impetus had always been predominantly moralistic. The *khalq al-Qurʾān*, too, probably remained clear-cut to him until the time of the *miḥna*; he emphasised that one could not regard anything besides God as eternal.[49] He clearly did not think much of *iʿjāz*, not even in the form which Naẓẓām accepted it during his lifetime.[50] His *K. uṣūl al-dīn* and his *K. al-diyāna*[51] may have been composed during this late period. And it is imaginable that is was due to this very theological abstinence that much of what he had embraced earlier was forgotten; later Muʿtazilites, even Jāḥiẓ, took barely any notice of him.

At first he had been led astray by his *takfīr* in particular. At that time he had shared his teacher Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's contempt of the blind ignorance of the masses,[52] and criticism he was able to voice of colleagues and also of his teacher on questions of detail was self-affirmation to him. All in all he seems to have adopted Bishr's system as the framework for his own. He composed a treatise on *lutf*,[53] and the solution he found to the problem of createdness was summarised by the doxographers in almost the same words as Bishr's.[54] Divine will was important enough for him to search for a form in which it contributes to human sins, but he changed perspective: while Bishr had said that God wills sins insofar as he names them as such,[55] Murdār believed that God willed sin by allowing humans their own decision.[56] He used the same examples when discussing the *tawallud* theory,[57] only refraining from discussing

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48  *Faḍl* 278, 1. The 'theological subtleties' (*al-laṭīf min al-kalām*) in Text 7, c, probably also refer to those issues Ashʿarī listed under the keyword *daqīq* in his *Maqālāt* (p. 301ff.), namely propaedeutics of science and philosophy such as atomism etc., which could be discussed without recourse to the revelation.

49  Text 5, a. Maybe he was drawing a comparison with the Christian doctrine of logos and thus brought about the argument with Theodore Abū Qurra.

50  Text 12, which is, however, slightly isolated. Regarding Naẓẓām see p. 445 below.

51  Catalogue of Works no. 1–2.

52  Cf. the report in Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil* II 196, 1ff.; cf. p. 118f. above.

53  Catalogue of Works no. 12.

54  Cf. Text XVIII 10, b, and XVII 31, a, and 32, a; also Text XVII 33. XVIII 10, c, does not appear to provide new information, either. The sentence mainly differentiates as compared to Muʿammar (cf. Text XVI 35, a–b). The text about Bishr does not state explicitly that creating was itself created, but it was a corollary of his doctrine (see p. 132f. above).

55  See p. 132 above.

56  Text XVIII 10, a; cf. also Gimaret in: SI 40/1974/11. In the context (*Maq.* 190, 5ff.) he is clearly distinguished from Bishr, but we must bear in mind that Ashʿarī's information on Murdār referred to Abū l-Hudhayl, who saw things from a different perspective.

57  Text 11; cf. the commentary. In brief also Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 653.

sensory perception.[58] It may have been more significant that he did not equate the capacity to act with the healthy functioning of the human extremities but rather saw it as an accident,[59] but we do not know what consequences he drew from this.

He was at his most original concerning the issue of theodicy. The way in which Bishr absolved God from the responsibility for the suffering of innocent children appeared to him to be eccentric;[60] he even wrote about it.[61] God does have the power to act unjustly, but he does not do so. By this time al-Naẓẓām was denying altogether that God had the power to perform actions contrary to his essence.[62] And the question addressed to Murdār, that had already discomfited Bishr, came from Naẓẓām's followers: what if God did something like this all the same? Murdār was evasive: asking such questions was unseemly. After all, one does not ask what if Abū Bakr had been a fornicator, or Ḥasan al-Baṣrī a thief. But his opponents persisted; the question was not nonsensical to him (*muḥāl*) as might have been said from Naẓẓām's point of view. Murdār retired to the position that it can be proven that God would not do such a thing; but that if he did, there would have to be proof of this, too. This would be the only, theoretical, case in which God could be omnipotent and unjust at the same time.

In this reconstruction I am following Ashʿarī's account. He appears to express the individual steps of the thought process well, although we need not assume that his dialogue style was genuinely based on the transcript of an actual discussion (Text 8, a–e). Khayyāṭ's leaving out the last round (Text 7, d–h) was probably because otherwise he would have had to agree with Ibn al-Rēwandī up to a point. The latter had emphasised precisely the last theoretical concession (cf. 7, b, and 8, e). Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who did not find himself in this dialectic situation, was able to perceive it as the main issue (Text 9, a). Concerning the dependencies cf. also Gimaret in: Annuaire Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes 89/1980–81/383f., and in: *Livre des Religions* 241, n. 3.

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58   Thus according to Baghdādī whose version is not, however, supported by anyone else's (cf. the commentary on Text f).

59   Text XVI 55.

60   See p. 135 above.

61   Catalogue of Works no. 13. It is not inevitable that the argumentation against Bishr's doctrine ascribed by Khayyāṭ to the Muʿtazila in general (Text XVII 42, i–k) goes back to him and was recorded in this book.

62   See p. 438f. below.

The question remained of how this, even as a theoretical possibility, would be compatible with the essence of God. Murdār's response appears to have been that injustice is not an attribute but an action. Injustice (*ẓulm*) means, doing something unjust; this is why the texts always name it together with the lie. God's actions, however, do not touch upon his essence. Murdār now had to agree to interpreting justice as a mere attribute of act;[63] but even al-Naẓẓām agreed with him in this.[64] This was the very reason that forced him to differentiate when transferring the same idea from injustice and lie to ignorance. God has the power of everything, including ignorance, but only if it refers to ignorant, i.e. foolish, actions. In this sense it is merely a question of taste whether one wishes to discuss it. God cannot be ignorant in the sense of not knowing things, or their destiny: this would touch upon his essence.[65]

In this way criticism of Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir was transformed into an argument with Naẓẓām. Murdār went into some detail on the subject in a *K. al-qudra ʿalā l-ẓulm*.[66] We are unable to verify whether he called Naẓẓām an unbeliever because of his divergent view of the *tawallud* model, as Baghdādī claimed,[67] but it does seem certain that he used this unkind epithet with regard to Abū l-Hudhayl.[68] He disliked the latter's doctrine that all movement will end one day in the afterlife.[69] While he saw that Abū l-Hudhayl had introduced this doctrine only so that he would not have to presume the eternal existence of the world, he believed that this was a clumsy manoeuvre that ultimately gave in to his opponents.[70] Baghdādī claimed he even discussed this in an extensive volume,[71] but this may be a misunderstanding. The titles listed by Ibn al-Nadīm do not include anything that might be linked to this, and the argument Baghdādī quotes would appear to have been formulated by Hishām al-Fuwaṭī.[72]

It is impossible to determine whether Murdār was a Zaydite like his teacher. He rejected ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, but at the time, especially under Maʾmūn, that was almost normal.[73] His attitude to ʿUthmān, on the other hand, remained

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63 Text 9, b.
64 See p. 437 below.
65 Text 8, f.
66 Catalogue of Works no. 10.
67 Cf. the commentary on Text 4.
68 Thus Khayyāṭ, *Intiṣār* 58, 6.
69 See p. 276ff. below.
70 Text XXI 92, a–c.
71 *Farq* 102, 8f./122, 3f., and 152, pu. f./166, –6f. (cf. the commentary on Text 4).
72 *Farq* 103, 6ff./122, ult. ff.; cf. p. 280 below.
73 Text 13, c–d; cf. p. 483 below.

controversial to Ibn al-Rēwandī and Khayyāṭ.[74] What is clear is that he did not make excuses for him; he certainly preferred ʿAlī. His attitude can be described as vaguely pro-Shīʿite, but there was room for a wide range of individual opinions. This makes it all the more significant that he condemned ʿUthmān's murderers explicitly: even if ʿUthmān had truly sinned, that was no compelling reason for killing him.[75] This sounds surprisingly moderate in someone who was so quick to cry *takfīr*.

It is interesting that Murdār attacked the followers of *ijtihād al-raʾy*.[76] Thumāma did that, too; maybe even before him.[77] If he did not consider the conclusion by analogy to be reliable enough,[78] he may have learnt that from Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir,[79] although it is more firmly anchored in Murdār's own system: his *takfīr* and *taqlīd* were based on rationalism which looked increasingly to a strict methodology. This was in fact independent of the faith: non-Muslims could recognise God too, he thought, although they do not yet know that they are performing a work of obedience.[80] The ignorant masses were, strictly speaking, in greater danger than an intellectual of different faith, and the truth one must preach to the masses was so simple because everything becomes clear when the light of reason shines onto it.

### 1.4.3.2.2  *Anthropomorphic Tendencies*

We will need to come back to the *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila* later. In the long term they distanced themselves not only socially but also theologically.[1] However, let us first look at another figure who exemplified the difficulties of the movement even at the time:

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74   Ibid., a–b. Both were writing at a time when it was not advisable to be seen to be pro-Shīʿite.

75   Text 14 and 13, b. It does not seem to be to me to be entirely certain that Baghdādī represented an independent strand of transmission.

76   Catalogue of Works no. 30.

77   See p. 182 below.

78   Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām* VII 203, 17ff.; 1047, 11f.

79   Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 187, apu., albeit in a rather generic report. The attitude was spreading quickly in the Baghdad school (see ch. C 4.2.1.3 below).

80   Text XXI, 47, 0, with commentary; cf. p. 272f. below.

1   See ch. 4.2.3 and 8.2.2.1 below.

Abū Shuʿayb al-Ṣūfī (or al-Nāsik).

He believed that God could feel emotion, such as when he is pleased or angered by humans in consequence of their actions.[2] To him, this was more than delight and anger, which had long been known as attributes and to which, as the case of Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir shows,[3] even a Muʿtazilite might agree. God, however, actually suffers when humans sin against him – 'he lacks something'. On the other hand he not only rejoices when his 'friends', the *awliyāʾ*, perform works of obedience on his behalf or turn back to him in repentance after wrongdoing, but he truly profits from it. Thus by creating humans he renounced his self-sufficiency, as it were, and is not unapproachable any more. This thought must have suggested itself to a Sufi, but it was not easily compatible with the Muʿtazilite image of God. Unfortunately not all the doxographers interpreted these data the same way. Ibn Ḥazm certainly went too far when he suggested that Abū Shuʿayb imagined God as a human made from flesh and blood;[4] this is simply based on the formula used to describe anthropomorphism as embraced by Muqātil b. Sulaymān and others. However, not even Jāḥiẓ concealed that Abū Shuʿayb thought it possible that God might feel tired.

Abū Shuʿayb proved this based on sura 50:38: 'We created the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, in six days, and no tiredness touched us' (Text 15, e). This would be purely an *argumentum e contrario*, God's becoming tired during the creation being explicitly ruled out in the passage. Furthermore, the phrase *lā taʾkhudhuhū sinatun wa-lā nawm* of the throne verse (2:255) contradicts it; the Muslims quoted it to point out to Jews and Christians that God did not need to rest after his work of creation. Abū Shuʿayb was thus not arguing from a strong position. Christians and Jews had always interpreted the prototype of sura 2:255 in psalm 121:4: 'Behold, he that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep' figuratively; Abū Shuʿayb may have done the same. He could also point out that *sina* did not mean 'tiredness' (Paret translates 'Ermüdung'), but 'nap, snooze' (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* [3]v 391 no. 5769ff.), and that the verse in the Quran addressed something rather more concrete than his theory indicated. Even so, one wonders whether he had an entirely different objective? Might he have assumed that God becomes tired because humans 'weaken' him with their obstreperousness, i.e. their sin (Text 17)? In this

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2  Text 15–18.

3  See p. 136f. above.

4  Text 19, a.

way the *argumentum e contrario* would be more comprehensible; he would only have proved that God can tire because of things **other** than the work of creation. Regarding the polemic against the Jewish position cf. Radtke, *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung* 222ff.; further details p. 428f. below.

Jāḥiẓ is the source of the report that Abū Shuʿayb was 'one of the old Muʿtazilites', too.[5] At first glance it is not entirely free from difficulty as it goes via Ibn al-Rēwandī and might come from his *K. faḍīḥat al-Muʿtazila*. Furthermore Abū Shuʿayb was only a Sufi in Ashʿarī's eyes; the latter mentions him in a brief, separate section on the ascetics.[6] Baghdādī, too, gives him the sobriquet al-Nāsik;[7] Kaʿbī, however, knows a Muʿtazilite named Abū Shuʿayb al-Ṣūfī,[8] and if the Jāḥiẓ quotation really is a fragment of the *K. faḍīḥat al-Muʿtazila*, Khayyāṭ's omitting to refer to it in *K. al-intiṣār* would equal an admission that he had nothing with which to counter it. Anthropomorphic ideas were not entirely impossible within the Muʿtazila, as illustrated by some heretic pupils of Naẓẓām's who were also Sufis.[9] The later Muʿtazilite biographers omitted Abū Shuʿayb's name; Jāḥiẓ, on the other hand, seems to have included him in his extant text under the name Abū Shuʿayb al-Qallāl.

The last-named identification is suggested by a reference in Ibn Ḥazm.[10] It is not entirely unproblematic, for Jāḥiẓ says clearly neither that Abū Shuʿayb al-Qallāl was a Muʿtazilite, nor that he was a Sufi. A *qallāl* was a manufacturer of large water jugs (*qulla*). Abū Shuʿayb appears to have been such an expert in this craft that Hārūn al-Rashīd once had him brought to the palace in order to watch him at work.[11] The caliph was impressed with his repartee; for a simple man, Abū Shuʿayb was surprisingly educated. He had knowledge of poetry, and was in fact a poet himself.[12] He appears to have come from

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5    Text 15, a.

6    P. 288f.; this is the source of Text 16. While it is not Ashʿarī's usual style to introduce
     Muʿtazilites as such, but he does not refer to them as 'someone' (*rajul*) as he dies in Texts
     16 and 17. He does not appear to have any particular concept of who Abū Shuʿayb was.

7    Cf. the commentary on Tex 15.

8    *Maq.* 74, 8, and probably also in the list based on his text in Ibn al-Nadīm 220, n., l. 6, where
     *al-Ṣayrafī* should be corrected to *al-Ṣūfī* (contradicting Fück in: ZDMG 90/1936/312f.). The
     mistake is an old one; Ibn Ḥajar already copied it (*Lisān al-Mīzān* VII 63 no. 589).

9    See p. 475f. below.

10   Text 18.

11   Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 261, 16ff.

12   Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās* I 41, 5ff. = Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 197, pu. ff. = Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ
     al-ʿuyūn* 251, apu. ff.

Sogdiana, and consequently had an eye for the differences in demeanour exhibited by the monks of different denominations: the Nestorians dwelt in subterranean chambers (*maṭāmīr*), the Melkites lived in cells (*ṣawmaʿa*), and the Manichaeans travelled around, always in twos.[13] This may be how he himself became a Sufi; maybe he had also learnt his image of God from them. He was certainly acquainted with Muʿtazilites; he was mentioned in company with Abū l-Hudhayl.[14] Muways b. ʿImrān supported him.[15]

A manuscript copy of Murtaḍā's *Amālī* contains the gloss that Abū Shuʿayb's name was Ṣaqr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (I 198, n. 4), but this does not help us. Jāḥiẓ was acquainted with Abū Shuʿayb al-Qallāl, while calling him 'one of the old Muʿtazilites' in Text 15, a; which argues against the identification suggested in the present study. Of course Jāḥiẓ' words might be quoted from Ibn al-Rēwandī. Other identifications are even more problematic. Ibn Baṭṭa mentions one Abū Shuʿayb al-Ḥajjām who was a Jahmite (*Ibāna* 91, 17), but a barber-surgeon is not a potter. We can also rule out the Baghdad Sufi Abū Shuʿayb al-Barāthī, whom Ritter assumed to be the Abū Shuʿayb of the *Maqālāt* (Index 637; also Massignon, *Passion* ²III 191/transl. III 169; regarding him TB XIV 418 no. 7757); he is not compatible with Texts 15 and 18 both of which were not known to Ritter. There was a further Sufi named Abū Shuʿayb from Baghdad who had been Maʿrūf al-Karkhī's pupil (TB XIV 419 no. 7758). We might consider identifying him and the Muʿtazilite Abū Shuʿayb who, according to *Agh.* IV 8, 6ff., made a fool of himself in front of Abū l-ʿAtāhiya because he was most obtuse when it came to the issue of *khalq al-Qurʾān*. On the other hand the text introduces him as a follower of Ibn Abī Duwād, even though Abū l-ʿAtāhiya died long before the latter became known. He may have been mistaken for one Shuʿayb who was mentioned in the account of Ibn Ḥanbal's *miḥna*, recorded by his cousin Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, as having been present in the background of the trial (see p. 503 below). Otherwise he would still have been alive in the 220s and could thus not very well have been 'one of the old Muʿtazilites'.

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13  *Ḥayawān* IV 457, ult. ff.; the editor is probably right to read *Ṣughdī* rather than *Ṣufrī* (*Bukhalāʾ* 343 no. 118).

14  *Ḥayawān* V 475, 8ff.

15  *Bukhalāʾ* 71, 19ff.

# Divided Empire and Civil War

We have hurried far ahead of ourselves. Murdār flourished mainly during Ma'mūn's and Mu'taṣim's time, but the people of Baghdad to whom he preached had been making history for some time before that. Amīn had been accorded the succession and dominion over the western part of the empire in the 'Meccan documents' of 186/802,[1] but when he became caliph in 193/809 at the age of twenty, he was allowed to enjoy possession of the capital untroubled for three years only; then the siege of the Khorasanian troops began. It was a long drawn-out conflict with fierce street fights.[2] The population was on his side; the Iranians had long fallen out of favour. The ʿayyārūn did not ask for pay, as the poet al-Khuraymī, who supported al-Amīn, noted with surprise;[3] they were fighting for their own interests. In Europe this attitude would emerge only after the French Revolution. Of course they were poorly equipped, as the common people were forbidden to own weapons. They wore woollen cuirasses and protected themselves using shields made from palm leaves and reed mats; when attacking they used sticks and rocks.[4] We do not know whether al-Amīn had won them over with religious concessions. He probably did nothing to change the conditions he had inherited from his father Hārūn. Ismā'īl b. ʿUlayya, the jurist's father, was said to have admonished him once when he was suspected of embracing the *khalq al-Qur'ān*. This would have had to be shortly after his accession, but the account is so vague that it is impossible to draw conclusions.[5] Naẓẓām appears to have been able to teach in peace in those days.[6]

Only once the Khorasanians had captured the city did religious persecution start. We have seen that the younger Ibn ʿUlayya emigrated to Egypt at

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1  In detail Kimber in: Occasional Papers, School of Abbasid Studies 55ff.

2  Cf. F. Gabrieli in: RSO 11/1926–8/341ff., and the summary in EI² 437f. s. v. *al-Amīn*; T. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 433ff.; Sidki Ahmad Hamdi, *The Civil War between Amīn and Ma'mūn* (PhD London 1948).

3  Ṭabarī III 877, 8, within a lengthy *qaṣīda* from which Jāḥiẓ quoted this verse as well as another one in his *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh* (*Rasā'il* I 284, 1ff.). Regarding the poet cf. Pellat in EI² I 159f.; GAS 2/550f/.

4  Ibid. 877, 5f.; cf. Cahen in: Arabica 6/1959/35f., and Sabari, *Mouvements* 78.

5  TH 323, –9ff.; Ibn ʿUlayya the elder died in Dhū l-Qaʿda 193/Aug.–Sept. 809 (see vol. II 419 above).

6  See p. 323f. below.

that time, probably accompanied by Ḥafṣ al-Fard.[7] Bishr al-Marīsī, too, was in danger of being called to account for his opinions, but was able to go underground.[8] The measure was instigated by Harthama b. Aʿyan, one of the two generals who had led the siege on Maʾmūn's behalf. We can only speculate as to his motives. The three theologians were linked by their belief in the *khalq al-Qurʾān*, and of course the fact that they engaged in *kalām* at all. One could entertain the thought that Harthama took the mood of the people into account, who were ill-disposed towards the *mutakallimūn* and furthermore in a most volatile mood as a result of Amīn's murder.[9] This, however, leads to the question of why they had not taken steps against the intellectual troublemakers earlier, during the siege. Maybe Amīn kept the peace; after all, he had nothing to gain from religious quarrelling.

As a result of the long fratricidal war the central government had relaxed its hold on the provinces. In late 195/mid-811, a grandson of the 'alchemist' Khālid b. Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya had appeared on the scene in Syria and driven out Amīn's governor. His mother had been ʿAlī's great-granddaughter, which allowed him to claim descent from both the parties at Ṣiffīn and thus be the one person to end the old schism. The Kalb tribal group supported him and he retained influence until Muḥarram 198/Sept. 813.[10] There were troubles in Egypt, too, the governor's family acting on their own account.[11] Rebellions flared up throughout the empire outside of Khorasan, where Maʾmūn firmly held the reins.[12]

These were not merely attempts at secession in the old style. The Sufyānī had been predicted in hadiths, and he would certainly have tried to adapt to the prophesies. He appears to have fought under red banners.[13] The self-destruction of the dynasty and the fragmentation of the empire, *fitna* in the old sense, had encouraged chiliastic ideas. 'When the Abbasids disagree among themselves', Kaʿb al-aḥbār was quoted as saying, 'this is the beginning of the downfall of their government.'[14] After all, this was how the Umayyads had perished, too. Fears were intensified by a round date approaching: the year 200. 'The power of the Abbasids will shatter in the year (1)97 or (1)98, and in the

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7      See vol. II 476 and 819 above.

8      Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 30, 14ff. Details show that this is not merely an incorrectly dated doublet of the preceding report 30, 11ff. (regarding the latter see p. 189f. below).

9      Thus in: Der Islam 44/1968/32f.

10     Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 254f.; Aguadé, *Messianismus* 151f.

11     Aguadé 132ff.

12     Cf. the overview in Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* II 540, 8ff.

13     Aguadé 156ff. after Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād; cf. 128ff. Also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 254ff., and Madelung in: SI 63/1986/5ff.

14     Aguadé 120; further hadiths in this vein 119ff.

year 200 the *mahdī* shall rise up.'[15] People counted five *ṭabaqāt* of 40 years each during which Islam gradually approached decadence; by 200 the 'people of the massacre (*harj*) and of wars' would determine the mood of the age.[16] Once the fifth caliph – namely Hārūn al-Rashīd – had died, there would be unrest until the seventh; the *mahdī* would put an end to this.[17] The fact that even the Christian Baḥīrā apocalypse included this belief shows the extent to which it had taken hold.[18]

15      Ibid. 127; also Madelung in: Festschrift ʿAbbās 345.

16      *alladhīna yulawwinuhum ilā l-miʾatayin ahlu l-harj wal-ḥurūb*; Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* II 392, −8ff. Regarding the term *harj* cf. Attema, Voorteekenen 63ff. It is found in Ancient South Arabic (cf. Sayed, *Ibn al-Ashʿāth* 331).

17      Aguadé 123f.; Madelung 345.

18      Aguadé 127 and Madelung 346; both after Abel in: Ann. Inst. Phil. Hist. Or. 3/1935/5, and SI 2/1954/29, n. 1.

## 2.1 The Uprising of Abū l-Sarāyā

One might assume that the Shīʿites in Iraq would have profited from this mood especially, but they lacked a leader, as none of Mūsā al-Kāẓim's numerous sons had come forward. In the end it was a Bedouin condottiere who was able to provide the fighting power they needed. Abū l-Sarāyā, the 'Lion of the Shaybān', had fought for Amīn at first, but then changed sides and followed Harthama b. Aʿyan. An ʿAlid whom he happened to meet in Raqqa could be persuaded to pose as pretender to the throne, which allowed Abū l-Sarāyā to campaign for *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* in the old style. He was a man of action. Not even his first candidate's sudden death and the need to find a new imam could deter him from military intervention, or from sending governors to the provinces from his stronghold in Kufa in order to drive out the Abbasids.[1] The inhabitants of Kufa bided their time; he was hardly the right man for the 'Rāfiḍites'. This makes it all the more interesting that two of Mūsā al-Kāẓim's sons threw their lot in with his, one of them taking the opportunity to conquer Yemen,[2] the other one going as governor to Ahwāz after setting fire to the Abbasids' palaces in Basra.[3] Many other ʿAlids joined in the game; Gabrieli called the uprising a general mobilisation of all ʿAlid forces in Iraq.[4] The Iraqi army suffered great losses until Abū l-Sarāyā was captured and executed in Rabīʿ I 200/ Oct. 815.

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1 Cf. in detail Gabrieli, *Maʾmūn e gli ʿAlidi* 12ff.; Arioli in: Annali di Ca' Foscari 5/1975/184ff.; Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 419ff.; Kennedy, *Abbasid Caliphate* 207ff.; briefly also Gibb in EI² I 149f., and Ashkūrī in GIE II 57f. s. v. *Āl Ṭabāṭabā*. The relevant passage in Ṭabarī on which opinions have generally been based is now available in translation by Bosworth, *History of al-Ṭabarī* XXXII 12ff., and Uhrig, *Maʾmūn* 8ff. Another source worth consulting is al-Manṣūr billāh, *Shāfī* I 247ff.

2 He was known there as 'the butcher' (al-Ghazzār); cf. Ṭabarī III 987, 4ff./transl. Bosworth 28ff., and Uhrig 32ff., also Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 533, 11, and 534, 1f. The secretary Bishr b. Abī Kubār addressed a critical letter to him (ed. W. al-Qāḍī, *Balawī* 185ff., where the heading *Mūsā al-Ghazzār* should be corrected to *Ibrāhīm al-Ghazzār*). Regarding the events of 199 in general cf. Qāḍī 26ff., and Madʿaj, *The Yemen in early Islam* 205ff.

3 From then on he was known as Zayd al-Nār. Regarding him cf. Ṭabarī III 986, 8ff./Bosworth 27 and Uhrig 30; *Maqātil* 533, 12, and 534, 5ff.; Ḥamdūnī, *Tadhkira* I 115 no. 239. Maʾmūn later pardoned both brothers; Zayd lived among ʿAlī al-Riḍā's entourage (Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLIX 216ff. no. 1–4).

4 *Maʾmūn e gli ʿAlidi* 23. Cf. also Kulīnī, *Kāfī* VIII 257, –7ff. One should bear in mind that Mūsā al-Kāẓim had no fewer than 23 sons (and 37 daughters; Ibn ʿInaba, *ʿUmdat al-ṭālib* 196, ult. ff.) According to another source there were 18; cf. *Biḥār* XLVIII 288 no. 4, and in general 283ff.; regarding their lives and their graves ibid. 307ff.

Abū l-Sarāyā sent Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn's grandson Ḥusayn al-Afṭas to the Hijaz, 'the man with the flat nose'. On New Year's Day 200, 1 Muḥarram, he had the covers of the Kaʿba, which the Abbasids had donated, taken down and replaced with cloths of black and white silk which Abū l-Sarāyā had sent with him.[5] When the news of the latter's capture reached him, he persuaded Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's youngest son Muḥammad, by then an old man, to proclaim himself 'commander of the faithful'.[6] This was the first time since the massacre at Fakhkh that an ʿAlid stood against the Abbasids in Medina; Muḥammad was said to have been persuaded only because he saw how much anti-ʿAlid sentiment had been incited by preceding events.[7] His claim was mainly based on the fact that he was now the eldest in the family, son of the same mother as Mūsā al-Kāẓim.[8] His followers further buttressed his claim by pointing out that he bore the same name as the prophet. In Khorasan the Shīʿa refused to recognise anyone other than him.[9]

None of this was probably as ephemeral as it appeared to the historians. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had left his followers with the hope that one of his sons would be the *qāʾim*.[10] We have reason to believe that this referred to Muḥammad from the time of his birth, Zurāra b. Aʿyan apparently alluding to it in a *qaṣīda*.[11] Further evidence pointing in the same direction comes from another poem, this one composed by one of Muḥammad's canvassers, a certain Abū l-Sarī Maʿdān al-Shumayṭī al-Mudaybirī. If no hopes had been tied to Muḥammad before this, we would have to date it to the year 200, as in Dhū l-Ḥijja of the same year – more precisely: on the 19th day of that month/19 July 816 – he gave in to the pressure of an Iraqi expeditionary unit and solemnly renounced power in the Masjid al-Ḥarām by the Kaʿba.[12] The poet, however, blind like so many of his calling,[13] does not seem to have been a native of the Hijaz but of the Jazira:

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5    Ṭabarī III 988, 3ff.; cf. Gabrieli 25. In the embroidery on the cloths Abū l-Sarāyā gave himself the name al-Aṣfar b. al-Aṣfar, just as he called himself al-Aṣfar al-Fāṭimī on his coins (Gabrieli 17, n. 1). The name has not been explained sufficiently (but cf. Fierro in: SI 77/1993).

6    Gabrieli 25f.

7    *Maqātil* 538, pu. ff.

8    Nawbakhtī 64, pu. f. Later it would be tried to cover this up, or it had been forgotten (*Biḥār* XLVII 241, 10ff.).

9    *Maqātil* 537, pu. f.

10   *Biḥār* XLVIII 271, pu. f.

11   See vol. I 382 above.

12   Gabrieli 28. He was transferred to Khorasan on Maʾmūn's orders (*Biḥār* XLVII 246f. no. 5).

13   He bore the sobriquet al-Aʿmā or al-Makfūf. Sharon, *Black Banners* 182 did not notice that the Abū l-Sarī he tracked down in Balādhurī III 117, ult. ff. DŪRĪ is in fact the same person.

Mudaybir was near Raqqa.[14] He was well-informed concerning circumstances in Iraq, indulging in mocking hints at the expense of all manner of Shīʿite extremists: the Kāmiliyya,[15] the followers of Abū Manṣūr al-ʿIjlī and Mughīra b. Saʿīd,[16] Bayān b. Samʿān and Khidāsh,[17] and apparently also Ibn Ḥarb.[18] He had a low opinion of the Rāfiḍites,[19] Zaydites of any kind,[20] and Muʿtazilites as well as Khārijites.[21] Of course he could have said all this during a visit to the Hijaz, but by this time it would have been entirely out of date there.

Furthermore his deliberations are altogether unrealistic. If one kept Zaydites as well as Rāfiḍites at bay, who would be left to provide help? In the Hijaz one might have found a few Jārūdites at least.[22] It is only understandable from a chiliastic point of view that expects God himself to effect political change. This corresponds to the fact that Maʿdān was not addressing the old imam in Medina but rather the wondrous child for whom the phoenix (ʿanqāʾ) prepared a cradle above the crescent moon, while on the earth ostriches and vipers are made aware of the event by an earthquake.[23] The child will appear when bats lay eggs instead of carrying their young, and when lambs and wolves as well as sparrows and serpents live in peace. Wine will be served – besides the animal idyll this is clear evidence of the paradise brought by the *mahdī* at the end of time.[24] This utopian vision was ancient; if it was indeed linked to the name Muḥammad, the name would have been chosen deliberately, all the more so

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14  Cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s. v. Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān* 230, apu. f., confirms that he did indeed come from there, mentioning in addition a place called Māzij; Yāqūt, however, was unable to locate it.

15  See vol. I 311ff. above.

16  Cf. Pellat's edition and translation in: Oriens 16/1963/99ff., vv. 1–3 and 7–9.

17  Cf. my contribution in: Der Islam 47/1971/245ff.

18  Cf. the verses in Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān* 231, 1ff. While Jāḥiẓ links them to Bayān b. Samʿān earlier (230, 1ff.), Bayān had, of course, been discussed elsewhere, and the story Jāḥiẓ narrates in this context is found in Qummī in relation to Ibn Ḥarb, with rather more probability (*Maqālāt* 40, pu. ff. = Halm, *Gnosis* 66f.; cf. vol. I 285 and p. 5f. above). Pellat, discussing the verses in: Arabica 22/1975/300ff., refers to Jāḥiẓ and combines them with the three verses I discovered in Pseudo-Nāshī, *Uṣūl* 40, 13.

19  Der Islam 47/1971/251, drawing some incorrect conclusions.

20  vv. 22–23 PELLAT.

21  Ibid., v. 20.

22  See vol. I 309 above.

23  vv. 14–15 PELLAT. The Sufyānī's time, too, would come when the earth opened up in Ḥarastā near Damascus (Aguadé 128 after Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād). Regarding *khasf* as an eschatological sign cf. Attema, *Voorteekenen* 71.

24  vv. 16–17; cf. also the signs of the *mahdī* in Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbīʿ* 41, apu. ff./transl. Adad in: Arabica 14/1967/50.

since thanks to a prophesy by Jābir b. ʿAbdallāh al-Anṣārī Muḥammad al-Bāqir had already been regarded as the *mahdī*.[25] He later asked his son Jaʿfar to give the name Muḥammad – the hopes linked to it clearly not having come true in his case – to one of his grandsons.[26] Thus we cannot draw any chronological conclusions from Maʿdān's referring to the connection with the name.[27] The poem was composed some time after 169/786; the 'dead man of Fakhkh' is the last ʿAlid mentioned.[28]

In 200 everything erupted briefly, probably due to the pressure of the eschatological date. As Mufīd reported, the Shumayṭiyya would gradually vanish afterwards,[29] which is hardly surprising. All the same, the 'Imāmites' thought it worthy of a serious refutation, pointing out (as in the context of other groups as well) that two brothers could not be imam after one another.[30] If we infer from this that in Iraq at least Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar's followers had previously recognised Mūsā al-Kāẓim, Maʿdān's *qaṣīda* should be dated to the time after 183.

This is not certain. The remark might just as well refer to the Shumayṭiyya's recognising ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar, as Zurāra apparently did, too (see vol. 1 380 above). – Concerning the question of how the name Shumayṭiyya came about I should like to point to my deliberations in: Der Islam 47/1971/251, n. 22). The reading is pure convention; as early as Qummī there was doubt as to whether it was spelt with *sh* or with *s* (*Maqālāt* 87, 1f.); overall the reading with *s* is more widespread. People only agreed that the founder of the sect was called Yaḥyā, but his father's name is transmitted differently in every source. Regarding the variants cf. Jawād Mashkūr's commentary on Qummī, p. 224; Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn added the form Yaḥyā b. Asmaṭ in his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (IV 335, –6 Ghālib). Zurāra's verse in *Ḥayawān* VII 132, pu., which contains the mysterious lexeme *sh.māṭ*, does not provide a solution, either, as according to *Burṣān* 357, 9, this should probably read *shimāl*.

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25    *Biḥār* XLVI 223ff.

26    Nawbakhtī 65,1ff. > Qummī 86, –6ff. (86, apu., should read *abī Muḥammad* instead of *Abā Muḥammad*).

27    v. 12 Pellat.

28    Ibid., v. 23. Pellat incorrectly says 160 instead of 169, which was adopted uncorrected in GAS 2/454.

29    Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Al-fuṣūl al-mukhtāra* II 92, 17ff./252, 11ff.

30    Nawbakhtī 90, 5ff.

## 2.2 Ma'mūn and ʿAlī al-Riḍā

During all this time Ma'mūn, caliph of the whole empire since 198, remained in Marv which had been the starting point of the Abbasid revolution decades earlier. He, too, called himself *al-imām* on his coins,[1] and was aware of the eschatological expectations. He had read in the *K. al-dawla* that there would be no pillar left standing for the Abbasids after the seventh ruler of the dynasty.[2] Just as it began with ʿayn, so it would end with ʿayn: al-Saffāḥ's name had been ʿAbdallāh, just like Ma'mūn's own.[3] Ma'mūn reacted in his own way, deciding to follow the first *daʿwa* with a second which would inaugurate a new age after the 'deposed one's' (i.e. Amīn's) 'rule of Cain'.[4] It is probable that this ideology had its origins at an earlier date, as it is possible that he called himself *imām* because he was not yet able to call himself *khalīfa*, the former title also referring to the first *daʿwa*, namely Ibrāhīm al-Imām who had proclaimed the Abbasid revolution publicly in 129/747. At the time, Ma'mūn was trying to counteract Amīn's policies.[5] After the opponent's death, however, the chiliastic aspect came to the fore. In 200 at the very latest Ma'mūn had the black banners replaced with green ones throughout the empire.[6] This, too, was symbolic of a new beginning – and maybe the beginning of the end – as green was the colour associated with paradise. The blessed wear green garments:[7] Muḥammad, upon entering paradise, is enveloped in such a garment.[8]

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1  Cf. Lane Poole, *Coins of the Eastern Khaleefehs in the British Museum* 91 no. 248 for the year 198.

2  Thus in his letter to his family members in Iraq, translated by Madelung in *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 343. The text appears to be genuine, at least in this place.

3  Aguadé 119 and 138; also Madelung 345, both after Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād.

4  Regarding the *daʿwat al-thāniya* and its relation to the first *daʿwa* cf. the quotation from the year 201 recorded in Madelung 336 (with n. 22). Regarding the 'rule of Cain' ibid. 337, although the reading is not entirely assured. The idea is a Shīʿite one; Shīʿite circles also referred to Manṣūr as 'cain' (*Biḥār* XLVII 181, 2). As the source adduced by Madelung is itself Shīʿite it is doubtful whether Ma'mūn really used the term.

5  Cf. M. Rekaya in EI² VI 332 b. Concerning the *daʿwat al-thāniya* and its presumed age cf. also Arazi and Alʿad in: SI 67/1988/39ff.

6  Thus according to the inscription RCEA I 92ff no. 116, which does not, however, survive in the original.

7  Thus according to sura 18:31; cf. also sura 76:21 regarding the boys who serve the blessed. Cf. Soubhi Saleh, *Vie future* 17.

8  Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* ²XV 146, 5.

This is not to say that green was the colour of the ʿAlids at that time as well; they had worn white since the earliest days.[9] However, a year after Abū l-Sarāyā and Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar had withdrawn from events the caliph called another ʿAlid to Marv in order to offer him the succession: ʿAlī, Mūsā al-Kāẓim's son, who was living in Medina[10] at the time and had not come to anyone's notice either in Iraq or in Khorasan. Now, however, after so many of Fāṭima's descendants had fallen into disrepute, he was the most respected among them. He was a little over fifty, the son of an *umm walad* of apparently Nubian extraction;[11] of course, descent from a lower-class mother had not troubled the Iraqi Shīʿites in his father's case, either. He did not yet bear the honorific al-Riḍā, receiving it only once the caliph named him his heir to the throne. The text of the document in which al-Maʾmūn officially confirmed this decree and made it public is extant, as is the postil ʿAlī al-Riḍā added to it; it was signed on 7 Ramadan 201/29 March 817.[12] Both documents were sent to Medina and read out by the prophet's grave.[13] The caliph states clearly that he is acting in deference to the duty incumbent on him as God's representative on earth; he was bound to look after the faith (*dīn*).[14] His choice fell on ʿAlī b. Mūsā because due to his 'religious attitude (*dīn*), his scrupulousness (*waraʿ*) and his knowledge he was the most excellent (*afḍal*, of candidates) available'.[15] Maʾmūn's criteria was thus 'Zaydite'; he did not chose ʿAlī as the imam of the 'Rāfiḍites'. Al-Riḍā, then, to him meant nothing more than *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*.

There has been no end of speculation ever since Gabrieli about what al-Maʾmūn really hoped to achieve with this sensational decision.[16] It does not, however, concern us here: we are looking at the intellectual climate at the court of Marv. Only little information can be found in this context. To the Iraqi historians Marv was too far away, and local sources are mostly lost. The most detailed account is found in the *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, but they are tendentious

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9 Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 313, 5; cf. F. ʿUmar in: *ʿAbbāsiyyāt, Studies in the History of the Early Abbasids* 148ff., and Björkmann in: EI¹ IV 960b s. v. *Turban*. Gabrieli, too, regarded green as the colour of paradise (*Al-Maʾmūn* 37, n. 4); cf. also Athamina in: Arabica 36/1989/325f.

10 Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 540, 12.

11 Concerning this as well as the following cf. Madelung in EIran I 177ff.

12 Translated by Gabrieli 38ff., and also Crone/Hinds, *God's Caliph* 133ff.; concerning the title *al-Riḍā* cf. 43/138.

13 Gabrieli 45.

14 Ibid. 39f.

15 Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* IX 365, 4; Gabrieli 41 and 45.

16 Cf. the sources listed by Madelung in *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 333, n. 2; esp. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 421ff. The number of known sources was greatly increased by Madelung's essay; based on it Crone/Hinds 94.

and the names mentioned in them have no meaning for us. Many of the reports were not composed in the places they described. Thus ʿAlī al-Riḍā is said to have debated with a certain Sulaymān al-Marwazī who lived in Khorasan and is described like a Muʿtazilite;[17] elsewhere, in a debate concerning the first caliphs' claim to rule, his opponent is a similarly obscure Yaḥyā b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Samarqandī.[18] Immediately after his arrival the vizier Faḍl b. Sahl was said to have gathered representatives of the various religions, among them even a Ṣābian (!); then the imam would demonstrate his superior knowledge in pages upon pages of debates.[19] The same model was applied to his medical experise. He was said to have been present at a discussion of medical matters in Nishapur between Iraqi (!) experts such as Ibn Māsawayh and Jibrīl b. Bakhtīshūʿ, later presenting a treatise of his own that impressed Maʾmūn so much that he had it copied in gold letters. This *Risāla Dhahabiyya* dealt with hygiene and survives in numerous manuscripts to this day.[20]

In these stories the caliph is no more than a prop; it was assumed – probably correctly – that he was as interested in religious and scientific debates in Marv as he would be in Baghdad later.[21] An interesting facet is provided by the Shīʿite tradition which speaks of the imam's composing a catechism for the caliph.[22] It is equally characteristic that the Shīʿite sources are not always entirely clear in their idealisation, for while displaying the imam's scholarship and erudition was desirable, it was at the same time necessary to come to terms with him having had dealings with worldly powers. This contradicted his *waraʿ* that Maʾmūn had praised so much; and it was known that the experiment did not end well. His father, people said, never gave *fatwā*s to the Sunnites.[23] As a consequence the reports had the imam justify himself;[24] it was said he had been forced to

17 Ibn Bābōya, *Tawḥīd* 364ff. > *Biḥār* X 329ff. no. 2; cf. the reference to Ḍirār at 333, ult. f.

18 Ibid. X 348 no. 6, and XXVII 318f. no. 1.

19 Ibn Bābōya, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* I 126ff., and *Tawḥīd* 342ff.; a passage in translation by D. Thomas in: JSS 33/1988/65ff. Ṣābian does not necessarily refer to a Ḥarrānian here; in fact, if we take into consideration the date at which they adopted the name, it would not be possible at all (see vol. II 506ff. above; also 629).

20 Ullmann, *Medizin* 190; GAS 3/226; Madelung in: EIran I 879 b. The text and the frame story are printed in *Biḥār* LXII 306ff.; Majlisī notes that the manuscripts contain divergent versions (309, 8). A Persian translation of the text is found in *Ba-yād-i Khūzistān* 101ff.

21 After Balʿamī IV 480 ZOTENBERG he daily (!) held an audience in the mosque, surrounded by theologians and jurists.

22 *Biḥār* X 352ff.

23 *Biḥār* XLVIII 271 no. 30 after Kashshī.

24 *ʿUyūn* II 137ff.

collaborate.[25] There were descriptions of debates not only with scholars but
also with Sufis, who took exception to his lordly attire.[26]

It is remarkable that in most of the dicta transmitted from him al-Riḍā ex-
pressed Muʿtazilite views.[27] Of course, initially this only tells us that he would
later be regarded as the key witness of Muʿtazilite circles within the Imāmiyya.
Even if the court in Marv was imbued with Muʿtazilite spirit, al-Riḍā would not
have had time to adapt to it during the year that was left to him before his sud-
den death. Still, the premise is wrong in any case. The caliph was no Muʿtazilite
but a Murjiʾite[28] or possibly a Jahmite; the Muʿtazilites always noted his dis-
agreement with regret.[29] It is true that one of Maʾmūn's confidants was the
Khorasanian Murjiʾite Ibrāhīm b. Rustam,[30] but he was also acquainted with
people such as the philologist Naḍr b. Shumayl (d. 203/819 or 204/820) who had
studied in Basra under Khalīl and, it was said, brought the *sunna* to Marv and
Khorasan.[31] He adhered to the *istithnāʾ* so abhorrent to the Murjiʾites.[32] ʿAlī al-
Riḍā's closest confidant, on the other hand, who transmitted many of his dicta
and would later even write a 'book' about the circumstances of his death,[33] was
a traditionist whose views are rather difficult to ascertain:

> Abū l-Ṣalt ʿAbd al-Salām b. Ṣāliḥ b. Sulaymān al-Harawī,

d. Wednesday 24 Shawwāl 236/30 April 851. He had lived in Nishapur[34] where
he had seen ʿAlī b. Mūsā entering the city on the way to Marv, sitting in a lit-
ter carried by a grey mule, surrounded by scholars who requested from him

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25    Ibid. 140 no. 5; also Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 488ff. no. 7.

26    *Biḥār* X 351 no. 11.

27    See vol. I 321 and 462f. above. To repeat a number of instances: Mufīd, *Amālī* 149, 3ff.
      (*tawḥīd*); Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 131, 6ff. (against anthropomorphism); ibid. I 96, −7ff. (against
      *ruʾya*); ibid. I 113, 1ff. (doctrine of the attributes); Barqī, *Maḥāsin* 191, 1ff. (distinction be-
      tween *mashīʾa* and *irāda*). It is interesting that he was quoted as speaking out **against** the
      prophets' *ʿiṣma* (*Biḥār* XI 72ff. no. 1, and 78ff. no. 8).

28    Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 86, 6/46, 10f.; Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna* 1459 no. 2818.

29    Thus Thumāma, ibid. 66, 4ff./35, 10f.; see also p. 175, and 194f. and 228f. below.

30    See vol. II 623 above.

31    Thus TT X 437, ult. f.; Mason in: Arabica 14/1967/207. Regarding him cf. Marzubānī, *Nūr
      al-qabas* 99ff.; Qifṭī, *Inbāh* III 348ff. with further references.

32    Kardarī, *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa* II 108, 2ff. He was later caught up in the *miḥna* in Baghdad
      (Ṭabarī III 1121, 12).

33    Najāshī 172, 7ff. > Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ* I 456f. Cf. Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 571, −4ff.

34    TT VI 319ff. no. 616.

the traditions of his family.[35] His *nisba* al-Harawī was probably due to one of his ancestors having been the *mawlā* of the companion of the prophet ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Samura who had waged war in Afghanistan during the forties of the first century.[36] He was fairly wealthy and had been able to afford to travel far and wide in search of hadith;[37] we learn, for instance, that he appeared before a Ṭāhirid together with the Sunnite Ibn Rāhōya.[38] He followed an ascetic lifestyle and demonstrated this by wearing ragged clothing. He did not become the imam's follower immediately but came to Marv in order to join the frontier wars against the heathen; Maʾmūn was said to have intercepted him and brought him back to his court,[39] where he would debate with Qadarites, Murjiʾites, 'heretics' and Jahmites.[40] Unlike the Jahmites he included actions in his definition of faith; later he would trace this back to ʿAlī al-Riḍā.[41] This might move him closer to the Muʿtazila, but it seems that he did not have any problems with anthropomorphism, either.[42]

   He appears to have gone to Baghdad with Maʾmūn. Being a Shīʿite, he was not greatly respected there. People disapproved of his transmitting the prophetic dictum 'I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is the gate…' which he had heard from the Murjiʾite Abū Muʿāwiya al-Ḍarīr.[43] He did not appear to be an extremist; he respected Abū Bakr and ʿUmar,[44] and even refrained from openly reviling ʿUthmān.[45] His view of Muʿāwiya was that one could not rely on his traditions, as he had a chamber (*bayt*) called *bayt al-ḥikma* into which he threw every hadith he found – a kind of geniza, in fact; later they were all transmitted

35    *Biḥār* XXVII 132 no. 130 (if the tradition is correct), and *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* II 131ff.; on
      the Sunni side Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar TD* XX 293f. (where the name is given incorrectly
      as Abū l-Maʿālī Faḍl b. Muḥammad al-Harawī). ʿAlī's entry into the city was embellished
      by many miraculous stories (*Biḥār* XLIX 120ff.).

36    TB XI 46ff. no. 5728.

37    Ibid. 50, 12f.

38    *Biḥār* LXIX 69 no. 24; regarding Ibn Rāhōya see vol. II 682f. above.

39    Ibid. 47, 12ff. after Aḥmad b. Sayyār (d. 268/881), who wrote a *Taʾrīkh Marv* and met him
      personally (cf. GAS 1/351, and *Mīzān* no. 5051).

40    Ibid. 47, 20.

41    Ibid. 47, 8ff., and 51, 14ff.; Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 33, –7; Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* I 362, 6ff. Regarding the
      Shīʿite tradition cf. *Biḥār* X 367, 11ff.

42    Cf. the hadith transmitted by him quoted in Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn* II 152, 4f.

43    TB XI 48, 7ff., and 49, 13f.; Sahmī, *Taʾrīkh Jurjān* 24, apu. ff.; Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 330, pu. f. and
      earlier. Regarding Abū Muʿāwiya see vol. I 248ff. above.

44    TB 47, 2ff.; Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 34, ult.

45    Thus according to the verdict of Aḥmad b. Sayyār who had interrogated him in person
      (ibid. 47, ult. f.).

without further scrutiny.[46] While there are some apocryphal Imāmite texts transmitted through him,[47] they made much less of him than might have been expected. Among the Sunnites he was suspected of falsifying hadith; Jūzjānī noted the verdict of a 'respected scholar' (*baʿḍ al-aʾimma*) that Abū l-Ṣalt was a greater liar 'than the dung of the antichrist's ass'.[48] While this idiosyncratic expression is remarkable in itself, it still does not provide any information on whether he was a competent theologian.

46    Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā l-Marīsī* 135, 7f./492, −8f.

47    Cf. e.g. *Biḥār* XLIX 300ff. no. 10; also Scarcia-Amoretti in: RSO 43/1968/27 and 50f.

48    TB 51, 3ff.

## 2.3 Theologians with Ties to al-Ma'mūn. Thumāma b. Ashras

Of course there were Mu'tazilites in Marv. We recall that Bishr b. al Mu'tamir signed 'Alī al-Riḍā's postil as a witness; he may have fled from Baghdad. There was also, and most importantly, the caliph's close confidant

Abū Ma'n[1] Abū Bishr (?)[2] Thumāma b. Ashras al-Numayrī,

d. 213/828,[3] who had also appended his signature.[4] He gained so much influence that Ma'mūn intended to appoint him vizier on his return to Baghdad; the speech with which he evaded this problem-ridden honour was archived and still praised in Ibn al-Nadīm's day.[5] Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid al-Aḥwal, whom he recommended instead,[6] later expressed surprise that of all the people at court Thumāma was the only one without an official title (*ma'nā*); the latter's answer was ironic: that after all someone had to make sure whether people like Aḥmad were suited to their offices.[7] And he does indeed appear several times as the one introducing people to the caliph, or finding them positions;[8] he would seem to have been an *éminence grise* for a while. Occasionally he would be entrusted with special tasks,[9] but it was also said that once on the feast of 'Āshūrā the caliph presented him with a cheque over 300,000 dirhams in recognition of the fact that 'he did not get involved in what did not concern him'.[10] After Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid's death in 211/826 Ma'mūn tried again to persuade

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1  Thus according to Jāḥiẓ, *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, in: *Rasā'il* II 195, 2; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'* 314, 13; TB VII 145, −4; Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 272, 10 > IM 62, 3; cf. also Text XVII 52, f. Ka'bī, *Maq.* 73, 3, misread *Ma'n* as *Ma'mar*. Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Ḥūr* 209, 15, has *Abū 'Umar*, probably a further misreading resulting from the previous one.

2  Thus only Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist* 207, −6), and one passage in Ibn Khallikān (VI 177, 3).

3  *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 84, 9ff., after Ibn al-Jawzī, who, however, included anachronisms correctly criticised by Ibn Ḥajar.

4  Thus according to Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (Gabrieli, *Al-Ma'mūn* 45). Cf. also *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 84, 6.

5  *Fihrist* 207, −5f.

6  Regarding him cf. EI² I 271f.

7  Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 228, 7ff./125, −5ff.

8  Thus in the case of Yaḥyā b. Aktham (Ṭayfūr 256, 8f./141, 1f.), the grammarian al-Farrā' (TB XIV 151, 9ff. > Qifṭī, *Inbāh* IV 12, 14ff. = Anbārī, *Nuzha* 101, 2ff. = IKh VI 177, 2ff.), or Abū l-Hudhayl (see p. 227 below). Cf. also Ṭayfūr 140, apu. ff./76, pu. ff.; Ṭabarī III 1067, 15ff.

9  Jāḥiẓ, *Bighāl* in: *Rasā'il* II 266, 6ff.; IKh IV 42, −6ff.

10  *'Iqd* IV 216, 10f.

him to accept the office of vizier, but on that occasion Thumāma suggested Yaḥyā b. Aktham instead.[11]

Once in Baghdad he enjoyed talking about Marv, albeit in his own particular, rather ironic, style: he said that the cockerels of Marv were the only ones in the world that pinched the feed given to their hens.[12] Having once been prisoner of the Turks who had treated him most nobly, he was a great champion of the Turkish mercenaries.[13] He compared their discipline to that of ants, meaning it as a compliment:[14] they were very skilful in war, he said, and were overall most capable.[15] He probably knew precisely why he sang their praises in this way; al-Muʿtaṣim had begun buying Turkish military slaves shortly after the civil war.[16] Muḥammad b. al-Jahm b. al-Barmakī sang the same tune.[17] Even the Shīʿites discovered him as an authority on this period; he was said to have recorded a proud rejoinder of ʿAlī al-Riḍā's given on the occasion that Maʾmūn suggested that by appointing ʿAlī his successor he had honoured him greatly.[18]

Another acquaintance from Marv may have been Ibn Ṣāfirī whom Thumāma witnessed being persuaded by an alchemist that he could rid his house of gnats (Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 385, 6ff.). This was presumably the – considerably younger – traditionist Ayyūb b. Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Ṣāfirī from Marv (d. 259/873 or 269/874; cf. TB VII 9f. no. 3472). Some confusion is caused by a *Taʾrīkh al-Marāwiza* to which Baghdādī referred, probably the work of Ibn Maʿdān (d. 375/986; cf. GAS 1/352), which claims Thumāma brought an action against Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī (regarding whom see p. 510 below) before Wāthiq in revenge for which the Khuzāʿa later killed him in Mecca (*Farq* 159, 2ff./174, 3ff.). This throws the chronology into disarray; forcing Baghdādī to date Thumāma to the time of Muʿtaṣim and Wathīq (ibid. 157, 2/172, 3), although he actually died while Maʾmūn was still caliph. The text's claim that he converted the caliph to

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11    Ṭayfūr 256, –5ff./141, 4ff. Concerning the part he played in arresting Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī in 210 cf. Tanūkhī, *Faraj* III 342, 7f.

12    Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 18, 1ff., and *Ḥayawān* II 149, 3f.; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 316, ult. ff./transl. Massé 375f., felt this to be mocking the Khorasanians; also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* V 113, 2ff. s. v. *Marv*.

13    Jāḥiẓ, *Manāqib al-Turk*, in: *Rasāʾil* I 61, 8f.

14    Ibid. 84, pu. ff.

15    Ibid. 59, –4ff., and 60, 7ff. The quotations are so extensive that one has to wonder whether he may have been composing a treatise on the Turks.

16    Töllner, *Die türkischen Garden am Kalifenhof in Samarra* 20ff.

17    Jāḥiẓ, ibid. 59, –4. Regarding him see p. 220ff. below.

18    *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* II 143 no. 12 > *Biḥār* XLIX 163 no. 2.

Muʿtazilism (157, 3/172, 3f.) is greatly exaggerated and reported with the intent of making him responsible for the *miḥna*.

Thumāma was an Arab, a member of the Banū Numayr.[19] The name Thumāma is recorded in ancient South Arabic inscriptions.[20] In Khorasan, where the Arabs were in the minority, his tribal pride would sometimes assert itself.[21] He was not on good terms with Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn, who declared himself independent in 207/822 in Khorasan shortly before his death; Ṭāhir referred to him as 'that Numayrite'.[22] He was even said to have pointed out his personal rank in a very confident and almost arrogant way towards al-Maʾmūn.[23]

He had chosen a secretary's career[24] and quickly worked his way to the top. He had been close to the Barmakids, although it is probably untrue that they invited him to their scholarly meetings.[25] Still, he regarded the vizier Yaḥyā b. Khālid with respect, and seems to have been closely acquainted with his son Jaʿfar.[26] He expressed no criticism on the dictum he heard from Yaḥyā b. Khālid, that fleas turn into bugs or into gnats when they grow wings like ants,[27] or that lice appear when one eats too many dried figs or throws incense onto a brazier.[28] What he admired most in Yaḥyā's son was his eloquence: Jaʿfar was

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19    *Fihrist* 207, –6.

20    Cf. Yusuf Abdallah, *Personennamen* 37.

21    Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 314, 14f.

22    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 261, 6ff.

23    Ibid. 272, 11ff., after Ibn Yazdādh's *K. al-maṣābīḥ*. Abū ʿUbayda, who thought this rather improbable, asked another authority to confirm it. Baghdādī's describing him, the son of a female prisoner, as a *mawlā* of the Numayr (*Farq* 157, 2/172, 2, and 158, 7f./173, 12f.) is another attempt at disparaging him. His pure-blood descent was confirmed by Ibn al-Nadīm; cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Manāqib al-Turk*, in: *Rasāʾil* I 61, 10. Kaʿbī was not aware of this any more (*Maq.* 73, 4).

24    *Fihrist* 207, –6.

25    Thus according to Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VI 373, apu./IV 240 no. 2574 > Ibn al-ʿArabī, *ʿAwāṣim* 85, 1; cf. p. 33, n. 3 above. It is much less accurate that he was able to gain Hārūn al-Rashīd's trust as early as the pilgrimage of 173/790, persuading him to remove his distant uncle Muḥammad b. Sulaymān from his position as governor in Basra. This is a Basran myth (see vol. II 447, also 96, above). And while it is not impossible that al-Mahdī might have temporarily borrowed his wife (in an entirely legal fashion, of course; cf. Pseudo-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-maḥāsin wal-aḍdād* 300, 9ff. VAN VLOTEN), it is probably also merely court gossip.

26    ʿUmar b. al-Azraq al-Kirmānī referred to him among others in his *Akhbār al-Barāmika* (cf. ʿAbbās, *Shadharāt min kutub mafqūda* 13, 4ff.).

27    Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 503, 1f., and IV 225, 9ff; V 373, 6ff.

28    Ibid. V 371, ult. ff.

able to speak fluently without faltering[29] and expressed himself concisely and clearly.[30] Thumāma transmitted his definition of lucid oratory (*bayān*)[31] as well as the way in which he described the art of writing.[32] He knew his subject well; Jāḥiẓ considered him to be a gifted rhetorician.[33] High-ranking officials would later treat him with reverence.[34] He, however, knew the weaknesses of the profession, too: arrogance and intellectual snobbery.[35]

Thumāma was also one of those who could tell the story of how the Barmakids forfeited Hārūn al-Rashīd's favour.[36] He himself had not been untouched by the reversal of their fortunes. In 186/802, shortly before the fall of the vizier's family, he was arrested because the caliph had found out that Thumāma had lied to him about Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd; perhaps not wishing to give the latter's presence in Basra away.[37] This gave rise to the suspicion that he might have been in league with the Barmakids;[38] after all, Faḍl b. Yaḥyā was accused of having sent 70,000 dinars to Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā in Basra.[39] Like many other prominent prisoners Thumāma was not sent to a common prison but handed over to one of the caliph's trusted associates who kept a watch on him. He later recalled how in his boredom he had watched a mouse hole.[40] He also, he said, upset his host by correcting him when he was quoting sura 77:15 saying *mukadhdhabūn* instead of *mukadhdhibūn*. Thumāma's insistence on the active rather than the passive voice led to his host believing him to be a Qadarite.[41] He

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29    Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn* 43, 5ff.; Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* II 386, 1ff.

30    Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 105, ult. ff. > *Ṣināʿatayn* 23, 1f., and Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 204, 15ff.; also *Bayān* I 115, 9.

31    Ṭabarī II 843, 16ff. = *Tawḥīdī, Baṣāʾir* II 128, 1ff./²v 116 no. 384.

32    Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB VI 277, –5ff. after Jāḥiẓ. Cf. also the probably apocryphal anecdote in *ʿIqd* II 127, 11ff., according to which he introduced Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā incognito into the *bayt al-ḥikma*.

33    *Bayān* I 111, 6ff.; his praise of the reed pen was recorded by Tawḥīdī (in: Ars Islamica 13–14/1948/13 and 24 no. 39).

34    Jāḥiẓ, *K. al-ḥijāb* in: *Rasāʾil* II 48, 3ff.

35    Jāḥiẓ, *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, in: *Rasāʾil* II 195, 1ff.

36    Ṭabarī III 668, 10ff.; also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 358, and p. 100 above.

37    Ṭabarī III 651, 11f.; misunderstood by Sourdel in *Vizirat* 169, n. 3. Cf. Madelung in: EI², Suppl. 48.

38    *Fihrist* 207, –4f.

39    Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ* 243, 13f.

40    Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* II 165, 1ff., and V 250, 7ff.

41    In which he was, of course, quite correct. If the anecdote is fiction, its intention was to demonstrate how such an accusation was based on theological ignorance only (Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 273, pu. ff.). In an attempt at emphasising the point, later Muʿtazilite tradition changed 'Qadarite' to '*zindīq*' (*Fihrist* 207, n. 1; TB VII 148, 3ff.; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Akhbār*

then composed a poem in which he stressed his devotion to Hārūn, and was believed to have been freed as a consequence.[42] He would in fact accompany Hārūn on his last journey to Khorasan in 192/807,[43] staying on in Maʾmūn's entourage. When some years later Thumāma had occasion to congratulate Maʾmūn on his accession to the caliphate, the latter is said to have invited him to be one of the evening companions (summār).[44]

In keeping with his professional career Thumāma was at the centre of adab rather than theology. He did not write many books, but we come across many anecdotes and aphorisms testifying to his ready wit. There were records of his debates with Yaḥyā b. Aktham on theological and legal issues,[45] which often focussed on the subject of free will.[46] He was also said to have clashed with Abū l-ʿAtāhiya on this subject.[47] The argument probably concerned influence at court, as Maʾmūn was not of the same opinion, either. Because of this Thumāma was said to have called the caliph a 'layman' (ʿāmmī) once.[48] He had paid for an ascetic to have a house in ʿAbbādān, but when he saw that there were 'Jabrites' living there, he refused to contribute to the renovation work. For another one he built a mosque, but when he heard that this man played Abū Shamir's school off against the Muʿtazila, he considered having it torn down again.[49] It is not surprising that he was reported to have refuted false prophets;[50] this was a sign of the times. It is noticeable that he did not

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al-ḥamqā 143, 11ff.). The person of the guardian changed as well; at first it had been Manṣūr al-Khādim, one of the caliph's eunuchs, but later the name given was Sallām al-Abrash. Both of them were involved in the action against the Barmakids (Ṭabarī III 684, 3ff.).

42   Fihrist 207, pu. ff.; cf. also TB VII 147, 14ff.

43   Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB XX 31, 10 after Jāḥiẓ.

44   ʿIqd II 167, 12ff.

45   Ṭayfūr, K. Baghdād 257, 8f./141, 11ff.

46   Ibid. 257, ult. ff./141, 12f. = Zubayr b. Bakkār, Muwaffaqiyyāt 285f. no. 154 = Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, Faḍl 273, 8ff. > IM 62, 5ff.; Faḍl 273, 13ff. > IM 62, ult. ff.; Tawḥīdī, Baṣāʾir ²VII 56 no. 186. Tawḥīdī, Baṣāʾir I 341, 4f./²II 46 no. 111 has a counter-tradition which has a lunatic holding him up to ridicule = Ibn Abī ʿAwn, Al-ajwiba al-muskita 151 no. 903, and Ibn Ḥabīb al-Naysābūrī, ʿUqalāʾ al-majānīn 172, 7ff. He also attacked determinism in two books (Catalogue of Works XIX, no. 4–5).

47   Faḍl 274, 13ff. > IM 63, 8ff.; ʿIqd II 382, 1ff.; TB VII 146, 20ff. after Ibn al-Nadīm; ibid. 147, 3ff. after Jāḥiẓ (via Marzubānī); after Jāḥiẓ also Agh. IV 6, 3ff. (via Ṣūlī) > Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn 457, −5ff.; Bayhaqī, Maḥāsin 493, 11ff. A sneering remark on Abū l-ʿAtāhiya's miserliness in Agh. IV 16, 16ff.

48   Ṭayfūr 66, 4ff./35, 10f., with a Muʿtazilite isnād.

49   Jāḥiẓ, Bukhalāʾ 209, 16ff./transl. Pellat 301f.; cf. vol. II 119 above.

50   Ṭayfūr 63, pu. ff./34, 3ff. = ʿIqd VI 143, ult. ff. = Bayhaqī, Maḥāsin 34, 12ff.; different: ʿIqd VI 148, 1ff. = Masʿūdī, Murūj VII 53, 3ff./IV 321f. no. 2739 = IM 64, 8ff. = Qalyūbī, transl. Rescher,

polemicise against those of different faiths; he possibly learnt this reticence from the Barmakids. He appears to have asked the Christians once for proof of the truth of their faith, and the Jacobite Abū Rāʾiṭa responded in a few lines,[51] but there was no debate, and the tone of the letter is factual and devoid of fear.

There is no need to expand this material further.[52] Much of it is in the style of feature writing, retold only because he was so noticeable and because Jāḥiẓ knew him so well; other items are clearly fiction. What is important is the type described. Thumāma is the smooth courtier who, quite unlike the plebeian Murdār, is never aggressive but rather dispatches opponents with a rationalist's ironic superiority.[53] He always knew a suitable anecdote concerning the stupidity of popular preachers.[54] He kept aloof from the common people; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār believed that this was why some of his teachings hardly spread at all.[55] He also kept visitors and petitioners at arm's length – for understandable reasons; but of course he could not avoid the accusation of being a miser.[56] His cosmopolitan spirit made him a predecessor to Naẓẓām.[57] He was the first to display signs of that slight frivolity the middle classes disliked so much: they could imagine him drinking too much[58] or disregarding the set times for

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*Adab-Literatur* II 180f.; similar: *ʿIqd* VI 145, 18ff. Different again: Abū l-Maʿālī, *Bayān ul-adyān* 72 no. 6 and 77f. no. 2. Also Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XV 274, 1ff.

51    Thus at least according to the MS Sbath 1017. In the edition of the text in Graf, *Schriften des Jacobiten Ḥabīb b. Khidma Abū Rāʾiṭa* (CSCO 130, p. 162/transl. CSCO 131, p. 197), the addressee's name is not specified. Cf. Kh. Samir in: Tantur Yearbook 1980–81 which includes a translation and analysis of the text on p. 100ff.

52    Sezgin (GAS 1/616) regards these dicta and anecdotes as fragments of his writing, which is rather daring. Hardly anything corresponds to the titles listed by Ibn al-Nadīm (cf. Catalogue of Works XIX).

53    Cf. *ʿIqd* II 407, pu. ff.; TB VII 147, 14ff.; *Faḍl* 274, apu. ff. > IM 64, 3ff. (a better text); Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Al-ajwiba al-muskita* 148 no. 888; Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²VII 56, no. 186; Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* V 290, 9f.

54    Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 317, 7ff., and *Ḥayawān* III 324, 4ff.; *ʿIqd* VI 156, 8ff.

55    *Faḍl* 275, 2.

56    Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 209, 1ff. = Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* III 137, 14ff. = *ʿIqd* IV 46, 2ff. = ibid. VI 198, 15ff.; different: ibid. VI 163, 3ff.; *Bukhalāʾ* 209, 8ff. Cf. also *Bukhalāʾ* 198, 6ff., and 199, 17ff.; *ʿIqd* VI 179, 15ff.

57    Both are named together as representatives of the Muʿtazila in a *qaṣīda* by Ibn al-Muʿtazz directed against the vizier Ibn Bulbul (cf. C. Lang in: ZDMG 40/1886/573, also the correction ibid. 41/1887/237).

58    Baghdādī, *Farq* 158, −4ff./173, apu. ff. > Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 52, 15ff. after Jāḥiẓʾ *K. al-maḍāḥik*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* after Ṣūlī (Ritter, *Maq.* 621, n. 1); Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr* 395, pu. ff.; Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* VI 526, ult. ff.

prayer.[59] He was said to have played a trick on a pious weaver, telling him that he received revelations.[60] He was a lover of music and greatly taken by stars such as Yazīd Ḥawrāʾ and Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī who had the fashionable world at their feet.[61] The faithful hurrying to the mosque of a Friday, however, reminded him of calves and asses: 'What has this Arab turned humankind into!'[62]

His theological background would not be remembered later, and it is indeed difficult to discern.[63] Ibn al-Murtaḍā said he was Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's pupil,[64] while older Muʿtazilite tradition has him studying for thirty years under Abū l-Hudhayl.[65] Both these claims are not very reliable. The connection with Abū l-Hudhayl is mentioned in the context of legends and has no systematic basis;[66] and he is separated from Bishr by not having any interest in *tawallud*.[67] He had more in common with Muʿammar. He believed that there was a 'nature' at work in bodies,[68] and he reduced human action to human volition.[69] This was why the prophet did not work wonders: he proved the truth of his message by

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59    *Farq* 158, ult. ff./174, 1f. after Jāḥiẓ; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwiba* 149 no. 895; Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²VII 56 no. 185. Jāḥiẓ puts a different emphasis on this as well as the preceding anecdotes than Baghdādī.

60    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XV 274, 1ff.

61    *Agh.* V 231, 3ff after Abū l-Hudhayl; transl., Rosenthal, *Sarakhsī* 110. Regarding Yazīd Ḥawrāʾ cf. Neubauer, *Musiker* 208; he died during Hārūn's caliphate.

62    Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl* 60, 10ff = 49, 8ff./transl. Lecomte 54f. § 55 > Baghdādī, *Farq* 158, 11ff./173, −7ff. This is of course mere slander; being an Arab himself, Thumāma would presumably not have used this expression. However, it is documented elsewhere, too, that he as a diplomat did not have a high opinion of the people (Ṭayfūr 92, 1ff./50, 9ff.; Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Muwaffaqiyyāt* 41f. no. 10 = Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin* 151, 5ff. = IM 64, ult. ff.; Masʿūdī, *Murūj* V 81, 2ff./III 223f. no. 1842). Al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī describes him as the epitome of unbelief and immorality (cf. Richter-Bernburg in: WO 20−21/1989−90/142, n. 110).

63    Mir Valiuddin's article *Thumāma b. Ashras' Muʿtazilism examined*, in: IC 34/1960/254ff., is mainly the product of a lively imagination and useless as a scholarly contribution.

64    IM 54, 7; see p. 117 above and Text XVII 52.

65    *Fihrist* 208, n. 1; also Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 261, −4.

66    The only thing they might have had in common was that he rejected the predestination of livelihood (*rizq*) and the date of death (*ajal*) completely. However, this has only been transmitted by his opponents (ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *K. al-sunna* 33, 5ff.; cf. p. 301 below).

67    This despite the fact that he agreed with his definition of the capacity to act (Text XVII 47).

68    Text XIX 2, c, and 4, d−e. The connection was emphasised by Jāḥiẓ (Text XVI 15, a). The term *ṭabīʿa* also occurs in the problematic Text IX 17. The conclusion Ibn al-Rēwandī drew from this information (Text XIX 2, a) was of course wrong, or deliberately ambiguous. Unfortunately it was spread further by doxographers such as Shahrastānī and Ibn Ḥazm.

69    Cf. Text XIX 3, a, and XVI 45, e. Ibn Ḥazm drew the line further from Muʿammar to Jāḥiẓ (*Fiṣal* III 54, apu. ff.). Cf. p. 74ff. and 92f. above.

means of the consistency of its contents.[70] In the case of the Quran, Thumāma agreed with Muʿammar's position, too,[71] although he appears to have been aware that this weakened the dogma of createdness, and consequently he conceded that God did not need to employ the 'nature' of the burning bush or the angel Gabriel in order to generate speech; he could create the Quran directly.[72] Unfortunately we do not know which cases he had in mind.

In all probability he was not Muʿammar's pupil in the true sense of the word, as he refused to apply the key term *fiʿl* with reference to lifeless bodies. These do possess a 'nature', but they do not act; only God or humans do that. The term was, after all, ambiguous and had, as we have seen,[73] caused Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir problems already. In Muʿammar's case we the difficulty could be played down by translating as 'effecting', but of course *fiʿl* also means 'acting'. Ibn al-Rēwandī used this instinctive aversion to attributing 'agency' to things unable to think against Muʿammar.[74] As Thumāma insisted that something that happens is always generated within the nature of the thing to which it happens,[75] and cannot be effected or 'generated' by a human, he considered it an event without an originator (*muḥdīth*). This was particularly true in the case of the *mutawallidāt*, but as human action was limited to human will in any case, everything would have to be 'generated' on a secondary level through will.[76] Thumāma appears to have occupied and modified the general position of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ*;[77] after all, he was a Basran.[78] He does not display the systematic stringency we find with Muʿammar.

It may be that there was something else as well. Thumāma was influenced by Ḍirār, too. While this cannot be proved when it comes to physics, he would have been aware of how much Ḍirār loathed the independence of bodies. There are

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70    Text XIX 16; Muʿammar had not yet given any thought to proving the truth (see p. 80 above). Thumāma did not seem to believe in *iʿjāz*, either.

71    Cf. Text XIX 6, c, and XVI 14, a–b.

72    Text XIX 6, a–b. This disagrees somewhat with Jāḥiẓ' claim in Text XVI 15, b.

73    See p. 127f. above.

74    Text XVI 6, b; cf. p. 74f. above.

75    Thus the expression used in Text XIX 4, d. Maybe Baghdādī, *Farq* 160, 9f./175, pu. = Text XXX 11, c, although he does not make it quite clear whether it is the human's nature or that of the body.

76    This appears to me what is meant by Texts 3, b–c, and 4, c–e. Text 5, too, makes sense if *fāʿil* is interpreted as meaning '**personal** agent'. Less decisive: Gimaret, *Théories* 30. Cf. already Horten in EI¹ IV 80of.

77    Juwaynī (*Shāmil* 237, apu. ff.) says the same. Regarding them see vol. II 44f. above.

78    This is implicit in the tradition mentioned in vol. II 447 above. In the Basran tradition he preferred Abū Bakr over ʿAlī (Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB I 7, 7).

clearer instances of borrowing in other areas. Maybe Ibn al-Rēwandī's claim that Thumāma believed in God's hidden *quidditas* is true,[79] as he also distinguished quite sharply between outward demeanour and inward attitude in the case of humans.[80] Ḍirār had done so as well, and it may have been customary among the Zaydites, too, whom Thumāma had assisted in dealing with Hārūn al-Rashīd.[81] Another thing they had in common, maybe due to the same idea, was that Thumāma preferred the Nabatean over the Quraysh as candidate for the caliphate.[82] We also learn that he once adopted the Muʿtazilite – and Shīʿite – cause in Armenia,[83] where Ḍirār had just then collected a following.[84]

Distinguishing between outward appearances and inward convictions was in fact the point at which Thumāma continued the train of thought independently. He did not want to call anyone a believer or an unbeliever simply on the basis of his outward actions. As far as one's fellow believers were concerned this was not a new attitude; there were two terms describing this: *muslim* and *muʾmin.* It is no coincidence that the most important text on his doctrine keeps repeating the terms *ahl al-qibla* and *ahl al-milla* that had already been used by the Ibāḍites to describe the Muslims in general as opposed to the 'true believers'.[85] Thumāma transferred this onto the unbelievers, too: a Jew or a Christian are unbelievers only if they profess their religion consciously and after due deliberation. This does not mean that one should say that any Jew or Christian one meets is not really a Jew or a Christian – that would be unrealistic. However, one must not call him an unbeliever until one knows that he has chosen his religion from the depths of his soul. As long as this is not the case, the fires of hell do not await him, as he is still in a state of innocence in a way. Only, however, in a way: his actions are not only innocent but, *sub specie aeternitatis*, also futile, for while he has not decided in favour of sin, he has not decided in favour of God, either. He is not subject to the law, and his actions are merely deterrents for other people or, like those of animals, subservient to them in corvée (*sukhra*). When he is resurrected he will not enter into paradise or hell, but will crumble to dust for good.

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79   Text 1; cf. p. 52f. above. If proof were needed that he did not approach this doctrine from an anthropomorphic point of view like Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, it is provided by the title at Catalogue of Works no. 3.

80   Text 9, h–i.

81   See p. 58 n. 21 above, also p. 174f.

82   Text XV 43, mentioned by Norris in CHAL II 40f.

83   Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil* II 48, 3f.

84   See p. 64 above.

85   Text 9, a–b and k; from a different perspective also 12, b.

Text 9, a–i; 10, a; 11; 12, a; 13, b; 8, b. *Sukhra* is any action performed without one's own decision. Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* I 204, pu., relates the term to the course of the stars, which is derived from the Quran (cf. the references for sura 13:2 in Paret, *Kommentar* 257). It also tells us that this 'corvée' serves humans (sura 31:20; 22:65; 45:13); however, the same word may also denote the person performing such service (cf. Lane, *Lexicon* 1324b s. v.); the restitution of Text 8, b, thus becomes more problematic (cf. the commentary).

Thumāma presumably drew this idea from sura 78:40 which states that on the Day of Judgment the unbelievers in their despair will wish that they did not have to be resurrected but might crumble to dust, leading the exegetes to conclude that they must be comparing their fate to that of the animals or the jinn.[86] Thumāma was, however, speaking of the afterlife only; he had no intention of touching on the status of the *ahl al-dhimma*.[87] Still, it is not easy to discern where he saw the dividing line. Ibn al-Rēwandī came to the obvious conclusion that he would now have to distinguish between conscious believers and mere *muqallidūn* among the *ahl al-qibla* as well; *muqallidūn*, i.e. women, children, and ignorant people (*al-ʿāmma*) overall, and in orthodox families at least the children who cannot think for themselves, would all crumble to dust. Khayyāṭ rejected this, outraged.[88] The same conflict arises again, but this time inverted: Ibn al-Rēwandī claimed Thumāma called the Islamic ecumene *dār kufr*, probably because all Muslims who sin consciously immediately become unbelievers; this, too, Khayyāṭ called a distortion.[89] He was probably right. Of course grave sinners go to hell; that is no more than good Muʿtazilite doctrine.[90] However, it is nothing to do with this world; Thumāma did not abandon the *manzila bayna l-manzilatayn*,[91] and he was not one of the *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila* either. Thus further claims are probably simply wrongly-drawn conclusions: such as when Baghdādī suggests that Thumāma objected to taking prisoners of war because only a (genuine) unbeliever could be enslaved,[92] or when the later

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86    Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* ²XXX 26, 1ff.; cf. Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 236, 6ff.

87    Cf. also Text 10, b.

88    Text 9, a–b and k. The category of *taqlīd* is introduced by Ibn Ḥazm in this context as well (Text 12, a).

89    Text 13.

90    Ibn Ḥazm was the only one to think this was something special (Text 12, b).

91    *Intiṣār* 93, 7f.

92    Text 14. Thumāma might at most have demanded that, as was the custom anyway, prisoners of war should be invited to convert to Islam in order to establish whether they were conscious unbelievers.

Ibāḍite Qalhātī attributed the view to him that a Muslim woman was forbidden to marry an anthropomorphist or a determinist as they were unbelievers.[93] This sounds rather more as if Murdār might have said it.

Thumāma took *waʿīd* seriously, but he had to know to whom the 'threatening verses' of the Quran referred. He wrote on the question of whether they should be interpreted generally or specifically.[94] The Murjiʾites were also interested in this question, intending to prove that the 'unbelievers' mentioned in those verses could on no account be Muslims.[95] Ibn al-Rēwandī even tried to force Thumāma into this corner,[96] but this was certainly once again unjustified: Thumāma believed it to refer to unbelievers who had already heard about Islam. These included all the *ahl al-dhimma* known to him as contemporaries and fellow countrymen – they could not be saved. The *muqallidūn* among the Muslims, on the other hand, were unlikely to crumble to dust because of their *taqlīd* only, as they knew Islam and could be admonished at any time. Thumāma's theory makes sense when we assume that he was not referring to the difference between scholars and *muqallidūn* but to unbelievers whom Islam had never touched because they lived beyond its sphere, or had lived at a time when there had been no Islam. This becomes increasingly probable when we look at how Thumāma approached the question of knowledge.

The duty to obey the law, and the associated legal responsibility, are the result, as we have seen, of knowledge and insight. Knowledge, however, is not an obligation as one does not acquire it: it is a gift; is 'necessary'.[97] Thumāma probably did not intend to deny the value of deliberation; he meant that deliberation does not **necessarily** lead to knowledge. It is of course possible to conclude God's existence from earthly things, but that is not the reason why they exists.[98] Consequently, if an unbeliever comes to know God, this is, as it were, sheer luck. This does not apply to a Muslim, as he would have been brought up within Islam from birth and thus learnt 'of necessity' what Islam is. For the same reason it does not apply to the *ahl al-dhimma*, either; but it does apply to

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93    *Al-kashf wal-bayān*, in: Ḥawliyyāt Tunis 18/1980/210, pu. ff.; cf. also Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 88, –5.

94    Catalogue of Works no. 6.

95    See p. 208f. below.

96    *Intiṣār* 93, 5ff.

97    Text 7 and 8, a.

98    Text 15, although the attribution remains hypothesis.

many non-Muslims who have passed already, for not knowing God or doubting his existence does not of itself constitute unbelief.[99]

This was probably the *Sitz im Leben* where Thumāma's doctrine was concerned. Persians heard often enough that their ancestors were in hell.[100] Conversely, a 'heretic' could proffer the excuse that after all the prophet's father had been an unbeliever as well.[101] At court in Marv, where the vizier Faḍl b. Sahl had converted from Zoroastrianism before Maʾmūn himself, it was common courtesy to refrain from discriminating remarks. A little theology, however, might be welcomed. While it did not grant the ancestors a place in paradise, at least it gave them back their good name. Thumāma discussed the matter in a treatise, and possibly also in his *K. naʿīm ahl al-janna*.[102] It is worth noting that Murdār wrote a refutation on this particular text.[103]

No-one would deny that a man in Thumāma's position had to have some understanding of the law. He wrote a *K. al-sunan*;[104] Jāḥiẓ transmitted hadith from him as well as from Abū Yūsuf.[105] Law was important to him; its internal logic was, as we have seen,[106] the basis of the truth of Muḥammad's prophethood. He did, however, ask much of the jurists. Simple *ijtihād al-raʾy* was not enough for him; in fact, he wrote against it. People thought this was an attack on Abū Ḥanīfa, and they were probably right; but when he was asked about it during Hārūn's last journey in Khorasan he appears to have rejected this, claiming it was addressed at the older Kufans: Ibn Masʿūd, ʿAlqama b. Qays al-Nakhaʿī (d. 62/682?), and his nephew Aswad b. Yazīd al-Nakhaʿī.[107] Like other Muʿtazilites before him he hoped to find a firm criterion, and he found it in rational proof.

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99    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qurʾān* 188, 5f. for the *aṣḥāb al-maʿārif* which take Thumāma as their starting point (regarding them see ch. C 4.2.4.1.2 below). I have used them as a source to fill the gaps in the Thumāma tradition. In this context we must bear in mind that unlike Ḍirār, Thumāma did not regard faith as being created by God and thus 'necessary' (Text XVII 52, h–i).

100   Thus e.g. Muḥāsibī, *Riʿāya* 229, 5ff.

101   Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* XV 390, 15ff., where ʿUmar II denies this vehemently. The problem was also discussed in hadith; Muqātil b. Sulaymān discussed it (cf. Gilliot in: JA 179/1991/68f.).

102   Catalogue of Works no. 2 and 7.

103   Catalogue of Works XVIII b, no. 20.

104   Catalogue of Works XIX, no. 8.

105   Cf. Ibn ʿAsākir in: RAAD 9/1929/203, 6 = Mawrid 7/1978, issue 4, p. 96b.

106   P. 178 above.

107   Faḍl b. Shādhān, *Īḍāḥ*, 524, 2ff.; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB XX 31, 10ff. after Jāḥiẓ, presumably his *K. al-tawḥīd* which is named shortly afterwards (31, apu.) > Ibn Maʿṣūm, *Al-darajāt al-rafīʿa* 26, 5ff.; quoted GAS 1/398. Regarding Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-tawḥīd* cf. Catalogue of Works XXX, no. 15 (vol. VI 314).

The consensus on which Ḍirār's and Aṣamm's generations had relied did not convince him: out of ten men, nine might be wrong. Truth is not found with a certain group or generation, e.g. the *ṣaḥāba*. A methodological basis must be established for the habit of legal scholars, often unacknowledged, of referring to the *khilāf* for their choice of one particular opinion.[108]

One of Thumāma's legal opinions caused quite a stir. Ibn al-Rēwandī mentioned it, but Khayyāṭ was so outraged that he withheld it from his readers: 'Then the shameless fool reports something about Thumāma for which he himself was notorious and had been punished several times, but which he did not abandon until God had him die and sent him to his painful punishment (in hell). If I did not wish to preserve this book from that (passage) I would speak of it'.[109] Insiders knew, of course, what the text stated: that Thumāma considered intercrural intercourse (*tafkhīdh*) with boys to be permitted, as there was no text prohibiting it.[110] This was first of all an application of the principle known since ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, namely that everything not explicitly prohibited, is permitted.[111] In addition, however, it was a delicate and much-discussed issue. Homosexuality was not acceptable, but in the late second century it was regarded as a mere peccadillo in fashionable circles in Iraq. It was the favourite topic of gossip among intellectuals; clearly, one could use it with impunity to slander someone. Jāḥiẓ wrote about it in *Tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā l-ẓahr*.[112] It was the passive partner, the *mukhannath*, who prostituted himself who was despised; even the hadiths we have on the subject make this clear.[113]

The Khorasanians were well-known for their inclination towards the sin of Lot (*liwāṭ*),[114] but we must be careful not to approach the subject with stereotypes. There is nothing to say that homosexuality was more widespread in eastern Iran than in Iraq or on the Arabian Peninsula.[115] During

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108 Thus according to a possibly fictitious debate with Yaḥyā b. Aktham, which he was said to have transmitted himself (Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 10, 2ff./IV 303f. no. 2703). His opinion may have been adapted too much to Naẓẓām's here (see p. 423f. below).

109 *Intiṣār* 67, −6f.

110 *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 84, 2ff.

111 See vol. II 343 above.

112 Ed. Pellat in: Ḥawliyyāt Tunis 13/1976/183ff., and ed. Hārūn, *Rasāʾil* IV 155ff.; *ẓahr* denoting homosexuality here.

113 Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* II 200, 2ff. (cf. 200, 8 and 10).

114 Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* I 148, −4; Mez, *Renaissance* 337.

115 Regarding homosexuality among the first warriors for the faith cf. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Awāʾil* II 149, −4ff.; during the early Islamic period cf. the extensive, but unfortunately nearly inaccessible, collection of material by Nabih Akel, *Studies in the Social History of the Umayyad Period* (PhD London 1960), p. 167ff. and 194ff. Regarding the present cf.

the Achaemenid era it had been regarded as reprehensible and was seen as a Greek custom in Iran.[116] All Islamic jurists agreed on its being a punishable offence: in theory they insisted on the perpetrators being executed.[117] Only hardened heretics were believed to consider it permitted: the Manichaeans, because the *electi* among them had to be celibate,[118] or a Shīʿite extremist such as Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr.[119] Intercrural intercourse was regarded differently, as this was petting rather than penetration. Even strict people like Ibn Ḥazm saw it as merely a venial sin;[120] the early Kufan jurist Saʿīd b. Jubayr[121] had even declared the practice to be permitted.[122] In contacts with boys this appears to have often been the usual practice;[123] during Antiquity, too, so-called διαμηρίζειν had been the norm, rather than anal intercourse.[124] Ibn Karrām had also shown leniency with regard to *tafkhīdh* in the context of heterosexual relationships.[125]

Thumāma had arrived at his opinion because he disapproved of the conclusion by analogy: pederasty and *tafkhīdh* are two different things. There is no rational reason why they should be treated the same.[126] A generation after

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I. Baldauf, *Die Knabenliebe in Mittelasien, Bačabozlik,* Berlin 1988). In comparison see J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality. Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago 1980).

116  Knauth, *Altiranisches Fürstenideal* 80.

117  For details cf. my *K. al-nakth* 71f.; concerning the Shīʿa cf. *Biḥār* LXXIX 62ff. Only the Shāfiʿites regarded this as actual fornication (*zinā*; cf. Sachau, *Muhammedanisches Recht* 818 §4).

118  Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 51, pu. f.

119  Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 78, 4ff. > Qummī, *Maq.* 100, –5ff., with particular emphasis on passive homosexuality.

120  *Fiṣal* IV 224, ult.

121  Regarding him see vol. I 181 and II 142 above.

122  Faḍl b. Shādhān, *Īḍāḥ* 91, 3ff.; esp. 92, 4f.

123  Cf. Ibn al-Muʿtazz' verse, transl. Wagner, *Grundzüge der klass. arab. Dichtung* II 96.

124  Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* 98f.; also H. Patzer in: SB Wiss. Ges. J. W. v. Goethe-Univ. Frankfurt 19/1982, issue 1, p. 119f., who emphasises the numinous and emancipatory character of this practice. The word corresponds precisely to Ar. *tafkhīdh*, ημρός being Gr. 'thigh'.

125  In this case it probably refers to a means of contraception; one would not have to perform the general ablution afterwards, he said (*Ungenützte Texte* 18, after his *K. al-sirr*).

126  This only emerges with Jāḥiẓ: in the afterlife, where the blessed are served by boys, sexual contacts are forbidden – as opposed to the consumption of wine, which is forbidden in this world. Furthermore sexual intercourse that does not serve procreation is against nature (*Fī l-muʿallimīn* in: *Rasāʾil* III 43, 2ff.). Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* II 84, pu. ff. records a later discussion on the subject (after Ibn ʿAqīl).

him this opinion appears to have been shared by Abū ʿAffān al-Raqqī, a contemporary of Jāḥiẓ.[127] He applied the same principle to a different case: the dripping and brains of a pig are permitted for human consumption, as only the pig's **meat** is forbidden by the Quran.[128] Another theologian, Jaʿfar al-ʿUtbī, permitted masturbation for the same reason.[129] Nothing else is known about him; there is no discernible connection with Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿUtbī, a man of letters living at al-Maʾmūn's court.[130]

No immediate pupils of Thumāma's are named anywhere. Jāḥiẓ once mentions a descendant of Khabbāb b. al-Aratt's who was believed to be *ṣāḥib Thumāma* (*Burṣān* 251, 9f.; regarding Khabbāb al-Aratt cf. EI² IV 896f.), but we cannot be quite sure what he intended to convey. Being a public official Thumāma probably would not have had time to give lectures. He influenced the *aṣḥāb al-maʿārif* in particular, which is why Jāḥiẓ is very close to him. – Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a secretary of Thumāma's (133, 2), but a comparison with 139, 4f. shows that this should read *Qumāma* instead of *Thumāma*. Flügel had already come to this conclusion.

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127  Regarding him see ch. C 4.2.4.2 below.

128  Thus all the passages on the subject (sura 2:173; 5:3; 6:145; 16:115). Abū ʿAffān's name is transmitted either corrupted or misread everywhere. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 197, 17ff., which names him together with Thumāma, has his name as Abū Ghifār; this is the basis for Saksakī, *Burhān* 32, 7ff. Thus also Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 556, 3. Different again in Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām* VII 203, –5/1047, 12. The reading is indefinite in Maqdisī, *Badʾ* V 144, 1. The doctrine is quoted anonymously in *Fiṣal* II 114, 7; concerning the juristic discussion surrounding it cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* IV 74, pu. ff. – Concerning the question of whether it is permissible to use pigs' bristles for sewing cf. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* V 22, –8ff.

129  Maqdisī, *Badʾ* V 143, ult. f.; together with the following remark on Abū ʿAffān part of a quotation after Ibn al-Rēwandī's *K. faḍāʾiḥ al-Muʿtazila* which does not survive in *K. al-intiṣār*.

130  See p. 223f. below.

## 2.4     The Anti-Caliphate of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī

Maʾmūn's surprising decision to appoint as his successor someone who was not an Abbasid hit the members of his family hard. The majority of them had stayed in Iraq and were beginning to feel that the centre of power had moved away from them. As a consequence they, in agreement with a number of the inhabitants of Baghdad, offered the caliphate to Maʾmūn's uncle Ibrāhīm, the son of al-Mahdī – the very caliph who had led Abbasid ideology to its climax. He was not too old, barely forty, and received the oath of allegiance on 5 Muḥarram 202/24 July 817, having taken the regnal name of al-Mubārak.[1] His glory was of short duration; half a year later the game had been lost. He did, however, have sufficient time for a few measures that shed light on the religious situation in the old capital. The first was to arrest

Abū Ḥātim Sahl b. Salāma al-Anṣārī,

a noble Arab of Khorasanian origin who had collected a group of vigilantes around himself who called themselves by the Quranic[2] name al-Muṭṭawwiʿa which had long been made famous through *jihād*. Their religious attitude was new – since the collapse of law and order the city had actually been teeming with gangs and vigilantes of all kinds. They took protection money for gardens and tolls from travellers; there was no police force that could have prevented theft and looting. Sahl b. Salāma had had the idea – like a certain Khālid al-Daryūsh, apparently a Sufi (*darwīsh*), about whom we know nothing else – to take the situation back to a normal level by reminding people of their responsibilities towards one another; rather than being 'protected' by others, all that was needed was for everyone to behave in the correct fashion. This was in keeping with *amr bil-maʿrūf wal-nahy ʿan al-munkar* but sounded rather like grass-roots democracy; there is no mention of Sahl ruling with the help of a particular unit. He wore woollen garments and a Quran tied around his neck, calling people to 'act in accordance with God's book and the *sunna* of his prophet'. He had nothing but contempt for the authorities, calling their representatives the 'criminals' (*fussāq*), for who sins against the creator does not

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1   Cf. EI² III 987 s. v. *Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī*. Among his followers was Sindī b. Shāhak (cf. Gabrieli, *Al-Maʾmūn* 49, n. 2, after Ṭabarī III 1016, 5/transl. Uhrig 85). He had previously been on Amīn's side (Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar* 375, –5; Gabrieli in: RSO 11/1926–8/351). Regarding him see p. 101f. and vol. II 275 above.

2   Cf. sura 9:79.

deserve obedience; this had been made quite clear in hadith.[3] He first made his ideas public in Ramadan 201/April 817 in a mosque, as was only proper, and possibly in the form of a penitential sermon. He compiled a list of members; whoever entered his name into it was at the same time protector and protected. His followers built little towers (*burj*) from bricks and plaster outside their doors in which they kept their weapons and a copy of the Quran.[4]

In the densely populated suburbs north-west of the round city[5] where Sahl had his home, 500,000 people were said to have followed him.[6] It is consequently not surprising that Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī let him go free once he himself felt his power waning.[7] Maybe he hoped to use him against al-Ma'mūn who was already approaching Iraq. If this was the case, he was not successful; Ma'mūn brought Sahl presents when he entered the city – although he also ordered him not to leave his house any more.[8] Ma'mūn is unlikely to have doubted his personal piety, but once he had taken control of the government of Iraq he considered the armed *amr bil-ma'rūf* to be anarchic.[9] When he heard about Sahl's appearance for the first time, still in Marv, Thumāma is said to have commented – with one of the witty paradoxes the anecdotes are so keen to attribute to him – that he was only dangerous as long as his movement did not spread. At that time he represented principles; later only the mob ran after him.[10] He is not listed anywhere as a jurist or traditionist. The *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* mistrusted him more than one would expect; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal disapproved of his behaviour although they shared the same background.[11] Maybe people resented that he had been bought by Ma'mūn; he was said to have worn only black from then on.[12] What he did was nothing if not applying the teachings of Aṣamm or the *ṣūfiyyat al-Mu'tazila*, that one does not need the authorities as long as everybody abides by the law of his own accord. A source not

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3    See vol. 1 100 above.

4    Ṭabarī III 1008, 6ff., and 1023, 5ff./transl. Bosworth 55ff and Uhrig 70ff.; summarised in Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, transl. Rosenthal 1 324ff. Cf. also Lapidus in: IJMES 6/1975/372f. with further details. Dovecotes were also called *burj* (cf. Ahsan, *Social Life* 250). If these were referred to here, they might have been used for reasons of secrecy, although there was really nothing to be kept secret.

5    The *arbād Ḥarbiyya*; cf. Ṣ. A. al-'Alī, *Baghdād* 1₂ 164ff.

6    Thus Ibn al-Faqīh, ed. al-'Alī, *Baghdād* 80, 16ff.

7    Ṭabarī III 1034, 10ff./transl. Bosworth 90ff. and Uhrig 118ff.

8    Ibid. 1036, 1f.; Ya'qūbī, *Mushākala* 28, pu. ff.

9    See vol. II 441 above.

10   Al-Khaṭīb al-Ishkāfī, *Luṭf al-tadbīr* 57, −4ff.

11   Khallāl, *Musnad* 25, −4; cf. p. 485 below.

12   TB V 176, 11.

exploited so far, the Zaydite al-Murādī, describes him frankly as a Muʿtazilite,[13] although according to the same source he transgressed against the principles of Aṣamm and the Muʿtazilite ascetics by offering the caliphate to the Ḥasanid ʿAbdallāh b. Mūsā (d. 247/861).[14] He had links to Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn, preaching in his mosque in Ḥarbiyya.[15] Ṭāhir was not in Baghdad at the time, but he was close to the old Khorasanian families and thus someone not even a man like Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī could ignore. Might Maʾmūn have treated Sahl b. Salāma so courteously because the latter, maybe unintentionally, furthered the caliph's interests?

Regarding Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn's origins in Khorasan cf. Kaabi in: *Arabica* 19/1972/145ff.; the family had taken part in the Abbasid *daʿwa*. Madelung elucidated the political background of the events in an essay in: *Festschrift Fahir İz* I 331ff. (1992). The scene changed rapidly, as always during a civil war. Sahl b. Salāma had not accepted Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's brother Manṣūr, either, when the latter had been elected governor by the Baghdad Abbasids. His followers were mainly the owners of small properties who had to fear the attacks of marauding soldiers most; presumably the authorities were not able to pay the soldiers. The Ḥanbalites would later find their followers elsewhere.

Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī probably had his own militia supporting him. A defamatory poem composed after his arrest accused him of having allied himself to the Nābita who would later play a part as opponents of the Muʿtazilites during the *miḥna*.[16] This clearly refers to forces close to the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, probably drawn from those who had previously supported Amīn. Maybe Faḍl b. Dukayn or Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī were among them, of whom it was said that they were active at the same time as Sahl b. Salāma;[17] they were both known not to be friends of the Muʿtazilites.[18] It is certainly not surprising that someone who had been blacklisted before, i.e. Bishr b. al-Marīsī,[19] was called to account once again under Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī.

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13    Quoted by Ibn al-Wazīr, *Tarjīḥ asālīb al-Qurʾān* 28, apu. ff.

14    Unless he meant him to take office as a temporary force for order. Regarding ʿAbdallāh b. Mūsā see p. 212 below.

15    Ṭabarī III 1010, 14f. Ibn Khaldūn even says that he had his headquarters in Ṭāhir's palace (transl. Rosenthal I 325).

16    Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 198, −4ff.; cf. also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 440.

17    See vol. II 441 above and p. 510 below.

18    Faḍl b. Dukayn also nourished Shīʿite sympathies (see vol. I 271 above).

19    See p. 159 above.

### 2.4.1    *Bishr b. al-Marīsī*

The second action the anti-caliph took left much clearer traces in the sources. It did, in fact, happen in public: Bishr's trial took place in a mosque before a large audience. Being a jurist he probably already commanded some respect at the time. His views on dogma, on the other hand, had earned him the reputation of being a 'Jahmite'.

> Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bishr b. Ghiyāth b. Abī Karīma al-ʿAdawī al-Marīsī,

d. Dhū l-Ḥijja 219/Dec. 833,[1] was a client of the family of Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb, a brother of the second caliph.[2] He was a Ḥanafite and pupil of Abū Yūsuf's,[3] but clearly studied under Aṣamm as well. Like Ibn ʿUlayya he adopted Aṣamm's rationalist theory that everything can be proved clearly and that every fallacy is a transgression in one way or another.[4] If he also adopted Aṣamm's political theory he would have moved into the vicinity of Sahl b. Salāma. This might explain why he was persecuted; Ibn ʿUlayya, who had been threatened together with him on the previous occasion, had left Iraq in the meantime. However, the case of al-Marīsī is more complex. There are no other indications that he had anything in common with Sahl b. Salāma. He was not a Muʿtazilite, and he does not appear to have been the kind of person to get involved with a popular movement in any case. If the caliph was hoping to get closer to Sahl b. Salāma through him, he should have gone directly to Sahl in the first place.

The trial took place in the chief mosque in the Ruṣāfa quarter where later, during the *miḥna*, the orthodox reaction would gather.[5] Bishr was asked to recant – unfortunately we are not told what, exactly. The trial was led by Qutayba b. Ziyād from Khorasan, a Ḥanafite like Bishr and a respected jurist whom Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī had appointed *qāḍī* on the eastern bank.[6] In the mosque Bishr had to stand on a box in which the Qurans were usually kept. The charges were presented by two *mustamlī*s, Abū Muslim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān

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1   ᴛʙ VII 67, 10f.; 219 is given as a variant. Khallāl, *Musnad* 437, 11, has a record of a slightly earlier date (215 or 216) which, however, relies on a not entirely assured recollection of the person reporting.

2   Regarding him cf. e.g. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 550ff. no. 846. He was a member of the ʿAdī b. Kaʿb, hence Bishr's *nisba* al-ʿAdawī.

3   Ṣaymarī, *Akhbār Abī Ḥanīfa* 156, 1ff.; ʿAbbādī, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-Shāfiʿiyya* 4, 13; Shīrāzī, *Ṭab.* 138, apu. ff.; ᴵᴬᵂ I 164ff. no. 371.

4   Text XIII 36–37; cf. vol. II 470 and 474 above. Interpreted as a Ḥanafite legacy by Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 25, ult. ff.

5   See p. 488f. below.

6   Regarding him cf. ᴛʙ XII 463f. no. 6941; ᴵᴬᵂ 413 no. 1146. Ibn al-Nadīm lists some of his books (*Fihrist* 260, 8ff.).

b. Yūnus (d. 224/839), who had held this position with Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, and Hārūn b. Mūsā, who served Yazīd b. Hārūn from Wāsiṭ.[7] They were probably not – or at least not primarily – representing their schools of law, as Sufyān b. ʿUyayna had been dead some years and had lectured in Mecca, after all. It is more likely that they were chosen because of their trained voices as the court-yard of the mosque may well have been teeming with people. Their words are in part recorded in direct speech: 'The commander of the faithful orders his judge Qutayba b. Ziyād to call Bishr b. Ghiyāth, known as al-Marīsī, to repent…'. Several charges follow, which our informant unfortunately omits, telling us only that they concerned the Quran, i.e. presumably its createdness. There is no need to assume that the caliph had indeed given an order; maybe the in-tention was to put pressure on the judge,[8] for Bishr was not to be intimidated. He called: 'God forbid! God forbid! I have no intention of repenting (*lastu bi-tāʾib^{in}*)'. Those present nearly lynched him, but he was taken to a chamber in-side the nearby gateway of the mosque. Presumably the *qāḍī* who was, after all, his colleague, ensured his safety.[9]

The mastermind in the background might have been Yazīd b. Hārūn. At the time, a few years before his death, he was at the height of his fame and was probably teaching in Baghdad; 70,000 people were said to have attended his lectures.[10] Abū Muslim, introduced by the account quoted as a (former) *mustamlī* of Sufyān b. ʿUyayna's, may have been working for him at the time as well.[11] He was said to have claimed that he called the people of Baghdad several times to murder Bishr al-Marīsī.[12] He was a fierce opponent of the

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7    Regarding him TB XIV 340, 4ff.

8    It does seem, however, that Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī had called the trial himself (TB XII 464, 8).

9    Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣayrafī's (a pupil of Ibn ʿUyayna and Yazīd b. Hārūn; 175/791–Rajab 265/March 879) account in TB XII 464, 9ff. was probably also the basis of Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt* III 270, 1ff. Nagel discusses him (*Rechtleitung* 330). Cf. also Khallāl, *Musnad* 447, 8ff.; Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil* 352, 2f.; IAW I 413, 12f.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* II 30, 12f. after the Spaniard Ibn al-Rūmiyya's (d. 637/1239) *K. al-ḥāfil fī takmilat al-Kāmil* (cf. *Der Islam* 44/1968/33).

10   See vol. II 488 above.

11   The biography at TB X 258f. no. 5374 tells us that Abū Muslim served under both of them. He did not enjoy the best of reputations among the *muḥaddithūn* (*Mīzān* no. 5010). This was probably partly due to his having 'collapsed' during the questioning concerning the *khalq al-Qurʾān* (see p. 493 below).

12   TB VII 63, 6; Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā l-Jahmiyya* 98, 3f.

*khalq al-Qurʾān*,[13] but just as opposed to Aṣamm, who was not long dead by that time.[14] There were several accusations against Bishr. The *khalq al-Qurʾān* probably did not come to the fore until later; many people saw Bishr as the instigator of the *miḥna*.[15] Ṣaymarī thought he was disliked because he was the prototypical *mutakallim*.[16] A remark by Jāḥiẓ, unfortunately not as precise as we could wish, seems to confirm that the *mutakallimūn* were going through a difficult time in general; the Muʿtazilites were not admitted as witnesses once again.[17]

Later, Bishr's losing his reputation was projected further into the past. It was claimed that his teacher Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) had already considered punishing him because of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*, whereupon Bishr moved to Basra.[18] This was probably only a malicious interpretation of the fact that he studied in Basra under Aṣamm. It is true that Abū Yūsuf was no friend of *kalām*, but Bishr transmitted some autobiographical information from him dating to the time shortly before his death.[19] Finally it was said that even Hārūn al-Rashīd had sworn to have Bishr executed.[20] His speech impediment was exaggerated in order to prove his lowly origin,[21] and Ḥanbalite circles claimed that his father was a Jewish fuller from Kufa or Ḥīra.[22] This claim was easily exposed as

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13   See vol. II 488 above.

14   Abū Dāwūd, *Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad* 270, 2f.; see vol. II 451 above.

15   Ibid. 262, 11; Ājurrī, *Sharīʿa* 95, −9ff. Cf. p. 498 and 546f. below.

16   *Akhbār*, loc. cit. According to the note in *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil*, Qutayba b. Ziyād believed him to be guildy of *bidʿa*.

17   Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh*, in: *Rasāʾil* I 285, 4f.; cf. p. 505 below.

18   Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā Bishr al-Marīsī* 108, 8ff./466, 6ff.; transl. in: Der Islam 44/1968/35. Nagel believes this to be historical (*Rechtleitung* 329). Cf. also Wakīʿ III 257, −5ff.; Khallāl, *Musnad* 429, 8ff.; TB VII 61, 20ff. and 65, 20ff.; IAW I 164, apu. f. A list of those who called Bishr al-Marīsī an unbeliever may be found in Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl iʿtiqād ahl-al-sunna* 383, 1ff.

19   TB XIV 252, 15ff.

20   TB VII 64, 7f.; Schacht correctly doubted this in EI² I 1242. Nagel (*Rechtleitung* 329) and I (in Der Islam 44/1968/31) may have taken this information too seriously. It is a different matter that there were times when Bishr was unable to appear publicly as a *mutakallim*. See also p. 505 below.

21   Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 212, 11ff. > TB VII 57, 16ff. etc.; cf. Fück, *Arabiya* 68. A different version is in Zajjājī, *Majālis al-ʿulamāʾ* 160 no. 73 (= Mawrid 7/1978, issue 4, p. 76b). Cf. also TB VII 63, 13f., where he makes himself conspicuous by his use of the vulgar *ēsh taqūl*.

22   Abū Dāwūd, *Masāʾil Aḥmad* 270, 11ff.; Khallāl, *Musnad* 429, 5ff.; Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā Bishr al-Marīsī* 46, 6/404, 1f.; TB VII 61, 8ff. > IKh I 277, pu. (where *ṣayyāgh* should be read as *ṣabbāgh*).

untrue, as he did not come from Iraq at all but from Upper Egypt, hence his *nisba* al-Marīsī.[23] This was why he knew Shāfiʿī well; when the latter came to Baghdad he stayed in Bishr's house.[24]

His connection with Shāfiʿī led to people's imagination running wild once again. Shāfiʿī was the older of the two, but in Baghdad Bishr was better known; after all, a street was named after him.[25] It was said that Shāfiʿī lured his pupils away,[26] and that Bishr had foreseen this when he had met him during the pilgrimage; but while in one of the reports he warned his listeners against Shāfiʿī, in another one he admitted the latter's pre-eminence.[27] We then find Shāfiʿī arguing with him concerning legal issues, and learn of a *qāḍī* who, when told of Bishr's doctrine, threatened to have his head cut off if Shāfiʿī could produce a witness (!).[28] In fact, Bishr did not adhere to either the Quran or the *sunna;* one must, he said, merely take care not to contradict these principles.[29] On the other hand there were Shāfiʿites who counted Bishr among their master's pupils.[30] The question of *kalām* was paramount; it was unimaginable that Shāfiʿī should not have admonished his host on this subject. Bishr's mother was said to have asked him to do so, but her son remained unmoved.[31] Finally it was said that Bishr asked for proof of *tawḥīd* in Hārūn's (!) presence, Shāfiʿī answering, as was to be expected, with a Quranic verse.[32] The rivalry between Shāfiʿites and Ḥanafites played a part as well; there is a parallel account which has Shāfiʿī triumphing over not only Bishr but also Shaybānī in Hārūn's presence.[33] East Iranian Ḥanafites responded in ther own fashion, claiming that Bishr defended

23    See vol. II 822 above.

24    TB VII 59, 3.

25    Darb al-Marīsī; thus after TB VII 56, 8f., and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s. v. *Marrīsa*, cf. also Ṣ. A. al-ʿAlī, *Baghdād* I₂ 73f. EI² I 1242 inverts circumstances, as already happened in later Arabian sources (e.g. IKh I 278, 4f.).

26    TB II 65, 11ff.

27    Ibid. II 65, 7f.; *Ḥilya* IX 95, 16ff.

28    Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī* 175, 1ff.; TB VII 60, 4ff.

29    Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī* I 204, 4ff.; IAW I 165, 4ff. (a reflection of Aṣamm's abovementioned doctrine).

30    Thus Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Āburī (d. 363/874) in his *Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī* (cf. GAS 1/486); Subkī expressed surprise at this (*Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* II 149, –4ff./III 147, ult. ff.).

31    Ibn Abī Ḥātim 187, 2f.; TB VII 59, 3ff.

32    Bayhaqī I 399ff.; id., *Iʿtiqād* (Cairo 1380/1961) 8, apu. ff.

33    *Ḥilya* IX 82, 13ff.

his views successfully against Ibn Ḥanbal before Hārūn.[34] Some of them even believed that Shāfiʿī studied under Bishr.[35]

Clearly, a positive image of Bishr did exist as well, but it did not prevail in Iraq; records of it are extremely thin on the ground. The one mentioning Bishr's large nose may not strictly speaking be one of them, but at least it is objective.[36] His physique was that of men from Upper Egypt; as he furthermore rode an ass similar to those known from his home, the Marīs,[37] he might have been taken for a physician.[38] Being a Ḥanafite he drank *nabīdh*;[39] he even wrote a treatise on this drink being permitted.[40] All the same, his *waraʿ* is emphasised.[41] He appears to have had a deep consciousness of sin, as he was accustomed to going to a canal between Baghdad and Wāsiṭ in order to perform the general ablution there (by immersing himself in the water?).[42] Maʾmūn was said to have donated 300,000 dirhams to him later 'because he performed the ablution so frequently'.[43] He had no qualms about leaving a *majlis* convened by the caliph in order to pray.[44] He clearly set great store by the example of Jesus, always adding a blessing after his name. The opposing side added quickly that he had less empathy with Muḥammad, who spent too much time on 'mirror, comb, and women' for his taste.[45] Interestingly he was not familiar with the concept of venial sin; every sin is a transgression against God.[46] He was unpopular only in Baghdad at first, while it seems that he was respected in Basra; Najjār agreeing with him on many points.[47] The Khorasanian Ibāḍite Bishr

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34    Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 261, apu. ff., allegedly after Ghazzālī (who, however, was a Shāfiʿite and hated the Ḥanafites!).

35    Kardarī, *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa* ²66, 8.

36    Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* II 146, apu. ff.; in TB VII 61, 13f., and Khallāl, *Musnad* 431, 1ff., he is said to look like a Jew (thus adopted by Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* II 28).

37    Cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s. v. *Marrīsa*; Dozy, *Supplément* II 589b.

38    Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Al-ajwiba al-muskita* 29 no. 152. Does this mean that people coming from Egypt to Baghdad were mainly (Christian) physicians?

39    Ibid. 29 no. 153.

40    Catalogue of Works XX, no. 11.

41    Ṣaymarī 156, 2.

42    TB XIII 441, 2ff; cf. vol. II 496 above.

43    *Iqd* IV 216, ult. However, it was also said that Maʾmūn regarded this behaviour as subtle eye-service (Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 100. 10/55, 5).

44    Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwiba* 34 no. 191.

45    ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *K. al-sunna* 32, 7ff. This already recalls the attitude of later Muʿtazilite Sufis (see ch. C 4.2.3 below).

46    Text XX 26; cf. Tritton, *Muslim Theology* 74.

47    See ch. C 5.2.1 below.

b. Ghānim quoted him in his *Mudawwana*.[48] Maybe al-Marīsī had grown up among Ibāḍites in Egypt.

He had probably never been to Iran. His participation in a public debate before al-Ma'mūn which also included ʿAlī al-Riḍā[49] was probably Shīʿite fiction. His greatest hour came when Maʾmūn returned to Baghdad. The caliph selected him together with Ibn Abī Duwād and eight other theologians and jurists to become members of his discussion circle.[50] From then onwards we meet him as well as Thumāma during debates;[51] in the city they were often seen as the caliph's evil spirits.[52] Still, they were by no means the best of friends: Bishr did not believe in free will. A Muʿtazilite poet dared to point out to the caliph the bad company he kept: Bishr would have the right faith if he were no determinist.[53] Two factions emerged at court, the Qadariyya, i.e. the Muʿtazila, against the 'Maʾmūniyya'. The Muʿtazila was supported by Maʾmūn's son Hārūn,[54] but Bishr was stronger, as Maʾmūn had brought back some 'Murjiʾite' ideas from Khorasan that corresponded quite closely to his own.[55] The caliph was said to have threatened his son that he would have him encounter the dreaded *mutakallim* and to have him executed if he could not refute the expert. From then on Hārūn was said to have avoided Bishr.[56] It is remarkable that there is no

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48    See vol. II 676f. above.

49    Tritton, *Muslim Theology* 73 after Ṭabrisī, *Iḥtijāj*.

50    Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 56, pu. ff./30, 12ff. Whether this happened immediately in 204/820 will have to remain unanswered (see p. 214ff. below).

51    Cf. e.g. Ṭayfūr 28, 8ff./15, –4ff. = Ṭabarī III 1039, 19ff./transl. Bosworth 100f. after an autobiographical report by Marīsī; Ibn Taghrībirdī II 187, 12f. (for 209). Abū l-Ṣalt al-Harawī was said to have been one of his opponents (thus according to Aḥmad b. Sayyār's *Taʾrīkh Marv*, although he may have based his account on hearsay; TB XI 47, 18f. > *Mīzān* no. 5051).

52    TB VII 66, 7ff., and 148, 18ff. They were named together as *kuffār* by Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna* 384, –5. Bishr's influence can also be inferred from a brief letter in which he, recalling long-standing friendship, recommended someone to Rajāʾ b. Abī l-Ḍaḥḥāk, the head of the *dīwān al-kharāj* under Maʾmūn (Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* 2v 159 no. 530).

53    Sīrāfī, *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn* 47, 9f.; after him Tritton, *Muslim Theology* 74. It is certainly no coincidence that apart from the anecdote about his lack of fluency in Arabic, Jāḥiẓ took barely any notice of Bishr.

54    *Agh.* XX 252, 13ff.

55    See p. 168 above.

56    Ṭayfūr 65, ult. ff./35, 6ff. I mistakenly changed this son into a (not documented) Muʿtazilite named Hārūn b. al-Maʾmūn b. Sundus in: Der Islam 44/1968/34. Sundus, however, is the mother's name which is specified here in addition to that of the father, the caliph; cf. the form *Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥanafiyya*. She was an *umm walad* all of whose sons were killed after ʿAbbās b. al-Maʾmūn's uprising under al-Muʿtaṣim (Ṭabarī III 1267, 18f.; cf. p. 527f. below).

known Muʿtazilite treatise against him. It was not until later that people began
to boast that Jaʿfar b. Mubashshir once defeated him in a debate.[57]

It is true that they had a common enemy: the 'anthropomorphists'. Bishr,
like Murdār, felt no qualms calling them unbelievers; he composed a *K. kufr al-
mushabbiha*.[58] During a visit to Mecca, maybe during the pilgrimage, he came
to realise that this tough Iraqi stance was not welcome everywhere. When he
was basing a lecture on his book – presumably the one mentioned above – in
which he 'denied the divine attributes' he was attacked physically. Sufyān b.
ʿUyayna (d. 196/811), who was present, did not take any steps to protect him
through his authority.[59] The 'similarisers' were probably mainly traditionists.

Despite his explicit views, Bishr's relationship with them was anything but
unambiguous. This is illustrated by a text influenced by his *Kufr al-mushabbiha*
or the *K. al-tawḥīd* also attributed to him:[60] Dārimī's *Radd ʿalā l-Marīsī al-ʿanīd*.[61]
The circumstances of the transmission are rather complex. When Dārimī (ca.
200/816–Dhū l-Ḥijja 280/Feb. 894) had published his *Radd ʿalā l-Jahmiyya*, an
unnamed 'opponent' (*muʿāriḍ*) had expressed objection to his attacks, which
seemed to him exaggerated as in his view Jahm b. Ṣafwān and Bishr al-Marīsī
merely represented one of the doctrinal divergences known well enough from
questions such as the definition of faith or of divine determination of fate.[62]
He was a 'Jahmite' himself, and had spoken to Bishr in person,[63] disagreeing
with him, however, in some nuances: he did not regard the Quran as 'made'
(*majʿūl*) as Bishr did, but rather as 'effected' (*mafʿūl*).[64] He did not refer only
to Bishr, either. Mid-text he had declared to be done with everything he had
heard from Bishr himself – which he seems to have reported faithfully up to
that point – and begun an account of the doctrine of Muḥammad b. Shujāʿ

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57    *Intiṣār* 68, 13. The jurist ʿĪsā b. Abān was the only one who debated with Bishr in writing
      (cf. Catalogue of Works, Refutation); he was a very powerful man (see p. 65 above).

58    Catalogue of Works no. 2.

59    ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *K. al-sunna* 31, 11ff.; Ibn Taymiyya, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīda al-
      Iṣfahāniyya* 57, –4ff. Slightly differently, and with reference to the *khalq al-Qurʾān* the
      story is found in Maqdisī, *Ikhtiṣāṣ al-Qurʾān*, ed. Arberry in: Isl. Quarterly 3/1956/26. 2ff/;
      more pointedly in Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ* 315 no. 501. Arberry dates the event around 184/800
      (p. 32f.).

60    Catalogue of Works no. 1.

61    The title is transmitted in different variants.

62    *Radd* 5, 3ff./361, 3ff. and earlier. Regarding Dārimī see vol. 11 641 above.

63    Text xx 8, a, and 21.

64    Text 20, a. The Quranic verses Bishr adduced in support of his theory (20, b) were the
      same Maʾmūm quoted in the missive with which he started the *miḥna* (Ṭabarī III 1118,
      11ff.).

al-Thaljī, who was nearly half a century younger (d. 266/880).[65] He did not spend much time on this, either, increasingly presenting his own opinion on the controversial issues. Dārimī described the version of the text he read as the most extensive collection of Jahmite arguments he had ever seen.[66]

Of course he only retained a few shreds; everything he quoted was merely an excuse for pages of polemic. One thing, however, becomes clear: his opponents, too, are traditionists. They do not ignore hadith, as Jahm and his pupils did; they do not reject it, as the Muʿtazila did. While occasionally prophetic dicta are declared to be false[67] – this being part of a *muḥaddith*'s job – on the whole they are simply reinterpreted[68] as their *isnād*s commanded too much authority by then. Bishr was said to have recommended this approach explicitly to his pupils.[69] The consequences were grotesque. Ibn al-Thaljī, for instance, tried to salvage the notorious hadith according to which God created his 'personality' (*nafs*) from the sweat of horses;[70] the Jahmite author who narrated this approvingly also considered two traditions to be genuine according to which God will appear to humans in paradise as a curly-haired youth, and creates the angels from the hairs on his arms and his chest.[71]

We are clearly in a transition period, as Ibn Qutayba already declared all these hadiths to be pure fiction,[72] while here they are accorded rather acrobatic exegesis. What is more, the argument Ibn Qutayba employed to make his decision easier, namely that the *zanādiqa* circulated these apocrypha, is shipwrecked in characteristic fashion. While the 'opponent' does adopt the idea as such – 12,000 hadiths are said to have been circulated in this way – Dārimī, contemporary of Ibn Qutayba as well, believes this to be a myth.[73] The Shīʿite Faḍl b. Shādhān, who died two decades before Dārimī, had no doubt that the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* were responsible for the traditions named.[74] On the other hand Ibn Qutayba's idea is also already found in Jāḥiẓ;[75] if Dārimī

65  *Radd* 76, –6ff./434, 11f.; regarding Ibn al-Thaljī see ch. C 6.3.2 below.

66  *Radd* 207, 7f./563, 4f. Cf. also, regarding this and the following, my earlier presentation in: Der Islam 44/1968/36ff., and Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 325ff.

67  Regarding Bishr al-Marīsī cf. Text 13, e–g; 14. For criticism of Abū Hurayra e.g. *Radd* 132ff./489ff.

68  Text 12–13, 15–16.

69  *Radd* 200, apu. ff./556, 7ff.; the report is made with polemic intent.

70  Ibid. 143, apu. ff./501, 6ff. and earlier 143, 2ff./500, 11ff.

71  Ibid. 163, 10ff./521, 1ff. and 140, 11ff./497, apu. ff.

72  See vol. 1 528 above.

73  *Radd* 137, 13ff./494, pu. ff., and 150, –6ff./508, 6ff.; also earlier 89, 1ff./446, –5ff.

74  *Īḍāḥ* 11, 1ff.

75  *Ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* in: *Rasāʾil* III 278, 3ff.

rejected him, it may well have been because he considered this to be an eva-
sive defence on his opponent's part. In fact, the 'opponent' was not quite sure
in some cases himself; apparently because *isnād* criticism had not yet evolved
very far, for his reluctance to rule out the possibility that these traditions might
be genuine was not due to the *tawātur* – after all, Ibn Qutayba would not really
have been able to overlook that – but because of the elegant *isnād*s and the
authority of the persons named in them.

Since Bishr al-Marīsī, these 'Jahmites' only shared Jahm b. Ṣafwān's inten-
tion, not his method. Nothing links them to Ḍirār b. 'Amr, whose influence I
once discerned here a long time ago.[76] We are looking at, as Baghdādī put it,
the 'Baghdad Murji'a'.[77] The fundamentally Murji'ite tendency is unmistake-
able. It is expressed in Marīsī's definition of faith as well as his conviction that
all Muslims will ultimately go to paradise.[78] Hence also the rejection of free
will; Marīsī is not a determinist like Jahm but more of a predestinarian.[79] He
had links to Kufa; it was said – not entirely correctly – that his ideas were ad-
opted from Sulaymān b. 'Amr al-Nakha'ī, a nephew of the Kufan *qāḍī* Sharīk b.
'Abdallāh al-Nakha'ī.[80] Maybe he studied there under Abū Yūsuf. This would
explain why he has things in common even with an anthropomorphist such as
Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[81]

The information we have about him in his capacity as a *muḥaddith* does
not quite correspond with these locations. Marīsī not only did away with
importunate traditions, but also circulated some himself. These were main-
ly in the Kufan and Iranian tradition: he transmitted from Abū Yūsuf[82] and
Muḥammad b. Ya'lā al-Sulamī, known as al-Zunbūr (d. 205/820–1), another of

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76   Der Islam 44/1968/34ff.

77   *Farq* 192, apu./204, ult.

78   Text xx 27 and 28. Among his writings the ones relevant in the present context are *K. al-
     irjā'* and presumably also *K. al-wa'īd* (Catalogue of Works no. 5–6).

79   Cf. Text 15, a, and commentary.

80   Regarding him see vol. 1 267 above; he was seen as a Qadarite, though. Cf. Der Islam
     44/1968/48, and Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 324f. and 348.

81   Such as the concept of the prophet's special status (Text IV 51; cf. vol. 1 441 above). Dārimī's
     mentioning Bishr al-Marīsī together with not only Ibn al-Thaljī but also the Kufan *qāḍī*
     Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Lu'lu'ī (d. 204/819; cf. Der Islam 44/1968/48) demonstrates once more
     that the 'Baghdad Murji'a' was strongly Ḥanafite. Kufan influence would also be the rea-
     son for Bishr's calling God 'light within light' (TB VII 58, 19), but the context of this report
     is more than suspicious.

82   Faḍl b. Shādhān, *Īḍāḥ* 309, 3ff.; in general also TB VII 56, 12f.

Abū Ḥanīfa's pupils.[83] Above all, however, he adopted the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition that was widely known in Kufa and Iran, not least through Kalbī's *Tafsīr*, as it provided him with the greatest number of dicta by the 'early fathers' with which to buttress his anti-anthropomorphic exegesis.[84] As we have seen, the Ibāḍites, too, had referred to it;[85] consequently it is not surprising that one of the few non-polemic extant hadith quotations resting on Bishr's authority is found in Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb's *Musnad*. Faḍl b. Shādhān, who provides further instances,[86] came from Qom, while the *isnād* of one Ibn ʿAbbās tradition leads to Marv.[87] We have already mentioned Bishr al-Marīsī's influence on Bishr b. Ghānim al-Khurāsānī.

The thrust of the arguments recorded by Dārimī is one familiar to us: *via re-motionis, laysa ka-mithlihī shayʾ*.[88] The subjects discussed, on the other hand, are partly new: never before had it been made so clear how Quran and hadith were treated in order to do justice to this ideal. The exegetic manoeuvrings we see here were probably discovered over several generations during the debates between Jahmites and anthropomorphists. In some places the development is still tangible. Abū Ḥanīfa is quoted as saying that in paradise humans will see God in the way he wants them to see him. The 'opponent' understands this as denying the *visio beatifica*, although he admits that he is not quite certain.[89] It was probably meant to refer to a kind of unearthly vision, using a sixth sense, as Ḍirār would have said, but that had long fallen into oblivion. God's *quidditas* is not mentioned any more, either;[90] only that God's signs would be seen.

'Jahmite' in the old sense is the statement that God cannot be comprehended using the five senses,[91] and the emphasis on his omnipresence.[92] The Jahmiyya had also realised that this delimitation would have to result in a rein-terpretation of the throne.[93] What is new, on the other hand, is the inclusion of exegetical instruments with a background in rhetoric. The opponent uses

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83 Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb, *Musnad* no. 844 (ed. Cairo 1349, III 23 = Damascus 1388, p. 222, apu. ff.). Regarding Muḥammad b. Yaʿlā cf. TB III 447f. no. 1578; *Mīzān* no. 8339 etc.
84 Text 5, also 2 and 17. Cf. vol. I 347 above.
85 See vol. II 238 above.
86 Besides the one noted in n. 82 above cf. also *Īḍāḥ* 312, 4ff., and 357, 4.
87 Text 2.
88 Text 6, b–c; 18.
89 Text 3, b–c and e.
90 See p. 49 and vol. I 242 above.
91 Text 2. Cf. vol. II 567 above.
92 Text 7 and 19.
93 Text 17. Cf. vol. II 564 above.

the term *ta'kīd* in order to do away with all-too-literal interpretation.[94] The phenomenon of transferred speech in particular has come to the fore: the names given to God are 'borrowed' (*musta'ār*), transferred from the human frame of reference. They do not reveal anything about God, rather as if one gave a name to a person one had not met before.[95] This category had a great future ahead of itself; Rummānī would later employ it in great detail.[96] But it is here that we find it for the first time. Even if Jahm b. Ṣafwān did use the opposites *ḥaqīqa–majāz*, he would have meant something different.[97]

The question is to what degree we may regard this as originating with Bishr al-Marīsī. The text leaves it open. Where the 'opponent' describes the names of God as 'borrowed', he 'interprets them like his master al-Marīsī'.[98] The theory of *ta'kīd* follows directly after an exegesis he heard from Bishr himself, and might thus either go back to Bishr as well, or be an addition by the 'opponent'.[99] Occasionally statements attributed to the 'opponent' at first are later declared by Bishr, one of them being the characteristic exegesis of the divine predicate *al-qayyūm* 'the steadfast one' as meaning someone who does not move, and consequently cannot descend to the lowest of the heavens in order to receive requests from humans.[100] It must, of course, be borne in mind that this issue was discussed during Bishr's lifetime; in ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir's circle in Nishapur the *ḥadīth al-nuzūl* was rejected vehemently.[101] The phrase *bil-majāz* 'in the figurative sense' – albeit not *istiʿāra* or *musta'ār* – was apparently used by Muʿammar and Thumāma already, too.[102] Furthermore, the first part of the book, as we have seen, was based on a *samāʿ* from Bishr. While Dārimī takes some time to get used to addressing him directly,[103] and of course it is only a rhetorical gesture, the 'opponent's' opinions are not discussed until later and go back once again to the throne, God's omnipresence, and the divine names.[104] In comparison, the first part seems arranged more clearly, discussing first the

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94    Text 8, b–c.

95    Text 1.

96    Cf. W. Heinrichs in: SI 59/1984/121.

97    See vol. II 559f. above.

98    Text 1, a. This formula also in Text 6, a.

99    Text 8, a–b.

100    Cf. Text 4, b, and 5, a; cf. Gimaret, *Noms divins* 189.

101    See vol. II 682 above.

102    See p. 77 and vol. II 560 above.

103    Text 5, 9, 11, 13–16.

104    *Radd* 78, 8ff./436, 5ff.; 95, 1ff./452, 16ff., and 106, 11ff./458, 5ff.; 193, −7ff./548, pu. ff.

relevant passages from the Quran, then those from hadith.[105] The question of whether God can be recognised and described is discussed before this.

The points in which Bishr differed from Jahm are not, of course, noted in this text, but elsewhere. Thus unlike Jahm Bishr believed in the interrogation in the grave; he was not a scripturalist. However, he arranged it according to his own system: it is part of the temporal punishment of hell every sinful Muslim must undergo and takes place 'between the two blasts of the last trumpet' before Muḥammad's followers enter into paradise.[106] In Iran a further tradition survived, namely that Bishr believed four of God's attributes to be eternal and uncreated: his knowledge, his omnipotence, his will, and his creative force. The information is probably reliable, coming from Ḥanafite–Māturīdite tradition.[107] This would confirm that besides the 'borrowed' names (*asmāʾ*) he also presumed *ṣifāt*, more precisely: attributes of essence. The selection is characteristic, emphasising aspects of predestination. Knowledge to him was knowledge of where humans will ultimately arrive.[108] Will was *mashīʾa* rather than *irāda* – or rather, the essence-related aspect of *irāda*, for like Ḥafṣ al-Fard (and in some way like Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir) Bishr divided divine will into an attribute of action and an attribute of essence.[109] His creative force applied to objects as well as human action. In the case of objects it took effect without the *fiat*, i.e. directly out of God's essence; this is another point in which he agrees with Ibn al-Muʿtamir.[110] When opponents – among them Abū l-Hudhayl[111] – adduced the phrase *an-naqūla lahū ʿkunʾ* from sura 16:40 as proof, he called it a pleonasm.[112] In the case of human action he interpreted the creative force as helping grace (*tawfīq*) or its withdrawal (*khidhlān*); consequently the capacity to

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105    Text 8–11 and 12–16.

106    Cf. Text XXI 166.

107    Text 24. Regarding attempts at limiting the attributes to a certain number see ch. D 1.3 (end) below.

108    Text 15, a. It is probably fiction when the *K. al-ḥayda* (52, 6) claims that he defined knowledge in Ḍirār's sense, as the negative of not-knowing. After all, this text also states that based on the relevant Quranic verses he recognised that God has a personality (*nafs*, cf. 70, pu. ff.; in contrast to Text 18, b).

109    Text XV 50. Bishr's considering divine knowledge to be partly created, partly uncreated, as claimed by a hostile source (Khallāl, *Musnad* 464, 4f.; cf. also 465, 8) is only inferred from his *khalq al-Qurʾān* (on the basis of Quran = *kalām Allāh* = *ʿilm Allāh*).

110    See p. 133 above.

111    See p. 302f. below.

112    Text 22; Bukhārī, *Khalq al-afʿāl* in: Nashshār-Ṭālibī, *ʿAqāʾid al-salaf* 125, 10ff. Regarding *kalām ṣila* = 'pleonasm' cf. Text XXV 90.

act is given from the outset with a predetermined course to good or evil.[113] As a consequence the duty to commit to abide by the law only emerges together with the revelation.

Text xv 38. Together with Text xv 50 this is the only indication of possible borrowings from Ḍirārite theology. From the Muʿtazilite point of view both these theologians shared the rejections of unconditional free will, but there is no proof anywhere that Bishr was a synergist like Ḍirār, or that he used the term *kasb*. The term *takhlīq*, which describes God's creative force in Text xx 24, cannot be used in support of such a theory either (in that God 'has man create'). It seems to occur in Iran only, especially in Māturīdite circles (cf. e.g. Gimaret, *Théories* 198 after Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 306, 3f.; also Kraus, *Jābir* II 98, n. 1 regarding Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd). Our oldest record for the time being is found in Bukhārī (*Khalq al-afʿāl* 210, ult.). It refers to the same thing as *khalq*; presumably *takhlīq* was coined simply in order to put an end to the vexed ambiguity of *khalq* (cf. vol. II 828f. above and p. 259 below). Apparently only the infinitive was used in the theological context, similar to *taqdīr = qadar*. This form does not occur in the Quran, where *kh–l–q* II is found only once, in sura 22:5 with the meaning of 'to do properly': *mukhallaq* = 'well-made'. Bishr al-Marīsī himself probably said *khalq*, like his contemporaries. Furthermore the idea that human action could be called 'creating' would have been foreign to him; this, however, would be the only context in which the interpretation of *takhlīq* suggested above would be feasible. Cf. the pair *takwīn* : *mukawwan*, which is also characteristic of Ḥanafite theology only (Gimaret, *Noms divins* 311).

We cannot say much about Bishr's political views. He refuted the Rāfiḍites' theory of the imamate,[114] but this probably only meant that he disagreed with reviling Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, or with describing the entire early community as corrupt. He had acquired sympathies for ʿAlī in Kufa; like Abū Ḥanīfa, he considered the fourth caliph to have been in the right in the battle of the camel.[115] His views on Ṣiffīn were probably similar; after all, he wrote against the Khārijites.[116] It seems doubtful whether it will still be possible to presume him

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113 Text 25; cf. also Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* III 54, 4. Bishr wrote a *K. al-istiṭāʿa* (Catalogue of Works no. 4).
114 Catalogue of Works no. 8.
115 Text XVII 59.
116 Catalogue of Works no. 7.

to have adhered to Aṣamm's political model, as we considered above; after all, Aṣamm was close to the Ibāḍites. Correspondences are probably limited to the juristic issues mentioned.

Here, too, it does not, as in Ibn ʿUlayya's case, apply to concrete *furūʿ*, but rather to the fundamentally rationalist stance and the rejection of unrestrained *ijtihād*.[117] In keeping with Aṣamm's maxim that there is only one valid proof of every fact[118] Marīsī appears to have rejected even the *istiḥsān* usually practised by Abū Ḥanīfa's pupils including Abū Yūsuf;[119] this was an exceptional case where Bishr agreed with Shāfiʿī.[120] He tautened the conclusion by analogy, requiring particular confirmation that the starting point on which the analogy was built actually contained a *ratio legis* and was not applicable only in isolated instances. This evidence is given if the *ʿilla* is expressed clearly in the Quran, or if it has been determined by consensus.[121] He rejected analogies without *ratio legis* as they had been frequently employed by the old schools of law *a fortiori*. And his rejection of *taqlīd* is a matter of course. However, he only reproached scholars when they admitted these; common people could not help themselves.[122]

One of Bishr's conclusions by analogy is found in Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna* ²I 477, 9ff. (with regard to sura 2:222 concerning menstruation). Regarding the *furūʿ* we can say that Bishr considered the casting of lots to be a game of chance and thus prohibited (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī* 175, 1); he was stricter than Ibn Ḥanbal in this respect (cf. Rosenthal, *Gambling* 34). Further information is expected to come from Qaffār al-Shāshī, *Ḥilyat al-ʿulamāʾ* (cf. III 89, 6f concerning *zakāt*); see also vol. II 473, n. 31 above. It is finally worth noting that he was believed to have transmitted Abū Yūsuf's *K. adab al-qāḍī*, the first of its kind (ḤKh 46, 10ff., where the name is corrupted to Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Marīsī; thus the person referred to might be Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī).

We hear little about Bishr's pupils. Four names were recorded: Shādh b. Yaḥyā, Muthannā al-Anmāṭī (regarding them see vol. II 495 above),

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117   Thus, too, in theology, in fact; cf. Text 6, b.

118   Text XIII 36, 37; cf. also Ghazzālī, *Mustaṣfā* II 106, 17, and 109, 1of., where Bishr is the only one linked to this doctrine.

119   MS Vatican, Arabo 1100, fol. 155b, 7f.; cf. also Shīrāzī, *Tabṣira* 492, 4ff., and *sharḥ al-Lumaʿ* 969, 5f..

120   Cf. EI² IV 255f. s. v. *Istiḥsān*.

121   Text XX 30–31.

122   Text 21.

Bishr b. Yaḥyā (a brother of the first-named? see vol. 11 625 above) and
ʿAlī al-Aḥwal (Dhahabī, *Ulūw* 188, 7ff.; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ijtimāʿ al-
juyūsh* 106, 11f.). They are difficult to grasp; particularly as we cannot be
certain whether they simply held the same beliefs as Bishr in the wider
sense, i.e. Jahmites.

### 2.4.2    *The Execution of Muḥammad b. al-Furāt*

While Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī does not appear as the driving force behind Bishr
b. al-Marīsī's trial, things were different in the case of an execution that took
place during this time. The victim was a Shīʿite who was in touch with ʿAlī al-
Riḍā and may have looked after his interests in Iraq:

>     Muḥammad b. al-Furāt b. Aḥnaf,

a member of the civil service (*kātib*), whose views took him far beyond the
boundaries of orthodoxy.[1] He may have used wine in a ritual, for when ʿAlī
al-Riḍā sent him a date and some wine he said this was so he should 'pray
over the wine' and then consider *nabīdh* to be prohibited.[2] This story was of
course invented by the Imāmites with the intention of presenting him as an
'extremist'. He had the reputation of calling himself the 'gateway' (*bāb*) to the
imam, and 'prophet';[3] but the two claims do not go well together. He appears
to have been an old man at the time of his execution as he transmitted from
Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Aṣbagh b. Nubāta,[4] and although it seems hardly
possible that he might still have met them,[5] he would at least have had to pos-
sess the considerable dignity needed to quote them. His father Abū Baḥr Furāt
b. al-Aḥnaf al-Hilālī had also been a member of the *ghulāt*, but he was living in
Kufa.[6] Presumably he also had a brother named ʿUmar b. Furāt who was a 'sec-
retary' in Baghdad as well, and one of the 'extremists'. At this point, however,
the tradition becomes confused. The Imāmites listed him, too, as a follower of

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1   Kashshī 303, 3, and 555, 8.

2   Ibid. 554 no. 1046.

3   Ibid. 555, 8f. The other traditions in Kashshī were also suggesting that the imam agreed with
    the execution (no. 1047–48; cf. Kohlberg in: JSAI 7/1986/165). In view of the political situation
    this does not seem probable.

4   Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt* 11 172f., where we also learn that he was the maternal uncle of a cer-
    tain Abū ʿAmmār al-Ṣayrafī, but the name does not tell me anything.

5   Regarding Aṣbagh b. Nubāta see vol. 1 337f. above.

6   Regarding him Fasawī 111 74, 7; *Mīzān* no. 6687.

'Alī al-Riḍā,[7] while the Nuṣayrians named him as the *bāb* of the tenth imam, 'Alī al-Naqī.[8] Maybe the two 'Alīs were mistaken for one another, or we are looking at a member of a younger generation; he could easily have bridged the time between 'Alī al-Riḍā's death in 203/818 and 'Alī al-Naqī's imamate (220/830–254/868).[9] They all appear to have been members of a family of important officials and even viziers.[10] It has not been possible to determine the exact connection.

Massignon insists that the records transmitted about Muḥammad b. al-Furāt should be attributed to 'Umar b. Furāt (*Opera minora* I 486; briefly also in *Passion* ²I 353 and 463/I 306 and 416). There is no reason for this assumption. He refers to the information in Astarābādī (*Manhaj al-maqāl* 314, 8ff., and 250, −4f.), which, however, is the same as in Kashshī. Later research followed him uncritically (thus Sourdel and Halm, loc. cit.).

### 2.4.3    *Ismāʿīl al-Jawzī*
A theologian from the extreme opposite side remains just as shadowy as these Shīʿites, although he appears to have been very influential in his time:

> Ismāʿīl b. Dāwūd al-Jawzī,

d. ca. 220/835. The only source that takes any notice of him is Pseudo-Nāshīʾ who calls him the 'imam of the Ḥashwiyya'. He was the spokesman of all those who only recognised the first three caliphs; he dismissed 'Alī because he brought civil war to the community.[1] This was something people liked to hear during the time of Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī; later, when Maʾmūn came to Baghdad, it was probably less expedient. Still, the 'Ḥashwiyya', too, changed its opinion under the influence of moderate Shīʿite traditionists;[2] Ibn Ḥanbal, whom the text names together with Ismāʿīl al-Jawzī, would later include 'Alī in the *khulafāʾ*

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7    Ardabīlī I 636 b; briefly mentioned also by Kashshī 461, 1f.
8    Halm in: Der Islam 58/1981/78 = *Gnosis* 302.
9    NB that in the case of 'Umar b. Furāt the grandfather's name is never added; furthermore *Furāt* is lacking the article.
10   Cf. Sourdel in: EI² III 767.

1    *Uṣūl al-niḥal* 66 § 113.
2    Regarding them see vol. I 270f. above.

*al-rāshidūn*,[3] leaving al-Jawzī entirely isolated. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī devoted a brief note to him which hints at just how much he had been forgotten.[4]

What little is transmitted there, however, is characteristic of al-Jawzī's position. He had rejected a hadith, according to which the prayer leader and the community should perform their prayer sitting down, quoting Mālik b. Anas' saying that if this were the case, the first three caliphs would have adhered to it as well. The three-caliphs argument was customary in Medina; it idealised the early community only for the time it had been governed from there. This was not tenable in Iraq for long, but it seems that al-Jawzī's demeanour made him enemies as well. As Pseudo-Nāshiʾ tells us, he was a *mutakallim*. He also passed the challenge of 218, but with the wrong result; he was one of the representatives of orthodox Islam who were sent to Maʾmūn in Raqqa in 218 and professed the *khalq al-Qurʾān* there.

Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, *Miḥnat Ibn Ḥanbal* 35, 5 (where *Jawrī* should read *Jawzī*). In the parallel report by Ṭabarī (III 1116, 15f.) the *nisba* is missing. The complete name, once again misspelt, is also found in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 386, 5. For general information cf. Madelung in: Der Islam 57/1980/223f. – Alternatively he might have been the same as that Ismāʿīl b. Dāwūd whom Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 87, 11ff./47, 7ff., has conversing with Maʾmūn. In that case he would have been the father of the three poets Ḥamdūn, Dāwūd, and Ibrāhīm who were court officials until al-Mutawakkil's caliphate, temporarily even in high positions (cf. GAS 2/612) His grandson Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl b. Dāwūd, who is the person reporting about him in the passage named, was a *kātib* himself and cited as an authority by both Ṭayfūr (87, 5ff./47, 3ff.) and Ṭabarī (III 597, 13ff., and 688, 16ff.) in other contexts as well. He does, however, have a double named Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl b. Dāwūd b. Muʿāwiya b. Bakr (named as a *rāwī* by Ṭabarī III 439, 16f.), who was probably no connection to our Ismāʿīl b. Dāwūd.

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3   See p. 489 below, and Madelung in: Der Islam 57/1980/223. Hadiths praising all four 'righteous' caliphs may be found in Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 384, pu. ff.

4   TB VI 247 no. 3283.

## 2.5       Ma'mūn's Return to Baghdad

### 2.5.1    *Faḍl b. Sahl's Murder. Muways b. ʿImrān*

The anti-caliphate encouraged Ma'mūn to forge even closer ties with ʿAlī al-
Riḍā. He gave his daughter Umm Ḥabīb in marriage to the imam, and mar-
ried the imam's young son Muḥammad to another of his daughters, who was
probably still young as well.[1] At the same time he decided to return to Iraq
in order to get the situation under control. In a particularly gracious letter he
persuaded his vizier Faḍl b. Sahl, who had thought about retiring, to remain in
office; the letter was published in Ṣafar 202/August–September 817 and read
out in every pulpit.[2] Retirement plans were expressed in religious terms in
those days: Faḍl had thought about 'retiring from the world'. What he meant
was probably that he found his master's politics rather too risky, in particu-
lar as in Iraq people believed him to be the one responsible, as they thought
the Persian party was active in Marv.[3] Faḍl b. Sahl and his brother Ḥasan
had grown up Zoroastrians. He had converted only in 190, and it was said that
when he suffered from wound-fever after his circumcision, he spoke Persian
with the physician. When the latter asked him about the Quran he was read-
ing, Faḍl compared the holy book with *Kalīla wa-Dimna* of all things, which
was not exactly conducive to raising his prestige with an Arab audience.[4] His
brother Ḥasan, as much hated in Iraq as Faḍl himself, was known as *majūsī
ibn al-majūsī*.[5] Faḍl's misgivings were soon confirmed. He was murdered in
Sarakhs, where he and the caliph had stopped on the way to Baghdad, on 2
Shaʿbān 202/12 Feb. 817.[6] Among those whom Ma'mūn had executed for con-
spiracy there was one theologian:

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1   Ṭabarī III 1029, 9f. s. a. 202. The confusing kinship ties resulting from these unions would be
    easier to comprehend for someone accustomed to polygamy than for us. Regarding the dif-
    ficulties of the date cf. Sourdel in: REI 30/1962/38 and 42.

2   Translated, with comments, by Madelung in: Festschrift ʿAbbās 334ff. I am essentially adopt-
    ing the conclusions Madelung arrived at with the help of this document he brought to light.

3   Ibid. 344.

4   Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'* 140, 8ff.; cf. Fück, *Arabiya* 47. Furthermore the physician, Jibrīl b.
    Bakhtīshūʿ, was a Christian. Cf. also *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* II 163, 7f.

5   Ṭabarī 1006, 2. Faḍl, too, had been reviled as a 'Zoroastrian' by Harthama b. Aʿyān. He had him
    executed in 200/816 (EI² III 231b).

6   Regarding Faḍl b. Sahl cf. also Scarcia-Amoretti in: Quaderni di Studi Arabi 5–6/1987–8/699ff.

Abū ʿImrān Muways b. ʿImrān b. Jāmiʿ b. Yasār al-Baṣrī.

He had not actually had a hand in the murder. Faḍl b. Sahl had been killed in the bath by four members of the caliph's personal bodyguard, one black man, one Greek, one Daylamite and one Slav; members of different units had probably been selected in order to spread responsibility evenly. More important, however, were the masterminds one of whom was, at least according to the caliph, Muways b. ʿImrān.[7] We will never find out whether this was actually true; it is not important for our study. Maybe he had previously been disciplined by Faḍl b. Sahl; the vizier had had some people punished and imprisoned who had conspired against him.[8] What is certain is that he was not involved in the conspiracy for theological reasons but as a courtier, and maybe also as representative of the Iraqi party. He came from Basra and appears to have been a merchant.[9] The sobriquet *al-khādim*, which a later source[10] bestows on him, is either a mistake[11] or simply meant to point out that he was among the caliph's closer associates.

His name was Mūsā, Muways being the diminutive form. He was a *mawlā*, but from an old-established family. His maternal grandfather, a certain Ziyād, had been given an estate in the delta between Euphrates and Tigris in fief, named Ziyādān after him. Through a sister of his mother's he was related to the Basran grammarian ʿĪsā b. ʿUmar al-Thaqafī (d. 149/766), teacher of Khalīl and of Sībawayh.[12] In his home city he had led the life of an important man who set great store by the friendship of intellectuals and therefore entertained them and supported them financially. Abū Nuwās and his colleagues Muḥammad b. Yasīr al-Riyāsī and Ḥusayn b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Bāhilī profited from his generosity,

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7    I have presented some speculation on the motives of the conspiracy in my article in: *Recherches d'Islamologie. Recueil Anawati-Gardet* 337ff., esp. 352ff. There I also collected the biographical material on which I am drawing here. I shall only provide references where I diverge from what was said in that article.

8    Ṭabarī III 1027, 2ff.

9    Ibn Ḥabīb mentions him as Muways al-Tājir (*Muḥabbar* 493, ult.). However, his name is often given incorrectly there, as indeed elsewhere, as *Muʾnis*. In the same place we also learn that the heads of the executed conspirators were sent to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, the brother of the murdered vizier and future father-in-law of the caliph.

10   Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* XV 129, 11.

11   Mistaking him for Muʾnis al-Khādim, who played a part at court in Mutawakkil's time (Ṭabarī III 1459, 13ff.). The name is misspelt *Muʾnis* in this passage in Ṭabarī as well. Regarding *khādim* 'eunuch' cf. Ayalon in: Arabica 32/1985/289ff.

12   See also vol. II 100 above. If this was the case Muways would have been an older man at the time of his execution.

probably flattering him when it came to his own poems, although posterity
was less impressed. He was not fond of Sufis, saying that with their *waraʿ* they
asked too much of God.[13] Jāḥiẓ mentions him frequently in his works; as a
starving student he had been invited to a meal by Muways, too. It is interesting
that Muways was in touch with Faḍl al-Rabīʿ who had incited Amīn against his
brother, which might explain his strained relationship with Maʾmūn. In that
case, of course, it would really be interesting to discover what made him move
so close to the latter, but that is precisely what we do not know.[14]

He was commonly regarded as a Muʿtazilite. It is true that he was on good
terms with Abū l-Hudhayl and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir, and we do not hear of any
criticism they might have voiced concerning him. However, his background
was probably in the Basran Murjiʾa. He followed the neo-Ghaylānite doctrine
that God is ultimately free to decide whether to punish a sinner or not, but
that once he has made a decision in the case of the first sinner, he would then
have to be consistent as he is just.[15] He clearly was no predestinarian, which
distinguished him from Bishr al-Marīsī, to whom he was probably not close
in any case. Like the Muʿtazilites he assumed that humans are possessed of
the capacity to act even before they perform an action,[16] a qualification not
even Abū Shamir had allowed. He did not, however, believe in the *manzila
bayna l-manzilatayn*;[17] humans are acting freely when they sin but remain be-
lievers, and in the end – maybe even immediately – God will receive him into
paradise.[18] Shahrastānī thought that this was a reflection of Abū Thawbān's
influence,[19] but this is speculation and really rather improbable as Abū
Thawbān is never mentioned together with Muways elsewhere.[20] Shahrastānī's
claim that Muways became Naẓẓām's follower[21] is probably just as unreliable
as Muways was considerably the older. What does sound convincing is that the

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13    Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 43, 4ff.

14    He remained in Basra after Amīn's death (cf. Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* II 159, 8 and earlier). Could it
      be that he fled when Mūsā al-Kāẓim's son Zayd took the city and set fire to the houses of
      the Abbasids?

15    Cf. Text II 34, d, and II 14 and 18; also vol. II 197 and 202 above.

16    Text II 35.

17    *Intiṣār* 93, 5ff.

18    Text II 34, a–b.

19    *Milal* 105, ult./267, 2. Regarding Abū Thawbān see vol. II 823f. above.

20    Cf. Text II 34, a, and 35, which list a number of names.

21    *Milal* 18, 14/30, 13, and 41, –4f./86, 9f.

*qāḍī* Muʿādh b. Muʿādh tried to forbid him to enter the mosque, the *qāḍī* being an anthropomorphist.[22]

Muways was a jurist, too. He certainly studied questions of principe. The Muʿtazilites would have asked him again and again how his Murjiʾte principles were compatible with the 'threatening verses' in the Quran. He was probably not the first to point out that these verses were not necessarily addressed to all Muslims; people had already deliberated for a considerable time about how one could see from a Quranic verse whether its intent was generic (*ʿāmm*) or specific (*khāṣṣ*).[23] However, no-one before him had denied so firmly that it was possible to reach certainty at all in this matter. In principle, he said, it would be possible in the case of every verse that God intended it to be specific, or at least not entirely generic; no extra indication was needed here.[24] What he was trying to say was presumably that all verses that are not marked by a quantifier such as *kull* to show that they are universally applicable may be regarded as specific in the first instance without requiring a quantifier (e.g. *baʿḍ*).[25] Simple plural (such as *fujjār*) or generalising relative pronouns like *man*, which were usually the focus of discussion,[26] do not seem to have satisfied him. This left room for interpretation, as direct quantifiers were extremely rare in Quranic language. As a consequence the theologians were not able to claim quite so confidently to know God's intentions; and as a Murjiʾte, God's freedom in this context was his greatest concern.

Of course he created a greater degree of legal uncertainty, which he tried to keep in check by allowing greater scope to those who interpret the law. To begin with, these were the prophets; he proved his theory using them as example. Jacob had forbidden the Israelites to consume the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip pocket, although God had permitted them all foodstuffs. Muḥammad had excluded certain possessions from the poor rate or, having conquered Mecca and declared the city to be a holy district, still permitted a certain kind of rushes to be harvested as it was indispensable for building houses and as fuel.[27] The latter concession had been made after ʿAbbās raised

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22   Wakīʿ II 153, 6ff.; regarding him vol. II 432f. above. The story has clearly been edited later, as it bases a play on words on the incorrect reading *Muʾnis* (instead of *Muways*).

23   See vol. II 317f. concerning Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ.

24   Text II 36.

25   The opposing standpoint was occupied by Shāfiʿī's pupil al-Muzanī: until the opposite can be proven, everything must be interpreted as being universally applicable (cf. *K. al-amr wal-nahy*, ed. Brunschvig in: BEO 11/1945–46/145ff.).

26   Cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 493f. and 522ff.

27   Text II 39.

an objection. This made it clear to Muways that while the prophet followed God's command in general in his decrees, he made an ad-hoc decision in this particular case. He had permission to do so, as God knew in advance that his prophet's decisions would always be right. This did not apply only to him, but in fact to all experts in the law. It is important to listen carefully: Muways does not say that God knew **how** they would decide – that would have been too predestinarian – and he did not presume that they would adhere to specific rational criteria; rather, they would act out of their own complete authority as protected by God.[28]

This was the point at which the Mu'tazila's criticism would later take hold: how could one know whether the person in question made the right decision or the wrong one?[29] And if this was true of a scholar, why not of a layman; after all, God could just as well put his trust in the latter?[30] Once polemic had taken this turn – and we only know of this theory from the polemic reflection – we are unable to determine to which group of people Muways was referring. There was something to be said for his theory insofar as it concerned the prophet; the existence of the *sunna* proves that when passing laws the prophet had gone beyond God's commandments. Stated thus precisely and with delimitations the doctrine was even supported by Jubbā'ī for a time; Shāfi'ī, too, did not reject it outright. People added to the proof provided by Muways;[31] but the same sources also emphasise that, unlike Jubbā'ī, he had not thought of the prophet only.[32]

Still, when we read that the expert (*al-ʿālim*) may decide as he thinks best (*ʿalā mā yaqaʿu fī khāṭirihī*)[33] we begin to feel doubt. It sounds as if Muways had extended ʿAnbārī's maxim of *kullu mujtahid muṣīb*,[34] but did he really believe that God knew in advance of any random *mujtahid* that he would take the correct decision? Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār tells us that Jāḥiẓ spoke of the theory, possibly in his *K. al-futyā*.[35] This book has been lost with the exception of its foreword, and we might feel disappointed, as Jāḥiẓ is not the most precise of authors on subjects such as this.[36] It seems likely that Muways thought of the

28    Text II 37–38. Cf. *Mughnī* XVII 305, 11f.

29    *Mughnī* XII 238, –4ff., and 239, 7ff.

30    Ibid. XVII 123, 17ff.

31    Abū Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 889, ult. ff., and 894, 8ff.

32    Cf. also ibid. 710, 6ff.; *Mughnī* XVII 230, 14f.; Ḥākim al-Jushamī in: *Faḍl* 279, n. 526.

33    Thus according to Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (*Mughnī* XVII 372, 2f.).

34    This is hinted at in this context in Abū Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī 898, 11ff.; cf. vol. II 185ff. above.

35    *Faḍl* 279, 10.

36    Jāḥiẓ also composed a *Risāla ilā Muways b. ʿImrān*, about which we do not know much, either (cf. Pellat in: Arabica 31/1984/150 no. 157).

ṣaḥāba as well as of the prophet; they were known to have followed their *ra'y*, but could hardly be in the wrong.[37] However, we are tempted to assume that he went beyond them, including the caliphs as well – especially Ma'mūn, who took his role as spiritual leader of the *umma* very seriously indeed. Ma'mūn would have been the ideal 'expert' who 'acts as he thinks best and as he decides, insofar as God has made him infallible and a law-maker (*ja'alahū ma'ṣūman mūjiban)'.*[38] The *'iṣma* of the prince chosen by God was highly regarded at the time; in the case of the heir to the throne it was doubled by the imam's *'iṣma*. This explains why the term *maṣlaḥa* is also sometimes employed;[39] it, too, suits a ruler perfectly. The abovementioned arguments to the contrary would have come to nothing. Laypeople have no place in this model, and neither do the *'ulamā'* and normal *mujtahidūn*. Muways shows himself to be an expert in constitutional law; he was probably never one of the *fuqahā'* in the traditional sense. This may be how he came to be at court. His becoming involved in a conspiracy against the powerful vizier is a different story.

### 2.5.2 *The Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā*

The vizier's murder was not the only reason why the journey from Marv to Baghdad took a long time. During one of the next stages, ʿAlī al-Riḍā died in early 203/autumn 818 in Ṭūs.[1] The caliph had him buried next to the grave of his father Hārūn al-Rashīd.[2] His politics found itself in a deep crisis, but on the other hand he now had the opportunity to engage in talks with the Iraqi

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37     They play a part in the arguments listed by Abū Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (898, 6ff.).

38     Thus the abovementioned passage *Mughnī* XVII 372, 2f. in its entirety.

39     Thus al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Dharīʿa* 91, 6ff.; also *Mughnī* XII 123, 13.

1     The date is not quite certain (cf. Madelung in: EIran I 879a). Coins in his name were struck as late as 204 (Miles, *Numismatic History of Rayy* 105ff.). For elegies on ʿAlī al-Riḍā cf. *Biḥār* XLIX 314ff.

2     For more detailed information on the tomb cf. EIran II 826ff. – ʿAlī al-Riḍā's uncle Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, whom Ma'mūn had had brought to Khorasan, was another victim of the journey (see p. 162, n. 12 above). Ma'mūn himself said the prayer of the dead over him (Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 105, –5f.). It remains to be researched where exactly he died. According to one tradition his grave is in Bisṭām between Nishapur and Dāmghān, where to this day there is an Imāmzāde Muḥammad beside the grave of Bāyāzid Bisṭāmī. Öljeitü is said to have erected the *qubba* above it (*Biḥār* XLVIII 300, 13ff.; cf. EI² I 1247 s. v. Bisṭām, and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥla* III 82, 7). It was not until the Safavid era that Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar's tomb overtook Bisṭāmī's in importance (cf. Adle in: JA 275/1987/413). Previously his memory was revered in the red tomb (*gūr-e surkh*) in the city of Gurgān, which was destroyed by the Mongols after 620/1223 (cf. Muḥallī in Madelung, *Arabic Texts* 321, 6ff.; cf. EI² II 1141b).

Abbasids once more. He took up a correspondence the final letter of which – assuming the document is genuine – is extant. Ma'mūn replied to a rude letter from the Iraqis with admonitions leaving no doubt that he had no intention of returning to the old political doctrine as proclaimed by al-Mahdī.[3] He adhered to this until his death; in 211/826 or 212/827 he officially proclaimed 'Alī's precedence over all the companions of the prophet, i.e. even 'Abbās; only Yaḥyā b. Aktham's influence prevented him from having Mu'āwiya condemned in all pulpits at the same time. 'Abd al-Malik's name was erased from the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock at that time.[4] In his will he recommended favouring 'Alī's descendants 'for their rights are binding in several ways'.[5] The only thing he did not insist on for long were the green garments everyone had been required to wear during his entrance into the capital.[6]

He then tried to win over 'Abdallāh b. Mūsā, a nephew of al-Nafs al-zakiyya with whom Sahl b. Salāma had negotiated previously, to become his successor.[6a] However, 'Abdallāh found the political experiences of his relatives more than enough for him and evaded the offer, going into hiding for decades, until the death of al-Mutawakkil.[7] This does not necessarily say that he was without political ambitions. We are told of canvassers representing his claim, all of whom preached the *khalq al-Qurʾān*:[8] the Shī'a was once again looking for a figurehead. 'Alī al-Riḍā's son, who would continue the succession of imams in the later understanding, was not yet eight years old when his father died. Furthermore he had stayed with his mother in the Hijaz, with the result that his father had not been able to impart any of his knowledge into the boy's budding mind.[9] Some diehards cited the case of Jesus who, according to sura 19:30, had already spoken while in the cradle, or John the Baptist who had been gifted with discretion (*ḥukm*) even as a boy (sura 19:12); as they were living in Iraq, this was pure theology not in need of proof.[10] Others looked to Aḥmad b. Mūsā, 'Alī al-Riḍā's brother, who had gone to Marv with him and was by now

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3     Cf. Madelung's translation in: Festschrift 'Abbās 340ff., esp. 341.

4     Regarding this and further detail cf. Sourdel in: REI 30/1962/39ff.

5     Ṭabarī III 1139, 12ff.

6     Ṭayfūr 3, 3ff./2, 5ff. A Kufan Zaydite named 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abān al-Umawī (d. 207/822) had spread a tradition from 'Alī in support of this only a short time earlier: 'The seventh Abbasid will wear green' (*Mīzān* no. 5082).

6a    See p. 187 above.

7     Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 628, –6ff., and 632, 2.

8     Ibn al-Wazīr, *Tarjīḥ asālīb al-Qurʾān* 28, 3ff. One of them adopted the system of the Zaydite theologian Sulaymān b. Jarīr (see vol. II 547f. above).

9     Nawbakhtī 74, ult. ff. > Qummī 97, 3ff.

10    Ibid. 76, 8ff. > Qummī 98, –5ff.; cf. vol. I 322 and 457 above.

living as a hermit in Shiraz; they claimed that Mūsā al-Kāẓim had named both brothers as his successors.[11] The surviving one, however, left barely any traces, not least because he had no male descendants.[12] Most people were resigned, considering the experiment with the eighth imam to have failed.[13] After all, all those who had followed al-Ma'mūn's politics only had never really been Imāmites anyway.[14]

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11      Ibid. 72, 11ff. > Qummī 93, apu. ff.

12      Ibn 'Inaba, *'Umdat al-ṭālib* 197, 2f.; regarding Shiraz local tradition cf. *Biḥār* XLVIII 308, 10ff.

13      Nawbakhtī 72, 14ff. > Qummī 94, 1ff.; they were said to have retracted their recognition of al-Riḍā.

14      Nawbakhtī mentions certain Murji'ites and Zaydites who 'dropped away' around this time (72, ult. ff. > Qummī 94, 4ff.). They were probably from Kufa, where Ma'mūn had appointed one of 'Alī al-Riḍā's brothers governor, and where the population had been divided from the first concerning his politics (Ṭabarī III 1020, 2ff./transl. Bosworth 71f.).

# Al-Maʾmūn in Baghdad. The Flowering of Muʿtazilite Theology

In a certain sense the caliph himself remained one of the most faithful followers of his original plan; in 215/830, when Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, called Muḥammad al-Jawād, was twenty lunar years old, Maʾmūn ensured that the marriage, which had until then only existed on paper, was solemnly consummated.[1] However, he had no intention of becoming drawn into the petty quarrels of Iraqi Shīʿites. Occasionally, in conversation with his scholars, he would defend the *manāqib ʿAlī* in the same way as in his letter to the Abbasids, and for which Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir had laid the foundation.[2] His intellectual interests, however, went far beyond this. In Marv, influenced by the Iranian environment – and, it was said, by Faḍl b. Sahl – he had already developed an interest in astrology and the ancient sciences; in Iraq theology and jurisprudence demanded their due.[3] Every Tuesday the caliph was said to have held a debate and dinner.[4] We do not know whether the theologians were invited from the beginning; one source says he only invited them into his inner circle in 209.[5] He appears to have selected twenty scholars in all whom he called his 'brothers' (*ikhwa*).[6] During the debates he made sure everyone adhered to the rules of the game: anyone who was abusive would be excluded from then on.[7] The age of the Barmakids appeared to have returned.

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1  Ṭabarī III 1102, ult. ff. Muḥammad later returned to Medina where he remained until al-Muʿtaṣim allowed him to come back to Baghdad early in 220/835. He died in the capital early in Dhū l-Ḥijja of the same year/late Nov. 835 (Nawbakhtī 76, 14ff.; *Biḥār* L 89 no. 4). Some Shīʿites claim his wife poisoned him (*Biḥār* L 10 no. 9, and 17, 1ff.). For general information on him cf. Madelung in EI² VII 396f.

2  A good, albeit possibly apocryphal, instance is the text *ʿIqd* V 92, 3ff. Cf. *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 340f., and p. 140 above.

3  Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VIII 300, 7ff./V 214 § 3453 after the verdict of the historian Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Khurāsānī (d. after 332/943; regarding him cf. Rosenthal, *Historiography* 52f.). Concerning the significance of the libraries of Marv for Iranian tradition see p. 109 above.

4  *Murūj* VII 38, pu. f./IV 314 § 2726. According to *K. al-Ḥayda*, on the other hand, it was Fridays.

5  Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 187, 12f.

6  Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* VII 76, 9f., where we learn that the jurist Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī was among them (see p. 258 below). Bishr al-Marīsī, Thumāma and Ibn Abī Duwād, too, were probably among them from an early date (see p. 175 and 194 above). Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ still used the term *ṣaḥāba* rather than *ikhwa*. According to Ṭayfūr's account cited on p. 194, n. 51, they were joined by a certain Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Anmāṭī.

7  Ṭayfūr 28, 8ff./15, –4ff. > Ṭabarī III 1039, pu. ff. after an account by Bishr al-Marīsī.

### 3.1 Ma'mūn's Intellectual Profile. Intellectual Life at Court in Baghdad

Only around half the members of the round table were theologians and jurists.[1] They were joined by grammarians, among them two sons of Yaḥyā b. al-Mubārak al-Yazīdī,[2] a Mu'tazilite[3] whom Hārūn al-Rashīd had appointed to teach the young Ma'mūn, and who had died at his court in Marv.[4] We do not know whether anyone else was invited. Of course, the legacy of Antiquity was well-established in Iraq. The *bayt al-ḥikma*, where Greek texts were translated into Arabic, had already existed in Hārūn's day;[5] some of the staff were still the same.[6] The earlier of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf b. Maṭar's two translations of Euclid was called 'the Hārūnite one', and the later one 'Ma'mūnite'.[7] Ma'mūn was not, however, subject to the same religious scruples that had troubled his father at the end of his life. A dream confirmed to him that revering Aristotle and everything for which this name stood was not in conflict with the revelation.[8] Kindī dedicated a treatise on 'cause and effect', i.e. a subject that had also occupied Mu'ammar or Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, to him.[9] He sent a delegation of scholars to Byzantium in order to acquire manuscripts.[10]

Of course he was not motivated by purely academic endeavour. Medicine and science were at least as important to him as philosophy, but he sponsored these applied disciplines far beyond simple expediency. He equipped expeditions to determine the position of a degree of latitude in the Syrian desert

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1    See p. 194 above.

2    Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt* IV 31, 4f.

3    Thus according to Qifṭī 30, 3; Ibn al-Anbārī believed only Mu'tazilites saw him as one of their own (*Nuzha* 84, apu.). As he came from Basra he might just as well have been a Murji'ite; after all, he had been Abū 'Amr Ibn al-'Alā's pupil (Qifṭī 25, 3; cf. vol. II 426 above). One of his sons, however, preferred Murdār over Bishr al-Marīsī (see p. 150 above).

4    Qifṭī 27, 2, and 28, 4. Regarding him also GAS 9/63f., and p. 149 above.

5    Cf. Endreß in GAP II 423. The Persians had already called their libraries 'house of wisdom' (thus Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī in Schoeler, *Katalog arab. Handschriften* II 308). Regarding Mu'āwiya's time see p. 169f. above. Concerning translations from Hārūn's caliphate cf. Ṣ. A. al-'Alī in: MMʿIʿI 37/1986/34f.

6    Thus the copyist 'Allān al-Shu'ūbī who also made a name for himself as a poet and genealogist (regarding him cf. GAS 1/271, and JSS 14/1969/49f.; regarding his text on the *mathālib al-'Arab* see Leder, *Das Korpus al-Haiṯam b. 'Adī* 225ff.).

7    Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 325, 11f. Regarding the history of the Arabic Euclid text cf. GAS 5/83ff.; concerning its influence on the Latin tradition see Busard in the introduction to his edition of Adelard of Bath's translation of Euclid, p. 2f. and 18f. Regarding the translators' pay cf. Ashtor, *Prix et salaires* 69.

8    Ibn al-Nadīm 303, –4ff.; also Köbert in: Orientalia 43/1944/414ff.

9    McCarthy, *Al-taṣānīf al-mansūba ilā faylasūf al-'Arab* 44 no. 260.

10   Ibn al-Nadīm 304, 3ff.

between Palmyra and Raqqa, in Iraq between Kufa and Baghdad, and finally in the Sinjār plain, in order to allow a recalculation of the earth's circumference.[11] A map of the world commissioned by him is mentioned a number of times.[12] Besides the *bayt al-ḥikma* – and apparently independent of it – there was an observatory in the Shammāsiyya quarter, led by Abū Yaḥyā b. Abī Manṣūr, a member of the well-known Munajjim family.[13] Together with numerous other astronomers he produced a catalogue of star positions, a so-called *zīj* that would become known as *zīj al-Maʾmūnī al-mumtaḥan* (Lat. *Tabulae Probatae*).[14] The historian Ṭayfūr reports how the caliph proved the substantiality of air by closing the end of a glass tube with his finger and then holding the open end of the tube under water.[15] He also attached great importance to logic, as Ibn Bahrīz, the Nestorian bishop of Ḥarrān and later metropolitan of Mosul, stressed in his foreword to the *Ḥudūd al-manṭiq* he composed at al-Maʾmūn's orders.[16]

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11    Concerning this and further details Nallino, *Raccolta* V 52f.; Honigmann, *Die sieben Klimata und die* πόλεις ἐπίσημοι (Heidelberg 1929), p. 122ff.; E. S. Kennedy, *A Commentary on Bīrūnī's Kitāb Taḥdīd al-amākin* 131ff. (on *Taḥdīd* 213, 12ff.; transl. Strohmaier, *Al-Bīrūnī. In den Gärten der Wissenschaft* 93ff.); H. Prell, *Die Vorstellungen des Altertums von der Erdumfangslänge*, in: Abh. Sächs. Ak. Wiss., Math.-Nat. Kl. 46/1959, issue 1, p. 45 and 56f.; Endreß in GAP II 434f.; Samsó in EI² VI 599f. s. v. *Marṣad*; GAS 6/20. The calculated value was still known to Columbus via the Spaniard Farghānī (cf. Vernet, *Cultura hispanoárabe* 19).

12    It is the basis of the *K. al-Jaʿrāfiyya* edited by M. Hadj-Sadok in: BEO 21/1968/7ff. Cf. also Y. Kamal, *Monumenta cartographica Africae et Agypti* III 63, and Sezgin, *The Contribution of the Arabic–Islamic Geographers to the formation of the world map*; together with Najafi in: Spektrum Iran 2/1989, issue 2/20ff.

13    EI² I 1141 s. v. *Bayt al-ḥikma*; in detail cf. Sayılı, *Observatory in Islam* 50ff. Regarding the Banū l-Munajjim cf. Fleischhammer in: Wiss. Zs. Univ. Halle, Ges.-SPrachwiss. 12/1963/215ff., and in EI² VII 558ff.; Nwiya in: PO 40/1979–81/538ff.; also Pingree in: EIran III 716.

14    Extant, with later insertions, in the MS Escorial 927, and recently edited in facsimile (Publ. of the Institute for the History of Arabic–Islamic Science, Ser. C, vol. 28; Frankfurt/ M. 1986); cf. GAS 6/136f., and 7/116.

15    *K. Baghdād* 174, 6ff./95, 5ff.; cf. also Text XXII 91. A similar experiment was already described by Jacob of Edessa (*Hexaemeron* 88a, 8ff./transl. 71). Abū l-Hudhayl denied the substantiality of air (cf. Text XXI 33).

16    P. 100, 16ff. DĀNIŠPAŽŪH, where the caliph is not mentioned. For biographical information cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 26, 8ff.; Kraus in: RSO 14/1934/3, n. 4; GCAL II 119f. The name *Bahrīz* is derived from MIr. *wahrīch* 'possessed of bounty' (Justi, *Namenbuch* 340). – Regarding the adoption of Antiquity under Maʾmūn see the summary by Endreß in: Festschrift Falaturi 153f. with further material, and M. Salama-Carr, *La traduction à l'époque Abbaside* (Paris 1990).

It was unusual that the caliph himself wrote 'books'; Ibn al-Nadīm mentions three titles.[17] These were not, however, the writings of a scholar. One is an official missive the style of which he influenced, addressed to the prince of the Volga Bulgars (Burghar) who did not yet profess Islam at the time;[18] a second one, a *K. aʿlām al-rasūl* or, as the *Fihrist* calls it, *Risāla fī aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, was still preserved in the library of a *ribāṭ* in the eastern quarter of Baghdad at the time of the Mongol invasion in a precious copy dating from Shawwāl of the year 251 and apparently written on parchment.[19] The subject matter is typical, recalling the letter written by Muḥammad b. al-Layth to Constantine VI on Hārūn's orders.[20] The official missive probably dealt with a similar topic. The third text, finally, discussed the 'glorious deeds (*manāqib*) of the caliphs after the prophet's death'. When al-Maʾmūn was shown relics of the prophet, he bought them for the state treasury.[21]

Ibn al-Murtaḍā's reference to treatises al-Maʾmūn apparently composed against Manichaeans, Jews and Christians,[22] on the other hand, is probably a myth. It overextends the image of the spearhead of Islam;[23] it actually appears that the caliph refrained from expressing polemic against and putting

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17    *Fihrist* 129, –5f.

18    It was said to have been more than a hundred pages long. In another place (209, 12f.) Ibn al-Nadīm stressed that the caliph composed it independently. Regarding the Burghar cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s. v.; also Shboul, *Masʿūdī* 189, and EI² I 1304ff.

19    Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Ṭarāʾif fī maʿrifat madhāhib al-ṭawāʾif* (Qom 1400), p. 424, 1ff.; in more detail Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work* 106. The library of the *ribāṭ* had been endowed by al-Nāṣir towards the end of the sixth/twelfth century; the copy probably came from the book collections of the Abbasid court.

20    See p. 26f. above.

21    Ṭayfūr 76, 3ff./40, 15ff. – Worth mentioning, too, is a poem he was said to have written on the subject of chess (Ahsan, *Social Life* 264). The *Risālat al-khāmis*, a text on political theory, was not written by the caliph himself but on his behalf by a ministry official (cf. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 140ff., and in detail Arazi/Elʿad in: SI 66/1987/27ff., and 67/1988/29ff.). Maʾmūn's hadiths were collected – not least because of their *isnād*s, some of which vent via earlier members of the dynasty to his forefather ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās – by Yaḥyā b. Manda, the first important scholar of the noble family from Isfahan discussed vol. II 705 above, probably not too long after the caliph's death (Kohlberg, loc. cit. 26of.).

22    Ṭab. 122, ult. f. He may have heard this from Ḥākim al-Jushamī; al-Manṣūr billāh names, more precisely, a *Radd ʿalā l-Manāwiyya* and a *Radd ʿalā l-Yahūd wal-Naṣārā* (*Shāfī* I 140, apu. f.).

23    This is also true for the tradition that he had the poet al-ʿAkawwak's tongue pulled out when the latter praised his sponsor Abū Dulaf al-ʿIjlī (regarding him see p. 529 below) as being the source of subsistence or death for his friends. Ibn al-Muʿtazz correctly doubted this (*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* 172, apu. ff.).

pressure on the *ahl al-dhimma*. We have seen that the head of the Manichaean Miqlāṣiyya was able to move freely at court.[24] We have no information about the part played by the Jews, but the Christians recorded that Theodore Abū Qurra debated with some *mutakallimūn* in the caliph's presence. The text, which survives in several manuscripts, is probably apocryphal; the opponents – a certain Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Khālid al-Baṣrī and one Ḥusayn b. Lāwī/Levi al-Fārisī – remain entirely shadowy, and in some recensions the place of Abū Qurra is taken by a monk or a metropolitan from Ṭūr ʿAbdīn of the name of Simon.[25] However, this is not relevant here. What is important is that the Christians remembered Maʾmūn as a tolerant ruler, the author emphasising the fact particularly.[26]

A last example will demonstrate just how much perspectives shifted in tradition. This one is about the Zoroastrians. Since Jāḥiẓ, the Muslims enjoyed an anecdote according to which al-Maʾmūn personally interrogated a Dualist named Abū ʿAlī, refuting him in a most elegant manner. Ibn al-Murtaḍā, or his source, may have taken his inspiration from this, although it is immediately noticeable how much the part played by the caliph was exaggerated: before him, several of the scholars of his entourage attempted to deal with the 'heretic', but only the caliph was able to come up with the decisive idea.[27] The argument he cited, however, was not his at all; Naẓẓām used it at the same

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24    See vol. I 493 above.

25    Guillaume believed this text to be genuine (in: JRAS, Centenary Suppl. 1924, p. 233ff., and again in: MW 15/1925/42ff.). Against him Graf, *Arab. Schriften des Theodor Abû Qurra* 77ff., and in CGAL II 21f.; quoted in: Islamochristiana 1/1975/155f. Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Khālid al-Baṣrī also occurs in another text attributed to Abū Qurra, spelt Ḍaʿḍaʿa b. Ḍālid (!) al-Baṣrī (ibid. 156). The Syrian chronicle from 1234 dated the *disputatio* to the year 214/829 (*Chronicon ad annum 1234 pertinens* 23/transl. 16), but it is far too young to be an independent witness; the author was familiar with the apocryphon which had, of course, emerged by that time. Another similar text has Abū Qurra elucidating his Christian creed before an unnamed vizier, together with the Monophysite Abū Rāʾiṭa and a Nestorian called ʿAbdīshōʿ (cf. Graf, *Schriften des Abū Rāʾiṭa* 163ff., and introduction xxvif.). The only thing that can be proved is that Murdār wrote against Abū Qurra (see p. 137 above) who was clearly known as an opponent to be reckoned with.

26    Guillaume in JRAS, p. 239. One of the recensions has the Nestorian patriarch Timothy taking Abū Qurra's place (CGAL II 22). He died shortly after Maʾmūn's arrival in Baghdad in high old age (cf. Putman, *Timothée* 142).

27    Thus at least in the version found in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* IV 442, apu. ff. Later the introduction would be left out (e.g. Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* II 152, 10ff., and Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *ʿIqd* II 384, 2ff.). Ibn ʿAbdrabbih narrates the story as part of a longer chapter entitled *Radd al-Maʾmūn ʿalā l-mulḥidīn wa-ahl al-ahwāʾ*.

time.[28] Interestingly it also occurs in *Dēnkart*;[29] clearly, the Zoroastrian remembered it as an irritant. They also repeated the story of an apostate named Abālish (also *Abālih* in Pahlavi) who had fallen out with the priests of a fire sanctuary and converted to Islam. He challenged the well-known Mazdaist theologian Ādurfarnbag ī Farrokhzādān to a debate before al-Maʾmūn and suffered a miserable defeat, whereupon the caliph expelled him from court.[30] This looks like a response to – or indeed the original of – the Muslim tradition; Abālish/Abālih might be concealing Abū ʿAlī.[31] The argument employed by Maʾmūn is not quoted in this text, as it discusses other subjects in the main, obscene details in the Zoroastrian ritual such as washing with cow urine and wearing the holy belt (*kustīg*). However, 'Abālish' constructs a similar dialectic problem: if a ruler imposes a punishment, one should assume that he is acting in accordance with the wishes of Ahura Mazda; on the other hand, punishment is something essentially bad and thus part of the realm of Ahriman.[32]

We can also observe the caliph's liberal-mindedness in the way in which he selected his staff. One of his secretaries was reputed to be a *zindīq*, but he was still very close to Maʾmūn: ʿAlī b. ʿAbīda al-Rayḥānī (d. 219/824). He was a popular and prolific writer in his day and, like Bishr al-Marīsī, wrote a *K. madḥ al-nabīdh*.[33] A particularly noteworthy man was

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28  Cf. Text XXII 156, d–g: the phenomenon of repentance as proof that even a bad human can have a good impulse. Khayyāṭ describes it as the 'well-known trick question' without even mentioning Maʾmūn at all (*e*). Found in similar form in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* V 36, 18ff., and 77, 9ff./transl. Monnot, *Penseurs* 199 and 256f., and in Abū ʿAmmār, *Mūjaz* I 288, 7ff., as the standard refutation of Dualists. Abū l-Maʿālī, *Bayān ul-adyān* 18, –8ff. (transl. in: RHR 94/1926/37f.), where the Maʾmūn anecdote reappears, the caliph instead cites the standard anti-dualist argument that two Gods could not both be omnipotent at the same time.

29  Transl. de Menasce 274 § 272.

30  *Gujastak Abalish*, ed. A. Barthélemy (Paris 1887). Regarding Ādurfarnbag cf. Tafazzoli in: EIran I 477f.; fragments of several of his writings are extant, especially a summary of his *Ēwēn-nāmag* in vol. 4 of the *Dēnkart*. Cf. Colpe in: *Neues Hb. der Lit. Wiss.* V 82f.

31  Some other interpretations of the mysterious name have been suggested as well: Abū/Abā Layth (Schaeder), and Yaballāhā or ʿAbdallāh (de Menasce). Cf. Tafazzoli in: EIran I 58.

32  Barthélemy 34f. IV.

33  Regarding him cf. *Fihrist* 133, 4ff.; Yāqūt, *Irshād* V 268, 6ff. (both providing extensive catalogues of works); also TB XII 18f. no. 6380; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* 7/145; GAS 2/58 and 83. Regarding the reading ʿAbīda cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih* 915, 11. Was he, too, a member of the 'round table'? After all, he wrote two books about this institution (Yāqūt V 270, 7 and 10).

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī,

according to his *nisba* a protégé of the Barmakids, who rose to great influence under al-Maʾmūn.[34] He was a Persian[35] and at times administered large stretches of central Iran on behalf of the caliph, usually through deputies while he himself spent most of his time in Baghdad.[36] Being close to the Muʿtazila he was no stranger to theological ideas.[37] He also supported it practically: he helped a certain Abū Isḥāq al-Makkī, a follower of Naẓẓām,[38] to obtain a post as district administrator in the region of Kaskar near Wāsiṭ. Jāḥiẓ comments derisively that the protégé – who probably came from the Hijaz – was unable to write or pronounce the Aramaic name of his 'fief'.[39] He was probably jealous, as he himself had flattered Ibn al-Jahm in his verses;[40] at the same time he collected every negative comment on him that he could find.[41] Ibn Qutayba made use of this: in his view Ibn al-Jahm embodied the cynical intellectual. Ibn al-Jahm, he transmitted, considered gratitude to be superfluous, as everyone acts merely through self-interest.[42] One should also not help those in

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34   Regarding him cf. in general Lecomte in: Arabica 5/1958/263ff. and EI² VII 401; GAS III 362.

35   Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 305, −9.

36   He described how the appointment came about, in *Agh.* XIV 178, 7ff.; concerning the variants cf. Lecomte 266. His close relationship with al-Maʾmūn is also recorded in an autobiographical account (Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 256, 15ff.); cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil* I 39, apu. f. = III 198, 7ff. Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt* II 174, 2, names him as al-Muʿtaṣim's trusted adviser. For further sources see Stern in: JSS 7/1962/239, n. 1, who claims, probably incorrectly, that he was a brother of the poet ʿAlī b. al-Jahm. Consequently the information on his father is wrong. ʿAlī b. al-Jahm (d. 249/863) was probably considerably younger; he was furthermore of Arab descent and never bears the *nisba* al-Barmakī (regarding him cf. GAS 2/580f. with further sources; regarding his father, who was a postal inspector in Yemen under Maʾmūn and commanded the police in Baghdad under al-Wāthīq, cf. TB VII 240 no. 3735).

37   Cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 232, 10ff., and *Ḥayawān* IV 442, pu., in both of which passages the author does not take pains to hide his derision. In the apocryphal *K. al-ḥayda* he is the most important representative of official authority and the *khalq al-Qurʾān* besides Bishr al-Marīsī (see p. 546f. below).

38   Regarding him cf. the sources given by Hārūn in: Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 330.

39   *Bayān* II 211, ult. ff. I am assuming that the place referred to was Kaskar in Mesopotamia, not the principality Kaskar Dūlāb in Gīlān (cf. Krawulsky, *Iran* 376), as in the latter case the place name would have to be interpreted differently.

40   Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 197, pu.

41   In a text the title of which we do not know precisely (ed. Ṭāhā al-Ḥājirī in: Al-Kātib al-Miṣrī 5/1947/55ff. Cf. p. 72 above.

42   *Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* 61, 3ff, = 49, 15ff. Lecomte's translation § 57 is imprecise; he does not fully understand the dialectical structure of the passage.

need – that was the duty of the state. Those who give money only teach people to be dependent.[43] In Ibn Qutayba's ears this sounded particularly bad as it was linked to criticism of the relevant hadiths.[44] Another terrible thing was that Ibn al-Jahm did not fast during Ramadan, his excuse being that his health could not take it.[45]

After all this it is not surprising he was not granted a place in the *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*; he was not suited to be a religious scholar. However, the Muʿtazilites not mentioning him in their *Ṭabaqāt* works does require an explanation. Even though he was a *mutakallim*, he was still one of the 'philosophers' among their number, like Maʿmar Abū l-Ashʿath or Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī. Jāḥiẓ regarded him as a physician.[46] He remembered especially that Ibn al-Jahm was in favour of retaining old native remedies (*ʿilāj al-qabāʾil wal-ʿajāʾiz*): if, as had been the custom among the Arabs for a long time, one should happen to pound a few flies together with the antimony when preparing *kuhl*, this genuinely strengthens one's eyesight and the growth of the lashes.[47] This was remarkable because Ibn al-Jahm usually, as was the custom in these circles, swore by the antique authorities. Ibn Qutayba noted critically that he studied the works of Aristotle: *Organon*, *Physics*, and *De generatione et corruptione*.[48] We can assume that the library of the *bayt al-ḥikma* was available to him; he read works of scholarship in order to keep sleep at bay, and was not afraid of weighty tomes.[49] Ibn Qutayba thought his misguided thirst for knowledge only destroyed his common sense,[50] and al-Kindī, although better informed on such matters, also expressed concern when Ibn al-Jahm wrote his own books reproducing the things he had learnt from those of others.[51] Still, he was not above acquiescing to a

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43  Ibid. 61, 9ff. = 50, 7ff./transl. § 57; in more detail *ʿUyūn* II 34, 3ff. In more depth Lecomte 269f. Wakīʿ also says that Ibn al-Jahm was guilty of attacks on the population when collecting taxes in Fars (II 173, ult. ff.

44  Another example in *Taʾwīl* 62, 1ff. = 50, 12ff./transl. § 58.

45  Ibid. 61, 1f. = 49, 14/transl. § 56. According to Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* II 226, he was able to hold his drink well.

46  *Ḥayawān* II 140, 9ff.

47  *Ḥayawān* III 322, 8ff. > Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* II 104, 6ff., and *ʿIqd* VI 245, ult. ff. Further scurrilous ideas from the realm of science in the style of Abū l-Ashʿath are collected in Lecomte 269, n. 1.

48  *Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* 60, pu. ff. = 49, 12f./transl. § 56.

49  Cf. his comments in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* I 53, 2ff.; the first section is copied in *Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* 306, 7ff. BADAWĪ.

50  *Adab al-kātib* 4, apu. ff.; transl. by Lecomte in: *Mélanges Massignon* III 55.

51  Cf. the dictum in Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* VII 95 no. 92/²VII 30 no. 81. The editor incorrectly identified 'Ibn al-Jahm' as the secretary Muḥammad b. al-Jahm b. Hārūn (d. 1 Rajab 277/19

request from the influential courtier, and wrote a treatise 'on the uniqueness of God and the finite nature of the cosmos (*jirm al-ʿālam*)'.[52] The astrologer Abū Maʿshar's appreciation went further still: he 'reported' about Ibn al-Jahm.[53] On the other hand, he probably needed his protection more than the 'philosopher of the Arabs'. Conversely, Ibn al-Jahm was the preferred source for those trying to expunge Abū Mashʿar's apocrypha.[54] He was a star-gazer in the mould of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī, with no mathematical background.[55] He wrote a book on astrological practice for al-Maʾmūn, concerning the method of *electiones* (*ikhtiyārāt*).[56]

This encyclopaedism went too far for the Muʿtazilites. Jāḥiẓ commented on a self-important remark of Ibn al-Jahm's with the sentence: 'The *mutakallimūn* think they know everything. God will not allow it.'.[57] He observed that Ibn al-Jahm was not familiar with doubt, and believed that he himself found this an affliction.[58] The newly acquired Greek knowledge seemed to provide the key to all problems, but it had not been brought into synthesis with Islam. Unlike the educated Christians of the time who worked in the *bayt al-ḥikma*, Ibn al-Jahm's starting point was not Greek or Syriac but rather the Iranian tradition which had grown much closer to Islam. He translated from Middle Persian himself;[59]

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    Oct. 890). He was secretary to Farrāʾ (regarding him cf. ᴛʙ ɪɪ 161 no. 588; Yāqūt, *Irshād* ᴠɪ 471f.; Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn* no. 151 etc.). Regarding Ibn al-Jahm's philosophical knowledge cf. also Stern, loc. cit. 241.

52    Ed. Abū Rīda, *Rasāʾil al-Kindī* ɪ 201ff./transl. *Cinq épîtres* 93ff. He writes *ʿAlī b. al-Jahm* rather than Muḥammad b. al-Jahm, in accordance with ᴍѕ Aya Sofya 4832 and another ᴍѕ (Teheran ɪɪ 634). However, this appears to be an incorrect emendation. ʿAlī b. al-Jahm was close to Ibn Ḥanbal (ɢᴀѕ 2/580), but the client had asked a concrete and competent question, as demonstrated by the introduction. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa does indeed have the version *Muḥammad* b. al-Jahm (*ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* ɪ 212, –8f.; cf. McCarthy, *Al-taṣānīf al-mansūba ilā faylasūf al-ʿArab* 48 no. 291).

53    Ibn al-Nadīm 336, 13; Qifṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-ḥukamāʾ* 284, 2f.

54    Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 317.

55    Ibn Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* 60, 6f.; regarding Fazārī cf. Pingree in: ᴅѕʙ ɪᴠ 555f. s. n., and Sezgin, ɢᴀѕ ᴠ 216f., and ᴠɪ 222f. Both authors do not distinguish between him and Ibrāhīm b. Ḥabīb al-Fazārī, 'the first one to produce an astrolabe in Islam' (*Fihrist* 332, –9f.). I wonder whether the latter may have been his father. That would resolve the chronological difficulties. Cf. Hadj-Sadok in: ʙᴇᴏ 21/1968/28ff.

56    Qifṭī, *Taʾrīkh* 284, 3f.

57    *Ḥayawān* ɪᴠ 319, 10ff. and ult. ff.

58    Ibid. ᴠɪ 35, 9ff. (read *Ibn al-Jahm* instead of *Abū l-Jahm*), and 36, 3f.

59    Ibn al-Nadīm 305, 20.

vthe *Khudāynāma* – already available in a version by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ – was apparently revised or retranslated by him.[60]

He was not the only example of a *mutakallim* who did not follow a particular school, and was not trying to achieve a particular 'system', but we do not know much about the others. The Christian Qusṭā b. Lūqā[61] tells us that al-ʿAbbās b. Saʿīd al-**Jawharī** was considered a theologian at the time. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions him as an astronomer and geometer; he composed a commentary on Euclid and a *zīj*; as late as 228/843 he was observing the principal points of the year. He translated Shānāq's poison book from Middle Persian for al-Maʾmūn.[62] According to Qusṭā b. Lūqā he was also experienced in logic. He knew entire books in Greek by heart.

Al-**Kindī**, too, belongs in this grey area. Al-Maʾmūn employed him at the *bayt al-ḥikma* to check the older translations. His writings have some points in common with Muʿtazilite theology.[63] He was, however, still young at the time; he would be most influential during al-Muʿtaṣim's caliphate.[64] 'There were many *mutakallimūn* during (al-Maʾmūn's) time', Yaʿqūbī tells us in his *Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim*, 'every one composing a book in support of his own doctrine and refuting that of his opponents'.[65]

In the anecdote in which Maʾmūn refutes the dualist Abū ʿAlī, not only Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī is among those present but also a certain ʿUtbī and one Qāsim b. Sayyār,[66] neither of whom appears to have been a *mutakallim*. Al-ʿUtbī is the poet and man of letters Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh (or ʿUbaydallāh) b. ʿAmr al-ʿUtbī (d. 228/843), an Umayyad

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60    Lecomte 265 with references; Minorsky in: Festschrift Levi Della Vida II 160.

61    In his response to Ibn al-Munajjim's *K. al-Burhān*, § 12.

62    *Fihrist* 331, 16ff.; Qifṭī, *Taʾrīkh* 219, 8ff.; cf. GAS V 243f. with further details.

63    Cf. Walzer in: Oriens 10/1957/203ff. = *Greek into Arabic* 175ff., and Ivry, *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics* 22ff.; also Endreß in: Festschrift Falaturi 155 and 158ff. Regarding Kindī's proof of the finiteness of the world cf. Craig, *Cosmological Argument* 19ff., and Netton, *Allāh Transcendent* 65ff.

64    At that time the translator Ibn Nāʾima compiled texts 'in the style of Aristotle's theology' at his request in order to show 'Aristotle's theology' (cf. F. Zimmermann in: *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages* 135 and earlier). Regarding him in general Jolivet and Rashed in: EI² V 122f. and, in more detail, in DSB XV 261ff. A philosopher finding positives in theology would later become rare; only al-ʿĀmirī would later think like al-Kindī (cf. *K. iʿlām manāqib al-Islām*; also E. Rowson in his introduction to *Al-amad ʿalā l-abad*, p. 18 and 23).

65    P. 28, 3f.

66    *Ḥayawān* IV 442, pu. f.

whose *nisba* referred to ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān,[67] while Qāsim b. Sayyār is
the *kātib* Qāsim b. Sayyār al-Jurjānī, a protégé of Faḍl b. Sahl's who also
made a name for himself as a poet.[68] We might consider the possibility
that he was the same as **Qāsim al-Tammār**, a respected *mutakallim* in Ibn
Qutayba's view,[69] whom Jāḥiẓ mentions a number of times as well. He
had saved Bishr al-Marīsī from embarrassment the latter's speech defect
had brought him,[70] and thus would have lived in Baghdad around the
same time. Still, it would be surprising if Jāḥiẓ had referred to him under
two different names and never even mentioned that these were the same
person. Qāsim al-Tammār was a Muʿtazilite,[71] but the tradition of that
school forgot him entirely. Jāḥiẓ, too, reports unimportant and bizarre
information only about him: that he was a pederast,[72] or had bad table
manners.[73] He included some of his dicta in *Bayān*,[74] which are origi-
nal and occasionally slightly risqué, but they have no connection with
theology.

Also worth mentioning is ʿAmr b. Nuhaywī who was acquainted with
Kindī[75] and Naẓẓām.[76] He may have been the latter's pupil, and was an
official in the administration under Maʾmūn.[77]

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67    Cf. Hārūn concerning *Ḥayawān* I 53, n. 5. Regarding ʿUtbī cf. Blachère in *Mélanges Massé*
      38ff., and Leder, *Ibn al-Ǧauzī* 128.

68    Regarding him GAS 2/615: mentioned as al-Maʾmūn's courtier together with Thumāma
      and Muḥammad b. al-Jahm in Jāḥiẓ, *Manāqib al-Turk* (in: *Rasāʾil* I 39, apu. f., and III
      198, 7f.).

69    *Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* 95, 3 = 79, 10/transl. § 106; quoted by Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *ʿIqd* II
      482, 11.

70    For instances see p. 191, n. 21 above. In the variant in Zajjājī, *Majālis al-ʿulamāʾ* Thumāma
      takes his place, but this appears to be a secondary version.

71    Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* IV 13, 14f.

72    Ibid. 13, 12ff.

73    *Bukhalāʾ* 198, apu. ff.

74    *Bayān* IV 12, 5ff.

75    *Bukhalāʾ* 17, 9, and 81, 2.

76    Ibid. 38, 2f.

77    Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara* I 132, 5ff.

## 3.2     The Great Muʿtazilite Systematists

### 3.2.1     *Abū l-Hudhayl*

The court was not, of course, the best place for quiet reflection. Systems were evolved elsewhere, although they might be tested in conversation in the caliph's circle. The great Muʿtazilite theologians of the time visited the palace only ever temporarily. They were flattered, but did not always submit to the tastes of the court. This became clear when Thumāma introduced the doyen of the Basran school,

> Abū l-Hudhayl Muḥammad b. al-Hudhayl b. ʿUbaydallāh b. Makḥūl al-ʿAbdī al-ʿAllāf,[1]

d. 227/841 (?), to Maʾmūn's circle.[2] He was not one of the *kuttāb*, and he was rather less willing than they to look from behind his hands. He would not get involved with astrology; he was reported to have given a speech (*khuṭba*), later to become famous, against the practice before the caliph.[3] He considered it unsound. Anecdotes would elaborate how he exposed the great authorities of this science as ignorant: how, he was said to have argued, could an astrologer know the future if he was not even able to say what happened in the past, or at the time of the conversation, when it would be possible to check his claims?

The question is whether Abū l-Hudhayl was really quite as radical as that. The anecdotes tell us nothing about the speech, presuming instead a conversation or debate.[4] The few surviving excerpts from the *khuṭba*, on the other hand, show – that is assuming they are genuine – a different direction altogether: Abū l-Hudhayl addressed technical questions, accepting some of the ideas that had been absorbed from Greek science, such as the correspondence

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1   The complete name in *Fihrist* 203, ult.; TB III 366, 8; Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 10, and many later sources. We sometimes find *ʿAbdallāh* in addition to *ʿUbaydallāh* (thus IKh IV 265, 10; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 248, 3; Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* V 161, 2, and *Nakt* 277, 9). Instead of *Muḥammad*, sometimes *Aḥmad* was transmitted (Ṣafadī, ibid.); Shahrastānī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī have *Ḥamdān* instead (*Milal* 34, 9/71, 3; Monnot, *Islam et religions* 36).

2   *Faḍl* 257, 8 > IM 46, 1.

3   Cf. Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 56.

4   One of them (Text XXI 76) takes place somewhere else anyway. The second one (Text 75) does not include a verbal exchange, but the challenge to a debate is the main topic.

between macrocosm and microcosm.[5] Even the anecdotes try to be specific, with him asking whether the stargazer encountered is someone 'who makes calculations, or someone who bases judgments on them.[6] There was nothing wrong with calculations: that was astronomy. Only the 'judgments' were reprehensible, for drawing conclusions regarding the course of the world or human behaviour from calculations opened the door for determinism.[6a] Abū l-Hudhayl's criticism appears to have been regarded as new. Venerable authorities like Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 96/714)[7] had had nothing against astrology,[8] and Jubbā'ī, who admired Abū l-Hudhayl greatly, would later cast birth horoscopes himself.[9] The earliest extant text arguing against astrology appears to be at least a generation younger than Abū l-Hudhayl.[10] Kindī, however, was at the same time calculating the duration of the Arabs' rule, probably on behalf of the authorities.[11]

### 3.2.1.1     Biographical Information

We do not know what occupation Abū l-Hudhayl had pursued in Basra. While he did bear the sobriquet 'the feed merchant' (*al-ʿallāf*), this was because his

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5      Text 74. Might Text 148 belong in this context as well? It may be interpreted to the effect that the Aristotelian ὡς ἐρώμενον is rejected in the case of the unmoved moving force (*Met.* XII 7. 1072b, 3). This ἐρώμενον is, as Aristotle says, ἀπαές (1073a, 11), but Abū l-Hudhayl could not imagine that a beloved should not himself love. However, the text may be classified entirely differently (cf. Bell, *Love Theory* 109), and its genuineness is by no means certain.

6      Text 76, c.

6a     Regarding *aḥkām* 'judgments' in this context cf. Fahd in EI² VII 558a; consequently astrologers were called *aḥkāmī*.

7      Regarding him see vol. I 182f. above.

8      Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya* IV 225, pu.

9      Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara* II 332 no. 174. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 290, 1f., also tells us that he was interested in Khwārizmī (cf. GAS 6/142); however, ibid. 316, −5f., we read that he wrote books against the astrologers.

10     Ed. and transl. by A. Heinen in: Abhath 28/1980/17ff. The text appears to be quoted by Faḍl b. Marwān (d. 250/864), vizier under al-Muʿtaṣim.

11     Cf. the text edited by O. Loth in Festschrift Fleischer 263ff.; also Walzer in: Oriens 10/1957/227 = *Greek into Arabic* 199f. Still during Kindī's lifetime, the end of Arab rule was assumed to be imminent by Pāpak's followers (cf. Sadighi, *Mouvements religieux* 245), later the Qarmates expected it to come in the year 296/908 (cf. Madelung in: Der Islam 34/1959/78). Kindī, on the other hand, calculated a duration of 693 years and was thus quite optimistic. Ṭabarī reports that Ibn ʿAbbās, too, thought in roughly the same dimension (*Taʾrīkh* I 8, 8ff./transl. Rosenthal 173).

house was situated in the quarter of animal feed sellers.[1] There was even a mosque of the *ʿallāfūn* which Ziyād had had constructed when he was governor; it was not far from the river port of Furḍa.[2] It may be inferred that Abū l-Hudhayl was involved in long-distance trade, but it is not documented. He was a client of the ʿAbd al-Qays,[3] hence his *nisba* al-ʿAbdī. His family was probably of Iranian origin; he was certainly familiar with Persian literature and language[4] and bore a Persian nickname indicating his dark skin.[5] He would have had an interest in *kalām* from his youth, as it seems that he was already taken to Baghdad for a hearing during al-Mahdī's caliphate. The officers who arrested him based on a written order and had to take him to a boat on the Tigris were threatened by the population of Basra; clearly, as the story implies, Abū l-Hudhayl already had followers at the time.[6]

Even so, we learn very little about his Basran years. We have seen that he did not think much of Aṣamm[7] and quarrelled with Ḥafṣ al-Fard.[8] They both, each in his way, cramped his style, and if he really was prone to the airs and graces Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir criticised,[9] he would have suffered from the competition they posed. Although he outlived them both, he probably was not so much the younger that he would have had to hold back out of natural respect; in fact, he had not even done so in the case of Ḍirār b. ʿAmr, claiming he had

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1   *Faḍl* 254, 4 > IM 44, 3ff. (with further instances of this type of naming indirectly). The 'feed' usually referred to oats (cf. A. Cohen, *Economic Life in Ottoman Jerusalem* 106 concerning Jerusalem).

2   Massignon, *Opera minora* III 70; cf. also the map sketch ibid. 65.

3   Kaʿbī, *Maq.* 69, −4; Ibn al-Nadīm 56, 13; TB III 366, 8 etc.

4   He referred to the *Jāvīdān khiradh* (Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* III 178, 7ff./²VI 123 no. 398; as autobiographical account in Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir* 91, 2ff.) and accorded Aṣamm a Persian epithet (see vol. II 455 above); of course this is not necessarily evidence of his being fluent in the language.

5   Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 258, 1f. I should prefer to interpret the form *z.r.jī* found there as a misspelling of *zar(a)jūn < zar-gūn* 'gold-coloured'. *Zarjūn* occurs as the name of a *mukhannath* in *Agh.* IV 221, 7. One might also consider a derivation of *zarak* 'gold-leaf'.

6   It is narrated by himself, or rather, he is presented as the narrator of the incident; one of his pupils is the transmitter. This is anything but a criterion for genuineness; the true core of the anecdote is a myth (*Faḍl* 254, 11ff.; transl. and commented in: ZDMG 135/1985/47ff.; regarding the pupil see p. 319 below).

7   See vol. II 455f. above.

8   See vol. II 817f. above. Cf. also the anecdote concerning a meeting with Najjār by the gate of the Muhallabids' estate (Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Risālat Iblīs* 77, 1ff.; regarding the location cf. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Baṣra* 178).

9   See p. 118 above.

attacked and refuted Ḍirār once – or the first time? – when he visited Basra.[10] Later, he wrote books against him.[11] He was probably no friend of the authorities then, either, for while one of our anecdotes presumes that he frequented one of the dignitaries of his host tribe, the ʿAbd al-Qays,[12] he is never linked with the governor.

All the more remarkable, then, that after 204 he was able to become a regular visitor at court. There is hardly any doubt that he wished to establish himself there, as he had reached an age where one does not make unnecessary changes any more. Thumāma, who introduced him, probably hoped to strengthen the Muʿtazilite party; he was reported to have recommended Aṣamm to the caliph as well, but Aṣamm died too early.[13] Soon enough Abū l-Hudhayl did exactly as Thumāma would have expected: he trod on Bishr al-Marīsī's toes. Muʿtazilite tradition glorified the part he played; in the record of the discussion Bishr is presented as someone who does not know how to think properly.[14] Even Bishr's ass, Abū l-Hudhayl is quoted as saying, was more intelligent than Bishr himself, for the ass, when one beat him, would jump a small canal but not a wide one as he knew the difference; Bishr, on the other hand, was incapable of distinguishing.[15] This was a dig at Bishr's determinism; when regarded through the eyes of a Muʿtazilite he was a supporter of *taklīf mā lā yuṭāq*. Still, it was well-known that there was not much to choose between the two; after a debate in al-Maʾmūn's presence, they made each other dubious compliments on the arrows they had loosed at one another.[16] Abū l-Hudhayl, people imagined, intimated to the caliph that he had not sought his company because of the wealth one might acquire there, but rather because of al-Maʾmūn's two-fold opposition to 'similarisation': not only did he not have an anthropomorphic image of God's appearance, he did not ascribe to him the kind of injustice found in humans, either.[17] The caliph's response does not refer to this expanded *tashbīh*

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10  See p. 54f. above.

11  Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 16 and 19.

12  Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 179, pu. ff.

13  Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 214, 6ff.

14  *Faḍl* 259, 11ff.; translated and analysed in: ZDMG 135/1985/30ff. The frame narrative occurs in another place as well, but the place of Abū l-Hudhayl is taken by a member of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (see p. 549f. below).

15  Suyūrī, *Irshād al-ṭālibīn* 264, pu. ff.; Ḥillī, *Istiqṣāʾ al-naẓar fī l-qaḍāʾ wal-qadar* (Najaf 1354/1935), p. 8, 4ff.; Cf. Laoust in: REI 34/1966/55. Regarding the ass see p. 193 above.

16  Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VII 166, 6ff. > Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* II 571, 9ff./²VIII 185 no. 679. Here, too, Abū l-Hudhayl is victorious thanks to an ironic remark.

17  *Faḍl* 227, 16ff. I interpreted this text differently in the past (cf. EIran I 319a).

concept;[18] 'injustice' here denotes what Muʿtazilites disliked in the determinist image of God.

Of course Abū l-Hudhayl received money anyway, a salary of 60,000 dirhams per year.[19] We only know of it because he distributed it among his followers; it seems he had always supported them.[20] We can assume that Maʾmūn did esteem him, even though later school tradition would exploit this motif.[21] A paean claims he succeeded in ending determinism,[22] and Dīnawarī concluded that he came to be Maʾmūn's teacher in matters of religion.[23] Under Muʿtaṣim, however, the sources dwindle. Abū l-Hudhayl seems to have given lectures at least at the beginning of Muʿtaṣim's caliphate as Mubarrad, who was born in 210, claims to have studied under him.[24] Another anecdote describes him settling in Samarra,[25] a city founded in 223/838. All the same, we must be careful of attempting to squeeze every report into the chronology; this is the approach taken by the medieval biographers. Abū l-Hudhayl died under Wāthiq, but during the last years of his life old age took its toll, as the Muʿtazilite al-Bardhaʿī recorded. Abū l-Hudhayl was blind, and had lost his powers of reaction. He was still aware of the fundamental principles of his Muʿtazilite faith, but could not follow his opponents' arguments any more.[26] His reputation was still such that Wāthiq held a funeral celebration for him. Ibn Abī Duwād said the prayer over his bier – with five *takbīr* according to the Shīʿite rite because

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18   This response also ibid. 262, 1f. The subsequent text has nothing to do with the scene.

19   *Faḍl* 255, 6f. > IM 49, 4f.

20   Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 135, ult. ff. > Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* II 204, 12ff., and *Taʾwīl* 53, pu. ff. = 43, 6ff./transl. § 44 (where Jāḥiẓ' name is replaced with a generic reference to a Muʿtazilite source). There, however, the emphasis is on the fact that Abū l-Hudhayl found it difficult to part with his money (cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 135, 4ff. > Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl* § 45 and passim). Jāḥiẓ believed Abū l-Hudhayl to be the greatest miser among his Muʿtazilite friends (*Bukhalāʾ* 64, 17f.).

21   Cf. al-Maʾmūn's alleged verse in *Faḍl* 258, 3f. > IM 49, 11f.

22   IM 49, 6ff.

23   *Akhbār ṭiwāl* 401, 4f. (Sourdel misinterpreted the passage in: REI 30/1962/42). *Faḍl* 256, pu. f., narrates how he explained the principle of divine justice to the caliph in very few words; clearly this was the chief issue here, too.

24   *Faḍl* 257, 6f.

25   Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 180, 10f., where the narrator Sulaymān al-Raqqī, consties only one of the problems (see vol. II 548, n. 91 above). Cf. also Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb* 365, pu. ff.

26   Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 14f.; without reference in Ibn al-Nadīm 204, 6f. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Bardhaʿī, a pupil of ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān, had most of his information on Abū l-Hudhayl from the latter's pupil Shaḥḥām (cf. TB III 370, 3ff., and p. 314 below). Regarding him in more detail ch. C 7.4.

Abū l-Hudhayl was close to the Hashimids.[27] Abū Tammām was said to have written a *marthiya* for him,[28] but it is not included in his *Dīwān*.

Now we are in possession of all the material that enables us to reach a conclusion on the dates of Abū l-Hudhayl's life, as these are reported differently in a number of sources. The only piece of information on which they are all agreed is that he lived to a great old age, while the actual dates have been inferred based on tradition. The dates of his birth and his death as well as his actual age have been adjusted in manifold ways.

It is advisable to start with the date of his death. Abū Tammām died in 231/845 or 232/846; Wāthiq ruled between 227/842 and 232/847. If we accept the two reports mentioned earlier as genuine, the only possible date among those suggested is 227. Only one of the others is earlier, the others are beyond Wāthiq's caliphate and would thus expand the period of undocumented later years. Reports of an active connection between Abū l-Hudhayl and Wāthiq are clearly apocryphal, or not to be taken literally.[29] As for his age, the biographers liked talking of 100 years,[30] not even bothering with smaller figures. Later sources were forced to go beyond even this, in order to coordinate all components. In actual fact the round number shows, of course, that there was no precise information to draw on. Abū l-Hudhayl himself was quoted as having said in the last years of his life that he was half as old as Islam.[31]

The date of his birth remains similarly vague. Khayyāṭ was the first to report a disagreement among Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils on the subject.[32] There is agreement insofar, however, as all variants assume the 130s, proving that at the time he was not yet regarded as a centenarian, or at least not literally, as Khayyāṭ names 227 as the date of his death, too, and thus does not go up to a hundred. Still, all figures and dates will have to be approached with caution. Abū l-Hudhayl's pupil Shaḥḥām claimed to have heard him say that his parents told him he was ten when Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh was killed in Basra.[33] In that case he would have been born in 135 – in fact, this was the date Ibn al-Nadīm

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27    *Faḍl* 263, 14ff. > IM 48, 4ff. after Ibn Yazdādh's *K. al-maṣābīḥ*.

28    IM 132, 2f. (and only there!).

29    According to IM 125, 16, Wāthiq adopted his theological views. According to Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn* 308, 6ff. (= *Muqābasāt* 96, –5ff., and *Baṣāʾir* ²VI 86 no. 290) he had him identify the author of a pro-ʿAlid poem.

30    Thus Ibn al-Nadīm 204, 6; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 258, 2.

31    *Faḍl* ibid.

32    Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 232, 1ff./V 21 § 291f.

33    TB III 370, 3ff.

calculated.[34] Other dates were earlier still: 131 or 134.[35] 131 was presumably considered only because that was when Wāṣil died, and the coinciding dates would show Abū l-Hudhayl as his true heir. This train of thought was even pursued with regard to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, presumably without anyone considering that in that case the year of Abū l-Hudhayl's birth would have been the entirely preposterous 110/729.[36] Even so, 135 might still be too early, too. While an age of 92 lunar years = ca. 90 solar years is not altogether impossible, one would assume a ten-year-old to be able to remember events himself, and also to know his age.[37] Events dated during Abū l-Hudhayl's youth, e.g. his debates with Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs, are apocryphal in any case. Even his arrest under al-Mahdī, mentioned above, is anything but securely documented.[38]

Ibn al-Nadīm was the first to collect the contradictory dates in a text available to us. At the same time Marzubānī (d. 384/994) was interested in them as well; his material survives in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*. The Muʿtazila's interest in chronology seems to have been awakened only late. Referring to Shaḥḥām was no coincidence; he was Abū l-Hudhayl's youngest pupil (see ch. C 4.1.3 below). Khayyāṭ tried to tidy matters up, but did not carry enough weight. The date of Abū l-Hudhayl's **death** he preferred, 227, was recorded by Masʿūdī (*Murūj* VII 232, 1f./V 21, 13), from where it was adopted into IKh IV 267, 2f. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* V 162, 20, and *Nakt al-himyān* 278, 21; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 248, 3ff.; Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* I 120, −9; Qummī, *Kunā* I 174, 10f. The date earlier than 227 goes back to the author Abū l-ʿAynāʾ al-Hāshimī: '226 in Samarra at the age of 104' (thus *Fihrist* 204, 2f.; TB III 396, 19ff. > IKh IV 267, 1f.). It is called into question by the exorbitant age. However, Abū l-ʿAynāʾ claimed that he had met Abū l-Hudhayl as a young man (Samʿānī, *Imlāʾ* 103, 12ff.; also Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 179, 18f.); he was born around 190/805 and died ca. 283/896 (regarding him cf. EI² I 108, and GAS 2/519f.; more details p. 522 below).

Later dates mentioned are: 235 'at the beginning of al-Mutawakkil's caliphate' (*Fihrist* 204, 5f.; TB III 370, 7f.; Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 12f.; IKh

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34    *Fihrist* 204, 3ff.

35    Ibid. 204, 1; Masʿūdī, loc. cit.

36    *Faḍl* 258, 1 after Ibn Farzōya (before 300/913). After all, who else might be 'al-Ḥasan'?

37    It is true that some sources, once again with reference to Shaḥḥām, cited the tradition as autobiographical. In these instances, however, it is the starting point for a legend, and furthermore Abū l-Hudhayl claims there to have been not quite 15 at the time. This resulted in the birth date of 131 (TB III 367, 3ff.).

38    P. 227 above.

IV 267, 1; Dhahabī, *ʿIbar* I 422, 10ff. > Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt* II 85, –8ff.; Shahrastānī 37, 3f./76, 11f.; IM 48, 3), and 239 (Ṣafadī, *Nakt* 279, 2, as a complement to *Wāfī*). No source is given for either of these dates, probably for good reason, as they are inferred. 235 comes with the comment 'at the age of 100', and by subtracting 100 we arrive at the year 135 which is supported by autobiographical notes. 239 is based on the same operation, the only difference being that it is the age of 104 that is added to 135. The comment 'at the beginning of al-Mutawakkil's caliphate' applies to 235 only with a pinch of salt as Mutawakkil acceded to the throne in 232/847. 227, on the other hand, was at the beginning of Wāthiq's caliphate; contamination cannot be ruled out. – I do not know how the Muʿtazilite Abū Mujālid, a contemporary of Khayyāṭ (regarding him see ch. C 4.2.4 below), came to believe that Abū l-Hudhayl went blind at over 100 years old (*Fihrist* 204, 17; TB II 370, 2f.). The parallel passage in Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī replaces 230 with 203, which might be a possible date for his relocation, but not in connection with his age.

In addition to the three ages mentioned (100, 104 and 'over 100') we also find '105 years', e.g. in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 255, 5f. after Muḥammad b. Zakariyyaʾ al-Ghalābī, called Zakarōya, (d. 298/910) *K. al-mashāyikh* (regarding him cf. Ziriklī, *Aʿlām* VI 364). Ibn al-Murtaḍā simply changed 105 to 150 (*Ṭab.* 48, 1f., where in addition al-Ghalābī is misspelt as al-Ghaylānī; cf. Fück in: OLZ 59/1964/373).

The date of 135 for his **birth** is quoted after Ibn al-Nadīm or Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in IKh IV 266, ult.; Ṣafadī, *Nakt* 279, 2; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 248, 4f. The variants 131 and 134 are older; the abovementioned disagreement among Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils referred to them. Khayyāṭ preferred the former, Kaʿbī the latter (cf. Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 11f. > IM 49, 1ff.). Meetings with Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs would have taken place before 167/783, according to the understanding at the time, as that was when the latter was executed. However, the actual narratives show that the accounts are pure fiction. There were even attempts at replacing Abū l-Hudhayl with Naẓẓām in them (cf. for details my article in: ZDMG 135/1985/22ff. and 52ff.; also vol. II 19, n. 20 above). The account of Abū l-Hudhayl's arrest and his relocation to Baghdad, on the other hand, aims at pointing out that Abū l-Hudhayl found himself under suspicion of being a *zindīq*. It may be based on the recollection that he had been part of Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs' circle in his youth, and was persecuted together with him, but there is no proof of that. Even if it were true, the chronology would not gain from it, as according to another – and presumably older – tradition he was executed under Hārūn (see vol. II 17f.

above), and even if we believe 167, possible birth dates could be as late as 140. It would make no sense to expand the possible range further.

One surprising feature of the early birth dates is that tradition never attempted to link Abū l-Hudhayl with ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd who, after all, died only a short time before the uprising of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh. Ibn al-Nadīm points out emphatically that Abū l-Hudhayl did not meet either ʿAmr or, naturally, Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ.[39] Later, it would be tried to find a connection with Wāṣil via his widow Umm Yūsuf who was said to have given Abū l-Hudhayl two chests (*qimaṭrayn*) containing her husband's notes.[40] This fits in well with the correspondence of the dates pointed out above, and is presumably just as fictitious, as later authors were not sure of Abū l-Hudhayl's starting points at all. Muʿtazilite tradition usually points to ʿUthmān al-Ṭawīl.[41] He is sure to have known him,[42] but there was probably not much to be learnt from him. Malaṭī, who did not have to worry about the Muʿtazilite consensus, named two other pupils of Wāṣil's instead who were at the same time believed to have been Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's teachers.[43] He certainly knew them, too;[44] but they remain even more obscure than ʿUthmān al-Ṭawīl. Malaṭī finally mentions Ḍirār b. ʿAmr, whom Abū l-Hudhayl was said to have succeeded as leader of the theological study circle in Basra. Ḍirār was probably the most influential, although people preferred to ignore him later. He broke away on his own initiative, and laid the foundation for the new concept of history: he transmitted the names of Wāṣil's missionaries,[45] and even the bold 'genealogy' that traced Muʿtazilite doctrine through ʿUthmān al-Ṭawīl and Wāṣil to Abū Hāshim, and from him through Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, ʿAlī and the prophet to Gabriel and God himself

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39   *Fihrist* 204, 1f.

40   *Faḍl* 241, –7f. > IM 35, 3ff. The word *qimaṭr* is derived via Aram. *qamṭrā* from Gr. κάμπτρα. In the Talmud it refers to the Torah chest in which the Torah scrolls are kept (cf. Carl Wendel, *Kleine Schriften zum antiken Buch- und Bibliothekswesen* 98, after Strack-Billerbeck, *Komm. zum NT* IV₁ 136 aa 66). In the Islamic world *qimaṭr* was a chest or bag in which the *qāḍī* kept and transported his documents protected by a seal (Kindī, *Quḍāt Miṣr* 391, 16ff.; Sarakhsī, *Mabsūṭ* XVI 92, 10; Tyan, *Histoire de l'organisation judiciaire* I 375; Moukdad, *Richteramt* 80). It might be as high as a man's chest (TB IX 161, 4f.).

41   *Fihrist* 204, 1, probably once again after Bardhaʿī and Shaḥḥām (cf. Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 15f.); also *Faḍl* 164, 16, and 251, 3f. > IM 42, 2f.

42   Cf. *Faḍl* 237, 15ff.; cf. also vol. II 356f. above. The autobiographical account in TB III 367, 5ff., has some traits associated with legends.

43   *Tanbīh* 31, 6ff./38, ult. ff.

44   At least one of them (see vol. II 361f. above).

45   See vol. II 353 above.

had its origin with him, if we can believe his pupil Zurqān.[46] He also circulated the legend of Ghaylān in a treatise of his own – maybe as part of an argument with the Basran Murjiʾites who claimed this tradition for themselves.[47] ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, on the other hand, is barely mentioned in his works.[48]

His connections to the *muḥaddithūn* were entirely ignored in Muʿtazilite circles, although they did exist; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, not usually one of his admirers, preserved the names of two of his teachers.[49] Both of them, interestingly, were Kufan: Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm al-Tamīmī[50] and Sulaymān b. Qarm al-Ḍabbī.[51] Through them he got to know Aʿmash's corpus of traditions, unmistakeably Shīʿite in its tenor; indeed, Ibn Ḥibbān considered Sulaymān b. Qarm to be a *ghālī*.[52] He was the source of his moderately critical attitude towards the authorities: 'Stand by the Quraysh for as long as they stand by you, but when they do not stand by you (any more), take up your swords and exterminate them!'[53] This was also the attitude among the Basran Ghaylānites,[54] which makes it all the more surprising that in his case it came from a Kufan source. It seems that he visited Kufa once in his youth. If he did indeed get into trouble with the authorities, this may have been the explanation. Later, in Baghdad, this behaviour would not have been advisable.

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46    Ibn al-Nadīm 202, 3ff.; cf. vol. II 289 above. Madelung considered this to be a later falsification (*Qāsim* 35).

47    *Faḍl* 233, 4ff. > IM 27, 12ff.; also the title at Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 48. His regarding Khālid al-Qasrī as a *zindīq* fits well with this concept of history (*Agh.* XXII 16, 1ff.).

48    Only in the critical account of ʿAmr's behaviour before the uprising of 145 in Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 246, 9ff. (which mentions Abū l-Hudhayl, like ibid. 238, −4, not by his *kunya* but his *ism*), and in the similarly characteristic tradition that he modelled his behaviour on Wāṣil's (*Faḍl* 243, 15ff.). It seems that there was an argument between Abū l-Hudhayl's and Naẓẓām's followers concerning the precedence of ʿAmr or Wāṣil (cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VII 7, 7).

49    TB III 366, 14f. (where ʿan should be read instead of ʿanhu).

50    Thus after Ḥillī, *Rijāl*, 245, ult. f., and Ardabīlī, *Jāmiʿ al-ruwāt* I 658f.; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says only *Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm*. Probably identical with the Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī named in Dhahabī, *Mīzān* no. 6673. For further Sunni sources (which on the whole do not give his *nisba*) cf. Nasāʾī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ* ²187 no. 485. According to the Shīʿite biographers he came from Basra but lived in Kufa.

51    *Mīzān* no. 3599; for further sources cf. Nasāʾī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ* ²116 no. 251.

52    *Majrūḥīn* I 332, −4ff.; similar also ʿUqaylī, *Ḍuʿafāʾ* II 137. Regarding the Shīʿite literature cf. in brief Ardabīlī I 382f.

53    TB III 366, ult. ff. This is not, of course, necessarily Rāfiḍite. Consequently Dhahabī also quoted him in conversation with ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, al-Nafs al-zakiyya's father, calling the Rāfiḍites unbelievers (*Mīzān*, loc. cit.). Ibrāhīm b. Ghiyāth was believed among the Shīʿites to have been a Butrite; he wrote a *K. maqtal amīr al-muʾminīn* (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 251f. no. 552).

54    See vol. I 151 and II 192 above.

Of course, he came in touch with entirely different circles there. He was acquainted with Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/830), director of the *bayt al-ḥikma* under Ma'mūn, although it seems that the latter did not have a great liking for him.[55] He then acquired the image of having got involved with philosophy. He is the only Mu'tazilite whom Ash'arī suspected of having been influenced by Aristotle,[56] while Ibn Sa'īd thought he detected pseudo-Empedoclean influence.[57] These speculations did not mean much, as we shall see. During his Baghdad years Abū l-Hudhayl was far too old to change his ways, while in Basra philosophy – with the exception of alchemist tendencies – was not particularly relevant in any case. One tradition, which has him come to the court during the era of the Barmakids, is apocryphal.[58] In the eyes of later generations he was **the** representative of *kalām*,[59] and consequently any number of stereotypes were tied to him. It is no coincidence that he was the subject around whom the motif, also seen in connection with Thumāma,[60] grew up of a madman refuting him in a *disputatio*.

It was employed above all by the Shī'ites; Abū l-Hudhayl had to admit that 'Alī deserved the caliphate over Abū Bakr. The framework changes, the conversation taking place in Ma'mūn's presence (thus in MS Brit. Mus., Suppl. 1238.3; cf. Rieu p. 796) or in a monastery, according to Ṭabrisī the Dayr Zakkā in Raqqa (*Iḥtijāj* II 150, ult. ff. > *Biḥār* XLIX 279ff. no. 35; regarding the location cf. Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* 218ff. and 384ff.; the name is corrupted in the printed version of the *K. al-iḥtijāj*). For further manuscript records cf. GAS 1/618; also RSO 4/1911/1024; Traini, *Arabic Mss. Ambrosiana* II no. 4 X and no. 186 XVI. In the MS Teheran, Majlis-i shūrā-yi millī (VII) 372, the madman is an 'Alid (cf. also *Rayḥānat al-adab* V

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55  Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 182, 1ff.; shorter TB III 369, 2ff. Different still *'Iqd* II 338, 11ff. (with reference to Muways b. 'Imrān, which is quite untenable due to the chronology); thus also Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn* III 138, 16ff. In a version Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-'uyūn* 244, 3ff., traced back to Jāḥiẓ, Sahl b. Hārūn was replaced with Ḥasan b. Sahl.

56  Cf. Text XXI 63, k, with commentary.

57  *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* 22, 3f.; also Qifṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'* 16, 21f.; cf. Stern in: Actas IV Congresso UEAI Coimbra 325ff.

58  This is once again the 'symposium' on the subject of love we have mentioned several times before.

59  Thus to Ma'arrī, as well as Ibn Kullāb (*Luzūmiyyāt*, Cairo 1891, I 131/Beirut 1961, I 155, v. 4). In Jubbā'ī's view he was the one who invented *kalām* (*Faḍl* 258, pu.); the vizier Abū l-Faḍl Ibn al-'Amīd was of the same opinion (Yāqūt, *Irshād* VI 73, pu. ff.). *Agh.* V 231, 4, names him as *ra's al-Mu'tazila*. Cf. also IM 127, 5ff.

60  See p. 175, n. 46 above.

194). Sunni sources such as Ibn Ḥabīb al-Naysābūrī, *'Uqalā' al-majānīn*
169, 5ff., or Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* I 120, 5ff., neutralise the subject;
furthermore the meeting takes place by the Dayr Hiraql, the Heraclius
Monastery, which may well be a cover for the Dayr Hizqil, the Ezekiel
Monastery, a proverbial lunatic asylum in the Wāsiṭ region (cf. Ya'qūbī,
*Buldān* 321, pu. f./transl. Wiet 164 with further material). Hamadhānī's
Maqāma Māristāniyya uses it as a literary motif, while replacing Abū
l-Hudhayl with the more topical figure of a Mu'tazilite from 'Askar
Mukram (no. 25 of the *Maqāmāt* = ed. Beirut 1889, p. 119ff.; transl. Rescher
in: *Beiträge zur Maqāmen-Literatur* V 71ff., and Rotter, *Vernunft ist nichts
als Narretei* 110ff.; cf. J. Monroe, *Art of Hamadhānī* 65ff.).

While this anecdote spread far and wide, Abū l-Hudhayl's sure aim in argu-
ments, on the other hand, remained proverbial.[61] His weapons were wit and
irony; the Mu'tazilites were proud to say that he always had the audience
on his side.[62] One of his characteristics was to pepper his deliberations with
verse;[63] he had a great repertoire of poetry although he did not practise this
art himself.[64] Little could be said about his piety, on the other hand. We learn
that he did not enjoy music[65] and that he cared for his servant and his ass.[66]
No-one dared mention asceticism; his disagreement with the poet 'Abbās b.
al-Aḥnaf was probably not due to the new, 'feminist' image of women em-
braced by the latter, but because in his own circle Ibn al-Aḥnaf made no secret
of his determinism.[67] The opposing side tried to denigrate Abū l-Hudhayl as a
pederast.[68] It seems that he did advise to seize the moment in matters of the

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61    Cf. al-Khālidiyyān, *Al-tuḥaf wal-hadāyā* 103, pu. f.; also Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* V 171, 1f. Retold
      as a legend e.g. in TB III 368, 13ff. (after Jāḥiẓ) and 18ff. (variant in Ibn al-Nadīm 204, 14ff.).

62    Cf. the stories in Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 260, 12ff., and 160, 15f. (= Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 180,
      13f.); Tawḥīdī, *Baṣā'ir* ²VII 76 no. 233, and VIII 28 no. 64 and 67; *Kalim al-fiṣāḥ min Tarwīḥ al-
      arwāḥ* MS Berlin Or. oct. 3859, fol. 85b, ult. ff. (in the presence of Faḍl b. Sahl, i.e. in Marv!).

63    The best (apocryphal) instance is the anecdote *Faḍl* 255, 8ff. which I have discussed in:
      Festschrift G. Hourani, p. 13ff.; for further instances ibid. p. 280, n. 9.

64    He was said to have quoted around 700 verses on the occasion of his first appearance
      before Ma'mūn (*Faḍl* 257, 9ff.). Mubarrad claimed to have heard him adduce 300 verses in
      a lecture (ibid. 257, 5ff. > IM 45, 14f.).

65    Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* II 178, 2ff.

66    Tha'ālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb* 365, 9ff.; similar 365, pu. ff.

67    *Agh.* VIII 354, 15ff. = Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ* 449, 1ff., after Ṣūlī; cf. Arabica 27/1980/277.
      'Abbās died not long after 193/808; the quarrel happened during Abū l-Hudhayl's Basran
      period.

68    TB III 369m 14ff. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* V 161, 18ff.; Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 543, 5ff.

heart – quoting a verse suggesting one should kneel before the 'ape of evil' if he was in power, and not ask what he was hiding.

Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VII 166, –5f. The phrase *usjud li-qirdi l-saw' fī zamānihī* was used like a proverb (cf. Maydānī, *Amthāl* I 357b, 11). Kulthūm b. ʿAmr also quoted it in a poem, but continued differently (ibid. I 355, 9; thus also – after him? – Thaʿlabī, cf. *Lisān al-ʿArab* XV 176b, –10ff. s. v. *q–r–y*). An anonymous poet in *Ḥayawān* VII 167, 1, phrases it slightly differently: *idhā dawlatun lil-qirdi jāʾat fa-kun lahū … sājidan*. It presumably usually means 'to run with the pack' and 'to put a brave face on it'. If I interpret it correctly, the context shows that Abū l-Hudhayl linked the saying to matters of the heart.

### 3.2.1.2    His Works

The titles of Abū l-Hudhayl's books confirm his love of dialectics. While they are not as exclusively polemical as Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's, around half of them do mention an opponent.[1] The titles listed by Ibn al-Nadīm frequently summarise the contents: 'a book against the Jews', 'a book against the Christians' etc. These were probably presentations of individual arguments, or maybe smoothed-out accounts of actual debates. Later tradition would put an anecdotal slant on the discussions; it is possible that some of Abū l-Hudhayl's original arguments survived.[2] The 'Book against the Jews'[3] corresponds to the report of a discussion during which a Jew tried to prove Moses' prophethood by means of his having worked miracles, only to have Abū l-Hudhayl point out to him that Jesus, too, performed miracles. Abū l-Hudhayl ignored his typically Jewish reply that Jesus' miracles were only magic – after all, they were reported in the Quran.[4] Later, it would be said that he had his first victory over a Jewish *mutakallim* as a boy, when he was not quite fifteen.[5]

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1   According to his pupil Yaḥyā b. Bishr al-Arrajānī he composed a total of 60 polemical books (IM 44, 5g.); Malaṭī even refers to 1200 texts (*Tanbīḥ* 31, 7f./39, 1f.). Ibn al-Nadīm has 50 or 51, i.e. fewer than for Ḍirār (57).

2   Cf. ZDMG 135/1985/22ff., esp. 37ff.

3   Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 5.

4   Furthermore, as early as Hārūn's letter to Constantine VI they were used as proof that Muḥammad, too, could work miracles (see p. 28f. above). Cf. *Faḍl* 263, 4ff.; here, too, Abū l-Hudhayl's ironic style must be pointed out.

5   Marzubānī traced this back to Shaḥḥām, and it is presented as an autobiographical account in TB III 367, 5ff. > Ibn al-Jawzī, *Adhkiyāʾ* 140, 12ff. KHŪLĪ, and Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* V 161, 21ff.; without *isnād* (*wa-qīla*) in Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 178, 17ff.

The name of ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī lends substance to the refutation of the Christans.[6] He was a Nestorian, probably slightly younger than Abū l-Hudhayl, and an author whose extant texts reject Ḍirār's theology as well as Abū l-Hudhayl's.[7] Going by his remarks the argument concerned the doctrine of the attributes, but none of it was reflected in anecdotes. When it came to the Zoroastrians, things were different. We not only have the refutation[8] but also the record of a discussion ending – as was the ideal model – with the conversion of the loser, or, in this case, the Zoroastrian who had hosted the debate.[9] It was said that Maʾmūn later had Abū l-Hudhayl face a certain Zādhānbukht.[10] One anecdote plays with details of Mazdaist mythology, connected in a derisive fashion.[11] Abū l-Hudhayl's attacking not only the Zoroastrians but the dualists in general may have been concerned with the problem of movement and the eternal duration of the world.[12] It is remarkable that the *zanādiqa* do not appear in the titles even though they, as Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār reported, particularly feared Abū l-Hudhayl in Basra.[13] However, there was a *K. al-ḥujja ʿalā l-mulḥidīn*.[14]

Among the Muslims it was the Basran Ghaylānites who were the butt of his polemic, especially Abū Shamir whom he had seen in all his glory as adviser to the governor.[15] People believed that the two did not get on at all.[16] Abū l-Hudhayl also engaged in a *disputatio* with his successor Kulthūm b. Ḥabīb.[17] He met Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, against whose political opinions he also wrote a book,[18] in Mecca and allegedly defeated him in front of a large audience;[19] the Shīʿites, however, saw the event differently.[20] The subject had not been

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6      Catalogue of Works no. 6–7.

7      See p. 40 above and 297f. below.

8      Catalogue of Works no. 8.

9      Ibid. no. 51. It is possible that the two texts are identical. The account in Ibn al-Nadīm was adopted by IKh IV 266, 7ff. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* V 163, 7ff. More details on p. 292f. below.

10     IM 74, 9ff.

11     Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 181, 5ff.

12     Catalogue of Works no. 9–10. In an account of an alleged discussion with the Manichaean Nuʿmān (regarding him see vol. I 519f. above) this is also the main point at issue (Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Al-ajwiba al-muskita* 149 no. 892 = Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 181, 18ff.).

13     *Faḍl* 258, 11f.

14     Catalogue of Works no. 2.

15     Ibid. no. 28–29.

16     *Faḍl* 256, 12, but the chronology is problematic here (see vol. II 204f. above). Cf. also ibid. 256, 11ff. and 257, 1ff.

17     Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān* 246, 3; cf. vol. II 208 above.

18     Catalogue of Works no. 47.

19     *Intiṣār* 103, –8ff.; Hishām's business partner, the Ibāḍite ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd, was among those present (Nashwān, *Ḥūr* 254, pu. f.).

20     Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 232, 2ff./V 21, –6ff.; cf. vol. I 423f. above.

the *imāma* but the image of God; in fact, Abū l-Hudhayl reported it himself in one of his books.[21] He was considerably younger than Hishām and probably challenged him. The representative of the Shīʿa in Basra was ʿAlī b. Mītham. According to his school's tradition he scored a few wins on points over Abū l-Hudhayl;[22] Muʿtazilite tradition barely mentions the connection.[23] Abū l-Hudhayl disapproved of *tashbīh* not only in the case of Hishām, but also when it came to the *ahl al-ḥadīth*. Once again we learn this through the title of a book, the oldest certain record of the *muḥaddithūn* being definable as a separate group adhering to particular theological views.[24] He fought against determinism in the person of Ḥafṣ al-Fard[25] as well as the poet Muknif al-Madanī, a descendant of Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā living in Qinnasrīn[26] and possibly influenced by Sulaymān al-Raqqī;[27] he met him at the house of the Abbasid Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān, presumably when the latter was governor of Basra around 175/791.[28]

Among the Muʿtazilites it was especially his nephew al-Naẓẓām with whom he debated; he wrote at least six texts against him.[29] Their systems were different *toto coelo*. Extra-Muʿtazilite circles would later rejoice at this fratricidal conflict; they told the story of how Abū l-Hudhayl once spat in his nephew's face when the younger man asked a critical question.[30] The Muʿtazilites, on the other hand, presented the argument as entirely objective disagreement between two theologians whose debates were of the utmost erudition. Jāḥiẓ emphasised that Abū l-Hudhayl was never happier than when no-one knew any more who was in the right, for 'fifty doubts are better than one certainty'.[31] Nobody wanted to decide, and finally it was said that at the end of the debates

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21   *Maq.* 32, 7ff.; also Baghdādī, *Farq* 48, apu. ff./66, 1ff.; the account is less detailed in Nashwān, *Ḥūr* 254, apu. ff., and the connection between the sources less clear. None of the books listed by Ibn al-Nadīm appears to correspond with the account. Cf. also *Faḍl* 140, 6ff., and 262, 15ff.

22   See vol. II 482f. above.

23   But cf. Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwiba* 150 no. 899.

24   Catalogue of Works no. 13.

25   Catalogue of Works no. 19–20 and 25; cf. vol. II 817 above and p. 298 below.

26   Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ* 502, pu.; regarding him GAS 2/601. Cf. Catalogue of Works no. 10.

27   The two texts at Catalogue of Works no. 14–15 might also be directed against him. Regarding him see vol. II 533ff. above.

28   Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Risālat Iblīs* 45, 8ff. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān might have brought him from his home city (?) of Medina, where he himself had previously been the governor (cf. *Festschrift Hourani* 15). Regarding a possible connection between Abū l-Hudhayl and Najjār see p. 298f. below.

29   Ibid. no. 21–22, 26, 36, 40, 44, and perhaps 42 and 54.

30   Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 227, 13ff. after Jāḥiẓ; *ʿIqd* II 412, 13ff.

31   *Ḥayawān* III 60, 5ff.

the scores were always even. The reason for this was explained by Abū l-Hudhayl himself: once he was defeated by an uneducated porter called Zanjōya 'little black one' who did not follow any method and jumped from one topic to another; it would have been entirely different among experts.[32] The Muʿtazilites were not entirely wrong, for there is at least one instance in which the arguments of both parties were summarised in one single record.[33]

With the exception of Ḍirār, who was a special case, we are met with surprising silence when it comes to older Basran fellow believers. Neither Muʿammar nor Aṣamm are found among those against whom Abū l-Hudhayl wrote. This is particularly surprising in the case of Aṣamm, as there is yet another anecdote[34] as well as Ibn al-Murtaḍā's remark that the two had a debate.[35] The *K. tathbīt al-aʿrāḍ* might have been directed against him.[36] Muʿammar, on the other hand, may have left Basra too early to have been a true opponent. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir was too far away, too, but in one of his books Abū l-Hudhayl wrote about the teachings of Murdār, who was probably younger.[37] Only one of his writings was apparently not polemical: his *K. al-ḥujja*.[38] Laoust assumed that Abū l-Hudhayl elucidated the *uṣūl al-khamsa* in this text,[39] unfortunately without documenting his theory. Still, there are several reasons to assume that this work, if indeed it was arranged systematically, followed the concept of the five *uṣūl* at least in its structure, as would later be frequent usage. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, who had no clear understanding of the situation, claimed that it was through Abū l-Hudhayl's influence that the *uṣūl* became the distinguishing characteristic of the school during Hārūn's time; everyone, he said, had read his *K. al-uṣūl al-khamsa*.[40] Ibn al-Nadīm does not list this title; it may be that it indeed refers to the *K. al-ḥujja*. The Shāfiʿite jurist Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918) studied the book under the Muʿtazilite al-Bardhaʿī.[41]

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32	Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ* II 90, 8ff.

33	Catalogue of Works no. 22.

34	See vol. II p. 455f. above.

35	*Ṭab.* 57, 6.

36	Catalogue of Works no. 42; although it seems that Abū l-Hudhayl was also polemicising against Naẓẓām in this text. Another possibility would be the *K. al-ḥarakāt* (no. 43), as Aṣamm, as we know, denied movement (see vol. II 456 above).

37	*Maq.* 190, 8f. = 512, 11f.

38	Also *K. al-ḥujaj*; cf. Catalogue of Works no. 1.

39	*Schismes* 102.

40	*Baḥr al-kalām* 75, 6ff. This is probably the source of Laoust's statement that the *K. al-ḥujja* was written under Hārūn.

41	*Faḍl* 301, 9f.; regarding al-Bardhaʿī see p. 229 above.

### 3.2.1.3 Abū l-Hudhayl's Teachings

So far Abū l-Hudhayl has not found the recognition to match his importance, although there are a few monographs about him. The first one, after an article by Jamīl Ṣalība that lacked originality,[1] was by ʿAlī Muṣṭafā Ghurābī in his book *Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf, awwal mutakallim islāmī taʾaththara bil-falsafa*.[2] The book hardly lives up to the title's promise, but it is structured clearly. R. M. Frank truly understood Abū l-Hudhayl's significance, especially impressively presented in his study *The Metaphysics of Created Being*,[3] but also in his article on Abū l-Hudhayl's doctrine of the attributes.[4] Since this article research has stagnated again,[5] although the conditions are better than in the case of most early theologians, Naẓẓām being the only one about whom we have more source material. However, records of Abū l-Hudhayl are scattered, and sometimes warped due to Jubbāʾī's launching a renaissance of his system two generations later. He believed Abū l-Hudhayl to have been the greatest Muslim after the companions of the prophet and thought to disagree with him in forty questions only.[6] Where they did not disagree we must be prepared for overlaps.

### 3.2.1.3.1 *The 'Physics'*

#### 3.2.1.3.1.1 Body and Accidents. Atomism

Abū l-Hudhayl's system could hardly be imagined without its connection to Ḍirār or Muʿammar, but however much he combines and expands existing ideas, he is at the same time as much a radical innovator as they were. He appears to have learnt from Muʿammar's atomism, but interprets it in the way Ḍirār did, as a toy in God's hand. Unlike Ḍirār or Aṣamm he does not reject the polarity of accidents and substances, but the combination does not result in straightforward ontology but, to use Frank's serendipitous coinage, in 'metaphysics of created being'. Being does not have a hierarchy of itself; rather, 'bodies' and accidents are on the same level as far as valence is concerned. Accidents simply circumscribe the formal reality of an entity, its being the way

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1  In: RAAD 21/1946/107ff. and 205ff.

2  Cairo 1949.

3  Istanbul 1966.

4  Le Muséon 82/1969/451ff.

5  My own overview of Abū l-Hudhayl's ideas in: REI 46/1978/227ff., and in: EIran I 318ff. have been superseded by the following description.

6  *Faḍl* 294, apu. ff. > IM 84, 7ff.; also Text 9, d.

it is; all phenomenal being is thus accident.[1] The nature of accidents is not derived; they do not necessarily require a body as their substrate.[2] They are more than simple attributes of being; they are entities that usually, but not invariably occur together with bodies.[3] Accidents only, and by no means all of them, may be directed by humans.[4] Bodies, on the other hand, are created by God alone.

As with Muʿammar, this is where atomism becomes important, as a body is always a combination; in fact, being combined is a necessary accident, a piece of reality without which the body could not exist – its cohesive force, as it were.[5] The word Abū l-Hudhayl uses to describe this particular accident, *taʾlīf*, actually means 'agglomeration', and is probably meant as active as it sounds. While an Arabic infinitive can, of course, always also have passive meaning, the sources use *ijtimāʿ*, which possesses the active connotation without any doubt, at least as frequently as *taʾlīf*.[6] We can also assume that both these terms were ultimately based on the Greek ἀθρόισμα used already by Democritus and Leucippus to denote a conglomeration of atoms.[7] Still, there is no doubt that in Abū l-Hudhayl's view the building blocks of being did not simply join together of their own accord, but that there is someone joining them together, i.e. God. After all, God is able to break the agglomeration, at which point the body will cease to exist and only the atoms remain.[8]

In fact, they do not actually remain, as on their own they lack dimensionality.[9] This was also Muʿammar's view: an atom is a 'substance' (*jawhar*), not a body,

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1  Frank, *Metaphysics* 42 and 45.

2  See p. 261f. below.

3  For general information see Frank in: Festschrift G. Hourani 42 and earlier.

4  Text 4, a; further details on p. 269f. below.

5  Ibn Sīnā said this of all the atomists (*Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt I 185, 7ff.).

6  Text 6, a; 1, d; 7 etc. For a general overview of *taʾlīf* and related terms in theology cf. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Furūq* 119, 1ff.

7  Cf. C. Bailey, *Greek Atomists* 138; U. Hölscher in: *Die antike Philosophie in ihrer Bedeutung für die Gegenwart*, ed. R. Wiehl (SB Heid. Ak. Wiss. 1981, no. 1), p. 42. There is no information on the character of this agglomeration; consequently ἀθρόισμα may also mean 'bundle' in the sense of Ḍirār's 'bundles' of accidents (cf. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion* 46ff.).

8  Text 6, a. Cf. also *Faḍl* 263, 9f. Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism in general cf. Ḥusayn Muruwwa, *Al-nazaʿāt al-māddiyya fī l-falsafa al-ʿarabiyya al-islāmiyya* I 705ff.

9  Text 6, b, and 7, b. The sentence at 7, a, might be misunderstood, as the negation (in 'denied') could have more than one referent. Here, too, the meaning is that the dimensions of a body are not composed of individual parts but develop in contact with the body.

and only a body possesses physicality.[10] This led to the question of where the limits of physicality were or, put differently: what the smallest possible body would be. Early *kalām* had different answers for this, and Abū l-Hudhayl's answer differs from Muʿammar's. The latter had defined the smallest possible body as a cube composed of eight similarly cubic atoms.[11] Abū l-Hudhayl, on the other hand, believed only the six basic directions right–left, front–back, up–down had to be marked, and that six atoms would be sufficient to arrange space in this way.[12] These could not, of course, be put together to form a geometric solid. In a first attempt I believed, some time ago, that Abū l-Hudhayl thought of an octahedron composed of two pyramids connected at their diamond-shaped bases;[13] this would require two atoms left and right, back and front, up and down – but of course it would not be the smallest geometric solid. That would be a single pyramid with a triangular base, a tetrahedron. Even Muʿammar's cube, being a hexahedron, would have fewer faces. My former approach seems to have been a dead end; one should not think in terms of platonic solids or the laws of Euclidean geometry.

It is more important that in Abū l-Hudhayl's view the atoms 'touched six of their kind',[14] i.e. they had six faces and thus presumably cubic shape as in Muʿammar's approach. Even so, as we have seen, they lack dimensionality; Ibn Mattōya would later say cautiously, when summarising the discussion of several generations, that the atom 'was closest to' the cube.[15] Insofar as our sparse sources allow any judgment at all, Abū l-Hudhayl did not attempt to explain the apparent discrepancy here. His theory of motion,[16] however, leads us to the assumption that in his view an atom occupies a 'field' in space;[17]

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10  Text XVI 1, cf. p. 73 above. The title at no. 41 confirms that Abū l-Hudhayl, too, used the term *jawhar*. Regarding the problem of its meaning cf. Pines, *Atomenlehre* 3f., and Frank, *Metaphysics* 39f., n. 5; also ch. D 1.3.2.1.1 below.

11  See p. 72 above.

12  Text 1, a–b, and 2. A remark by Naẓẓām (Text XXII 79, d) confirms that this contrast expresses the two leading opinions of the time. Cf. also Pines, *Atomenlehre* 5f., and Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 67f.

13  In: REI 46/1978/198, with illustration.

14  Text 1, c, and 6, d; cf. Gimaret, ibid. 6of.

15  *Tadhkira* 173, 5; which also states explicitly that the hexahedron is the best and only possible shape of the atom. Cf. Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 98, 2f.

16  See p. 252ff. below.

17  Later this would be defined more clearly with the term *ḥayyiz* (cf. Frank, *Beings and their Attributes* 96); but it is not transmitted from the period discussed here. In the context of Abū l-Hudhayl it is the term *kawn* that belongs in this context (see p. 253f. below; regarding his atomist understanding cf. Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 432, 5ff.). Dhanani (cf. p. 337, n. 13

dimensions appear when two or more occupied 'fields' are adjacent. The question remains of how six of these adjacent 'fields' could result in a three-dimensional shape; after all, if an atom 'touches six of its kind', there are seven altogether. Once again the sources offer no help. The solution is certainly not to join the cubes at the edges or the corners, or to assume hexahedra of different shape such as cuboids, or non-right-angled hexahedra such as rhomboids or parallelepipeds on a triangular basis – no solid conforming to the conditions mentioned above will be formed. Nor does Juwaynī have the solution when he suggests that of the six atoms three were positioned on top of the other three, as that would at best result in a prism, which would allow to distinguish right and left, but back–front or up–down only to some degree.[18] We will have to make do without plastic representation; that is implicit in the atom's lack of dimensionality. Abū l-Hudhayl is unlikely to have felt that the argument, proposed by Naẓẓām and repeated a number of times, applied to him: how, then, an atom could touch several others if it did not itself possess dimension.[19] This was the axiom on which his geometrical model was built, and an axiom cannot be proven again; it can only be either accepted or rejected.

The axes of a spatial coordinate system were essential.[20] Aristotle had contributed to the spread of this model,[21] but it was immediately comprehensible in any case; not only the Greeks but also the Jews assumed six cardinal directions.[22] It was once again Abū Hāshim, probably representing many others, too, who later pointed out that the atoms marked these six directions.[23] In Abū l-Hudhayl's eyes they were thus the smallest entities found in space which, although they only acquired dimensionality in agglomeration with others, possessed from the first a unique place they did not share with anything else. This is a fixed place, a 'field', and even though they may not be possessed

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below) coined the phrase 'discrete geometry' to denote the scientific model on which this was based.

18    Text 3, a; there is also an anonymous reference to this model in Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* V 105, pu. f. Juwaynī's account is problematic, not least because he claimed that Abū l-Hudhayl also spoke of a 'compact body' (*jism kathīf*) that had to be composed of at least 36 atoms (Text 3, b). This, however, sounds more like Abū l-Hudhayl's pupil Hishām al-Fuwaṭī (see ch. C 4.1.1.1 below).

19    Regarding Naẓẓām see p. 334ff. below; later also Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* V 102, 5ff. and earlier (cf. Baffoni, *Atomismo* 100ff. and 163ff.).

20    Text 2.

21    *De caelo* II 2, 284b 20ff.; he also emphasised, unlike Democritus, that a body required six atoms (Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 396).

22    Scholem, *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala* 26.

23    Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 174, 10ff.

of dimensionality, it can be stated that it is 'closer to the sky' than the surface on which it is located.[24] Usually they are invisible,[25] but God could allow us to see them as they are by no means non-existent. After all, they are invisible only because they do not have a colour;[26] Abū l-Hudhayl, like the entire field of optics in Antiquity, regarded colour as what is seen when an object is perceived.[27] If, however, an atom touches six others which do not also touch one another, this is because by touching (*mumāssa*) it enters into a combination that conveys dimension to it in the true sense. Only now, presumably, it acquires six sides, as Naẓẓām knew a group of atomists who believed that the atom possessed sides at the top and bottom, left and right, front and back, but who regarded these sides as accidents.[28] This implied that they were secondary features; atoms become cubes – as opposed to being comparable to or imaginable as cubes – only when they join with others.

Abū l-Hudhayl's imagining a spatial coordinate system is made more probable by Kaʿbī's later discovery of how the same effect can be achieved with only four atoms: it is possible to use one atom as the pivot for three others, by assuming one other atom to be either right or left, in front of or behind, and above or below it (Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 48, 8; a slightly vague explanation in Pines, *Atomenlehre* 6. n. 5; better Dhanani [see p. 337, n. 13 below] 264f.). The Samaritan al-Ṣūrī adopted this idea (*K. al-ṭabākh* 123, 4ff.). We must not lose sight of the fact that bodies are not isolated in space; Abū l-Hudhayl does not seem to have employed the idea of a vacuum. Air, too, consists of atoms. One can speak of the grid structure of the universe only in a limited sense; pitched stonework would be a better comparison, as already with Muʿammar's model. In order to comprehend the relation between individual atoms it was possible to use not only the verb *māssa* 'to touch', but also *laqiya* or *lāqā* 'to meet, come together' (cf. Text XXIII 6, b, and Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 173, 3f.). For further information on these matters see ch. D 1.3.2.1.1 below.

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24    Text 5, b–c.

25    As they were to Democritus (cf. Ch. Mugler in: Revue de Philologie 27/1953/145).

26    Text 6, d, and 20.

27    Cf. in more detail vol. I 429f. above.

28    *Maq.* 316, 10ff.; Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 61. Regarding Naẓẓām's text see p. 334f. below.

If Abū l-Hudhayl did in fact consider the sides to be accidents, as suggested by the passage from Naẓẓām's *K. al-juzʾ* cited above,[29] these would not be the first accidents to join with the atom. In the beginning there are rest and movement, for without movement there would not be joining or separation, and without rest, no stability. Physicality is not possible without movement and rest; consequently joining and separation are, in a sense, secondary or 'generated'.[30] Other accidents, such as colour or life, are even more secondary; while joining and separation constitute physicality, colour or life only occur once the body has formed.[31] As the accidents are not themselves physical, several of them may occur in one and the same place; this is impossible in the case of atoms or bodies.[32] Not even God can remove fundamental accidents from the atoms; this is an axiom of the order of creation that he determined for himself.[33]

The ranking of accidents in this way recalls Ḍirār; he, too, had emphasised certain fundamental accidents as opposed to others.[34] Abū l-Hudhayl, however, applies a different distinction between them: accidents that already inhere to the 'simple, indivisible substance' are always those that could be effected by a human: namely movement and rest, and everything 'generated' or caused by them – not only joining and separation, but also e.g. appearance (*hayʾa*).[35] This point of view comes as a surprise; based on Ḍirār one might have assumed that the fundamental accidents would be the ones not accessible to humans. However, Abū l-Hudhayl did not interpret atomism as a cosmological model in the way the Greeks did. God does not push atoms together in order to create the world, but creates things as a whole as presupposed in the Quran. Colour, Ashʿarī explains Abū l-Hudhayl's approach, means that something is created colourful, while combination means that something is created

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29      In confirmation cf. Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 188, 7ff., where, however, he is listed together with Jubbāʾī and Kaʿbī and might thus be overinterpreted.

30      Text 4, a; 1, c; 5, a; 6, b and d; 22. Regarding joining and separation we should also consider the terms σύνκρισις and διάκρισις used by the Greek atomists (Aristotle, *De gen. et corr.* I 2. 315b 20ff.).

31      Text 1, d, and 4, b; also 20.

32      Text 16.

33      Text 4, d. Cf. p. 250f. below.

34      See p. 42f. above.

35      Text 4, a. The term *hayʾa* occurs only in one other text, Text 21, in connection with Abū l-Hudhayl, and in a similar context. The probable meaning is, once again, that an atom acquires its sides and its dimensionality only in combination with others. Correspondingly, a human effects e.g. the appearance of a chest through combining boards by means of movement; if he takes the boards apart, the chest does not exist any more.

combined.[36] Within the chronological sequence of creation, colour is thus not at all secondary, nor does it differ from a 'primary' accident like agglomeration. 'Fundamental accidents' are consequently not something that existed first, but something without which the earthly existence of things would be impossible to imagine – primary preconditions for the atoms' spatial existence. Abū l-Hudhayl handled atomism in a reductionist way, explaining not the physical coming-into-being of things but their ontological structure.[37] If he says that a mustard grain can be divided into atoms,[38] this is above all a thought experiment; if it could be divided indefinitely, its parts could cover the entire earth.[39] The context suggests that, if such a reduction to the smallest component parts ever came about, God would be the one responsible.[40] But independently of whether he divides or combines, he will act in accordance with the laws of human action.

The theory is idiosyncratic, and the few remarks the doxographers devote to it are not enough to elucidate it entirely, but we can discern its place within the system. The scope of independent human action is, as we shall see,[41] greatly restricted in Abū l-Hudhayl's concept; movement and rest are not one aspect of many but the primary expression of human activity. The way in which Abū l-Hudhayl explained motion furthermore presumed that it did not affect only the body as a whole but also the individual atoms – and possibly not all of them.[42] Above all he applied the same concept to the issue of the creation, using it as the basis for his proof of the existence of God. It is true that, like the issues mentioned before, this belongs in a later chapter, but we shall look at the points relevant to this discussion here.

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36 Text 100, f; 101, a; 102, b. The separate creation of atoms and accidents might possibly be implicit in Text 100, e, but this sentence is only a retrospective conclusion. – Ibn Ḥazm would later conclude from these circumstances that from the point of view of theology atomism was actually a superfluous theory (*Fiṣal* v 95, 2ff.).

37 Cf. Frank, *Metaphysics* 40f.; cf. also 43. Similar Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 52.

38 Text 6, c.

39 Named as an atomist argument by Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt I 199, pu. ff.; cf. also Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's text in: ZGAIW 1/1984/175ff. Both, of course, consider this to be wrong. Ibn Mattōya traces it back to Jubbāʾī, among others (*Tadhkira* 171, 4ff.).

40 Cf. Text 6, and d.

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### 3.2.1.3.1.2    Createdness and the Proof of the Existence of God *e contingentia mundi*

God creates everything individually, calling it into existence by means of the *fiat*. This is how it was at the beginning of time, and it continues to this day, as beings are created all the time. Going beyond this he also imbues things with permanence by saying *ibqa* 'may you have permanence'; destroys them by saying *ifna* 'decay', and calls them back to life by saying 'return' (*'ud*).[1] With reference to the categories of atomism we can imagine this in such a way that by saying '*fiat*' he conveys the accident 'combination' to an agglomeration of atoms, imbuing them with cohesion and physicality, *iqba* causes the accident to have permanence, and *ifna* removes it. The being of things is inherent in their createdness.

As we have seen, things are created whole: combined, dimensional, coloured etc., with all the accidents/attributes God grants them. Those accidents that can also be effected by humans, namely rest and movement, however, are not inherent in them at the time of their creation. A thing is neither at rest nor in motion at that point,[2] being only 'directed', i.e. oriented towards a certain movement, but nothing more;[3] thus its atoms' fundamental accidents do not assert themselves. Now it becomes clear why Abū l-Hudhayl said that they may manifest themselves on the atoms, not that they *must* manifest themselves.[4] Kindī took this theory so seriously that he refuted them in a separate treatise.[5] His pupil Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī, on the other hand, embraced it.[6]

Abū l-Hudhayl explains the ability of the accident 'combination' or 'connection' to give cohesion to things in that the accident spreads out over the individual atoms of a body.[7] In the theory of movement it was also, and particularly, relevant that one and the same accident could be inherent to more than one substance.[8] This actually only stated one of the attributes of the body; Ibn Mattōya still explained simply that if a body is difficult to split, there must, after all, be a reason for it.[9] The Basran school would adhere to this model for

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1  Text 18, g; *Maq.* 366, 14f.; Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 243, 7ff. Also Frank 51, and Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 530ff. (p. 537ff. on the similarities with Jubbāʾī's teachings).

2  Text 28, c, and 29, a.

3  Text 29, b.

4  Text 4, a.

5  Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 318, ult., and in the dependent sources (cf. McCarthy, *Taṣānīf* 29 no. 156). Kindī furthermore wrote against atomism (ibid. 319, 1 = McCarthy 30 no. 158).

6  Cf. Rosenthal, *Aḥmad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib* 56.

7  Text 8; distorted in Text 14.

8  See p. 255 below.

9  *Tadhkira* 503, 3ff.; Abū Rashīd, *Fī l-tawḥīd* 101, 10ff.

centuries to come, with one qualification: after Jubbāʾī, the same did not apply to 'separation' any more. In fact, it was much more difficult to understand why it should have been called an accident at all; it was simply regarded as a 'state of being'.[10] This distinction does not alter the fact that neither Abū l-Hudhayl nor his successor were able to accept the idea of a *materia prima*. Abū l-Hudhayl refuted it explicitly in one of his works, with reference to the indispensability of the accidents combination and separation – despite denying that rest and movement which, in his view, 'generated' combination and separation, were inherent to things at the moment of their creation.[11] In the world before our eyes they are always part of bodies; we can see how they alternate in a body and thus conclude that they are temporal phenomena that emerged within time (*muḥdath*), as they were called.

If they are fundamental conditions and at the same time tied to a specific time period, the body itself must have come into being within time. In this case, however, one cannot but presume a force that brought it into being, namely God.[12] Knowledge of God is thus generated in the very moment when one understands changes in the world and consequently the emergence (*ḥudūth*) of something that did not exist before. At this point the knowledge is summary and will be completed to give a coherent image of God in a second stage[13] but being tied to the immediate experience of creaturehood it is also predetermined and necessary, rather than acquired through reason.[14] This model is based on John Philoponus' criticism of Aristotle,[15] but similar ideas are also found in the works of the Church Fathers, Eznik of Kolb[16] or John of

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10   Text 9. Jubbāʾī said the same of rest; it, too, is only nominally different from 'Sosein', '(just) being' but belongs to the same category (*jins*; cf. Abū Rashīd, ibid. 131, pu. ff.). Regarding the concept of 'state of being' (*kawn*) see p. 252f. below.

11   Text 10–11. Unfortunately the 'book' in which Abū l-Hudhayl set down this proof is not named (Text 10, c). In ZDMG 135/1985/45 I thought of *K. al-jawāhir wal-aʿrāḍ* (Catalogue of Works no. 41), but I do not consider it probable any more, as 'substances' and accidents were not necessary for this proof. Maybe the *K. al-ḥujja ʿalā l-mulḥidīn* (Catalogue of Works no. 2) would be a more likely source. Abū l-Hudhayl proposed a total of three arguments, only one of which was regarded as stringent. Interestingly this was the only one that would later continue to be linked to him (cf. ZDMG, ibid. 43ff.).

12   Text 41–42; also the anecdote in Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 181, 18ff.

13   See p. 271f. below.

14   Text 43 and 44, a–b.

15   Cf. H. Davidson in: JAOS 89/1969/370ff., and id., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God* 92 and 134; also Craig, *Cosmological Argument* 7ff.

16   *Adv. haereses* I 2/transl. *Ausgewählte Schriften der armenischen Kirchenväter* (BKV 57), p. 28f.

Damascus.[17] Muqammiṣ adopted it directly from there, interestingly without the atomist guise.[18] To the systematist this might recall Descartes in whose view consciousness recognised itself at first as imperfect being, thus legitimising an innate knowledge of God.[19] Within Islam this is the first consistent proof of the existence of God. It is based on the deliberations of the Basran Ghaylāniyya concerning the first and second knowledge of God; they, however, had not thought in terms of proof of the existence of God but were merely trying to de-limit more clearly what exactly the a priori element of knowledge of God con-sisted in.[20] While this approach is still discernible in Abū l-Hudhayl's concept, it was discarded later: the existence of God could be proven just as easily, and turned out to be more compelling, without the belief in predetermined knowl-edge of God.[21] Once it had been segmented into its separate stages, it would be called Abū l-Hudhayl's 'four theories' or 'four premises' (*daʿāwī*);[22] they were most popular for a long time to come.

Concerning the long-term effect on Islamic and Jewish *kalām* cf. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity* 134ff. A comparatively early instance is found in the deliberations of the Zaydite Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, d. 246/860 (cf. Abrahamov in: Oriens 29–30/1986/279); his contemporary al-Jāḥiẓ also argues entirely in accordance with Abū l-Hudhayl and presuming immediate knowledge of God (cf. Text XXX 7, g). Ṭabarī adopted the proof in the cosmological introduction to his history (I 25, 3ff./transl. Rosenthal 194). Davidson looks more closely at the version revised by al-Juwaynī (p. 143ff.). Texts to be added to the numerous later instances he adduces are Bīrūnī, *Taḥdīd nihāyat al-amākin* 38, 4ff./transl. Strohmaier, *In den Gärten der Wissenschaft* 75, and Ibn Sabʿīn, *Masāʾil Ṣiqilliyya* 20, 2ff. Concerning Ibn Rushd's criticism cf. *Kashf manāhij al-adilla* 135, 5ff.; also Meyer in: ZGAIW 3/1986/316f. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī already considered the proof to be outdated (*Zubdat al-ḥaqāʾiq* in: *Muṣannafāt* I, p. 12, 1ff.).

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17    *De fide orthodoxa* I 3/transl. BKV 44, p. 5.

18    Cf. Stroumsa in: *ʿIšrūn maqāla* 16.

19    Cf. L. Oeing-Hanhoff in: Theologie und Philosophie 52/1977/388.

20    See vol. II 196f. and 200f. above.

21    Or, as in the case of Abraham in the well-known pericope sura 6:67ff., before one knew who the true God was. There, too, movement ('disappearance') is proof of finiteness.

22    Text 42, c. Cf. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity* 140 and also in: JAOS 89/1969/386f.; also Frank in: *Isl. Philos. Theol.* 81, and Gimaret, *Noms divins* 305; in more detail id., *Ashʿarī* 219ff.

### 3.2.1.3.1.3 Permanent and Non-Permanent Accidents

Just how much this train of thoughts followed the axioms of the 'metaphysics of created being' only becomes clear in an entirely different context. A body that came into being within time cannot, we learn, have been effected by another body, for nothing created can effect another created body. Its status of being is deficient: only the creator effects.[1] This is directed against Muʿammar, and it may lead to difficulties when we consider human actions; but this is the only way in which the proof of the existence of God is complete. Accidents by definition cannot possess their own effective force; after all, some of them are not even permanent.

Abū l-Hudhayl did not claim that **all** of them lacked permanence, i.e. endured no longer than a moment; he may have been an atomist but not necessarily an occasionalist. On the contrary: just like the body on which they manifest themselves, most of them possess a degree of permanence, above all, of course, the 'combination', i.e. the cohesion of the body, but also its colour, its scent, flavour or, in the case of living beings, life and the capacity to act, and maybe even knowledge.[2] The criteria according to which Abū l-Hudhayl proceeded are not quite clear. We receive the impression that he sometimes decided ad hoc, following theological constraints, thus for instance when he considered pain and delight to be permanent, presumably to ensure that the delights of paradise and the pains of hell should not be interrupted while they endure.[3] Rest, on the other hand, which one might have assumed to be most likely to be permanent, is in fact only permanent in some cases, thus in the afterlife when all movement has come to an end.[4] His younger contemporary Iskāfī (d. 240/854) reported that he made a distinction that meant only lifeless things could be at rest permanently, not living beings.[5] He may have thought of the majestic peace of a mountain range, but even when they enter into eternal rest, the inhabitants of paradise would still be living beings. Permanence, as we have seen, was generated by God enhancing his *fiat* with the words 'may you have permanence'.[6]

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1 Text 86, a–c.

2 Text 18, e, with commentary. The tradition is not entirely clear on the subject of knowledge.

3 Text 18, h–i.

4 Ibid., c–d; also 88, d. For more information see p. 275ff. below.

5 Text 19.

6 Text 18, g.

3.2.1.3.1.4        The Theory of Motion

The fact that rest is not inherently permanent is probably linked to rest being the correlate of motion. A movement is, in fact, the most significant instance of an accident that is never permanent.[1] A late source, Ījī's *Mawāqif*, also lists noises; after all, to us, too, sound is the most typical of transient phenomena.[2] Movement, on the other hand, we regard differently: as a continuum. It is well-known that this view was not customary at that time. Like most of his colleagues Abū l-Hudhayl did not regard movement as a passage through space but rather as a factor of the being of a thing;[3] *ḥaraka* is an isolated act of movement assigned to a particular moment in time. Here we must distinguish between the first moment (*waqt*) when the body is situated at a first location, and a second moment, when it is situated at a second location. The locomotion itself is not reflected – not least because there is no interval between the first and second moments; they follow one another immediately. Consequently the second moment is not necessarily the final point of the movement, but rather the immediately subsequent moment during which the body has moved one step along the plane on which it moves. Movement, in Abū l-Hudhayl's understanding, is an act manifesting in the second moment, in the form of an accident of the moving body when it reaches the second point. Movement thus means that the body has (already) moved. Rest, correspondingly, means that it rested in the same place for two consecutive moments.[4]

This is proper atomistic thinking, and follows a long-standing tradition. Epicurus had already been of the opinion that one cannot say that something is moving but only that it has moved.[5] The Megarian Diodorus Cronus had provided the following reasoning: an atom, i.e. a 'body with no separable parts', cannot possibly be *partly* here and *partly* there. It must fill the location at which it is entirely and thus cannot move within it.[6] Motion is the movement of atomically structured bodies within an equally atomically structured

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1   Text 18, b. Jubbāʾī adopted this position (Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 467, 10f.). On the subject of rest and motion in general see also Text XVII 13 and *Maq.* 404, ult. ff. (presumably as delimitation towards Naẓẓām).

2   Ibid., Commentary. Ījī's naming human speech as well is not altogether correct. Abū l-Hudhayl granted it, unlike sound, permanence (see p. 306 below).

3   Frank, *Metaphysics* 19.

4   Text 25.

5   Cf. esp. the summary in Simplicius, *In Arist. Phys.* Z 1. 232a 1ff. Diels, quoted in Usener, *Epicurea* 198 § 278b; also Furley, *Two Studies* 121. The idea that movement is made up out of moments of rest was implied already in Zeno's paradox of the flying arrow.

6   Furley 132; also H. J. Krämer, *Platonismus* 310f. In more detail S. Luria, *Die Infinitesimaltheorie der antiken Atomisten* 160ff., and R. Sorabji in: *Infinity and Continuity* 57 and 59ff.

space. There can be hardly any doubt that Abū l-Hudhayl thought the same,[7] but the framework within which he located his theory had shifted. To him the model of the first and second moment is above all a means of explaining human action.[8] Consequently he regarded movement as mainly caused by humans, and less as a purely mechanical process: it is prepared by means of the capacity to act in the first moment, and then exists as an action and event in the second moment. Humans can determine whether they choose the alternative (*ʿalā l-badal*) of implementing an act of rest: that is their free decision.[9] The abovementioned proof of the existence of God could thus be argued on the basis of actions, too.[10]

However, movement leads to a change of location and thus to a new state of being in space. Abū l-Hudhayl called this state of being *kawn*, and as it is always assigned to one particular item and may change from one moment to the next he also used the plural *akwān*. While the *akwān* would be unthinkable without movement, they are not identical with it.[11] Thus if someone walks to the right, his decision intends not only the movement but also a particular state of being, in this case being-on-the-right (*kawn yamnatan*);[12] movement, as Baghdādī put it, is the starting point of a state of being.[13] This *kawn* does not, however, require a separate capacity to act; as it is merely a 'factor', as would be said later, not an accident. In this way it was ensured that the path of the action should not be too fragmented.[14]

Several things depend on the correct understanding of the term *kawn*. Nader, translating *génération*, shifts the perspective (*Système de Muʿtazila* 170ff.); Frank, too, using the word 'becoming' in some instances, is still not quite free from this idea (*Metaphysics* 17f.; cf. BO 25/1968/259), but interprets correctly soon afterwards when in the same context he speaks of 'act of being temporally located in space' (18). Pretzl, *Attributenlehre*

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7   Regarding Muʿammar see p. 81 above.

8   See p. 267 below.

9   Text 24, a; 23, c.

10   Cf. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* VIII 286, 7ff.

11   Text 25, a, and 28, b; cf. also Abū Rashīd, 'Fī l-tawḥīd' 131, −4f.

12   Text 23, d–e; 24, b–c.

13   Text 26. Adopted in this form by Jubbāʾī and his two pupils Abū Hāshim and Ashʿarī.

14   Text 23, f. Furthermore, as we have seen, the capacity to act applies to this one movement just as to its alternative, the correlated act of rest. Further details on p. 267f. below. I do not believe that Abū l-Hudhayl regarded the state of being as a separate accident, as Frank presumed (*Metaphysics* 17). Of course the discussion of what else it could be may not have emerged until later.

47, is also good: 'Seinsweisen des Dinges im Raum' (the ways of being of a thing in space. Besides 'Befindlichkeit' (here translated as 'state of being') I have also used the word 'Sosein' (here translated as '[simply] being'); we should bear in mind that it refers to something impermanent. Consequently the term 'existence' is not recommended. We can see that the use of *kawn* to refer to a point in time, however terminological, does also have parallels in everyday speech, such as *in kāna kawn* 'when something happens' > *fa-kāna dhālika l-kawn* 'then this event took place' (Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLVIII 14, 8). Cf. also WKAS I 465.

The term was probably first coined by Abū l-Hudhayl, but Naẓẓām already used it in a modified sense (see p. 353 below). Later it would frequently be used simply to describe the fundamental accidents or primary states of movement and rest, combination and separation (Frank, *Metaphysics* 18, n. 15). Abū l-Hudhayl, on the other hand, distinguished the *akwān* not only from movement and rest but also from *ijtimāʿ* and *iftirāq*; the latter two being, as Abū Rashīd put it, 'factors' (*maʿānī*) added to the state of being of two things or atoms in order to constitute their closeness or distance (Text 9, a). Jubbāʾī revived this concept although he, as we have seen, qualified rest and separation (p. 248f. above). In general cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 99ff.

The fact that movement cannot be determined of itself is due to its being an accident. One does not perceive movement but rather the moving body or the body that has moved. This is how one is able to see movement, and even feel it.[15] The latter was not as evident as the former, and it is possible that Abū l-Hudhayl did not maintain it from the very beginning; he was said to have denied it in conversation with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam who then pointed out to him the contradiction in connection with seeing.[16] However, it was not a serious problem for him. He was much more interested in the question of where movement, if it is an accident subsisting within a body, is in fact located: everywhere, or only in a few atoms? For the time being what was clear was only that it spread,[17] and that an atom can absorb only one unit of movement.[18] He did not consider it necessary, on the other hand, that a part of movement **inheres** in every atom. In this, movement differed from colour which must inhere in all

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15    Text 21, a–f.

16    Text IV 34. According to Text 21, g, Abū l-Hudhayl emphasised explicitly that it was impossible to feel e.g. colours.

17    Text 4, c, and 14.

18    Text 12.

atoms as the object would otherwise not be coloured in its entirety, and conse-
quently not visible as a whole.[19]

Abū l-Hudhayl does not seem to have found many followers for these ideas[20] which were not, however, a simply theoretical whim but actually served to explain certain phenomena. Thus there was, for instance, movement caused by two agents – such as when two people moved one rock. This was clearly a combined movement manifested in one and the same body, but the atoms in which it inhered were moved by two different forces. The atoms' accidents of movement could consequently be distributed among the two agents, in accor-
dance with the force invested by each of them.[21] It would seem that if only one of the two does the work, he confers movement to a limited number of atoms. The related observation that there is slow as well as fast movement was even more important. If we assume that movement always attaches to every atom, this difference would be impossible to explain as the quantum of movement imparted to each individual atom is not variable. Abū l-Hudhayl found a solu-
tion in the hypothesis that a 'pause quantum' (*waqfa*) attaches to some atoms, and that the numerical relation between the two groups of accidents deter-
mined the speed. Even when running a horse still has 'pause quanta', when it puts its hooves down or lifts them up, as we know that it can always increase its speed. In the same way he explained that a rock with a greater weight will roll down a slope faster than another.[22]

The pause quanta are thus not linked to the distance covered by the horse or the stone; Abū l-Hudhayl did not mean that the moving body actually pauses at particular points ('atoms') of its journey. This spatial interpre-
tation was triggered only by Naẓẓām's theory of the 'leap'. Abū l-Hudhayl rejected the latter, not least because it presumed an infinite divisibil-
ity incompatible with atomism (Text 30, a–c; 6, c; also p. 339ff. below). Consequently Ibn Sīnā's later criticism of the *mutakallimūn*'s theory of movement does not apply to Abū l-Hudhayl, either, as he, too, regarded movement as a primarily atomistic process on a surface composed of atoms in the same way. Besides, he did not use the term *waqafāt* 'pause quantums', but *sakanāt* 'rest quantums' and thus creates the impression that moments of rest are inserted between the body's individual acts of

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19    Text 15, a–b; cf. p. 244 above.

20    Text 15, e.

21    Text 13. As we have seen (p. 131 and 79, n. 51, above), this issue was discussed by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir as well as Muʿammar; regarding Murdār cf. Text XVIII 11.

22    Text 30, c–e. It is possible that we are looking at later interpretation in this text (cf. the commentary).

movement. The difference to Abū l-Hudhayl becomes particularly clear in the following argument: a bird is slower than the sun, consequently the bird possesses moments of rest compared to the sun. The moments of rest, however, must not be fewer in number than the moments of movement, as in that case the bird would not be moving at all but be at rest. The sun could thus be moving only slightly less than twice as fast as a bird, which is obviously wrong (*Najāt* 110, −4ff.; similar also *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt 1 194, 12ff.). This would probably not have discouraged Abū l-Hudhayl, as he did not accept the idea of preponderance (*tarjīḥ*). Even if movement attaches to only a few atoms, overall movement is the result, if only a very slow one. A body is at rest only if **all** its atoms are at rest. The summary in Maimonides, *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn* 202, 18ff., is clearly dependent on Ibn Sīnā and consequently not applicable, either.

At first glance it does not seem entirely logical that weight was taken into account in the example of the rock. One wonders what the connection is between weight on the one hand and the numerical relation of movement and pause quanta on the other. The answer might be that the atomists explained the difference between lighter and heavier bodies as being because of the (greater) quantity of air particles embedded in the former.[23] If Abū l-Hudhayl assumed that pause quanta were attached as accidents to each of these air atoms, the smaller weight would automatically influence the velocity. Furthermore it would seem that Abū l-Hudhayl followed Aristotle in assuming that the fall velocity was proportional to the weight of the falling body.[24] It was not until Galileo's *Discorsi* that this theory received the death blow. Abū l-Hudhayl did, however, meet with opposition, which is not surprising, as there had been divergent views during Antiquity, too. Epicurus, in fact anticipating Galileo, had claimed that in a vacuum the velocity of all falling bodies must be the same;[25] John Philoponus, too, had raised concerns.[26] Abū l-Hudhayl's opponents maintained that weight was relevant only insofar as the lighter body reacted more to external obstacles, lurching or falling away from the straight line, and would thus take longer to cover the distance than another, heavier body. This takes into account factors such as air resistance etc., which Galileo would cite as well.[27]

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23    See p. 374f. below after texts by Jāḥiẓ, but without a direct connection to Abū l-Hudhayl.

24    Regarding Aristotle cf. *De caelo* 1 6. 273b 30; also Sambursky, *Das physikalische Weltbild der Antike* 130 and earlier.

25    Cf. Sambursky 235 after Diogenes Laertius 10, 61.

26    Dijksterhuis, *Val en worp* 40.

27    Text 30, f. Unfortunately the authors of this theory remain anonymous, but as some of them are described as 'philosophers', they were probably younger than Abū l-Hudhayl.

### 3.2.1.3.1.5    The Position of Earth in Space

Abū l-Hudhayl also thought about fall in an empty space. He found himself faced with a question much discussed during his day: how earth stayed where it was, being located unattached in empty space. Aristotle had long answered the question in his way: it is located in its 'natural place' (ἴδιος τόπος) at the centre of the universe, and as everything moves towards its 'natural place', earth is at rest there.[1] Epicurus had also provided an explanation in his Περὶ φύσεως.[2] It was thanks to the Sumanites, i.e. presumably the influence of Indian scholars, that the discussion had started moving again, as they claimed that earth, being heavy, was constantly falling through air.[3] Abū l-Hudhayl had tried to refute this: if earth was really falling into an abyss, a pebble or a feather dropped from a raised point would never land on it, as the earth is heavier and consequently falling faster, moving away from them, in fact. This implies the same error as before,[4] and it does not explain what holds the earth in place, for Abū l-Hudhayl did not believe in the 'natural place' – not, however, because he did not find Aristotle's teleological approach satisfactory: he was not looking for a genuinely physical explanation. He wanted a religious interpretation: God makes earth stop in its place, entirely of his power, 'without pedestal (*'amūd*) or tie', as he put it.[5] This clarification served to reject divergent opinions: the earth is not suspended from anywhere, nor does it rest on anything. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had thought that there must be a body beneath it whose rising movement balances its weight,[6] and others had resorted to the belief that while this body was not rising (like a balloon?), it could not fall either, as it was created anew every moment.[7] Mani had spoken of an angel who held up

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1   Regarding this idea cf. Gatzenmeier, *Straton von Lampsakos* 114; Sambursky 122 and 531f. (also Aristotle's criticism of Anaximenes ibid. 27.). Summarised by Baghdādī in *Uṣūl al-dīn* 61, 12f.

2   Frg. 42–44 = p. 243ff. ARRIGHETTI.

3   Baghdādī, ibid. 60, ult. f.; Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* 25, 7/transl. Bosworth in: *Festschrift Yarshater* 14; in more detail Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd* 152, 6ff., and Abū ʿAmmār ʿAbd al-Kāfī, *Mūjaz* I 277, ult. ff. Ibn al-Murtaḍā called this – probably incorrectly – the doctrine of the dualists (*Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 103, 10).

4   This encourages us to attribute the argument to Abū l-Hudhayl, as it only occurs in an anecdote also linked to Naẓẓām in a similar form (cf. Text 72 and Text XXII 125); Abū ʿAmmār links it simply to an 'early theologian' (*Mūjaz* I 279, 5ff.). However, it seems that Naẓẓām only added detail to the argument (cf. Text XXII 125, d–e and f–g). Cf. also Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 62, 4ff.

5   Text 69–71. Similar later Ashʿarī (cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 62).

6   Text IV 29; cf. vol. I 428 above. Later apparently adopted by Ibn al-Rēwandī (Text XXXV 7).

7   *Maq.* 326, 7ff., and 571, 11ff.; also Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* V 58, 3ff. Further theories on the subject cf. *Maq.*, ibid.; Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 61, 6ff. (with a refutation); Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf*

the earth,[8] and ancient beliefs had it resting on the back and horns of a bull who was in turn standing on a fish.[9] When pushing these speculations aside Abū l-Hudhayl relied on the Quran which states that the heavens have no supports (*ʿamad*).[10]

If earth is at rest this means that the universe, such as the firmament, moves around it. This movement, according to the Aristotelian view, did take place 'not within something', i.e. in empty space (cf. A. Maier, *Die Vorläufer Galileis* 20f.). It is possible that Abū l-Hudhayl also spoke of movement 'not away from something and not towards something', namely a movement that does not entail locomotion (*intiqāl*), as both phrases occur shortly after one another in the same text (27, c–d), but only there and in a context that is far from unambiguous. Abū l-Hudhayl and Jubbāʾī are not separated clearly, and furthermore the passage concerns the fact that a body does not move itself but only by means of its location. This could be related to the stars, if they were regarded as fixed points within a moving sphere, in which case they would be moving without leaving their location, 'not away from something'. A more obvious example would be that of a passenger on a ship; Aristotle had employed it to demonstrate movement *per accidens* (*Physik* VI 10, 240b. 8ff.). Strictly speaking the formula 'movement not away from something and not towards something', which is the only one traced back to Abū l-Hudhayl, could be applied only to the rotation of an axis. Naẓẓām rejected it, but then used this very rotation movement as an argument against the atomist theory of motion (see p. 352 below).

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192ff. § 52. The oldest passage discussing the dissent on the issue known to me is Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Al-dalīl al-kabīr* 104, 1ff.

8      Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 394, 5f. Thus also in Shīʿite tradition (*Biḥār* LX 94 no. 30).

9      Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 3, 10f./transl. Massé 5; Maqdisī, *Badʿ* II 47, –4ff. (after the 'books of the *quṣṣāṣ*', translated in Radtke, *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung* 8of.); Wahb b. Munabbih in Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* I 180, apu. ff. s. v. *thawr*, and in Suyūṭī (cf. Heinen, *Cosmology* 116 and 144f.); as popular belief in Baghdad in Petermann, *Reisen* II 301. Regarding Shīʿite tradition cf. Kulīnī, *Kāfī* VIII 89, 6ff.; *Biḥār* LVII 88, 2f., and LX 78f. no. 1–3. Concerning Persian poetry cf. Ritter, *Bildersprache Niẓāmīs* 37, and *Meer der Seele* 36. The fish presumably corresponds to the behemoth in Job 40:15; the underlying consideration is how earth can stay in the ocean.

10     Sura 13:2 and 31:10; cf. Job 38:6: 'Whereupon are the foundations thereof (i.e. of the earth) fastened?' For further material, also antique parallels, cf. Daiber, *Aëtius Arabus* 431ff. Emperor Frederick II considered this question, too, and asked Michael Scot for a solution (Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* 293).

### 3.2.1.3.1.6 Air and Light

Besides the falling movement and the downward slide along an inclined plane, there was throwing or casting. In this case Aristotle assigned an important role to the air: the force imparted to the projectile by the human has effect only at the moment of throwing; it is causation by contact. Afterwards the body maintains its movement thanks to the air surrounding it, which it parts before itself, and which then joins together behind it.[1] John Philoponus had already rejected this model,[2] and Abū l-Hudhayl did not follow it, either. Movement 'cannot be thanks to the air, for if it does not impede, it cannot cause, either'.[3] Air is not something concrete, not a 'thing'; it merely provides 'a place for the bodies'.[4] Maʾmūn conducted an experiment to show that he disagreed.[5]

In the case of Abū l-Hudhayl, too, we cannot be entirely certain whether he believed what a comparatively late source reports about him. Elsewhere we read that air had 'parts', presumably atoms, which could carry accidents; in which case it would be a 'body' after all. The accident that spreads together with it is light,[6] the real existence of which may be deduced by the fact that we can keep it away by closing a shutter.[7] Of course in order to make the two fragments agree, Abū l-Hudhayl would have to presume that in truth we are only impeding the path of air.

### 3.2.1.3.1.7 Accidents without Substratum

To Abū l-Hudhayl, accidents were phenomena without a physical form. They usually manifest themselves on bodies, but this is not a *conditio sine qua non*. Occasionally Abū l-Hudhayl felt compelled to presume an accident 'without a substratum', 'not in a place' (*lā fī maḥall*), for instance in the case of the '*fiat*'. This is an act of creation (*khalq*) expressed through God's act of speech and will, referring to something that has being and becomes created in this way:

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1  *Physik* IV 8. 215a 1; also Samburksy 135f. and Manuwald in: Festschrift Moraux 153f. Concerning the distinction between causation by contact and transferred causation cf. Anneliese Maier, *Zwei Grundprobleme der scholastischen Naturphilosophie* (²Rome 1951), p. 115. H. Blumenberg uses the terms 'begleitende Kausalität' (concomitant causation) and 'übertragene Kausalität' (transferred causation) (*Die kopernikanische Wende* 21f.). Aristotle only knew of the first of these.

2  Maier, *Zwei Grundprobleme* 120f.; Pines, *Collected Works* I 38f. and 50ff.

3  Text 73, b–c, a quotation from the *khuṭba falakiyya*. 73, a, has no connection to Abū l-Hudhayl.

4  Text 33. See also ch. D 1.3.2.1.1 below.

5  See p. 216 above.

6  Text 32.

7  Text 31. The same example was used by Naẓẓām, but with a different reasoning (cf. Text XXII 44; also p. 348 below).

the created being, too, is called *khalq*.[1] However, the being does not yet exist; only the act of creation generates it. Consequently the accident *khalq* does not have a 'place', it is a hypostasis. The same is true of decay, which is also effected by means of God's word; in this case the substratum slips away from under the accident, as it were.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl applied the same theory even to existence, although this accident could be supported by a body that already exists and has not yet decayed.[3] He was probably swayed by the analogy;[4] God's word cannot become as one with earthly things. Every divine act of will, we learn, exists without a substratum.[5]

A last one of these accidents is time.[6] Here we would appreciate even more than previously if the sources were to tell us why this is so. What is clear is: they presume that Abū l-Hudhayl's definition set him apart from the ideas of his time, which were probably still centred around the idea that time was generated by the celestial sphere turning; the celestial sphere would then in turn be its substratum. Sībawayh's deliberations were probably based on this; in his view time is 'the sequence of night and day' (*muḍiyy al-layl wal-nahār*), and he calls it *dahr* – without any qualms at using a term with which people associated the fateful, impersonal, eternal time of the ancient Iranians.[7] He certainly did not think in such heathen terms; *dahr*, as the context reveals, is the course of time into which periods of time (*azmina*) fit, and into these, in turn, points in time (*awqāt*). Sībawayh distinguished between time and place, or rather: between the determination of time in the grammatical sense and the determination of place, stating that place has physicality (*juththa*), while time

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1   Frank correctly points out the equivocality of the term (*Metaphysics* 45 and 49f.). Further details p. 302ff. below and vol. II 828f. above.

2   Text 17, b, and 36, a. The explanations are not found in the sources in this form. Cf. also Kiyā al-Harrāsī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 108b.

3   Cf. also Text 18, f.

4   Might the axiom that an accident (existence) cannot subsist in another, namely that to which it imparts existence (cf. vol. I 420 above)? However, Abū l-Hudhayl believed existence to be 'without place' even when it related to **bodies** (Text 18, g).

5   Text 17, b. Thus also Jubbāʾī; regarding his argument cf. Gimaret in: *Livre des Religions* 265, n. 3. This is probably the reason why Abū l-Hudhayl did not ask the question (which would later be more or less a matter of course) with regard to existence of whether this accident has permanent existence like the body concerned, or whether it is created anew in every moment.

6   Text 17, b, and 36, a.

7   *Kitāb* I 12, 10f. Derenbourg/transl. Jahn I 17. The definition was still quoted by Maʿarrī, *Jufrān* 418, 6f. Regarding *dahr* see vol. I 31 above and, in a wider context, Rosenthal, *Sweeter than Hope* 4ff.

does not; it 'is closer to the verb (*fiʿl*)'. Abū l-Hudhayl might just about have agreed: time is an accident, not a body, and it is concerned with actions (*afʿāl*).

Still, it was really not possible for a Muʿtazilite to embrace the concept of *dahr*. Abū l-Hudhayl saw day and night as 'the points in time (*al-awqāt*) and nothing else'.[8] Time is not a macrocosmic phenomenon, and it does not possess continuity; all larger units dissolve into individual points in time – entirely logical within a concept that sees movement as the progression from a first to a second moment (*waqt*), and action as the transition between the moment of capacity and the moment of realisation.[9] And we have to restrict this even further; movement was not relevant to Abū l-Hudhayl in this context, as he continued: 'The point in time is the factor that separates individual actions (*aʿmāl*), the distance between one action and the next. An act is generated with every point in time'.[10] *Aʿmāl* are only ever human actions; these are the subject under discussion. Movement is physics, but actions have value and will be evaluated. This point of view touches on Norbert Elias' more recent opinion: Time is the relation between activities; the measure of the distance between two events.[11] Abū l-Hudhayl, on the other hand, thought in atomist and theocentric terms: Time is a chain of points in time, for the reason that each point in time is immediate in relation to God. Time is not calculated but filled, and thus generated. It must be bought with good deeds.

Marzūqī tried to link this concept to that of Alexander of Aphrodisias, explaining that Abū l-Hudhayl just did not express himself quite clearly.[12] This would mean that Abū l-Hudhayl was one of the long line of those who agreed in some way with Aristotle's view that time was 'a number of motion'.[13] However, Marzūqī only had access to a part of the definition, as he based his work on Kaʿbī[14] who only quoted the first half of the sentence discussed above. Even if we substitute 'movements' for 'actions', his suggestion does not lead us anywhere: unlike Abū l-Hudhayl the Aristotelians thought in macrocosmic terms. There is also no explanation of why time cannot have a substratum in that

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8     Text 35, b.

9     Cf. Texts 13 and 25, c; in general also Maimonides, *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn* 201, 21f.

10    Text 34; also 35, a. Briefly also Daǧ in: İslam İlimleri Enst. Dergisi 2/1974/83.

11    *Über die Zeit* (Frankfurt 1984). W. M. Watt recalled Bergson; cf. *Free Will* 70: 'time as experienced, in a somewhat Bergsonian sense'. Homer, too, saw time as a phenomenon concomitant with events (cf. H. Fränkel, *Die Zeitauffassung in der frühgriechischen Literatur*, in: Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens 1ff.).

12    *Al-azmina wal-amkina* I 141, 7ff.

13    *Phys.* V 11. 220a 24f. Regarding the development in the Islamic region cf. Pines, *Collected Works* I 111ff. and 149ff.

14    Text 35.

case, a problem that can be solved only if we think in Abū l-Hudhayl's own categories. Time cannot be an accident of action as action is an accident itself; but it cannot be an accident of the acting body as it would lose its universal applicability. This would make it difficult to explain the phenomenon of simultaneousness because 'there can only ever be one point in time'.[15] It is true that the Muʿtazilites debated the question of whether one and the same point in time could apply to two things.[16]

Marzūqī was clearly incapable of imagining the past. He died in 421/1030 by which time a work by Alexander of Aphrodisias had long been available in an Arabic translation.[17] Furthermore, in the meantime Jubbāʾī, who frequently followed Abū l-Hudhayl's ideas, had explained the points in time as acts of motion of the celestial sphere.[18] Mufīd, who adopted this concept, interpreted it – presumably correctly – to mean that besides the individual points in time Jubbāʾī presumed an encompassing macrocosmic time (*zaman*); points in time are then fixed within this continual flux by whoever uses them 'for something', presumably an action.[19] Jubbāʾī may indeed have believed he was continuing Abū l-Hudhayl's ideas, but in fact this is something new, and Ashʿarī separated the two ideas quite clearly.

Maqdisī had no difficulty linking the first part of Kaʿbī's report of Abū l-Hudhayl (text 35, a) with the movement of the celestial sphere (ibid., commentary). He describes it as 'the Muslims' theory' (cf. the commentary on the text); he is probably following Jubbāʾī's lead. What ʿUbaydallāh b. Jibrīl b. Bakhtīshūʿ (d. after 450/1058) described as 'the Muslims' theory' in his *Rawḍa al-ṭibbiyya* (p. 44, 13) was quite different. Ṭabarī's definition of time, which he proposed at the very beginning of his history (I 7, 9/ transl. Rosenthal, *History* I 171), clearly follows Sībawayh's. Concerning definitions of time from the Islamic region cf. in general, following Abū Sulaymān al-Manṭiqī, J. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam* 166ff., also Pines, *Atomenlehre* 49ff. The difficulty of identifying the concept of time in past cultures was discussed by C. Colpe in: *Die Zeit* 225ff. – Regarding the atomist concept of time in late antique philosophy

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15    Text 36, b.

16    Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 443, 8f.

17    Ed. by Badawī in: *Commentaires sur Aristote perdus en Grec* 19ff.; cf. Zimmermann/Brown in: Der Islam 50/1973/314f., and *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* I 135 no. 23.

18    *Maq.* 443, 5f.

19    Cf. Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* 82, 7ff., and the analysis in McDermott, *Theology of al-Mufīd* 302ff.

cf. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 18f. (Diodorus Cronus), 300ff. (occasionalism in antique scepticism), and 375ff. (atoms of time in Epicurus); regarding Epicurus also A. Laks in: *Zeit, Bewegung, Handlung*, ed. E. Rudolph and C. F. von Weizsäcker 137. Sībawayh's speaking of the 'sequence of night and day' recalls Plato's Timaios (37 E); but it was probably quite a widely-known concept at the time, and furthermore so obvious that we should refrain from conclusions. As for Abū l-Hudhayl's idea of time's having no substratum we should remember that Chrysippus counted time among the four ἀσώματα (SVF II 331).

### 3.2.1.3.1.8    Sameness and Differentness

Abū l-Hudhayl devoted particular attention to the phenomena of sameness and differentness. This was thanks to Muʿammar; it was important to avoid the infinite regress which the latter had accepted in this context.[1] Like Aristotle Abū l-Hudhayl assumed that bodies ('substances') do not embody a contrast; this is generated by the accidents.[2] One is white, the other black etc.; these are contrary accidents inherent to individual bodies causing them to become opposites.[3] This model only works if it is applied to bodies, but not if one were to compare for instance God and the worlds; God is not a body, and nothing can inhere in him. It would not work, either, if one compared accidents directly, as they could only be the same or different if there were sameness or differentness inherent in them. This is, of course, not possible: no accident can be inherent in another one, and Abū l-Hudhayl took great care not to talk of *maʿānī*.[4]

The solution he proposed was predominantly verbal. Experience shows that one is constantly comparing accidents; it is consequently important to express the facts clearly. Verbal expressions, be they in the finite form (*ashbaha*, *ikhtalafa*) or the participle (*mushtabih*, *mukhtalif*, *mukhālif*),[5] should be avoided; nouns, on the other hand (*shibh*, *khilāf*) may be used.[6] God is not *mukhālif* in relation to the world, he is its *khilāf*;[7] one movement does not **equal** another but is equal to it (or rather, its equal).[8] The argument on which he based this

1   See p. 84ff. above.

2   Text 38, a–b; cf. Aristotle, *Cat.* 5, 3b 24ff. Text 38, c–d, is only an argument over terminology.

3   Text 39, b, and 40, c. For general information see Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 79ff.

4   Hishām b. al-Ḥakam used the same argument (see vol. I 420 above).

5   Text 23, a and k; 40, a; also 126, b.

6   Text 23, b; 39, a; 40, b. Cf. also Text 122, and 90, r.

7   Text 23, k, and 40.

8   Text 23, a.

distinction is not recorded by the sources, but it seems that in Abū l-Hudhayl's view the noun meant that something was the same or different of itself;[9] in this way he circumvented the necessity of turning sameness and differentness into accidents themselves. Verb forms, on the other hand, are traced back to the infinitive, the *maṣdar*, 'starting point'.[10] In this way they convey the impression as if an accident was inherent in them from the very first. This fallacy can be prevented by the use of appropriate language.

I shall not conceal that this interpretation distorts sentence 23, g, as this states that Abū l-Hudhayl considered the word *khilāf* **not** to be permissible. In this, however, it contradicts Text 39, a, as well as 122 and the statement concerning *shibh* in 23, b (i.e. the same paragraph). Maybe one ought to read *mukhtalif^(ān)* or *mukhālif^(ān)* instead of *khilāf^(ān)*; the following, too, seems to suggest a conjecture (cf. the note on sentence g). Or maybe the sentence should be read in connection with the subsequent passage 23, h–i, in which case terminology would not be the matter under discussion but rather the affirmation that 'things' (presumably: accidents) are different in and of themselves rather than thanks to a difference. Cf. also Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/474f., n. 79, although I diverge from his view in several points. Also Bernand in: SI 36/1972/31, n. 2.

### 3.2.1.3.2    *Anthropology*
#### 3.2.1.3.2.1       The Unity of the Person
Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism, like Muʿammar's and Ḍirār's, had to stand the test of being applied to the image of man. There can be no doubt that in Abū l-Hudhayl's view humans were composed of 'parts';[1] there was not even, as in Muʿammar's system, a special human atom determining a person's individuality.[2] The parts **themselves** form a total (*jumla*), a complex working of itself and always as a whole, not using just one or some of its parts.[3] As with all other bodies, unity,

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9      Text 23, h–i.

10     Thus at least in the view of the Basran grammarians. Regarding *ikhtilāf* cf. Zajjājī, *Īḍāḥ*
       56ff., and Abū l-Barakāt al-Anbārī, *Inṣāf* I 235ff. (quaestio 28); also Mehiri, *Les theories
       grammaticales d'Ibn Jinnī* 325.

1      Text 124.

2      See p. 89f. above.

3      Text 124; regarding *jumla* cf. Text 116, b.

'combination' is thus presupposed,[4] although it remains entirely physical to begin with: a human is 'a body (*jasad*) that eats and drinks'[5] or the 'person (*shakhṣ*) that has two hands and two feet',[6] clearly that which is visible on the outside.[7] While there are some features with which he could dispense without losing his personhood: his hair, the nails on his fingers and toes,[8] he does not, at least by this definition, a soul.

Abū l-Hudhayl had this materialistic concept in common with Ḍirār.[9] It is, of course, properly atomist; Democritus, too, had determined humans based on their outward appearance.[10] He, however, had also spoken of a fire within.[11] Abū l-Hudhayl could not work without an animating principle, either, although he does not seem to have employed the word that would be used from Naẓẓām onwards at the latest, namely *rūḥ*. While the term crops up from time to time in our sources, it appears to have found its way in through a secondary question: wherever it does occur it is redundant and not necessary to the argumentation.[12] Abū l-Hudhayl simply spoke of 'life'; Islamic theology uses this term, unlike Aristotle but in accordance with the Stoics, only for living beings (*ḥayawān*) in the narrower sense, not for plants.[13] However, he appears to have believed that this life, which joins the human's visible form, might be an

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4    Abū l-Hudhayl used the term *taʾlīf* in the context of humans as well, as witness the title at Catalogue of Works no. 35.

5    Text 117, a (after Kaʿbī).

6    Text 116, a. Regarding *shakhṣ* see ch. D 2.2 below.

7    *al-ẓāhir al-marʾī* is the expression shared by the two otherwise verbally different definitions in 116, a, and 117, a.

8    Text 116, b.

9    Later, Jubbāʾī would follow him closely (cf. Gimaret, *Noms divins* 157f., and especially *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* 92ff.).

10   Aristotle, *De part. anim.* I 1. 640b 29ff.

11   Jürss, *Griechische Animisten* 172f. To Epicurus, too, the human was 'that figure there, with a soul' (τοιουτονὶ μόρφημα μετ᾿ἐμψυχίας, Frg. 310 USENER; cf. M. Gigante, *Scetticismo ed Epicureismo* 149ff.).

12   Cf. e.g. Text 120, c, with the commentary; 120, a, is presumably only an interpretation by the heresiographer. In 123, too, *rūḥ* is merely the generic term used by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. Text 118 is not characteristic enough, being the summary of several doctrines. In Text 121, b, on the other hand, *rūḥ* does not occur at all.

13   As pointed out by Gimaret, *Noms divins* 232. The reason was probably, as it had been for the Stoics, that they linked the *rūḥ* or the πνεῦμα to the blood; in the Stoic view plants, on the other hand, were held together purely by their organic structure (cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Phys.* I 81; also Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* [4]III$_1$, p. 196, n. 1, and vol. II 44, n. 26 above).

accident as well as a body. If it is interpreted as a body, then it is independent and could separate from the human again later; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār thought that this anticipated the idea of *rūḥ*.[14]

The *qāḍī* was surely only partially correct. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya made clear that by continuing to call *rūḥ* 'life', Abū l-Hudhayl betrayed that he did not believe it would exist after death. He may have thought of it as an independent 'soul', but certainly not an immortal one. If life was an accident, it would, of course, not be immortal in any case.[15] Still, we may presume that it is inherent in all the atoms of the human body.[16]

The degree to which the unity of the human person was not only postulated but also guaranteed may have seemed doubtful to other thinkers such as Muʿammar or, in particular, Naẓẓām. Abū l-Hudhayl did indeed argue with Naẓẓām concerning this subject.[17] It should not be overlooked that he accorded the human not only life but also a self (*nafs*).[18] This term could not be avoided, as – unlike *rūḥ* – it occurs far too frequently in the Quran with reference to humans.[19] He also read in the Quran that this *nafs* is recalled not only at the time of death but also during sleep, while the sleeping person's life stays with him.[20] And this shows precisely that *nafs* did not guarantee the unity of the person in Abū l-Hudhayl's view;[21] he was engaging in exegesis rather than anthropology.

### 3.2.1.3.2.2    Human Action

The unity of a person is experienced particularly when performing an action. We have seen that a human employing the capacity to act granted him will

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14    Text 117, b–c (after Kaʿbī) and 119. Cf. also Text 140, b, and XVI 54.

15    Text 123. Here, as in 120, no mention is made of the suggestion that life might be a body. In 119 Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār is relying on 117, b–c. Consequently everything depends on Kaʿbī's testimony. Text 140, b, conveys the impression that this was above all doctrinal dissent among Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils.

16    Cf., for the entire subject, also Frank, *Metaphysics* 34ff.

17    Cf. the title at Catalogue of Works no. 36. Abū l-Hudhayl composed two further texts on the human person (no. 34–35).

18    Text 121, b.

19    It is well known that the term *rūḥ* plays a rather complex part in the Quran (cf. Th. O'Shaughnessy, *The Development of the Meaning of the Spirit in the Qurʾān*; Rome 1953). It never primarily refers to the soul or the breath of life of a human, but always the spirit of God. This may, as in the case of Mary's conception, be breathed into a human. More details in ch. D 2.2 below.

20    Text 120, c, after sura 39:42.

21    As opposed to Dughaym's view in *Falsafat al-qudar* 101f.

have an effect beyond the moment.[1] While this capacity to act is merely an accident, it does have permanence.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl, however, did all he could to demonstrate its limits. Human action has nothing in common with God's action, just like human will has a much smaller reach than divine will; God alone can realise something in the very moment that he wills it.[3] Humans are able to effect things immediately and unavoidably by means of an act of will,[4] in which case the event takes place in two moments that immediately follow one another 'without interruption'; it would be the same in the case of an action.[5] Experience teaches us that even when acting one can never be entirely sure of the implementation. It is true that one possesses the capacity to act in the 'first moment' – one is able to act, and indeed does act – while in the 'second moment' the action takes place and thus exists, similar to how we should imagine movement (language expresses this in the two aspects *yafʿalu* and *faʿala*, *fiens* and *factum*).[6] It might, however, happen that in the second moment incapacity (*ʿajz*) occurs simultaneously with the action: the agent may suffer a stroke. In that case the capacity to act that had already transformed into action would be impeded after all – even though it would have completed playing its part by this, second moment, and would not be required any more; it is required only before the action.[7] Similarly an act of will can be stopped if the capacity to act, that logically would have to combine with it, were hampered by some incapacity.[8]

This theory was rather complex and gave rise to misunderstandings. As a human possesses the capacity to act in the 'first moment' and also acts, people tried to delimit Abū l-Hudhayl's theory to stating that a human would then have the capacity to do only what he does in fact do, that his actions would be predetermined.[9] This was not Abū l-Hudhayl's intention: the capacity to act

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1  P. 49f. and 126f. above.

2  Text XVI 55, and XXI 127; also 18, 3. It is not, in fact, identical with health and well-being, as Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir assumed (cf. Text XVI 55 and XVII 47).

3  Text 126 and 125.

4  Text XVI 52.

5  Text 129.

6  Text 130; cf. McDermott, *Theology of Al-Mufīd* 164. Abū l-Hudhayl wrote against Ḥafṣ al-Fard concerning *faʿala wa-yafʿalu*, also a *K. al-istiṭāʿa* (cf. Catalogue of Works no. 24–25).

7  Text 128, a–d with commentary; also Text 129 and 92, d. Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 234, 12ff., appears to base his construction of the counter-image of the 'majority' opinion on this.

8  Text 133. This sentence becomes comprehensible only if considered with reference to 128, c–e.

9  Text 134, where the argument for this *muʿāraḍa* is a different one.

does not have to be realised as an action,[10] and even if it is, one might just as well do the opposite – but only this, not just any arbitrary action.[11] Once the action has started it cannot, under ordinary circumstances, be stopped, except in case of a suddenly arising incapacity. That this clearly does not detract from the original capacity to act was used as an elegant explanation for the fact that chickens after their heads have been cut off will still run around and flap their wings for a while, or that someone whose power of speech has been paralysed will stammer a few words after all. In Abū l-Hudhayl's words: muteness and death, both of which are special cases of 'incapacity', may still be linked to a minimal amount of speech or the action for which one had previously been granted the capacity.[12] Knowledge, will, or perception, on the other hand, cannot occur simultaneous with them.[13]

The latter distinction was self-evident in the situation described. To Abū l-Hudhayl it was also proof that physical and mental activity should not be treated equally in any case.[14] Mental processes (*afʿāl al-qulūb*) can exist simultaneously; physical actions, on the other hand, cancel one another out. Someone in motion cannot also be at rest; but someone knowing something may well want to do it at the same time. Or, to put it differently: a body part can only ever do one thing at one particular moment; brain activity and emotions, on the other hand, which Abū l-Hudhayl subsumed under the term 'heart' (*qalb*), are complex.[15]

And independently of where the actions take place, in Abū l-Hudhayl's view they are always tied to a particular objective; he did not include aimless action, not even on the mental level, in his system. This one-track view was mitigated, as we have seen, by the 'alternative' option of refusing the objective; furthermore, *tawallud* widened the range of outcomes of an action slightly. Still, it is interesting to see how Abū l-Hudhayl limits this last concept, which he adopted from Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir, in particular. While he appears to have adopted

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10   Text 135.

11   Text 24, a; especially also Text 9, l and u–z, exemplifying the argument with the predestinarians. Cf. p. 252f. above for the example of movement.

12   Text 128, e, and 131, c–d; also 77, b–c.

13   Text 128, f, and 131, b; also 77, d.

14   Text 131, a.

15   Text 132. It is not certain that Abū l-Hudhayl himself employed the terms *afʿāl al-qulūb* or *afʿāl al-jawāriḥ*; the traditions also include phrases such as *mā kāna bil-jawāriḥ* (Text 131, a). The phrase *afʿāl al-qulūb* was also used in grammar, in a different sense (cf. G. Ayyoub in: Analyses Théorie 1980/1, p. 1–54). A possible connection remains to be researched. It is furthermore remarkable that Syrian monks distinguished between *ʿamlē dᵉlebbā* and *ʿamlē pagrānāyē* (cf. Thomson in: MW 39/1949/287 regarding Isaac of Nineveh).

Bishr's definition,[16] in his view human action implied a 'knowing how to do it'.[17] This immediately eliminates a number of Bishr's examples, in particular the controversial issue of perception. One 'generates' the pain of someone whom one hits, because one 'knows how to do it', but one does not generate the enjoyment one feels when eating something delicious. One does not generate colour, either; God does that.[18] We are not told further details, but what is important is that it seems that with this restriction human responsibility was pushed to the fore more clearly. All of a sudden, the example of the arrow is pursued to lead to the person shooting it killing whoever it hits; one even 'generates' his death if one has died in the meantime. If one 'knows how to do it', this train of thought suggested itself. Things beyond one's control, everything inexplicable but also everything unintentional and reflexive, is in God's domain; for everything else one has to take responsibility even beyond one's own death.[19]

It may be instructive to list everything humans cannot effect because they do not 'know how to do it': knowledge and perception (Text 142 and 140, e); hearing and seeing (Text 22); life and death (Text 85, b, and 140, m); enjoyment, hunger and satiety; temperature ('heat and cold'); wetness and dryness; cowardice and bravery; colours, flavours, and smells (Text 140, e, with commentary; also Text 22 and 85, b). It must be borne in mind above all that humans do not effect their capacity to act (Text 22 and 140, m) or, of course, their incapacity (Text 85, b); both these come from God. In any case, humans can only effect accidents, never bodies (Text 140, m). A craftsman who produces something effects only length, width, etc.; the materials are already existent. We should like to know how Abū l-Hudhayl explained the work done by a fuller or apothecary if humans do not 'know how to make colours and smells (scent)'. Besides the 'fundamental accidents' humans are able to control noises especially;

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16  Cf. Text 140, d and i, and Text XVII 17, g (unless, of course, this was simply the formula used by the heresiographers – or by the source on which both passages in Ashʿarī are based – when speaking of *tawallud*). In general also Text 139, b.

17  Text 140, a and g–h. The Arabic phrase used is *yuʿlamu kayfiyyatuhū* (in the passages cited to be translated more literally as 'the implementation of which is known'). The same phrase in the active voice is found in Text 22 (Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 374, 5f.): *mā yaʿrifu l-khalq kayfiyyatahū*. In this context Jāḥiẓ, too, speaks of *ʿālim bi-kayfiyyat al-fiʿl* (Text xxx 6, b). Regarding the interpretation cf. the commentary on Text 22.

18  Ibid., b and e; cf. also the commentary. Also Fakhry in: MW 43/1953/98f.

19  Ibid., k–l, discussed in more detail in Text 141. Abū l-Hudhayl wrote a *K. al-tawlīd*, but interestingly directed against Naẓẓām rather than Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (Catalogue of Works no. 26). Regarding Naẓẓām's understanding of *tawallud* see p. 411 below.

it is known that these are caused by knocking two items together (*ištikāk*, cf. Text 140, b and h; also Text 22 and 85, a). Consequently they are never listed with those accidents that cannot be 'fundamental' (Text 1, d; 4, b; 6, e). Interestingly, Abū l-Hudhayl also wrote a *K. fī l-ṣawt mā huwa* (Catalogue of Works no. 46). Concerning pain see p. 251 above and Text 22; it is caused by a blow (Text 140, b and h). A human's self-determination is thus minimal, but sufficient to justify his responsibility before God.

3.2.1.3.2.3      Perception and Knowledge

Perception is one of the processes of which we do not know how they work exactly; it is effected by God and occurs 'of necessity'.[1] The senses by means of which it takes place are accidents;[2] they are distinct from one another.[3] Being accidents, they are different from the human body, and consequently perception does not take place within the sensory organ but in the 'heart'.[4] The point at issue concerns hearing and seeing, not eye and ear, and although Abū l-Hudhayl did not know the concept of the soul and had not discovered the need for a *sensus communis*, he understood perception to be a psychological process; it was part of the *afʿāl al-qulūb*. This is precisely why it is beyond human control; being able to open and close one's eyes is entirely irrelevant in the context.

Being effected by God removes its status as a law of nature at least in theory; it is in God's discretion. It could thus happen that someone opens his eyes but does not see because God does not will it, or that a blind man recognises colours because God created the perception in his heart.[5] It could even be possible to see an atom.[6] Abū l-Hudhayl wrote a separate treatise on the salient point, concerning 'whether hearing and vision act (themselves) or whether they are (merely) a means to an action', i.e. whether they are only tools.[7] The consequences were properly discovered by his opponents who then exaggerated them; they probably came from Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's camp[8] and provided

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1   Text 143, b, and 145, a.

2   Text 121, a.

3   Text 122. In this context, too, Abū l-Hudhayl did not, of course, say *mukhālif* but *khilāf* (see p. 264 above). In my opinion Bernand overinterpreted this passage in SI 36/1972/30f.

4   Text 143, a, and 144.

5   Text 145, b–c; also 77, b.

6   Text 6, d.

7   Catalogue of Works no. 45.

8   See p. 127f. above.

arguments that would be oversimplified over time.[9] They were so successful
that even Jubbāʾī distanced himself from Abū l-Hudhayl in this matter.[10]

Rational cognition was a different matter, although it could be seen as close-
ly related to sensory perception: understanding (ʿaql) is 'sensing (ḥiss) that we
call understanding insofar as it is rational'.[11] In both cases we are looking at
how we grasp reality; Abū l-Hudhayl interprets ʿaql more as an infinitive (to
understand something) than as a noun (the understanding of something).
In Muʿammar's system, aḥassa/ḥiss had been the superordinate term as the
word was not yet restricted to sensory perception.[12] This made it easier to
understand that part of rational cognition is also 'necessary'. In Muʿammar's
view this was the sense of self; Abū l-Hudhayl called it 'a becoming aware (ʿilm)
given of necessity, thanks to which a human can distinguish between himself
and an ass, between heaven and earth, and suchlike'. There is also the kind
of rational cognition acquired by deliberation,[13] which is based on the first
kind. Still, it, too, can be given by God a priori: he can intervene here just as in
sensory perception.[14]

The faculty of discrimination (tamyīz) that is given and appears when the
intellect matures is a prerequisite of the proof of the existence of God we de-
scribed above; it also allows humans to recognise their creaturehood.[15] It is
thus furthermore the basis of accountability before the law (taklīf);[16] knowl-
edge to Abū l-Hudhayl, and to his era in general – and indeed to the majority
of Muslims to this day – was aimed at proving oneself in the world and living
as a believer.[17] A young person would do well to develop this primary and dif-
fuse knowledge of God, to become aware that God is one and is just, and that

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9       Cf. Text 146; also my *Erkenntnislehre* 168.

10      Text 145, d. – Pain, if one feels it oneself, is of course a perception effected by God; only if
        one inflicts pain on someone else does one 'know how to do it'.

11      Text 170, c.

12      Cf. Text XVI 64, f.; cf. p. 93f. above. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār discusses this interpretation in
        *Mughnī* XI 378, 7ff. Fārābī would later list the individual meanings of ʿaql at the beginning
        of his *Risāla fī l-ʿaql* (transl. Lucchetta 91f.).

13      Text 170, b. ʿilm should also be read as an infinitive; 'knowledge' would be too static.
        Regarding the context cf. also Bernand in: SI 36/1972/32.

14      Text 45. There is a certain tension here with Abū l-Hudhayl's exegesis of sura 7:143 where,
        in his view, Moses was not justified in asking God for immediate knowledge of him (see
        p. 54 above). Abū l-Hudhayl would probably have answered that one must not tempt God.

15      Text 44, a–b. Sensory perception is in the wrong place in *b*.

16      Cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Risālat al-Qiyān*, transl. Beeston 35 § 54.

17      Thus also Frank, *Metaphysics* 32, n. 31.

he has made ritual and moral duties incumbent on humans. Insights granted the young person through the revelation, i.e. 'auditory' ones, that cannot be grasped through reason, such as details of the law, must be executed immediately. Should he fail to do so he would be deserving of punishment and, if he died then, would go straight to hell.[18] In fact, the a priori proof of the existence of God leads straight into Muʿtazilite theology.

Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir thought this approach too strict. However much he approved of Abū l-Hudhayl's model in principle, he still insisted that humans must be granted time to think; only once a human does not think and **then** does not apply the knowledge of God he has been granted does he fall into guilt.[19] This sounds like much ado about nothing, as the problem only arose because both parties understood time from an atomist perspective and tried to fill moments with actions; they both agreed that it is possible at the same time to know and not know about an object and thus be on the way to knowledge.[20] The doxographers, however, concluded that there were theologians who believed there was a 'deadline' to the process of becoming aware (aṣḥāb al-muhla). Khayyāṭ counted Naẓẓām and Murdār among them,[21] but it was Murdār's teacher Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir who had first developed this idea.[22] People would tend to agree with it later, too; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār for one.[23] Soon, Abū l-Hudhayl was the lone believer in the condemnation without notice.[24]

The reason might have been that some strange consequences had emerged. Someone who recognises God in the first moment of reflection pleases God and thus gains reward, but he does not yet know that he pleases God as he has not yet recognised him. He does not have any time until his deadline in which to achieve this intent, this directedness towards God (ikhlās),[25] as he

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18    Text 44, d–e. Baghdādī's referring to a child (ṭifl) is probably polemical here. After all, a
       priori knowledge of God is not innate but will be granted at the time of tamyīz.

19    Text 44, f–g; cf. p. 137 above.

20    Text XVII 21; cf. p. 129f. above.

21    Text 47, o.

22    Khayyāṭ's mentioning only Naẓẓām and Murdār is due to his referring to a remark by
       Ibn al-Rēwandī who had singled out these two theologians (47, e). Earlier he discusses
       'Naẓẓām and his school, or Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and his school' (47, m). Baghdādī's remark
       in 44, c is open to misunderstanding. He did not believe that Abū l-Hudhayl embraced the
       concept of the 'deadline' but that he developed his own concept.

23    *Erkenntnislehre des Īcī* 350.

24    Cf. also Text 50.

25    Cf. Text 47, a.

will be focussed on doing something else in the next moment. Consequently he performs a work of obedience which does not 'intend' God (*ṭā'a lā yurādu llāhu bihā*).[26] This was indeed Abū l-Hudhayl's opinion; he even wrote a book with this precise title.[27] In it he also tried to prove his theory, using examples which approached the problem from an entirely different angle. Every unbeliever, he argued, does good in some way – even a supporter of the eternal duration of the world (*dahrī*) who does not believe in God at all, or at least not in a creator God. Experience teaches us this, but we can even prove it logically, for a Dahrite is always neither Christian nor Zoroastrian. Consequently, by not believing either in the trinity or in dualism, he performs a work of obedience. If this were not a work of obedience, his belief in the eternal duration of the world would not be sin, either. On the other hand it is clear that he does not do it for God's sake.[28]

This appears eccentric, but was certainly presented just like this by Abū l-Hudhayl, for not only did Khayyāṭ not make any effort trying to deny it in conversation with Ibn al-Rēwandī,[29] but Baghdādī even repeated it using the same example but clearly following a different source – possibly one containing an original quotation.[30] The surprising element – namely, that Abū l-Hudhayl argues *ex negativo* – was probably due to the long-standing awareness that a Dahrite at least admits the world's existence, even though he denies its createdness; he thus misunderstands the object in some sense, but does know it, too. Thus even he is on the path to complete knowledge.[31] Ka'bī, however, goes on to elucidate Abū l-Hudhayl's point of view in a different way: a heathen Meccan thinks about Muḥammad's message in order to later fight him the more effectively; the thought in itself is good in spite of the evil intent. This may, of course, be a later example, as Jubbā'ī and his son Abū Hāshim fell out over it. Jubbā'ī saw the thought as evil, too, while Abū Hāshim allowed

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26  Text 46, c, where Shahrastānī seems to give too much weight to the later approach to the question in the context of the *aṣḥāb al-ma'ārif*, and especially Jubbā'ī (e.g. including the **intention** of beginning to think; cf. my *Erkenntnislehre* 140f. and 329ff.; also in: *Islam and the Medieval West*, ed. Kh. Semaan 69ff.). In Text 136 the problem has been shifted, polemically, onto the capacity to act.

27  Catalogue of Works no. 38.

28  Text 47, a–b and g–l.

29  He converts it to a positive statement by pointing out that no-one outside the Mu'tazila would have thought so subtly (47, m–n; a parallel see p. 282f. below).

30  Text 48 with commentary.

31  Cf. Gimaret, Ash'arī 168.

Abū l-Hudhayl's position.[32] The nub of the question was whether the intention determined the worth of an action or not. It was irrelevant to Abū l-Hudhayl; in his view actions were clear facts whose evaluation (*ḥukm*) is determined by the law. This was in fact also the position of the early *aṣḥāb al-muhla*: Bishr, Naẓẓām, Murdār, as Ibn al-Rēwandī observed quite correctly. It seems that they rejected only the arguments Abū l-Hudhayl used to extend his theory beyond the 'first deliberation' onto the actions of people without revelation.[33]

A second consequence of the theory of the a priori knowledge of God was that in this case a particular impulse for further thought (*khāṭir*) was unnecessary and could thus not be claimed to be a universal requirement. As every human becomes aware of his creaturehood, even the heathen before the time of Muḥammad should have recognised God without the particular impulse; consequently it is right that they are in hell.[34] A stringent argument can replace any impulse.[35] We have seen that this was the very point at which Abū l-Hudhayl attacked Ḍirār.[36] While the field in which a human can control his knowledge is limited, it is valid without considering the revelation.

The third consequence was that knowledge is not necessarily based on or 'generated' by thought and deliberation. At the beginning, one immediately comprehends that things in this world are temporal, *ḥudūth*, and similarly later whenever one sees a body one knows without further deliberation that it is contingent.[37] And also: ignorance and unconfirmed knowledge, 'opinion', are also generated spontaneously; why, then, should knowledge be 'created'? In that case one would have to assume that deliberation always leads to knowledge, which is, of course, not true: one can just as easily err.[38] Knowledge is a gift like perception, and one does not 'know how to do it'.[39]

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32    Text 49, where Jubbāʾī is mentioned following the translated passage. The sentences b–c are probably not part of the quotation after Kaʿbī, Abū Hāshim – who is referred to here – being his contemporary.

33    Text 47, e and o with commentary. Fundamental rejection is found later, e.g. from Shaykh al-Mufīd: unbelief and work of obedience never go together (Murtaḍā, *Al-fuṣūl al-mukhtāra* I 37, 6ff./39, 2ff.).

34    Text 46, a. Whether Shahrastānī is correct in having Abū l-Hudhayl believe in a natural sense of ethics in the case of the heathen remains to be seen.

35    Text 137. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ describes the *khāṭir* as a fleeting glance, deliberation on the other hand as intense scrutiny (ʿĀmirī, *Al-saʿāda wal-isʿād* 420, 8f.). According to Abū l-Hudhayl the impulses are accidents effected by God or Satan.

36    See p. 55 above.

37    Text 51, b.

38    Ibid., a and c.

39    See p. 269 above; also my *Erkenntnislehre* 292.

Abū l-Hudhayl called the knowledge one might have 'acquired' by deliberation but in fact received by some other means, 'conviction' (*iʿtiqād*). This refers to rational points of view one embraces because of mere convention, thanks to *taqlīd*, or randomly. They are unreflected, and it would be incorrect to refer to them as knowledge which is of an entirely different 'class' (*jins*). 'Conviction' is at best a kind of superordinate term.[40] This would become a problem later when Jubbāʾī discovered that knowledge cannot simultaneously be subsuWmed under conviction and belong to a different class.[41] It is certain, though, that Abū l-Hudhayl at the very least prepared this step – with an argument that would be adduced time and again: God possesses knowledge, but not 'conviction'; consequently the two terms must be different.[42]

### 3.2.1.3.2.4    Resurrection and Afterlife

As there is no immortal soul, resurrection is a completely new creation, but at the same time it is a 'repetition' (*iʿāda*) as the unity of the person must be preserved.[1] This was an entirely Quranic approach: '(God) performs the creation a first time (*yabdaʾu l-khalq*). Then he repeats it (*yuʿīduhū*) in order to recompense those who believe and who do deeds of righteousness, justly' (sura 10:4).[2] Abū l-Hudhayl interpreted this idea in his own way. As Frank emphasised against Massignon, he focused less on God re-combining the scattered atoms and more on his creating all the same accidents, as they are what establishes the phenomenal reality of a thing.[3] He only re-creates those accidents he created the first time; accidents under the human's control will not

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40   Text 53, a–b. and 52, a–c; cf. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* 211. I realise that 'Überzeugung/conviction' is not an ideal translation of *iʿtiqād*, but 'belief' is already used for *īmān*.

41   Text 52, b and d. Whether he was interpreting Abū l-Hudhayl correctly here is another matter; Mānkdīm does not appear to have seen a contradiction of this kind at all (cf. text 53).

42   Text 53, c. Regarding the discussion cf. in general *Erkenntnislehre* 51ff.; Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/465f.; Bernand in: SI 36/1972/36ff.

1   Text 100, h and l–m.

2   Thus also in numerous other passages (cf. O'Shaughnessy, *Creation and the Teaching of the Qurʾān* 70ff., and Gimaret, *Noms divins* 296f.). The respective noun, *maʿād* 'return' is a *hapax legomenon* in sura 28:85; its meaning was controversial at first (cf. Ṭabarī ²xx 124, 1ff.).

3   *Metaphysics* 37, n. 51.

be 'repeated'.[4] In other words: the resurrected person is the human as he was beforehand, while that of which he 'knows how to do it', his actions, remain in the past. It has been written down, and he will be presented with it on the Day of Judgment, but the noises he produced and the speeches he spoke have faded away. This does not mean that humans do not speak or act at all any more in the otherworld, but they do not do so out of their own decision, as decision would mean proving oneself, and that is only possible in this world. If it were possible in the otherworld, humans would deserve reward and punishment as they did on earth, and the entire reckoning would be confounded. Any action in the otherworld is compulsive, given like a reward or imposed like a punishment.[5] The delights of paradise are provided by God,[6] but so are the words one speaks; consequently one only speaks the truth in paradise.[7] During the reckoning itself those statements will emerge 'of necessity' with which, as people knew from sura 41:20ff., the limbs or the skin will bear witness against the sinner;[8] once humans do not speak of their own accord, they cannot conceal anything any more.

This paved the way for the theory that more than any other made Abū l-Hudhayl a talking point: namely that movements will come to an end in the otherworld some day.[9] If God has relieved humans of their capacity to act, he can also control their movements. However, Abū l-Hudhayl's focussing on the movements rather than on actions tells us that his starting point was located elsewhere: in his examination of the theory of the eternal duration of the world. As we have seen, Abū l-Hudhayl based his proof of the existence of God on movements as instances of temporality (ḥawādith); they have a beginning and they require an initiator. If they have a beginning, they must also have an end, otherwise the analogy could be inverted and deny their beginning due to their lack of an end.[10] Thus Jahm b. Ṣafwān's theory did not apply any more:

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4      Text 22. Paradise and hell do not need to be 'repeated', either, but have existed since the beginning of time (Text XVII 56).

5      Text 94, g–k. Abū l-Hudhayl regarded this as a self-explanatory conclusion drawn from a fundamental idea shared by all Muslims (k).

6      Ibid., h. Cf. Ibn Mattōya, *Muḥīṭ* II 185, 5: Food and drink should not be a burden in paradise, therefore they will happen reflexively, 'of necessity'.

7      Text 98, b; also Text XVI 20, c (cf. the commentary).

8      Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* 183, 2ff.

9      Abundantly documented; cf. Text 88, b, and, in polemical distortion, Text 94, a–f. Also Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/473ff., and Brunschvig in: SI 39/1974/7ff.

10     Text 91, i–k, and 97; confirmed by Qirqisānī, *Anwār* 248, 3ff. The anecdote in Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 181, 18ff., shows clearly that Abū l-Hudhayl's 'four theories' were directed against the Dahriyya.

namely that paradise and hell would cease to exist; but from a certain point in time onwards, nothing would happen there. Everything will abide in eternal and unchanging rest. This does not mean that the delights of paradise are past; the blessed will have enjoyed them to the full, and God will continue to create a feeling of enjoyment in them, without them having to do anything to evoke the feeling; eating, drinking, and intercourse do not exist as actions any more.[11]

Abū l-Hudhayl furnished proof in his *K. al-qawālib*,[12] a text the title of which is not preserved in the *Fihrist*, surprisingly, but we do not know the context. The doxographers' reports are entirely informed by the debate that would soon grow up around this doctrine, and unduly emphasised particular aspects. This is presumably why only paradise is referred to: it probably did not matter to the pious theologians that there would be dolorous rest in hell, too. Abū l-Hudhayl himself did discuss this accent shift, writing a *K. al-tafahhum wa-ḥarakāt al-janna*.[13] We should like to know whether the vision of God increased in significance during this state of rest. After all, Abū l-Hudhayl did not deny it but rather reinterpreted it as the immediate gift of knowledge of God for which Moses had prayed in vain by Mount Sinai.[14] By knowing about God, one can 'see' him in one's heart;[15] God is able to create perception in the heart without requiring a sensory organ.[16]

The argument was missing a link. The proof of the existence of God was based on the observation of individual movement, while the discussion with the Dahriyya was concerned with the question that **every** movement must have a beginning and consequently also an end. Abū l-Hudhayl had to expound that 'everything' could not be infinite. It was helpful that the Arabic word for 'everything' (*kull*), rather like French *tout*, can also mean '(the) whole'. A whole, though, by definition, has parts. And we can observe that all earthly things are divisible; but as the divisibility does not continue forever in the atomist view of the world, all things must form a finite whole. God, on the other hand, does not have parts, and is consequently eternal and infinite.[17] The fact that we are able to encompass earthly reality with the word *kull* furnishes the proof. The

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11    Text 88, c–d; 89, b; 90, q. Rest and delight are accidents here, too, but they exist only because they are not replaced by their opposites any more (88, d).

12    Text 97, a; Catalogue of Works no. 52.

13    Catalogue of Works no. 32.

14    Cf. Text xv 29, k–l; here Text 68. Cf. p. 53f. above.

15    Text 67; thus emphasised already by Massignon, *Passion* ²III 18of./transl. III 168.

16    See p. 270 above.

17    Text 90, m–o. God probably had no parts, in Abū l-Hudhayl's view, because he is not material; for the same reason it is easy to claim that **all** earthly things, being material, are divisible.

world consists of bodies and accidents, and as we are able to say that **all** bodies are different from **all** accidents, the sum total of both these sets must be finite.[18] Or, with reference to events within time: **everything** that is and will be, will one day be past; thus everything that happens is a finite whole.

Text 92, l. Cf. Pines, *Atomenlehre* 14f., who points out that Alexander of Aphrodisias already attempted to derive the spatial finiteness of the world by means of analysing the terms part and whole (Quaest. Nat. III 12 in: *Scripta minora*, Suppl. Arist. II 2, p. 101ff.). To an Arab, it was probably also relevant that *kull* meaning 'all, everything' is always combined with a suffix or a genitive (*kulluhū, kullu dhālika* etc.); someone saying 'all of it' rather than just 'all' must have felt the limitation more strongly.

This proof, which to us seems nothing more than a misunderstanding based on linguistic equivocation, seems to have convinced many contemporaries at the time. Khayyāṭ, who believed Abū l-Hudhayl's theory of rest in the otherworld to be incorrect, agreed with this argument in his report and saw it as evidence of Abū l-Hudhayl's honest intentions; his criticism was focussed elsewhere. Anecdotes thought up in praise of Abū l-Hudhayl emphasised this point and did not even attempt to follow the thought through; everyone knew what would happen to them once they had settled on the word *kull*.[19] Kindī, too, declared that *kull* – like *baʿḍ* – could not be applied to God,[20] interpreting the present as the contact of two sums of points in time both of which sums are finite.[21] Ashʿarī still understood sura 36:12 '**Everything** we have numbered in a clear register' to imply that 'everything' could refer to a limited sum.[22] You can only count something, Abū l-Hudhayl had already pointed out, if it has a limit.[23]

This turn completed the chain of proof, but Abū l-Hudhayl had by now abandoned motion. He had spoken of things in general, which was a good thing, as people would always have at the back of their minds that a 'movement' could be caused by a human – and that was the very aspect they had to leave out: this was about movements which allowed the conclusion that God caused them.

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18    Text 92, i–k.

19    Cf. Text 92, m, and the very intricate anecdote *Faḍl* 255, 8ff., which I discussed in: Festschrift G. Hourani 13ff., esp. p. 14 and 22ff.).

20    Cf. Jolivet, *L'intellect selon al-Kindī* 109, n. 1.

21    Cf. Hasnaoui in: *Time and the Philosophies* (UNESCO 1977), p. 65ff., esp. p. 69f.; also Ivry, *Kindī's Metaphysics* 164 ad 122, 13–15.

22    *Istiḥsān al-khawḍ* 92, ult. f./ed. Frank in: MIDEO 18/1988/143, 5ff.

23    Text 90, p.

Consequently the theory is sometimes phrased in such a way that the objects of God's omnipotence (*maqdūrāt*) form a finite sum and a whole; as God has foreknowledge of everything in his power, the same could then be said of the objects of his knowledge.[24] Abū l-Hudhayl had found all this in the Quran: verses saying 'God is powerful over everything' (16:77) or he 'has knowledge of everything' (2:29) imply the numerical limitation in 'everything'.[25] This train of thought presumes that all *maqdūrāt* will be transferred into existence; there can be possibility only for something that will be realised in the future.[26] God does not have power over anything that is not;[27] as the non-being, in the sense of something that will never be, is a figment of the imagination, just like a tailor whom one imagines dancing around wearing a *qalansuwa* on his head.[28]

At this point things became critical as God's omnipotence appeared to be limited – but this was not intended. Abū l-Hudhayl knew that God has the freedom to do whatever he wants, but while this is a statement on God's essence, here he is concerned only with the objects. Abū l-Hudhayl was able to separate the two so clearly because in his view these objects existed only within earthly reality but not as intelligibles, and thus did not imbue the divine essence with plurality or limitation.[29] They have no potentiality inherent in them, being possible only in that God knows that he will create them.[30] The freedom he has means that, as with human actions, he might just as well do the opposite.[31] As these opposites mirror the *maqdūrāt*, they, too, add up to a finite total.[32]

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24 Thus Ibn al-Rēwandī in Text 90, c, and Ashʿarī in Text 88, a. It is possible that they were both referring to the same doxographical source. In 90, m, Khayyāṭ confirms Ibn al-Rēwandī.

25 Text 90, p. We can compare this to Karl Barth: God's knowledge is not infinite, as God knows everything and this everything is finite; it only appears infinite to us (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* II₁ 622). In Antiquity the idea that not even God could know that which is infinite suggested itself due people's awe of the ἄπειρον; this already led Galen to the conclusion that the world must have a beginning (*On Medical Experience*, cap. 19.3/transl. Walzer 122f.).

26 Text 92, e–h; also 90, r–t. Cf. Frank, *Metaphysics* 24ff.

27 Text 89, c–d.

28 Text 37. Craftsmen probably did not normally wear a *qalansuwa*, a tall hat rather like a fez. It was already worn during the Umayyad era, but during the Abbasid era and in Iraq it only became popular under Muʿtaṣim, when the caliph showed he was partial to it (Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VIII 302, 5f./V 214 § 3454; also Ahsan, *Social Life* 30f.).

29 Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/467f.

30 Ibid. 481f.

31 Text 90, s–t, y–z.

32 Text 88, a, must be interpreted in this way. Cf. Frank, ibid. 482ff.

God acts spontaneously, but within a framework set by his foreknowledge – and by Abū l-Hudhayl's paradigm.

Frank may be right when he suggests that this was the real reason for the unease the Muʿtazila felt regarding Abū l-Hudhayl's theory,[33] but on closer inspection the impression we first had in the context of the definition of *kull* makes a second appearance: criticism was levelled not so much at the axioms but rather at the consequences. In part this may have been due to people arguing dialectically. In order to impress the public it was sometimes sufficient simply to repeat Abū l-Hudhayl's odd conclusions: in the end the blessed will not eat and drink any more, or visit one another.[34] Hishām al-Fuwaṭī exaggerated this into a caricature: who knows in what situation the blessed will be surprised by the sudden end of all movement? It might be that one of them holds out his right hand to take a cup from his wife, i.e. one of the paradise maidens, while at the same time picking up a fruit with his left; if he then freezes at a moment's notice, he would have to sit for all eternity like one crucified. This is not fitting for a Muslim. Abū l-Hudhayl's answer, reported with some emphasis by Khayyāṭ, was that God would make sure that everyone would be in the best possible position in time.[35]

Hishām al-Fuwaṭī's ironic witticism was probably part of his text 'on the delights of paradise' in which he criticised Abū l-Hudhayl,[36] but he seems to have regaled audiences with it in other circumstances, too: Ibn al-Rēwandī tells us that he 'narrated it in his stories about him (i.e. Abū l-Hudhayl)'.[37] In view of this rather convincing testimony it is surprising that Baghdādī attributed it to Murdār.[38] Murdār, however, who apparently also wrote a book against Abū l-Hudhayl,[39] argued differently and rather more fundamentally, according to what Ibn al-Rēwandī tells us. He thought that Abū l-Hudhayl had done his cause a disservice, and implicitly agreed with the Dahriyya, the very movement he meant to refute; for arguing that God would be omnipotent for a long time, but then suddenly not be able to effect movements, was exactly what the Dahrites liked to hear. Even a rock that had broken something due to its weight

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33    Ibid. 484.

34    Thus Ibn al-Rēwandī in Text 91, a–c, claiming to summarise a contemporary polemic. Abū l-Hudhayl would then have come to the conclusion only under pressure from such polemic, and we would have to assume that doxographical statements such as 88, c, referred to these debates rather than to a treatise by Abū l-Hudhayl.

35    Text 95, a–c.

36    Catalogue of Works xxiv, no. 6.

37    Text 95, a.

38    *Farq* 103, 6ff./122, ult. ff.

39    Ibid. 102, 8f./122, 3.

and hardness could repeat this any number of times, unless it changed in some way. Murdār pointed this out to Abū l-Hudhayl in conversation in Thumāma's house,[40] but Ibn al-Rēwandī recalls similar arguments from others, too: it is absurd to assume that God grants the blessed life and perpetual existence but ultimately cannot keep them in motion.[41] This was the level at which Ibn al-Rēwandī finally adopted the idea;[42] although he turned the comparison with the rock around, finding that the blessed have as little control over themselves as a rock one rolls to and fro and leaves lying somewhere in the end.[43] This shows that he was being deliberately obtuse – just like when he said that with reference to God and the end of time Abū l-Hudhayl denied the very thing he always demanded of the determinists with reference to humans: that one had to be able just as easily to do the opposite.[44]

The third well-known early opponent was Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb. He, too, was said to have narrated Hishām al-Fuwaṭī's anecdote,[45] and a separate refutation by him was transmitted, a *K. al-tawbīkh Abī l-Hudhayl*.[46] It may have been identical with his *Masāʾil fī l-naʿīm*, as in the latter text he first developed the argument that went straight to the core: how can 'everything' that God knows be finite, if he knows about himself? For he himself is infinite.[47] However, this question made a dialectical detour by confounding God as a calculable object of knowledge with his essential infiniteness.[48] And of course it had to shift the emphasis from the *maqdūrāt* onto the *maʿlūmāt*; the self-reference was possible only in the context of knowledge. Still, Abū l-Hudhayl would not have agreed with this in any case, as Jaʿfar seems to have referred to one of the Quranic verses adduced, sura 2:29: '(God) has knowledge of everything'.[49] According to Abū l-Hudhayl's understanding of the text, this referred only to earthly reality; God's self-awareness was part of a different chapter. Consequently Khayyāṭ came to his defence,[50] although it did not stop him defending Abū l-Hudhayl

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40    Text 92, a–c.

41    Text 90, i.

42    Text 93, a.

43    Text 94, c.

44    Text 90, k–l.

45    Text 95, d.

46    Catalogue of Works XXVIII, no. 11.

47    Text 96, a–h.

48    Maybe this was the '*kalām* argument' mentioned by Khayyāṭ in 95, e. This, however, would mean that Ibn al-Rēwandī quoted it twice in his book.

49    Cf. Text 96, g, with commentary.

50    Text 96, i.

against Ibn al-Rēwandī using this very argument of Jaʿfar's.[51] This is further-more anachronistic, as Abū l-Hudhayl probably did not live to hear Jaʿfar's criticism in person.[52]

Al-Naẓẓām and his contemporary Iskāfī went to the heart of Abū l-Hud-hayl's concept. Naẓẓām's argument does not survive; all we know is that he ex-pounded it in his *K. al-tawḥīd*.[53] Still, it appears to have been similar to Iskāfī's, which Khayyāṭ summarised earlier: it is wrong to assume an analogy between beginning and end. It is possible to prove that the world had a beginning with-out recourse to the end. And: if one realises that things happen only because there was a first thing that made its coming into existence possible, one has to conclude that this first thing, always assuming it does not change, enables more things happening all the time.[54] Thus was Abū l-Hudhayl's theory of the end of all movement put to rest once and for all.

To Khayyāṭ, this had long been an established fact. He only took up the question because Ibn al-Rēwandī had stirred up the past once again. Ibn al-Rēwandī employed this example to compromise Abū l-Hudhayl's orthodoxy, with the result that Khayyāṭ found himself in the unenviable position of hav-ing to undertake a mission of rehabilitating the wrong object. He does this more or less skilfully, but with changing arguments. Sometimes he simply di-verts attention, claiming that Ibn al-Rēwandī mistook Abū l-Hudhayl's teach-ings for the doctrine of Jahm b. Ṣafwān,[55] or clouding the distinction between the continued existence of delight and the end of action that was so important to Abū l-Hudhayl.[56] Sometimes he employs distinctions that were unknown

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51    Text 90, d–f.

52    This is the impression conveyed by Text 96, which purports to be an instruction of how to debate with Abū l-Hudhayl. The anecdote analysed in *Festschrift Hourani* 13ff., however, has Jaʿfar coming from Baghdad to Basra in order to pit his knowledge against Abū l-Hudhayl; interestingly he is refuted by means of a trick question that presupposed Abū l-Hudhayl's interpretation of *kull*. This was simply propaganda originating among the circle of Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils (see below).

53    Text 91, t; cf. also Catalogue of Works XXII, no. 2.

54    Ibid., o–s.

55    Text 91, g.

56    Ibid., d–f. The Quranic quotations in *e* did not contradict Abū l-Hudhayl's theory, but they did not prove what Khayyāṭ went on to say in *f*, namely that according to Abū l-Hudhayl's view food and drink would never have an end in paradise. The latter could only be true if we assume that neutral witnesses like Ashʿarī in 88, c, depend on polemical accounts like Ibn al-Rēwandī's (see n. 34 above), but then it becomes less easy to impart consistency to Abū l-Hudhayl's theory.

to Abū l-Hudhayl, and are fruitless.[57] On the whole, however, he is apologetic, and that once again in a twofold and nearly contradictory fashion. First he notes that such sophisticated ideas, even if they might not be true, could only be comprehended by sophisticated Muʿtazilite brains; only someone at home with theology – and all the more someone who had to refute heretics – could be wrong in such an inspired way.[58] Then, on the other hand, he claims that Abū l-Hudhayl suggested all this in a hypothetical and speculative spirit only to repent when he realised what he had brought about.[59]

This last statement is clearly fiction. At least one of his pupils, Yaḥyā al-Arrajānī, remained faithful to Abū l-Hudhayl's teachings even after the teacher's death;[60] it is hardly probable that he would have ignored a change of mind on Abū l-Hudhayl's part. He is the source of the anecdote, mentioned already, in which Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb was refuted. Arrajānī used it to justify himself. It dates from a time when Jaʿfar's reputation was not yet universally recognised; Arrajānī used the opportunity of reminding his listeners that Shaḥḥām, too, supported Abū l-Hudhayl's teachings at a time when he was already advanced in years.[61] When Hishām al-Fuwaṭī criticised Abū l-Hudhayl in 120 *quaestiones*, the latter, who had gone blind by that time, had one of his pupils refute them;[62] one is tempted to assume that the issue of paradise was resurrected then as well. With a little imagination we could even see this pupil as Yaḥyā al-Arrajānī or Shaḥḥām. As a result Khayyāṭ felt compelled to support his repentance idea in a, for him, unusual way: by quoting *isnād*s. Kaʿbī had him write them down for him,[63] but they are really rather problematic. The first of them goes back to Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb who, after all, could have refrained from composing an attack on Abū l-Hudhayl if the latter had indeed repented. If the attack was written during Abū l-Hudhayl's lifetime at all, it was certainly not long before his death. Another authority, Abū ʿAbdallāh al-ʿĀjī, about whom we know nothing else, shows less interest in 'repentance' than in the consequences resulting from it; after all, Abū l-Hudhayl's original teachings were widely known thanks to his books. Abū l-Hudhayl was quoted as saying his books were not gospel, and everyone reading them should form their own opinion.[64] This was

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57  Text 90, g–h.

58  Thus approximately, with slight variants, Text 90, b; 91, n; 95, f.

59  Text 90, a; 92, o, 95, g.

60  See p. 314 below.

61  Cf., in detail, *Festschrift Hourani* 25ff.

62  Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* 31, 16f./39, 10f.

63  Cf. Text 92, o, and 89, g.

64  Text 89, h.

simply veiled advice of what one should reply if someone did not believe the repentance theory and pointed out the discrepancy between it and the books; preparation for Khayyāṭ's own theory that Abū l-Hudhayl wrote speculative texts. Kaʿbī at least was honest enough to admit that some maintained Abū l-Hudhayl genuinely believed what he said – and to the day of his death, too.[65] Jubbāʾī would later put it differently: Abū l-Hudhayl said on his deathbed that he never committed a mortal sin that he recognised as such.[66] Thus he had simply made a mistake in his theory about the otherworld.

M. Seale believed Abū l-Hudhayl's ideas to be a reflex of Origen's theory of ἀποκατάστασις. According to this the blessed will shed their mortal nature in paradise and return to being intelligible and incorporeal beings living in the same state as God. Origen's theory is well-known to have lived on in the East; Seale points to the parallel idea by Stephan Bar Ṣudailē that the era of reward in paradise would be followed by a stage during which creation merges with God, everything becoming 'one nature and one substance' (*Muslim Theology* 71ff.). This, however, is rather a long way from Abū l-Hudhayl; in order to present parallels Seale has to twist the text (cf. my review in: вo 23/1966/103). Frank made clear that there are differences not only in the detail but also in the system (in: Muséon 81/1969/477f.). One might say that these Origenist ideas, if indeed they were known to him, predisposed Abū l-Hudhayl to venture a step beyond the usual concept of paradise in his own theory; but this cannot be proved and does not lead us anywhere.

Origen's ἀποκατάστασις is related to the older concept of κατάπαυσις or ἀνάπαυσις already found in Hebrews (3:11ff.), and in particular in Valentinian gnosis such as *Evangelium Veritatis*. As the word states, it refers to a state of rest that characterises, among other things, heavenly beatitude. In a typically gnostic way the highest pneumatic's present experience of salvation and the future, post-mortal experience of rest appear to merge; both are, in fact, the restitution of the primary state of rest one achieves by entering into the *pleroma* (cf. first Ph. Vielhauer in *Apophoreta*, ed. W. Eltester 281ff.; then O. Hofius, *Katapausis*, PhD Tübingen 1970; and more recently J. Helderman, *Anapausis im Evangelium Veritatis* with further references, esp. p. 71, 86, and 337ff.). Elchasai was

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65    Cf. in Text 89 sentence a and e–f.

66    *Faḍl* 260, –5ff. The verse quoted there (sura 13:35) already played a part for Khayyāṭ (cf. Text 91, e). While it did not contradict Abū l-Hudhayl's theory as such, it seems to have been regarded as proof against it.

also familiar with the idea (cf. Asmussen in: EIran I 824). This takes us closer to Abū l-Hudhayl, if not chronologically at least geographically. It might provide an explanation for his approach focussing entirely on the state of the blessed; there was never any mention of ἀνάπαυσις in hell. However, as with Origen we must bear in mind that Abū l-Hudhayl's intention pointed to an entirely different direction.

### 3.2.1.3.2.5    Satan and the Demons

There were no 'spirit beings' in Abū l-Hudhayl's 'materialistic' system. In fact, this is true of the entire *kalām* up to the Ashʿarites.[1] Demons, too, have a body, but it is so subtle (*laṭīf*) that we are normally unable to see it. Qatāda had already confirmed this. Abū l-Hudhayl, probably in his work of exegesis,[2] asked the question of how they could be made to serve someone; he was probably thinking of Solomon. His answer was that, if God gives them the ability, they can condense (*yatakaththafūna*) and take on a physical shape.[3]

They only have power over humans if God grants it to them, which is entirely possible, as he may employ them to test or punish a human. Consequently it is also possible that Satan, as described in sura 2:275, 'strikes' someone, i.e. throws him to the ground in an epileptic fit. ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd had already defended the passage against sceptical queries,[4] while Jubbāʾī would later come to a more rationalistic conclusion: someone had too much black bile, or a weak brain, and was thus susceptible to delusions whispered to him by Satan; this results in the fit, which was ultimately effected by God.[5] Satan's power had thus been taken from him.

In the Muslim view, he is furthermore by no means the lord of hell; Satan, like the sinners among humans, will be punished there. However, according to sura 43:39 this makes no difference to humans. Abū l-Hudhayl interpreted the sentence as follows: if one sees on earth that an enemy is just as badly off as oneself, one feels satisfaction and relief in spite of one's own plight. This is not possible in hell, as it would relieve the suffering of the damned.[6] As we have seen they are not master of their own actions any more; God would have

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1   Ibn Sabʿīn stated this (*Masāʾil Ṣiqilliyya* 7, 20ff.). More detail in ch. D 2.2.2 below.

2   Catalogue of Works no. 55.

3   Text 169. Regarding *kathīf* = 'material, solid' (as opposed to *daqīq*) cf. Kraus, *Jābir* II 140, n. 1, and WKAS I 70a; we must, however, bear in mind that this is not about the opposition between 'material' and 'immaterial' but rather about different degrees of materiality.

4   Text X 1; cf. vol. II 342 above.

5   Text 168.

6   Text 167.

to create the feeling of malicious satisfaction for them and, as the Quran says, he will not do so.

This ingenious, but rather individual psychologising exegesis did not find favour with Ṭabarī and other non-Muʿtazilite commentators. It was preserved by Mubarrad, a Muʿtazilite himself who compiled Abū l-Hudhayl's *Tafsīr*. He displayed his knowledge in al-Muʿtaḍid's (r. 279/892–289/902) evening salons.[7] Jubbāʾī probably heard the material from him as well. It would later find its way in fragments into the Shīʿite commentaries of Ṭabrisī and Ṭūsī, both of whom relied heavily on Jubbāʾī's *Tafsīr*.

### 3.2.1.3.3    *Questions of Hermeneutics and Criteriology*
#### 3.2.1.3.3.1    Quranic Exegesis
Abū l-Hudhayl wrote a book on Quranic passages that require explanation, some traces of which may well survive;[1] and he also thought in general about the criteria one must apply to exegesis. There can be no doubt that the Quran conveys insight, 'knowledge'; one simply has to know the method with which to extract it. The problem discussed most frequently in this context was whether generic passages may be restricted to a particular group of people. The Murjiʾites had initiated it; they had refused to apply Quranic verses about unbelievers or the eternal torments of hell in general to Muslims as well.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl, being a Muʿtazilite, believed in the eternal punishment of hell for grave sinners, and consequently thought that generic statements should be interpreted as such, unless there was an indication that their intent could be limited. God could not have revealed a generic verse without such an indication unless he intended it to be generic. However, before abiding by such a verse one must consult the philologists to ensure that the words at issue do indeed cover the meaning one reads into them. Put concretely: one must find out what exactly *kāfir* or *khālidūna fīhā* mean.[3]

Abū l-Hudhayl may have evolved this idea in direct debate with Muways b. ʿImrān, who considered it legitimate to restrict the application of every single Quranic verse even if there was no evidence for it. Abū l-Hudhayl met him in

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7   Cf. Text 167, c, and *Faḍl* 258, ult. ff. > IM 127, 5ff.; also Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Sharḥ ʿuyūn al-masāʾil*, MS Ṣanʿāʾ 2951, fol. 51b, 5. Muʿtaḍid appears to have had great respect for Abū l-Hudhayl.

1   Catalogue of Works no. 55.
2   See p. 209f. above.
3   Text 171; also 172.

Basra.[4] His theory reached Jubbāʾī via Shaḥḥām.[5] Jubbāʾī added a lot of evidence, but we do not know whether this went back to Abū l-Hudhayl. If God expressed something specific without a caveat in a generic way, it would be rather like speaking to an Arab in the language of black people, we read there,[6] or: he would encourage humans to remain ignorant.[7] One must be prepared for the possibility that certain verses were abrogated (*mansūkh*) without the abrogating verse being known[8] etc. We may as well end here, as it does not lead us anywhere. Naẓẓām rejected Abū l-Hudhayl's standpoint entirely, but it is improbable that it was his criticism that had spurred Abū l-Hudhayl to come up with these arguments, as we have no record of any texts in which the debate could have been conducted. We do, however, hear that Abū Hāshim followed Naẓẓām;[9] it would seem that in the time between him and his father the issue became a purely scholastic and theoretical argument.

### 3.2.1.3.3.2      The Truth of the Prophetic Tradition

In Abū l-Hudhayl's view hadith was real. He was probably familiar with Ṭayālisī's *Musnad*; Ṭayālisī had lived in Basra and died in 203/818 or 203/819.[1] ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211/827), too, was considerably older. The prophetic miracles that became more and more important in the debate with the Christians could only be proved by means of the tradition,[2] as the Quran had given a different image of Muḥammad. Consequently Abū l-Hudhayl did not fight the *muḥaddithūn* as Ḍirār had done; rather, as we have seen, he transmitted hadith himself.[3] If, however, this was done not merely for edification but for theological argument, he demanded stringent standards. Just like his predecessors he saw a hadith as a *khabar*, a statement, and the truth criterion must consider when we are able to believe reports or statements we cannot verify rationally. He saw it as numerical – later hadith theory would use the word *tawātur* – but

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4   See p. 208 above. The anonymous Murjiʾite doctrine is closer to Abū l-Hudhayl (*Maq.* 145, 3ff.).

5   Cf. Text 171, f, and 172, a.

6   Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 361, 3f.

7   Ibid. 360, 23f.

8   Ibid. 361, 7f. This does not tell us anything about Abū l-Hudhayl's or Jubbāʾī's views on the individual variations of *naskh* (see vol. 1 39ff. above), as it only discusses in the context of *naskh al-tilāwa*, or *naskh al-tilāwa dūna l-ḥukm* that the **abrogated** verse might be unknown.

9   Ibid. 360, 7ff.; cf. p. 422f. below.

1   GAS 1/97f.

2   Text 175, a; also *Mughnī* XV 257 (although the text only discusses ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān). Cf. p. 27 above.

3   See p. 234 above.

he was also familiar with a concept rather like *ʿadāla*. However, he put his own slant on this aspect.

Wāṣil had already tried to define sufficient authoritative confirmation,[4] but he had not given any figures. This would have been awkward indeed; if one tried to define the dividing line between probability and certainty in this way, one was in immediate danger of being accused of sorites.[5] Abū l-Hudhayl tried to avoid the accusation of arbitrariness by anchoring his figures elsewhere. He believed certainty was possible only if at least 20 persons agreed on the same statement or transmitted the same account. He inferred this rule from the Quran: 'If there be twenty of you, patient men, they will overcome two hundred (unbelievers)', sura 8:65 taught him.[6] He did, however, omit to mention that the verse went on to say 'if there be a hundred of you, they will overcome a thousand unbelievers'; furthermore the subject of the passage was not knowledge but *jihād*.[7] A statement **may** be correct if four or more persons transmit it; but if we have fewer than four witnesses, we are unable to reach a conclusive result.[8] The source does not tell us how Abū l-Hudhayl arrived at this limit, but it may well be that he was thinking of the number of witnesses to adultery (sura 2:24). He had suggested the figure 20 in his *K. al-ḥujja*.[9]

Now he added a further condition: at least one of these 20 must be an exemplary Muslim, a 'candidate for paradise' (*min ahl al-janna*), as it was called at the time;[10] a 'friend of God', as Khayyāṭ put it,[11] or indeed one who was safe from sin (*maʿṣūm*), as Ibn al-Rēwandī exaggerated.[12] Ibn al-Rēwandī scoffed that this was presuming something he did not even expect of the prophet[13] whose *ʿiṣma* had not yet become dogma. However, it was not meant quite so

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4    See vol. ɪɪ 318f. above.

5    Regarding this argument cf. G. Sillitti, *Alcune considerazioni sull' aporia del sorite*, in: Scuole socratiche minori e filosofia ellenistica, ed. G. Gianantoni (Bologna 1977), p. 75ff.; H. J. Krämer, *Platonismus* 75f.

6    Text 175, d.

7    I presume that Baghdādī's statement (175, d) was not simply made up. Could Abū l-Hudhayl have conflated *jihād* and *ijtihād*? Neither Ṭabarī nor Ṭūsī in his *Tibyān* nor Rāzī in *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* preserved his interpretation.

8    Text 175, c.

9    *Faḍl* 301, 10f. He could thus rightly say that the truth can be recognised by means of consensus (Text xv 29, q).

10   Text 174, a, and 175, a. He probably adopted the term from the Murjiʾites; see vol. ɪ 230 above concerning Abū Ḥanīfa and his circle.

11   Text 173, g; also Kaʿbī in 174, b.

12   Text 173, a; but also Kaʿbī in 174, b.

13   Text 173, b and e.

severely: such a pious man might well commit venial sins; but he must not forfeit God's friendship.[14] He does not need to be remarkable for his piousness, either; Abū l-Hudhayl did not presuppose that he was well-known.[15] He did, however, believe that there would always be people like that: God would not abandon his community entirely. There could be many of them, as many as twenty thousand in every generation, as Ibn al-Rēwandī said – exaggerating yet again.[16]

Still, what was the purpose of all this? Of course one would then be certain that at least one person spoke the truth,[17] but if one did not know who he was, how could one be certain in that case? Abū l-Hudhayl apparently assumed that among 20 Muslims one would be such a 'friend of God', even if one did not know which one he was. After all, his reason for adding this clarification was not to strengthen the internal Muslim truth criterion, but rather to delimit himself against external *tawātur*. Qirqisānī observed that when it came to proving the prophethood of Moses or Jesus, up until the time of Abū l-Hudhayl and Naẓẓām the Muslims did not rely on the Quran only but also on statements by Jews and Christians;[18] the age of Isrāʾīliyyāt continued to exert an influence. Consequently people were confronted with the confounding circumstance that all Christians – and ultimately the Jews as well – claimed that Jesus had died on the cross, although according the Quran this could not be true. This seems to have been the point on which Abū l-Hudhayl based his argument: while it appeared that the death on the cross had been documented, it had not been proven, as there was no 'candidate for paradise'. One cannot rely on the heathen or on grave sinners.[19] It quickly became clear that this could apply only to religious truths, as one does not, after all, doubt the words of a heathen when he talks about his home country or his history.[20]

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14    Thus Khayyāṭ in 173, g.

15    Text 173, i.

16    Text 173, d, h, k; 174, b. Ibn al-Rēwandī exaggerates because he wants to emphasise the contrast with the Shīʿite doctrine of the **one** infallible imam; in his view the Shīʿa was rather more economical. – According to the *Dēnkart* the 'people of *vahisht*' (NPers. *bihisht*) were few (transl. de Menasce 259 § 251).

17    Text 173, e and k; 174, b.

18    *Anwār* 304, 3ff.

19    Text 173, e, and 175, b; slightly differently 174, d.

20    Thus Khayyāṭ in Text 173, 1. Regarding this theory of Abū l-Hudhayl's cf. also Goldziher in: Der Islam 3/1912/236; Andrae, *Person Muhammeds* 109; Tritton in: Woolner Comm. Vol. 254; van Ess in: *Erkenntnislehre* 413, and *La notion d'autorité au Moyen Age* 217f.

3.2.1.3.3.3        Juristic Methodology

When it came to the old controversy over *kullu mujtahid muṣīb*, Abū l-Hudhayl returned to ʿAnbarī. Clearly he did not share al-Aṣamm's and Bishr al-Marīsī's optimism that legal issues, too, can be resolved beyond all doubt.[1] He may even have been the one responsible for ʿAnbarī's theory prevailing in the field of *fiqh*, as Jubbāʾī and Abū Hāshim adopted his view and passed it on to theoreticians such as Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī.[2] This was also why Abū l-Hudhayl, unlike Naẓẓām after him, did not wage war on the conclusion by analogy; he regarded it as good religious practice, a *dīn Allāh* or 'putting God's religion into practice'.[3] On the other hand, he did not distinguish it clearly from other methods of finding evidence, such as the syllogism; juristic logic was still in its infancy. As a result he drew up rules for the *qiyās* employing legal terminology such as the concept of *ʿilla*, but really referring to any rational conclusion.

I have discussed the relevant texts elsewhere. The essence of Abū l-Hudhayl's deliberations was included in an anecdote which used it to have him show his superiority over Bishr al-Marīsī.[4] The Muʿtazilites clearly saw it as progress at the time. Seen with later eyes, the results were less significant, not least because Abū l-Hudhayl used a terminology that would not be used later. He intended to show when evidence is false, but restricted it to cases where someone contradicts himself. He distinguished three types:

1.    *jaḥd al-iḍṭirār*: where one denies 'necessary' knowledge such as a sensory perception or a fundamental truth (*badīha*). We do not learn what precisely he thought *badīha* was. Later, it would be interpreted as the 'axioms' of Aristotle's terminology: the principle of the excluded third etc.; but it is unlikely that he had that in mind. A *badīha* was something immediately obvious; the root *b–d–h* was probably evolved out of *b–d–ʾ*.[5] The example Abū l-Hudhayl cited had particular relevance to sensory perception: if one sees an old man with dyed hair sitting on a chair one knows immediately that he has not always been sitting there like that. However, the conclusion is reached because the sensory perception is supplemented by experience; it might thus be that *badīha* was mainly an

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1   Cf. vol. II 470 and p. 202 above.

2   Text 177.

3   *Dīn* is used in a restricted sense here. The expression is not Abū l-Hudhayl's, but he accepted it with the proviso that *dīn* 'religion' usually refers to 'something permanent and constant', something one has rather than a single, temporarily applied practice (Text 176).

4   Cf. in detail ZDMG 135/1985/30ff.; here Text 178.

5   Regarding the development of the term cf. *Erkenntnislehre* 118f. and 164.

empirical principle in Abū l-Hudhayl's view. This chapter is not particu-
larly concerned with the conclusion by analogy.

2. *tark ijrāʾ al-ʿilla fī l-maʿlūl*: where one forgets to apply the proof of a gener-
   ic statement to a specific case, or conversely does not realise that there
   is a generic statement to be found in a specific statement. One cannot
   praise one's horse for travelling 10 parasangs in a day and call it a racer
   unless one admits that every horse that travels 10 parasangs in a day is a
   racer.

3. *naqḍ al-jumla bil-tafsīr*: where one revokes a universal verdict arrived at
   earlier with later explanations; if one claims that a hot summer is always
   followed by a cold winter and vice versa, one cannot then say afterwards
   that sometimes this is not so.

It is not easy to distinguish between cases 2 and 3, but that may not be due to
Abū l-Hudhayl's lack of training in logic. It seems, in fact, that in the case of (2)
the example – and possibly the greater context – forced him to add *tark*. In the
simple list, on the other hand, he did not distinguish between thought process
and thought error and consequently only spoke of *al-ʿilla fī l-maʿlūl*.[6] In this
case (2) would be the positive counterpart of (3). We would be more certain of
this if we knew the overall context, but at the moment it is not even possible to
see in which of Abū l-Hudhayl's works the list might have been included. For
the conclusion by analogy this merely meant that one should pay attention to
the general applicability of the *ratio legis*, which suggests that at the time it was
often used quite arbitrarily.

### 3.2.1.3.4 *The Image of God*

#### 3.2.1.3.4.1 Uniqueness and Omnipresence

Unlike Ḍirār or Muʿammar Abū l-Hudhayl did not write a *K. al-tawḥīd*. He did,
however, polemicise against the *tashbīh*, seeing as his opponents the *aṣḥāb
al-ḥadīth* rather than, as had been the custom earlier, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and
the Kufan Shīʿites.[1] He seems to have felt that wrath and delight, ancient and
venerable attributes of God,[2] were rather too human; he held forth about
them a number of times[3] but did not include them in his own doctrine of the

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6   Text 178. The term is also found in Qirqisānī, *Anwār* 83, 11, where it is elucidated as being the
    *qiyās* of the dialecticians.

1   Catalogue of Works no. 13.
2   Cf. vol. ɪɪ 543 above; also 651 and 664.
3   Catalogue of Works no. 14–16.

attributes. He criticised Ḍirār for teaching that God might 'be wrathful about his own actions',[4] although this was probably just an offshoot of his criticism of Ḍirār's synergism:[5] if one believes that God is wrathful about the actions of humans, and at the same time has God have a part in these actions, he must be wrathful about his own actions as a matter of course.

We also know how he dealt with the dualists. He had come up with an argument following a similar construction to the one attributed to al-Maʾmūn concerning repentance:[6] light and darkness do not automatically effect good and evil; rather, it depends on the situation. If someone has lost his purse, the light of the moon is helpful to him at night; but if someone has to hide from an enemy, it only harms him. The dualist whom he confronted with this argument is said to have converted to Islam.[7] One might toy with the idea that this was Mīlās/Milos (?), who had once arranged a debate between Zoroastrians and Abū l-Hudhayl,[8] and that the argument in this form was copied from the records of the debate. It is, however, too shallow and materialistic to have convinced a 'magus'; light and darkness were cosmic principles and could not simply be reduced down to the moonlight in a dark night. The *Shkand gumānīk vichār* would later provide a Mazdaist refutation.[9]

While he might have had a weak opponent in the debate, surely the arguments in the 'Book against the magi' he composed[10] should have had more substance. And indeed, after another account he argued more strictly theologically; however, this account is short and Abū l-Hudhayl was superseded by Jubbāʾī in it. According to this he, as would become customary later, pointed out that two Gods cannot work together; they would have to be allowed an independent existence either spatially or temporally.[11] This was really only a *petitio principii*; after all, this was exactly what the dualists believed. Here, the refutation was a means of self-affirmation. This made it relevant not least because the Muʿtazilites in general believed in God's omnipresence. Abū l-Hudhayl, and Jubbāʾī after him, understood this to mean that God held in his hands everything that would ever come to pass.[12] If there were two Gods, the

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4       Ibid. no. 16.

5       Ibid. no. 19; cf. also p. 52 above and p. 298 below.

6       We first find it reliably documented in Naẓẓām; it may be younger (see p. 219, n. 28 above).

7       Text 55.

8       Catalogue of Works no. 51; p. 238 above.

9       Transl. de Menasce 41.

10      Ibid. no. 8.

11      Text 54.

12      Text 66.

unity of the cosmos would break apart; the God of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*, the one who lived in heaven, would have been somehow doubled.

Abū l-Hudhayl is, of course, part of a tradition as well. What he presented was simply his slant on the argument usually covered by the term *tamānuʿ* 'the mutual obstruction (of two Gods)'. It is already found in a very similar form in John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa* I 5; Quranic verses adduced were sura 21:22 and 23:91. Ṭabarī cited it at the beginning of his History (I 26, 17ff./transl. Rosenthal 195f.). Regarding instances in theology cf. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity* 166f., and Stroumsa in: Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn maqāla* 160, n. 33.

It was discovered fairly recently[13] that the *Kitāb Mīlās* was in the form of an autobiographical account. If this style of literary presentation is to be trusted at all,[14] Abū l-Hudhayl would have been looking back at events. Thus there can be no doubt that the text is stylised; the question of whether the opponents were able to defend themselves was not important any more. In a postscript (which is the only extant part) Abū l-Hudhayl takes the opportunity of settling a score with the *zanādiqa*. Mīlās/Milos himself is shown as making the suggestion, asking whether, now he had been refuted, the 'heretics' would suffer the same fate. When Abū l-Hudhayl – who was very young at the time – showed himself to be optimistic, because people who desert God can never be victorious, Mīlās walked past a church with him in which the 'heretics' had assembled. They are presented as Christians;[15] probably intended to be Marcionites or maybe Dayṣānites, although the doctrine summarised does not fit either of them.[16] Manichaeans are more likely. Basically, however, the aim of the text was to present two competing dualist models and to refute them in a text-book manner. What Abū l-Hudhayl says here is not substantially different from the first of the arguments mentioned above.

### 3.2.1.3.4.2    The Doctrine of the Attributes

Abū l-Hudhayl was the first Muʿtazilite to evolve a doctrine of the attributes that went beyond mere *theologia negativa*. It did not become the Muʿtazila's official creed, but in the form modified by Jubbāʾī it continued to influence even the later Basran school. Abū l-Hudhayl was familiar with Ḍirār's point of

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13    Text 55 A.

14    See p. 227, n. 6 above.

15    Text 55 A, c.

16    Cf. ibid., g–i and m, and the summaries in vol. I 503ff. and 506ff. above.

view, and did not deny it. He, too, was of the opinion that the statement 'God is knowing' means that 'God is not unknowing'. In addition, however, it confirms that God possesses knowledge due to which he is knowing, but this knowing is not a separate thing but identical with him. Finally it tells us that there are, were, or will be objects of his knowledge – but that was nothing new, as it had already been discussed in Kufa. And it is not true of all the attributes: God's life, for instance, does not have an object.[1]

There can be hardly any doubt that Abū l-Hudhayl went a step beyond Ḍirār because he believed that this was the only way in which he could do justice to the Quran. The revelation comprised more than an arid *theologia negativa*; it does not negate things on the whole but names God's attributes as such, and not as adjectives only but also as nouns.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl accepted all of them, just as they were 'attributed to God because of himself',[3] indiscriminately. He spoke of the omnipotence (*qudra*) and of greatness, majesty, sublimity and glory,[4] never subsuming the last four under the first as Bishr al-Marīsī would have done. He did not speak of attributes of essence and attributes of act, which would become the custom in the next generation of the Muʿtazila; to him, attributes of act were just as eternal as the others,[5] and he does not seem to have used the term *dhāt* 'being, essence' at all.[6] They are all eternal perfections of God, neither 'with him' nor 'within him', but substantially his.[7]

Some distinctions, however, were necessary. We have seen that life has no object, and the same is true of eternal duration.[8] Other attributes do not even have opposites: the face, the essence (*nafs*). If one did not wish to deny these attributes, *theologia negativa* was impossible altogether. One could only state that they were identical with God.[9] In the case of the essence this was clear

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1   Text 56, c, a, and d. The new component is emphasised separately in 62, a–c, and 64, a–b. Regarding the approach cf. Gimaret in EI² VII s. v. Muʿtazila.

2   Especially in phrases with *dhū*; cf. e.g. *dhū faḍl[in]* in sura 2:251, *dhū l-raḥma* in sura 6:133, *dhū l-quwwa* in sura 51:58.

3   Text 62, b.

4   Ibid., a.

5   Text 58–59; also 56, b. Karl Barth, too, refused to move beyond the 'essential' of the divine being to the 'unessential' in his relationship with the world around him (*Kirchl. Dogmatik* II₁ 392).

6   This seems to be implied in Text 57; cf. Frank in Muséon 82/1969/471. The only critical exception is Text 68; in Text 56, b, and 64, b, *ṣifāt al-dhāt* is the heresiographer's interpretation. Text 68, on the other hand, is late, and the parallel in Text XV 29, k, does not need the term *dhāt*.

7   Thus Frank, loc. cit. 469; cf. also Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 276f. Abū l-Hudhayl clearly was no nominalist like Occam or Gabriel Biel.

8   Text 61.

9   Text 56, e.

from the meaning, in the case of God's face it was at least established by tradition.[10] Abū l-Hudhayl may not even have perceived the anthropomorphism here.[11] There were other anthropomorphisms he had to reinterpret; only the detour via the new sense led to identity.[12]

The question of to what degree he took the special characteristics of the attributes of act into account remains unanswered. Shahrastānī claimed he regarded God's seeing and hearing as well as his rewarding and punishing, his friendship, his enmity etc. as eternal attributes, but only in the sense that God would be seeing, hearing, rewarding etc. in the future (Text 59). This is a sensible distinction: the statement that God has been omniscient for all eternity is on a different level from claiming that he had been a friend, or given rewards or punishments, for all eternity. However, Shahrastānī may be dependent on an account by Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb or by Ashʿarī, who cited this account in two places in his *Maqālāt* (Text 60). In one of these Ashʿarī expressed doubt as to whether this was truly what Abū l-Hudhayl had taught. It could be that this issue was only brought into the tradition retrospectively. Elsewhere (Text 58), he stressed only the identity with reference to the two most important attributes of this group, namely hearing and seeing, including them more or less with the 'attributes of essence' (Text 56, b). Maybe Abū l-Hudhayl did not regard the difference between knowledge and power on the one hand, and seeing, hearing, rewarding etc. on the other as later scholars would; he may well have focussed on the issue that had governed the discussion up until then, namely that the objects of knowledge and power had not existed for all eternity, either, just as those of hearing etc. had not. However, Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb is an early witness. The discussion was certainly already conducted among Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils.[13]

Regarding the problem of creating see p. 302ff. below. If we accept Shahrastānī's account we have to ask at the very least whether he did not expand the list of the attributes at 59, b improperly. It is difficult to stomach that Abū l-Hudhayl should have regarded God as the creator for all eternity but believed creating to be created (see below).

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10      See vol. II 595 and 544 above.

11      Text 56, e suggests that he interpreted *wajh* in the sense of *nafs*.

12      Text 56, f–g. Even though hadith said that both of God's hands were right hands, this was not proof to him that only a literal interpretation was possible. He adduced some verses as evidence to show that a metaphor can be carried further: if the hand of God means 'mercy', then his right hand means 'perfect mercy' (Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 303, 1ff.).

13      Cf. also Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/460, n. 31.

The core of the doctrine was not touched by these distinctions; however, this same core, the theory of identity, would soon be under fire from criticism, less because of the intended meaning than because of the way it was expressed. Abū l-Hudhayl could assert that knowledge was identical with God, but by postulating it as that due to which God is knowing, he presented it as a separate entity. This contradiction was noted within the Muʿtazila as well as beyond it. Critics applied formal logic. If the attributes are identical with God, they said, they would have to be identical among themselves;[14] God's knowledge would thus be the same as his omnipotence. Furthermore it would have to be possible to invert the statement of identity: '(God's) knowledge is God' would mean that 'God is knowledge'.[15]

Abū l-Hudhayl avoided the first argument by pointing out that the objects were different: the attributes are identical in that they are all identical with God, but at the same time they differ insofar as what is known (*maʿlūm*) is not the same as what one is capable of (*maqdūr*).[16] This does not really convince, as 1) not all attributes have an object and 2) taken all in all, the objects of God's knowledge and omnipotence are of course identical. As we have seen they constitute the same finite sum. Still, we are probably looking at the problem from the wrong angle. Abū l-Hudhayl's argument was based on Quranic statements, and he examined them not from a philosophical but from a linguistic point of view. He was not concerned with the identity of attributes but with the fact that the individual statements mean the same thing.[17] It is also likely that he did not interpret them as generic but rather as specific; *Allāhu bi kulli shayʾin ʿalīm* did not so much tell him that God was omniscient as that God knew every single thing, each through its individual act of knowledge. *ʿAlīm* is an adjective derived from a verbal root and, as we have seen,[18] in the view of the Basran grammarians both the adjective and the verb were based on the infinitive (*maṣdar*), the verbal noun. The verbal noun *ʿilm*, however, does not mean 'knowledge'/'knowing' in a generic sense but an 'act of knowledge'; consequently 'something known' was certainly different from an individual object of God's omnipotence.

This aspect also plays a part in the second argument. It is not easy to see what would be considered offensive in a statement such as 'God is knowledge'. In Ashʿarī's ears it sounded too much like Antiquity, like 'God is νοῦς' or

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14   Text 62, d. Ashʿarī adopted the opponents' argument in 63, b–d, proving that Abū l-Hudhayl arrived at a similar conclusion in another context.

15   Text 63, a; adopted by Ibn al-Rēwandī in 65, a–b).

16   Text 64, f, and 62, d.

17   Thus Ashʿarī in Text 64, d–e.

18   See p. 263f. above; also Frank, *Beings and their Attributes* 28, n. 8.

'thought thinking itself' (νόησις νοήσεως) not taking notice of the world at all, in the Aristotelian sense.[19] Still, this is probably secondary once again. If 'God is knowing' was understood as meaning 'there is an act of knowledge with God, and it is identical with him', the inversion of the second half of this statement would be 'God is an act of knowledge', which was indeed untenable. Abū l-Hudhayl defended himself by pointing out the consensus regarding the face of God. The whole world – or at least the entire Mu'tazila – was agreed that the face is God himself, but no-one would suggest inverting the statement and saying 'God is a face'. Note '**a** face'; his *mu'āraḍa* followed his opponents having interpreted *'ilm* as specific, too.[20]

Muslim sources do not enlighten us as to who these opponents were, but there is conclusive evidence that there was at least one Christian among them: 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, against whom Abū l-Hudhayl himself wrote a pamphlet.[21] One of the two extant works by 'Ammār, *K. al-burhān*, was composed under al-Mu'taṣim at the very earliest;[22] Abū l-Hudhayl's pamphlet hat probably been written by that time. 'Ammār was presumably just retaliating when he now took the step Abū l-Hudhayl had always hoped to avoid: wisdom and life, attributes according to Abū l-Hudhayl's concept, but the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Christian, are substantively independent and eternal. God is alive, and the adjective 'alive' was derived from the noun 'life', but if there was no life, God would be dead.[23] This looks like a caricature of Abū l-Hudhayl's model, when in fact it is a *mu'āraḍa*. In the second text, entitled *K. al-masā'il wal-ajwiba*, 'Ammār directly employs one of the arguments described above: if the statements 'God is wise' and 'God is alive' had the same denotation, everything alive would be wise at the same time.[24]

The Mu'tazilites reacted quickly.[25] Khayyāṭ came up with the excuse that Abū l-Hudhayl meant to say that God was knowing of himself (*bi-nafsihī*, rather

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19  Cf. Text 63, e, with commentary; also in detail Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/462ff.

20  Text 65, h–l. The specific sense is clearly visible in *b* where Ibn al-Rēwandī juxtaposes *'ilm* (indefinite) and *al-'ilm* (definite) and derives one from the other. Unfortunately he does not make it quite clear who the *ahl al-tawḥīd* in *h* refers to – Muslims in general, or only the Mu'tazilites. The Jahmiyya had already taught that God's face was identical with God (see vol. II 564 above).

21  Catalogue of Works no. 7.

22  Cf. the remark there on p. 38, –5f.

23  Ibid. 46, –5ff., and 48, 7; cf. Griffith in: Muséon 96/1983/169f.

24  Ibid. 154, 6ff. 'Ammār's problem is, of course, how to prove that wisdom and life only are these substantive attributes. And in fact he is not concerned with attributes at all but with hypostases. He uses the term *qunūm*, rejecting *shakhṣ* 'person' (ibid. 162, 1ff.).

25  If Text 65, h, is referring to the Mu'tazilites (see n. 20 above), we would have the proof that they, too, were among the first opponents.

than *bi-ʿilmihī*).[26] This was what Naẓẓām taught as well, and it was the expression Jubbāʾī would select. It put the identity beyond doubt, and the Christians were left with no leg to stand on. The grammatical analogy, however, had been ruined; divine knowledge could not be explained in analogy to human knowledge any more,[27] but then Abū l-Hudhayl had prepared the last-named consequence: God is the opposite of the world.[28]

### 3.2.1.3.4.3    Omnipotence and the Plan of Salvation

Abū l-Hudhayl's analysis of human action demonstrated the degree to which he stressed God's omnipotence. The model with which he worked was simple and clear: God has power over everything (*huwa ʿalā kullu shayʾin qadīr*); but he can divest himself of this power, and if he chooses to do so, it will be entirely. This explains humans' freedom to act; there are no compromises like synergism.[1] He only has power over human action insofar as he has relinquished it; if he applied this, it would still result in human action.[2] Abū l-Hudhayl did not distinguish between determinists and synergists. He appears to have attacked the latter in particular. The detailed summary of one of these texts, probably his *K. al-makhlūq ʿalā Ḥafṣ al-Fard* is extant;[3] it dates back to his Basran days. Somewhere he also clashed with Najjār's followers.[4] He must have known him in Basra,[5] but he never wrote against him;[6] Najjār, too, seems to have been at odds rather more with Naẓẓām.[7] He discomfited his pupils by means of a theologoumenon to which Najjār devoted much attention, but that Abū l-Hudhayl had apparently already developed himself, albeit with a different emphasis: the 'alternative' capacity to the opposite of what one does do.[8] He accused them of destroying this alternative by allowing an unbeliever the

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26    Text 65, d–f.

27    Cf. Frank in: Actas IV Congresso UEAI Coimbra 98. Regarding the development in more detail cf. id., *Beings and Their attributes* 11ff.

28    See p. 263 above. Frank regards this as left over from Neo-Platonic thought: God is ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (in: Muséon 82/1969/471f.).

1    Text 82; distorted polemically in Text 83.

2    Text 84.

3    Cf. Text 86 with commentary.

4    Cf. Text 90, l; mentioned as *mujbira* in u.

5    See p. 227, n. 8 above.

6    Unless we want to regard the *K. al-radd ʿalā l-Qadariyya wal-Mujbira* (Catalogue of Works no. 18) as being directed against him.

7    See p. 323 below; also ch. C 5.2.1.

8    See p. 253 above.

capacity to act only in accordance with unbelief.[9] An unbeliever is not con-
demned to unbelief, he held, but chooses it himself,[10] and even someone who
does good is only granted divine assistance (*tawfīq*) and protection from sin
(*ʿiṣma*) once he has earned it through his actions.[11]

The alternative also entails God's freedom, for if God effects natural pro-
cesses, he could also let the opposite happen: he could make a stone hover in
the air rather than drop to the ground, or put fire to cotton without the latter
burning.[12] If he has the power of justice, he also has power to do wrong; if he
speaks the truth, he could also lie.[13] Of course he has foreknowledge that he
will not lie; but he clearly has power over even those things he knows he will
not do. This gives rise to the problem that there are some cases where he has
'published' this knowledge in the revelation, committing himself. This does
not detract from his power; it is superior to knowledge. However, if we wanted
to assume that knowledge changes in the wake of an 'alternative' decision, the
new state would first have to be 'published'.[14] This is probably an explanation
of abrogation (*naskh*).

If God does no wrong despite having the power to do so, it is not sufficient
to say that he knows this beforehand; rather, it is not in his essence. Doing
wrong, after all, is imperfection, and it is unthinkable (*muḥāl*) that there could
be imperfection in God.[15] God does good for its own sake;[16] he is so wise and
merciful that he does not act contrary to it.[17] Consequently he also always
does what is most beneficial (*aṣlaḥ*), as anything less beneficial would once
again be a sign of imperfection.[18] Still, this does not reduce him to only being
able to do what is according to his 'nature'; he does not have a nature.[19] Abū
l-Hudhayl did not speak of his 'essence' (*dhāt*), either.[20] Consequently God re-
tains the power of doing something less beneficial.[21] However – and this is new

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9    Text 90, u–y; in a similar form directed against Ḥafṣ al-Fard (?) in Text 86, s.

10   In the form of the exegesis of a critical Quranic passage in Text 87.

11   Kashshī 561f. no. 1060 > Majlisī, *Biḥār* XLIX 282 no. 36; cf. also Text 157.

12   Text 77, a. Jubbāʾī accepted this; Kaʿbī, who adopted the Baghdad tradition, rejected it
     (Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 195f. § 53).

13   Text 80, a; cf. also 90, k. Also the title at Catalogue of Works no. 21.

14   Text 78.

15   Text 79 and 80, c.

16   Text 81.

17   Text 80, b.

18   Text 99, b, d–e, k.

19   In detail cf. Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/486ff., who makes the comparison with Origen.

20   See p. 294 above.

21   Text 99, c and l–m.

compared to doing wrong and lying – it cannot be said that he has the power of doing something more beneficial than he has already done;[22] this is the nature of the superlative. Furthermore the 'mercies', in which he does whatever is most beneficial to humans, are limited in number, like all *maqdūrāt*.[23]

The strong emphasis on the *aṣlaḥ* principle intensified the problem of theodicy, but Abū l-Hudhayl was able to refer to older solutions. Children who die early go to paradise, not because God in his mercy decrees it, but as a reward for the faith they have shown in their primal state – *fī l-dharr*, as he said, i.e. in the covenant Adam's descendants (*dhurriyya*), dispersed as particles of dust, made with God during the pre-existence. This appears to have applied to all humans; people only became unbelievers through a conscious profession, or through the parents' influence as stated in the well-known *fiṭra* hadith. This is what Abū l-Hudhayl reported about Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in his *K. al-ḥujja*, and he seems to have identified with it.[24] He agreed with Muʿammar that harmful, ugly or dangerous animals could never find their way into paradise.[25]

None of this had much relevance anymore. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir had shifted the accent from the death of the children to the meaning of their suffering; Abū l-Hudhayl was familiar with this theory[26] and commented on it in a treatise.[27] In his view suffering only had meaning if it was deserved; in that case God is truly doing what is most beneficial. If this is not the case, there must be compensation (*ʿiwāḍ*) either on earth or in the otherworld.[28] God does not act like humans here. The compensation is not granted once, like blood-money, but forever,[29] as ending it would once again be cause for sorrow; 'mental cruelty', as it were.[30]

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22    Ibid., f–g.

23    Ibid., a. h–i make clear that this only ever refers to what is most beneficial to humans, not to the idea of this world as the best of all possible worlds. Cf. p. 135f. above concerning Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir; Ḍirār was not yet familiar with this idea (cf. Text XV 36, a). In general see Brunschvig in: SI 39/1974/6f. (= *Etudes d'Islamologie* I 234f.), and Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/489f.

24    Text 151.

25    Text XVI 44.

26    See p. 135 above.

27    Catalogue of Works no. 31.

28    Text 149. Regarding the term cf. Ormsby, *Theodicy* 244f.

29    Text 129.

30    This is the reasoning given in Māīm, ShUKh 496, 4ff.; but it is not clear whether it goes back to Abū l-Hudhayl. The term, too, may be younger, as Jubbāʾī shared Abū l-Hudhayl's view (cf. Text 149).

The most blatant interference in God's plan of salvation was murder. According to the Quran God allocated a 'term' (*ajal*) to each human; a murderer flouts this. In Abū l-Hudhayl's view this was an optical illusion: the murdered person would have died at this time in any case.[31] Thus the event does not infringe God's power; while the murderer acts on his own decision, he is the instrument of a hidden plan. Zoroastrianism agreed with this view,[32] but the Muʿtazila would soon move away from Abū l-Hudhayl.

Cf. Text 152, commentary. Regarding the individual opinions cf. *Maq.* 257, 3f., and especially *Mughnī* XI 3, 4ff. Some of the arguments against are rather colourful. According to Abū l-Hudhayl's theory someone who killed someone else's sheep (i.e. slaughtered it correctly, but without permission) performed a good deed, for if the beast had died naturally at that time, it could not have been consumed (*Mughnī* XI 8, 10ff.). Or: sometimes, such as in a war, scores of people are killed at the same time; if they had all died naturally at the same time, it would have been most unusual (ibid. 7, –6ff.). This objection was already found in some Christian texts (cf. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* 146f.). In Islamic theology the opposition formed within the Muʿtazila, in the Baghdad school (cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 427f.). What was frequently overlooked was the difference between Abū l-Hudhayl's theory and predestinarianism (cf. the Māturīdite *Risāla fī l-ʿaqāʾid*, ed. Yörükan, § 17), namely mainly that Abū l-Hudhayl believed God knew the date of someone's death in advance, while the determinists believed he also willed it in advance (cf. Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 658). The reason why someone was killed was of course also relevant; an execution was usually the criminal's own fault. Farazdaq, too, had believed that it would only be carried out if the moment was predetermined (*Naqāʾiḍ* I 384, and 385, 2ff.).

The sources do not give a clear idea of Abū l-Hudhayl's view of livelihood (*rizq*), a question discussed of old in connection with that of the date of death. The traditional position, supported by hadith, was that everything God grants humans as the foundation for their material existence was livelihood. The Muʿtazilites introduced a distinction: livelihood is only what a person owns or acquires in a legal manner; if he obtained it against the law it is impossible for God to have granted it him (cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 429f.). Abū l-Hudhayl, it seems, did not judge quite as severely as his later fellow believers: God always grants the livelihood

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31  Text 152.

32  Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems* 35 after a commentary on *Vidēvdāt* 5, 9.

a human acquires in any particular moment, be it lawfully or unlawfully (cf. Text 153–154 with commentary). Regarding the earlier discussion cf. ch. D 2.1.1.

### 3.2.1.3.4.4    Creating and Creation

When God created humans, he did so out of wisdom; it was the most beneficial for them. He also did it out of generosity, for 'he is not small-minded'.[1] Being is more than not-being; it profits humans as it allows them to earn their salvation. God does not need creation for himself, but as it exists for humans, it was not merely a pointless act (*'abath*).[2] This idea combined Quranic with Hellenistic tradition. It was already written in *Timaios* that God did not create the world out of necessity but out of benevolence;[3] Galen's compendium of that work, which is extant only in Arabic, tells us that he was not miserly.[4] Pseudo-Ammonius' doxography narrates a similar tale, probably even before Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq translated the Galen text into Arabic.[5] The Quran in its turn emphasised that God did nothing 'for fun' (*lāʿibᵃⁿ*) or 'to no purpose' (*bāṭilᵃⁿ*);[6] there are parallels in the Church Fathers, such as Justin.[7] Unlike Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir,[8] Abū l-Hudhayl thus did not think it superfluous for God to speak his '*fiat*' during the act of creating. It has its purpose: the angels hear it and know that something has been created.[9]

The question is how one should imagine this. The *fiat* emanates from God, but it is obviously not an attribute. Still, it is the expression of a divine act of will which always accompanies it; both combine to form the act of creating.[10] Willing and creating might be regarded as attributes; being God's speech the *fiat* might well have been accorded the same status – but Abū l-Hudhayl decided differently. The *fiat* is, like all of God's speech, a mere accident, as is the

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1    Text 99, h–i.

2    Text 115. Concerning *'abath* cf. Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes* 133f., and Index s. v.; he uses the translations 'purposeless action' and 'pointless act'.

3    29 D–30 A.

4    *Galeni Compendium Timaei Platonis* 5, 9f./transl. 40.

5    XIII 26ff. RUDOLPH; cf. the commentary p. 165f. there.

6    Cf. sura 21:16 and 38:27; in more detail O'Shaughnessy, *Creation* 55ff.

7    2nd Apo. 4.2: οὐκ εἰκῇ, 'not at random'. Regarding Jesus Sirach and Judaism cf. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* ²262f.

8    See p. 133 above.

9    Text 107.

10   Text 100, d, and 101, a.

act of will;[11] creating is itself created.[12] The act of will and the *fiat* do not have a substrate; like creating they are 'not in one place', i.e. not material.[13]

The explanation for this step is probably that here as elsewhere Abū l-Hudhayl thought very much in Quranic terms. Of course God has the power to create things even without the word *kun*,[14] but he had 'made public' that he would not do this. The process of creation has to be explained out of the *kun*, rather than vice versa. In fact, this was the normal path in Abū l-Hudhayl's time; more rationalistic concepts which regarded the *fiat* as superfluous or too human spread only slowly. There are parallels in the *K. sirr al-khalīqa* as well as in Pseudo-Ammonius;[15] one of the philosophers' speeches in the *Turba philosophorum* includes the word *kun*, which is created before everything else, as male μονάς which is followed by the female Two.[16] And in the view of the Alexandrine gnostic Basilides God created the world from nothing, simply through his word based on his decision.[17] Abū l-Hudhayl thought Jesus was called the word (*kalima*) which God announces of himself in sura 3:45 because the divine 'Be' becomes manifest in him in an exemplary fashion because of the virgin birth.[18]

Creating, like the *fiat*, is thus a kind of hypostasis and can consequently not be identical with the thing created,[19] but it exists at the same time: a divine act of will is realised instantly.[20] The same is true of the act of will itself, of existence, decay and of the 'repetition' in the resurrection.[21] All these acts are themselves created because they manifest themselves on a particular object.[22] Now, however, Abū l-Hudhayl had to avoid regress that had gained notoriety thanks to Muʿammar. Consequently he made a distinction: creating is created in the true sense of the word only if it manifests itself on a body, which in turn

11 See p. 259f. above. Text 126 may also be referring to this.

12 Text 101, a; 102, b; 105, h.

13 Text 110; 100, f; 105, a. Further references on p. 249f. above.

14 Cf. Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/495 after Mānkdīm, ShUKh 562, 3ff.

15 F. Zimmermann in: *Pseudo-Aristotle* 197; Pseudo-Ammonius, cap. XXIV 8ff. RUDOLPH with commentary p. 201ff.

16 Ruska, *Turba philosophorum* 297.

17 G. May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts* 74. The passage in the *Turba* also goes back to a Christian source, namely Hippolytus of Rome (cf. U. Rudolph in: Oriens 32/1990/116).

18 Text 108.

19 Text 100, a, e, h; 106, c. Regarding this and the following cf. Frank in: Muséon 496ff.

20 Text 100, c; 106, b. Also p. 267 above.

21 Text 100, i–k and m–n; 105, a; 106, a; *Maq.*366, 14f.

22 Frank is probably right when he assumes that Abū l-Hudhayl is not yet distinguishing between *makhlūq* and *muḥdath* in this context.

is *khalq* 'creation' and thus created. As an act of divine speech and will, on the other hand, 'creating' may be called created only in the figurative sense.[23] *Kun* does not require a further *kun*; in theory God did, after all, not even need it.[24] This also applies to the act of will: it is 'created' in the figurative sense only; it cannot, in fact, be mistaken for the creation.[25] Willing is not itself willed, and causing to happen (*iḥdāth*) is not itself happening (*ḥadīth*), just like motion is not itself moving.[26] Only a body is moving and created in the true sense. The idea Abū l-Hudhayl adhered to was apparently that creating emanates from God like a speech bubble and then is appropriated by the thing created to become its accident.

The texts on which we base our analysis are complex and may be combined in several ways.[27] Some passages certainly also reflect the discussion that would later erupt around this thorny issue. Even among Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils there was an argument over whether the master believed that the act of divine will subsisted in God himself.[28] This demonstrates how soon he was misunderstood. Everyone assumed that God's willing was one of his attributes, but Abū l-Hudhayl had regarded it as an accident, and accidents only existed in the created world.[29] Still, he had noticed that if he tied willing to creating, the equation did not quite come out. Unlike creating, willing could, as we have seen, only be called created in the figurative sense. And: while one might simply say of creating that it was not identical with the created thing, it was not enough to say that willing was not identical with that which was willed. God **wills** human acts of obedience, but does not create them. The theorem had to be expanded. One could emphasise, as Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir had done and as was only good and proper among Muʿtazilites, that God willed acts of obedience by commanding them.[30] But the act of will in connection with the *fiat* as conceived by Abū l-Hudhayl was undoubtedly more than that. It was not only a commandment and, the heresiographer adds in accordance with Abū l-Hudhayl, not a statement or a qualification (*ḥukm*) either.[31] In other words, a

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23    Text 101–102; also 105, h, with commentary.

24    Mānkdīm, ShUKh 562, 4ff.

25    Text 104, b; cf. 105, e, with commentary.

26    Text 103.

27    The oldest record is a summary of the doctrine of divine will found in Muḥāsibī, *Fahm al-Qurʾān* 342, 4ff.), but it is not very detailed and in addition anonymous.

28    Text 104, d–e.

29    Malāḥimī saw clearly that the Muʿtazila in general only came to regard the will as an independent entity later (*Muʿtamad* 240, 2ff.). Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see Text 17, b.

30    Text 106, d.

31    Regarding the latter see p. 132 and 273f. above; also 463 below.

good deed does not become good because God wills it, and the act of will does not immediately imply that it will come to pass.[32]

Discord arose when it came to the example of faith. The sources' discussing this as a separate issue indicates that Abū l-Hudhayl did not treat faith as one act of obedience among many. The reason was probably that even in Abū l-Hudhayl's day numerous Muʿtazilites considered faith to be created.[33] Abū l-Hudhayl now disagreed; otherwise he would not have been able to take on the *aṣḥāb al-makhlūq*.[34] He did not, however, admit that by willing faith God simply commanded it;[35] he neither commanded nor created it in this way.[36] Unfortunately this is ambiguous, like all negative statements. One thing only seems to be clear: he does not mean an act of will in the sense of the *fiat*. Willing is less than creating and more than commanding. Maybe Abū l-Hudhayl had in mind a divine mercy to ensure support by the surrounding circumstances; after all, one does not usually believe without precondition, like doing a good deed based on a sudden decision, but is born into the faith. However, as long as there are no new sources confirming this, we must leave this question unanswered.

### 3.2.1.3.4.5  Divine Speech

If the *fiat* was a mere accident, this surely applied to all divine speech. In addition it requires a substrate:[1] when God spoke to Moses, it inhabited the burning bush;[2] when God speaks to the Muslims it exists as the Quran in the form of a book, in the memory of humans, or in the recitation.[3] While the Quran also exists somewhere in heaven, on the 'preserved tablet', it is an accident there as well and created as such.[4] Consequently it can be in many places at once, and it can cease to exist in any place: such as when a copy of the Quran is destroyed, or when someone finishes his recitation,[5] but this does not mean that the Quran as such, God's speech, is constantly moving around; one and

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32  Text 105, d; also 104, a.

33  See p. 115 above.

34  Cf. Text 90, u–y; also p. 298 above.

35  Text 100, l.

36  Text 104, c, and 105, b.


1  Text 110.

2  Text 86, p; cf. p. 78 and 178 above.

3  Text 113, a–b; 114, b.

4  Text 114, a.

5  Recounted in distorted form by Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna* 221 no. 363.

the same accident can exist in several places and still retain its identity.[6] The speech itself would have passed away only if there were no substrate left; in that case it could continue to exist as a *fiat*.[7]

We have to look closely at the implications of this theory. The substrates are always material: the copy of the Quran, the 'heart' representing the memory, the tongue the recitation. The 'preserved tablet', too, is not imaginary or metaphorical, but material. The speech, too, cannot be mere sound, as it exists as an accident even in places where it does not manifest itself in the form of sound. Sound is transient, God's speech has permanence.[8] Sound comprises the sounds one hears, while speech is the combination of these sounds that exists beyond the moment.[9] It can be repeated at any time without losing its connection with the speaker. Of course sound does not convey isolated meaningless sounds; on the contrary, it is identical with the recitation. Speech is thus not the only thing imparting sense, the 'meaning'; this would take us very close to Ibn Kullāb's idea of *kalām nafsī*. It always has meaning; it is an **ordered** arrangement,[10] but the recitation also makes sense. The dividing line is elsewhere. Our source uses the term *ḥarf* to refer to the combination that exists beyond the moment, a word that denotes the smallest separable element of speech independently of its realisation: the sound as well as the letter, but also the particle and even the word.[11] What Abū l-Hudhayl meant when he said accident was what speech has in common in all its forms or, as one might say, that which is recited rather than the recitation.[12] That which is recited, then, is the 'message' (*ḥikāya*) originally stated. Consequently, whenever one hears the Quran, one hears what God himself said; repetition does not change it or add anything to it.[13] Ultimately the same is true of human speech.[14] In the

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6     See p. 254f. above.

7     Text 113, b–d; 114, c–g. Cf. also Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 270ff.

8     Text 111, b, and 138; cf. p. 251 above.

9     Ibid., c; esp. 112.

10    Text 112, a.

11    The usage of this term is known to be quite varied; a historical study remains to be undertaken. Cf. Fleisch in: EI² III 204f., and Bravmann, *Phonetische Lehren der Araber* 8f.; esp. Fischer in: JSAI 12/1989/135ff., and Dichy in: *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar* II 111ff. Sībawayh had already recognised the difference between a sound and its symbol (cf. Weiß in: ZDMG 54/1910/359ff.); regarding his usage cf. Troupeau, *Lexique-Index* 67.

12    Text 111, c. *Ḥarf* can even denote the 'Quranic text' per se, the written representation as well as the text version (Fischer 141f.).

13    Ibid., a and e–f; cf. the commentary.

14    Text 113, e, and 114, h (slightly weaker).

case of the Quran this meant that Abū l-Hudhayl believed in the verbal inspiration all the same.

Cf. in detail Frank in: Muséon 82/1969/490ff. The problem in both cases is to what degree Abū l-Hudhayl anticipated the ideas later found mainly in Jubbāʾī's systematising version. Apparently Jaʿfar b. Mubashshir's criticism of Abū l-Hudhayl was an important milestone in the development. He applied the distinction between *ḥikāya* and *maḥkī*, the 'reproduction' and 'something reproduced', both terms appearing in the title of the treatise he wrote on the subject (see ch. C 4.2.1.2 below). Jubbāʾī was certainly familiar with it, as we can conclude from the fact that his son went back directly to Ibn Mubashshir. We can assume that whenever Abū l-Hudhayl's teachings are expressed in these terms, we are looking at a later version. Text 111 is indeed different from the summaries in Ashʿarī (Text 113–114). The latter have a single instance of *maḥkī*, where it is used equal with *maḥfūẓ* (114, h). Jubbāʾī explained the verbal inspiration with sura 9:6: 'If one of the heathen asks you for protection, grant him protection so that he might hear the word of God'; his position furthermore led him to the conclusion that Quranic pericopes even when they have the same content are reporting different events (Gwynne, *The 'Tafsīr' of Jubbāʾī* 43 and 47).]

He never questions the Quran's createdness for one moment. We hear nothing about its existing in the spirit of God, as a message known of old. As it was an accident, this would not have been possible. Extra-Muʿtazilite observers might wonder what was divine about this Quran. Even so: Abū l-Hudhayl left no doubt that it was unadulterated revelation. If repetition does not change its status as immediate speech, it may be assumed that it was also impossible to 'produce its like',[15] but even though Abū l-Hudhayl attached great importance to this statement from sura 17:88, he did not prove it in this way. It would not have been logical in any case, as no loss of substance will occur through (literal) repetition – of course, this is also true of human speech, but the latter is **not** inimitable.

Abū l-Hudhayl probably discussed inimitability in a text entitled 'On the signs of the truthfulness of the prophet' (*K. ʿalāmāt ṣidq al-rasūl*).[16] He used

15    Thus Jubbāʾī (or Abū l-Hudhayl?) in: Ibn Mattōya, *Muḥīṭ* 327, 15f. ʿAzmī/ I 341, 13f. HOUBEN. After him Frank 494. Regarding Jubbāʾī cf. also Peters, *God's Created Speech* 388ff.

16    Catalogue of Works no. 37.

the plural; 'signs' may have meant 'miracles' as well. He demanded 'required' knowledge in this case[17] – probably the confirmation by 20 authorities we mentioned earlier. He paid particular attention to the challenge (*taḥaddī*) of the Quran. It could not be denied; the Quran itself mentioned it both directly and indirectly,[18] but the heathen Arabs had not responded appropriately, resorting to violence instead. This suggests that they had nothing equivalent with which they could have countered the prophet's claim; they had not noted the alleged internal contradictions within the Quran.[19] The *iʿjāz* is thus evolved through psychology, rather than based on the linguistic appearance of the Quran. In fact, the term *iʿjāz* is not used at all; the focus is on the inner truth of the Quran rather than its inimitability.

According to one of the summaries Abū l-Hudhayl said on this subject that 'the (ancient) Arabs were more skilled in discovering when a text contradicts itself';[20] an early sign of the linguistic argumentation. It is reinforced in an anecdote that appears to have been distilled from Abū l-Hudhayl's theoretical deliberations soon after his death. This insinuates that the criticism came from 'Nabataeans', i.e. from people whose mother tongue was not Arabic. It probably refers to Persians, *zanādiqa*; Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's ironic refutation of the *iʿjāz* – it, too, takes the psychological approach – was presumably known to Abū l-Hudhayl, whether it was authentic or not.[21]

Prophethood is an entrusted good (*amāna*) accorded by God to a chosen human who shows himself as deserving by accepting it without being forced to do so. Abū l-Hudhayl is said to have encountered this doctrine, which was not controversial among Muʿtazilites, in Wāṣil's teachings (cf. Text IX 10; also vol. II 313 above). It was not entirely sure whether he considered it possible for a prophet to have committed a grave sin before his calling. This conclusion would not have been illogical, but Jubbāʾī was the only one who transmitted it reliably. He may have been referring to Abū l-Hudhayl, but overall it was rejected by the Muʿtazilites (cf. Text 181; also Mānkdīm, ShUKh 563, –5ff.).

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17    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt* 511, 11ff.

18    Text 179, b–c.

19    Ibid., d–e; Text 180. Jāḥiẓ adopted and expanded this argument in his *K. ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* (*Rasāʾil* III 273, 5ff./transl. Rescher, *Excerpte* 143f.).

20    Text 179, a.

21    Cf. vol. II 39f. above. Regarding the preceding see in detail ZDMG 135/1985/46ff.

### 3.2.1.3.5 *The Theory of Sin*

The concept of indifferent actions was foreign to Abū l-Hudhayl.[1] Every moment of earthly existence is tied to an action,[2] and every action is included in the balance sheet one presents at the Last Judgment. This seems like an earlier stage compared to the five-grade scale with which jurists would later evaluate human actions, but is probably already the result of a process of abstraction. Quran and hadith present a varied vocabulary; the dichotomy, on the other hand, once evolved continued to exist for a long time in the Mu'tazila, until Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's time.[3] 'Amr b. 'Ubayd had already worked with it.[4] Abū l-Hudhayl's applying it was probably also due to his puritanical background; it was believed that the category of *mubāḥ*, indifferent, had already been evolved in addition to *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* in Kufa.[5]

The Kufan solution appears more realistic; it was clearly devised by practitioners. Dichotomy could only be maintained if one looked less to the action itself than to the intention. Abū l-Hudhayl did this, too. It is of no interest to a jurist if someone puts on a new garment, but it is different in relation to God. One may be putting it on in order to perform the prayer in a dignified fashion, or to demonstrate that God had bestowed such benevolence on one that one could afford a new garment; in these cases it would be an act of obedience. On the other hand one might wear it in order to emulate the rich or annoy the poor; in these cases it would be a sin. Abū l-Hudhayl was not a Sufi; it did not even occur to him that one might simply wear plain attire at all times. To wear fine clothing was only proper, as one is supposed to 'tell of one's Lord's benevolence' (sura 93:11); but it must be done in the right spirit.[6]

Of course it is easy to see why such an action would be interpreted as ἀδιάφορον, as one is not supposed to share one's motives with others. If one explained one's intention, one would be praising oneself – but God commands that one must not assert one's own purity (sura 53:22); but if one revealed one's

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1 Text 160, a.

2 See p. 261 above.

3 Cf. Gräf in: ZDMG, Suppl. III₁ (DOT 1975), p. 388ff. Even the Shī'ite Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 644/1266) expressed himself in favour of the idea that there cannot be indifferent actions for a *mukallaf* (Kohlberg, *A Medieval Scholar at Work* 375).

4 See vol. II 344 above.

5 Text 160, b–c.

6 Ibid., d–e. Ghazzālī prescribes a prayer for the situation when one has put on a new garment; it combines thanks to God with the request to be preserved from all evil while wearing it (*Iḥyā'*, translated in Nakamura, *Ghazali on Prayer* 112). – Muqammiṣ mentions a scholar who denied the existence of ἀδιάφορα (*Ishrūn maqāla*) XII 35 = p. 252); but this does not concern the intention but the fact that unconscious actions would be evaluated, too.

impure thoughts, one would expose oneself, which is also prohibited.[7] Abū l-Hudhayl regarded the action as being between human and God, which is why it is also the case that one is under no **obligation** to tell anyone one's motives. Under duress one may lie and even renounce Islam, as long as one does not mean it.[8] Jubbāʾī would later qualify this: the lie is evil, but it will not be punished as it was spoken in order to prevent harm.[9]

We can feel what it meant for Abū l-Hudhayl to distinguish between *afʿāl al-qulūb* and *afʿāl al-jawāriḥ*. The decision to commit a sin weighs as heavily as the sin itself;[10] indeed, it might be the only sinful component of an action: such as if one intended to cheat the owner of a deposit, but then returns it after all.[11] As it is the intention that determines the value an action has for salvation, it is not even very important whether the action is an obligatory one as faith can be realised through these as well as through supererogatory actions. All the good that one does, is faith.[12] One must, of course, take great care not to invert the proposition claiming that all the evil one does, is unbelief: as faith is 'all faith in God',[13] while unbelief is only unbelief if one destroys this faith in God following a deliberate decision. This is a serious matter indeed, and must be defined precisely. Abū l-Hudhayl distinguished three cases in which this occurred: 1) *tashbīh*, but only if one regards God as a combined and limited body, not if one defines 'body' in such a way that the definition could include God, or at least only if one claims to be able to see him like earthly things; 2) if one denies his perfection and questions his justice; and 3) when one transgresses against the religious consensus of Muslims.[14] Anything that is controversial cannot be unbelief – certainly not in the case of someone incapable of arriving at his own opinion: if a simple man does not believe that the Quran is created, this does not make him a heathen as he has no intention of transgressing

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7     Ibid., f.

8     Text 164–165; cf. Goldziher in: ZDMG 60/1906/225 = *Ges. Schr.* V 71.

9     Muwaffaq, *Iḥāṭa*, fol. 139a, 13ff.

10    Text 156. Wāṣil was said to have taught this as well (Text IX 9), but as both texts mention Jubbāʾī, too, we can assume that his teachings were anchored with different authorities in the past each time, or he himself cited different precursors (cf. also vol. II 305f. above).

11    Text 163; cf. also Text 49, c.

12    Text 155, a. According to Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 87, 10, Wāṣil, ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir shared this view.

13    Ibid., k.

14    Ibid., c–h. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 287, 2f., confirms that Abū l-Hudhayl allowed fewer excuses for determinists and predestinarians (= no. 2) than for anthropomorphists (= no. 1).

against God. If, however, he denies that the sky is created, he cannot be saved, as everyone knows that; in Abū l-Hudhayl's view, it was a priori knowledge.[15]

These examples recall Murdār,[16] but, one might say, in inverted proportions: where Murdār expands, Abū l-Hudhayl restricts. While Murdār suspected *kufr* everywhere, Abū l-Hudhayl evaluated in grades similar way to those employed by Aṣamm and Bishr al-Marīsī on the field of jurisprudence:[17] besides *kufr* there is *fisq*, deep sinfulness, 'transgression', then the domain of venial sins and finally all those things omitting which is not sinful at all. The latter refers to the *opera supererogationis* (*nawāfil*); while they are faith when one performs them, they do not count when not performed.[18] It is interesting that in the context of transgression Abū l-Hudhayl – or at least our source – first thinks of ritual offences: that someone does not pray, does not fast, or does not pay the poor rate;[19] we would first think of murder. However, omitting these ritual duties is disobedience against God in the most direct sense and thus closest to unbelief.

In addition, this was where the rules were clearest; in other areas the boundaries of 'transgression' had to be defined first, e.g. in the case of certain property crimes. Theft in the strict sense of the word, i.e. purloining an item from someone else's safekeeping (*ḥirz*) appeared clear to Abū l-Hudhayl: as soon as the *ḥadd* punishment is applied, the crime is a grave sin.[20] It is different in the case of fraud or misappropriation (*khiyāna*). This is not theft according to the Muslim definition, as nothing is purloined from someone else's safekeeping; a much-quoted hadith clearly prohibited applying *ḥadd* punishment.[21] The transition to grave sin could only be determined if one fixed a minimum amount for the misappropriated goods: Abū l-Hudhayl thought this should be five dirhams.[22] We do not know whether the same sum also required the *ḥadd* punishment in case of theft. It would make sense, for five dirhams were mentioned in this context elsewhere, too, e.g. in Kufa.[23] The Ibāḍites in Basra

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15    Text 158; cf. p. 249 and 271 above.

16    See p. 148 above.

17    See vol. II 470 above.

18    Text 155, b and l. Still, in the latter case they are by no means ἀδιάφορα, as they do not then exist. The fact that in that case they did not count and only made a difference to the positive total may have contributed to Jubbāʾī and Abū Hāshim's not including the *nawāfil* under faith (Mānkdīm, ShUKh 707, –4f.).

19    The last example is found in Abū ʿAmmār, *Mūjaz* II 272, 6ff., and earlier.

20    Text 162, a, and 161, b. Regarding the definition of theft cf. the heading of Text 162 (*Maq.* 272, 13) and in general Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law* 179f.

21    *Laysa ʿalā l-khāʾin qaṭʿ*; cf. Conc. II 92, a.

22    Text 161 a.

23    See p. 138 above.

probably also adhered to this figure,[24] and he might well have found supporters in the Muʿtazila as well.[25]

The question remains of how he arrived at this figure. It seems that he did not simply adopt it from tradition but drew an analogy with the alms tax (cf. the allusion in Text XXII 260, c). Other texts did this as well; in both cases the term for the minimum amount was the same: *niṣāb*, only the calculation was different. Naẓẓām's starting point was the minimum amount of capital on which one had to pay *zakāt* (see p. 421 below); Abū l-Hudhayl, on the other hand, as we are later informed by Jubbāʾī, started with the amount up to which one may withhold *zakāt* with impunity: up to four dirhams. He would have treated misappropriation like tax fraud. We have no information on whether this analogy was applied more widely at his time, but ʿAlī and ʿUmar were said to have decided along these lines (cf. Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* III 513, 9ff.).

Punishment on earth does not, however, mean that the sin is forgiven: penitence is needed for that. Abū l-Hudhayl is said to have warned people of putting it off, as his assistant (*ghulām*) was killed by a brick before he had performed his penitence.[26] This presumes that it was not merely an intention, but that one's change of heart had to be demonstrated. Venial sins, on the other hand, could be forgiven without penitence as long as one committed no grave sins; God will overlook many small faults in a pious man. He does this purely because he is merciful: this generosity is not deserved.[27] And of course one cannot rely on it; even a venial sin could in principle be punished with the eternal fires of hell.[28] Abū l-Hudhayl allowed God greater freedom than later Muʿtazilites would do. They spoke of *iḥbāṭ* 'annulment', interpreting it rather more in the sense of automatic compensation.[29] Someone who is spared the eternal fires will be punished only during the interrogation by angels in the grave, which takes place after the resurrection but before the judgment – 'between the two blasts of the trumpet'.

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24    Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 105, ult.

25    Text XXII 259, a.

26    Maʿarrī, *Risālāt al-Ghufrān* 521, 3ff.

27    Text 155, i.

28    Text 159.

29    In more detail in ch. C 4.2.1.2 below regarding Jaʿfar b. Mubashshir; regarding Jubbāʾī cf. *Maq.* 270, 4ff.

If we are to believe the tradition, Abū l-Hudhayl shared this idea with Bishr al-Marīsī (cf. Text 166; also p. 199 above) and did not, like many of his fellow believers, reject the punishment of the grave. He even wrote a book about it (Catalogue of Works no. 30). As this also dealt with the cistern (*ḥawḍ*) by which Muḥammad awaits the believers, and in particular with his intercession, it was not shown in an exclusively positive context. It is certain that unlike Bishr al-Marīsī Abū l-Hudhayl did not exempt all Muslims from the eternal punishment in hell. See ch. D 2.2.1.1 below, and Text XXI 166, addendum to the commentary.

### 3.2.1.3.6    *Political Theory*

Abū l-Hudhayl wrote a *K. al-imāma*.[1] It was directed against one Hishām, probably Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, and was thus in all likelihood composed in Basra. His clashing with the Shīʿites there is suggested by the records of his debates with ʿAlī b. Mītham, even though these might be apocryphal.[2] He had angered them by refusing to accept ʿAlī's precedence over Abū Bakr.[3] If the Shīʿites used the hadith of the pool Ghadīr Khumm, he argued that even assuming it was genuine, the wording did not yield the meaning they heard: 'He of whom I am the patron, of him ʿAlī is the patron', only states that the prophet regarded ʿAlī as his special confidant, not that he had promised him the succession.[4] On the other hand Abū l-Hudhayl's train of thought was not so Basran that he ignored ʿAlī altogether; he quite agreed that after ʿUthmān's death the caliphate was indeed rightfully his.[5] While he did not believe ʿAlī to be 'more excellent' (*afḍal*) than Abū Bakr, he does not seem to have been convinced of the latter's precedence, either;[6] he maintained friendly relations with the Hāshimids at court.[7] There he probably simply professed the four-caliph theory that gained ground in Baghdad around this time.[8]

He avoided controversial issues. He did not deny that ʿUthmān was guilty of 'innovations' during the last six years, but he believed that their influence could not be inferred from the tradition. Consequently one should not call ʿUthmān

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1    Catalogue of Works no. 47.

2    See vol. II 482f. above; also Kashshī 561f. no. 1060.

3    Cf. Text XV 44 and 41.

4    Text 183.

5    Text 182, e–f.

6    Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* 33, 14ff./41, 9ff.; *Mughnī* XX₂ 115, 6f.; Muwaffaq, *Iḥāṭa*, fol. 111b, 1f.; Ḥajūrī, *Rawḍa*, fol. 98a.

7    See p. 230 above.

8    See p. 204f. above. According to Ḥajūrī, loc. cit., he supported it with an apocryphal hadith.

a grave sinner but refrain from judging him.[9] His view on ʿAlī and the battle of the camel was similar: here, too, the reason why Ṭalḥa and Zubayr took up arms cannot be discerned clearly any more; and as the opponents were equal in other respects, ἐποχή is advisable.[10] In Muʿāwiya's case he did not need to show such restraint.[11] It has occasionally been suggested that he adopted this approach from earlier Muʿtazilites, Wāṣil and ʿAmr or Ḍirār;[12] but he probably also embraced it because he wanted to avoid embarrassing situations at court.

### 3.2.1.4    His Legacy

Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils are going to cross our path frequently in the following pages. He had a large number of them, and they were not only found in Basra or Baghdad, but the inhabitants of Jahrum in Fars, too, followed his teachings.[1] Some of his ideas were even adopted beyond the Muʿtazila. Certain Imāmites followed his definition of humans;[2] like him, Ibāḍites used the term acts of obedience 'not aimed at God'.[3] His son Hudhayl, after whom he bore his *kunya*, was a *mutakallim* as well, but did not write anything.[4] From a later point of view, Shaḥḥām occupied a key position: he was the link with Jubbāʾī.[5] He was able to play this part only because he was very young; there were certainly others who were more significant, but people did not always like to speak of them. Some, e.g. ʿAlī al-Uswārī, fell in with Naẓẓām,[6] while others embraced views that would soon fall out of fashion. One of these was

　　　　Yaḥyā b. Bishr al-Arrajānī,

who would adhere to Abū l-Hudhayl's theory of the end of all motion in the afterlife against the later consensus. While it was said that he, like his master, abandoned this error,[7] this was not until very late. Kaʿbī pointed out that

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9     Text 182, a–c.

10    Ibid., g–n; Text XV 46 and 47, a–c.

11    Text XV 47, d.

12    Cf. Text XV 46–47 also Mufīd, *Jamal* 26, 13ff.; also Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, who has Text IX 16 immediately following Text XXI 181.

1     Kaʿbī, *Maq.* 113, 5.

2     *Maq.* 61, 8ff.

3     *Mq.* 105, 5f.; Baghdādī, *Farq* 84, –4ff./105, 10ff. The priority is not clear, however.

4     Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 204, 14.

5     See ch. C 4.1.3 below.

6     See p. 455 below.

7     IM 78, 8.

during his time he still persisted in it,[8] adding that Arrajānī was by then the only one; but of course Abū l-Hudhayl had probably been dead for half a century by the time Kaʿbī wrote this. It is still an attempt at whitewashing the original situation. Shaḥḥām, who attacked Arrajānī in a treatise 'concerning the movements', had shared his opinions at first.[9] He was considered one of Abū l-Hudhayl's most important followers.[10] In Isfahan he had a pupil, Abū Bakr al-Zubayrī, who also embraced the greater part of Abū l-Hudhayl's teachings and may well have followed him in the controversial issue under discussion here, too.[11] The arguments employed to defend his 'false doctrine' were still refuted by Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār;[12] they might go back to Arrajānī through him.[13]

The *nisba* is frequently read *Irjāʾī* (e.g. in both editions of *Muḥīṭ*, loc. cit.; also ɪᴍ 46, 5). The editor of the *K. faḍl al-iʿtizāl* justified this in a note (284, n. 556), but started with a wrong assumption; the account he cited did not name Yaḥyā b. Bishr as a follower of *irjāʾ* but an opponent (cf. *Faḍl* 284, 10f.). Furthermore the *nisba* associated with it would not be *Irjāʾī* but *Murjiʾī*. – In Arabica 13/1966/30 Vajda hesitantly wondered whether this theologian might be the same as the mysterious Yaḥyā b. Bishr b. ʿUmayr al-Nihāwandī whom Ibn al-Jawzī mentions a number of times as his source in *Talbīs Iblīs* (e.g. 43, 13ff.; 45, 11ff.; 49, 8ff.; 59, 6ff.). This is not entirely impossible. Nihāwandī was a doxographer whose particular interest appears to have been non-Islamic theories; he would thus join Zurqān who also came from Abū l-Hudhayl's school (regarding him see ch. C 4.2.4.3 below). *Terminus ante quem* for him is the year 377/988 at which point, or a little while earlier, the manuscript of his work used by Ibn al-Jawzī in the Niẓāmiyya was written (cf. Monnot, *Islam et religions* 78f.). This still leaves us with a century to bridge until we come to Yaḥyā b. Bishr al-Arrajānī. In addition, two of the four passages referred to call Nihāwandī Yaḥyā b. Bashīr rather than Yaḥyā b. Bishr.

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8    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* ɪɪ 193, 9f. Ibn Mattōya (*Muḥīṭ* 116, –4ff. ʿAᴢᴍī/ɪ 109, 21f. ʜᴏᴜʙᴇɴ) and the author of the fragment edited by Abū Rīda 'Fī l-tawḥīd' (p. 265, 4f., and 269, 8f.) are probably based on Kaʿbī.

9    *Faḍl* 256, 8f.; cf. *Festschrift Hourani* 29, and p. 283 above.

10   *Faḍl* 285, 10f.

11   Regarding him see ch. C 7.5 below.

12   *Fī l-tawḥīd* 265, –5ff.

13   This might be inferred from 269, 8f.

Another interesting case was

Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Shāfiʿī,

whom Ibn Ḥazm and his contemporaries introduced as the pupil who modi-
fied the truth criterion Abū l-Hudhayl applied to oral traditions. Instead of 20
authorities he demanded a mere five among whom there had to be one 'friend
of God'; but then five others were supposed to receive the information from
every single one, and so on forever. We are not told how this radiation was
supposed to work, whether horizontally in a kind of snowball effect during
the same generation, or vertically, being transmitted through several genera-
tions. The latter concept is likely to have played a part; it imbued Abū l-Hud-
hayl's criterion with a historical dimension, making it more suitable for hadith.
The reason for stipulating five in particular may have been to ensure that the
Christians' four evangelists should stand no chance any more; also, five was
just beyond the four witnesses with whom, in Abū l-Hudhayl's view, probabil-
ity began.

See p. 288 above; cf. my summary in: *La notion d'autorité au Moyen Age*
218, and ch. D 4.3 below, based on passages from Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 203,
16ff., and Bājī, *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl* 328, 4f. I follow the more explicit account in
Ibn Ḥazm, Bājī being rather brief and replacing *walī Allāh* with *maʿsūm*,
which was also used in the context of Abū l-Hudhayl's theory. On the
other hand he transmitted the name more precisely: *Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*
rather than *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*, as Ibn Ḥazm says. A. Turki suggested he is
identical with Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī, which appears to be correct.

Until now we had met with this Muʿtazilite in a different context, as Kaʿbī's
source in his *K. al-Maqālāt*; he drew up a list of Qadarites that may have been
the first of its kind.[14] He was well acquainted with hadith science; in his youth
he had studied under the historian Walīd b. Muslim (d. 195/810) in Damascus
among others,[15] probably because he had grown up in Palestine where his fa-
ther had lived. The latter was presumably a Qadarite and embraced an ascetic
lifestyle;[16] the son, too, was known for his *zuhd*.[17] He went to Basra where he

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14    See vol. I 71 above.

15    Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* VII 76, 5ff.; Shīrāzī, *Ṭab.* 102, pu. f.

16    Regarding him vol. I 140 above.

17    ʿAbbādī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* 26, 8f.

became a follower of not only Abū l-Hudhayl but also of Muʿammar.[18] He was also in touch with Naẓẓām and reported about him.[19] Khayyāṭ did not think much of his evidence, and he was not included in Muʿtazilite *Ṭabaqāt* works, although Maʾmūn called him to the court where he was one of his 'college of scholars', the so-called 'twenty brothers' in whose company the caliph relaxed.[20] Maybe he became too close to Bishr al-Marīsī, seeing as he played an active role in the *miḥna*: the reports of the interrogation of Ibn Ḥanbal mention him as an assistant of Ibn Abī Duwād.[21]

In the long run it was probably something else that disturbed the Muʿtazilites rather more: he was a pupil of Shāfiʿī's. In Baghdad he had played such an important part in his circle that early sources usually quote him as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī[22] or *ṣāḥib al-Shāfiʿī*.[23] Consequently his role in the *miḥna* is sometimes described in entirely different terms: he was asked to go and visit Ibn Ḥanbal in prison by the latter's friends in order to persuade him to act more diplomatically. After all, he and Ibn Ḥanbal had attended Shāfiʿī's lectures together. At that time he wore woollen garments; his heretical views were said to have become apparent only later.[24] Over time there would be attempts by the newly emerging school to lower his prestige in the eyes of posterity, claiming that Shāfiʿī had warned against him because ʿAbd al-Raḥmān did not transmit correctly from him.[25] There would certainly have been concrete reasons for this: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān claimed to have heard from his teacher that it was impossible to see God.[26] More objective, and less incriminating, instances were advanced instead, however: his eyes were weak and he frequently misread, consequently Shāfiʿī did not allow him near his notes at all.[27] This image

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18  *Intiṣār* 45, 16f.; cf. Daiber, *Muʿammar* 51.

19  Text XXII 257, d.

20  *Lisān al-Mīzān* 76, 2ff.; see p. 214 above.

21  Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 320, apu. after an older source; also Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad, *Miḥnat Ibn Ḥanbal* 281, −4f. DŪMĪ.

22  Thus Kaʿbī (*Maq.* 76, 4), or Ibn al-Jawzī, loc. cit.

23  Thus Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad, loc. cit.

24  Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* XI 240, 8ff.

25  TB V 200, 18ff. > *Mīzān* no. 10381.

26  He based this on a hadith according to which God is a light that blinds the eyes so much that one cannot see anything. The opponents tried to evade the consequences with a small linguistic tweak (Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 486, 8ff., after Rāmhurmuzī, Jawābāt al-Tustariyyīn; regarding him see ch. C 7.5 below). Another hadith with the same information is found ibid. 487, 3ff.; *Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad al-Shāfiʿī* should be corrected to read *Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Shāfiʿī* here.

27  ʿAbbādī 26, 9f.

is straightened out in a surprisingly positive report by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, which survives in Ibn Ḥajar's text:[28] Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān was the first pupil Shāfi'ī had had in Iraq, and he had the rights to transmitting his 'older' books.[29] Later he would support his teachings in numerous publications. Bishr al-Marīsī, too, had been closely acquainted with Shāfi'ī.[30]

Ibn al-Nadīm took no notice of his works, but Ḥājjī Khalīfa mentioned him implying that he wrote about *shurūṭ* and, if we interpret the note correctly, that he based his deliberations on Shāfi'ī's works.[31] His puritanism is expressed in the tenet that if one omitted a prayer, one could never [make up for it];[32] Abū l-Hudhayl, too, had, after all, believed that the decision to commit a sin was a transgression of the same magnitude as the sin itself.[33] With his attitude opposing the mainstream tradition, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān could not occupy an official juristic position; he gave *fatwās*.[34] His main importance was that he became Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī's teacher;[35] in this way Shāfi'ī's legacy reached the Ẓāhirites. They agreed with him in some points of divorce law.[36] He probably died after 230/845.[37] – A third of Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils remains shadowy:

Abū 'Amr (?) Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Ādamī.

His entire name including the *kunya* Abū 'Uthmān is found in Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār,[38] but in another passage concerned with Abū l-Hudhayl directly, his *kunya* is given as Abū 'Amr.[39] If both passages refer to the same person,[40] he

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28    *Lisān al-Mīzān*, loc. cit.

29    Manṣūr billāh, *Shāfī* I 149, –5ff.

30    See p. 192f. above.

31    ḤKh 1046, apu. ff.

32    Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 555, 5ff.

33    See p. 309f. above.

34    'Abbādī 26, 8f.

35    Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 555, 10. Regarding Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī see ch. C 6.3.2 below.

36    Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya* II 65, 10ff.; also Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* VII 76, 13. Regarding his opinion on the validity of the repudiation formula see p. 421f. below.

37    Dhahabī assumed that he was alive as late as the 230s (*Siyar* X 555, apu.); Gimaret would like to extend this as far as 250 or 260 (JA 277/1989/230).

38    *Faḍl* 268, 13 > Manṣūr billāh, *Shāfī* I 137, –4, and IM 58, 4f.

39    Ibid., 254, 11ff.; transl. in ZDMG 135/1985/87f.

40    Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 199, n. 53.

would have collected traditions of Muʿtazilite teachings: he also had information about Wāṣil[41] and ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd's pupil al-Shimmazī.[42] Khayyāṭ referred to him; in this context we learn that he appears to have commanded some influence at Wāthiq's court.[43] Ashʿarī commented on his teachings once, but only in connection with other Muʿtazilites such as Abū l-Hudhayl.[44] We cannot make him more tangible; even the origin of his *nisba* remains uncertain.[45] – Ḥajūrī also mentioned a certain Bishr b. Abī Khālid, a pupil of Abū l-Hudhayl and one ʿAmr b. ʿAlī al-Uswārī,[46] but we cannot pin him down any more than his second teacher.[47] Similarly mysterious were ʿAlī b. Yāsīn, whose name Dhahabī recorded after an unknown source,[48] and Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Dabbāgh, whom Ibn al-Murtaḍā mentioned.[49] The information that the poet Abū Tammām was a pupil of Abū l-Hudhayl is also specific to Ibn al-Murtaḍā and probably inferred from the claim that the former had written an elegy on Abū l-Hudhayl.[50] This is uncertain, and Abū Tammām was certainly not a theologian. The epigones stood a chance only in the province; in Iraq, and Baghdad in particular, they paled into insignificance compared to someone who even during Abū l-Hudhayl's lifetime had taken the initiative by presenting an entirely new theological approach: one Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār b. Hāniʾ, better known as al-Naẓẓām.

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41  *Faḍl* 235, 11ff.: after other Muʿtazilites.

42  Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 138, 14ff. = Text II 6.

43  IM 78, 11ff.

44  Text XVI 52.

45  With only the *nisba* he is mentioned as Abū l-Hudhayl's pupil in Kaʿbī, *Maq.* 74, 9f., and Shahrastānī 18, 10f./30, 8f., and 37, 2/76, 9; cf. also Kaʿbī's list in Ibn al-Nadīm 220, n., l. 6. Qushayrī has an Abū ʿUthmān al-Ādamī as the transmitter of material from Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ (d. 291/904; cf. *Risāla*, transl. Gramlich 262), but he is certainly too late for our context.

46  *Rawḍa*, fol. 143 b., pu. ff., among the Muʿtazilites from whom no individual teachings were transmitted. He has probably nothing in common with Bishr b. Khālid, pupil of Wāṣil and ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd (see vol. II 362 above).

47  Unless he was **Abū ʿAlī ʿAmr b. Fāʾid al-Uswārī** (regarding him see vol. II 94 above).

48  *Siyar* X 543, −4.

49  *Ṭab.* 78, 7f.

50  Ibid. 132, 2f.; cf. p. 230 above.

### 3.2.2   *Naẓẓām*

Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār was the son of Abū l-Hudhayl's sister[1] and had been his assistant (*ghulām*) for a time.[2] He appears to have been destitute in his youth;[3] Abū l-Hudhayl, too, may well not have been rich during his Basran time. It had not been forgotten in Basra that he was descended from a long line of slaves on his father's side.[4] He was the *mawlā* of a clan from the tribal federation of the Bakr b. Wāʾil who had invaded Iraq from the Yamāma during the wars of conquest; his patron traced his genealogy back to Bujayr b. ʿAmr b. ʿUbād al-Ḍubaʿī of the Qays b. Thaʿlaba. This Bujayr was familiar to every Arab with a sense of tradition. He had been a young man when he was killed by the Taghlib in revenge for Kulayb during the Basūs war; his uncle al-Ḥārith b. ʿUbād al-Ḍubayʿa, a poet known as 'the ostrich rider',[5] had taken blood vengeance for him. Interestingly, two of ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd's opponents – Sulaymān al-Taymī and his son Muʿtamir b. Sulaymān[6] – were connected with this clan as clients.[7]

Bujayr is occasionally erroneously called Bujayr b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿUbād, his avenger being confused for his father (e.g. *Agh.* V 46, 10, and 47, 4; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 305, 2f., and 320, 11ff.). This error is also found in information concerning Naẓẓām's clientship (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 193, 13f. > *Lisān al-Mīzān* I 67, 1ff., where he is called *Buḥayr* instead of *Bujayr*). *Bujayr* (or *Buḥayr*) was then misread as *Yaḥyā* (e.g. in Saksakī, *Burhān* 29, 15: *Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥārith al-Baṣrī*). Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī wrote correctly, if rather vague: *mawlā* of the Balḥārith b. ʿUbād of the Qays b. Thaʿlaba (*Ḥūr* 152, 10f.); similar also Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 541, 9f. – The *nisba* al-Balkhī, which Ibn Khallikān adds to Naẓẓām's name in several places (I 203, 10; III 471, 3; IV 275, 5) seems to be the result of a misunderstanding. In Muʿtazilite sources, especially Jāḥiẓ, he is frequently cited as Abū Isḥāq. This influenced even the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* where he is found under this headword

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1   Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 15, 2.

2   *Faḍl* 261, 5. – It is worthwhile to look at Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī Abū Rīda's monograph *Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Naẓẓām wa-ārāʾuhū l-kalāmiyya al-falsafyya* (Cairo 1365/1946), a thorough study, albeit outdated in some points. Muḥammad ʿAzīz Naẓmī Sālim's more recent study *Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Naẓẓām wal-fikr al-naqdī fī l-Islām* (Alexandria 1983) is useless. Cf. also ʿAbbās Zaryāb in GIE II 431ff.

3   Cf. the autobiographical narrative in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 451, 5ff.

4   *min wuld al-ʿabīd* (*Fihrist* 205, apu. > Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 187, 12).

5   Regarding him GAS 2/155, and Caskel, *Ǧamhara* II 314a; regarding the 'ostrich rider' cf. Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq* 138, 4ff., and 356, 10ff. Regarding Bujayr cf. Caskel II 228b.

6   Regarding them see vol. II 418f. above.

7   Ibn Durayd 356, −5f.

(I 275ff.). We must be careful when using later works, especially Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, where this *kunya* often refers to his teacher Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ʿAyyāsh (regarding him cf. Peters, *God's Created Speech* 17). In the case of the numerous quotations in *Mughnī*, he should be the first to be considered. Both these theologians are most easily distinguished based on factual information, but it is also possible to apply the rule of thumb that the phrase *shaykhuynā Abū Isḥāq* always refers to Ibn ʿAyyāsh. The formula *raḥimahū Allāh* after the name is less characteristic. While it usually accompanies Ibn ʿAyyāsh, it can also refer to Naẓẓām (e.g. XI 315, 8, or XII 512, 15). In heresiographical contexts Naẓẓām is sometimes simply named *Ibrāhīm* (thus IX 11, 19; cf. the titles at Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 44, and XXXII a, no. 16). – One of Naẓẓām's sons, named Muḥammad, may have been Ṭabarī's informant on an audience Kulthūm b. ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī (see p. 108ff. above) had with al-Maʾmūn (III 1159, ult.; cf. Uhrig, *Das Kalifat von al-Maʾmūn* 336, n. 1643). The poet ʿAlī b. Ḥatfān b. ukht al-Naẓẓām, mentioned briefly by Thaʿālibī (*Yatīmat al-dahr* II 23, 8ff.) was probably not the great-nephew of our Naẓẓām as the chronological distance is too great.

Naẓẓām would later become a wealthy and famous man who could afford his own assistant.[8] However, we know even less about his life than about Abū l-Hudhayl's. Even the biographies in Muʿtazilite *Ṭabaqāt* works are sparse; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who filled ten pages with information about Abū l-Hudhayl, devoted barely one to Naẓẓām.[9] The wealth of material collected by his pupil Jāḥiẓ, especially in his *K. al-ḥayawān*, more than makes up for it, although it reveals more about his teachings than his life. It allows us some glimpses of how legends began to grow around him. The philologist Abū ʿUbayda had told Jāḥiẓ of how he heard Naẓẓām, then a child, describe a glass in stylistically perfect language.[10] Immediately afterwards, but in a different context, Jāḥiẓ mentions the description of a date palm of which Naẓẓām was said to be the author, and a rather unfriendly remark about Khalīl.[11] Later – the first sure evidence of it we have is in Marzubānī – all these motifs are combined in an anecdote in

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8   Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭab.* 271, ult.

9   *Faḍl* 264f.

10  *Ḥayawān* VII 165, 13f.; also III 471, 3ff.; adopted in *Faḍl* 264, 8ff. > IM 50, 1f., where Abū ʿUbayda becomes Abū ʿUbayd (after Ḥākim al-Jushamī). Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī even included it in his collection of proverbs (*Durra* II 392, ult. f.); cf. also Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt* 175, –6f.

11  Ibid. VII 165, 15ff.

which Naẓẓām's father takes him to see Khalīl where the boy describes a date palm and a glass.[12]

Other information followed similar paths. The story, itself apocryphal, of Abū l-Hudhayl's visit of condolence to Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs after the death of the latter's son,[13] was embellished with little Naẓẓām accompanying him and coming up with the punch line.[14] Both these accounts glorify Naẓẓām's precociousness. He was also said to have been a competent and fast arithmetician at school despite his teacher tying his hands and pouring water in his mouth.[15] This made it easier to believe that he met the Barmakid Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā, to whom he boasted that he knew Aristotle by heart inside and out, and could refute him point by point.[16] And so he, like many another Muʿtazilite, ended up in the fictitious 'symposium' on love said to have been hosted by the Barmakids,[17] while opponents of the Muʿtazila painted him as a pupil of the Dualists and the Basran Sumaniyya.[18]

A further apocryphal story set in the circle of the Barmakids was a particular favourite with the Shīʿites. It concerned a female slave named Ḥusayniyya who had grown up in the home of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. She was said to have debated with Naẓẓām in the presence of Hārūn and Yaḥyā b. Khālid, and later with Shāfiʿī (!) as well as Abū Yūsuf, and refuted them all.

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12    Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas* 69, 9ff.; expanded in Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 189, 1ff.; Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 226, pu. ff.; Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 15, 10ff.; IM 51, 3ff.

13    Cf. ZDMG 135/1985/23.

14    Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs* 39, 10ff. (after a pupil of Naẓẓām) > IM 47, 6ff. (where Abū l-Hudhayl has been reinstated due to the pressure of the parallels); Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 227, ult. ff.; Ṣafadī, *Nuṣrat al-thāʾir* 85, pu. ff., and *Wāfī* VI 15, 3ff.; added as the genuine version also ibid. v 163, 6f., and *Nakt al-himyān* 279, 8f.

15    *Faḍl* 264, 13f. In more complicated operations intermediate results would be noted by the position of the fingers (cf. A. S. Saʿīdān, *ʿIlm al-ḥisāb al-ʿarabī: ḥisāb al-yad* (Amman 1971); or one could say them repeatedly in order to keep them in mind. Concerning Antiquity cf. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* ⁵366. – Naẓẓām as a paragon of intelligence also in Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbīʿ* 23, 10 (= *Rasāʾil* III 67, ult.). J. Vernet, *El Islam en España* (madrid 1993), p. 37, also notes that a child who was supposed to learn mental arithmetic had to fill his mouth with water.

16    *Faḍl* 264, –4ff. > IM 50, 10ff. (abridged). Jaʿfar's comment that he could not even read Aristotle may have given rise to the tradition that he was illiterate (*ummī*; thus *Lisān al-Mīzān* I 67, 14f. after Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazila*; also IM 50, 3). His excellent memory is mentioned specifically in *Faḍl* 264, 11f.; and Text XXII 78, a, proves that he did indeed compose a criticism of Aristotle later.

17    Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VI 371, 4ff./IV 238 no. 2570; cf. p. 33 above.

18    Baghdādī, *Farq* 113, –6ff./131, 4ff. Similar Abī l-Dam in Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 15, 13ff.

Naẓẓām asked her 80 questions all of which she was able to answer; when she quizzed him in turn, he had to pass (Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* 43). This story was transmitted separately as well, entitled *Kitāb* (or *Risālat*) *al-Ḥusayniyya* (cf. ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Kunā* III 219, 4f.; also Oktay, *Fihrist-i Kutubkhāne-yi Āsitān-i quds*, Mashhad IV 93 no. 548). The Sunni version is found in the Arabian Nights, the slave's name is Tawaddud there. Hārūn invites the famous Naẓẓām to come from Basra to Baghdad. Naẓẓām behaves arrogantly and sure of his victory, but in the end has to take off his robe as a sign of his defeat (transl. Littmann III 632 and 686ff.; cf. Miquel, *Sept Contes de Mille et Une Nuit* 27, who dates the story to the late sixth century or later and believes it to have originated in Iraq). The motif is well-known to have entered into Spanish folklore (cf. Horovitz in EI[1] IV 760f. s. v. *Tawaddud*, and W. Mettmann, *La Historia de la Donzella Teodor. Ein spanisches Volksbuch arabischen Ursprungs*. Abh. Ak. Wiss. und Lit. Mainz, Geistes- und Soz. Wiss. Kl. 1962, no. 3).

When he came to Baghdad the Barmakids had probably been long overthrown. His rise had begun in Basra. The Abbasid Ayyūb b. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān had invited him;[19] the Muʿtazilites narrated the story of how Naẓẓām had replaced the Murjiʾite Abū Shamir in his favour.[20] It seems that he also had much to thank ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Thaqafī for, the rich Basran traditionist whose son had caused the downfall of the Muʿtazilite poet Ibn al-Munādhir;[21] later generations remembered the elegant, if rather wordy, style in which he praised his way of life.[22] All this would have taken place during Hārūn's rule; Ayyūb b. Jaʿfar died during his caliphate, and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī a year after Hārūn's death, in 194/810.

In Basra he might also have debated with Najjār (cf. Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Risālat Iblīs* 76, 11ff.) and the Shīʿite ʿAlī b. Mītham (see vol. II 483, n. 36 above), but the first account reads like a Muʿtazilite celebrity anecdote, while in the second Naẓẓām may well have taken the place of his pupil Uswārī. Furthermore ʿAlī b. Mītham as well as Abū Shamir apparently spent time in Baghdad (TB VI 98, 7ff.). The conversations with Shayṭān al-Ṭāq (see vol. II 362f. above) are sure to have been projection.

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19    Cf. the account in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VI 78, 5f.
20    See vol. II 204 above.
21    Cf. vol. II 444 above.
22    *Fihrist* 206, 3f., probably after Jāḥiẓ (cf. Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 187, ult. ff.).

In Baghdad Naẓẓām sought the company of Abū Nuwās, who was at the height of his fame at the time; a Spanish traveller noted with awe that he lived in a palace with a large staff of servants.[23] Maybe Abū Nuwās introduced Naẓẓām to Amīn's circle. The first firm chronological piece of evidence is found in a source written in Baghdad during the troubles after his murder, around 200/816: the *K^ethābhā dh^e-sīmāthā*, 'book of treasures', by the Nestorian Job of Edessa.[24] The author debated with Naẓẓām and even wrote a book against his theories.[25] He does not mention his name, speaking only of the 'new philosophers' and their leader,[26] but there can be hardly any doubt of his identity.[27] Abū Nuwās died around the time at which Job of Edessa composed his book, but Naẓẓām, as Job remarked enviously, caused quite a stir with his 'philosophy'.[28] The conversation circles he hosted for his followers were known throughout the city.[29] This opened him many doors. Ibrāhīm al-Sindī[30] recorded how he attended a feast with him and the grammarian Quṭrub (d. 206/821), who was well-versed in Muʿtazilite theology and the teachings of Naẓẓām, in the house of Ziyād b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr b. Ziyād.[31] The host came from a respected family of officials; his father had been entrusted by Hārūn with a delicate mission in Damascus in 187/803.[32] This is probably the family named as the Ziyādiyyūn whose client Naẓẓām was according to the testimony of the *Fihrist*;[33] he appears to have entered into a new alliance in Baghdad.

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23    Cf. Terés in: Festschrift Lévi-Provençal I 346.

24    Ayyūb al-Ruhāwī al-Abrash. Regarding him cf. GAS III 230f., and IV 80f., and Ullmann, *Medizin im Islam* 101f.; more details p. 361f. below. The *Book of Treasures* was edited by A. Mingana in Cambridge (1935); see Intro. xxiv regarding the date of the text (following Text XXII 98, f).

25    Text 98, b and n.

26    Text 98, a–b, and 100, d.

27    Cf. p. 362 below.

28    Transl. Mingana 166: 'They court the empty notoriety of being honoured by men'. This may be an allusion to Naẓẓām's (earlier?) ties to the court.

29    Text 103, b. Job, writing in Syriac, used the Greek loan word σωματεῖα, 'corporations, societies' (cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon* 1366a, and Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon* 1065a s. v.). He probably meant *musāmarāt*.

30    Regarding him see p. 70ff. above.

31    Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 330, 10ff.; regarding Quṭrub see vol. II 100 above.

32    Ṭabarī III 688, 6. Regarding the family cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 417, 2f.; it was part of the Banū l-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb.

33    *Fihrist* 205, apu. > Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 187, 12.

When I say this, I am assuming that the conflicting statements concerning his clientship are both correct, which is by no means certain, as they are in different sources and might be mutually exclusive. Linked to this is the question of where the Ziyādiyyūn were located. If we regard them as Basrans a double clientship becomes unlikely. There was indeed a respected Ziyādī family in Basra, the descendants of Ziyād b. Abīh. Due to Ziyād having been adopted by Muʿāwiya they were members of the Quraysh. While al-Mahdī had relegated them to the status of clients in 160/777, they had opposed this measure and succeeded in keeping their influence in the city.[34] They and their clients had an entire quarter to themselves;[35] their mosque was situated in the Shāriʿ al-Mirbad.[36] Genealogical correlations are obscured by the fact that they were always regarded as parvenus and the *nassābūn* consequently took no notice of them. We do not know much more about the abovementioned Manṣūr b. Ziyād and his descendants, either. A dedicated study remains to be undertaken. – There is one further instance only in which the Ziyādiyyūn appear in connection with Naẓẓām. He had some contact with a member of the family who suffered from mental illness, possibly even had to look after him; strangely, he bore a Persian name.[37]

He looked on Basra as his home for all his life.[38] Information about his activity in Baghdad soon dried up. We find him in the company of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī,[39] but are unable to date this.[40] There is some information placing him at Maʾmūn's court,[41] but as a theologian he would have been overshadowed there by Abū l-Hudhayl, who had the advantage of age; Naẓẓām appears as 'the young man'.[42] This is reason enough for us to look into the problem of the dates of his birth and death. Concrete information does not appear until late; Ibn

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34   Cf. Pellat, *Milieu basrien* 34, n. 2.

35   Ṣ. A. al-ʿAlī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Baṣra* 125.

36   Tanūkhī, *Al-faraj baʿd al-shidda* III 321, 7.

37   Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* III 214, 13ff.; also IV 9, 1, where the name is transmitted slightly differently. Without the name also in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Adhkiyāʾ* 217, 12f. Naẓẓām is mentioned together with the teacher of one Manṣūr b. Ziyād in Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 54, 5ff.

38   Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III 453, 8.

39   Thaʿālibī, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ* (Tunis 1293) 94, 14ff.

40   Isḥāq was already known at Hārūn's court (cf. EI² IV 110f. s. n.).

41   *Faḍl* 257, 1f. (most problematic due to the presence of Abū Shamir; see vol. II 207 above); in general Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VIII 301, 4ff./V 214, 8ff. Cf. also Maʾmūn's remark in *Agh.* XXI 80, 6ff.

42   *Faḍl* 257, 2.

Nubāta is the first to include it, and with supreme confidence: Naẓẓām died in 221/836 at the age of 36.[43] In that case he would indeed have been a 'young man' during Ma'mūn's time: he would have been around 20 at the time of the caliph's entrance into Baghdad in 204. Consequently Ayyūb b. Ja'far could not have taken notice of him in Basra, and he would have been barely ten years old at the time of 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī's death.

In order to resolve these contradictions one might try to suggest an earlier date for his death; the sources, however, show the opposite tendency. Ṣafadī dates his death to 230;[44] Kutubī gives the year 231.[45] Ibn Ḥajar mentions Mu'taṣim's caliphate (218/833–227/842),[46] while Ibn Nubāta claims that he only began to achieve importance at that time.[47] Still, independently of how we decide, the age of 36 at the time of death does not compute in any case. Ibn Nubāta probably copied that age from the Ḥanbalite Ibn 'Aqīl whose *K. al-funūn* listed seven great men who died at that age: Alexander, Abū Muslim, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Sībawayh, Abū Tammām, Ibn al-Rēwandī, and Naẓẓām.[48] It does not seem to be correct for any one of them.[49] What they did have in common was that (a) there was not much precise information on the dates of their birth and death and (b) they died in their prime, or at least had that reputation. In the understanding of the time 36 was a round number: 3 times 12. 'Amr b. Fā'id al-Uswārī explained the Quran for 36 years.[50] According to the early Byzantine *Testament of Solomon*, Solomon banished 36 demons.[51] In his *Politics* Aristotle advised for women to be married at 18 years of age, and men 'at the age of 37 or a little earlier' as that was when 'the body is in the prime of physical vigour'.[52]

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43    *Sarḥ* 229, 15f.

44    *Wāfī* VI 18, 9f.; in his *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* Dhahabī, to whom Ṣafadī referred frequently, dated Naẓẓām to the decade between 221 and 230.

45    *'Uyūn al-tawārīkh* (after him Macdonald, *Development* 140, and O'Leary, *Arabic Thought* 126).

46    *Lisān al-Mīzān* I 67, –5.

47    *Sarḥ* 227, 8f.; in fact invalidating the date of death he cites two pages later. Adopted by Dhahabī, *Mushtabih* 645, 3, and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 234, 13.

48    Cf. the quotation in Ibn Mufliḥ, *Al-ādāb al-shar'iyya* (Cairo 1348–49) II 119, –6ff.

49    Regarding Ibn al-Muqaffa' cf. vol. II 28 above; regarding Ibn al-Rēwandī see ch. C 8.2.2.1 below. Abū Muslim would have been born precisely in the year 100; Alexander was 33 when he died.

50    See vol. II 94 above.

51    Cf. the edition by C. C. McCown in: UNT 9/1922/51*ff. and Intro. 45.

52    Pol. VII 16. 1335a 28ff. J. Heers showed that even in the Early Modern Age in Genoa multiples of 12, especially 36 and 48, were preferred over multiples of 10 when giving the ages of people (REI 44/1976/238). In the early Arab understanding an 'era' (*qarn*) had a

It is certain that the *K. al-ḥayawān*, composed before 232/847, assumed that he had died by then.[53] He died in the house of Ḥammōya al-Khuraybī, an animal lover who kept peacocks or traded in them.[54]

### 3.2.2.1    Naẓẓām as a Poet and Man of Letters

There were times when he received an official salary, maybe under Maʾmūn, maybe already under Amīn. It was high enough for him to support others;[1] in this way he appears to have won ʿAlī al-Uswārī as a follower, although he had studied under Abū l-Hudhayl.[2] The question remains for what reason he received the salary. It is possible that he was paid not as a theologian but as an entertainer, especially as a poet: after all, that is where he got his name. 'Al-Naẓẓām' is the sobriquet of a poet in more than one case;[3] it alluded to the fact that a poet's work was often compared to the stringing of pearls. He appears to have borne this *laqab* already during his youth in Basra;[4] Ibn al-Muʿtazz seems to confirm this when he says that he developed an interest in *kalām* only later in his life.[5] Once he was regarded as a theologian only, the tradition emerged that he had been a stringer of pearls, selling the necklaces in the market in Basra.[6]

He did not leave much poetry.[7] While he wrote poems in praise of caliphs, viziers and other high-ranking persons,[8] he does not seem to have done so professionally; probably because he did not need to after a time. Not a single line of this made-to-order poetry survives; it was probably average and occasionally – during Amīn's time – addressed to the wrong people. Verses that expressed his own style, on the other hand, were preserved. They were remarkable for their

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duration of 60 or 120 years (cf. *Agh.* V 7, 15, and IS I₁ 127, 21f.; concerning the divergences cf. Goldziher, *Abh. zur arab. Phil.* II 22f.); the meaning 'century' is more recent.

53    Cf. Pellat in: Arabica 31/1984/139.

54    *ṣāḥib al-ṭawāwīs*; *Fihrist* 206, 12. The complete name is recorded in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* V 204, 5ff., and II 78, 2ff.; the *nisba* Khuraybī might indicate that Ḥammōya lived in the Khurayba quarter of Basra.

1    Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* 523, –4ff.

2    *Faḍl* 281, 8f. > IM 72, 12ff.

3    Cf. Abū Shāma, *Dhayl* 18, 11, regarding a poet from Baghdad who died in 596/1200; GAS 2/686 regarding a poet from Spain.

4    If indeed the autobiographical account in *Ḥayawān* III 451, 5ff., is genuine (cf. also 452, –5).

5    *Ṭabaqāt* 272, 10f.

6    Baghdādī, *Farq* 113, 11ff./131, 3ff. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 14, ult. ff.

7    Ibn al-Muʿtazz 273, 2.

8    Ibid. 440, 8.

subjects and for the metaphors used. He described wine and the beauty of boys with slender limbs;[9] his similes employed innovative *maʿānī*/τόποι taken from theology. Jāḥiẓ coined the phrase *madhhab kalāmī* for these metaphors, 'the way of speaking like the *mutakallimūn*', or 'dialectic jargon' as Heinrichs translated.[10] Ibn Ḥazm characterised Naẓẓām's style accurately by saying that he addressed visible things as though they were spiritual;[11] in one of his poems – the longest extant one – we find rhymes such as *qiyāsī, wahmī, juzʾī, khuṣūṣī, jinsī, kayfī, ḥaqīqī* and *ʿulwī*.[12] Even later, when the ekphrastic genre was practised everywhere, this was not common; poets were more likely to refer to concrete things. In his time, it was extraordinarily modern. The extant fragments – most of them around 80–90 verses long and their authenticity not always confirmed – are mostly very short, but it does not look as though they came from long *qaṣīda*s, their characteristics being those of snapshots. Naẓẓām did not engage much in the usual bickering of poets; only one of the fragments is a *hijāʾ*.[13]

Naẓẓām had probably studied the art with Abū Nuwās. He revered him: 'He is the one who had complete mastery of the language (*jumiʿa lahū l-kalām*) and chose the best from it', he would later say.[14] He even gushed about him in epigrams.[15] Abū Nuwās himself, considerably older, remained reserved.

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9    Cf. the list following the Catalogue of Works XXII: on wine no. 4, 9, (19) and 21–23; description of a boy no. 1, 2, 5–8, 12, 14, 17, 20, and 22–25. His emphasising the ethereal appearance of the boys provoked Abū l-Hudhayl to comment ironically that one could only 'fuck them with an imaginary penis' (cf. commentary on no. 12).

10   In ZGAIW 1/1984/183, n. 6. Different (but not very convincing) S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 9. Regarding Jāḥiẓ' own use of *madhhab kalāmī* cf. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska in: RO 36/1973/42ff. The term changed its meaning over time. As early as Ibn al-Muʿtazz the examples are much more widely-ranging; none of these, furthermore, was by Naẓẓām. Later, e.g. in Qazwīnī's *Talkhīṣ* of Sakkākī's *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm*, it denotes the poetical enthymeme (cf. Wansbrough in: *Lebendige Antike*, Festschrift Sühnel 55ff., and Heinrichs, loc. cit.).

11   *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* 10, 4ff./99, –4ff. ʿABBĀS.

12   No. 22. Cf. also no. 21, where wine is described using speculative terms; no. 23–24 and 17 in the description of a boy (in the latter case only in such a way as to evoke Hārūt and Adam), and to some degree no. 2 (which, however, is a satire and does not use the numerous foreign terms in comparison). Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ* 72, has a pretty example, but does not name his source. In general on the characterisation TB VI 97, 7, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭab.* 273, 2; also Ibn al-Nadīm 206, 2, who uses the phrase *madhhab al-falsafī*.

13   No. 2 on the list. Later positive evaluations: cf. Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* 244, 11f., and Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 18, 10f.; also TB VI 97, 17f.

14   Transmitted by Jāḥiẓ > Mubarrad > Anbārī, *Nuzha* 78, 7ff.

15   *Fihrist* 205, pu.

He attested to his piety but thought him self-righteous; he mocked Naẓẓām's claiming philosophy for himself. Apparently Naẓẓām had tried to convert him to Muʿtazilism; Abū Nuwās declined with the remark that he did not approve of forbidding God to exercise forgiveness.[16] A direct *hijāʾ* was also transmitted, but it contains *topoi* that reflect on himself; Naẓẓām appears as a *zindīq*, drinks wine and is a homosexual.[17] Tradition would not be able to distinguish between the two poets' verses later.[18]

The brevity Naẓẓām appears to have cultivated in his poetry corresponded to his penchant for witticism. He was a favourite source for collections of proverbs and sayings as well as *adab* works, beginning with Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-bayān wal-tabyīn*. After all, he had made his debut with the description of a glass; Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/830)[19] was said to have written his *Risāla* on glass being superior to gold because Naẓẓām criticised glass and the preacher Shaddād al-Ḥārithī[20] praised gold out of all proportion.[21] He was a master of the art of rhetorical palindrome: 'Science is something that will surrender to you in part if you have surrendered to it altogether. But (even) if you surrender to it altogether there is no guarantee that it will surrender to you in part'.[22] Or, on his sickbed: 'I drive out ill with ill',[23] and 'I wish I could wish for something'.[24] Sometimes the appeal was in the striking comparison: 'It is more delightful than glowing coals

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16     *Dīwān* III 4, 3ff. WAGNER; *Fihrist* 206, 1; Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 320, 12f. The entire poem is translated in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās* 292; cf. p. 439 below. Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) claims that Abū Nuwās learnt *kalām* from Naẓẓām in his youth (*Dīwān* III 4, 11f.). His Murjiʾite attitude is also expressed in the poem B. Lewis translated in: Festschrift Gabrieli 443, no. 2.

17     *Dīwān* II 60, 4ff. WAGNER; 619, 5ff. in Ṣūlī's *riwāya*. It is to be wondered whether this is a fabrication.

18     Cf. the commentary on no. 10.

19     Regarding him see p. 235 and vol. II 22 above.

20     Regarding him cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II 71, 3ff.

21     Thus Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 320, 12f. and earlier; not mentioned in Wagner, *Rangstreitliteratur*. The text of Shaddād's praise of gold and Sahl's praise of glass is found in Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Durra* 393, 2ff.; cf. also Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab* III 472 no. 277 after Ibn Nubāta. A remark Naẓẓām made on the baseness of gold is found, in variants, in Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* VII 97, 7f./²VII 31 no. 86; Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* II 523, 13f., and Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 229, ult. f. Jāḥiẓ agreed that because of the production process glass was more amazing than gold (*Tarbīʿ* 43, 11f.); the price would have been barely lower.

22     TB VI 97, 9ff. (after Jāḥiẓ) > Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 229, −5f.; Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Motto following the title page, with further references. A piece of advice worth heeding on how to test the stature of a scholar is found in *Ḥayawān* VI 36, 7ff.

23     I.e. the sickness with the remedy; Ibn Nubāta 231, 3f.

24     Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* I 241, 10/²I 198 no. 600.

in the cold of winter';[25] or it might be the skilful use of *saj'*.[26] Prayers, too, were given stylistic polish;[27] one wonders how Naẓẓām circulated them. Some pieces are too good to be genuine, but there can be no doubt that he was a master in the art of language. As a consequence he was a popular guest; he took part in the verbal duels common in literary circles, which were the basis of precedence debates. The comparison of a dog and a cockerel that weaves through the first part of *K. al-ḥayawān* was apparently influenced by him; he defended the dog while a Muʿtazilite colleague championed the cockerel.[28]

This is not the place for displaying the material in all its detail.[29] We do not know how it survived, but it shows that Naẓẓām retained a much greater reputation as a master of style than as a theologian. Shahrastānī, although he regarded him as a heretic together with all other Muʿtazilites, seems to have traced one of his sayings back to him through an *isnād*.[30] However, his poems were soon seen as proof of his dissolute lifestyle. He was said to have fallen to his death out of a window or off a balcony, blind drunk.[31] And it was a foregone conclusion that someone who wrote poetry about boys would also run after boys; it was rumoured that he wrote a book on the superiority of the Trinity over the profession of oneness for a Christian boy to whom he had lost his heart.[32] We are unlikely ever to find out the true facts of the case. Still, it is important to distinguish clearly between poetry and reality, not least for methodology's sake. He was certainly not an ascetic; it would not have been

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25  Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Durra* 158, 5f.
26  Thus e.g. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭab.* 440, 11f.
27  Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* III 285, pu. ff.
28  Cf. there I 282, 10ff., and II 153, 5ff.; regarding Maʿbad Text XXII 217. I 3, 11f., names both as rivals; as does I 200, 5ff., albeit anonymously. I 216, 10, tells us that they were both Muʿtazilites. Cf. S. H. Mansur, *The Concept of Divine Unity in the Kitāb al-Ḥayawān of al-Jāḥiẓ*, in: Bull. Fac. Arts Alexandria 22/1968–9, Engl. section/25ff. after a dissertation written at McGill University. Naẓẓām also attacked pigeon fanciers (ibid. III 256, apu. ff.). The addressee of the *K. al-ḥayawān* felt, as Jāḥiẓ pointed out in his foreword (I 3, 11), great liking for Naẓẓām; tradition names him as the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/848; regarding him see p. 527 and 531ff. below).
29  Other sources worth comparing: Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭab.* 440, apu. ff.; Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 187, 14ff.; Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* III 114, apu. ff., and 524, 7ff./²III 79 no. 244; Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 338, 1ff.; *Ḥayawān* III 471, 1f., and V 572, 5f., and 592, 1.
30  IKh IV 275, 5ff.
31  Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 542, 7, and Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 18, 5f.; prepared in Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl* 21, 1ff./17, apu. ff. Cf. the edifying story about his death from a Muʿtazilie source, Text XXII 115, m.
32  Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* 130, 14ff./278, 4ff. ʿAbbās after Ibn al-Rēwandī's *K. al-lafẓ wal-iṣlāḥ*. Cf. also *Agh.* VIII 248, 12ff., and Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²VII 75f. no. 228, and VIII 167 no. 578.

compatible with the circles in which he moved. When the Sufis claimed that they were walking 'along the path of God' (*fī sabīl Allāh*), he retorted: 'I prefer it that someone should die on camelback while earning his daily bread (*fī ṭalab al-rizq*), than that he should die on the path of his lord'.[33] Presumably the Basran middle class was dependent at least in part of caravan trade.

The most reliable information about him comes from Jāḥiẓ. Like so many witty intellectuals Naẓẓām was incapable of keeping a secret. This was worst when he had been sworn to secrecy; otherwise there might have been a chance that he would forget the matter.[34] Despite his success in society he praised the simple life; worries increase once one has to put on a show for others.[35] He was a rationalist, of course; he narrated a lengthy autobiographical story with the aim of reducing the fear of omens *ad absurdum*;[36] he did not approve of belief in demons or interpreting dreams, either.[37] Despite his poetic skill he did not set any store by correct language in everyday usage.[38] Due to his great self-esteem he was not easy to influence.[39] He was accustomed to being always right, and Jāḥiẓ revealed how he lost his self-control:

> ... Ibrāhīm was reliable in his speeches and hardly ever lapsed into errors and falseness when it came to truth or untruth. (And when) I say that he *hardly ever* lapsed into errors and falseness, I do not (mean that) it did sometimes happen after all, but I am using the expression as one might say 'he has barely any shame' meaning 'he has no shame at all'. Sometimes one uses the word 'hardly' or 'barely'[40] in place of 'not at all'. The only mistake he could not shake off was his suspiciousness and the quickness with which he drew conclusions based on coincidences, ideas and unreliable precedent (*jawdat qiyāsihī 'alā ...*). If only he, instead of continually honing his conclusions, had striven to improve their basis to perfection (?)! But he assumed something and drew his conclusions,

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33  Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭab.* 440, 8ff., where the connection to the Sufis is emphasised. His anti-ascetic views are also evident in one of his juristic expert opinions (cf. Text 258, a, and commentary).

34  *Ḥayawān* v 187, 4ff.

35  Ibid. vii 166, 3ff.

36  Ibid. iii 451, 5ff., and 453, 9f. > Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ* 228, 11ff./transl. Fahd, *Divination arabe* 470f.

37  Ibid. iii 453, 11; Text 233.

38  Ibid. i 281, pu. ff.

39  Ibid. i 281, –6f./transl. Souami 294.

40  'Hardly' and 'barely' translate Ar. *qalīl* 'little'. These words seem to express the semantic observation Jāḥiẓ describes here more precisely in English in the example given.

forgetting that he had started with a mere assumption. When he then thought he had a handle on the theory, he stated it apodictically and reported it as if quoting its author, in the way of someone who has given much thought to the accuracy of its meaning. He did not, however, usually say 'I heard' or 'I saw', but no-one doubted that he made these statements based on authorised eye- or ear-witness accounts, as he presented them like assured information.[41]

### 3.2.2.2    Naẓẓām as a Theologian

In theology he introduced a new style. The middle Akhfash, being a philologist and consequently opposed to all extravagance, claimed to be incapable of understanding the greater part of Naẓẓām's books.[1] Naẓẓām, as we have seen, thought of himself as a 'philosopher'; Ibn Nubāta cited this, adding that he mixed philosophy with *kalām*.[2] 'Philosophy' does not mean metaphysics in this context, but rather the explanation of the natural world, as it did with Ibrāhīm b. al-Sindī or Abū l-Ashʿāth.[3] We learn nothing about Naẓẓām's training, but he was familiar with the teachings of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ*.[4] His brother-in-law was an astrologer and relied only on what happened 'in accordance with nature' and the laws of the elements.[5] Naẓẓām himself also found more sense in astrology than Abū l-Hudhayl, believing it showed that God followed a specific plan.[6] He wrote about microcosm and macrocosm; Ibn al-Rēwandī discovered affinity with the 'heretics' (*mulḥidūn*).[7] In fact he refuted these very *mulḥidūn*;[8] we will see how he utilised foreign, especially Dualist, ideas in his

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41    *Ḥayawān* II 229, 10ff.; also translated in Pellat/Müller, *Arab. Geisteswelt* 233. My translation differs in some details.

1    Ibid. I 92, 7ff,; cf. Pellat/Müller 216.

2    *Sarḥ* 226, 6ff. This was also Jāḥiẓ' ideal (cf. *Ḥayawān* II 134, –5ff.).

3    See p. 71f. and vol. II 44 above. It is worth noting that the *K. al-ḥudūd* of the Corpus Jābirianum subsumes physics as well as astronomy (and astrology) under philosophy, which is in turn part of the 'science of religion' (*ʿilm al-dīn*; 100, 6 and 12f.).

4    See p. 365ff. below; also Mufīd, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* 83, pu. ff.

5    *Ḥayawān* I 148, 6ff. He also had a firm view of the ideal marriage combination: a man from Khorasan and an Indian woman.

6    Text 180.

7    Catalogue of Works XXII, no. 25–26. The Mandaeans had texts entitled 'first microcosm' and 'first macrocosm'; they discussed the ceremony of the dead and the ascension of the soul (cf. K. Rudolph, *Diwan der Flüsse* 9).

8    Ibid. no. 6.

own system. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had done this, too.[9] Later legend had the two meet;[10] their terminological and systematic similarities were indeed striking. Naẓẓām probably met Hishām's pupils, but the circles from which the latter had drawn his ideas were still in existence as well.[11]

He was no specialist. The realm of living beings interested him as much as physics. He thought about the differences between races and peoples,[12] and he argued with physicians about humorism;[13] he spoke about the effects of scorpion stings[14] and about the behaviour of eels[15] and migrating fish.[16] He had some knowledge of cats,[17] although he did not revel in zoology in quite the same way as Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir, and we find no trace of his having had an interest in botany like Abū Shamir. He did, however, enjoy experiments, in keeping with the spirit of the circles in which he moved. He was present when a distinguished Hāshimid tested how certain animals behaved in a state of inebriation,[18] and he reported of a lively get-together during which an ostrich was fed burning coals because these birds were believed to have a particularly strong stomach.[19] This shows us the kind of experiments involved: they were playful and the result of the whims of rich people. They were not part of a fixed theoretical framework; in particular, the systematic repetition is missing. Nature was observed, and people thought about it, but explanations were easily found and were, indeed, often prepared in advance.[20]

This was really no different in the case of Naẓẓām himself. While he looked at physical matters in much more detail, there is no sign of any consistent

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9    See vol. I 418 and 512f. above.

10   *Faḍl* 254, 4ff. > IM 44, 6ff.; also Kashshī 274, −4f., where he still embraces Abū l-Hudhayl's ideas.

11   See p. 360f. below.

12   Text 97.

13   See p. 381f. below.

14   Text 96.

15   Text XVI 66, c–e.

16   *Ḥayawān* III 259, pu. ff./transl. Souami 330.

17   Ibid. v 318, 5ff.

18   Ibid. II 230, 9ff.; cf. 228, pu. f.

19   Ibid. IV 320, 7ff.; cf. Paret in: Der Islam 25/1939/228ff.; allusion to and explanation of it in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* IV 125, 14ff. The phenomenon was already mentioned by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir in one of his zoological *qaṣīda*s (Text XVII 2, v. 41); and also in his first *qaṣīda* (Text XVII 1, v. 11). Regarding Jāḥiẓ cf. the texts in Souami, *Le cadi et la mouche* 263ff.

20   Concerning the issue cf. G. E. R Lloyd, *Experiment in Early Greek Philosophy and Medicine*, in: Proc. Cambridge Philol. Soc. 190/1964/50ff.; in general id., *Magic, Reason and Experience* 126ff., and Sambursky, *Das physikalische Weltbild der Antike* 598ff.

interconnection within his thoughts and ideas.[21] Muʿammar may have been superior to him in that respect. Naẓẓām, however, did not think much of him; he debated with him in Baghdad and wrote a 'book' against his idea of the *maʿānī*.[22] He remained the man of quick and catchy ideas described by Jāḥiẓ. Nowhere do we read that he studied systematically at any point. The sources concentrate on his relationship with Abū l-Hudhayl who was not much help when it came to natural sciences. Their discussions, it was said, often went into several rounds, but they were friendly jousts – at least that is how the Muʿtazilites described them.[23] Naẓẓām did not share Abū l-Hudhayl's enjoyment of quoting;[24] which is not surprising in someone who valued originality as much as he did. He is said to have criticised him in 120 points, Abū l-Hudhayl responding to all of them.[25] In fact the refutations written by Abū l-Hudhayl known to us by their titles at least are much more numerous than those by other theologians; in the case of the controversy the two fought out concerning the question of creation, treatise and refutation were apparently transmitted together.[26]

### 3.2.2.2.1    *The 'Physics'*

3.2.2.2.1.1        Deliberations on Atomism. Infinite Divisibility and the Theory of 'The Leap'

In one point we are able to follow the argument between the two theologians in great detail. Naẓẓām believed in the infinite divisibility of bodies,[1] distancing himself from Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism. He was well aware of the front of his opponents: it is exclusively thanks to an excerpt from his *K. al-juzʾ* preserved by Ashʿarī that we are aware that at his time there were already several models besides his teacher's and Muʿammar's. He does not name names; it was not

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21    See p. 359ff. below; we might wonder whether the passages from *K. al-ḥayawān* discussed there were reflexes of the evening salons of which we heard from Job of Edessa. Naẓẓām's frequently beginning sentences with 'I have determined' (*wajadtu*) is worth noting, but he is not the only one.

22    See p. 70 above; also Catalogue of Works no. 21.

23    See p. 239 above; cf. also Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* I 75, apu. f./²I 68, no. 186 = Ibn Nubāta, *Šarḥ* 227, 11f.

24    *Faḍl* 257, 12f.

25    Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* 31, 18f./39, 12f.

26    Cf. XXII, section Refutations, esp. no. 3.

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1    Text XXII 13, b–c; also 14–15, and 79, e–f.

his intention to pick a quarrel with Abū l-Hudhayl in particular.[2] The question of whether an atom had six or eight sides was a doxographical matter to him; the true question was how an atom could have sides at all. If it has sides, it is divisible. This, in fact, had already been stated by the author of the pseudo-Aristotelian text *De lineis insecabilibus*,[3] and Naẓẓām continued the train of thought in several thought experiments: if an atom is situated between two others, it must touch them with two different parts of itself; if it is situated on a plane, it has an upper and a lower side.[4] Of course, this also means that it has quantity, and that length, width and depth are not the result of combination only, as Abū l-Hudhayl had assumed.[5] After all, one could imagine that one atom sits on the boundary between two others and thus occupies both partly.

Text 19–20. This contains a logical fallacy: as an atom is indivisible, one must not imagine that only one of its halves would be 'occupied' by the atom sitting on top (cf. also Furley, *Two Studies* 42f. regarding Lucretius). It is possible that Text 20 attempts to evade this objection. Jubbāʾī and Abū Hāshim still had different opinions on the issue (Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 96ff. § 18). Abū l-Hudhayl had not really been refuted in any text; the thought experiments mentioned started with a combination of several atoms, i.e. a state in which atoms had quantity and dimensionality in Abū l-Hudhayl's view, too. Furthermore the argument that it was impossible that a body could be interpreted as the sum of zeroes or dimensionless points could be turned around in favour of atomism; Democritus had already based his theory on it (Luria, *Infinitesimaltheorie der antiken Atomisten* 132 and 135). – Of course Naẓẓām did not share Abū l-Hudhayl's view that God could reverse the cohesion of the body's atoms and thus annihilate the bodies, either (Text 14).

The focus of the discussion soon shifted towards the theory of motion. After all we have learnt, this move suggested itself, and Naẓẓām supported it by

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2    Catalogue of Works no. 20; transl. Pines, *Atomenlehre* 9f., and Baffioni, *Atomismo* 104f. Unlike Baffioni, Pines noticed that the reference to ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān (*Maq.* 316, 4ff.) is anachronistic in Naẓẓām and was probably added by Ashʿarī. It is even more impossible for Naẓẓām to have thought of Jubbāʾī (Baffioni 105). Cf. also Text 79, d.

3    970 b 10ff. Hett.

4    Text 17–18.

5    Text 16; also Text IV 20, d. Cf., with slightly different emphasis, Aristotle, *De gen. et corr.* 316 b 5, and John Philoponus, *In Arist. De gen. et corr.* (CAG XIV) 2.31f. Vitelli; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* III 22.

introducing a new term: the 'leap' (*ṭafra* or *ṭafr*, inf.). The arguments he pro-
posed in support of the associated concept caused quite a stir among the
Mu'tazila. Jāḥiẓ tells us that at the time he wrote his *K. al-ḥayawān*, shortly
after Naẓẓām's death, treatises were written about it everywhere.[6] Not every-
one was happy with the innovation; Hishām al-Fuwaṭī, who was well aware of
the weaknesses of the atomist theory, was believed to have stopped criticising
it as he did not want to be seen to be accepting the 'leap'.[7] Jāḥiẓ was already
aware that there were circles who did not want to hear of it.[8] Not everyone
was deterred, however; even at Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād's court in Rayy there were
followers of Naẓẓām championing his hypothesis.[9] Even if one did not believe
in the 'leap' any more, the arguments in its favour could not simply be ignored.
Naẓẓām had contrived them skilfully, and the atomist theory of motion looked
to it. Thus Abū l-Hudhayl's approach wad ultimately modified, especially con-
cerning the phenomenon of acceleration,[10] while Naẓẓām's criticism was not
infrequently purged of all association with the idea of the 'leap' and rewritten
as a straightforward plea for infinite divisibility.[11]

In this way a personal argument became a debate between different schools,
which in turn evolved into a chain of dialectical problems on which it became
customary to whet one's intellect. The circle of those who had something to
say on the matter thus kept expanding. Consequently it is better document-
ed than many. We know that Ash'arī studied Naẓẓām's arguments thanks to
the summary of his theory in Ibn Furāk.[12] The relevant part of Qāḍī 'Abd al-
Jabbār's *Mughnī* is not, unfortunately, extant any more, but Ibn Mattōya was
probably referring to it when, in his *Tadhkira*, he reviewed the examples linked
to Naẓẓām and refuted them from an atomist point of view. Juwaynī, who died
not quite ten years after him, confirmed and supplemented the information in
the extant part of *Shāmil*. He was Kiyā al-Harrāsī's teacher in Nishapur, who

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6    *Ḥayawān* IV 208, 4ff.

7    Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 169, 10ff., which has only Hishām. The parallel in Ibn al-Murtaḍā,
    *Dāmigh al-awhām* (vol. 3 of his *Baḥr al-zakhkhār*), MS Brit. Mus. Or. 3807, fol. 19 a, 5ff.,
    shows that Hishām al-Fuwaṭī was the one referred to. Cf. also Text XXI 30.

8    Cf. his foreword to *K. al-Futyā* in: *Rasā'il* I 319, 6, addressed in fact to Ibn Abī Duwād;
    transl. p. 521 below.

9    Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 129, n. 1 after Mollā Ṣadrā, *Asfār al-arba'a*.

10    See p. 255 above; more details p. 341ff. below.

11    Cf. Text 31, 38, and 41–41, as well as the commentaries on Text 33–34 and 40.

12    *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Ash'arī* 208, 1ff.; cf. Gimaret, *Ash'arī* 55ff.

would later be Ghazzālī's colleague at the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad; he mentioned Naẓẓām in his as yet unedited *Uṣūl al-dīn*.[13]

In the person of Ibn Sīnā a philosopher had now become involved in the debate. From his point of view the matters under discussion did not offer a true alternative. Unlike those mentioned before, he did not approve of atomism, but this did not move him to agreeing with Naẓẓām. He found *kalām* in general suspicious. He did not name any names but discussed the *mutakallimūn* as a group; in his view Naẓẓām had not questioned the fundamental axioms of atomism at all.[14] What he meant was that Naẓẓām believed in a current infinite divisibility. Despite this fundamental rejection Ibn Sīnā of course exerted great influence over later Islamic scholasticism. In his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* Ghazzālī adopted his anti-atomist arguments exactly as Ibn Sīnā had expressed them in his *Dānishnāma-yi ʿAlāʾī*;[15] unlike his fellow student Kiyā al-Harrāsī, he did not refer to Juwaynī. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who wrote a commentary on Ibn Sīnā, discussed the issue in detail in his *Mabāḥīth al-mashriqiyya*.[16] Even Kemāl Pasha-Zāde, Shaykh al-Islām under Sulaymān al-Qanūnī, the 'Magnificent', (d. 950/1533), wrote a treatise about the 'leap',[17] and in the twelfth/eighteenth century Muḥammad Aʿẓam al-Hindī (d. 1185/1771) once more brought the issue to the notice of the Indian public with reference to Dawānī (d. 907/1501).[18]

This poses several problems. The first one concerns source criticism. We must take into account that even in texts which trace the arguments back directly to Naẓẓām, they will have been smoothed and distorted; and indeed, once the tradition has become consolidated, they are usually not reproduced uniformly. Furthermore, even within the Muʿtazila the awareness of Naẓẓām's having predecessors, or at least one predecessor, had been lost: Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. He, too, had embraced the infinite divisibility,[19] and his pupils at the latest, but presumably he himself, too, explained movement by means of

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13 Cf., in more detail. Text 16–20 and 26–42 with the parallels referenced there. Ibn Mattōya's deliberations are discussed extensively in Alnoor Dhanani's dissertation *Kalam and Hellenistic Cosmology. Minimal Parts in Basrian Muʿtazilī Atomism* (Harvard 1991).

14 *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt I, p. 184, 5, and 187, 4ff.; summary in his *K. al-najāt* 102, 8ff., and 110, 8ff. Job of Edessa, too, seemed to regard Naẓẓām as simply an atomist, as his refutation shows (Text 103, b).

15 Cf. the instances in the commentary on Text 18, 20, 35–36, and 41.

16 Cf. the instances Text 20 and 31, and in the commentary on Text 18, 33–34, 37, and 40–41; discussed in detail in Baffioni, *Atomismo* 211ff.

17 Several MSS, e.g. in Leiden (Acad. 208, fol. 114a ff.) and in Vienna (Kat. Flügel 219).

18 Cf. MS Princeton 278, fol. 44b–47a; regarding the author cf. Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* IX 64.

19 Cf. Text IV 19–20; also vol. I 419 above.

the 'leap'.[20] A second crux is tied to this, namely that everything the sources tell us about Hishām b. al-Ḥakam confirms that he had in mind **theoretical** infinite divisibility only. Consequently we cannot be certain that Ibn Sīnā's abovementioned verdict on Naẓẓām was correct. While it was frequently repeated by his followers[21] and found even beyond his sphere of influence,[22] it is based purely on the later scholarly discussion at which point the living context of Naẓẓām's system had long passed away. If we then read that the *mutakallimūn* were not even capable of distinguishing between the two, we are faced with the question of how much of the antique pre-history of the issue was known to them at all; after all, the distinction had already been put into clear relief then.

The last-named question is known to be rather complex. At the current stage of tradition it is hardly possible to avoid circular reasoning to the effect that on the one hand we infer the degree of familiarity with Hellenistic philosophy from the arguments proposed by the *mutakallimūn*, while on the other interpreting the latter based on antique models. In addition the awareness of the problem was honed only gradually in Antiquity, too. We could maintain that Naẓẓām had at least a superficial knowledge of Aristotle's *Physics*.[23] His contemporary Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī was said to have read it,[24] and Naẓẓām quotes Aristotle in one place.[25] Consequently he might have known that, as Aristotle demonstrated there, infinity in the sense of divisibility and finiteness in the sense of measurability are not mutually exclusive.[26] However, the insight that theoretical infinite divisibility as a thought experiment on the one hand and the real existence of smallest discrete entities, the so-called 'minima', on the other could also coexist, was only formulated by Epicurus.[27] It

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20    *Maq.* 61, 12ff.; the connection would later be emphasised by the opponents, e.g. in Baghdādī, *Farq* 113, −4ff./131, 6ff.

21    Regarding Rāzī cf. De Vincentis in Baffioni, *Atomismo* 282; also Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *Ishārāt wal-tanbīhāt* (II 135ff.). Regarding Mīr Dāmād cf. *Qabasāt* 184, 6ff. In general Pines, *Atomenlehre* 11f., n. 3.

22    Thus Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* v 92, −7ff.

23    Wolfson based his argument on this hypothesis (*Philosophy of the Kalam* 515f.).

24    See p. 222 above.

25    Text 78, a. Cf. p. 322 above, also p. 393f. below. The *Physics* was translated for the first time by Sallām al-Abrash during Hārūn's caliphate under the title *Samʿ al-kiyān* (Φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις; cf. Hein, *Definition und Einteilung* 288); regarding him see p. 175 above.

26    M. Schramm, *Die Bedeutung der Bewegungslehre des Aristoteles* 60.

27    Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* 128, also 94 and earlier; H. J. Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* 243ff. (and also 276). The 'minima' pose a limit to thought

is much more difficult to determine whether this distinction lived on. While the logician Ibn Bahrīz named Democritus and Epicurus as atomists in his *Ḥudūd al-manṭīq*, written for al-Ma'mūn,[28] and it was later also stated by Ibn Sīnā,[29] this is mere short-winded doxography from which Naẓẓām would not have learnt much. The most likely 'teacher' remains Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. More detailed study is required to show how much of this lived on in Islamic thought thanks to oral scholarly tradition.[30]

Following on from these general remarks it would seem sensible to present the material. It is immediately noticeable that this only begins during the second stage, that of Abū l-Hudhayl's polemic against Naẓẓām's theory. There is no assured evidence that Naẓẓām ever introduced the concept of the infinite divisibility into the discussion in a self-contained format. While one might assume that he did so in his *K. al-juz'* or *K. al-ṭafra*,[31] it seems even more probable that he did not feel the need at all because the position was already well-known. Presumably he simply built on what was known of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and contrasted it with Abū l-Hudhayl's atomism. The latter reacted by reinterpreting an argument known to us since Antiquity in his own way: an ant crawling over a sandal will never reach the end if the sandal's surface is indeed made up out of an infinite number of atoms. For if the infinite number is achieved by there being a half of every atom that the ant would have to cross, the animal would be stuck right from the beginning – just like someone who wants to enter a house but has to pass through another one every time, will never really enter anywhere.[32] Ibn Sīnā compared this with the parable of Achilles

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in reality. Furley correctly points out (p. 4f.) that the term 'theoretical divisibility' is more precise than 'mathematical divisibility', as there is usually no mathematical theory implied. It would be added only by Eudoxus (regarding him cf. E. Frank, *Plato und die sogenannten Pythagoreer*; Halle 1923). It is debatable whether Aristotle was familiar with the difference between physical and theoretical divisibility (cf. Sorabji against in: *Infinity and Continuity* 55, and Miller cautiously in favour, ibid. 89f.).

28   P. 109, pu. ff.; regarding him see p. 216 above. Concerning the transmission of Democritus' atomism in Arabic sources cf. Daiber in: *Proc. I. Congress on Democritus* 261f. (where Ibn Bahrīz is not yet included).

29   *Shifā'*, Ṭabī'iyyāt I 184, ult.; cf. also 187, 11f., regarding the *ṭafra*.

30   At least for the later period it has been provided by Dhanani's abovementioned dissertation. The author believes that the Islamic atomists applied a theory of minima, too, but that to them (unlike Epicurus) an atom did not consist of several minima/ἐλάχιστα but of one only.

31   Catalogue of Works no. 20 and 22. Maybe even in his *K. al-'arūs* (cf. ibid. no. 32 with commentary).

32   Text 28. Regarding the parallels cf. also Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 130.

and the tortoise; pointing out that the ant and the sandal had been substituted for the former by the *muḥdathūn*.[33] He is right, on the whole; the kinship with Zeno's paradoxes cannot be denied. Still, there are variants of the antique argument that are much closer to Abū l-Hudhayl's proof.[34] Furthermore the tortoise does not occur in Zeno but only appears in Simplicius;[35] Aristotle, our main source for Zeno's proof, says only βραδύτατον, 'something slower (than Achilles)'.[36]

Abū l-Hudhayl was, however, not referring to the Eleatic in any case. He probably knew nothing of him, certainly not that he was the author of the paradoxes. The doxographical tradition links some insignificant aphorisms with his name;[37] the paradoxes were collected separately in Aristotle's *Physics*, and the fact that they were linked to Zeno there was probably of rather less interest to an Arab of that time than it would be to a present-day historian of ideas. The argument as such, on the other hand, was known thanks to old-established dialectic or sceptic tradition;[38] the translation of the *Physics* probably served to revive the recollection. Only once we come to the *falāsifa*, for instance Ibn Sīnā,[39] does Aristotle feature as the direct source.

Thus it will not surprise anyone that Abū l-Hudhayl does not talk about Achilles. When, however, he refers to the ant, we are looking at a special case, because he is not thinking of an ant in the proper sense, which would be *namla* in Arabic. The word he uses instead is *dharra*, which denotes a very small species or, as he was not particular about species, any small crawling insect. And *dharra* is also the speck of dust in the sunlight.[40] While this cannot, of course, be the intended meaning here, it shows the focus of the argument: not, as in the case of the tortoise, the slowness, but rather the diminutive size.[41] This, after all, was how people imagined atoms: dots, like tiny beetles or mites. The

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33    *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt I 186, 1.

34    Diels-Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 29 A 25/transl. Capelle 177, 15. Cf. Gomperz, *Griech. Denker* I 163f.; H. Rüdiger, *Sokrates ist nicht Sokrates* (Zurich 1975) 24ff. Regarding the theory of motion in Zeno in general cf. Guthrie, *History* II 91ff.

35    *In Arist. Phys.* 1014, 5 Diels.

36    Arist., *Phys.* VI 9. 239b 14ff.; *abṭaʾu baṭīʾ* (713, –5 Badawī). Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary (ibid. 717) does not mention the tortoise, either.

37    Cf. the material collected by F. Rosenthal in: Orientalia 6/1937/21ff.

38    Beginning with the pseudo-Aristotelian text *De lineis insecabilibus* (there 968a 18ff.); cf. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 321ff.

39    *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt I 185, 15ff.

40    Cf. Lane, *Lexicon* 957 s. v.

41    Cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* I 216, –5f.; also Goldziher, *Ges. Schr.* III 47.

Greeks had already come up with the comparison to specks of dust.[42] In modern usage, *dharra* denotes the atom as such.

This was an advantage for Abū l-Hudhayl in that it allowed him to present the basis of his theory of motion directly: an atom progresses along a surface of atomic structure, covering one of the atoms of this surface with every step. Covering a distance in this way was called *muḥādhāt* 'being opposite',[43] while the gradual progress across the surface was called 'traversing' (*qaṭʿ*) of the distance.[44] This was based on antique vocabulary: *qaṭaʿa* corresponds to Epicurus' καταερεῖν 'to measure';[45] in reviews of Aristotle *muḥādhāt* is similar, though not identical, to παρὰ ἕκαστον γίγεσθαι 'to reach each (point) once',[46] while the pseudo-Aristotelian text *De lineis insecabilibus* has καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἅπτεσθαι 'to touch each point once'.[47] The Arab atomists also spoke of 'touching' (*mumāssa*).[48] Thus the size of a body is always a whole multiple of the atoms. This was the model Naẓẓām rejected: movement takes place in imperceptible leaps; even the ant is only 'opposite' some of the points.[49] This probably meant that he was well aware of the difference between finite length and infinite divisibility. Even by leaping one cannot, after all, traverse an infinite number of points; but one can cover a finite distance in this way, while the individual sections crossed are infinitely divisible in their turn.[50] Abū l-Hudhayl replied to this idea once again. One could dip the mite or ant in ink, then it would leave a continuous line on the surface. If there had been leaps, there would have to be gaps in the line. A knife cutting through a fruit cuts it smoothly; if it 'leaped', the fruit would not be cut in two.[51]

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42  Ibn Bahrīz, *Ḥudūd al-manṭiq* 110, 1, has *ḥabbāt*; elsewhere usually *habāʾ* (a collective); cf. the material collected by Kraus, *Jābir* II 154, n. 6, and Strohmaier in: Philologus 112/1968/1ff. Another comparison suggested was with a grain of sand (*Ḥayawān* III 216, −5). The Jewish theologian Yūsuf al-Baṣīr emphasised that atoms are actually much smaller than specks of dust in the sunlight (cf. Ben-Shammai in: JSAI 6/1985/264f.; also Sirat, *History of Jewish Philosophy* 55).

43  Cf. Text 29, b; 34; 35, b; 37, b; *Ḥayawān* V 20, 1. Regarding the atomist theory of motion in general cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt* I 186, 9ff.; Maimonides, *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn* 202, 16f. ATAY/ transl. Friedländer 121.

44  Text 28, b–d; 29, a and c, etc.

45  Cf. Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* 243.

46  *Physik* VI 9. 240a 15f.; the Arabic translation uses the phrase *bi-izāʾihī* (716, 8 BADAWĪ).

47  968a 2of.

48  Cf. Ibn Sīnā, loc. cit. Sometimes, however, they made a distinction (see p. 342 below).

49  Text 29. For visualisation it might have been sufficient that one could imagine a flea instead of a mite or an ant.

50  Thus also Sorabji in: *Infinity and Continuity* 79.

51  Text 32.

This was probably how it was written in Abū l-Hudhayl's *K. al-ṭafr*, in which he criticised Naẓẓām.[52] Jāḥiẓ acknowledged that he was particularly well-informed on the issue of the 'leap'.[53] It would seem that he earned this praise quite easily, as Naẓẓām clearly used the word *ṭafra* as a technical term. What he meant to say was that every interval of a movement was itself divisible. After all, not even the atomists could deny that there were leap movements in the real world, such as those performed by horses, although they explained them differently: when leaping, one is 'opposite' every point, but one 'touches' only the one where one's feet land on the ground again.[54] Naẓẓām, on the other hand, does not appear to have distinguished between *muḥādhāt* and *mumāssa*.[55]

In his own *K. al-ṭafra* he appears to have provided proof of his theory, going back to the example of the ant, but with a characteristic twist. He has two 'ants' or mites race one another along lines that form a right-angled triangle, one following the hypotenuse and the other the two legs, thus:
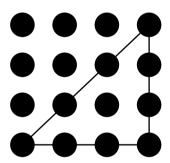


DIAGRAM 1

If the atomic speed is the same, the first one will arrive earlier, and that only because it 'leaped' along the way.[56] This is a surprising explanation: Naẓẓām does not care that the hypotenuse is shorter than the two legs in any case. The reason was that he calculated in atoms, not in lengths. Most important is that his example is not based on a random right-angled triangle, but on one that is formed by two sides and the diagonal of a square,[57] and is thus not only right-angled but also isosceles. Later opponents of atomism repeatedly based their arguments on this shape: if the length of the sides of such a square (four,

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52   Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 44.

53   *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, in: *Rasā'il* II 192, 4f.

54   Cf. Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* 39, 2ff.

55   Cf. Text 37, b, with commentary; also 29, b.

56   Text 30, a–b.

57   Text 30, a.

for instance) is interpreted as being the number of discrete atomic units, the diagonal will have the same number of atoms as one of the legs (four, again). If we presume that there are no spaces in between the atoms, this cannot be possible; thus a type of atomism that tries to make do without the concept of vacuum – i.e. the Islamic type – has been refuted.[58] Naẓẓām was probably familiar with the argument as according to Juwaynī he insisted that the diagonal could not have more atoms than the legs, as every single one of the former was 'opposite' one of the latter. Or, put differently: if one assumed more atoms on the diagonal, they would be situated between the rows of atoms where they would have no 'opposite'; according to the axioms of atomism this is impossible.[59]
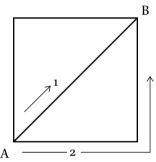


DIAGRAM 2

Naẓẓām was not out merely to refute atomism, but to apply his theory of the leap to ensuring movement remained plausible. Movement was not a continuum in his view, either. The ant crawling along the two legs of the triangle is still moving in accordance with the atomist model, being 'opposite' one of the seven atoms of the distance covered. The other ant, on the other hand, is by no means 'opposite' seven atoms, as that would require inserting three atoms into the spaces between the atoms of the hypotenuse. And while the distance is clearly longer than the four atoms of one leg, the 'spaces' between the atoms are smaller than one atom. Naẓẓām appears to have used the theorem of

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58 Particularly clear in Ibn Sīnā, *Dānishnāma*, transl. Achena-Massé ²I 144f. > Ghazzālī, *Maqāṣid* 151, 1ff., and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (= Text 31); cf. also Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, Ṭabīʿiyyāt 190, ult. ff., and Bīrūnī in his questions to Ibn Sīnā (cf. Bausani in: *Akten VII. Kongreß UEAI* Göttingen, p. 76); Maimonides, *Dalāla* 203, 14f./transl. Friedländer 122 = Pines 198. Through Ghazzālī's *Maqāṣid* the argument also became known to Western scholasticism, e.g. Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus (cf. Lasswitz, *Geschichte der Atomistik* 149 and 195f.; Murdoch in: *Actes IV. Congrès Internat. de Philosophie Médiévale* 218f.).

59 Text 30, c. I do not uphold my explanation given in REI 46/1978/201 any more.

Pythagoras to prove this: if one leg has the length 4, the length of the diagonal is = √32, which is not 7 but a value between 5 and 6. There is no indication that Naẓẓām started calculating at this point; he probably was not capable of it in any case. In fact, it would not have been necessary, as it was sufficient to know that one was looking at an irrational number. The theorem of Pythagoras implied that there were mathematical quantities that did not correspond to a point in space; this applied whenever the right-angled triangle was formed by drawing the diagonal of a square. On this hypotenuse the ant is 'opposite' four points in space and has to 'leap' between them. That is why it reaches the destination more quickly.

Cf. also Text 29. The sources we have compel us to leave a number of questions open. The thought experiment neglects the concept of velocity; Aristotle was not familiar with speed as an independent class of quantities, either (cf. Schramm, *Bewegungslehre* 35f.). The time factor, too, is ignored; we may safely assume that the 'leap' takes place in one moment, i.e. one single 'time atom'. It had already been stated that the distance leaped is itself infinitely divisible. This was where the opposite side found the 'metaphysical' problem of how a distance of finite length (the one leaped by the ant) could be composed of an infinite number of component sections, each of which in turn was of finite length. It took infinitesimal calculus to demonstrate that this was indeed possible: the finite number 2 can be explained as the sum of $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} \ldots + \frac{1}{2^n}$ *et sic ad infinitum* (cf. Luria, *Die Infinitesimaltheorie der antiken Atomisten* 106ff.).

Naẓẓām did not necessarily interpret the distance leaped as a 'gap'; the sources do not say this, and he would probably have met with protest by the atomists. Still, this led to difficulties, as the idea of a vacuum between the atoms only emerged later (see ch. D 1.3.2.1.1 below), and even when this possibility was being considered the atomists themselves usually searched for a different explanation of the circumstances: the atoms are cubes, and it is not their sides but their edges that touch along the hypotenuse (thus e.g. Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 97, pu. ff., and Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 193, 7ff. suggested as an alternative; also mentioned by Ibn Sīnā, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt* I 190, 12ff., and Bīrūnī, cf. Heinen in: Chelkowski, *The Scholar and the Saint* 53f.). Occasionally they imagined that three further atoms could fit diagonally into the 'serrated' (*muḍarras*) line like wedges (Ibn Sīnā, ibid. 191, 9ff.). This in turn leads to difficulties if the line was not the hypotenuse of a triangle but the diagonal of a square, as the square would then end up with a few atoms too many which

would spoil the grid structure. What everyone could agree on was that on the hypotenuse the distance between one 'field' to the next was greater than on the legs of the triangle. This would have provided sufficient basis for Naẓẓām's theory of the 'leap'. Regarding the interpretation of his theory cf. also Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 384ff., and Ḥusayn Muruwwa, *Al-naza'āt al-mādiyya fī l-falsafa al-'arabiyya al-islāmiyya* I 743ff. Regarding the mathematical aspect of Zeno's paradoxes cf., besides Luria's study, J. Mau, *Zum Problem des Inifinitesimalen bei den antiken Atomisten* in: Deutsche Akad. Wiss. Berlin, Inst. für hell.-röm. Phil., Veröff. no. 4 (1954). Half a century after Naẓẓām, Thābit b. Qurra would apply the theorem of Pythagoras to random triangles, calling it 'the Socratic theorem' (*al-ḥujja al-mansūba ilā Suqrāṭ*, after Plato's Menon; cf. GAS 5/266).

Naẓẓām appears to have made use of the numerical proportions of a right-angled triangle once again for his own ends. This case was not concerned with irrational numbers; consequently he omitted the condition that the legs of the triangle also had to be the sides of a square. He relied exclusively on observation: if a board is leaning against a wall, and one pulls it in such a way that it drops to the ground but still touches the wall with its end, then the top end will have slid down the wall a longer distance than the bottom end moved along the ground; thus there must have been 'leaps' – or one 'leap' – along the wall.[60] The guise of this brain teaser is old, it was known to the Babylonians, and is found later in a source from the Seleucid Era.[61]

Naẓẓām also put forward a second one of Zeno's paradoxes, known among the Greeks under the name 'stadium'[62] and presumably simplified by long use, as his version does not appear in its original form. Only those who read Aristotle or were part of the Aristotelian tradition would have been familiar with the original, e.g., later, Ghazzālī.[63] It was linked to Naẓẓām in three different versions.[64] The basic idea was that two rows of atoms, or two atoms along atomically structured lines, move parallel but in opposite direction, like two lines of athletes marching past one another in a stadium. If they were stopped once during each time unit, it would turn out that each of the marching athletes

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60    Text 42; cf. the commentary.

61    van der Waerden, *Erwachende Wissenschaft* 122f.

62    Arist., *Physik* VI 9. 239b 33ff.; Diels-Kranz, *Vorsokratiker* 29 A 28. Also Gomperz, *Griech. Denker* I 165; Furley, *Two Studies* 72ff.; Rüdiger, *Sokrates* 30ff.; Sorabji in: *Infinity and Continuity* 40ff., and *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 330ff. Cf. also *Physik* VI 2. 233b 16ff.; and Schramm, *Bewegungslehre* 34f.

63    *Maqāṣid* 148, 15ff.

64    Text 33–35.

was only 'opposite' every second one in the opposing line, having 'leaped' past the one in between.

Cumulative motion processes were just as suitable for this kind of experiment as contrary ones. This was easiest to imagine in the case of a human moving on a surface that is itself in motion, e.g. on a ship. If he walks in the direction of travel, his speed is added to that of the ship, and it would be possible in theory that of a distance he covers, he has in fact himself only travelled half. This would mean that he would have been 'opposite' only half of the smallest units/atoms of the distance at a particular moment.[65] A similar example was that of the bucket brought out of the well by means of two ropes or a crook hooked into a rope. The rope from which the bucket hangs is doubled, and the bucket will have come all the distance out of the well after one has paid out only half the second rope, or pulled the crook half the way out of the well.[66] This was immediately comprehensible to people living at the time, and consequently repeated frequently. The early jurist Iyās b. Muʿāwiya, a man known for his quick-wittedness,[67] was said to have surprised his contemporaries with it;[68] Naẓẓām would probably have known it from Arabic tradition. It seems there are no antique versions of this story.

The reference to the example of the well Baffioni believed to have found in *De lineis insecabilibus* 970 v 1ff. (*Atomismo* 232) is entirely vague; above all it contains no mention of the particular context. – The example of the ship presents a slightly different case. Aristotle used it, but only in order to demonstrate accidental movement (*Phys.* VI 10. 240b 8ff.); the passenger himself it not moving here. Naẓẓām's question may have developed from this starting point. Abū l-Hudhayl had already thought about the case of accidental movement (see p. 258 above). To the atomists, the crux was especially the assumption of a maximum speed: if the ship moves so fast that it 'touches' an atom of the surface of the water at every moment, there would not be any points in space for the passenger to be 'opposite'. If there were infinitely indivisible 'leaps', the problem would not arise (thus also Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 391).

A fourth group of examples demonstrates the 'leap' by means of the movement of concentric circles on gyrating objects, such as a spinning top or a millwheel. The circles all have a different circumference, but they all move in the same

65    Text 38–39. Regarding Ashʿarī's response cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 57f.
66    Text 40; cf. the illustrations there.
67    See vol. II 143 above.
68    Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt* I 363, 3ff.

way with the object on which they are situated. Larger circles cover a greater distance than smaller ones. If we assume that a small circle is 'opposite' all points of an atomic structure during one revolution, it is not possible for a larger circle during the same revolution.[69] A version of this problem was first broached in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanica*;[70] it became known under the title 'Aristotle's wheel'.[71] Heron of Alexandria, too, discussed it in his *Mechanics*; interestingly, this text is extant only in the Arabic translation.[72] This may be part of the explanation why this is the only example Ash'arī included under Naẓẓām's name, and also the only one mentioned by Ibn Sīnā after introducing the concept of *ṭafra*.[73] Heron's version diverges significantly. It is probably closest to the example of a gyrating ruler recorded by Sextus Empiricus.[74] Consequently the preference may actually be due to the fact that it was the most suitable for the atomists to elucidate their different position: all circles are always 'opposite' all the points past which they glide, but their movement is interrupted repeatedly by moments of rest, and that more frequently in the case of the small circles than the large ones. Maybe they modelled the idea on gears.[75] As we have seen, this was also the explanation atomists gave for differences in speed.[76] The 'leap' made this easier, of course.[77]

The last group of examples to be discussed is slightly disparate but, as we shall see, relevant because of this in particular. Naẓẓām observed that the shadows of standing objects of different height do not grow or shrink at the same speed; the shadow of the larger object appears to 'leap'.[78] The light 'leaps'

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69    Text 36–37.

70    Cap. 24. Cf. also *De caelo* B 8. 289b 34ff. with reference to the stars.

71    Cf. I. E. Drabkin, *Aristotle's Wheel: Notes on the History of a Paradox*, in: Osiris 9/1950/162ff.; also M. Jammer, *Das Problem des Raumes* 68ff., and A. Maier, *Die Vorläufer Galileis* 164.

72    Ed. Carra de Vaux in: JA, NS 1/1893/424, 9ff. = transl. 465ff.; also L. Nix, *Heronis Alexandrini Opera* II 1, p. 16.

73    *Ṭabī'iyyāt* I 187, 13ff.

74    *Adv. Math.* X (= *Adv. Dogm.* IV) 149ff.

75    Ibn Sīnā, 187, 17ff.; cf. Text 36, b, with commentary. Lasswitz, *Atomistik* 149, stands the facts on their head. It was pointed out that a wheel may indeed sometimes 'wobble' or be flung from the axle (Juwaynī, *Shāmil* 437, ult. ff.). Conversely, Aristotle had already cited reasons why the sky was not torn to pieces (διασπᾶσθαι), although the celestial bodies move at different speeds (*De caelo*, loc. cit.).

76    See p. 255f. above. Evidence for Ash'arī with regard to this example is found in Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Ash'arī* 208, 9ff.; cf. Gimaret, *Ash'arī* 56. Gassendi, too, took this approach (cf. Pines in: REJ 103/1938/47 = *Collected Works* I 45).

77    Cf. also Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 387ff. (esp. 389, n. 14).

78    Text 41; regarding Ash'arī's response cf. Gimaret 53f. It must be borne in mind that the times for prayer during the day were determined by means of a gnomon; the *'aṣr* prayer, for instance, could be performed from the moment when the shadow of the gnomon was

in the same way: at sunset we can observe how it retreats, and the shadows flit after it towards the horizon. Conversely, in the morning the sun spreads its light very quickly all over the entire earth; considering the great distances it has to cover, this can only be explained as 'leaping'.[79] If one closes a hatch, it gets dark immediately: the light left 'at a leap'.[80] Vision is possible due to rays of light emitted by the eye, and once again it is only the 'leap' that explains how we can see the sky, far away though it is, immediately and not only after some time.[81] The soul will 'leap' back to its origins when a human dies.[82] These examples use the concept to render excessively fast movement comprehensible, following a long-standing tradition. Aristotle had rejected Empedocles' theory that light needed time to move from the sun to the earth; in comparison he had pointed out that every part of a pond freezes in the same instant, and that heat spreads instantly everywhere.[83] Theophrastus, Alexander of Aphrodisias and John Philoponus had followed him.[84] Naẓẓām's interest in the idea meant that for the first time there was more to the issue than mere movement along a surface, straightforward being 'opposite' was not the main concern. This proves that the term *ṭafra* fulfilled not only a dialectic function in the discussion with Abū l-Hudhayl but also occupied a positive position in Naẓẓām's system.

This must be taken into consideration when we now return to the above-mentioned fundamental issues. If the 'leap' had had a purely dialectic function, we could deal with it quickly, as it would be no more than an instrument of refuting atomism. Now we know that this is not the case, our eyes have been opened to the fact that the anti-atomist arguments do not really allow this assumption in any case. If a straightforward refutation had been the objective, the 'leap' would not have been needed; consequently it would later be shown to be expendable in the overall context of anti-atomist arguments.[85] Ibn Mattōya probably represented an intermediate stage; he used both the leap and the infinite divisibility, and stated clearly in one place that the latter was the best

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the same length as the gnomon itself to the moment when the shadow is twice the length (cf. King in: EI² VII 28 s. v. *Mīḳāt*). The length of the gnomon was irrelevant.

79    Text 43, c–e; cf. Gimaret 57.

80    Text 44 and 53, s–t with commentary; also 88, m–q, and 89, l.; and 137, b. Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see p. 259 above. Farmhouses where the only inlet of light was a roof hatch existed in the Middle East until the nineteenth century (cf. Hütteroth in: LexMa 1308).

81    Text 43, a–b; 105, a. Cf. p. 348 below.

82    Text 89, d.

83    *De sensu et sensato* 6. 646a 26ff., and 446b 27ff.

84    Sorabji in: *Infinity and Continuity* 49; *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 53.

85    See p. 336, n. 11 above.

way of dealing with atomism.[86] If the two can be separated, it is not clear at
first glance how Naẓẓām connected them. If it was only about the infinite di-
visibility, we could confidently assume that he saw it as theoretical divisibility.
The 'leap', on the other hand, took place within the reality of movement.

Even so, it turns out that we will not have to agree with Ibn Sīnā's phrase
of the current infinite divisibility. While the 'leap' meant that Naẓẓām even
more than the atomists understood movement as discontinuous, it does take
place across measurable finite distances and can thus come to an end in spite
of the theoretical infinite divisibility, as it does not have to be 'opposite' every
point. There are probably several reasons why Ibn Sīnā did not grasp the heart
of the matter. The scholarly discussion he was looking at did not reveal much
of the original approach. He furthermore interpreted theoretical divisibility as
mathematical divisibility, but the mathematical aspect was missing entirely
from Naẓẓām's and his followers' concepts. And finally he was unable to com-
prehend that any *mutakallim* could ever have agreed with Aristotle.

The early sources, sparse though they are, all agree with our interpretation.
One of the reports on Abū l-Hudhayl mentioned takes Naẓẓām into account
as well; it was recorded by the Mu'tazilite al-Maqdisī.[87] Khayyāṭ, too, left no
room for doubt.[88] Not even Ibn al-Rēwandī denied that Naẓẓām distinguished
between finite dimension and infinite divisibility; he even knew that Naẓẓām
pointed out to the Manichaeans that one could not traverse an infinite dis-
tance. He also recalled derisively that Naẓẓām's critics did not agree with the
distinction; and tried to find contradictions himself.[89] It is characteristic how
Naẓẓām, in a tucked-away passage, comments on the infinite divisibility of
a mustard grain: he believes this theory to have certain advantages, but does
not adopt it for himself.[90] Consequently the popular atomist argument that if
there were infinite divisibility, a mustard grain would have the same number
of parts as a mountain (namely an infinite number), did not convince him;[91]
the parts of the mountain would individually always be proportionally larger

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86    Text 41, d; cf. also 38, c–d, and 42, b. While Sorabji, *Infinity and Continuity* 82 and 84, as-
      sumed that the development in fact took place the other way around, and that Juwaynī
      reformulated Naẓẓām's anti-atomist arguments into positive proof of the 'leap', this is not
      supported by tradition. Especially the information found in Ash'arī contradicts it (cf. Text
      37, which is loc. cit. the continuation of Text 27). Cf. also p. 336f. above.

87    Text IV 21.

88    Text 119, f and g; 120, l–m; 121, h.

89    Text 119, a–b and i–k; 120, a–i.

90    Text 79, b–c.

91    Ibn Sīnā, *Ṭabī'iyyāt* I 186, 3f.; Baghdādī turns it against Naẓẓām (*Uṣūl* 36, 6ff.). Cf. p. 81 and
      247 above.

than those of the mustard grain.[92] Thus in his view even the smallest part had dimensionality – a remarkable difference from Abū l-Hudhayl, who had, after all, denied that a single isolated atom had any dimensionality at all.[93]

Naẓẓām's theory was certainly not naïve.[94] While it has been proven that he did not refer directly to Aristotle or other Greek authors, he was familiar with the most significant distinctions evolved in Antiquity. The 'leap' was probably not originally his idea, either. After all, he shared Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's concept of divisibility, and probably this detail, too; the inverse hypothesis that Hishām's pupils, of whom it was transmitted, only adopted it from Naẓẓām, thus becomes even less appealing than it would be in any case. Hishām may well have adopted the idea from the Iranian environment to which he referred in many ways. We have seen that there was interest in the theory of motion among the *zanādiqa*; one of them was an atomist as well.[95]

### 3.2.2.2.1.1.1    *Models from Antiquity*

For the time being this is merely an explanation of *ignotum per ignotius*. Furthermore, the question remains of whether, and to what extent, the 'leap' had models in Antiquity. The studies by Sorabji, which we have quoted a number of times, helped to clarify matters, especially his study written for the collection *Infinity and Continuity in Ancient and Medieval Thought*.[1] He discusses Naẓẓām among others, based on the new sources I made known in my study of 1978.[2] The trail he follows back from there had already been discovered by van den Bergh: ἅλμα or πήδημα are found in the works of the Neo-Platonist Damascius, together with the verb ὑπεράλλεσθαι.[3] Damascius is an ideal point of contact for the Middle East: he spent some, though not much, time in Persia; he was removed from his position as the head of the

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92    Text 121, c and h.

93    Regarding the issue in general cf. already Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 120ff.; his decision is the same as ours. Caspar, in MIDEO 4/1957/185, considered this a 'thèse excessive'. Cf. also Ḥusayn Muruwwa, *Al-nazaʿāt al-mādiyya* 741ff.

94    Against Pretzl in: Der Islam 19/1931/126, and Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 516.

95    See vol. I 518f. above. According to Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 566, ult. ff., there was a second, namely the nephew of Abū Shākir al-Dayṣānī (regarding him cf. vol. I 438f.). Cf. also in detail Dhanani (see p. 337, n. 13 above).

1    Ed. N. Kretzmann (Cornell Univ. Press 1982), p. 37–86.

2    *Theology and Science. The Case of Abū Isḥāq al-Naẓẓām.* Second Annual United Arab Emirates Lecture in Islamic Studies. Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1978 (published 1979).

3    S. van den Bergh, *Die Epitome zur Metaphysik des Averroes* 189, n. 1 (only ἅλμα); Sorabji 74ff.

Academy in Athens by Justinian's well-known decree of 529, and found sanctuary at Khosrou Anoshirwan's court. The ruler who, according to Agathios' verdict, was well-read in philosophy, was interested in the theory of motion, among other things.[4] This was not necessarily how contact with the Greek world took place, as Damascius was part of a tradition. His innovation was a point we could really do without in our comparison with Naẓẓām: that time, too, progressed in leaps; that every leap is a time quantum.[5] Sextus Empiricus, on the other hand, appears to have been aware that movement can take place in leaps.[6] While, as we have seen, Aristotle had already pointed out that light does not need time, he had regarded this as an exception. The idea that **all** movement leaps only evolved after Diodorus Cronus and Epicurus had explained motion the atomist way.[7] Damascius did not make any effort to evolve the idea systematically, but when he uses it to explain why different planets in the sky traverse the same cycle at different speeds, this recalls Naẓẓām's concentric circles; the canopy of fixed stars was probably the surface 'opposite' which the planets were situated.[8] And his speaking of a 'leap' even concerning the moment a thing comes into being means that he understood the range of the term to be as wide as Naẓẓām did; furthermore they both believed that everything comes into being at once in a kind of movement.[9]

3.2.2.2.1.2     General Theory of Motion. The Concept of *i'timād*

We should not put too much pressure on the comparison. While Naẓẓām said, like Damascius, that things are in motion at the moment they are created,[1] he was not referring to *ṭafra* but to *i'timād*, which is something else altogether. However, we know even less than in the case of *ṭafra* what, precisely, it is. The great scope of Naẓẓām's theory of motion has been hidden completely by the *ṭafra* discussion. Naẓẓām's inspiration for writing a book on motion and

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4     Cf. the translation of the text by Duneau in: *Mélanges Crozet* 17; regarding Damascius ibid. 18ff.

5     In such detail in the quotation in Simplicius, *Phys.* 774, 34ff. (transl. in: Sambursky-Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism* 64ff.); also Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutions* III 105. Cf. Sorabji 76; id., *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 52.

6     Sorabji 76.

7     Cf. Sorabji 59ff.; also *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 375ff.

8     *Dubitationes et solutions* III 105 § 395. Indian astronomers certainly regarded the issue in this way, as demonstrated by a passage in Bīrūnī (cf. Hartner, *Oriens-Occidens* 321, n. 4; Heinen in: Chelkowski, *The Scholar and the Saint* 52). Cf. also p. 347, n. 75 above.

9     Ibid. II 300 § 221. In his understanding this was the transition from the one to the number.

1     Text 21, f.

rest was believed to have been a verse by Abū Nuwās. The relevant words in
the verse were: 'until movements emerged that were created from rest'.[2] This
sounded like a primacy of rest; Muʿammar would have been satisfied. Naẓẓām,
however, was not; to him, there was only motion. Ashʿarī quoted him as having
written: 'I do not know what 'rest' is. It might mean at best that something is
in the same place for two moments, i.e. moves on it for two moments'.[3] This
imperceptible 'movement' on the spot was explained as *iʿtimād*.[4]

Of course there was also motion in the traditional sense, a change of loca-
tion. It is an accident inherent in the moving body from the very beginning of
its movement and accompanying it throughout its movement from the start-
ing point to the destination (the 'first location' to the 'second location', as they
said).[5] There is not, however, only this type of motion, as proved directly by
the rotation of an axle. While this is a movement in the agreed sense, there is
no change of location.[6] In this context Abū l-Hudhayl spoke of 'movement
not away from something or towards something', but Naẓẓām did not agree,[7]
and not for terminological reasons alone. He did not regard rotation as a differ-
ent type of motion; on the contrary, all movements are the same in principle.
They belong to the same class (*jins*), as he put it.[8] All this means is probably
that they all, whether they include a change of location or not, are caused by
*iʿtimād*.[9]

This *iʿtimād* is thus the moving force inherent in every body. In that re-
spect a later Muʿtazilite was correct when he said that it fulfilled precisely the
same function that in his and his contemporaries' view motion itself fulfilled:
it is the force that makes things move.[10] *Iʿtimād*, however, went beyond the

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2       Wagner, *Abū Nuwās* 116; the source is Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās* 223, 11. It is not un-
        likely that it refers to the *K. al-ḥarakāt* mentioned at Catalogue of Works no. 30, but it is
        not assured.

3       Text 21, e, and 152, c; cf. also the short remark by Zurqān in Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 55, 13f.

4       Text 23, b–c. Also Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 132ff.; Brunschvig in: *Festschrift Abel* 75f. = *Etudes* I
        254f.; Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans* 37f. In the mind of the time the 'location' was not an
        imaginary quantity but a body or an atom on which another body or another atom is situ-
        ated (cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 100).

5       Text 24; also regarding Abū Shamir. Regarding the accident cf. Text 3, a; 4, b; 5, b; 6, b; 8, a.

6       Text 26. Najjār also adduced this example, provoking Kaʿbī to disagree (Ḥākim al-Jushamī,
        *Sharḥ* I 40a).

7       Text XXI 27, d and g; cf. p. 258 above.

8       Text 23, f.

9       There is nothing comparable in Damascius; to him, movement was only a change of
        location (II 188 § 151).

10      Text 22.

accepted concept of motion. It allows us to explain creation: while things are at rest at the moment they are created, God has imbued them with *iʿtimād* from the first.[11] He has wound them up, as it were, and they will run of their own accord. The idea that the act of creation would put everything in motion suggested itself; it was also expressed e.g. in the *Dēnkart*.[12] The *iʿtimād*'s initial latency, its expression in a state of rest, probably prevented in Naẓẓām's view that God himself should be set in motion through the act of creation. It was at this point that the theology of Naẓẓām's predecessor Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had revealed its weaknesses.[13] It is perhaps no coincidence that Ammonius' fictitious doxography, which seems to have been composed in an atmosphere of Muʿtazilite speculation,[14] discusses only the alternative of whether God was at absolute rest, or 'in resting motion', i.e. in motion in the sense of Naẓẓām's *iʿtimād*.[15]

It looks as though Naẓẓām ascribed a certain direction to this *iʿtimād* that is inherent to things from the very first.[16] This would have been no more than consistent, as motion and *iʿtimād* are constitutive of the 'state of being' (*kawn*) of a thing in space,[17] and Abū l-Hudhayl, who had first used the term 'state of being', had regarded it as being 'possessed of direction'.[18] The question remains of whether there was only one such direction in Naẓẓām's view, and if yes, which one it was. In view of the later development of the concept of *iʿtimād* this question is more than justified; while if we look to Abū l-Hudhayl, it seems to restrict his concept of the 'state of being' unduly. There can be no doubt that Naẓẓām was the linchpin of the development, but the sources we have are too sparse to allow us to determine his contribution with any clarity. We must distinguish between four areas of problems: 1) To what degree did Naẓẓām use the word *iʿtimād* under a terminological aspect? 2) Where did the word come from? 3) What connotations besides the subjects discussed did the concept include? 4) Where did those subjects come from?

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11    Text 21, f, and 25. One is tempted to speak of potential motion, but potentiality is a category that was not yet present in the Muʿtazila at the time (cf. ch. 4.1.3 below).

12     § 371/transl. de Menasce 334.

13    See vol. I 426f. and 439 above.

14    Cf. U. Rudolph in: Akten XIV. Kongreß UEAI Budapest.

15    Cap. 10 and commentary p. 154f.

16    Text 124.

17    Text 23, d, and 21, d.

18    See p. 252f. above.

We should perhaps begin by saying that Naẓẓām's model knew of one exception, i.e. one thing or one mass that does not possess *i'timād*, namely the earth: it is always at rest. This is surprising; one wonders why it should not yield to its own weight. That, however, would have meant that Naẓẓām agreed with the Sumaniyya who claimed that the earth was falling into a fathomless abyss. Abū l-Hudhayl had explored this view (see p. 257 above), but Naẓẓām found a new argument: there can only be movement where there is space (a 'location'). The earth is not 'inherent to a location', i.e. it is not within a space (Text 126). Compare this to his statements on the sphere elsewhere (see p. 378f. below); it is apparently only positioned on top of the earth. In Antiquity we find the idea that the earth is floating in space, held up by the symmetry of the distances all around it, in Anaximander's writings (Diels-Kranz A 26; A 11 § 3). Jwaideh's linking the passage at Yāqūt 16, −7ff., to Naẓẓām in this context (*Introductory Chapters of Yāqūt's Mu'jam al-buldān* 21, n. 6) seems justified in the light of Text 115, d, but there is no proof of it anywhere.

The source that is closest to Naẓẓām, namely Jāḥiẓ, does not mention *i'timād* in connection with him at all. The term is only found in the works of doxographers, Ash'arī being the first of them. It is possible that Jāḥiẓ deliberately employed non-terminological language;[19] the theory of motion is not at all at the centre of his writings. On the other hand, *i'timād* was part of the current vocabulary of the Basran school at Ash'arī's time; Jubbā'ī was familiar with it, as was Ash'arī's fellow student Abū Hāshim. We must be prepared for reformulations and expansion. Later theory is best studied with authors of the late fourth and fifth centuries: Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār,[20] Abū Rashīd,[21] Ibn Mattōya,[22] Juwaynī.[23] A *K. al-i'timād* was transmitted from the *qāḍī*;[24] Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, too, composed a *Mas'ala fī aḥkām al-i'timād*.[25]

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19    See p. 360 below.

20    Thus in the *K. al-tawlīd* (vol. IX) of his *Mughnī*; e.g. 27, 14ff., and 145, 21ff. Cf. the translation by J. Hecker, *Reason and Responsibility*, Index 506ff. s. v. 'directive cause'.

21    *Masā'il fī l-khilāf* 229ff. (which includes a reference to Ka'bī at the beginning); also the early chapters of the book.

22    *Tadhkira* 530ff.; cf. also Ibn al-Wazīr, *Tarjīḥ asālīb al-Qur'ān* 117, 11ff.

23    *Shāmil* 490ff. Regarding the later period cf. Suyūrī, *Irshād al-ṭālibīn* 88, 7ff. In the Jewish *kalām*, Hebr. *s^emīkūt* is the corresponding term (cf. Vajda in: REJ 131/1972/316).

24    Instances in 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān, *Qāḍī al-quḍāt* 64.

25    Listed in the Catalogue of Works MS Princeton, ELS 2751, fol. 219a, 9.

If we look at whom else Ashʿarī mentioned in connection with the term, we find two of Naẓẓām's pupils, Ṣāliḥ Qubba[26] and Muḥammad b. Shabīb,[27] but also Abū l-Hudhayl[28] and Abū Shamir al-Ḥanafī,[29] both of whom were older. Consequently we must at least envisage the possibility that the word was in use in scientific debate even before Naẓẓām. In fact, this is confirmed by a piece of evidence not as yet considered in this context: Sībawayh used *iʿtimād* to mean 'effort' in articulating, 'vocal pressure'.[30] This takes us to the second half of the second century; all Naẓẓām can have done is to give the word a new meaning in the context of his system. The phrase found in Khayyāṭ *iʿtamada l-maʿāṣī*, 'to commit sins', is probably also old.[31] This refers to **conscious** action; Sībawayh may have been aware of this, too, when he used it as a phonological term.

Abū Shamir and Ibn Shabīb used the term with more or less the same denotation as Naẓẓām. Ṣāliḥ Qubba, on the other hand, was the first to claim in this context that *iʿtimād* can also be the energy a **human** imparts to a stone when he flings it.[32] Both aspects would be discussed side by side later as well. *Iʿtimād* appears to be inherent in a moving object generally;[33] it is closely linked to the object's weight. It was discussed whether weight was a separate accident of a body or whether it was identical with the body's *iʿtimād*.[34] Consequently in the later understanding it was mainly directed downwards;[35] Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī emphasised that it could never be directed upwards.[36] This only applies when we discount secondary influences, because it was entirely possible that a steep downward movement would suddenly be redirected upwards if it encountered an obstacle – when for instance a sled going downhill collides with a hummock. Abū Hāshim distinguished between pertinent and

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26    Text XXIII 9, f.

27    Text XXXI 8, e, and 9, c.

28    Text XXI 139, a.

29    Text II 21 with commentary.

30    *Kitāb* II 454, 1 = ed. JAhn II 855; further instances cf. Troupeau, *Lexique-Index* 147 s. v. Cf. also Danecki in: *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar* II 92.

31    *Intiṣār* 72, 13 = Text XXX 10, b.

32    Similar already in the text on Abū l-Hudhayl (XXI 139, a). Sībawayh based his ideas on the same presumption. Similarly, later, Khayyāṭ in Text XXI 141, g.

33    Cf. the example of the axe in Text XXII 32, d–e.

34    Cf. e.g. Juwaynī's abovementioned deliberations; also Abū l-Qāsim al-Anṣārī, *Sharḥ al-Irshād lil-Juwaynī*, MS Aya Sofya 1205, fol. 60b, –8ff. Text XXXV 7 also belongs in this context.

35    *iʿtimād suflan* in the later terminology.

36    *K. al-furūq* 120, 4.

contributed, secondary *i'timād*.[37] The pressure of air, water etc. was also called *i'timād*.[38] Abū Hilāl's definition was that *i'timād* causes movement in a certain direction once all obstacles have been removed.[39] We would use the term kinetic energy nowadays. The best translation is, perhaps, force.

Thus also M. Bernand in: SI 36/1972/39, n. 1. Elsewhere the translation is usually dependent on the respective examples used. Thus Bernand uses 'impetus' or 'force de poussée' in other contexts (*Problème de la connaissance* 239 and 277). Brunschvig has 'impulsion' (*Festschrift Abel* 75 = *Etudes* I 254); Peters, 'pressure' (*God's Created Speech* 135ff.); Gimaret, 'pression' (*Théories de l'acte humain* 40); Frank, 'pressure, e.g. the weight of a body or its momentum which is manifest in its resistance to our effort to lift it or move it in a contrary direction' (in: *Philosophies of Existence* 268); Monnot, 'conatus' (*Penseurs musulmans* 39); J. Hecker, 'directive cause' (see above). Nader still translated literally 'appui' (*Système philosophique* 171, only in the context of Naẓẓām), as did D. Eberhardt: 'Sich-Aufstützen' (*Sensualistischer Ansatz* 33f., with an overview of earlier attempts at interpretation). Wolfson uses the phrase 'motion in the sense of an inclination to motion' in the context of Naẓẓām (*Philosophy of the Kalam* 630), Tritton has 'movement in intention' (*Muslim Theology* 92), Daiber the similar 'Intention' and 'intendierte Bewegung' (*Mu'ammar* 305f.). Like Eberhardt, Daiber emphasises strongly that Naẓẓām must be understood by himself and independent of the later development. Materials on the subject of later understanding of the terminology may be found in Bernand, SI 36/1972, and Peters, loc. cit.

There are only traces – or the seeds – of evidence for all this in Naẓẓām. He, too, appears to have thought about weight, but in the few texts we have on the subject the term used is *quwwa* rather than *i'timād* when referring to the body's own downward force.[40] Furthermore, weight could not be an accident in his view.[41] It is not clear whether a human could impart *i'timād*;[42] in his day, the

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37    *i'timād lāzim* or *i'timād mujtalab*; cf. *Mughnī* IX 27, 23ff., and 28, 10ff.

38    Abū Rashīd (?), '*Fī l-tawḥīd*' 422, –7ff., and 424, –6f.

39    *Furūq* 120, 5ff.

40    Text 90, d, and 64, a (where the commentary must be taken into consideration). In 69, o, *i'timād* is the opposite of *irtifā'* 'ascent' in a way that is not entirely clear.

41    See p. 374f. and 389f. below.

42    Cf. Text 107, b; *i'timād*, that which leads to generation of noise. Here it is named side by side with *iṣṭikāk*, beating objects together, which might cover the generation of noise by humans.

category of *tawlīd* would still have applied here. Consequently every attempt at linking the later systematic connection to Antiquity via Naẓẓām is most daring. The Stoics believed that something moves either because of an inherent force, or because of a force imparted from outside;[43] during the same period (the second century BCE) the astronomer Hipparchus of Nicaea assumed that projectiles had a power of movement inherent in them. The crucial step was taken by John Philoponus in the sixth century CE. Being a Christian he involved God; in this way he was able to unify applications of dynamics that had been discussed independently since Aristotle in one all-embracing theory. In his view **every** force was imposed from outside, be it through a human (by throwing a stone, for instance) or through God who moves the celestial bodies. The spirit of Antiquity had vanished here, and that of the modern age had yet to emerge; the stars have lost their divine soul but are endowed with a κινητικὴ δύναμις at the moment of their creation, and objects have no inherent inertia with which they might resist an external impetus.[44] The development leads via Islamic scientific thought to the impetus theory of Paris Scholasticism and Galileo's *vis impressa*. If Naẓẓām should be included in this process, his *iʿtimād* would correspond most closely to ῥοπὴ φυσική in late antique philosophy, which the *falāsifa* would later render as *al-mayl al-ṭabīʿī*; this, too, refers to the downward inclination of the heavy elements.[45] The issue of the ῥοπὴ was discussed mainly using the example of the scales, which had also captured Muʿammar's interest:[46] weight is inversely proportional to the length of the balance beams.[47] *Impetus* as a technical term first occurs with Buridan.[48] Interestingly, Leonardo da Vinci used the word *forza* instead of *impetus*.[49]

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43  Cf. M. Frede in: *Doubt and Dogmatism*, ed. M. Schofield et al., p. 249.

44  The concept of inert mass was only evolved in the modern age (cf. M. Jammer, *Der Begriff der Masse* 51ff.).

45  Cf. Pines in: REJ 103/1937/49ff. = *Collected Works* I 47ff.; Hasnaoui in: Jolivet/Rashed, *Etudes sur Avicenne* 103ff. (regarding *iʿtimād* p. 120f., n. 38). We must bear in mind that Philoponus believed the elements lost their inclination of moving upwards or downwards once they had lost their natural place (cf. R. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion* 232). This is why the earth is at rest, and this is why Naẓẓām may well have thought about its status (see above).

46  See p. 69 above.

47  F. Krafft, *Dynamische und statische Betrachtungsweise in der antiken Mechanik* 75; also 49 regarding ῥοπὴ as opposed to ἰσχύς, a force applied from the outside.

48  M. Wolff, *Geschichte der Impetustheorie* 27f.

49  Dijksterhuis, *Val en worp* 146.

It remains to be examined how the terminological denotation of *i'timād* thus presumed is compatible with the original meaning of the word.[50]

Dijksterhuis already pointed out the development from Hipparchus to scholasticism and Galileo (*Val en worp* 34). The situation during the late Middle Ages was first examined in detail by Anneliese Maier (cf. *Die Impetustheorie* in: Scholastik 30/1955/321ff.; *Das Wesen des Impetus*, in: *Zwischen Philosophie und Mechanik*, Rome 1958, p. 343ff.). More recent works for comparison are M. Wolff, *Geschichte der Impetustheorie* (p. 67ff. regarding John Philoponus), and in particular M. Clagett, *The Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages*, p. 505ff. (with source texts). Further progress was made thanks to R. Sorabji's studies; cf. the relevant chapter in his book *Matter, Space and Motion* (London 1988; p. 227ff.), and the brief summary in the volume edited by him, *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science* (London 1987; p. 7ff.). Sorabji also appreciated the contribution Arabian philosophy made to the field (*Matter* 259ff.), basing his deliberations on a study by F. Zimmerman in: *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science* 121ff. The credit for having first embarked upon the subject must go to S. Pines whose findings were examined and confirmed by Zimmermann. Pines wrote on the subject in the following studies:

*Etudes sur Awḥad al-Zamân Abu'l-Barakât al-Baghdâdî*, in: REJ 103/ 1937/3ff. (now also in *Collected Works* I 1ff.); concerning *i'timād* p. 45ff./43ff.;

*Les précurseurs musulmans de la théorie de l'impetus*, in: Archeion 21/1938/298ff. (= *Collected Works* II 409ff.);

*Un précurseur baghdadien de la théorie de l'impetus*, in: Isis 44/1953/247ff. (= *Collected Works* II 418ff.). Yaḥyā's gloss on Aristotle, *Phys.* IV 8. 215a, is now accessible in the edition of 'A. Badawī's Arabic translation of the *Physics*, p. 370, 8ff.

*Saint Augustin et la théorie de l'impetus*, in: Archives Histor. Doctr. et Litt. 44/1969/7ff. (= *Collected Works* II 394ff.). Augustine is important because he is older than John Philoponus and part of the Latin tradition. Scholasticism might have adopted the idea of *impetus* from him, and not exclusively from Avicenna and the Arabs. The appendix, p. 19ff., includes the translation of a relevant text from Shahrazūrī, *Al-shajara al-ilāhiyya*.

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50    In the case of *i'timād* as used by Sībawayh, Danecki considered an adoption from Sanskrit (RO 44/1985, issue 1, p. 132).

The presumption of a continuous tradition from Philoponus to Leonardo has gained in probability thanks to these studies. A. Maier did not see any evidence of late scholasticism having been influenced by Arabian philosophy, F. Zimmermann, on the other hand, believed he could prove that Ghazzālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* provided a link. Sayılı presumed that Buridan quoted Avicenna directly (in: *Festschrift Kennedy* 477ff.). At Galileo's time, on the other hand, Philoponus was directly accessible (cf. W. A. Wallace, *Galileo and His Sources* 191ff.). It has not yet been determined how close the connection was, if any, between the Arabian philosophers and the *mutakallimūn* before them. Many of the relevant theological texts have only been known since around 1970. Pines was not able to use them; Zimmermann does not refer to them with a single word, but in his very first study (REJ 103/1937/45, n. 188) Pines ventured criticism of S. Horovitz' hypothesis in ZDMG 57/1903/184f. that *iʿtimād* was a calque of the Stoic τόνος. This is justified and not only, as Pines said, because of the later development of the concept of *iʿtimād*, but also due to the way in which Naẓẓām used it. τόνος is the cohesive force that holds matter together (Sambursky, *Physikalisches Weltbild der Antike* 187f.); τονικὴ κίνησις denoted the tension in the *pneuma* that generated quantity and quality, unity and essence (SVF II 451). It has nothing to do with locomotion (ibid. 210ff.). Unfortunately we have no precise information on how Naẓẓām imagined the movement of projectiles; this topic, the so-called *motus violentus*, was one that occupied Christian scholasticism to a high degree.

3.2.2.2.1.3      The Theory of Bodies

Naẓẓām's saying that not only light but also cold could 'leap'[1] reminds us of Aristotle's example of the freezing pond.[2] And indeed, he means to say that in a combustion process the cold disappears so quickly that it is impossible to follow its path. The 'leap' – which Aristotle, after all, does not mention – is not a mere metaphor; light and cold can jump because according to Naẓẓām's understanding they are bodies. While we may just about accept this in the case of light, when it comes to cold, more detailed elucidation is required. Cold is a property, and properties are – we have become accustomed to it in the foregoing – accidents. Naẓẓām saw this differently. We must look into his ontology.

However, as far as ontology in the strict sense of the word is concerned, our sources do not take us very far. We receive information about his 'physics', in previously unseen detail; due, of course, to the fact that Naẓẓām regarded 'philosophy' as a natural science. Another factor was that in Jāḥiẓ he had a pupil

1   Text 53, q.
2   See p. 348 above.

who shared his interests and who recorded his ideas with love, if not always with conscientious precision. The information collected on the first 100 pages of the fifth volume of Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-ḥayawān* may be chaotic and difficult to understand in parts, and in the existing edition probably corrupt in places, but it offers an unequalled insight into the dialectic execution of ideas that were theological and natural-philosophical at one and the same time. For the first time we have the opportunity to compare Muʿtazilite argumentation in detail with those parts the doxographers would filter out of it later. The difference is so great in places that it makes us wonder whether it is even permissible to write a history of dogma based on doxographical evidence. On the other hand it seems that the doxographers were able to discover a clear line in the capricious and inconsistent to and fro of the debates. Jāḥiẓ, on the other hand, was not.

A remark in Text 53, t, tells us that Jāḥiẓ recalled debates, but it is impossible to say with any certainty what approach he took in his presentation. He knows that some sequences of arguments were paradigmatic, but still allowed them to develop gradually, as they may well have done in reality. He does not shut up the opponents, either; in one passage he even distances himself clearly from his teacher (Text 85, n). None of this rules out that he might have made use of written material, minutes of debates, perhaps, and certainly also Naẓẓām's own works. The boundaries between what came from Naẓẓām and what was added by Jāḥiẓ can frequently not be determined, neither as regards vocabulary and style, nor as regards additions to the contents. Jāḥiẓ probably 'adabised' Naẓẓām's diction in some passages, preferring changing expressions over terminology (cf. *ḥarāra* beside *sukhūna* in Text 60, a; regarding *ruṭūba* beside *billa* see p. 377, n. 5 below); he furthermore allowed himself some digressions (cf. the commentary on Text 53 and 92). Sometimes it is not clear whether a *qāla* still refers to Naẓẓām (e.g. V 199, –4ff.); sometimes he leaves a quoted person deliberately anonymous (see p. 378ff. below). The quotations from Naẓẓām are not a continuous unit but are sprinkled into his text.

A further surprise awaits us when we look at the varied background in front of which Naẓẓām distinguished himself in Basra – or in Baghdad? Suddenly all those come alive whom we have met as the bogeymen of the systematists: the Dayṣānites,[3] the Manichaeans,[4] the Dahriyya.[5] Naẓẓām knew them all and

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3 Text 86; cf. p. 365f. below.

4 Text 118–119; cf. p. 374 and 425f. below.

5 Text 81–81; 120–121. Cf. p. 365f., 379f. and 396 below.

tried his best not to be confused with them. He was not altogether successful; Ibn al-Rēwandī clearly enjoyed pointing out parallels, and he was certainly not the first one to do this.[6] It is true that Naẓẓām was influenced significantly by his opponents when it came to terminology and intellectual approach; it was thanks to this that he found it so easy to refute them. And after all they were his opponents only in some points, as he did not encounter them only as 'Dahrites' etc., but also as intellectuals with whom he came in contact every day. When quoting the astronomers[7] or discussing Galenic medicine,[8] he was probably in referring to the same group of people once again. The alchemists, too, would have been part of it; links with the *Turba philosophorum* or the *Corpus Jābirianum* are striking, whatever we may think regarding these texts' place within the chronology. Occasionally we even come across Indian parallels, but it is not yet certain how we might assess these.[9]

Naẓẓām was not even on his own in the issue the doxographers thought characteristic of him, namely that he saw bodies and 'substances' where others saw only accidents. He himself distinguished between 'corporeists' (*aṣḥāb al-ajsām*) and 'accidentalists' (*aṣḥāb al-aʿrād*), but while there is no doubt that he felt a closer connection to the former, he still treated them as a group separate from him.[10] He furthermore did not regard the antithesis as being characteristic of his time; the accidentalists had their forerunner in Ḍirār b. ʿAmr, or even Aristotle,[11] and he himself felt confirmed by the 'method of the true *mutakallimūn* and the incisive intellects of times past".[12] After all, his partners in conversation were by no means representatives of Iranian ideas only. The most independent observer of his activities was the abovementioned Nestorian Job of Edessa, who appears to have come from the Jazira to Baghdad, where he met Naẓẓām in person.[13]

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6    Cf. e.g. Text 119, h–l.

7    Text 88, c–d; cf. also 124.

8    See p. 381ff. below.

9    See p. 396 and 367, n. 30, as well as 371, n. 6 below. Just how much a degree of dilettantism in matters of natural history and cosmology was in vogue at the time can be seen from a remark by Jāḥiẓ (?) in text 81, n.

10   Text 78, d–f; also 52, a, and 73, d. Jāḥiẓ made the same distinction in *Ḥayawān* VII 7, 4f.

11   Text 50, a; 78, a–c. Cf. p. 392ff. below.

12   Text 59, q.

13   Text 98, b. Naẓẓām's name is not actually mentioned. The identification is clear thanks to the correspondence in the concept; it was suggested for the first time by P. Kraus (*Jābir* II 175, n. 1).

Job was a physician; Maʾmūn engaged his services.[14] He also worked as a translator.[15] His 'book of treasures' linked several ancient traditions in a syncretistic fashion.[16] He did not, however, want to rock the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accident, and consequently he devoted more than a dozen pages to refuting the 'new philosophers'. He presented their approach quite clearly: in Naẓẓām's view, accidents were, in keeping with the word's lexical meaning, something that 'joins' (*yaʿtariḍu*) the body;[17] it must thus be possible to remove them, or at least imagine them being absent. Pure substance, without accident, has not yet been seen by anyone.[18] Things humans perceive are phenomena accessible to the senses: colours, odours, tactile sensations etc.[19] They have permanence; they may change their location, but they do not suddenly stop existing in the way that was assumed of accidents. Where, after all, should they spring from all of a sudden?[20] Consequently they must be seen as bodies.

Job compared this to the teachings of certain arithmeticians who appear to have viewed everything countable as substance; he commented that Agathinus, the 'head of the philosophers', rightly made them a laughing stock.[21] This only shows what his focus was: Claudius Agathinus, a stoic from Nero's time, was a physician above all else; Galen mentioned him a number of times.[22] Naẓẓām, on the other hand, was not a practitioner of arithmetic; rather, he was a sensualist, like Aṣamm, and like many of his opponents among the *zanādiqa*. In a sense he thus went back beyond the atomists. He found accidents too incalculable; one can transform into another, and one has no idea why.[23] Of course one might say that it is not necessary to know this as it was a

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14    Yāqūt, *Irshād* I 122, −4f., provides evidence of his presence in the year 217. The title of his book introduces him as *rēsh asawwāthā* 'chief physician'.

15    Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 305, 2; in particular he translated a number of Galen's writings into Syriac, mainly commissioned by Jibrīl b. Bakhtīshūʿ (cf. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galenübersetzungen*, Index s. n.). More general information in the references given p. 324, n. 24 above.

16    Cf. the edition and translation by Mingana; also Kraus, *Jābir* II 275ff., B. Lewin in: Orientalia Suecana 6/1957/21ff., and M. Levey in Chymia 11/1966/29ff.

17    Text 2; accidents without a substrate (*lā fī maḥall*) as described by Abū l-Hudhayl were thus not possible. In general cf. Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 110, 3ff.

18    Text 104, a.

19    Text 6, d, and 172; 170, c–d.

20    Text 104, k.

21    Ibid., i.

22    Regarding him cf. RE I 745 and Suppl. I 22.

23    Cf. Text 78 and 79 with commentary; also 49, e, and 51, l.

matter that concerned only God: Abū l-Hudhayl would have reacted like that, as would Aṣamm. Naẓẓām, on the other hand, was too much a natural scientist to be satisfied by this; he believed that things functioned out of themselves. The question was – especially in the context of a sensualist approach – how this could be.

Juwaynī, quoting Naẓẓām's argument as preserved by Job of Edessa nearly verbatim,[24] included doxographical accounts which minimalised the difference between him and his opponents, in particular Ḍirār and his school. Naẓẓām, too, he says, saw substance as an agglomeration of accidents (*aʿrāḍ mujtamiʿa*) with which it was entirely identical;[25] his calling accidents 'bodies' appears quite negligible. Still, an important aspect is being disregarded here. While it is true that in Naẓẓām's view, too, objects did not have their own essential core, the components did not simply form an agglomeration but in fact permeated each other. Naẓẓām used the term *mudākhala* or *tadākhul*;[26] other metaphors like *mulābasa* 'intertwining'[27] or *tashābuk* 'network'[28] also occur. The accidents transformed into bodies are an ingredient (*mulābis*) of things. This implied to him that they need not be on the surface; they may well be 'hidden' (*kāmin*).[29] Consequently they cannot be perceived immediately, but it is possible to discover them by means of experiment. Naẓẓām's sensualism was thus linked to a theory, and he was compelled to draw attention to the fact from time to time that appearance alone was not a determining criterion to him.[30] 'Substances' are not recognised per se, but through their effects.[31]

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24    Text 11, d.

25    Text 10, a, and 11, a–b. The phrase *aʿrāḍ mujtamiʿa* is characteristic of Ḍirār (cf. Text xv 1, a); interestingly, 11, a, names Naẓẓām together with Najjār.

26    Text 45, a and d; 46, d; 56, b and g etc.

27    Text 56, i; cf. WKAS II 131 a: 'to intertwine with one another'.

28    Text 56, g; 131, b. In individual cases I have not been entirely consistent when translating these terms.

29    Text 49; 50, a, and frequently elsewhere; also Text xv 5. Cf. in general the article *Kumūn* in EI² V 384f. Instead of *kumūn* Jāḥiẓ has *istisrār* in another passage (Text 63, c). Later (?) *mustakim* would be used instead of *kāmin* by some authors (thus Abū Rashīd, '*Fī l-tawḥīd*' 40, 14f.).

30    Text 62, f; esp. 74, m–n, where appearance (*mā tarā l-ʿayn*) is contrasted to 'reality' (*ḥaqīqa*) and that 'which is known with regard to the substantive core (*jawhariyya*)'. An instance of a wrong conclusion drawn from appearances in Text 60, d.

31    Text 70, k, and 116, a. Regarding *mudākhala* as the opposite of atomist *mujāwara* cf. Text 46, e, and *Ḥayawān* V 5, 8.

It is noticeable that, while the doxographers in general speak of 'bodies' (*ajsām*; cf. Text 45–46), Jāḥiẓ usually says *jawāhir* 'substances' (Text 56, c; 57, b etc.; both together in 70, k; 'bodies' alone only 51, k). Job of Edessa, too, had corresponding *ūsiyyās*/οὐσίαι in Syriac (Text 98 etc.). This was probably originally the predominant term; Naẓẓām deliberately employed *jawhar* differently from the atomists. The doxographers simplified in order to achieve greater clarity; they may have had the pair of opposites *aṣḥāb al-aʿrāḍ* and *aṣḥāb al-ajsām* in mind, that Naẓẓām had already used. Jāḥiẓ' occasionally replacing *jawhar* with *jins* (e.g. in 56, b) shows that the perspective had changed; all substances or 'bodies' belong to certain 'classes' (see p. 366f. and 373 below). Occasionally we even find 'accident' where 'body' would have been expected (Text 150, d; also 74, e), as a concession to the opponents' usage.

### 3.2.2.2.1.3.1    *The Theory of Mixture*

'Hiddenness', 'latency' and 'permeation, interpenetration' are two aspects of one and the same phenomenon, but Naẓẓām dealt with them separately, composing a treatise on each of them.[1] One of these may have been accessible to Job of Edessa; he mentions a text without naming its title.[2] The model was not necessarily new. Naẓẓām probably adopted it, together with the concept of *ṭafra*, from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[3] The terms mentioned were widely used and accepted. *Mudākhala* and *mulābasa* were found in the works of the Ibāḍite Muḥammad b. Ḥarb.[4] *Kumūn* was already familiar to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā;[5] Wahb b. Munabbih was also said to have applied the concept.[6] Abū Nuwās used the word in one of his verses, availing himself of the appeal of *madhhab kalāmī*.[7] Naẓẓām's Muʿtazilite colleagues did not object to the idea, either, as long as it did not become an entire ideology.[8] After all, it expressed something entirely normal; Naẓẓām himself used the term rather vaguely at times, referring to the fire or water hidden within the earth.[9] The Syriac *Causa causarum*

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1  Catalogue of Works no. 23–24.

2  Text 98, e. Jāḥiẓ, too, was certainly familiar with it; this would explain parallels between his work and Job's.

3  Established by Baghdādī, *Farq* 113, –4ff./131, 6ff. Further details in vol. 1 417f. and 433 above.

4  Unless it was Jāḥiẓ who introduced them into his lexicon (cf. Text XXXII 66, b, and ch. C 5.3 below).

5  Cf. his missive to the heir to the throne in: *Rasāʾil*, ed. ʿAbbās 223, ult. f./transl. Schönig 26.

6  Muḥāsibī, *Riʿāya* 85, ult. f.

7  *Dīwān* I, 136, 6 WAGNER.

8  Text 48. Cf. also the Shīʿite text in Majlisī, *Biḥār* X 184, –4ff.

9  Cf. Text 63 with commentary.

said that fire was 'hidden' within rocks, iron, or wood; although the worldview there was entirely different from Naẓẓām's.[10] The part of the introduction of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that goes back to the Middle Persian version, the account of Burzōya's mission to India, presupposes this idea, too.[11] The poison book of Cāṇakya/Shānāq, said to have been translated into Arabic[12] under Ma'mūn by Saʿīd al-Jawharī,[13] also recalls Naẓẓām's terminology.[14]

The Iranian parallels are particularly important. Manichaeism often speaks of mixture. Light and darkness permeate one another; Satan wants to take possession of light by penetrating it.[15] The tree is 'hidden' within the grain of seed, as is the foetus within a drop of semen.[16] Light is imbued with colour at the moment when darkness mixes with it.[17] This theory of mixture has much more ancient roots; its beginnings are found among the pre-Socratics.[18] Here it was set in a monistic framework; it would develop into the Stoic doctrine of the κρᾶσις δι' ὅλων. The first dualist reinterpretation is found in Bardaisan. The contact with Manichaeism, which here as elsewhere learnt from Bardaisan, introduced the concept in the Iranian world: it is not originally Iranian.[19] 'Mixture' is a characteristic of earthly existence; the *khvarrāh* of the Gods, on the other hand, is unmixed and consequently especially beauteous.[20] Baghdādī described the

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10    *Causa causarum*, transl. Kayser 238.

11    Ed. Beirut 1977, p. 99, ult.: fire within rock; also in the *Panchatantra* itself (transl. Benfey, p. 16: fire within wood).

12    Regarding the text cf. Ullmann, *Medizin* 324f.

13    Regarding him see p. 223 above.

14    Cf. B. Lewin in: Lychnos 1952, p. 227, after B. Strauss, *Giftbuch* 121. During Ibn Sīnā's day, the theory of *kumūn* was still found in several variants (*Shifāʾ*, Ilāhiyyāt II–IV, p. 101ff., esp. 102, 12). Thus ʿAbd al-Jabbār adopted it in some respects, e.g. concerning colour (cf. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain* 46, n. 27).

15    Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 393, 9.

16    Jābir b. Ḥayyān, *Rasāʾil* 299, 6f. KRAUS; rejected by Jābir (300, 8ff.). Cf. also Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 329, 4ff.; polemic, on the other hand, as late as Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Radd ʿalā l-mulḥid* (MS Berlin, Glaser 101, fol. 58a–62a). The opponent is not identified more closely, but he might have been an Egyptian Manichaean (cf. Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 150ff.; Pines, *Atomenlehre* 99, n. 2; Madelung, *Qāsim* 100).

17    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* V 67, 10ff.

18    Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I 830–920 regarding Anaxagoras; cf. also F. Solmsen, *Nature as Craftsman in Greek Thought*, in: Kleine Schriften (Hildesheim 1968) I 322ff.

19    Cf. Colpe in: Or. Suec. 27–28/1978–9/132ff.; also Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight* 284ff.; Boyce, *The Zoroastrians* 25.

20    Thus *Dēnkart*, transl. de Menasce 109 § 108.

teachings of the 'Dahrites' in this way: the accidents are all 'hidden' in the bodies; bodies differ thanks to which accidents emerge on the surface.[21]

We must not let these parallels unnerve us. They confirm what we stated above: a certain similarity of language and categories of thought. Much more significant are the differences in the detail. As we shall see, Naẓẓām transformed this dualist variant back into monism. And he went his own way in other matters, too. The mixture of light and darkness was not, of course, for him. He refuted it using the Dayṣāniyya as an example: light and darkness are something one perceives with one's eyes; how should these constitute a world that appeals to **all** the senses? Mixture is a much more widely found phenomenon, as can be determined empirically: if one mixes ink and milk, light and darkness are not involved in any way.[22] He criticised the theory of the elements or the elementary qualities he knew from the Dahriyya in a similar fashion. Independently of which of the two concepts one preferred – regarding the world as being made up out of elements or elementary qualities was not enough, for earth, air, water or fire, or heat, cold, dryness and wetness are perceived with the sense of touch. However, we have five senses; odours or flavours may also be part of a mixture.[23]

Naẓẓām thus used his sensualism to establish a more complex image of reality. He did not actually object to the elements, regarding them as a kind of pre- determined organising principle[24] – but not as the sole key to explaining the world. Job of Edessa noticed this clearly. In Naẓẓām's view, he said, there were many more besides the traditional four elements,[25] but when Job refuted him, the five senses were the guiding principle all the same. Drawing analogies from one sensual experience for another are one of Naẓẓām's favourite dialectic device.[26] Each sensory area forms its own 'class' (*jins*), within which individual perceptions such as colours or sounds, for instance, are related to one another and can also be in opposition.[27] Naẓẓām's sensualism encouraged him to look at the world in its momentary, phenomenal reality. The theory of the elements, on the other hand, was an attempt at genetic explanation. It was

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21     *Farq* 127, apu. ff./142, –6ff. Regarding the influence of this model on the Mishna cf. Neusner in: BSOAS 52/1989/419ff.

22     Text 86.

23     Text 81 with commentary; also 86, e. Regarding the teachings of the Dahriyya cf. the report of Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq in: MUSJ 50/1984/390, 4ff. and 10f.

24     Thus e.g. Text 59, n.

25     Text 98, d. Ashʿarī says the same thing in context, *Maq.* 309, 1ff.

26     Thus e.g. Text 49, d; also 49, f.

27     See p. 383 below. Regarding the use of *jins* cf. also Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism* 98f.

actually superfluous for someone believing in a creator God; God could just as easily compose the world from other ingredients. Consequently Naẓẓām also rejected the *materia prima* that, according to Aristotle, had preceded the elements.[28]

When speaking to an audience thinking in Islamic categories he probably found it easy to brush aside opposing frameworks of this kind whose axioms were not comprehensible any more. At the same time he attempted to present his own theory as free from presuppositions as possible, employing examples everyone could understand: the mixture of ink and milk mentioned above, or that of honey and aloe which results in a new flavour.[29] Just as obvious, but a little more complex, was the manufacture of a jug: clay and water are mixed, but fire also joins them and coalesces with them within the jug. The end result does not give away much of these ingredients: it is not hot like fire, not wet like water, and not crumbly and lacking cohesion like soil (*turāb*, actually 'dust'). The mixture takes place at the level of touch; it shows that something that was manifest has become latent, while something else, of which one had no inkling previously, has come to the surface.[30]

The controversial point in this example was the fire. Who says that it has passed into the jug? It imparted some of its heat to the jug, but it may simply have ceased to exist. This is how the 'accidentalists' would have argued. In Naẓẓām's system, however, things could not simply cease to exist, and consequently he had to prove that hidden things could become manifest, too. Once again he employed examples understood by all and consequently relatively safe from contradiction: oil is hidden in an olive,[31] flour in a grain,[32] butter within milk,[33] grease in a sesame seed,[34] resin in a pine tree,[35] and fire in

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28    This is probably what Text 80 intends; Naẓẓām refuted the *aṣḥāb al-hayūlā* in a separate text (Catalogue of Works no. 3). During late Antiquity Plutarch in particular was known because he, following Plato but disagreeing with the Neo-Platonists, believed in uncreated matter. Pseudo-Ammonius referred to it in his doxography (cf. the commentary by U. Rudolph, p. 153).

29    Text 86, o; 70, e.

30    Text 51, o–p. Interestingly the same example is found in a comparable context in the Indian Samkhya (cf. W. Ruben, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie* 193).

31    Text 48 and 49, a.

32    Text 51, l.

33    Text 51, m.

34    Text 48.

35    Text 67, d.

a flint.[36] The difference between these instances is only the method used in order to extract the ingredient.[37] And it may be that the method is not familiar to us, which provides the reason why we cannot make the fire that went into the jug, manifest once more.

If there is indeed fire within flint, then how much more must this be true in the case of wood,[38] as it emerges all the more visibly from the latter. Once again it is the method that is different: while fire is extracted from the flint by striking it, in order to extract it from wood, the wood must be rubbed.[39] Naẓẓām appears to have discussed this example particularly frequently; Jāḥiẓ as well as Job of Edessa went into some detail concerning it, although they emphasised different aspects. We are now looking at 'unmixing' or disintegration, the mirror image of the process described in the example of the potter. At the moment the fire emerges from the wood – when the wood burns, as we should say – the other ingredients become manifest as well: smoke, ash, and water. If the wood was fresh, one might have noticed the water beforehand, while smoke and ash as well as fire were completely hidden. Together they may be representative of the four elements: smoke would be a manifestation of air, and ash of earth.[40] The nub of the matter, though, is that they are all combinations as well: ash contains flavour, colour and dryness; smoke, flavour as well as colour and odour; fire contains heat and light, while water also includes a noise: the crackling sound heard during burning.[41]

This, at least, was how Jāḥiẓ developed the idea. Job of Edessa was more concerned with the change in colour: the wood was light ('white') at first, and turned red and finally black when it burns. Whiteness is not manifest in the normal state only, but also predominates in the ash; redness and blackness were previously latent.[42] He thus emphasised the aspect most important to the sense of sight. Jāḥiẓ, on the other hand, for the first time demonstrated how the perceptions of several senses could be joined in one and the same object: tactile sensation like dryness, the odour of smoke, the flavour of ash, and the sound of water. They belong to different 'classes' and have nothing in common

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36    Text 48 and 49, a. This is the example ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā had already adduced: a human's evil nature is hidden within the human as fire is in a hard rock (see n. 5 above).

37    Text 67, c–g.

38    Text 49, a; 52, g; 62, b, etc.

39    Text 67, c, and 63, a, confirm that Naẓẓām had this way of making fire in mind, rather than setting fire to something.

40    Text 59, m–n.

41    Text 51, b.

42    Text 99 with commentary. The train of thought is slightly unclear in the details.

of themselves. In order to stick together they must permeate one another. Each of them is in the place where the other is as well; the atomist law that two things cannot be in the same place has been abolished.[43]

The vocabulary Jāḥiz used to describe these circumstances was colourful. When naming the ingredients, Naẓẓām most frequently used the word *akhlāth* 'components of a mixture'.[44] This term is usually typical of medicine, where it describes the humours,[45] but *mizāj*, a word always linked to the former in medicine – with the meaning 'temperament'[46] – does not occur at all, and he had a number of objections against humoral pathology, as we shall see.[47] The fact that he only uses the plural form shows that the word came from technical terminology, but it might just as well have been that used by the alchemists.[48] In one passage he – or Jāḥiz – uses the strange hendiadys *al-akhbiṣa wal-anbidha*;[49] in another he speaks of 'nutrients' (*marātiʿ*) from a genetic point of view, i.e. components.[50] He also employs one of the common words meaning 'element', *rukn/arkān*,[51] pointing out, however, that this may also denote a compound (*majmūʿ*).[52] This probably had some history; in the *Corpus Jābirianum* the *arkān* are the 'bases', i.e. those elements artificially produced by humans.[53] Here, *rukn* is the opposite of *ʿunṣur* or *usṭuquss*; both of which terms do not occur in Naẓẓām.

Terminologically, the difference between components of the first and the second order is barely noticeable. Where Naẓẓām, or Jāḥiz, explains it, he speaks

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43  Text 8, c; 9, c; 45, c–d; 46, d. Juwaynī claimed the same of the bundles of accidents he thought to have found in Naẓẓām's system (Text 47). The atomist shared the principle mentioned, which was understandable under recourse to the law of contradiction, with Aristotle (Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion* 72f.), while the Neo-Platonists as well as the Church Fathers had permitted exceptions (ibid. 106ff.).

44  Text 51, a; 52, t; 59, i; 62, b (in the translation usually rendered rather freely as 'Ingredienzien' [ingredients], and once as 'Stoffe' [matter]).

45  Cf. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* 57ff.

46  Galen's Περὶ κράσεων/*De temperamentis* is called *K. al-mizāj* or *K. al-amzija* among the Arabs.

47  See p. 381f.v below.

48  Cf. Kraus, *Jābir* II 8: *khalṭ* (inf.) as opposed to the atomists' *mujāwara*. Naẓẓām was, of course, familiar with medical usage (Text 233, f).

49  Text 51, f; cf. the commentary.

50  Text 59, i.

51  Used thus by ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (*Masāʾil* 95, 8, and passim). In medicine, the humours were seen as derivations, 'daughters' of the elements (*banāt al-arkān*); cf. Ullmann, ibid. 58.

52  Text 51, a–b.

53  Kraus, *Jābir* II 6, n. 3.

of *mufradāt* and *muzdawijāt*, simple and 'two-fold, coupled' components.[54] This does not appear particularly skilful, as 'compounds' might well be composed of more than two ingredients. *Muzdawij* is probably simply meant as an opposite to *mufrad*, as in number theory;[55] however, *murakkabāt* would have been more appropriate. The word was adopted from the Aristotelian theory of the elements where elements were combined out of **two** primary qualities each.[56] Baghdādī noted the idea that component bodies become 'compact' (*kathīf*) by mixing; they do not occur independently in reality.[57] Job of Edessa, too, used this term, albeit in a different context: when latent bodies emerge, for instance during combustion, they become 'compact' and thus visible.[58] We have no further evidence to help us reconstruct the theory at the back of the two last-named, not entirely consistent, statements. Maybe he meant that heat, wetness etc. only ever occur together with certain carrier substances coupled to them.

It is interesting to see how Naẓẓām handles the concept of 'nature'. When arguing with 'accidentalists' he occasionally stresses that objects have a 'nature' (*ṭabīʿa*) or an effective force (*ḥaqīqa*).[59] In another context, however, he declares that the word did not mean much.[60] These are probably two aspects of a circumstance we already mentioned above: to him, objects have no 'nature' of their own **besides** their ingredients. He does not use the word *ṭabāʾiʿ* to refer to primary properties; his similarities with the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ* were superficial and no greater than those he shared with Muʿammar.[61] He may have verbally resolved the term *khilqa* 'innate nature' he found in Hishām b.

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54    Text 51, e.

55    Thus also in ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, *Masāʾil* 182, 6 (here, however, in the form *muzawwajāt*).

56    *Izdawaja* used in this sense e.g. in the *K. al-sirr al-khalīqa* by Bālīnās/Pseudo-Apollonios of Tyana (p. 286, 1f., and 366, 17 WEISSER; quoted by Kraus, *Jābir* II 147, n. 10, and 175, n. 2).

57    Text 46, c–d. Concerning the distinction between 'subtle' and 'compact' bodies cf. Text 129, a, and 148, b. Text 150 shows that 'fine', 'subtle' (*laṭīf*) was sometimes interpreted as meaning incorporeal, immaterial; however, this text diverges somewhat from Naẓẓām's customary terminology; see p. 402, n. 20 below.

58    Text 99, f. Abū l-Hudhayl, too, used the word *kathīf* (see p. 285 above). Both authors use it to refer to the condensing, the 'materialisation' of subtle substances.

59    Text 50, d, and 77, f; cf. also 116. *Gharīza* (or the derived adjective *gharīzī*) also occurs (Text 84, g, and 149, g and n; cf. *Ḥayawān* IV 208, ult.).

60    Text 63, k.

61    Regarding them see vol. II 44f. above. Job of Edessa, on the other hand, speaks of the elementary qualities as opposed to the combined elements fire, water, etc. (cf. the quotation from his *K. al-tafsīr*, originally written in Arabic, in Maqdisī, *Badʾ* I 140, 1ff.; also Kraus II 175, n. 1). ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī called the elementary qualities *quwā* (*Masāʾil* 97, 9).

al-Ḥakam's teachings;[62] only the doxographers cite it in connection with him, but it does not occur in Jāḥiẓ' texts.[63]

### 3.2.2.2.1.3.2 *Combustion*

The process of combustion was a particularly good example with which to prove 'latency' because it sometimes occurs without external stimulus; Naẓẓām mentions spontaneous combustion for instance on boats transporting teak.[1] Of course he knows that this, too, is the result of friction; but the friction cannot introduce the fire into the process, for if one were to rub for example talcum rather than wood, nothing would happen.[2] Fire is not hidden in all rocks, either,[3] but where it exists within combustible material, the amounts differ, as does the firmness of the bond. Sometimes all the preconditions for combustion appear to be present, but still the material behaves differently, for instance papyrus, which could be used for fire protection in the bazaar despite being of a light texture.[4] It is also possible to interrupt the process: if part of the fire remains latent in burning wood, the result is charcoal.[5] It can furthermore take place imperceptibly slowly: it is not possible to see how a small oil lamp uses up the fuel from one moment to the next, and how it changes constantly due to the gradual emitting of latent ingredients.[6]

Combustion is thus a process of disintegration from the inside out. This does not rule out that it can be initiated from the outside, but one must not imagine that fire is brought to the wood entirely from the outside. The outside

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62 See p. 411, n. 9 below.

63 The word as such was, of course, generally known. One of the 70 books from the *Corpus Jābirianum* is entitled *K. al-khilqa* (Kraus, *Jābir* I 52); concerning Pseudo-Apollonius, *K. al-ʿilal*, cf. Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina* 133, 12. As regards ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, his *K. al-masāʾil* 96, pu. f., is a good reference. It is probably not directly cognate with Syr. *ḥelqā*, meaning 'fate', used by Bardaisan; 'nature' is called *kᵉyānā* in his texts (cf. Drijvers, *Bardaiṣān* 81ff.; Rundgren in: *Festschrift Spuler* 358; Dihle, *Antike und Orient* 162.

1 Text 63, g–h. The fact noted in *h* was already discussed by Lucretius in a similar fashion (*De rerum natura* I 897ff.).

2 Ibid., i; also 77, b.

3 Ibid., c.

4 Ibid., a–b and c.

5 Ibid., d, and Text 66, The example of fire and coal was also used in contemporary Christian literature to elucidate the mixture of natures (Abel, *Réfutation* xlix).

6 Text 68 with commentary. An Indian text addressed to the Bactrian ruler Menander/Milinda already pointed out that throughout the course of a night the flame of a lamp was neither identical nor different (*Milindapañha* 40).

fire reinforces the latent internal fire; 'activating' (*tahayyaja*) it, as Naẓẓām used to say.[7] This enables it to separate from the other components of the mixture and emerge into the open.[8] Fire is thus by no means burning air as the Aristotelians said,[9] and it does not rise up around the burning object; rather, different components of fire are caused to emerge in different places of the wood.[10] Previously these had been bound by the other ingredients, but now they have grown so strong that they can carry the others, e.g. smoke and ash, along with them.[11]

In this point Naẓẓām argued against his opponents using the Quran as well, as it contains two passages referring to the Bedouin custom of making fire by rubbing wood.[12] The emphasis, however, is entirely different: it stresses the omnipotence of God who has given the human suitable pieces of wood. Naẓẓām would like to prove that the idea of *kumūn* was implied in these passages, and engages in a few exegetic contortions to this end.[13] The Quranic approach is clearly secondary with him; it is employed only once, and then not in a central position.

The axiom, originating in Antiquity, that like belonged to like, was much more significant.[14] It served to explain why the latent fire joins the firebrand that approaches from outside, and also why the freed fire rushes to the empyrean. 'Everything moves towards its own kind and feels attracted by its like', he was quoted as saying,[15] and it would not be surprising if a boy who had never studied with him had known the chief tenet of his 'philosophy', namely that 'natures (*ṭabāʾiʿ*) attract similar ones due to the kinship of species, and are attracted to their own kind due to their concordance'.[16] The Manichaeans, too, had believed in this principle in their theory of mixtures.[17]

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7     Cf. *hayyaja* in Text 56, h; there is a hint of 'reinforce' in 58, b–c. Cf. Text 99, f.

8     Cf. Tet 58, a–d.

9     Text 52, a–c and p. Kaʿbī and Ashʿarī would later share this opinion (cf. Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 72).

10    Text 62.

11    Text 60, x–y; also h–i.

12    Sura 36:80 and 56:71f.; cf. E. Haeuptner, *Koranische Hinweise auf die materielle Kultur der alten Araber* (PhD Tübingen 1966), p. 35f.

13    Text 77 with commentary.

14    Cf. Carl W. Müller, *Gleiches zu Gleichem. Ein Prinzip frühgriechischen Denkens* (Wiesbaden 1965).

15    Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* ²VII 31 no. 86, in explanation, however, of why gold is found so often in the hands of base persons.

16    *Agh.* VIII 249, 1ff. Cf. also Text 60, a; 83, i; 90, d; 185, b and i–k.

17    Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *Lotta* 50, 17f., and 52, 2ff.

The empyrean is the 'home' (*tilād*) of fire, its 'heavenly counterpart' (*shakluhā l-ʿulwī*);[18] this explains why fire always rises upwards.[19] When it emerges from the wood, it expands[20] and very soon disappears, but it does not stop existing; the fundamental bodies are permanent, and constant as to their amount.[21] Naẓẓām probably thought of the sun as being the empyrean; it consists of fire.[22] Other bodies, too, had their home, such as the soul which, when it is freed and not too burdened of itself, will hurry to its 'higher land' (*al-balad al-aʿlā*),[23] or water and air.[24] This home, however, is not necessarily situated in the higher world. Water, for instance, and wetness in general, inclines downwards, as wetness is heavy. The same is true of cold: it, too, is weighty, as demonstrated by ice.[25] Each 'class' (*jins*) of substances has its own effect,[26] but one could basically distinguish between matter or 'bodies' with a rising tendency, and those with a resting tendency.[27] These were old, familiar ideas; one need only look at the beginning of the first book of Aristotle's *De caelo*. The idea that the celestial region consisted of fire and nothing but fire goes back to Heraclitus and Anaxagoras; Aristotle repeatedly discussed it in his *Meteorology*, and again in *De caelo*.[28]

What is true of fire also applies to heat. Cold, on the other hand, disappears underground when it is freed; there it is 'dominant', like fire is dominant in the sun. To the cold, Naẓẓām said, the earth was 'like the disc of the sun'; earth and sun being opposites that correspond in some ways, including, it seems, the

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18     Text 52, e; 60, k (*al-tilād al-ʿulwī*). *Shakl* with a pronoun denotes the same or like; it corresponds to *jins* (cf. the sayings quoted n. 15 and 16 above).

19     Text 51, o; 60, g and k; 82 (where the attribution is not entirely clear; cf. the commentary); 115, a–b; also 56, c–e.

20     Text 52, g.

21     Cf. 60, u; also the commentary on Text 49, d–e and 51, l.

22     Cf. Text 74, h–l with commentary.

23     Text 114, c. Cf. also p. 405 below.

24     Text 83, k.

25     Text 65, a–b; 53, n–q.

26     Text 70, k.

27     Text 65, k; 82, c–d; 115, d.

28     Cf. G. Kaiser, *Theophrast in Assos* 78f. with instances. Aristotle's two texts were known in the Islamic world during Naẓẓām's lifetime (see p. 46f. above and 394f. below); it is also possible that Simplicius wrote his commentary during a stay in Iran (cf. I. Hadot in: *Simplicius. Sa vie* 22). Manichaeism as an intermediary is also a possibility: the 'breath of air', the universal principle of life pulsating throughout the world (see p. 379f. below) aspires to higher spheres and carries particles of light with it, which in this way return to their original place in the world (Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 564, apu. f.).

shape.[29] Cold, as we have seen, moves by 'leaps'; this is why not everything it passes freezes solid. Fire, too, moves in 'leaps', but it dissolves at the same time, as it consists of two components, of heat and of light, as we saw earlier,[30] and light is faster than heat. Light moves away at a leap; heat, on the other hand, remains longer. This explains why an oven in which the fire has gone out still gives off heat but does not glow any more, or conversely, why one can see a fire from a long distance but not feel the heat.[31] Consequently in the empyrean, light is always above heat; when the latter arrives, the highest place has already been taken.[32] The greater speed is due to, firstly, light being lighter than heat,[33] and secondly, heat being retained for a time by its surroundings. For while cold dominates within the earth, there is also hidden heat that combines with the heat emitted by an oven. By the time the heat succeeds in freeing itself, the light has long fled, as there is no light within the earth.[34] And the earth attracts darkness all the more, as darkness is inert and consequently stays down below.[35]

Parallels with dualist, especially Manichaean, ideas cannot be overlooked; Ibn al-Rēwandī emphasised them particularly.[36] They not only agreed on the distribution of light and darkness to the higher and the lower regions, but also on the two effects of fire being light and heat.[37] However, Khayyāṭ pointed out correctly that in Naẓẓām's view, light and darkness were not eternal principles;[38] what he shared with the Manichaeans were certain fundamentals of physics. In fact, Aristotle had already taught that a flame contained heat (θερμότης) as well as whiteness (λευκότης), the latter being identical with light.[39] This idea is part of general knowledge; Naẓẓām's Christian contemporary ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī used it in his explanation of the trinity.[40]

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29   Text 53, n–q. We do not, however, have direct evidence that Naẓẓām regarded earth as a disc.

30   See p. 367f. above; cf. also Text 69, b, and 70, a.

31   Text 54–55; also 56, f and k.

32   Text 56, c–e.

33   Text 54, a.

34   Text 56, f–k; 57.

35   Text 82, c.

36   Text 114, a–d.

37   Complete with the characteristic 'moral' note that these are the good parts of fire, while burning was the bad component (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 393, –8ff.).

38   Text 114, e–g.

39   *Phys.* IV, 9, 217b 6.

40   *Burhān* 49, 14f.

### 3.2.2.2.1.3.3    *Further Effects of Fire*

As fire is lightweight, it also renders objects lighter in which it is hidden. Consequently a flint weighs less than a lump of metal of the same size. Here Naẓẓām contradicts the atomists who explained the different weight of bodies of the same size with the differing density of the grid structure in their basic atoms, in the gaps of which a greater or lesser amount of particles of air could be contained.[1] Of course it cannot be denied that enclosed air can lift a body,[2] but it is not always the case. Other ingredients are also able to do this. We can observe it directly in the case of heat,[3] which is a component of fire, after all. Weight is generated when light and heavy things mix, or 'permeate one another'; as the grid structure is irrelevant, one need not assume any more, like the atomists did, that the matter of a lighter body will always take up more room than that of a heavy one.[4] Unfortunately the texts do not enlighten us on how the lightness of light bodies can be explained. One might assume that the lightness, or rather the weight, as they are not accidents, are bodies – and there are occasional hints that seem to confirm this.[5] However, nowhere is it stated explicitly that fire contains not only heat and light but also lightness.[6]

The relation between fire and dryness is complex. It would be wrong to say that fire or the heat contained in it dry out an object, as heat can only generate its like, namely heat, and fire can only join with fire. Fire itself is not, in fact, dry at all, for dry things do not cohere but fall apart like dust. Of course it cannot be denied that items that come in contact with fire become dry, but that is merely a side effect. When the particles of fire emerge from the wood during combustion, the particles of wetness that were previously contained in the wood are also freed; the earthy component that remains, namely the ash, does therefore not contain any wetness and is dry. Or, using a different example: if one evaporates the water in a vial, there may be some dry residue at the bottom of the vial, but only because the fire 'activated' the heat components enclosed in the water, which in turn carried wetness particles with them. The explanation for the bubbling of the water is not that air escapes, but that fire rises within the

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1   Text 63, t–x; 65, m. Regarding Democritus cf. D. O'Brien, *Theories of Weight in the Ancient World* I 131ff. In Text 78, b, Naẓẓām incorrectly traces this theory back to Aristotle.

2   See p. 378 below.

3   Text 65, c. Regarding the relation between weight and temperature in the antique concept cf. O'Brien 57ff.

4   Text 64; also 115, d. Regarding Job of Edessa cf. Text 103, e.

5   Text 49, f.; especially in Job of Edessa (Text 103, f, and 104, a). Cf. also Pazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 231, 15.

6   More detail on p. 389f. below.

water and takes some of the water with it. In this way the earth components become dominant, which is also why the water that has not evaporated now has a salty taste.[7]

Life would be unthinkable without fire. The sun gives light and heat and ensures the circulation of water. The fire within the earth melts metals and other elements which rise to the surface in the form of liquid or gas.[8] These observations had always been known to natural science. For Naẓẓām they became proof that fire mixes with the other elements of the cosmos and permeates them.

### 3.2.2.2.1.3.4    *The Other Elements*

Earth, too, is always mixed with something else. The Aristotelians called it cold and dry, but that is pure theory. If we try to determine it without prejudice we fine that it is salty, or dark; clearly a flavour and a colour have permeated one another. An odour is also part of this mixture, as is a sound, as particles of earth can collide.[1] It is only dry in the form of dust.[2] Usually it is mixed with water and takes the form of clay and possesses a quality which Naẓẓām – or Jāḥiẓ – describes with the word *ludūna*, which is difficult to translate: a plasticity, malleability, flexibility caused by the addition of wetness.[3] When the water becomes dominant it emerges as a spring on the surface. This is also true of fire which appears in 'fire springs', volcanoes and burning oil wells, or air compressed in folds within the earth that emerges under pressure.[4] If the ingredients were not dominant in these places, we would not even notice them, but it allows us to conclude that they must exist, albeit 'latent'.

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7   Text 59, a, g, i–p; 60, a–o. Ibn Sīnā referred to this example in his *Shifāʾ* (Ilāhiyyāt II–IV, p. 102, 14ff., and 111, 5ff.). The precipitation of salt had always been seen as proof that water can be transformed into 'earth' (Baghdādī, *Uṣūl* 54, 13ff.).

8   Text 61.

1   Text 81, i.

2   Text 59, c; 85, h and l with commentary.

3   Text 59, d–f; said of air in 84, e, and 88, s. The latter passages may be referring to 'wetness' in general (cf. the commentary on 84). For references of this meaning, especially in texts on natural science and in translations from the Greek, cf. WKAS II 466.

4   Text 63, m–q; also 61, f. These phenomena were observed elsewhere as well. The word *burkān*, used by geographers to describe all kinds of volcanic phenomena, is not found in Naẓẓām's texts (cf. Miquel, *Géographie humaine* III 107ff.).

**Water** is the only element directly identifiable with an elementary quality. It is wet, this is obvious from its being liquid.[5] According to the theorem that things effect what is like them, when ice melts there has to be water as well as heat joining it from outside; this is the only way to activate the wetness contained in the ice.[6] Conversely, water does not freeze merely because it becomes cold – dryness must be added as well.[7] Water is involved wherever wetness occurs; other fluids such as oil, milk, etc., are the result of mixture. When they are boiled this admixed component remains; water only evaporates without residue.[8] It washes the salt from the earth, which is why sea water is salty. Naẓẓām regarded this process as rather complex. The salt – or rather, the saltiness – remained behind only because the sweetness had been freed from the water. Fire particles are also freed in this same process of disintegration, as the earth surrounding the water contains fire (i.e. it is warm) and activates the fire contained within the water. In this way the sea water evaporates, a circulation begins in the course of which the water returns to the earth, and ultimately into the sea, by means of rain, hail, snow and dew.[9] Hydrological balance is the best example to show that substances always remain constant.[10] The fire that has risen up within the vapour can discharge itself in the form of lightning. The thunder that follows the lightning shows that there was a sound mixed with the fire,[11] a sound that may have been caused by the friction of the air carried by the water vapour.[12]

The example of the suction pipe could demonstrate how closely water may be linked to air. It would not have been news to a physicist, as Heron of Alexandria had discussed it in his *Pneumatika*,[13] but from Naẓẓām's point of

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5    Text 59, b and h. The texts consulted indiscriminately use the words *ruṭūba* and *billa* to convey 'wetness' (cf. e.g. Text 81 the passages at *Ḥayawān* V 41, 12 and 13 as opposed to 40, 6 and 9; 41, 3 and 9, and 42, 1). Regarding *ludūna* meaning 'wetness' see n. 3 above.

6    Text 65, i with commentary.

7    Ibid., e–g.

8    Text 93, where the attribution is not entirely clear (cf. the commentary).

9    Text 60, p–v. It would seem obvious that this circulation is not only stimulated by the heat within the earth but also by the sun, but would require filling a lacuna in the text (in 60, q). The parallel 63, y, also only refers to the interior of the earth.

10   Text 60, s and u–v.

11   Text 76, b.

12   Thus according to Text 63, y–z. This is really only a report of the 'accidentalist' explanation, but Naẓẓām appears to agree with it on the whole.

13   Diels, *Über das physikalische System des Straton*, in: SB Preuß. Ak. Wiss. Berlin 1893, Phil.-Hist. Kl., p. 107f.; also Furley in: *Festschrift Moraux* I 605. Cf. Maʾmūn's experiment on p. 216 above.

view the process acquired a different dimension. If the pipe only carried air next to the water, nothing would happen; only because there is air **within** the water, which combines with the air carried by the pipe, is the water drawn upwards together with the air.[14] Bellows work according to the same principle: air enters the piece of metal to be wrought, combining with the air within the metal, thus loosening the structure of the metal which then becomes pliable.[15] This circumstance is most noticeable in the case of a ship with an iron keel that should sink in the water; it would, as the text has it, knock a hole in the water because of its weight. However, once the ship's hull is closed, air is enclosed within it which combines with the air particles of the iron – and the wood and the pitch, and in this way the ship is carried on the surface of the water.[16]

There is something else in addition in this last example. Air is a body with neither upward nor downward tendency; it is, in fact, a medium for these movements.[17] Consequently it holds objects in which it is enclosed at the same level. It does not resist the weight of a falling object,[18] as it is loose and very subtle.[19] Forces 'from below and from above' affect it.[20] If it is compressed, it develops force of its own; one can feel it when one touches an inflated skin.[21] It will be buoyant if one pushes it under water – not, however, because air has a fundamental upward tendency, but because it is alien to water and wants to be combined with its own kind. The water does not wish to keep it, either; as we have seen, water always has a downward tendency.[22]

Air is also locked in outer space, within the lunar sphere. This is why one can, as in the example of the inflated skin, conclude from its pressure onto the strength of the sheath covering it there, i.e. the sphere surrounding it; pressure and counter-pressure must correspond. Pressure causes circulation which we call wind. The wind comes from above; air is different near the sun.[23] We will

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14    Text 91, a–b and f–h.

15    Ibid., c. The phrase is not quite clear; there may be a presumption that the air carried by the bellows also contains fire. This is supported by Text 52, f.

16    Text 90, also 88, g. The examples listed were not attributed to Naẓẓām directly but to another, unnamed, theologian, whose ideas were certainly very like Naẓẓām's (cf. the commentary on 90–91).

17    Text 83, e–g.

18    Text 125, c.

19    Text 83, b–c.

20    Ibid., a.

21    Ibid., d.

22    Ibid., h–k.

23    Text 84, a–f. The text is in fragments, and the transmission is not entirely assured (cf. the commentary). Also 88f.

probably have to resort to antique concepts in comparison, as they were transmitted in the *Placita philosophorum*: wind is generated when air gets too close to the sun and evaporates or is set in motion.[24]

Closely related are the ideas attributed to a 'leading theologian (*mutakallim*) by Jāḥiẓ in Text 88. Like all early Islamic thinkers he assumed that there was no vacuum in the world; air is consequently what fills every gap (*b*; also *f*). It grows thinner the higher up it is; beyond our region we do not use the word 'air' but instead 'surge' (*lujj*). This is reason why the sky appears 'green', i.e. blue, to us; although in reality the 'surge' looks no different than the air, i.e. light (*c–e*). He probably means that the light of the sun passes through this surge and is affected by it. The sphere within which air and 'surge' are enclosed is shaped rather like an egg (*g*); the idea of the world-egg may have played a part (cf. vol. I 514 above). The term *lujj* itself, however, comes from the astronomers, the text informs us. We may come across it in the – extant unfortunately in Latin only – speculations of the *Turba philosophorum*. There, Anaxagoras says that every element has its own 'compactness' (*spissum*, cf. Plessner, *Turba* 49f.). In Arabic this word usually refers to water, not air: 'mass of water, flood, surge of waves, the deep' (references in WKAS II 214f.), but may also be found in the context of the *rūḥ* (Majlisī, *Biḥār* VII 38, 8), and as metonymy for the dark of night (WKAS II 215b). It is hardly possible to say with any certainty which Greek word was the basis for it. In the context of Anaxagoras we might think of the 'vortex' (περιχώρησις), but to Anaxagoras this was a cosmic force leading to the separation of celestial bodies etc. and finally the ether (Jaeger, *Theologie der frühen griechischen Denker* 183f.). We might ask whether it was not rather the 'first compactness' (πρῶτον πυκνόν), which according to Xenokrates combined with fire to form the substance of the stars (Frg. 56 Heinze = 161 Isnardi Parente).

Kindī, too dedicated a treatise to the question of why the sky was 'green' (GAS 7/260); it was part of being educated to have an opinion on the matter (cf. e.g. Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar* I 30, 16, and 97, 14f.; also Radtke, *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung* 244f. and 365f.).

Naẓẓām pointed out the importance of air for the human organism, more than in the case of the other elements, because air and breathing are connected. The essence of air is cold; that is why breathing it in provides refreshment.

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24  *Plac. phil.* III 7/Ar. transl. 177 Daiber. ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn pointed out a related passage in Qazwīnī (*Ḥayawān* V 44, n. 2).

A corresponding amount of warm vapour that has grown within the body, is exhaled.[25] Naẓẓām once again distances himself from the Aristotelians who regarded air as warm and wet.[26] The Stoics, on the other hand, found that it was cold.[27] The idea that breathing served to cool the heat inherent in the body was widely held among physicians; Galen noted it as the teachings of Philistion and Diocles.[28]

This concept was also discussed by the abovementioned Anonymous (88, h), who subjected it to nuanced criticism (*i–l*) during which it emerged that he considered breath and 'breath of air' (*nasīm*) to be related (*k*; cf. also *f*). He picks up on a word used by Manichaeans and Dahrites; the 'breath of air' was the universal spirit of life, the *pneuma* (*rūḥ*) of light that joined the four elements – probably a translation of Gr. αἰθήρ, 'aether' (cf. Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 549, 9ff., and 552, 8 [= MUSJ 50/1984/391, –4ff., and 394, 10; after Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq] regarding the Dahriyya, and 562, 12ff, and 564, apu. f. regarding the Manichaeans). He makes only a weak distinction between breath (*nafas*) and soul (*nafs*); the Arabic language distinguishes them by one vowel only and, fortunately, their gender (*nafas* m. : *nafs* f.; cf. the frequently cited connection between *rūḥ* and *rīḥ*). A kind of universal soul subsists within the air; it enters into bodies in the form of rays and separates there; if one attempts to separate the soul from this its origin, it takes flight and the human dies (*m–p*). Concerning further details cf. the commentary on Text 88, h–s.

In this context a rather macabre discussion broke out concerning what happened when a human was being strangled (Text 89). This was not so far-fetched, because if one were to strangle someone, he would die *without* his soul – as a breath – leaving his body. In order to explain his dying, it was suggested that in this case the strangled person's blood would begin to boil and, together with the 'counter-forces' hidden within it, drown his soul (*d–e*); this may well have been based on the observation that the victim's face grows red. This would mean that a liquid, namely the element water, contributed to the death; after all, some 'Dahrite' physicians believed it was possible to die of 'rotten blood' (cf. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq in: Malāḥimī 552, 5f. = MUSJ 50/1984/394, 7f.). Anonymous, however, wishes to focus on the element that had so far served to explain

25    Text 84, g.
26    *De gen. et corr.* II 4. 331a, 30f.; cf. Text 52, b, and maybe 84, e (cf. the commentary).
27    Cf. O. Gilbert, *Die meteorologischen Theorien des griechischen Altertums* 487.
28    *Opera* IV 471, 5ff. KÜHN.

everything concerning the soul, air. He, too, thought of 'counter-forces' within the body itself, but in his view they were made up out of 'rotten air', namely the warm vapours that grow within the body and are replaced with breath. He emphasised the fact that someone who is being strangled does not die immediately, which may be explained, he says, by the fact that air does not only enter the human body through mouth and nose, but also through the pores in the skin beneath the hairs ($f$): in this way the soul was in contact with the 'breath of air' even from inside the body ($g$). Stopping mouth and nose would thus not be sufficient to suffocate the person; only if the vapours condensed more and more within the body would death occur; as now the skin expanded, closing the pores ($h$). This was probably inferred from realistic observation; one saw how the strangled person's veins swelled, and explained it as the air in his body continuing to heat up and expand. Only now does the soul leave the body ($i$–$k$) – although it is not explained how this is possible after all (?) orifices have been stopped.

Jāḥiẓ did not name that theologian because he found his views 'repellent' (88, a); presumably he wanted to spare his school the scandal. We are unable to reveal the secret, but there are some indications that he was referring to Naẓẓām himself. After all, the unnamed theologian, an 'authority', as he pointed out, was familiar with the concept of the 'leap' and used light as an example to prove it (cf. 88, m–p, and 89, l; cf. p. 348 above). He furthermore assumed that the soul would return to its home in a 'leap', which corresponds with Naẓẓām's idea, cited elsewhere, that the souls, depending on whether they are light or heavy, will either float upwards or sink downwards after their separation from the body (see p. 373 above and 405 below). However, Jāḥiẓ' account seems to suggest that he thought they would unite with the air again and rise to the heights where the winds collect and swoop down. The theory might easily have become the starting point for a theory of the migration of souls, which indeed emerged among Naẓẓām's pupils (see p. 464ff. below), but it does not yet seem to be presumed here.

### 3.2.2.2.1.4 The Connection to Contemporary Medicine

As Naẓẓām modified the theory of the elements in many places, and even questioned the principle, it was impossible to avoid conflict with contemporary medicine. Still, in both subjects, Naẓẓām did not break with tradition entirely. Like the physicians he believed that the nature of living things was determined by the four elementary qualities. In the ideal case, these forces would be in a balanced ratio (*i'tidāl* = εὐκρασία); if divergences grow endemic

in certain regions, we perceive them as racial differences. Those people are 'cooked' differently than others;[1] they are not properly matured within the womb. Intelligence and character will fall behind, although craftsmanship may still develop well.[2] The model can also be applied to individual cases: if one is too hot in the bath, the balance can be disturbed to such a degree that one faints.[3]

This is also the point where it becomes clear how much Naẓẓām distorted the existing model. If the heat a human carries within himself is increased from the outside by the heat of the bath, it is 'freed' according to Naẓẓām, or 'activated'; it combines with the external heat and may turn against the human, against his spirit of life (*rūḥ*). The 'obstacle' keeping it back – namely the other components of the mixture that constitutes the human, above all, presumably, cold – has disappeared.[4] If a toxic substance disturbs the balance, this is due to the fact that humans carry some toxins within themselves which is only increased by a snake's bite. Humans have a predisposition for absorbing toxic substances, as it were. The snake, on the other hand, does not die from its venom, because there is no other toxic substance in its body.[5]

According to Text 96 heat also contributes to the toxin spreading through the body, as the pores (*masāmm*) are opened more widely in the warm. Might there have been an idea that *masāmm* could be interpreted as 'paths of poison' (derived from *samm* 'poison')? That would explain why humans always carry some toxic substance within them.

The fundamental contrast with traditional medical theory emerges in the context of the explanation of the four ages of man. In Naẓẓām's view human 'nature' and its composition was always basically the same, with the dryness inherent in the body 'squeezing out the other forces' and the wetness; this is why an ancient man will drool, his nose will run, and his eyes water. Physicians had observed this long before; but they concluded that an old person's body contained more phlegm (φλέγμα) than before. Phlegm, Plato had said in *Timaios*,

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1  Regarding the concept of πέψις cf. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* 59.

2  Text 97.

3  Text 95, f–g.

4  It makes us wonder how Naẓẓām explained that the person comes to again after fainting. Somehow the 'obstacle' must have returned, or been reactivated.

5  Text 95, a–e. The effect of toxic substances is an old object lesson in the theory of mixture (cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* VI 218, 6f. Bruns). Khosrou Anoshirwan had the philosopher Priscian answer a similar question (cf. Duneau in: *Mélanges Crozet* 20).

is the product of decaying flesh.[6] Naẓẓām countered that an old person's skin becomes dark and wrinkly, i.e. dry. Phlegm, on the other hand, was white and wet in the understanding of the physicians; consequently, the effect of an increase in phlegm would have to be altogether different. Furthermore, children, too, secrete fluids: they cry more than adults, their noses run, and they wet themselves. Plants, too, are wetter in their youth than later. Ageing is thus a process of disintegration. It is continuous; there are no ages of man – certainly not in the sense that each could be marked by a different composition.[7]

### 3.2.2.2.1.5      Sensory Perception

Everything we perceive through our senses is a body. As we only perceive qualities, all qualities must be bodies. A body as such, behind these qualities, does not exist. What we perceive e.g. with our eyes are the colours only. The body is visible because of them, or rather: they are visible as bodies. Accidents are invisible.[1] Each sense is a separate entity; all the perceptions of one particular sense form a common class (*jins*). Within this class they are able to develop by means of mixture: two colours when mixed result in another colour, but never in a temperature or a weight etc.[2] Opposites are thus only possible within one and the same class: black and white, rough and smooth, etc. Perceptions of **different** sensory organs are never opposites; a certain flavour and a certain odour are merely different.[3] There are five senses in all.[4]

### 3.2.2.2.1.5.1      *Sight. Colour Theory*

We see because our eyes emit rays. They 'leap' towards the object and permeate it.[1] Naẓẓām probably adopted this concept from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, and shaped it further in accordance with his ideas.[2] Another description that

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6   Concerning the antique tradition cf. R. E. Siegel, *Galen's system of physiology and medicine* (Basel/New York 1968), p. 221ff. Job of Edessa defended it (Text 104, d and f–h). Ibn Hishām's *K. al-tījān* had already drawn the parallel between the four humours and the four seasons; phlegm corresponded to winter (4, 11ff., under teachings of the 'philosophers').

7   Text 139, c, and 166, b.

1   Text 6; 105, n–p; 105 A, a and g–h.

2   Text 86.

3   Text 70, l–q (with regard to Naẓẓām and his entire school); 71; 45, b. Cf. also Text 1, a. The idea is of Manichaean origin (cf. Text 140, h).

4   Text 139, c, and 166, b.

1   Text 43, b; 105, a; 105 A, f.

2   See vol. I 429f. above.

is closely related to his thinking is found in the *K. sirr al-khalīqa*: there is a kind of lamp in the eye, namely the spirit of life (*rūḥ*), whose light combines with the brilliance of bodies of light colours.[3] This brilliance is as essential as the sight rays, as without it things would have no colour, and we basically see only colour.[4] This was the Aristotelian model; 'brilliance' or 'lustre' was expressed with words such as στίλβον, λαμπόν or αὐγή.[5] The corresponding Arabic term is usually *ḍiyāʾ*.

Thus used by e.g. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (cf. Text IV 28, f). Regarding Naẓẓām Text 70, a and d, are most relevant; also 73, g. The usage is not always consistent. 85, d, uses *ḍiyāʾ* as the opposite of darkness, i.e. 'light'; cf. also the inconsistency between 70, a, and 74, e. – Another theory is located in the same circle, which was used by the '(natural philosophers) who profess Islam' to explain the effect of the evil eye (after a text examined by R. Köbert in: Der Islam 28/1948/120, ult. ff.):[6] 'It is not impossible that subtle, invisible[7] substances are emitted from the eye of someone who possesses the evil eye in order to combine with the victim of the evil eye in such a way that they are able to enter into the pores of his body, God creating decay at the same time, just as he creates death when someone drinks poison. This is due to a custom he established, which is neither necessary nor so natural that he should force (?) it onto the act,' (Shīḥī, d. 741/1340, *Lubāb al-taʾwīl* < Nawawī, d. 676/1278 < Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Tamīmī al-Mazārī, d. 536/1141). This probably does not refer to Naẓẓām. He was unlikely to have said that God creates decay, nor would he have used the term 'custom'.

The brilliance that makes colours apparent on the surface of things contains a colour, too, but an imperceptible one as it does not 'impart colour': white.[8] Theophrastus had already stated this;[9] Alexander of Aphrodisias, too, emphasised it in a brief didactic text that was probably translated into Arabic

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3  P. 464, 6ff. Cf. the translation in Ullmann, *Medizin* 95f.; also Weißer, *Geheimnis der Schöpfung* 142. Concerning the subsequent psychological reaction cf. Weißer 145f. no. 19.1.

4  Text 70, i.

5  Thus in Theophrastus; cf. K. Gaiser in: *Synusia*, Festschrift Schadewaldt 195.

6  I diverge from Köbert's translation in some places.

7  I read *ghayr marʾiyya* as in the MS, rather than *ghayr marīʾa* 'unhealthy' as Köbert suggests (118, n. 4).

8  Text 70, a, and 72, h.

9  *De igne* 50, p. 723.

not long after Naẓẓām's death.[10] Naẓẓām quickly adds a distinction: this statement cannot be inverted; there is also white that does not contain brilliance and light.[11] This would seem to refer to the white paint we usually use; opaque white that can neutralise other colours. Brilliance and colour are two different things.[12] Colours neutralise one another because they can be opposites. We can mix milk and ink, white and black, and end up with a grey liquid; mixing green and red results in brown.[13]

The question is, how to determine the opposite. The opposition between black and white is different from that between green and red. Among the 'accidentalists' as well as the corporealists there were some who only recognised white and black as opposites, and then tried to derive all other colours out of combinations of these two.[14] These included Job of Edessa[15] or the author of the *K. sirr al-khalīqa*.[16] The Dayṣānites insisted on it, to them white represented light and black, darkness.[17] They all referred back to antique concepts. Anaxagoras had regarded colours as mixtures of black and white; the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise Περὶ χρωμάτων says something similar.[18] Aristotle himself, on the other hand, had distinguished two kinds of colour mixture: by placing them next to one another or on top of one another.[19] In Naẓẓām's environment, two kinds of opposites were distinguished as well, an absolute one between white and black, and a 'habitual' one between the other colours.[20] The other colours impart colour and assume colour; white and black, on the other hand show their absolute opposition in the fact that they each only

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10    Gätje, *Die arabische Übersetzung der Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Farbe* 370ff., Ar. text 8off.; regarding the date of the translation cf. Endreß, *Proclus Arabus* 188 and 63f.

11    Text 70, b–c. We do not know who the 'learned theologian' is whom Naẓẓām contradicts in *c*.

12    Ibid., d.

13    Ibid., e–h.

14    Text 73, d–f., and probably also 72, a.

15    *Book of Treasures* 130.

16    Weißer 143 § 15.1. Thus also Kaʿbī (cf. Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 132, 1ff.). Regarding the Muʿtazilite theory of colour in general cf. also Ibn Mattōya, *Tadhkira* 253ff.

17    Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 338, 8f., and 349, 9ff.

18    C. Prantl, *Aristoteles über die Farben* 58 and 109ff.

19    Gaiser in: *Synusia* 186f. In general also W. Kranz in: Hermes 47/1912/126ff. It is of no particular significance that Aristotle named white and black as an example of opposites (ἐναντία) within the same class in his *Categories* (11. 14a 19 = *Manṭiq Arisṭū* I 48, 2of. BADAWĪ).

20    Text 73, b.

possess one of these qualities: white assumes colour, but does not impart it; black imparts colour but does not assume it.[21]

The colour of particular things may often be explained with secondary admixture. Fire, for instance, is not red naturally, as one might assume based on the evidence of one's own eyes; as we have seen, it is composed of heat and brilliance, and that is at best white.[22] Colour happens because of the gas or the smoke that accompany the fire, and they depend on the nature of the wood.[23] A shadow or the darkness of the night can also cause it to change colour by mixing with it; consequently embers look different in different light.[24] Similarly it is well-known that in the morning or the evening the sun, being closer to the vapours of the horizon, looks red or yellow, rather than white, its colour at noon when it is in the zenith.[25] What we perceive as red or yellow may simply be black settling on top of the whiteness of light.[26] We can once again find a Greek comparison: Aristotle did not regard the sun as fire-coloured, but as white,[27] and he thought it turned red because of mist or smoke.[28] Alexander of Aphrodisias demonstrated the same thing with the example of fire.[29]

Of course the colours, or the admixtures that generate them, may also be latent. As we have seen, Job of Edessa had the process of combustion explained to him in the following way: whiteness is manifest on fresh wood,[30] redness, on burning wood, and blackness comes to the surface of coal. All these had been hidden within the wood from the very first; when the wood has been consumed entirely, they are freed and evaporate in the air.[31] They behave similar to water that evaporates, as they are only compact, and thus visible, when combined with dense bodies.[32] Light alone cannot show them to the eye; indeed, it is possible that an excess of light prevents perception altogether.[33]

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21      Text 72, f–h.

22      Text 74, a and e.

23      Ibid., f and m–p.

24      Text 76, a.

25      Text 74, h–l.

26      Ibid., g. Cf. the corresponding remarks on clouds in Text 75.

27      *Met.* I 3. 341a 35f.

28      *De sensu et sensato* 440a 10ff.

29      Gätje, *Arabische Übersetzung* 366, l. 4of.

30      Naẓẓām as well as Job were thinking of the lighter heart of a branch, not the green or brown bark.

31      Text 99, b–l; concerning blackness cf. also 87, f. Cf. p. 367f. above.

32      Text 99, n–p. Cf. p. 370 above, according to which density is caused by the mixture. This gives rise to the question why mixing with air is not sufficient.

33      Text 87, d, but only as a dialectical argument. Naẓẓām may have been thinking of established facts, such as that one is blinded by light.

### 3.2.2.2.1.5.2    *Hearing. Acoustics*

Sounds are also bodies, but they are very 'thin', and consequently fit in every crack.[1] They can even enter into rocks, but once they are inside, they cannot come out by themselves as they are held by the rocks' compact structure. The make the same noise on the inside as on the outside, but as they cannot come out, we do not hear them. Only once rocks, or other objects, are knocked together do they 'leap' out – presumably because this shakes up the structure of the objects within which they are hidden.[2] As they are thin, they are light and rise up.[3] This, too, takes place in a 'leap'; the speed of sound, rather like the speed of light, was so great that it could not be comprehended with the general theory of motion. One cannot really say that a sound is generated; it has always existed.[4] Here, too, the sum of the bodies remains constant.

It may seem rather reductionist to us that sounds should be generated particularly as a result of knocking objects together; we would also think of wind instruments, where the process is entirely different. In fact, Ibn Sīnā argued against this theory in his *K. asbāb ḥudūth al-ḥurūf* (cf. M. Bravmann's translation, *Phonetische Lehren der Araber* 113). However, the explanation by *iṣṭikāk*, which is the dominant one all over *kalām* (see p. 76 above), has a long tradition: it goes back to the Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum, a friend of Plato's (cf. Diels-Kranz, *Vorsokratiker* 432, 9ff. = Text 47 B1: πληγαί τινων ποτ᾽ἄλλαλα; regarding him cf. *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* I 339ff. no. 322) and presumably became known in the Islamic world through Aristotle's *De anima* (II 8. 419b 9ff.). Fārābī embraced it and applied it to musical instruments (*K. al-mūsīqā* 212, 2f.). Regarding Ashʿarī cf. Gimaret, *Doctrine* 124f.; concerning the usage of the word also Text XVI 15, k. I am grateful to B. Reinert of Zurich for suggestions regarding this issue.

In order for us to hear a sound it is not enough for it to be freed, it also has to move to and into our ear. In doing so it has to pass through the medium air. The air is affected by it, it 'waves' (*yatamawwaju*) and assumes the shape of

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1   Text 106 and 107, a; 102, i. 'Thin' is the word used by Job of Edessa (102, i); a comparison with the other texts shows that the corresponding Arabic term is *laṭīf* 'fine, immaterial'.

2   Text 102, i (and presumed in a–f); 107, b; 108.

3   Text 82, c.

4   Listed as an anonymous theory by Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 426, 9; probably referring to Naẓẓām and his school.

the sound; i.e. the sound permeates it.[5] The same happens within the ear. The air that has become 'intertwined' with the sound taps on it and causes a pain[6] at the moment when the sound is passed from the air to the ear; the sound can now combine with the *rūḥ* and 'permeate' it.[7] The antique roots of this theory are unmistakeable. The Stoics had already regarded sound and speech as bodies.[8] They also assumed their connection with air; Diogenes of Babylon had said in a treatise on the subject: 'Sound is air that is hit (pushed), or what is mostly perceived by the ear'.[9] The idea that this movement was in waves was considered by Aristotle as well as Galen.[10]

Still, there was a problem within this theory. How could one understand that many people hear at the same time? This seemed to presume that the sound divided in the air, as the question already ruled out the possibility that it tapped onto people's ears one after the other. The opponents may have thought they could force Naẓẓām to agree with atomism in this way,[11] but they were surely triumphant too early; his system, too, allowed of a body dividing. After all, a sound was 'thin', why should it not divide and deform its medium in more than one place. He compared the process with water being poured over several people; each of them will only be touched by part of the water.[12] This also invalidated a second objection the opposing sources were fond of repeating: that everyone would hear something different after the division.[13] After all, the water was the same for everyone who was soaked. On the other hand a certain discomfort did now spread throughout the Muʿtazila. As in the case of Abū l-Hudhayl's notorious theory of eternal rest in paradise, Khayyāṭ once

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5       Text 109, a; 111, a; 112, a. The concept of movement in waves, which seems quite modern, first occurs in Shahrastānī (112, a); 'permeation' (*tadākhul*) is probably older (cf. also 111, c). Aristotle had also said that sound requires air as a medium (*De an. 419a 34*).

6       Text 109, a; also 105 A, e.

7       Text 109, b; 110, a; 111, c; 112, b–c. The latter depiction (Shahrastānī) is the most precise one, but it probably reads too much into Naẓẓām's model. Shahrastānī presumed Naẓẓām to have been dependent on the philosophers (112, g), but judging by his style he had probably been influenced by Ibn Sīnā (regarding whose teachings cf. Bravmann, *Phonetische Lehren* 114). Cf. also M. Bernand in: SI 39/1974/32f.

8       SVF II § 140–42, and III 212, 29ff.

9       Ibid. III 212, 23ff.; also II § 138, 139, and 142. Cf. Versteegh, *Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking* 30.

10      Siegel, *Galen on Sense Perception* 133ff.; Galen, too, regarded πνεῦμα as the basis of auditory perception.

11      Text 111, g–k.

12      Text 113, b–c; cf. 111, d–e.

13      Text 113, a; also 111, l–n.

again dug up the formula that only Naẓẓām's own fellow believers ever spent time thinking about this dark question.[14]

We must beware of equating sound and human speech as Shahrastānī did in Text 112. The case of speech is rather more complex (see p. 443f. below). Naẓẓām's theory of sound influenced Jāḥiẓ when he wonders whether certain sounds such as the rubbing together of freshly baked bricks, or the hissing of a wick just before it goes out or because it has absorbed water, are perceived as so unpleasant because fire is mixed in with them. It would thus not be the sound itself but the fire within the sound that emerges and heats the air around it (*Ḥayawān* III 361, 1ff., and earlier). Polemic against Naẓẓām's model was also found in ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* (composed 454/1062), p. 7, 5ff.: the sound is not a body but, being an intelligible, an accident. He did not, however, mention Naẓẓām's name.

### 3.2.2.2.1.5.3    *The Other Sensory Perceptions*
We do not learn much about taste and smell. Odours are 'thin', rather like sounds, which is why they can enter into water, e.g. in the case of perfume.[1] There are seven different categories of flavour, but only four are mentioned: sweetness, bitterness, tartness and acidity.[2] Like colours and sounds they can combine to form the most varied of mixtures; consequently some are pleasant or nutritious, while others are painful or fatal.[3] They are generated by coming in contact with the taste nerves.[4]

The 'bodies' perceived by touch are eight in all: hot and cold, dry and wet, soft and hard, smooth and rough.[5] The first four have already been mentioned frequently, but this list provides the final proof that in Naẓẓām's view they were not elementary qualities that were in any way superior to the other four. On the other hand it did not occur to him to subsume warm and cold under the generic term 'temperature': language was not ready for this. Even where such a generic term existed already, in the case of weight (*wazn*), he continued to

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14    Text 110, b. Cf. also 111, b, and 112, f–g. Text 170, g–i, shows the extent to which the issue
        could be exploited for polemic.

1     Text 101, a and d; cf. also 49, c, and 105 A, d.
2     Text 100, a–b.
3     Text 81, f–l.
4     Text 105 A, c.
5     Text 70, l–m; also 105 A, b.

refer to heavy and light.[6] He rejected the attempt by certain 'Dahrites' to re-place the contrast between dry and wet with a gradual scale.[7] He does not appear to have perceived the problem of threshold values.

Naẓẓām said in all clarity that there were no further tactile sensations be-yond the eight categories mentioned.[8] Job of Edessa, on the other hand, pre-sumed that contraction and expansion or heaviness and lightness were among the 'bodies' that could be perceived by the senses; if we follow the structure of his text, he appears to have counted them among the tactile sensations.[9] He is, however, a slightly vague witness; speaking at first of 'light and heavy, con-tracted and expanded **elements**', thus allowing the interpretation that these qualities are imparted to an object by other ingredients, e.g. fire or air.[10] It is also not clear what Naẓẓām thought of length, width and depth, the three di-mensions that, in the view of the atomists, are constitutive of physical bod-ies. Kaʿbī says that Naẓẓām believed them to be bodies, too; but immediately afterwards adds that length to him was that which was long, width that which was wide, and depth that which was deep.[11] This sounds as if they, as opposed to other 'bodies', were not independent ingredients, but only manifest them-selves in connection with, and as a consequence of, an object. Ashʿarī would indeed embrace only this last statement.[12]

We should also like to know more precisely how pain and enjoyment are related to tactile sensations. Naẓẓām appears to have regarded them as bodies; consequently they can mix with other things, such as pain with colour,[13] pre-sumably as in the case of a bruise turning blue. For this same reason they can-not be effected by humans;[14] they are caused by 'innate necessary causation' (*ījāb al-khilqa*), by human nature itself.[15] Naẓẓām made his opposition against Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir's *tawallud* theory clear here. Unlike heat and cold, how-ever, pain and enjoyment are also emotions. This is probably why in another

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6      See p. 375 above.

7      Text 85, b, with commentary.

8      Text 70, m.

9      Text 103, c and f; 104, a.

10     Text 98, d; cf. p. 370 and 375 above.

11     Text 8, a–b.

12     Text 9, a–b; also 13, a. Still, elsewhere he states (Text 1, a) that Naẓẓām also regarded 'shapes and spirit(ual substances)' as bodies; 'shapes', however, are not possible without dimensions. Cf. also Pazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 231, 15.

13     Text 81, h.

14     Text 152, d–e.

15     Text 203.

passage pain is listed among the accidents.[16] He probably had to compromise, as the subject was too complex.

Baghdādī claimed that Naẓẓām accorded sexual sensation a special position as a sixth sense (Text 143). This would mean that he differentiated further in the field of enjoyment, but the same was also said of ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān (Text XXV 75; cf. ch. C 4.1.2.1.1.5 below).

### 3.2.2.2.1.6 Motion as an Accident

The only accident familiar to Naẓẓām besides all these 'classes' of bodies was motion.[1] Some of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ* had been of the same opinion.[2] In the context of his theory it meant that motion cannot have duration.[3] This is astonishing as by introducing the concept of *iʿtimād* he himself had accorded each body a motion peculiar to itself. Still, we have seen that he only ever calculated *iʿtimād* according to momentary 'states of being'; he is all atomist in this respect. On the other hand *iʿtimād* helped him defend the axiom that accidents are not arranged in opposites; if a moving and a resting body are not opposites this is because the resting one is in fact in motion too.[4] And *iʿtimād* made it clearer than other concepts that accidents are invisible.[5]

The problem as a whole can only be perceived in outlines now. Dualists and *zanādiqa* as well as Kufan Shīʿites discussed the status of motion, but they did not all ask the question in the same way. Shīʿite theologians in Kufa regarded motion in general as a body (cf. Text IV 4, and 17, a; also vol. I 401f. and 407f. above). The same was said of the Manichaeans from whom the *zindīq* Ghassān b. Ruhāwī adopted it (vol. I 518f. above). Naẓẓām's pupil Muḥammad b. Shabīb also returned to this position (see ch. C 5.1.1 below), but the 'naturalists' (*aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ*) had expressed disagreement, as we have seen: it is not possible for bodies to mix without motion; consequently it cannot itself be a body. This left the possibility that

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16  Text 150, d.

1  Text 4, b; 5, b; 6, b; 9, d; 46, a; formulated around Juwaynī's categories in 10, b.
2  See vol. II 44f. above.
3  Text 3, and 171, f.
4  Text 71, a. Kaʿbī was the only one who did not notice this; he names rest as an accident besides motion (Text 8, a), and even suggests counting motion among the 'class' of rest (Text 154, b).
5  Text 6, a, and 105, n.

it might be identical with the moving object, as many Manichaeans were said to have concluded. Even those among them who regarded motion as a quality did not therefore automatically see it as an accident (Malāḥimī, *Mu'tamad* 566, 13ff.; cf. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq in Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 349, 12ff, and Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* V 11, 16ff.). Abū Shākir al-Dayṣānī spoke of things being identical and not identical at the same time (see vol. I 513 above). Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was thought to have considered movement not to be identical with its carrier, but we do not learn what his positive conclusion was (vol. II 38f. above). As for Naẓẓām, we must be aware of the variations in terminology. If Juwaynī says that he believed substances to be identical only because of their accidents, 'accidents' appears to refer to the components of the mixture, not the movements (cf. Texts 12 and 10). Naẓẓām himself may have used the term 'accident' in a rather wider sense, too (cf. Text 58, f; also 93, k?).

Humans only have control over the accidents.[6] Their actions are thus limited in a similar way as in Abū l-Hudhayl's model, which makes the question of what precisely Naẓẓām believed motion to be all the more significant. After all, he said that a potter may create a mixture as well as God. He probably meant that a human cannot create the primary bodies; if he combines things at a secondary level, this is merely movement. In a human, movement is identical with activity. This is confirmed by Naẓẓām's regarding knowledge, will etc. as accidents;[7] on the other hand the *khawāṭir*, the stimuli from outside, are bodies that combine with the soul and the intellect.[8] There were interesting borderline cases. Ashʿarī stressed that humans cannot create life; life was a body in Naẓẓām's view.[9] The problem arose in the context of procreation; Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir had at least regarded sexual intercourse as 'movement'.[10]

We must go a step further. We have to consider whether in Naẓẓām's view every kind of change in quality was a 'movement'. 'Bodies', to him, were perceivable qualities that had a degree of permanence and could be integrated into an object through mutual permeation. Change happens when a latent relation is abolished. Here, too, we are observing bodies that have long existed, and consequently the object's continuity is assured. At the same time,

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6    Text 4–5; 152, d.

7    Text 152; cf. p. 411f. below.

8    Text 229, c (where Ashʿarī expresses doubt concerning this statement). Also Baghdādī, *Farq* 122, 11/138, 16, and *Uṣūl al-dīn* 50, 16f.; also p. 412 below.

9    Text 5, d; cf. p. 408 below.

10   Text XVII 17, a.

however, something is happening; a body moves to the surface – by means of movement, presumably. The movement itself is not visible, we only see the emerging body. Consequently all movements are part of the same class; the process is fundamentally the same every time. Movement causes the change in appearances and consequently in perceptions. The perceptions are tied to the moment, and the movement has no enduring existence, either.

The sources do not offer this interpretation in such detail, but it does not contradict any of the extant texts.[11] In this case Naẓẓām, quite sensibly, would have distinguished between change brought about by humans and change happening of itself. Movement in the sense of change of location would have to be treated as a special case.[12]

### 3.2.2.2.1.7    The Nature and Objective of Naẓẓām's Theory

The way in which Jāḥiẓ reported his teacher's arguments down to the sometimes mysterious details shows that – in spite of the palpable naivety – the boundaries between the individual parties were clear. This can be obscured by the dialectical nature of the debate; frequently opponents are anonymous or presented as merely a general line with little informative value. Thus when Naẓẓām speaks e.g. of 'accidentalists'[1] it is safe to assume that these never existed as a uniform group. While he does name Ḍirār b. ʿAmr[2] not long before, giving the impression that the accidentalists were his pupils, this is indeed about the impression only; he tries to push them into the same corner. This much becomes clear when he subsequently accuses them of 'affinity' with Jahm b. Ṣafwān;[3] Jahm had nothing to do with accidents at all. Ḍirār was different, of course, but even in his case this aspect was mainly verbal. Ḍirār certainly was an 'accidentalist', but not the only one in Naẓẓām's view, and presumably not the most important one, either – after all, he was dead. Abū l-Hudhayl is a much more likely candidate. In order to be an accidentalist in Naẓẓām's eyes, one did not have to believe that everything created consisted **only** of accidents. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār noted that Abū l-Hudhayl criticised

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11    I owe it to D. Eberhardt's study *Der sensualistische Ansatz und das Problem der Veränderung in der Philosophie Muʿammars und an-Naẓẓāms*; cf. ibid. p. 18ff. and 32ff.

12    I have doubts as to whether *iʿtimād* ought to be interpreted ontologically, as Eberhardt does, as 'Bestehenbleiben der Erscheinungen' (permanence of phenomena) or 'Bestandhaben der Wahrnehmungen' (continued existence of perceptions) (p. 46f.); it certainly cannot be proved.

1    Text 52, a; Jāḥiẓ also in 72, a.

2    Text 50, a–c.

3    Text 50, d; also 77, e. Cf. p. 41f.

Naẓẓām's theory of mixture: 'If a quince was caused to exist (actually by God) by means of agglomeration (*ijtimāʿ*, of individual ingredients), then God is able to disassemble the component parts after their agglomeration'.[4] And finally we should remember Job of Edessa. Jāḥiẓ would never have mentioned him, as the Christian theologians were still far too dangerous to be presented to the reading public, but we know from Job himself that he challenged Naẓẓām.[5]

Naẓẓām cannot deny that some accidentalists possessed a certain prestige; while they were 'undistinguished scholars' they rose to the 'level of authorities'.[6] Jāḥiẓ described some of them as astute,[7] which was not least due to their great forebears. After all, Aristotle was on their side; Naẓẓām saw himself compelled to mount a frontal attack on him.[8] In the theory of the elements they countered the concept of *mudākhala* with the Aristotelian concept of 'transformation' (μεταβολή) according to which the individual elements may be transformed into one another by exchanging one primary quality: air is hot and wet, and when its wetness is replaced by dryness when it is heated up, it turns to fire, which is hot and dry.[9] Fire is only different (*khilāf*) from water; its true opposite (*ḍidd*) is water. Transformation takes place in degrees (*tadrīj*)[10] in a cycle (περίοδος) described by Aristotle in those physical texts that were the first to have been translated into Arabic.[11] 'Transformation' (*inqilāb* or *qalb*) was, as we have seen, one of the key concepts of early Basran theology;[12] this was how Ḍirār's pupils might have found to Aristotle. Of course it is not possible to prove this definitively; there were probably Aristotelians everywhere in Naẓẓām's environment.

Text 78, a–b, appears to establish a fairly clear connection, but it really points to contemporaries of Naẓẓām whose identity is not made quite clear. The περίοδος of the elements was also described in the Syriac *Causa causarum* (transl. Kayser 233ff.); cf. also Pseudo-Apollonios, *Sirr*

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4    *Faḍl* 263, 9f.

5    Text 98, b; cf. also p. 323 above. He, too, was familiar with the distinction between accidentalists and corporeists, but to him the former were those who did not recognise any bodies at all (Text 97 n). He considered himself to be a man of moderation rather than extremes.

6    Text 67, a.

7    Text 52, p.

8    Concerning the wrong point altogether, it must be added (cf. Text 78 with commentary).

9    Text 52, h–i. Cf. also Jāḥiẓ' remark, *Ḥayawān* V 55, 2f.

10   Text 52, l–n.

11   *De gen. et corr.* II 3ff., and *Meteorologie* IV 1ff.

12   See p. 42 and 67, and vol. II 452f. above.

*al-khalīqa* 572, 2ff. after Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis*. The doxo-
graphical summary in *K. al-taṣrīf* demonstrates how much opinions dif-
fered between the experts in details (*Corpus Jābirianum*, transl. Kraus,
*Jābir* II 142ff.). – The terminology the accidentalists used in this context:
*istiḥāla* for μεταβολή, *khilāf* for διαφορά, *ḍidd* for ἐναντίον, is normal for the
period; it was found in the translation of the *Meteorology* Ibn al-Biṭrīq
completed not very long after 200, and was still used by ʿAlī b. Rabbān
al-Ṭabarī (d. after 240/855). Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn (d. 299/910) was the first to
deviate from it in his translation of the *Physics*. I presented these con-
nections for the first time in: Der Islam 43/1967/254f. Regarding the date
of Ibn al-Biṭrīq's translation of *Meteorology* cf. Endreß, *Übersetzungen
von De caelo* 91ff., and Petraitis, *Arabic Versions of Aristotle's Meteorology*
27ff. Instances of the lexical correspondences are found in the glossary
Petraitis collated; cf. also *Meteor.* 338a 23, ed. Schoonheim 53, l. 10 (cf.
85, l. 275). However, we must not view the development of terminol-
ogy in one dimension only. Frequently several corresponding terms are
used together; later translators usually looked to earlier versions. In the
*Meteorology* Ibn al-Biṭrīq renders διαφορά not as *khilāf* but as *ikhtilāf*;
μεταβολή as *istiḥāla* as well as *taghayyur*. The *De caelo* translation that
goes back to him uses both *istiḥāla* and *taghayyur* in its oldest stratum,
and sometimes even together: *taghayyara wa-staḥāla* (information from
G. Endreß). Circumstances are similar in the case of the Arabic Proclus
source from the circle around al-Kindī (cf. Endreß, *Proclus Arabus* 122ff.).

The accidentalists' criticism of Naẓẓām's theory of *kumūn*, specifically of the
idea of fire being hidden within wood, was presented in part by Alexander
of Aphrodisias in his text Περὶ κράσεως καὶ αὐξήσεως/*De mixtione* from the
Aristotelian point of view and against the Stoic idea of the κρᾶσις δι' ὅλων. This
includes the argument that fire is greater than wood, or at least of a different
shape and would thus not fit inside the wood.[13] The fundamental opposition
of mutual permeation on the one hand, and contact on the other, is Greek;
χωρεῖν (σῶμα διὰ σώματος) or διήκειν contrast with ἀφή and παράθεσις there, like
*mudākhala* and *mumāssa* or *mujāwara*.[14] On the other hand we find parallels

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13    Text 51, g–h; 52, a. Simplified by Ibn Ḥazm (Text XV 5, a). Cf. *De mixtione* VI 219, 9ff. BRUNS;
      translated and elucidated by F. Rex, *Chrysipps Mischungslehre und die an ihr geübte Kritik
      in Alexander von Aphrodisias De mixtione* (PhD Frankfurt 1966), intro. p. 56f., and transl.
      p. 13; also R. B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics* 122ff.

14    Rex, intro. 7, 17, 23f., 57; Kraus, *Jābir* II 8. Some of the examples are also already present in
      Alexander's text: toxins (see p. 382 above), nutrition and growth (cf. VI 233, 14ff., with text
      50, d), cheese and milk (cf. VI 231, 32ff., with text 51, m–n).

with Indian sources: Naẓẓām's opponent who jokingly peeled the bark of a piece of wood and asked, where the hidden fire was, could have learnt it there.[15] Still, the idea is so obvious that one might have thought of it without Indian assistance.[16] A similarly naïve comment was that the fire would have to destroy the wood from the inside out,[17] or that one would have to be able to feel it when touching the wood.[18]

Even more important to the understanding of Naẓẓām's position are the differences among his own followers, the 'corporeists'. What he had in common with them was the idea of mixture, but as this idea had passed through heathen media, dualist systems above all, he modified the model. The way in which he did this was not new, either, as he moved closer to Stoic ideas once again.[19] The reduction to only a few basic building blocks, that was so characteristic of Iranian systems and probably increased their allure, was thus reversed. The world was not made from light and darkness only any more, as the Dayṣānites believed,[20] and not out of the four elements of the Dahriyya, either.[21] The 'bodies' from which it is composed are everything that can be perceived with the senses. The Stoics would have said: they are everything that can have an effect, or be subjected to one.[22]

The rejection of the theory of the elements was the most momentous step. One might say that Naẓẓām went about it half-heartedly, but the steps he took were sufficient to separate him not only from the 'Dahrites' but from the alchemists as well. According to the theory recorded in the *Corpus Jābirianum*, when distilled every body dissolves into the components water, air (i.e. gas = oil, *duhn*), fire (i.e. colouring), and earth (the residue).[23] The speculations of

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15   Text 67, b; cf. W. Ruben in: AO 13/1935/147.

16   Job of Edessa mentions it, for one (indeed, he might be the one Jāḥiẓ referred to; cf. Text 99, c), as would Kaʿbī's school later (Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 57, 7ff.). Cf. also Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I 891f. (against Anaxagoras).

17   Text XV 4, c; later also Kaʿbī (Abū Rashīd, *Masāʾil* 56, 8ff.). Cf. also Lucretius I 904ff.

18   Text 53, a; also Lactantius' argument cited by Pines, *Atomenlehre* 100f. Cf. in general Lewin in: Lychnos 1952, p. 222ff.

19   S. Horovitz already pointed out this connection in: ZDMG 57/1903/181; also Lewin, loc. cit. 225, and more recently Rundgren in: Or. Suec. 38–39/1989–90/149ff. In general see Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion* 6off., and vol. I 468 above.

20   See p. 366 and 385 above.

21   Text 81; also 63, r. Cf. p. 366 above.

22   See vol. I 467 above. The translation of the *Placita philosophorum* includes this definition in Arabic (Daiber, *Aëtius Arabus* 210, 5f. = Diels, *Doxography Graeci* 410a 5ff., with slightly divergent text).

23   Kraus, *Jābir* II 5.

the *Turba philosophorum* all concern the interrelation between the elements.[24] The alchemists – or at least the circle responsible for the *Corpus Jābirianum* – had an advantage over Naẓẓām when it came to the mathematical foundation on which they based the theory of the elements;[25] Naẓẓām was not enough of an expert to go into the question of quantities in detail. On the other hand it is quite possible that he was not yet aware of this development; the chronology of the individual parts of the *Corpus Jābirianum* and its overall layering is still an open question. Shahrastānī grouped Naẓẓām with certain 'philosophers', apparently in particular with Anaxagoras.[26] This is a heresiographical commonplace, but it may betray a keen eye: Anaxagoras had already believed that things contained all kinds of matter and all qualities within them in such a way that certain kinds of matter and certain qualities outweighed the others.[27]

Still, we must not forget that Naẓẓām was a theologian. He did not speak of alchemists; the opponents he attacked were dualists or those who denied the concept of creation. Explaining correctly what happens during creation was very close to his heart. In the visible world God does nothing other than a human making a pot: mixing ingredients and thus creating a variety of phenomena.[28] Nature could not do this by itself as it only ever adds like to like or, put differently, a substance only ever effects what is in its essence.[29] Things, however, as we can see in their composition or after their decay, consist of mixed elements that are not part of the same 'class'. They include contrasts that become 'neutralised' (*fāsada/tafāsada*); only the hidden cold of a body as an 'obstruction' (*māniʿ*) to its perceptible heat stops the latter from taking over and burning the item.[30] This really simplifies the matter too much; things

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24  One might compare what is claimed there to be the teachings of Leucippus and Democritus (Plesner, *Turba* 6off.); also the rather detailed deliberations in Pseudo-Ammonios (41, 3ff. RUDOLPH with commentary 149f.; also Daiber in: *Proc. I. Congress on Democritus* 258f.). Regarding the *K. sirr al-khalīqa* cf. Weißer, *Geheimnis der Schöpfung* 9of.

25  Cf. Kraus, *Jābir* II 187ff.; this is the so-called *ʿilm al-mīzān* which was probably influenced by Pythagorean theories.

26  Cf. *Milal* 39, 13f./82, 5, and 256, 7ff./814, 13ff.

27  Cf. Diels-Kranz, Frg. B 12, last sentence; also Jaeger, *Theorie der frühen griechischen Denker* 182. Regarding his kinship with Naẓẓām also Horovitz in: ZDMG 57/1903/186, and Horten in: ZDMG 63/1909/774ff.

28  Text 51, q; also 117, b. It may be possible to infer from Text 95, h–k that God can unmix things, too; but the passage is problematic (cf. the commentary).

29  See p. 372 above; also Text 116.

30  Text 53, d. *Fāsada* occurs in Text 70, d–e; 71, b–c; 45, b; in a mirror image also 53, b. Regarding *māniʿ* cf. Text 58, g; 62, d; 63, f, and once again 53, b. Ashʿarī uses the form *mumāniʿ* (Text 45, b).

have permanence because **all** the ingredients, not only the opposing ones, are 'bound' (*'aqada*) and keep each other in check.[31] This state can only be achieved by pressure from the outside, by compulsion,[32] as opposites do not mix of their own accord.[33] This is the point at which the physical image of the world cannot continue without God; mutual permeation and the existence of a higher order can only be imagined in connection with God's intervention.[34]

The anti-dualist emphasis of this line of argument is inescapable, but the idea had begun to emerge among the dualists in particular. *Fāsada* 'to neutralise' was apparently a Manichaean term.[35] The Marcionites, who assumed a third principle besides light and darkness, namely the primal human, believed the latter had mixed light and darkness and thus caused the balance (*ta'dīl*) between them.[36] Naẓẓām was probably familiar with this variant of the dualist model. He was probably also aware of the Christians having turned it into a deist model. 'Ammār al-Baṣrī agreed with him in accusing the 'deniers of God' that the different elements can only be combined in the world by God applying force.[37] 'Ammār was probably slightly younger, but Theodore Abū Qurra was also familiar with the idea[38] and, closer still, so was Job of Edessa. We can follow its path via the Church Fathers such as Athanasius back to the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo*.[39] We also find it in an Islamic context, in one of the speeches in the *Turba philosophorum*: God joined enemy elements peacefully, so they now love one another.[40] Naẓẓām's pupil Muḥammad b. Shabīb developed it further.[41]

The *creatio ex nihilo* had still not been proven. So far the point at issue had been a secondary creation by means of combining pre-existing elements; the latter might well have eternal duration. This was how the parallel with the Marcionites could be confirmed. The Dahriyya proved the eternal duration of the elements with the argument that they were mixed in spite of their

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31  Thus Text 58, f–g; *e contrario* probably also inferable from 53, b–c.

32  Text 116, c and e.

33  Text 118, c and f: as an argument against the Manichaeans.

34  Thus already in Text 116; fully formed in 117, a and d–e; also 118, g. Stated concerning the separation of elements in Text 185, i. Noted as proof of the existence of God characteristic of Naẓẓām by Karājakī, *Kanz al-fawā'id* (Teheran Lithograph), p. 86, 11ff.

35  Text 140, h.

36  See vol. I 508 above.

37  *Masā'il* 95, 6ff, and 100, 5ff.

38  *Mīmar fī wujūd al-khāliq* II 7f. and 11–19 (= p. 182ff. Dick).

39  Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity* 150f.; cf. also Walfson, *Philo* I 337ff.

40  Plessnre, *Turba* 83.

41  Text XXXI 1, from where Māturīdī adopted it (*Tawḥīd* 12, 3f.).

opposing natures.[42] Naẓẓām, of course, like his Christian contemporaries, had no doubt that God also created the primary 'bodies'; they, in fact, are the only ones to be called into existence from nothingness (*ikhtirāʿ*) – this is a process that does not allow of a comparison between God and humans.[43] The question remains of how the two could be imagined together. Ibn al-Rēwandī claimed that Naẓẓām believed everything was created at once; meaning to say, presumably, that everything exists, but is latent, from the beginning, that creation thus unfurled gradually out of itself.[44] In another passage he compared this to Muʿammar's teachings, commenting mockingly that despite the similarity in their approaches, the latter was greatly exercised by the idea that according to Naẓẓām an *infinite number* of bodies came into being at the same time during the creation.[45] What Ibn al-Rēwandī is clearly trying to say is that in Naẓẓām's view, bodies were infinitely divisible; but this was pure polemic. Naẓẓām, as we have seen, was not an adherent of the actual infinite divisibility;[46] Khayyāṭ would recall the fact in this context.[47] Still, Ibn al-Rēwandī would not have made this up out of thin air; after all, Muʿammar and Naẓẓām had conducted a debate, and Naẓẓām had even written a treatise against Muʿammar's theory of the *maʿānī*.[48] In this context he probably criticised the infinite regress that Muʿammar accepted for the sake of the theory. Muʿammar's remark was simply a retort, a *muʿāraḍa*.

Ibn al-Rēwandī was intelligent enough not to mention this background to his polemic. However, his earlier summary of Naẓẓām's theory without the category of infinite number is also incorrect, as Khayyāṭ emphasised, without, however, clearly showing the reason why.[49] Things can only be created all at the same time if their components or ingredients are present and already created at that time. This should not, however, be interpreted as preformationist as Ibn al-Rēwandī did: Naẓẓām was not an evolutionist. Rather, after the creation, coming into being and decay are explained as God – or humans – mixing things, and unmixing them. Basically, Naẓẓām was thinking along similar lines as Abū l-Hudhayl in the context of *taʾlīf*.

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42    Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq in: MUSJ 50/1984/393, 5f. = Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 550, pu. ff.

43    Text 117, b and f–g. In this way God creates e.g. the flavour of a melon (Text 171, b–c).

44    Text 122, a and c (cf. the commentary).

45    Text SVI 26, d.

46    See p. 349 above.

47    Text 122, i–l.

48    See p. 70 and 334 above.

49    Text 122, e–f.

Similar, too, the Zaydite Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm in his refutation of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ: things are subject to change not as to their substance but only as to their form (*Lotta* 51, 17f.). The preformationist interpretation was adopted by Ibn Ḥazm (cf. Text XV 5, a).

Jāḥiẓ caused further confusion. People named him as the source of the information that Naẓẓām believed God was creating everything anew at every moment. This was close to the occasionalism of later Ashʿarites, and was consequently repeated in particular among those circles, by Baghdādī and Juwaynī for instance.[50] It did not, however, really agree with Naẓẓām. He believed that what was new in every moment were the perceptions or the phenomena rather than the things themselves. It must be said that when summarising this interpretation Ibn al-Rēwandī emphasised that the constant new creation of the world did not entail the constant destruction of the world. This leaves us with the question of what Jāḥiẓ actually said. It looks as if in the passage from the *K. al-ḥayawān* at the root of this he mentions that an oil lamp or the wick of an oil lamp is not the same at any two moments.[51] Ibn al-Rēwandī changed this to say that the fire within the light did not have permanence at any moment.[52] He probably generalised this interpretation in the relevant passage.[53] It seems that the Muʿtazilites of Khwarazm –of whom Zamakhsharī was one – refuted it for generations to come.

Suyūrī, *Irshād al-ṭālibīn* 56, 3ff. and earlier; cf. also Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 16off. after Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī. Nāṣr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī was part of this tradition (*Talkhīṣ al-muḥaṣṣal* 94, 1f./211, 11ff.). It would have been helpful if Khayyāṭ had pointed out this deformation in 122, h. In 69, b, he says quite clearly that he did not share Ibn al-Rēwandī's interpretation. – Nagel, *Der Koran* 181f., already emphasised that in the Quran, too, the creation is presented as a constant event rather than the beginning of the world (for more detail see ch. D 1.3.2.1 below). That God created everything at once was claimed in *Theologie des Aristoteles* (98, 12f., and 51, 12ff. BADAWĪ).

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50    Text 122, g–h (with commentary), and 123.
51    Text 68.
52    Text 69, a.
53    Cf. *Erkenntnislehre* 181f., and Eberhardt, *Sensualistischer Ansatz* 37 and 110f.

### 3.2.2.2.2 *Anthropology*

#### 3.2.2.2.2.1 The Spirit

Living beings are fundamentally different from inanimate objects.[1] While inanimate bodies are divided into different 'classes', everything living forms one single class. This is an obvious consequence of the fact, that the effect of living beings everywhere comes about in the same way: by intentional actions.[2] They are able to act deliberately thanks to a particular principle that permeates all living bodies: the spirit (*rūḥ*),[3] which is a separate entity in every sense, a substance without an opposite.[4] Being a substance it was of course a body in Naẓẓām's view, but not a compact one but on the contrary subtle (*laṭīf*);[5] it is mixed and 'entwined' with the living body and inhabits every extremity.[6] Insofar as it gives life it may be called the breath of life;[7] if it leaves the living body, death occurs.[8] As it also generates actions, it marks humans in a particular fashion. The human being is the spirit,[9] the living body serves as this spirit's shell (*haykal*).[10] In this sense the spirit also fulfils the function of that which we would call 'soul'; this was an easy step as the 'soul' (*nafs*) in the Arabic understanding of language was always the human 'himself'.[11] Plants, on the other hand, have neither 'spirit' nor 'soul'.[12] Naẓẓām did not use these terms when speaking of animals, either, although he would surely not have denied that they possessed the breath of life.[13]

That would ultimately have been too much subtlety. The step he took was bold enough: in order to carry conviction Naẓẓām had to begin with the most

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1    Text 127, a–b.

2    Text 127, c; 153, a–c; 154, a; 226, d.

3    Text 151, a and e.

4    Text 130, b, and 131, f.

5    Text 136, a; 146, a; 148, b.

6    Text 129, a; 130, a; 131, b–c; 136, a; 148, b. Thus also in *K. sirr al-khalīqa* (cf. Weißer, *Geheimnis der Schöpfung* 219). The Sharīf al-Jurjānī appears to have misunderstood the tradition when he uses the plural: '(The soul consists of) bodies that fluctuate in the human body (*sāriya*), without dissolving or perishing' (quoted in Majlisī, *Biḥār* LXI 74, 3ff., probably after his *Sharḥ maṭāliʿ al-anwār*; the poet Fużūlī quoted and abridged this version (*Maṭlaʿ al-iʿtiqād* 30, 8f.). Similar also Mutawallī, *Mughnī* 57, 1.

7    Text 130, a; 146, c–d.

8    Text 158, a.

9    Text 129, a; 130, a; 132, a; 136, a; 148, b.

10   Text 132, c. For deliberations on the origin of the term cf. Daiber, *Muʿammar* 292, n. 6.

11   Cf. Text 146, b, and 147, a, as well as 148, 1.

12   See p. 265 above.

13   The author of *K. sirr al-khalīqa*, too, believed humans only possessed a spirit, while animals perish with their living bodies (Weißer 135); but see p. 442 below.

obvious. Ḍirār and Abū l-Hudhayl had not been familiar with the concept of the soul as a separate entity, while Muʿammar had been aware of it, but defined it within an atomistic framework. The soul as Naẓẓām understood it came from the Dahrite philosophy, where it might have been based on antique, Iranian, or possibly even Indian models.[14] A Muslim need not identify with all this; there was no extra-Islamic tradition at the time that, in the way of Platonism for paleo-Christianity, could have been adopted widely without giving rise to resentment. The spirit, Naẓẓām himself admitted, was the 'most astonishing phenomenon in the world'.[15] Hadith offered some points of contact,[16] but this would not have been a sufficient criterion.[17] Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had done some preliminary work,[18] but he was a Shīʿite. People needed rational proof.

This proof was in fact available; it only needed to be adapted to its new environment. In *Phaedrus* Plato defined the soul as 'self-moving';[19] similarly Naẓẓām – or his pupils – defined the human being as something different distinct from the body it inhabits, something that causes it to be in motion or at rest.[20] The idea may have been conveyed by Christian scholastic tradition, although unlike Plato the conclusion was not drawn with regard to the immortality of this human core; the point was its existence, the spirit as a unifying and active principle.[21] Thus the Platonic approach was immediately joined by the Aristotelian one: the soul as *sensus communis*. Being an active principle the

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14    In Indian thought the spirit principle (*atman*) permeates everything that has being in the form of consciousness and self-awareness, and exists in the primordial matter as fire does in wood or oil in oilseed (*Vishnupurana* II 7, v. 28). Regarding *jān* as the separate soul in the Zoroastrian system cf. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems* 99f. (after the *Dēnkart*) and 106 (in Zātspram); it shares its force throughout the entire living body and lives in the heart and the brain (ibid. 103). Regarding the Dayṣāniyya cf. Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 332, 12ff. Concerning Antiquity cf. Jaeger, *Theologie der frühen griechischen Denker* 88f.; regarding Aristotle see below; in general Daiber, *Muʿammar* 343ff.

15    Text 128.

16    See ch. D 2.2 below.

17    See p. 417 below.

18    See vol. I 432 above.

19    *Phaedrus* 245 C–246 A.

20    Text 150, a–b with commentary; also 149. This was a dialogue in which Naẓẓām's theory was defended. Its describing humans as incorporeal, even though in Naẓẓām's view the spirit was a *jism laṭīf*, was probably due to the fact that the text was directed against the supporters of materialistic anthropology who believed in nothing except the body. The platonic proof is also mentioned by the Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ (cf. Diwald, *Arab. Philosophie und Wissenschaft* 489f.; Marquet, *Philosophie des Iḫwān* 228).

21    Text 129, b; 132, c; 146, c.

spirit is also the seat of all sensory perceptions.[22] Only the spirit establishes the contact between them; it distinguishes between them and determines whether different senses are perceiving one and the same object.[23] Consequently one might say that really, humans have one sense only.[24]

The perception of pain is uniform, similar to the *sensus communis*. One can perceive pain with every body part, because the spirit flows everywhere.[25] This, of course, leads to the question of what happens when one extremity is severed. In general it was believed that the spirit would then retreat into the remaining body, and once this was not possible any more, death would occur.[26] The last conclusion did not appear logical to everyone, as they assumed that the spirit if it had less and less space in this way would become compressed and its force increase. An amputee should thus be expected to live longer.[27] Naẓẓām did probably not take this difficulty into consideration. He used the example differently in any case, as proof for the existence of the soul once again. If a human were only the body he inhabited, part of him would be in every severed extremity. However, it may have been cut off because he sinned, such as by committing theft. In that case the extremity was evil and will go to hell, while the human can become pious again and achieve paradise. In the end he would be partly in heaven, partly in the fires of hell.[28] It seems that this argument best satisfied his opponents' materialistic approach. In its legal guise it looks more Islamic, and consequently original, than the other evidence adduced. The New Testament, too, presumed that an extremity cut off

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22 Text 131, e. Thus also John Philoponus (cf. Böhm, *Philoponos* 210).

23 Text 138. Two generations later Nāshiʾ would still regard this as the most convincing proof he knew and extended it further (*Frühe muʿtazilitische Häresiographie* 133f.). Regarding Aristotle cf. *De anima* III 2. 426b 12ff.; in general Ross, *Aristotle* 139ff. Galen was familiar with this concept, too (cf. Siegel, *Galen on Psychology* 139ff.).

24 Text 139, a–b. Naẓẓām directed this against the Manichaeans who, because of the strict separation of good and evil, did not allow a connection between the individual senses (Text 140).

25 Text 135.

26 Text 136, without direct reference to Naẓẓām. Thus, too, but with regard to faith, in Abū Muṭiʿ al-Balkhī's *Fiqh al-absaṭ*: if someone's finger is cut off, his faith does not decrease but moves to his heart (p. 57, 8ff.); similarly later the author of the *Risāla fī l-ʿaqāʾid* attributed to Māturīdī (ed. Yörükan 16 § 23).

27 Text 137. A different and less witty counter-argument is found in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XI 319, –5ff.

28 Text 134. Nāshiʾ once again agreed with this emphatically (*Frühe muʿtazil. Häresiographie* 134f.). Regarding the problem in general cf. Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 252, 1ff. (discussed in Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 508f.).

in punishment for a transgression would be lost to resurrection;[29] converse-
ly, there are early Islamic sources confirming that an extremity lost in a good
cause will precede the human to paradise.[30]

His contemporaries could not help but realise that this thought opened up
a new dimension. Abū Dulaf al-ʿIjlī (d. 225/840)[31] assuring his beloved that
to him she was like the spirit in an otherwise cowardly body demonstrates
Naẓẓām's influence; the human body's existence depending on the soul and
the theorem that like would find like were regarded as the cornerstones of
his philosophy.[32] However, we are not always able to discern the consequenc-
es clearly. Naẓẓām explained e.g. dreams as seeing once more those things
that one had seen during the waking hours, and that had made an impres-
sion on the spirit.[33] If one encounters one's beloved in a dream, as the poets
were so fond of describing (khayāl) this is only possible because one knows
what she looks like; at the same time it shows one is afraid of her guardian
(raqīb).[34] This may mean that Naẓẓām, unlike Abū l-Hudhayl, did not be-
lieve that the soul left the body during the hours of sleep in order to return to
God.[35] In any case, love was 'a fruit of affinity and proof of two spirits mixing'.[36]
Handwriting, too, was shaped by the spirit; it allows the senses to perceive the
human's personality (nafs).[37]

We would know more if we were able to define the boundary to the Dahriyya
better. The Indian physician refuted by Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in the K. al-ikhlīlaja also
said that one only sees in dreams what one has previously perceived with

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29    Mark 9:43: 'And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee *to enter into life
      maimed*, than having two hands go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched'.
      Similar also Matthew 5:30.

30    IS IV₁ 177, 15ff.

31    Regarding him cf. GAS 2/632; also p. 529 below.

32    *Agh.* VIII 248, 8ff, and 249, 3f.

33    Text 145.

34    Text 163, This was adopted by Jewish theologians (cf. Qirqisānī, *Anwār* 600ff./transl. Vajda
      in: REJ 106/1941–42/116ff.; also Sirat, *Visions surnaturelles* 63).

35    See p. 266 above. It was, of course, possible to combine the two and say that the *nafs*
      rejoins God during the hours of sleep, while the *rūḥ* continues to circulate through the
      human body (thus e.g. in Shīʿite tradition; cf. *Biḥār* LXI 62 no. 46). In that case the dream
      would be a work of the *nafs* rather than the *rūḥ*.

36    Text 162. There is a second text concerning love (161) that was cited in the context of the
      apocryphal 'symposium' mentioned a number of times above. The genuineness of 162 is
      by no means assured, but the statement is rather less literary than in 161 and concerned
      more with Naẓẓsām's terminology. Of course, Ibn Ḥazm would use similar expressions
      later (*Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* 6, 7ff./94, 3ff. ʿAbbās); it was probably a commonplace.

37    Text 160.

the eye.[38] It seems that the question of whether the *rūḥ* might be understood as a cosmic force, a *quinta essentia*, seems to have interested Naẓẓām, although his response was rather monosyllabic.[39] The internally Dahrite argument over whether the spirit was more likely to combine with blood or with a breath of air (*nasīm*) was certainly also familiar to him.[40] If he took sides it would have been for the latter position; after all, the Quran stated that God 'breathed' his spirit into Adam.[41] He was not obliged to comment, however; as the concept of body he evolved was above these identifications. Furthermore he, unlike the Dahrites, believed in the resurrection and consequently had to ensure the individuality of the soul; neither blood nor a breath of air were suited as a medium. While he thought that the spirit, once freed from the body, would rise up due to its ethereal nature, as fire does, the concept that it would join a 'universal soul' that was identical to the 'breath of air', the aether, was an extension that would be difficult to link to him.[42] Other souls, he thought, would sink downwards as they had grown too heavy; the enjoyment of sin seems to materialise in them, dragging them down to hell.[43]

He could only have relinquished the individuality of the *arwāḥ* if he had distinguished between *rūḥ* and *nafs*, the 'self', but there is no reliable evidence for that. The terminology the heresiographers use to express his ideas varies; they appear to use both terms indiscriminately. If, as was the case in Naẓẓām's circle, one linked *nafs* to *nafas* 'breath' (see p. 380 above), the distinction became inaccessible, too. Regarding the problem in general see ch. D 2.2 below. – The idea that the soul came from an extra-terrestrial home to which it would return after the human's death was of course widely believed, although in this context the word light was more frequent than 'breath of air'. Cf. e.g. regarding Abū Maʿshar, probably a younger contemporary of Naẓẓām's, Pingree in: EIran I 338 a; regarding Kindī, *Rasāʾil* I 275, pu. f./transl. Endreß in: Festschrift Falaturi 159; regarding the later Ismāʿīlite Nasafī, Madelung's remarks in:

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38 *Biḥār* LXI 61, 15; regarding the text see vol. II 550 above.

39 Text 87, a. The informative value of the passage is furthermore compromised by a philological controversy.

40 See p. 380f. above. The attribution of the relevant source is too uncertain for it to be claimed to be Naẓẓām's own text.

41 Sura 15:29 and 38:72. Shīʿite circles pointed to it, supporting it with the argument that *rūḥ* and *rīḥ* 'wind' were derived from the same root (*Biḥār* LXI 28 no. 1).

42 See p. 381 above.

43 Text 115, c, after Ibn al-Rēwandī. Khayyāṭ did not comment on the issue.

Festschrift Yarshater 131f. The concept can be traced back to Hermetism
(cf. Genequand in: ZGAIW 4/1987–8/3).

### 3.2.2.2.2  Spirit and Body

How the soul separates from the body was not the only problem, but also how
it appears to us when joined to it. After all one does not distinguish people
based on their spirit but by their looks or physiognomy; Abū l-Hudhayl was
really closer to reality with his definition of a human as 'that person there'.
Whoever regarded the spirit as the truly human principle had to wonder
whether it influenced its 'shell', whether the inner individuality informed the
outward appearance. Naẓẓām's pupils do not appear to have known how he
thought about it;[1] they were only gradually becoming aware of the problem.
The opponents belaboured the argument that the spirit was invisible; if it was
genuinely identical with the human, no-one could ever have seen the prophet
Muḥammad – or indeed any other human.[2] This was drawing consequences
for their own sake, and probably incorrect ones at that, as Naẓẓām presumed
that by mixing with others, 'subtle' bodies could become 'compact' and thus
visible. The true question was rather, **how** one saw humans.

The mere fact that every human had his own individual handwriting[3] was
of course not an answer. It was, however, said that during his lectures Naẓẓām
went a step further: when one interprets a human based on his outward ap-
pearance, one sees him as an abstraction. Other things, too, can be seen only
in part, even if they do not resist perception: one knows one is standing before
a wall, even if one only sees one side of it.[4] The important thing was that one
should not confuse the human with the sensations on which one's interpreta-
tion is based; on cannot taste or smell him.[5] This way of recognising a human
as an individual must also be distinguished from his definition; while the latter
is also an abstraction of the appearance, one arrives at it by listing the most ge-
neric characteristics: life, death, reason (*nuṭq*) and laughter.[6] The passage also
shows that Naẓẓām included the property (*khāṣṣa*) laughter in the definition:
he interpreted humans not only as *animal rationale* but as a mortal, intelligent

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1   Text 132, c–e.
2   Text 133.
3   See p. 404 above.
4   Text 149, a–d.
5   Text 150, d.
6   Text 149, e–g.

living being that is able to laugh. This extension was suggested in Porphyry's *Eisagoge*; Muḥammad Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's shorter Arabic version helped, too.[7]

Just as the spirit has an effect on the body, so does the body influence the spirit. There is tension between the two; like everyone presuming a duality of body and soul Naẓẓām, too, tended to deprecate the body. It is the 'prison of the soul';[8] the soul is free after the body's death.[9] The idea sounds Platonic, but it also suggested itself because the spirit was frequently interpreted as a breath of air imprisoned in the body as in a bag.[10] Naẓẓām also added several further modifications. He emphasised that the spirit was 'neither light nor darkness',[11] addressing the Dayṣāniyya,[12] and also Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[13] The spirit is not a divine spark; however much people tried to remove from it all physicality, it would never be the same as God, as being the same is never based on negative similarity.[14] The human body for its part may be a 'detraction' (*āfa*),[15] but not necessarily an ill; the detraction it causes has its place in the order of the world. After all, it is the result of mixture; seen under this aspect, body and spirit affect each other like two opposite elements or 'bodies' that 'neutralise' each other.

The word *āfa* had already been used as a term by 'Dahrite' physicians, referring to a harmful force that affects the spirit and can lead to death.[16] The Dayṣāniyya was also familiar with it,[17] but Naẓẓām now used the term in his own way. 'Detraction' denotes every 'body' together with which we perceive the human body with our senses and which permeates its spirit; odour, colour etc.[18] By prevailing against these obstacles the spirit's function becomes

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7    Cf. ibid. 7, 12: *al-insān huwa ḥayy nāṭiq mayyit*, the reference to laughter is slightly earlier (7, 7). The complete extant translation of the *Eisagoge* is much more recent, the translator was Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī (ed. A. F. al-Ahwānī; Cairo 1952). The *K. al-ḥudūd* of the *Corpus Jābirianum* calls the addition of *ḍaḥḥāk* superfluous but harmless (*Rasāʾil* 98, 5ff., esp. 99, 11ff.).

8    Text 131, d.

9    Text 115, c.

10   Thus according to a Shīʿite belief, probably from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's circle (*Biḥār* x 185, 10ff.).

11   Text 131, g.

12   See p. 366 and 385 above.

13   See vol. I 432 above.

14   Text 150, e–g.

15   Text 131, d, and 146, e.

16   Cf. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq in Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 548, 9 = MUSJ 50/1984/390, −4.

17   Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 338, 6.

18   Text 151, b.

differentiated. Fundamentally, as we have seen, all sensory perception is one as long as the spirit is its medium, but a 'detraction' may cause one of the organs of perception to fail.[19] This also explains why we have several senses; we can imagine that a dark filter stops the ear from perceiving colour, or that a kind of glass pane in the organ of sight allows colour to enter but not sound. However, at this point one hypothesis more or less made little difference to Naẓẓām; one might just as well say that in the eye, and only there, colour prevails over the 'detractions' emanating from the other sensory perceptions, i.e. 'bodies' such as sounds, odours etc. One might even, as some pupils added, consider that colour can enter the eye only because there is not much colour there; in this case the 'detraction' would be due not to something foreign but to something similar.[20] However, the principle of the explanation was indisputable despite these variations.

Of course death, too, is a 'detraction' in a certain sense. If it enters into something living, it destroys its capacity to act.[21] Naẓẓām chose his words carefully; he did not say that death destroys the *human* or causes him to perish, as the human does not perish when he dies.[22] The human is the spirit, and the spirit lives on. Even the 'bodies' that made up the human body really only enter into a different mixture. Overall, the situation is slightly changed from before. Death may be caused by a component of the mixture, for instance the toxic substance already present within the human,[23] but death is not itself an ingredient that can become dominant over life at any point. Life is the spirit, and – as we have seen – the spirit has no opposite.[24] Consequently death is no body; it is merely the escaping of the spirit, i.e., a movement and as such an accident. Saying that it 'enters into' the body, as we quoted above, was probably simply a metaphor for God's having sent it.[25] A murderer can also make it enter into his victim; then it will be inherent in the killed person as 'being killed' (*inqitāl*). The term 'inherent' tells us that death is interpreted as an accident in this context: it is an accident of the person killed, just as killing – being an action – is an accident of the murderer.

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19    Text 141.
20    Text 142 after Jāḥiẓ, perhaps his *K. al-maʿrifa* (cf. Catalogue of Works xxx, no. 36, and p. 413 below). NB his concluding remark (*k*). Regarding the last of the theories listed cf. also Text 151, i–k.
21    Text 149, o–q; also 147, c.
22    Ibid., q.
23    See p. 382 above.
24    See p. 401 above.
25    It is also said in the same context that God gives life (149, o–p).

Text 158. Death is explicitly described as an accident in Text 149, i, although the passage is problematic, as it also mentions life as an accident and opposite of death. However, according to Naẓẓām accidents could not be opposites; furthermore, life was equated with spirit. Circumstances are regarded under a different aspect here: life and death are different properties of the human body; the human, being spirit, is not actually affected by this (cf. 149, h–l). – Like Naẓẓām, Kaʿbī would later distinguish between *qatl* as human action on the one hand and *inqitāl = mawt* as divine act on the other (Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 143, 11ff.; cf. also Gimaret, *Ashʿarī* 428).

### 3.2.2.2.2.3 Human Action

The relation between body and soul determines human action in a special way. Naẓẓām is not familiar with a separate capacity to act; this is identical with the spirit,[1] but as one acts with one's limbs, the body is part of the action, but as 'detraction', which results in an important consequence. The spirit would, as all spirits are members of the same 'class', always do the same thing, following its nature. The 'detraction' causes interference in this natural action, which means that humans have a choice. Freedom of will is due to 'detraction'.[2] It is freedom to choose evil; the spirit would, of course, only ever do good. In this way the world becomes a world of tests, and only in this way can humans earn the afterlife. This does not mean that there will not be any 'detractions' in the afterlife, for while one will not have to decide between good and evil, one will still have a body. The belief in the resurrection of the flesh prevented Naẓẓām from interpreting *āfa* as negatively as the 'Dahrites' had done.

Cf. Text 151. Ibn al-Rēwandī claims here that the end of 'detractions' would lead to the blessed not eating, drinking, or having sexual intercourse any more (*d*). This might mean that they, as Abū l-Hudhayl believed, enter into the permanent rest of paradise. There is indeed a Shīʿite anecdote that states this as Naẓẓām's view (Kashshī 274f. no. 493), but it is rather stereotypical and has his opponent Hishām b. al-Ḥakam using an argument Hishām al-Fuwaṭī had already employed against Abū l-Hudhayl (see p. 280 above). While Naẓẓām did write a book on the subject, this was probably in order to distance himself from Abū l-Hudhayl. His concept of the spirit may of course have led him to spiritualise the delights of paradise without having to deny the resurrection of the flesh, which

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1 Text 130, c; 147, a; 148, a; cf. also Text XIII 4.
2 Text 148, c, and 146, e–f.

he would have been even less likely to do if he had indeed followed Abū l-Hudhayl. Khayyāṭ expresses himself diplomatically on this point, but he leaves no doubt that if the blessed wished to enjoy their rewards through their senses, Naẓẓām, too believed that they could do so only because of being mixed with flavours, odours etc. (*g–h*). It is furthermore important that the ability of sensory perception is not dulled in the afterlife. The pains of hell – and presumably the joys of paradise, too – must thus not be so great that the spirit could not perceive anything besides. This clever idea was criticised unjustly (*i–m*). It recalls the abovementioned theory some of Naẓẓām's pupils evolved in the context of sensory perception: that one can perceive – we might say: appreciate – colour only if the eye is not yet filled with colour that 'detracts' form the perception. However, we do not know whether Naẓẓām used the term 'detraction' in the context of the afterlife.

Elsewhere[3] I compared this unusual explanation of freedom of will with the model of Maximus Confessor (580–662); he distinguishes between the 'natural' will of the human (θέλημα φυσικόν) and his 'personal' will (θέλημα γνωμικόν). Natural will, like Naẓẓām's spirit, always inclines to good; something perfect never has to choose, seeing as it always knows naturally what is good. Choice is the result of 'personal will' which is the mark of human imperfection. If we agree to consider this choice, we limit our true freedom.[4] The kinship of the two systems is in their intention; they diverge in the substance. Maximus Confessor must explain original sin, while Naẓẓām's starting point is the 'mixture' in humans. Consequently Maximus Confessor begins with the will, while Naẓẓām choses the capacity to act. The capacity to act meets a 'detraction' in the form of its opposite, the incapacity to act (*ʿajz*),[5] just like bodies are always 'neutralised' by their opposites. Clearly he is not saying that one is not capable of performing a good action; merely that one is able of ignoring the capacity to act which still exists and which, being an expression of the spirit, only aspires to do good. Of course this does not explain everything; least of all those actions where will plays the decisive part: deliberate sin.

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3  In: *Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. T. Rudavsky, p. 53ff. (esp. p. 63).

4  V. Loussky, *They Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* 125; Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* 137ff. On the field of Christology Maximus also decided against Monotheletism as championed during his lifetime by Emperor Heraclius (Meyendorff 144f.; Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* II 74).

5  Text 148, d; 147, c.

We have very little information indeed on this issue. The case as such is clear: to Naẓẓām, injustice, lies etc. were also the result of 'detraction'.[6] However, as these are not bodies but 'motion', and ultimately movements – i.e. action – of the spirit,[7] further distinctions must be made. We are not looking at actions humans do not initiate themselves, as these are part of their nature and cannot be evaluated morally.[8] He is not referring to the 'generated', secondary acts; they are effected by God in such a way that the nature with which he imbued things becomes active. When Naẓẓām devised this last explanation, he was probably looking to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's idea of the *ījāb al-khilqa*; 'generated' events are of necessity caused by a force inherent in the object affected by the acting human.[9] The human contributes only the stimulus, and this is essentially contained in his will. Whenever Naẓẓām found himself compelled to list human 'movements', he would limit these to intellectual occupations: expressions of intent or the absence of intent, knowing and not-knowing, speech and silence, thought in its various forms: as rational deliberation (*tafakkur*), as creative force and imagination (*tamthīl*), and ultimately honesty and lie. If he did name physical activities, the first that came to his mind were duties of worship: prayer or fasting.[10]

Sin thus happens first and foremost because the human wants to commit it.[11] This, however, leads nowhere within the framework of Naẓẓām's system; independently of the fact that in his view all actions were members of the same 'class'. This difficulty, which Ibn al-Rēwandī pointed out and Baghdādī

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6    Text 187, c.

7    Text 156, b.

8    Text 149, n, which expresses it in a positive way: these actions occur *ʿalā l-mufāǧaʾa*. I translated this as 'spontaneous', but this is probably only justified in the context given; it shows that this by no means refers to a spontaneous deliberate decision.

9    Text 152, f–h; briefly also 146, f. With reference to sensory perception Text 144; with reference to secondary generated pain Text 203 (cf. p. 390 above). It seems remarkable that Ashʿarī always expresses the facts in a verbal construction: *bi-ījābin khalaqahū (llāh)*; perhaps Naẓẓām wished to avoid consolidating the idea into a concept. Text 203 has *bi-ījāb al-ṭabīʿa*. Cf. also *Erkenntnislehre* 169, n. 1, and Gimaret, *Acte humain* 27; p. 371 above. Naẓẓām's idea of *tawallud* was met with understandable criticism both by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and Abū l-Hudhayl (Catalogue of Works XVII, no. 8, and XXI, no. 27).

10   Text 152, c; 149, m–n; 164. Baghdādī noted that this distinguished him from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam who regarded all these as bodies, too (Text 155). I do not understand how he would have refuted the latter with the remark quoted there, as it was really an argument against himself.

11   Cf. also Text 159 and XVI 52.

elaborated,[12] is resolved by the observation that opposites are likely especially within a class, such as sensory perceptions; in this way one can want to perform an act of obedience as well as commit a sin.[13] The actual question is where we can find a 'detraction' that does not reduce this decision to a purely mechanical process. It seems that Naẓẓām found it in the two 'intellectual stimuli' (*khāṭirāni*) offering the alternative necessary for a conscious decision according to many Muʿtazilites. They are bodies; they must be, as they were both created by God.[14] Humans cannot function without them, but they do not effect them.[15] Being bodies they enter into humans, presumably in the form of 'inspiration' or 'suggestion', where they act as 'detractions' to the spirit to such a degree that it does not automatically do good any more. A devil's advocate might say that sin is God's fault, but not even Ibn al-Rēwandī accepted this. God, he said, creates the 'suggestion' to commit a sin in order to 'establish a balance'; he only wants to test humans.[16]

The part Satan plays in this is consequently small. He does not enter the hearts of humans, even less does he move around in them like blood (thus after a well-known hadith; cf. *Conc.* I 215a). However, he acquires influence over them by interpreting their reactions correctly (Text XVI 62; cf. vol. I 411 above). This agrees with Naẓẓām's rationalism; he dismissed the humming of the *jinn* people believed they could hear in the desert, or the spooky stories about *ghūl*, as figments of the imagination and hallucinations (Text 233; cf. Jacob, *Beduinenleben* 122f.). He also thought it was impossible for demons to serve a human, e.g. Solomon (see p. 451 below).

### 3.2.2.2.3   *Knowledge*
#### 3.2.2.2.3.1        'Necessary' and 'Acquired' Knowledge
Knowledge or understanding, as we have seen, was a movement of the spirit or, as was also said, of the heart.[1] This definition is not, however, sufficient, as it also applies to not-knowing. Compared to a mere opinion, knowledge has the advantage of being true and giving humans certainty. The question is, how does one

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12    Text 156, b, and 153, b–d.
13    Text 154, c, and 156, i–k; also 255. Cf. p. 383 above.
14    Concerning this conclusion see p. 392f. above.
15    Cf. Text XXI 137, d, and XXII 229.
16    Text 229. Ashʿarī's scepticism towards Ibn al-Rēwandī's account (*d*) seems to me unjustified in the systematic context. Cf. also Pazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 100, 1f.

1     Text 164, a.

notice this. Naẓẓām's criterion appears to have been that movement changes to rest; some of his pupils were certainly familiar with the phrase *sukūn al-kalb*.[2] Knowledge would then be movement only while it is 'on the way'; Ar. *ʿalima* also means 'to gain an insight, to recognise'. Someone in possession of the truth experiences peace of heart; at that point knowledge is not an action any more.[3]

This was easily understood, the only disadvantage being that the criterion was subjective. Naẓẓām seems to have accepted this. Later sources ascribed the view to him that a decision was true if it agreed with the person's innermost conviction; whether it agreed with actual reality was of less interest to him.[4] This was, of course, said *a posteriori*; Naẓẓām himself probably had not made such a strict distinction here. After all, he was still a sensualist up to a point: we recognise bodies, and can make use of them.[5] He also seems to have presumed that the heart calms down because the person acquiring the knowledge can refer to 'necessary' information, such as sensory perceptions (*istishhād al-ḍarūrāt*).[6] Still, it depends on what one makes of reality; truth may be abused. Sura 63:1 tells us: 'When the hypocrites come to you they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of God"', and immediately afterwards interprets the situation, 'And God knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and God (also) bears witness that the hypocrites are truly liars'.[7] They are liars because they do not in their hearts agree with the truth they speak. The crux of this argument was that *kadhib* did not only denote a 'lie' but also an objectively incorrect statement; Arabic makes no distinction, similar to Greek ψεῦδος. Jāḥiẓ would soon pursue this idea.[8]

Jāḥiẓ also transmitted which kinds of knowledge (i.e., cognition) Naẓẓām assumed besides sensory perception, applying the same paradigm he employed in the case of Muʿammar.[9] Consequently we cannot be quite certain

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2 Cf. Text XXX 5, d, g, and p. M. Bernand, too, believed the idea originated with Naẓẓām (SI 39/1974/48, n. 3). Job of Edessa also knew this concept (*Book of Treasures* 284f.).

3 Concerning the further history of the term *sukūn al-qulb* or *sukūn al-nafs* cf. Bernand, *Problème de la connaissance* 75ff., and my *Erkenntnislehre* 75ff., also for information regarding the question of its origins. During Antiquity there had already been some who described truth as κίνημα τῆς διανοίας (Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Log.* II 137).

4 Text 165; cf. also Tahānawī, *Kashshāf* I 330, 1f.

5 Text 170, b–d.

6 Text XXX 5, k–l and q.

7 Text 165, commentary; also *Erkenntnislehre* 71, and Bernand, *Problème de la connaissance* 173f.

8 See ch. C 4.2.4.1.1 below. Regarding the development in general see also Bernand in: SI 39/1974/25ff.

9 Cf. Text 166, a–b, and Text XVI 64.

whether the similarity apparent as a result is suggested mainly by the presentation, or whether Naẓẓām actually commented on a catalogue drawn up by Muʻammar.[10] It was normal that Naẓẓām should have distinguished between innate and acquired knowledge, but as the examples given for the former are the same Muʻammar gave – intuition and, even more characteristically, knowledge we receive from the statements of others, the approach looks quite specific.[11] Lacking, on the other hand, was what would later be called *badīhiyyāt*: axioms like the law of contradiction etc.[12]

This was not surprising as they only came to the fore from the fifth century onwards, but it is noticeable that Naẓẓām did not accord the awareness of self its own place; Muʻammar had emphasised it particularly. We can guess at the reason when we see that he also omitted the a priori awareness of creaturehood;[13] the two together were the basis of a priori knowledge of God that had existed in Basra until Abū l-Hudhayl and Muʻammar's day. Naẓẓām abandoned this; one achieves knowledge of God, like all religious information, by deliberation, i.e. through one's own active endeavour.[14] The intellect is more than equal to this – even someone who does not know the revelation must come to the conclusion that there is a creator, and that some actions are good and others evil.[15] Naẓẓām believed in natural theology.

Consequently, like Bishr b. al-Muʻtamir he, too, had to allow humans a 'term' during which they could search for God without incurring punishment.[16] In fact, he went a step further: he appreciated doubt. Not by according it a central place like Descartes, but by admitting it as a necessary transitional stage.[17] The common people's trust in authority, on the other hand, was to be condemned: it was the reason, sura 43:23 tells us, why some of the prophet's contemporaries did not welcome the new message.[18] The allocated 'term' may continue for a long time, as one cannot know God only partially. This is possible in the case of earthly things, but one must know God not at all or entirely – and then, of course, in keeping with Muʻtazilite theology.[19] This knowledge will remain

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10    We will have to take into account that this catalogue for Muʻammar is not complete in the
        version transmitted by Jāḥiẓ (see p. 94 above).

11    See p. 93 above.

12    Cf. my *Erkenntnislehre* 164ff.

13    Cf. Text XVI 64, e–g.

14    Text 166, c. Cf. Qāḍī ʻAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XII 512, 15, and earlier.

15    Text 168. Cf. also 223, d–h.

16    Text XXI 47, o; cf. p. 137f. and 272f. above.

17    Text 167.

18    Text 235.

19    Text 171–172. The Baghdad school adopted this (*Maq.* 394, 9f.).

rational; even in the afterlife one will not perceive God with the senses, not see him face to face. The realms of 'necessary' and 'acquired' knowledge are separate forever more.[20]

### 3.2.2.2.3.2    The Reliability of Tradition

The dominant part played by the senses and by the intellect led to tradition losing in importance. We have seen that Naẓẓām believed the knowledge we acquire by means of *akhbār* of any kind to be 'necessary', but this did not refer to the information conveyed but to the way in which it was conveyed: we receive it through our ears. The difficulty was how it 'spread' – thinking in Naẓẓām's categories: how the sound of an account spreads through the generations and over numerous individuals, believers and unbelievers, and is 'fragmented' in the process.[1] This might explain how a tradition would gradually become 'discussed to pieces', but it did not say anything concerning its original reliability. Consequently Naẓẓām added a number of provisos. Bodies, he said, cannot be recognised through *akhbār*;[2] i.e. they are only accessible to the senses – it is not possible to describe the taste of milk. When it comes to information accessible to the intellect, *akhbār* are not relevant, either; this is for the intellect only.[3] This includes, as hinted earlier, the fundamentals of faith.[4] If a tradition is our only source of knowledge in the area appropriate, it does not matter how well attested it is. Naẓẓām was not interested in numerical criteria of the kind Abū l-Hudhayl had tried to determine; in his view, the relevant factors are sensory perceptions and rational conclusions accompanying the statement and imbuing it with conviction.

He intended to say that reports and statements always have a context and are understood in relation to a particular situation. If someone tells us of a death, we will believe him if we know that the person mentioned was fatally ill, and if we see a coffin brought to his house.[5] In this case it would not matter whether the person giving the information was a Muslim or not; this is only

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20    Conversely things perceived with the senses cannot be understood through reason (Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 16, 2ff.).

1     Text 170, g–h; also p. 388 above.

2     Text 241, b.

3     Text 169, a, and 170, f.

4     Explicitly stated in *K. al-nakth* (cf. there p. 23 § 1).

5     Text 241, a, and 242–243. The examples in the last-named text may well have been devised later, like those cited by Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār following 242 (*Mughnī* xv 392, 11ff.). ʿAbd al-Jabbār furthermore shows that he does not have precise knowledge of the intention of Naẓẓām's theory (398, 9ff.); he relies on doxographical tradition only. A counter-argument

relevant if his faith is the determining attendant circumstance, i.e. if points of faith are transmitted: in these cases a Muslim deserves a higher degree of trust. It is not, however, proof of the truth of the information; but considering it to be true (*taṣdīq*) becomes easier.[6] Ibn al-Rēwandī interpreted this to mean that no creed takes precedence over another,[7] but he forgot to add that in Naẓẓām's view there is proof of truth in the case of Islam, but that it must be achieved by means of reason.

This takes us to the issue that was always present in discussions of the subject: the reliability of hadiths. The chronological distance would usually mean that the transmitter and his *ʿadāla* were the most relevant of the 'attendant circumstances'. Naẓẓām did not dismiss hadith in general; he knew that purely intellectual criticism may sometimes err, and he admitted that he himself once took years to understand the meaning of a prophetic dictum.[8] He did not even want to reject improbable things such as the metamorphosis of humans into animals (*maskh*), because he was aware that all Muslims believed it and quoted prophetic dicta as evidence.[9] While he mocked the traditionists who in spite of all their travels 'did not know their wares better than pack camels',[10] he himself was well-versed in their subject,[11] sometimes even applying criteria developed by them.[12] None of which changed the fact that he would only take an isolated hadith, like any other statement, seriously if its message made sense – either because it was supported by a sensory perception, or because it could be confirmed by reason. As for the transmitter, one can never rule out that he might have been lying. On the contrary: experience tells us that jurists and traditionists falsify traditions in order to gain prestige and material reward; sometimes they even admit to it, albeit only on their deathbed. This explains why many hadiths are contradictory; Naẓẓām collated a number of instances, possibly inspired by Ḍirār b. ʿAmr.[13]

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was presented by Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 567, 5ff. – Regarding the criterion of the attendant circumstance (*qarīna*) in the *uṣūl al-fiqh* cf. Hallaq in: JAOS 108/1988/475ff.

6       Text 245, a–c and f–g.

7       Ibid., d.

8       Text 253.

9       Text 234. Did he believe lizards were transformed humans? (Cf. *Ḥayawān* VI 78, 5ff., and earlier).

10      Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* I 67, –6f.

11      The best examples are in *K. al-nakth*; cf. e.g. p. 78f., 101 and 104; also Text 270, a–d. However, these were frequently dicta of the *ṣaḥāba*.

12      Cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Bighāl* in: *Rasāʾil* II 356, 4ff. Jāḥiẓ, too, paid him the compliment of having been an expert in hadith (*Nakth* 118). The *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*, of course, did not agree.

13      Cf. Text 254 with the characteristic introduction; also Ibn Qutayba's summary Text 252. Regarding Ḍirār see p. 56 above. The Christians of Naẓẓām's time also pointed out

He drew the consequence that one cannot base a legal rule on a hadith alone.[14] Even broad authentication (*tawātur*) does not fundamentally change this. The opponents chose a provocative example in this context: it could be that the entire community agreed on an error.[15] Khayyāṭ thought that only Jāḥiẓ claimed this of Naẓẓām,[16] but there is a parallel in Ibn Ḥazm where a sarcastic afterthought of Naẓẓām's proves that Jāḥiẓ (a good witness overall) did not simply make the sentence up: not even if many blind men come together will they see again.[17] Ibn Qutayba recalls a further example mentioned by Naẓẓām in this context: all Muslims believe that only Muḥammad was sent as a prophet to the people; this, however, was true of all prophets, as a prophet proves himself by working miracles, and miracles are phenomena that can be perceived by everyone through their senses.[18] Naẓẓām thus overrides consensus with a rational conclusion.

### 3.2.2.2.3.3 The Issue of *ijmāʿ*

This also shows that the maxim applied not only with reference to *tawātur* in hadith. The only field where there was no danger of collective error was sensory perception.[1] While it is likely that Naẓẓām had some faith in rational insight – especially his own – the consensus of jurists was just as fallible as the *tawātur* of the *muḥaddithūn*. The former had a broader basis, but the arguments that had been evolved to support it did not stand up to criticism. It had been said, with Wāṣil, that people who followed the most diverse interests could never agree on something wrong,[2] but the example of Jews and Christians showed that this was possible after all.[3] The maxim that the community would never agree on an error had been raised to the rank of a hadith, but of course this was just as weak as many others.[4] And people had invoked Quranic passages, but their reference was anything but clear.[5]

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incompatibilities in hadith (Jāḥiẓ, *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā* 19, pu. f. = *Rasāʾil* III 320, 9f./transl. Allouche 137).

14 Text 244, b–d. It would be different if it agreed with a Quranic statement.

15 Thus Ibn al-Rēwandī in Text 246, a, and elsewhere; Ibn Qutayba in Text 250, a.

16 Text 246, c.

17 Text 247. It is noticeable that Naẓẓām did not have recourse to sorites (cf. p. 288 above).

18 Text 250.

1 Thus Ibn al-Rēwandī in Text 246, a.

2 See vol. II 318 above.

3 Text 249, d–e.

4 Text 249, c. Another hadith of this type in Text 271, a.

5 Text 249, b.

The Christians' false consensus was their belief in the crucifixion, while the Jews erred in their conviction of the impossibility of abrogating the law. The Mālikite jurist Bājī (d. 474/1081) still considered Naẓẓām's argument to be valid, modifying it only to say that a large group of people could not agree on a **deliberate** lie (Turki, *Polémiques* 157). Naẓẓām had not claimed this in any case. Jāḥiẓ shared Naẓẓām's scepticism; citing some instances of such errors occurring in the Islamic community – such as when in Manṣūr's time all the inhabitants of Bahrain performed the Friday prayer on a Thursday (*Ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* in: *Rasāʾil* III 247, 3ff.). The Ḥanafite Jaṣṣāṣ had already pointed to Jews and Christians before Bājī (cf. Bernand in: JAOS 105/1985/631). Ibn ʿAqīl also discussed this question (*Funūn* 302f. § 295).

Presenting the abovementioned maxim of infallibility in the form of a hadith was, of course, a later development; not quite as late, however, as Schacht believed (*Origins* 91): it had emerged by the time of the canonical collections. While Shāfiʿī quoted it in his *Risāla* as a universal principle without reference to the prophet (472, pu. f.), Naẓẓām, only one generation after him, should be regarded as the *terminus ante quem*. He may well have been more familiar with Iraqi tradition than Shāfiʿī. A characteristic detail sheds light on the possible path taken by the development. Naẓẓām as well as Shāfiʿī are concerned with a 'mistake' (*khaṭaʾ*) on which the community could never agree, while the canonical version preserved by Ibn Māja has 'error' (*ḍalāla*, Sunan no. 3950; cf. also *Conc.* III 518 b). Thus also in the roughly contemporary rejection by Faḍl b. Shādhān (*Īḍāḥ* 126, pu. ff.) and in Text XV 44, h, which probably takes us back to Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb. Mufīd claims, possibly based on Jāḥiẓ, that Naẓẓām accepted the hadith in principle but then insisted on the distinction that the community could not agree on a mistake but might agree on an error (Text 248). This should be regarded with some caution as it does not correspond entirely with the remark 249, c, which goes back to Jāḥiẓ; but if we agree to the distinction it might be evidence that the *muḥaddithūn*, in order to take the wind out of Naẓẓām's sails, changed the hadith to read *ḍalāla*, too. [I have since discovered that Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb's *Musnad* (Cairo 1326/1908) I 65, 4, includes it in this form already.] Regarding the problem cf. also Text 263, g–h, with commentary. Concerning the later study of the dictum cf. Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 471, 15ff./transl. Bernand, *Accord unanime* 26ff. (which once again has *khaṭaʾ*); it also contains information on Quranic proof (459, 1ff./13ff.).

If one were to continue to speak of consensus under these circumstances, it would have to be defined in a similar way to every other reliable statement,

based on whether it could be grasped by reason. Ghazzālī put it succinctly: Naẓẓām was interested in the argument (*ḥujja*) for the consensus; if the argument was conclusive, the consensus might even be a single individual's.[6] This is not necessarily how Naẓẓām himself put it, but it seems that the case was summed up like this quite early on, as the Shīʿites concluded that Naẓẓām believed that only the dictum of an imam who was free from sin could be an argument.[7] Thus they interpreted 'a single individual' in their way; Naẓẓām himself would certainly not have seen it like this.

In the Shīʿa this would later be called *ijmāʿ dukhūlī* (Löschner, *Dogmatische Grundlagen des šīʿitischen Rechts* 135f.; cf. also Brunschvig in: Le Shîʿisme imâmite 205). Naẓẓām probably did not have this consensus or the *ijmāʿ al-ʿulamāʾ* in mind, but rather the *ijmāʿ al-umma*, as the arguments to which he referred were universally valid (cf. Text 255, b). After all, he did not regard *ijmāʿ* as a separate juristic basis beside a tradition, but as the agreement in **accepting** a particular tradition; this was what his criteria were aimed at. The theory described anonymously in Qāḍī Nuʿmān, *Ikhtilāf uṣūl al-madhāhib* 82, 3ff., that 'an *ijmāʿ* argument is seen as binding when all humans professing Islam (*ahl al-qibla*) … agree on a statement that is in itself an argument'. At this point, as we shall see in the following, the development had reached a stage where the *ijmāʿ* hadith discussed above was accepted in the *ḍalāla* version. Naẓẓām had nothing to do with the Imāmite Shīʿa, as witness his political theory (see p. 451 below).

3.2.2.2.3.4     Renouncing the Conclusion by Analogy. Juristic Special Opinions

The Shīʿites' misunderstanding was rooted in the fact that like Naẓẓām they believed in a superior authority, but where they saw the imam's place, Naẓẓām saw reason and sensory perception. He now had to clarify how one had best use reason. Once again he caused the legal profession some distress: he rejected the conclusion by analogy. The commandments applicable until then, which were based on the Quran, are not in an analogical relation, consequently they cannot be extended *per analogiam*. It we did not know from sura 33:59 that it is permitted to see the hair of a female slave, we would conclude from the fact that it is prohibited to see the hair of a free woman as stated in 24:31 that it is, by analogy, prohibited in the case of a female slave, especially if the latter is prettier. A *ratio legis* could easily be found: the fear of being led into

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6    Text 251; also 236, a.

7    Qummī, *Safīnat al-biḥār* II 597 s. n. Naẓẓām, although it is possible that he relies exclusively on Shahrastānī 39, pu. f./82, 13.

temptation. By deciding differently in the Quran God demonstrates that he has no interest in analogies.

Cf. Text 255–256. Our presentation of the case barely indicated in 255, e, takes its lead from Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 747, 5ff., where he follows Naẓẓām's train of argument through. Abū l-Ḥusayn probably did not have access to the original, either. The Quranic verses we adduced are not named, and are not clearly distinguishable. At the stage in the discussion where Naẓẓām began to contribute they had long been interpreted in any case. Sura 33:59 is an admonition to the 'women of the faithful', especially the prophet's wives and daughters, to cover their heads with their garment when going out; in this way they could show they are respectable women and thus be safe from harassment. This led to the conclusion, *e contrario*, that female slaves might wear their hair uncovered (cf. Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān* IV 370, –11ff.). Sura 24:31 is the *locus classicus* exhorting the 'faithful women' to behave demurely. As the verse names slaves separately the inference was that this exhortation was addressed to free women in particular. It does not mention hair specifically, only the women's 'ornament', but the meaning of this word was extended early on to include hair (cf. Ṭabrisī IV 138, 13; also Samarqandī, *Tuḥfat al-fuqahāʾ* III 467, 3ff.; in general Juynboll, *Handbuch* 163f.). It is furthermore possible that Naẓẓām used a more generic term: *maḥāsin* 'charms' (cf. the commentary on Text 255, e).

Naẓẓām adduced further examples that we cannot present in detail here.[1] They would have gladdened the heart of every Shīʿite, as a number of them are also found in the much-quoted conversation of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and Abū Ḥanīfa in which they proved *qiyās* impracticable.[2] The development may have taken the opposite route; it is possible that Shīʿite tradition grew over the years and adopted arguments from accounts about Naẓẓām and subordinated these to their own intent.[3] It is still rather surprising to find that in one of the legal tenets people remembered from him, Naẓẓām seems to have relied on an

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1   Text 255, b–d. Cf. Turki, *Polémiques* 340ff., although he tends to ascribe anonymous arguments to Naẓẓām too uncritically (see p. 371 and 375 above); also id. in: SI 42/1975/76.

2   See vol. I 218 above, with references.

3   Some of the Shīʿite accounts do not contain any examples (e.g. Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 57, –5f., and 58, 14ff.). On the other hand, one of the most convincing arguments was found only in them for a long time, namely the comparison between the number of witnesses to fornication (four) and murder (two), when the latter was the much graver transgression. Naẓẓām's example

analogy after all. He determined the limit above which the misappropriation of an orphan's fortune was to be graded as fraud at 200 dirhams.[4] This was precisely the minimum (*niṣāb*) capital on which one had to pay taxes, i.e. *zakāt*,[5] although the case was slightly different; after all the analogy would have been weak in spite of a number of parallels.[6] He did not employ *qiyās* but based his opinion on the Quran. Sura 4:10 promises the fires of hell to all those who 'consume the fortune of orphans unlawfully'. This 'threat' expressed their status as sinners beyond any doubt, and Naẓẓām defined 'fortune' as 200 dirhams and above.[7] While he may have had the *niṣāb* for the *zakāt* in mind, this was not a true analogy. The approach was actually rather 'Ẓāhirite' in character: exegesis based on rational criteria was most important.[8]

This becomes quite clear with his attitude towards the formulas of divorce. With reference to sura 2:230 he rejected all formulas that did not contain the word 'repudiation' (*ṭalāq*, or the corresponding verb) as not effective.[9] He was not the first to discuss the problem; a boundary had to be drawn in any case,[10] but usually the decision in Iraq had taken the husband's intention into account above other factors.[11] The frontlines would be drawn entirely differently if Naẓẓām applied the same principle to the *ẓihār*, the use of the pre-Islamic repudiation formula 'you are (as untouchable) to me as my mother's back'. The Ḥanafites, i.e. those with whom he was most likely to have to deal with in Iraq, denied it had any legal effect.[12] He, however, retained it as it was written in the Quran (sura 58:2–4 and 33:4), but once again only if it was used word by word. If the back were to be replaced by something else, even something less touchable

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adduced by us was not, as far as I can see, used by the Shīʿites at all. Āmidī was the first to have all of them in one place (*Iḥkām* IV 9, 9ff.).

4    Text 260, d.

5    Cf. Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* I 255, 14ff.; Schacht in EI[1] IV 1303a s. v. *Zakāt*.

6    See p. 311f. above.

7    Text 260, e–f.

8    And this text as well as Text 261 is not primarily concerned with defining the elements of the offence of fraud, but with determining when someone committing fraud is a grave sinner. Naẓẓām clearly considered someone who did not pay *zakāt* to be a grave sinner (Abū ʿAmmār, *Mūjaz* II 272, 6ff.).

9    Text 262, a. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī emphasised the reference to sura 2:230 (*Tibyān* II 248, –6ff.). Jubbāʾī, we learn there, agreed with Naẓẓām.

10   Cf. the dissent between Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī and Shaʿbī reported by Fasawī II 100, 13ff.; also ʿAlī's dictum ibid. 105, apu. ff.

11   Cf. Schacht in EI[1] IV 691 b = HW 722a. Baghdādī also pointed it out (*Farq* 132, 4ff./146, 2ff.).

12   Schacht in HW 726a; also EI[2] IV 688.

such as the pudenda, the formula would lose its validity.[13] And it was particularly noticeable in a last case, namely the so-called *īlāʾ*, the husband's vow to refrain from intercourse with his wife. If he persevered for over four months this, too, would lead to divorce; the Quran says so (sura 2:226f.).[14] Naẓẓām, however, once again worried about the exact wording to be employed: as he linked *īlāʾ* with *Allāh* he believed that this had to be a vow by God.

Text 262, c. He appears to have been the only one to arrive at this false etymology. The correct one may be found in Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-lugha* I 127ff., or in *Lissān al-ʿArab* XIV 40 b ff. Regarding the problem of how to formulate an *īlāʾ* cf. Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* [3]IV 456ff. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī, who transmitted a legal opinion by Naẓẓām in Text 257, c–d, had his own opinion on the divorce formula as well (Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* II 65, 10ff.). We do not, however, know whether he was also responsible for the material in Text 262. No corresponding title of a book by Naẓẓām is known.

As for Naẓẓām's other extant legal tenets, the rationalistic approach sometimes shows an anti-ascetic tendency (cf. the commentary on Text 257, a, and 258; also 259, where Naẓẓām was probably reacting against pietistic circles who were afraid of performing the prayer on illegally appropriated land. The opposite position was represented by Abū Shamir al-Ḥanafī whom he tried to oust in Basra; see vol. II 206 above). The characteristics Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* II 346, 21, reported about him, were probably copied from Baghdādī, *Farq* 133, apu. f./148, 2f. and referred incorrectly; they were introduced by ʿUmar rather than by Naẓẓām.

3.2.2.2.3.5      Recourse to the Quran and the Decadence of the *ṣaḥāba*
Naẓẓām's rationalism thus led him to give precedence to scripture in questions the solutions of which were not determined by natural theology. Of course the competition between differing exegeses may cloud one's view,[1] but the way in which Naẓẓām himself practised exegesis demonstrates the degree to which he trusted his reason.[2] When it came to the debate on the subject of when general Quranic statements should be interpreted as specific, a debate

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13      Text 262, b. The Ḥanafites might have pointed out that the Quran expressed disapproval of the formula in both passages.

14      Cf. Schacht in HW 725b.

1       Text 236, a.

2       Text 216–219, esp. 216.

that had already raged for a generation, Naẓẓām (unlike Abū l-Hudhayl before him) did not demand that God would have had to clarify the matter by providing context in each individual case.[3] Rather he recommended looking for parallels in the greater context; only if nothing could be discovered there should and must one adhere to the literal meaning.[4] This context included, in his view, hadith and consensus as well; while they are most problematic in themselves, they are well-suited to provide support and confirmation. Naẓẓām had in mind those detailed legal rules in the Quran that are not accessible to a purely legal justification. It is inherent in them only if the *ratio legis* is stated in the Quran as this will always have universal application.[5] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār read this to mean that Naẓẓām accepted the conclusion by analogy after all,[6] but that was not what he intended: he had a deduction in mind. Once again his approach was Ẓāhirite, and some Ẓāhirites would indeed follow him.[7]

Naẓẓām watched the increase in juristic traditions with great suspicion. Instead of using the Quran as the basis, people had followed the *sunna* for a long time and, in order to justify it, referred to decisions made by the companions of the prophet. As everyone knew, there were many areas in which they did not agree, and the result had ultimately been a quarrel between interests and schools. Naẓẓām's older contemporary Shāfiʿī had tried to control the chaos by according absolute precedence to prophetic tradition; Naẓẓām, as we have seen, trusted in reason. They both agreed on turning their backs on the methods of the past. Naẓẓām, rationalist that he was, expressed himself more forcibly and thus attracted the hatred of the traditionists; only the Shīʿites were happy – even though he did not spare ʿAlī in his criticism of the *ṣaḥāba*, either. He discussed the issue in his *K. al-nakth*, best known to us from a Shīʿite source.[8]

He had no intention of supporting any one party, of course. In his view, the companions of the prophet had gone astray when deciding unclear cases according to their discretion.[9] There was no doubt that they had done so; they had admitted it openly themselves.[10] At the very least this allows the conclusion

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3    Text XXI 171, d–e, and 172; cf. p. 286 above.

4    Text 237–238.

5    Text 239–240.

6    Text 239, c.

7    Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad* 753, 8f.

8    Shaykh al-Mufīd's *ʿUyūn al-masāʾil*, of which Sharīf al-Murtaḍā preserved selected passages. Numerous new fragments have become accessible thanks to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maḥṣūl*. Cf. Catalogue of Works no. 19.

9    Text 267, a–b.

10   Text 267, b; 270, a–e.

that they did not see the problem: one cannot simply follow one's opinion, as in the Quran God charged us to strive for certainty.[11] Perhaps they did not simply commit an error, however: maybe it was deliberately evil intent, greed for power and influence.[12] It could certainly not be denied that the constant dissent had led to bloodshed;[13] Shīʿites and Sunnites had been at odds ever since. Clearly the development of Islam had taken the same course as that of the other, earlier religions, too: its followers had fallen out over the revelation.[14] It sounds almost as if Naẓẓām had seen the *taḥrīf* of Jews and Christians re-emerge in the *ṣaḥāba*'s arbitrary decisions.[15]

The wealth of examples adduced by Naẓẓām is impressive; tradition made it easy for him.[16] It is not surprising to see that ʿUmar and ʿAlī provided him with particularly large amounts of material. What might seem surprising is that the Shīʿite sources did not suppress the material concerning ʿAlī,[17] but the over-all effect was too valuable to them; furthermore Shaykh al-Mufīd had righted matters in his refutation. They overlooked that Naẓẓām could not be co-opted even after this correction, as he by no means believed that **all** companions of the prophet went astray. Legal opinions were transmitted in the names of only a few of them; consequently only they were the dissenters (*aṣḥāb al-furqa*). While they were of course the most prominent men, and it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that they pronounced their *fatwā*s in order to emphasise their importance, there was a majority of silent men besides them who were aware that they did not count and consequently preserved *taqiyya*. They were the true believers, and over them, as the hadith said, God held his hand.[18] In this context Naẓẓām recalls Marcion; he, too, had eliminated the original apostles because they had falsified the true gospel by preaching their own doctrine.[19]

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11    Text 270, f.

12    Text 268, b–c. Khayyāṭ was willing to admit the error at best (Text 267, c). Aṣamm had already considered that the companions of the prophet might have acted through lust for power in the battle of the camel (Text XIII 28, f; also vol. II 468 above).

13    Text 269 and 270, e.

14    Text 268, a; also 272.

15    This is a Shīʿite thought (see vol. I 326 above).

16    Cf. my collection of fragments. I shall not go into further detail here.

17    Cf. *K. an-Nakth* 47ff.

18    By quoting this hadith Naẓẓām responded to his opponents' criticism (Text 271), at the same time interpreting it in his own way, as what it actually said was that God held his hand over 'the community'. This, of course, included **all** the companions of the prophet, and gave it the status of a confirmation of the doctrine of consensus. Regarding the circulation cf. *Conc.* I 371 a, and Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 19, 1.

19    M. Werner, *Entstehung des Dogmas* 172 and 175. The analogy reaches no further. Marcion was on St Paul's side against the Judaising early community; Naẓẓām, on the other hand,

The title of the *K. al-nakth* should probably be understood in this context, too. *Nakatha* means 'to break the oath of allegiance'; *nakth* is the 'breach of faith' (ElShoush, *Nature of Authority* 251; Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership* 70). The word plays a part in pro-ʿAlid hadiths; those 'breaking their oath' are ʿAlī's opponents in the battle of the camel (Suyūṭī, *Laʾālī* I 409, 11ff.). Naẓẓām knew it was used in this context (*Nakth* 82ff.), and may have wanted to distance himself from it. He appears to have seen the breach of faith as being the *ṣaḥāba*'s failure to preserve the prophet's legacy.

### 3.2.2.2.4 *Theology*

#### 3.2.2.2.4.1 Dealing with Non-Muslims

With Naẓẓām Islam achieved absolute sovereignty over the other religions in Iraq. There had been polemic for a long time, and we may safely assume that Muslim theologians had decided many a debate in their favour before his time – after all, under the circumstances they could hardly lose them. Now, however, we have an increasing number of records of these discussions, or the arguments expressed in them, for the Muslim side as well. This is proof that they were seen as conclusive, and they probably impressed the opponents, too. Manichaeans and Dayṣānites have since vanished into thin air; at the time, close combat with Christians and, to a lesser extent, the Jews, began in earnest. The opponents had been pushed so far onto the defensive that Naẓẓām was the first Muʿtazilite who was able to adopt their arguments openly.

#### 3.2.2.2.4.1.1 *The Dualists and the Dahriyya*

As we have seen this was particularly true of his relationship with Manichaeans and Dayṣānites. He overcame them by 'killing them with kindness'. In retrospect people were less than grateful to him because when the dualists perished, their worldview became obsolete, too. Ibn al-Rēwandī used the fact that Naẓẓām adopted certain details of Manichaean and Dayṣānite thought to denigrate him.[1] Khayyāṭ, on the other hand, emphasised that none of those details contained anything heretical; but he clearly did not identify with any of them. He did, however, tell us where Naẓẓām saw the relevant points. While Naẓẓām believed that light and fire would rise to the empyrean, he did not have two separate realms of light and darkness in mind.[2] The realm of

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found that until the generation of the *tābiʿūn* there had been no-one to correct the misguided developments of the early period (Text 270, g).

1     Text 114, a–d; 115, a–d.
2     Text 115, e–g.

light was not, as the dualists claimed, infinite[3] or eternal;[4] after all, they them-
selves believed that light and darkness delimited one another.[5] They are able
to enter into mixtures, but entirely incapable of doing so of their own accord,
as they belong to different 'classes'.[6] In the view of the dualists they were origi-
nally separate; thus there must be something bringing them together. The di-
lemma is particularly clear in the case of the Dayṣāniyya which believed the
actions of the darkness to be conditioned by its nature.[7] The Manichaeans did
admit the possibility of light and darkness deciding freely – but then why did
they not decide in favour of something that is against their 'nature'?[8]

The problem of freedom arose all the more the more the emphasis shifted
from the scientific to the ethical aspect. If in the Manichaean view the light
commanded those of its particles trapped in the world and awaiting deliver-
ance, to do good, this seemed absurd as long as light could do nothing other
than good in any case.[9] The behaviour of a human intending to achieve de-
liverance himself cannot be explained by his 'nature' only, as good and evil
are mixed in his free decision. Naẓẓām was probably thinking of his theory
of 'detraction',[10] but he could not, of course, impose this on the dualists.
Consequently he employed an antinomy that would become quite well-known
later and was transmitted in a similar form about the caliph Ma'mūn:[11] if
someone confesses to having lied, it is the light speaking through him as he is
doing a good deed. However, being the principle of good, the light cannot in
fact say that it had lied.[12] The argument is structured following the model of
the sophism of the lying Cretan,[13] but it does not need to be expressed quite
so pointedly. The point was that one and the same spirit in a human causes
deceit as well as honesty; one cannot say the spirit is the abode of good and the

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3    Text 119, c–d.

4    Text 114, g.

5    Text 119, h–n; also de Menasce in: *Shkand gumānīk vichār*, Comm. 245ff.

6    Text 118, c and f–g.

7    Text 184, k and o–q; cf. commentary on 185.

8    Text 185, a and d–h; also 186, e–f. Cf. p. 397f. above. This is not the place to examine wheth-
     er Manichaeans and Dayṣānites were truly refuted; and the question hinted at in all these
     texts, namely whether Naẓẓām was implicitly contradicting his own principles, must also
     be shelved for the time being (see p. 438 below). *Shkand gumānīk vichār* also says that
     good and evil had their own 'nature' each (p. 41, l. 29; cf. Comm. p. 43).

9    Text 186, a and c–g.

10   See p. 408f. above.

11   See p. 218 above.

12   Text 156, d–g.

13   Baghdādī noticed this (*Uṣūl al-dīn* 217, 4ff.).

body the abode of evil.[14] When it came to the senses, good and evil could not be separated as clearly as the Manichaeans assumed.[15] By adding dualism to a human, they divide the human's personality.[16]

Naẓẓām presumably expressed these ideas – or at least some of them – in the treatise he wrote against the dualists.[17] He also attacked the *mulḥidūn*,[18] but we do not know who that referred to. The situation is better with regard to his *Radd ʿalā l-Dahriyya*;[19] several texts can be assigned to this title. He argued with the Dahrites concerning the spatial and temporal infiniteness of the world. He refuted it by pointing out the finiteness of all motion and consequently of all distances traversed. Movement that took place in the past has, as we know, come to an end.[20] Movements that appear to continue forever like the celestial bodies differ from one another in that individual planets move along orbits of different lengths, and as the differences are finite, the orbits must be finite.[21] These are arguments that may be traced back to John Philoponus, and will be found again later; Naẓẓām was the first to mix them into *kalām*.

Cf. in detail Davidson in: IAOS 89/1969/375ff. and previously; also in: *Proofs for Eternity* 117ff.; adopted by Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* 214ff. (cf. also *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Schience* 171ff.), and by Ivry who pointed out the similarities with Kindī (*Al-Kindī's Metaphysics*, p. 25 of the introduction and p. 148 and 163 in the commentary; cf. again Davidson, *Proofs* 106ff.). Regarding the context in Philoponus' own works cf. W. Wieland in: Die Gegenwart der Griechen im neueren Denken, Festschrift Gadamer 307 and earlier; briefly also Sambursky in: Festschrift Walzer 353 and earlier. Some Muslims, too, remembered that he was the man behind these argunments, e.g. Isfizārī (cf. the text in: MUSJ 50/1984/237, −7f.) or Bayhaqī (*Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma* 24, 7f.). – Presumably the astronomers to whom Naẓẓām responded in Text 124 were probably also close to the Dahriyya as he saw it: they believed that substances were generated out of primal motion.

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14    Text 156, a.

15    Text 140.

16    The argument is often turned this way elsewhere, too (cf. the references given p. 219, n. 28 above). Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl's version see p. 291 above.

17    Catalogue of Works no. 5.

18    Ibid. no. 6.

19    Ibid. no. 4.

20    Text 120 with commentary.

21    Text 121.

3.2.2.2.4.1.2    *The Jews*

We have access to a text purporting to be the transcript of a discussion between Naẓẓām and a Jew.[1] This is a rare document at that time, for while a number of Muʿtazilites before Naẓẓām had already written against the Jews: Aṣamm, Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir, Abū l-Hudhayl,[2] their arguments left no traces in tradition. It is quite surprising that there is no relevant title listed among Naẓẓām's books. The text in question is not fully authenticated; Naẓẓām's authorship is stated as *zaʿamū* 'they say'. It may well be simply a model for a Muslim to follow. The subject is indeed the very one always discussed with Jews: the abrogation of the Mosaic Law.[3] Even so there is no real reason why we should doubt the text. The train of thought touches on some of his other statements. Furthermore he was said to have known by heart not only the Quran but also the Old and New Testaments and the psalter together with their exegeses.[4]

A Muslim regarded the abolition of the Mosaic Law as divine abrogation (*naskh*). This actually decided the case for him, as he would know from the case of the Quran that abrogation is possible and that God effects it. Maybe Naẓẓām was the first to have focussed the debate onto this point. It must also be admitted that the Christians had paved the way for him by speaking of the 'new covenant'. Naẓẓām knew this, he quoted Jeremiah 31:31f., that verse of the OT that was repeated in Hebrews 8:8f. because of its reference to the new covenant.[5] Still, he was not necessarily quoting a Christian source:[6] he only adduced the verse at the end of his argumentation, as an instance from scripture that the Jew could hardly escape; before that, he had argued based on reason.

That was how his opponent had planned it. The Jew begins the conversation, is the challenger – at least in the eyes of our source. The approach he chose was not bad at all: God's law is wise. His wisdom is unchanging and he

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1  Text 223.

2  Cf. the Catalogues of Work XIII no. 22, XVII no. 30, XXI no. 5.

3  Cf. the later and more detailed attack by Bāqillānī. Brunschvig discussed in in: *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa* I 225ff. (= Etudes d'Islamologie I 263ff.). This study also compares the parallels from Qirqisānī, *Anwār* and Saʿadyā, *K. al-amānāt*. We should also adduce the apocryphal discussion between Muḥammad and the Jews reported in Ṭabrisī's *K. al-iḥtijāj* (Najaf 1966, p. 43ff.); the example cited here is the change of the *qibla*.

4  Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 264, 11f.

5  Text 223, p. The quotation is slightly abridged, but it is not possible to determine whether Naẓẓām was quoting the Jewish or the Christian version. The first Arabic translation of the Prophets was by the Nestorian Pethin b. Ayyūb; he was younger than Naẓẓām (regarding him cf. CGAL II 120f.; Frank in: Cath. Bibl. Quarterly 21/1959/136ff.).

6  This is Abel's view in: Elaboration de l'Islam 83, n. 4. He also writes incorrectly 'Jes. 21.31f.' instead of 'Jer. 31.21f.'

cannot alter a law, once given, by abrogation.[7] This was tailored to Naẓẓām's theory of divine justice; God **must** be just, as he must be wise in this context.[8] Naẓẓām introduced a distinction: while there is natural theology,[9] there is also revelation. Consequently there are behavioural standards that are wise in themselves: honesty, charity etc., and others that only become wise through revelation, e.g. the rules of worship. One does not keep the Sabbath because it is reasonable but because God commanded it. This behaviour is good and wise only for as long as God wills it, and God can change his will.[10] He can even sweep aside the fact that Moses declared this law as binding 'forever' at God's own command. Just as Moses confirmed this by the miracles he worked, Jesus' miracles confirmed that it had been abolished, and if one of them could have lied, then the other one could have done so, too. This is the Muslim speaking who views the quarrel between Jews and Christians from a distance. Ultimately the 'forever' had to be reinterpreted to mean a long time – and the law of Jesus had of course long been abrogated, too.

Text 223, k–o. Cf. the parallel at Text 227, k–l, and 228 (cf. p. 448 below); also Text 189, t–u, according to which God abrogated the laws of Moses and of Jesus one after the other 'for the benefit of his creation'. The Christians had of course long argued along these lines regarding Mosaic Law (cf. Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* I 16f.). – God's declaring the law of the Sabbath to be binding 'forever' is a reference to Ex. 31:12ff., where we read in v. 14: 'Therefore keep my Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Whoever defiles it shall surely die'. Naẓẓām paraphrases this as: 'This shall be binding upon you *forever*; whoever does not follow this must be put to death' (223, k). Later the passage was summarised as: 'Keep the Sabbath forever, for as long as heaven and earth shall exist' (Abū l-Fidāʾ, *Mukhtaṣar fī taʾrīkh al-bashar* II 296, 8f., or Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-janān* II 144, ult. ff.). Apparently the text was never quoted verbatim among Muslims. It was probably based on an expression from Jewish apologetics, and the 'forever' that was not part of the original at all moved to the focus of interest. Saʿadyā and Qirqisānī point out the passage from Exodus (cf. Brunschvig in: *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa* I 237 = *Etudes d'Islamologie* I 275). It is interesting that Christian polemic, also intent on relativising the law of the Sabbath, found that the phrase 'forever' was missing from the Jewish sources (cf.

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7     Text 223, a–c.
8     See p. 438 below.
9     See p. 414 above.
10    Text 223, d–i.

Pseudo-Andronicus Comnenus in: PG CXXXIII 905 C). The argument would carry increased conviction later with a different emphasis (see ch. C 8.2.2.1 below).

As was only proper, the debate entered a second round; having silenced his opponent Naẓẓām could now start with a question of his own.[11] He gave him short shrift: the sacrifice of Isaac shows God revoking a commandment that, as it came from him, had been wise. Of course one may say that he only meant it as a test, but that does not change the fact of the 'abrogation'; after all, the law of Moses may have been decreed as a test as well.[12] The discussion – as we have indicated above – may be contrived, but it showed in an exemplary fashion how a Muslim could defend himself, and how he had best attack.

### 3.2.2.2.4.1.3    *The Christians*

When debating with Christians the point at issue was not the law but rather the question of Jesus being the son of God. Naẓẓām makes no concessions: if the Quran refers to Jesus as the 'word' (*kalima*) he considers it to be a mere name that need not have had any deeper meaning.[1] If the Quran hints that Mary was the third person of the Trinity, Naẓẓām sees no reason to doubt this, as some Christians admit it themselves if one speaks to them in confidence.[2] He does, however, have to take into account concessions that people around him had made. The Christians had long noticed that the Quran described Abraham as God's **friend**; why, then, should one not be permitted to call Jesus God's **son**, as long as one interpreted it as an honorific with which God expressed his appreciation of Jesus?[3] Of course this limited the Christian position, but that was not too unusual. Saʿadyā reported a recently emerged Christology that verbal-

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11    Regarding this convention cf. REI 44/1976/38f.

12    Text 223, q–z. Naẓẓām also speaks of the sacrifice of Isaac in Text 201, g–h: God was observing the principle of proportionality here.

1    Text 183.

2    Text 182; cf. sura 5:116, and Paret, *Kommentar* 133f. on the passage. This makes it all the more astonishing that he does not respond to the corresponding, an just as problematic, statement concerning Judaism in the Quran, namely ʿUzayr/Ezra being the son of God. Ibn Ḥazm assures us (*Fiṣal* I 99, 5f.) that there was a Sadducean community in Yemen who believed in it. Szyszman considered that ʿUzayr/Ezra might have been the name of the 'master of justice' in Qumran (in: Comptes-rendus du GLECS 11/1967/147f.).

3    Text 181, a.

ised precisely the point of view mentioned,[4] with the objective of showing that Jesus was only a prophet.[5] Instances of the existence of honorifics were not only Muslim, namely *khalīl Allāh* to describe Abraham, but also included a Jewish one: 'God's firstborn', referring to Israel, i.e. Jacob, in Ex. 4:22 and Deut. 14:2. Naẓẓām also referred to these passages.[6] While Saʿadyā was a century younger than Naẓẓām, it may be that the followers of Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī had found the same compromise in order to bring the three Abrahamic religions closer together.[7] The theory was not actually very revolutionary; what it conveyed was adoptionism, and adoptionist Christology had been spread throughout the Orient by Judaeo-Christians.[8] Some even tried to locate it in pre-Islamic Mecca.[9] The heresiographer Muḥammad b. Shabīb regarded it as the doctrine of Christians who had grown up among Muslims.[10]

In his attempts at explaining the term 'friend' (*khalīl*) Naẓẓām had listed several synonyms for it and apparently emphasised that they all have the same meaning as the word used in the Quran.[11] Somewhere in his environment, among the Christians perhaps, but certainly also among the Muslims – his own pupils, in fact – this idea had been adopted and generalised: God can use names and terms in the revelation in any way he likes.[12] We read that he calls himself magnanimous (*jawād*) in the Quran, but not generous (*sakhī*); merciful (*raḥīm*), but not clement (*rafīq*).[13] And then he can give these words

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4  *Amānāt* II 7 = 90, ult. ff.; discussed in detail by Pines in: Festschrift Scholem 177ff., whose view I share on the whole. Also used by Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 347f., who classifies the passage differently.

5  Concerning such currents see also vol. I 144, n. 22 above.

6  Text 181, d.

7  Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Ḥūr* 145, 6f., but said only of ʿUzayr being the son of God.

8  Regarding Judaeo-Christianity cf. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* 71ff.

9  Lüling, *Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muḥammad* 165f. with regard to ʿAmr b. Luḥayy's (regarding him EI² I 453) *talbiya* formula, interpreted as Christian already by Köhler (in: Biblica 35/1954/405f., and Orientalia 35/1966/32), and probably correctly understood as adoptionist.

10  Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd* 210, 18f. Regarding Ibn Shabīb see ch. 5.1.1 below. In this context Pines also points out the passages in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* V 105, 10ff., and *Tathbīt dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* 120, 1ff. – In Spain the adoptionist doctrine had followers until the late eighth century; clearly the Muslims came across it there, too (cf. V. Cantarino, *Entre monjes y musulmanes*, Madrid 1978, p. 134ff., and McWilliam in: Gervers/Bikhazi, *Christian Communities* 75ff.; in general see Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* III 52ff.).

11  Text 181, n.

12  Ibid., d.

13  Ibid., h.

the meaning he wants.[14] It depends on the respective situation. In a similar approach he treated the prophets differently: Jesus was born of a virgin, John of the union between an impotent man (Zacharias) and a barren woman; Abraham he calls his friend, and Jesus perhaps his son. If this were in the sense of adoption rather than procreation, there would be no reason why he should not do so; the instances from the Old and New Testaments adduced by the Christians do not say anything else, either. The Christians have grown accustomed to using these words, and one cannot even rule out that the followers of Muḥammad's Arab predecessors Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and others, about whose language usage we know very little, might have spoken in the same way.[15]

Naẓẓām was probably familiar with these considerations. It is unlikely that he liked them, or indeed the adoptionist theory itself.[16] He, too, was looking for the proof in language usage. While one may call someone son in the figurative sense if one has brought him up or has great love for him, this is really only possible among humans: we should never call a dog 'son', however much we love it. Humans are much further removed from God than dogs from humans; speaking of someone as God's son merely means humanising God.

Text 181, p–q. I have presented the text here as I imagine the development of the arguments, which is anything but unambiguous. I would request the reader to consult my commentary, which also contains deliberations on Jāḥiẓ' concluding response (r–s) and his own theory. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was already believed to have rejected the analogy between 'friend' and 'son' (Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna* I 265, 12f,); similarly Ibn al-Rēwandī (cf. Text XXXV 11). ʿAlī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī, who converted a generation after Naẓẓām, pointed out the possibility of interpreting the 'son' as being adopted in his *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā* (MUSJ 36/1959/147, 11ff.). Regarding those of Naẓẓām's pupils who followed this theory see p. 475 below.

### 3.2.2.2.4.2    Systematic Theology
#### 3.2.2.2.4.2.1    *God's 'Attributes of Essence'*
Naẓẓām's doctrine of the attributes presupposes Abū l-Hudhayl's. The approach is exegetic in both cases, based on the statements from the Quran. Like Abū l-Hudhayl Naẓẓām only discussed the attributes mentioned in the

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14    Ibid., d.
15    Ibid., b–i; cf. also o.
16    Against Pellat in: SI 31/1970/224.

Quran – but then all of those.[1] He made the one significant change to Abū l-Hudhayl's model that would become the central point in the eyes of the majority of Muʿtazilites in Basra and Baghdad: he replaced the statement 'God is knowing thanks to an act of knowledge that is identical with him' with 'God is knowing through himself'.[2] This, as we have seen,[3] was in the air, and it solved a number of problems. He maintained the bare bones of Abū l-Hudhayl's theory in all other points, like him defining an attribute in a twofold fashion: as a positive statement concerning God as such, and as the negation of its opposite.[4] The question of how the divine attributes – or the statements concerning them – differ **from** one another, however, he could not answer with Abū l-Hudhayl that they differ due to their objects, for if they themselves have ceased to exist, their respective objects are not distinctive any more. Instead he said that they differ due to their opposites: they are identical in their essence, but they each denote a distinct aspect.[5] This also ensures that they are not conflated with God altogether.[6]

It seems that he explained turning from *ʿālim bi-ʿilm* to *ʿālim bi-nafsihī* using the example of an attribute Abū l-Hudhayl had seen more as an exception: the face of God. It was not possible to derive an adjective in this case, and no Muʿtazilite doubted that it referred to God himself. Abū l-Hudhayl had agreed with this; he had proved it based on language usage, and all Naẓẓām had to do was to adopt the arguments.[7] At the same time the face was one of the few examples he based on the noun rather than the adjective. Of course there was no other way, but in the other cases he only considered the nouns if they were

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1  This is probably the reason why the doxographers noted regarding him as well as Abū l-Hudhayl that he remarked on 'God is mighty' (*ʿazīz*; Text 175; regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see p. 294 above). Theology would devote but little thought on this attribute in the future (Gimaret, *Noms divins* 243ff.). The criterion mentioned is particularly noticeable in Text 181, h, which, however, is about a pupil of Naẓẓām: it is **prohibited** to address God with names that are not found in the Quran.

2  Text 173, a, and 175. Regarding the further development in Basra and Baghdad cf. Text 176, c, and *Maq.* 188, 5f. Regarding the relationship with Abū l-Hudhayl see also Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam* 225ff.

3  See p. 298 above and earlier.

4  Text 173, b and e; 175. This should be compared with Text XXI 56, c; cf. p. 294 above.

5  Cf. Text 173, c–d, and Text XXI 64, f. The difference is clearly highlighted in *Maq.* 167, 3ff. (without, however, mentioning Abū l-Hudhayl).

6  Text 179, a.

7  Cf. Text 176 and 177, a, and XXI 65, h–l (although Khayyāṭ might have interpreted Abū l-Hudhayl in Naẓẓām's sense).

found in the Quran in that form, e.g. *ʿilm*.[8] In such a case the word had to be used in spite of the new formula, but 'in the wider sense', without theoretical conclusions.[9] This also applied to anthropomorphisms such as God's 'hand' which had to be reinterpreted as God's beneficence.[10] Nouns not confirmed by the Quran, on the other hand, had no place in theology; speculation on whether God was 'something' (*shayʾ*) or 'not something' (*lā shayʾ*) seemed to him to be heresy.

Abū ʿAmmār, *Mūjaz* II 263, 9ff., also tells us that he was said to have considered false exegesis concerning the divine attributes to be unbelief. Regarding the question of whether one may call God *shayʾ* cf. also Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn* 227, 8f., where the issue is framed in an obviously incorrect historical context: Naẓẓām is said to have polemicised vigorously against this theory during the caliphate of al-Muʿtaṣim. His refusing to regard the attributes, too, as 'things' or 'something' (Text 179, a) was a logical corollary of God's possessing them *bi-nafsihī* only. He apparently provided a different argument, namely that an attribute could not itself possess a quality (or attribute) (Text 179, b). Of course, like Abū l-Hudhayl he was familiar with attributes belonging to God only. This is confirmed in the case of *jabbār* 'almighty' (Text 216, t–u), but surely he would have counted 'eternal' among these as well. 'Seeing' and 'hearing' he interpreted as 'knowing' in order to avoid anthropomorphism (Text 174). He did not allow the nouns from the same root at all as they were not part of the Quran. For the same reason he would not say that God possessed 'life', although he could be described as 'live' or 'living' (Text 173, g).

### 3.2.2.2.4.2.2    *Divine Actions*

It is unlikely that Naẓẓām distinguished attributes of essence and attributes of act any more than Abū l-Hudhayl did, but by having the attributes immersed in God, as it were, he paved the way for the distinction. There was a greater awareness than before of the numerous Quranic statements concerning God that ascribe a quality to him only because of his connection with the world. Naẓẓām does not seem to have thought deeply, or fundamentally, about the matter. The points on which he focussed on were those prepared by Muʿtazilite tradition,

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8     Text 173, g, and *Maq.* 188, 4f. The fact that both passages also list omnipotence is due to sura 41:15 where *quwwa* refers to God. Naẓẓām clearly equated *quwwa* and *qudra*.

9     Text 173, f.

10    Text 177, b.

especially Abū l-Hudhayl. They were, essentially, (a) God's will and willing and (b) his power to do what is unjust.

### 3.2.2.2.4.2.2.1 Willing and Creating

In Naẓẓām's model the complicated theories by means of which Abū l-Hudhayl had attempted to render the process of creation more comprehensible, have vanished. He was not familiar with accidents 'without location', and if he had believed in the *fiat*, he would have had to explain it differently as it was a sound. In his view there was one accident only: movement, and he did indeed interpret the creation of things as directed movement.[1] This movement, being an accident, could of course only be inherent in things themselves; God had imbued them with it. In God, on the other hand, nothing moves; from his point of view, creation is an act of will.

Naẓẓām knew from theological tradition that God's willing can change its character depending on its sphere of application. This was due to the dogma of human free will, a subject he discussed a number of times.[2] He enriched the debate by analysing the concept of 'willing' from the point of view of linguistic usage with unprecedented discriminatory power. He distinguished five senses in all:

1) to will/want to = to have in mind, to intend
2) to will/want to = to command, to order
3) to will/want to = to decree that something will come to pass
4) to will/want to = to realise, to call to life
5) to will/want to = to be about to (e.g. 'the milk will boil')[3]

No. 5 could be put aside immediately. This usage was found in the Quran, and his example came from there: 'a wall about to tumble down' (sura 18:77), but it was about an object and not a person. No. 1, too, had to be left out for – and this is not immediately plausible – God has no 'mind' (*ḍamīr*).[4] This makes us wonder whether this is not a verbal fallacy; after all 'to intend' is just as valid an definition as 'to have in mind'. Naẓẓām, however, was looking at the substance: in this context 'will' expresses an intention the realisation of which is not assured as it is in the future. One thinks of doing something, like a human plans an

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1  See p. 352f. above.
2  Catalogue of Works no. 10 and 12, perhaps also no. 9 and no. 14–15.
3  Text 197, a–b; 196, c.
4  Text 197, c; thus also later the Zaydite al-Mahdī li-dīn Allāh (cf. MUSJ 49/1975–6/670).

objective in the sense of a *causa finalis*.[5] This is not appropriate to God.[6] If he intends something for the future, he decides at the same time that it will come to pass (no. 3) – such as his willing to sit in judgment on the Day of Judgment. The fact that this has been decreed definitively is often confirmed by God in the revelation: in that way he commits himself in the eyes of humans, too.[7]

Never, of course, does he decide on actions of humans that are in the future. He only wills it in the sense that he commands it (no. 2), while the decision rests with the human himself.[8] At the moment the action takes place, too, it is willed by God only in this way; otherwise he would create it, and he only creates bodies. Human actions, however, are accidents.[9] Furthermore, bodies are immediately brought into existence when God wills them. He realises 'his will'; willing and that which is willed are the same thing and happen at the same moment. Consequently the act of creating is also the created entity, as the formulaic language of the time had it.[10] Once again all of Abū l-Hudhayl's careful distinctions have been swept away. Naẓẓām's model prevailed in the Baghdad school.[11]

While he paid detailed attention to language usage, he clearly regarded it with the eyes of a Muʿtazilite theologian. Theological criteria determine the distinction between 'intend' and 'decree', or 'command' and 'realise'. The main point is the difference between God and human. If God intends to do something, it happens immediately. If a human effects something, his act of will precedes the outcome effected.[12] If God wills a human's action it means that he commands it or prohibits the opposite; but if he wills his own action, there is no direct reference to an object, and we are back with what applies to the other attributes: namely that the statement must not be interpreted as a positive affirmation but as a negative implying that God does not act erratically or inconsiderately.[13] However many special areas must be taken into consideration when discussing God's willing, fundamentally it must be treated like the other *ṣifāt*. Like them it cannot be predicated of God 'in the true sense'; if

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5       Text 159, c.

6       Cf. ʿAlī al-Riḍā's dictum, preserved by Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 109, 4ff., that is dependent on this idea.

7       Text 196, c; 197, e.

8       Text 197, e; 198, c; 199, c.

9       See p. 392 and 411 above.

10      Text 196, a–c and d–e; 197, d; 198, b.

11      Cf. the commentary on Text 196.

12      Text 159, a. In this context 'will' equals 'desire' (Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla* I 375, 14).

13      Text 199.

we read that he has willed for all eternity this means that he has known for all eternity what he wills.[14]

### 3.2.2.2.4.2.2.2 God's Justice and His Power to Do What is Unjust

The circumstances of this case are even more obvious when we look at what Naẓẓām said about God's justice. It, too, would usually be regarded as an attribute of act later,[1] but Naẓẓām approached it rather differently. He did not examine it because he regarded it as an attribute of act, but because he was repeatedly urged to define it in his debates with the dualists: it was at the centre of all considerations regarding theodicy. It becomes clear that he believed natural theology to be possible. We have seen how, in the disputation with the Jew Manasseh, he distinguished between two kinds of wise actions: those that are declared reasonable and sensible by the revelation, and those that are reasonable and sensible of themselves.[2] In the latter sense justice is something one can do for its own sake, thus immediately gaining the essential advantage over its opposite, as injustice is never committed because it is injustice. One commits an unjust act in order to profit from it or to prevent harm, maybe also because one does not even know it is unjust or punishable – always for secondary reasons.

The advantage of justice over its opposite manifests itself in God's advantage over humans: while humans act justly because they gain from it, God cannot gain. He acts justly for its own sake only. Not even humans, with all their utilitarianism, forget at any time that justice is good of itself.[3] If this is true, the sentence 'God is just' expresses not only – in accordance with the customary rule – that he is not unjust, but that he **cannot** be unjust as he has no motive to act unjustly.[4] Or, put differently: as acting unjustly is tied to utilitarianism

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14 Text 198, a and d. The issue is discussed from the point of view of later sources in Abū Rīda, *Naẓẓām* 82ff.

1 Cf. the chapter *Maq.* 179, 5ff.

2 See p. 429 above. This is also the core idea in of Maʾmūn's dream (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 303, pu. f.; cf. p. 215 above).

3 These ideas are at the basis of Text 184, but they are not presented in their logical sequence there because Ibn al-Rēwandī's intention was to convict Naẓẓām of Dayṣānite thought. I would recommend consulting my commentary. Similar also Text 185, d–f; 186, e and i. – Ibn Ḥazm called the theory that a rational being only acts in order to gain profit or avert harm 'Dahrite' (*Fiṣal* III 98, –5ff.), a statement that sounds rather general. We may be permitted to refrain from concluding that Naẓẓām was responding to Dahrites here.

4 Text 184, a–b; 185, b; 186, b and i; 191, a. Cf. also 194, a–c with commentary.

or ignorance, it is a characteristic of contingent beings.[5] It is caused by the human spirit being subject to a 'detraction'[6] that allows him to decide freely in favour of it. God decides freely in favour of justice, but for the very reason that it is justice.[7]

The opponents always saw this as the weak point in the theory: why should humans be free due to a 'detraction', but God due to himself? Would it not make more sense to say that in that case God is **bound** by his nature to act justly? Not only Ibn al-Rēwandī repeatedly proposed this argument,[8] but apparently the Basran school of the Muʿtazila as well.[9] It based its arguments on polemic by Naẓẓām's contemporaries Abū l-Hudhayl and Murdār.[10] The Basrans could not come to terms with the idea that there might be something God could not do. Naẓẓām, on the other hand, did not regard the capacity to act as something unconditionally positive; sometimes one has scope for action only because a 'detraction' prevents one from something else, something good. This is not to say that God does not have scope of action, but his is entirely good. Naẓẓām is very close to Origen here, who had emphasised in his *Contra Celsum*: 'We say that God cannot do evil as otherwise he would not be capable of being God. For if God did something evil, he would not be God'.[11] Jāḥiẓ adopted this position;[12] his *K. iḥālat al-qudra ʿalā l-ẓulm* was probably written with it in mind.[13] The Baghdad school would remember for a long time that God does not have the capacity to do everything.[14]

If acting justly is God's free decision, we have disposed of the objection that he, having only the capacity to be just, had to have been just for all eternity – although in the beginning there were no humans at whom this justice might have been directed.[15] The theory, however, had further ramifications, which

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5    Text 185, f.

6    Text 186, i; 187, c–d.

7    Text 184, g; 185, b; 186, h.

8    Cf. Text 184–186, comparing him to Manichaeans and Dayṣānites, who genuinely believed in this compulsion, and whom Naẓẓām had criticised for this very reason.

9    Baghdādī, *Farq* 117, 2ff./134, 14ff. and earlier.

10    Cf. Catalogue of Works XXI, no. 23, and XVIII b, no. 10.

11    *Contra Celsum* V 23.

12    Text 191.

13    Catalogue of Works XXX, no. 19.

14    Cf. my essay in: MUSJ 49/1975–76/653ff.; also Ormsby, *Theodicy* 153ff. I have presented the connections described above in more detail in: *Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence in Medieval Philosophy*, p. 53ff.; with further references.

15    Text 184, f–h and k.

once again looked to natural theology. Just as God cannot act unjustly, he cannot lie, either.[16] As he announced in the scripture which of humans' actions are wise, and how he will give them a just reckoning, he cannot change this system of ethics of reward again; cannot reprieve someone expiating his sins in hell.[17] Being a good Mu'tazilite, Naẓẓām did not believe in purgatory; he believed in the eternal duration of the punishment of hell as affirmed by the Quran. God cannot, as Jahm b. Ṣafwān believed, allow paradise to come to an end, either: death is not what he promised the blessed. Furthermore death is less valuable than eternal delight; and God must always do what is most beneficial to his creation.[18]

This takes us to the heart of all these considerations, the *aṣlaḥ* theory. It reaches its climax with Naẓẓām. Abū l-Hudhayl had also said that God always does what is most beneficial, but had allowed him, at least in theory, the power to do something less beneficial.[19] This is now all in the past; God can only do what is most beneficial.[20] That he does not use his freedom is due to the fact that there is an infinity of things that are equally beneficial. If he realises one, he refrains from doing another; to Naẓẓām, freedom was the choice between doing and omitting to do something, but not like Abū l-Hudhayl's model.[21]

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16 Text 186, b; 191, a.

17 Text 187, a–b; 200, a. Abū Nuwās criticised Naẓẓām's severity in a poem (see p. 329 above).

18 Text 190; 191, c; phrased as polemic 193, a.

19 See p. 299 above. This difference prevents us from assuming that Naẓẓām's opposites death : eternal delight, dug up by the opponents in their previously cited argument, were originally directed against Abū l-Hudhayl's theory of permanent rest in paradise. They may have been linked; the comparison with Jahm b. Ṣafwān occurs in this context in the polemic (see p. 282 above). However, Abū l-Hudhayl could always have circumvented the argument; also, he did not claim that the subjective experiencing of the delights of paradise would come to an end.

20 Text 188, a; 189, a; 192, d–e. When Text 192, f points ou that otherwise God would be small-minded, it refers to an argument that was first formulated by Abū l-Hudhayl (Text XXI 99, i), and later adduced by 'Abbād b. Sulaymān (Text XXV 60, c); it is not really characteristic of Naẓẓām.

21 Text 186, h; 189, e–f; 191, b; 192, c. Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see p. 266ff. above. If Text 195 says that in Naẓẓām's view God did not have the power to do something of which he know that it will not come to pass, this must be restricted in the manner described: he has foreknowledge that it he will refrain from doing one most beneficial thing for the sake of another most beneficial thing, but he still has the power to do it. The text may be based on Text 194, d. In Text 192, a–c it is described with the word *lutf*; God's mercies have no end. We can sense how close Naẓẓām is to Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir here.

Freedom implies the choice of the right moment; if something is most beneficial under certain circumstances, God cannot realise it earlier.[22] This is true of creation in exemplary fashion: it was beneficial to humans, and God had known this for all eternity; but that does not mean it should have happened before time. The prophets, too, had their particular best time, as did the laws they brought.[23] This was the beginning of a rationalistic concept of salvation that would have its final climax in Ibn al-Nafīs' *Risāla Kāmiliyya*.[24] Kindī, too, agreed with Naẓẓām, saying that God will 'of necessity generate what is most beneficial'.

*Rasāʾil* I 236, ult.; cf. also 260, 6. Also Jolivet in: MUSJ 50/1984/327. Regarding the subject cf. Brunschvig in: SI 39/1974/10 = Etudes I 238; in general Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought*, p. 221f. regarding Naẓẓām. We should perhaps bear in mind that when it came to creation Naẓẓām retained the utilitarian pattern of argument he had rejected in the context of justice: creation is realised for the humans' sake, not for its own sake (because it was so perfect, or beautiful, for instance). Naẓẓām follows Abū l-Hudhayl (cf. Text XXI 115, and p. 302 above). The case is, however, different: it is not about one's own benefit.

Compared to later thinkers, such as e.g. Ghazzālī, who also devoted intensive thought to these matters, Naẓẓām was still very much in thrall to the original approach in that he did not see the optimum effected by God in the harmony of creation, but rather in the salvation of each individual human;[25] *aṣlaḥ*, after all, meant 'most beneficial' rather than 'best' in the sense of the best of all worlds. Naẓẓām does not seem to have given thought to a cosmological proof of the existence of God that would have been the inescapable corollary of the other perspective; and ideas such as those Galen expressed in *De usu partium* were alien to him.[26] He continued to be concerned with the traditional issues of early Islamic theodicy: the suffering of humans and animals. In the extant

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22    Text 189, b–d.

23    Ibid., g–m, r–u; also 184, m.

24    Also known as *K. Fāḍil b. Nāṭiq*, ed. by Meyerhof and Schacht under the title *Theologus autodidactus* (Oxford 1968).

25    Cf. Ormsby 241.

26    Consequently I consider Schacht's suggestion in SI 1/1953/29, of linking the *aṣlaḥ* discussion with Galen, to be beside the point.

texts the suffering of the animals is emphasised even more than that of humans; the Zoroastrian influence was still at work.[27]

There is not enough material to determine how Naẓẓām came to terms with the various aspects of this thorny issue. The solution he advocated was, unsurprisingly, an idealistic one: in this world, illness and poverty are more beneficial to the person they befall than health and riches. Whether Baghdādī was right when he concluded mockingly that according to Naẓẓām's approach God could not have changed this, must be left unanswered;[28] they are probably beneficial because they are a test. This interpretation would not apply in the case of children; when they suffer, it is part of a natural process which is, ultimately, effected by God.[29] Children who die before they reach the age when they can be 'tested' will consequently all enter into paradise; their parents' religion is irrelevant.[30] As for adults, it depends on how they react to tests, as there is no criterion for their future rank in paradise except the deeds performed.[31] God is, as we have seen, just in the strict sense. He makes no exceptions.[32] This, we may be permitted to add, is to the advantage of those afflicted: if they acquit themselves well, they may overtake those who lived a happy life on earth. For happiness, too, is a hidden test; God wants to know whether one is grateful for it.[33] It certainly is not a reward, for reward exists only in the afterlife.[34] And it is not a mercy, either; Naẓẓām's God is not a merciful God. He only shows mercy in one case: that of the children who died without having performed any actions, but among them, too, none receive preferential treatment; they are all granted the same measure of mercy.[35]

Where animals were concerned, Naẓẓām's most significant step was not to discriminate against harmful and dangerous animals, bidding a final farewell to dualism here, too. The point was not so much that snakes, scorpions etc. could

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27    It also plays a part that the two most important texts (200–201) come from Jāḥiẓ'
      *K. al-ḥayawān*.

28    Text 193, b. Baghdādī assumed that everything that happens is always the most beneficial,
      and that as such God must do it. He overlooked that there were innumerable other beneficial decrees of God.

29    Text 203. Cf. p. 390 above.

30    Text 200, d.

31    Text 200, a; 202, d.

32    Text 202, b–c.

33    Text 204, b.

34    Ibid., a.

35    Text 200, b and d.

not be part of a secondary creation on earth – a Muslim would not have be-lieved that anyway. However, Naẓẓām was the first to state clearly that they will all enter into paradise, albeit not in their physical form – after all, that might impair the enjoyment of the blessed in the case of bedbugs and fleas – but in their spirit, and as the resurrection is of the flesh, the spirit will be clothed in a new physical form.[36] They are part of a universal plan of salvation,[37] and divine justice encompasses them just as much as humans: if pain is inflicted on them on earth – and if they can feel pain – then God will recompense them in the afterlife. This does not mean that he will allow only those animals into paradise who were maltreated or killed on earth; rather they will all be granted mercy, just like the children.[38] It does, however, mean, that one need not go too far in protecting animals; after all, God himself permitted the slaughter of animals.

Still, it is not ruled out that one might incur guilt if one deals with animals beyond this permitted limit. Cruelty to animals was already forbidden in hadith.[39] The resulting discussion was not, however, fuelled by pity for poor creatures, but rather by the question of the possibilities of natural theology. By approaching the question rationally one could embrace the position that one must not hurt or harm an animal because one has no means of making up for it. The cases in point were the mutilation of domestic animals, possibly also killing fleas, and maybe even more noble kinds of hunting. Reason only allowed one exception: the attempt at helping an animal by causing it pain, for instance when treating a wound. This was too rigoristic for Naẓẓām; after all people had always killed fleas. It is not really necessary to provide a logical argument in favour of such action; it would be exaggeration if one were to say that one was taking just revenge on a flea or, expressed on a juristic level, ap-plying talion if the flea had bitten and one killed it afterwards. Circumstances would change only if a recognised authority had clearly prohibited such an action.

Cf. Jāḥiẓ' account, Text 201. Naẓẓām was applying the legal principle, formulated by ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, that everything is permitted unless it is explicitly prohibited (see vol. II 343f. above). Jāḥiẓ does not name the authorities entitled to decree such a prohibition explicitly, but judging by the context he was thinking of the companions of the prophet. Seeing as

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36    Ibid., e–f; 202, a and c.

37    Text 193, c.

38    Text 200, c and e.

39    Shayzarī, *Nihāyat al-rutba* 27, 6f.

Naẓẓām did not trust them much in any case (see p. 423f. above), it was even more important to add the caveat that their opinion must be uncontested and unmistakeable; a mere divergent opinion was not sufficient. In this interpretation I presume that Naẓẓām, who is mentioned only in 201, i, was not only the author of sentences *g–h* which are introduced with *qāla*, but also a supporter of the opinion presented previously *d–f* to which his sentences refer. We do not learn the names of those who championed the first view in *a–c*, but considering the similarities with Text X 6, it might go back to ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd or his school.

### 3.2.2.2.4.2.2.3    Divine Speech. The Quran

When the scripture tells us that God speaks, Naẓẓām interpreted it to mean that he is not mute, not that he speaks like humans. That would not, in fact, be possible, as human speech is movement and as such an accident.[1] The human moves his tongue which affects the sound (*ṣawt*) which is an existing body. His articulation structures and divides this amorphous body into pieces; interrupted in this way, the sound reaches our ear which perceives it as speech.[2] In accordance with the phonology of his time Naẓẓām understood human speech to be *aṣwāt muqaṭṭaʿa*, 'articulated sounds,'[3] although he translated *aṣwāt* as 'sound moments' into the language of his system, and also understood *taqṭīʿ* more literally than was usual. We may imagine this process as the sound tied up in the flow of air that emanates from a human. Within this, the sound is neutralised and inaudible; only when it is divided into pieces does it become free and audible to us.[4]

It is the same when one recites the Quran, as recitation is movement.[5] Divine speech, on the other hand, is not generated through movement; God does not, after all, have a mouth. It is only sound, and consequently a body. It, too, consists of *aṣwāt muqaṭṭaʿa* and is thus structured and composed like

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1  Text 205, a. Cf. p. 411 above.

2  Text 207 and 208, c; also 112, f.

3  Cf. the definition of the *ḥurūf* in the *K. al-ḥudūd* of the *Corpus Jābirianum* (*Rasāʾil* 109, 4f.); cf. Kraus, *Jābir* II 244, and WKAS II 914 b (after Tawḥīdī). Regarding Abū l-Hudhayl see Text XXI 112, b; but his theory is rather more complex (see p. 305f. above). A single sound does not constitute speech (cf. Baghdādī, *Farq* 123, 10ff./139, 9ff., who based an argument against Naẓẓām on this).

4  Cf. the parallel in Text 206; also 208, c. Naẓẓām was probably aware that the throat played a part in articulation as well as the tongue. Sībawayh believed that vocal pressure (*iʿtimād*) transforms the flow of air into sound (cf. Danecki in: *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar* II 92), but Naẓẓām used the term *iʿtimād* differently (cf. p. 352ff. above).

5  Text 205, c; cf. sura 75:16.

human speech, but it is immediately created by God.[6] This guarantees that it is permanent, and probably also immutable, but it also means that it is not everywhere but stays at the place where God created it.[7] The question is where this was. Naẓẓām may have had the 'preserved tablet' in mind – and in that way proved that the Quran we see and hear is not God's immediate speech but only 'in the figurative sense'.[8] However, he would at the same time have created the problem of how the prophet could have got hold of the Quran? Opponents would later claim that in Naẓẓām's view God's speech was never 'sent down' to the humans.[9] This may have suggested to some of his followers – or maybe to Naẓẓām himself? – that like human speech it was contained in the air; the recitation removed the 'obstruction' and made it audible.[10] This really only applied to the time since the Quran had become known on earth through the mouth of the prophet; it did not necessarily explain the process of revelation. The model per se was ancient; Wolfson has pointed out similar ideas in Philo's *De decalogo*.[11]

In this context Wolfson proposed the plausible hypothesis that in Naẓẓām's view God created his speech at the moment of the revelation, meaning that it would automatically be the same as the created Quran. It does not have to betray its divine origin; God adapted himself to the experience of his audience. To begin with, this audience consisted of Arabs, as the Quran came to the world through an 'Arab prophet'. Only once it is translated into different languages will it truly address all humans;[12] Naẓẓām had too many Ḥanafites around him to have been frightened of translating the Quran.[13] God does not make it easy for his audience; much, if not all, of the scripture is expressed

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6    Text 205, b, and 208, a–b. Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* 86, 18f., overlooked the difference between divine and human speech.

7    Text 205, e.

8    Text XXVII 4, a.

9    Text 209, a.

10   Text 206. Ashʿarī was probably correct when he referred this account by Ibn al-Rēwandī to Naẓẓām or his school. It is also clear, however, that he is not speaking of Naẓẓām alone, as he introduces the passage with *wa-qāla qāʾilūn* (*Maq.* 588, 9; cf. Text 205, d, and commentary). In the next generation Jaʿfar b. Mubashshir expressed similar ideas (see ch. C 4.2.1.2 below).

11   *Philosophy of the Kalam* 274ff., and *Repercussions* 103f. (where the line is continued to Saʿadyā and Yehuda Halevi). Naẓẓām probably discussed these question in his *K. fī l-Qurʾān mā huwa* (Catalogue of Works no. 37).

12   Text 214, b–c. Cf. p. 417 above and 450 below.

13   Cf. vol. II 553 above.

in oblique language and awaits interpretation.[14] The Quran is not rhetorically unsurpassable.[15]

All the more remarkable, then, that Naẓẓām was preparing the ground for the later *i'jāz* dogma. He was the first theologian who consistently presumed the Quran in itself as proof of Muḥammad's prophethood, beginning, however, with the contents rather than the style. The scripture's divine origin reveals itself in its true prophecies: such as when it predicts the expansion of Islam (sura 24:53 and 48:16) or the brief victory of the Byzantines over the Sasanids (sura 30:1–3). This was how the prophet knew in advance that the Christians would not agree to the *mubāhala* (sura 3:61), and that the Jews did not wish for death in order to prompt God to decide on the truth of their beliefs (sura 62:6).[16] The criticism previously directed at the Quran had also been based mainly on its contents. The Christians pointed out anachronisms;[17] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ – or the author of the anti-Islamic treatise attributed to him – had mocked the legend of the shooting stars.[18] The legend of the shooting stars, however, is the link with the only text in which there are hints of Naẓẓām's ideas even before his time: the official letter of Muḥammad b. Layth al-Kātib.[19]

This subject had exercised many minds in the meantime. 'Dahrite' intellectuals had remarked that the devils were far too clever not to secure their eavesdropping operations better in the long run.[20] And Aristotle explained the origin of shooting stars quite differently in his Meteorology.[21] If one really wanted to see them as the stoning of demons, one could also find this explanation in pre-Islamic poetry; how, then could it be proof of Muḥammad's prophetic gift?[22] Naẓẓām knew of this dispute and may well have been involved in it.[23] It is certainly no coincidence that Khayyāṭ did not mention this particular verse in his explanation of Naẓẓām's point of view on which we based our

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14    Text 215 with commentary.

15    Text 210, a, and 209, b; Jāḥiẓ, *Khalq al-Qurʾān* in: *Rasāʾil* III 287, 7f.

16    Text 210, b; also 209, b, and 211, a. Anonymous in Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ījāz* 7, 3ff. Concerning the last-named issue see ch. C 8.2.2.3.1.3.1 below in detail.

17    Jāḥiẓ, *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā* 11, 4ff. = *Rasāʾil* III 304, 10ff./transl. Allouche 130f.

18    See vol. II 35 above.

19    See p. 26ff. above.

20    Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* VI 264, ult. ff./transl. Pellat–Müller, *Arab. Geisteswelt* 284ff.

21    Ibid. 280, 3ff., and Ḥalīmī, *Minhāj* I 286, 8ff.; also *Meteor.* I 4. 341 b. 1ff.

22    Ibid. 272, ult. ff.; also the instances given by Kunitzsch in: ZDMG 128/1978/248, n. 23.

23    Jāḥiẓ quotes him here, 278, 11ff. The *qāḍī* ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who refers to the passage in *Tathbīt* 69, pu. ff., also names Naẓẓām in this context.

deliberations above.[24] The Muslims were in a rather precarious situation here, especially when they set such great store by the natural sciences as Naẓẓām did; the legend of the shooting stars was very much like similar ideas they ridiculed in the Manichaeans. Jāḥiẓ, who presented the discussion in some detail, consequently selected a theological way out that Muḥammad b. Layth had not yet known, or indeed needed: if the devils keep making the same mistakes despite all their cleverness this is because God keeps or guides them away (*ṣarafa*) from more beneficial knowledge.

He explained other peculiarities like this as well: that the Israelites could not find their way in the desert although there were so many merchants among them, or that Solomon had never heard of the Queen of Sheba even though he was the master of the winds and the king of the spirits.[25] This was a criticism the Dahrites had already raised concerning the Quran.[26] Above all, however, it allowed Jāḥiẓ to explain sura 17:90: 'Assuming the humans and the jinn (all) join forces in order to produce something that is equal (in value) to the Quran, they will not be able to do it, (not) even if they helped one another'.[27] They are not incapable because the stylistic beauty of the Quran is unattainable, but because God prevents them the moment they try. *I'jāz* is not a permanent quality of the Quran, but a kind of shock caused by the challenge (*taḥaddī*)[28] – a miracle, certainly, but a miracle God worked in other cases as well, where it was not really significant. People had always believed that he prevented humans from reaching an insight or performing an action; this explained the hardening of hearts. '**Aversos** esse arbitror divina potentia ne scire possent veritatem', as Lactantius had said.[29]

We may safely assume that it was Naẓẓām who inspired this idea in Jāḥiẓ. The doxographers trace it back to him,[30] and his older contemporary Bishr al-Marīsī also supported it.[31] It is noticeable, however, that Ash'arī did not use the term *ṣarfa* with reference to Naẓẓām; Khayyāṭ refrained from all references

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24    Text 210, b.

25    *Ḥayawān* VI 268, 10ff.

26    Ibid. IV 85ff.

27    Ibid. VI 269, 8ff.; also IV 89, 3ff.

28    Nowadays the term *i'jāz nafsī*, psychological *i'jāz*, is used.

29    *Div. Inst.* IV 2. 5; quoted by von Grunebaum in: EI² III 1019a s. v. *I'djāz*). Regarding Jāḥiẓ cf. also *Ḥayawān* IV 92, 1ff., and VI 216, 12; *Ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* in: *Rasā'il* III 228, 4; also Geries in: SI 52/1980/8of.

30    Text 211, b, and 212 with commentary; exp. 213, which includes a parallel case in *d*, similar to the one mentioned by Jāḥiẓ.

31    Yāqūt, *Irshād* I 177, 11.

as well. Naẓẓām did not deny the rhetorical **beauty** of the Quran in any case; he even used the term *iʿjāz* once in this context.[32] Rhetorical **inimitability**, on the other hand, was a problem only in the dialectical disputes with the 'Dahrites'. He never wrote a book on the subject, but it is clear at least that the *ṣarfa* theory would become very popular later, with the Baghdad school[33] and with Shīʿite theologians connected with it: Mufīd,[34] the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā,[35] and also among the Zaydites.[36] Even an Ashʿarite like Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāʾīnī (d. 418/1027) agreed with it.[37] The advantage of this concept was twofold: 1) it explained why the jinn, too, are unable to create something equal to the Quran, even though they in fact speak better Arabic than any human,[38] and 2) it avoided the weakness of the rhetorical concept of *iʿjāz* that presumed Arabic experts around the prophet and also later, people who would appreciate the perfection of the Quran and be able to recognise it as unattainable.[39] This continuing effect obscured Naẓẓām's original approach.

Attempts at reconstructing Naẓẓām's position may be found in Abū Rida, *Naẓẓām* 32ff.; Bouman, *Conflit* 20ff., and Audebert, *Ḫaṭṭābī* 8off. In his *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* Khafājī (d. 466/1073) still named rhetorical *iʿjāz* and *ṣarfa* together without criticising the latter (p. 4, 3ff.; also Yāqūt, *Irshād* I 177, 7ff.). A detailed response to the *ṣarfa* theory may be found in Bāqillānī, *Nukat al-intiṣār* 286ff.; it remains to be examined whether the argument Abū Muʿīn al-Nasafī claims was Naẓẓām's (Text 212 A) really goes back to him.

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32  In his *K. al-nakth* (cf. my collection of fragments p. 98f.), if this is a literal quotation. The expression has certainly been tinged by the polemical context.

33  Thus with Rummānī and Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī (cf. Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, cap. 64). Another comparatively early instance of *ṣarfa* in the Baghdad school is probably Ibn al-Munajjim, *Burhān* § 75/transl. Nwyia 581, but again without using the term itself.

34  *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* 31, 1ff./transl. Sourdel in: REI 40/1972/271 § 32.

35  *Rasāʾil* III 323, 3ff., and II 347, ult. ff. He also wrote a *K. al-mūḍiḥ* on the subject (MS Princeton ELS 2751, fol. 219a, −7). His treatises on the subject were collected by Naʿīm al-Ḥimṣī in: RAAD 28/1953/69ff.

36  The imam al-Nāṭiq bil-ḥaqq pointed this out (*Ziyādāt sharḥ al-uṣūl*, fol. 101 b).

37  Cf. Madelung in EI² IV 108a s. n. *Isfarāyīnī*. Ibn Kammūna called it 'the doctrine followed by most of the Muʿtazilites and some Sunnites' (*Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth* 83, 11ff./transl. Perlmann 122f.).

38  Thus Murtaḍā in MS Princeton ELS 2751, fol. 140 b, 5ff. Interestingly the argument presumes that the rhetorical form of the Quran was the work of the prophet rather than God.

39  Ibid. 140 a, −9ff.; also Abū Rashīd, *Ziyādāt sharḥ al-uṣūl*, fol. 24 a–b.

### 3.2.2.2.5    *Ethics. Sin and Faith*

By presuming the existence of a natural moral law[1] Naẓẓām is saying that
actions that are good or bad in themselves could not be classified differently
even by God. They are contrasted with others that only become good or bad
through the revelation. Their qualification (*ḥukm*) is not a matter of reason but
purely ordained by God.[2] This does not mean that ethical commandments are
not part of the revelation. God could not **not** have commanded them;[3] fur-
thermore, as we have seen, he can never abrogate them.[4] And of course this
does not rule out that in the earthly reality it is always the human who causes
evil. While evil may in some cases be made evil because God decrees it, it is
only ever **generated** by humans.

Text 227 thrives on the misunderstanding that presents itself here. Ibn al-
Rēwandī had claimed that by causing evil to be evil, God actually makes
evil; he made use of the fact that Form II can have declarative as well as
causative meaning. In this way he gave himself the opportunity of calling
Naẓẓām a Ḍirārite; in the view of the orthodox Muʿtazilites Ḍirār's syn-
ergism made God the author of sin. Cf. also Text XVII 41 regarding Bishr
b. al-Muʿtamir, and XXIII 17–18 regarding Ṣāliḥ Qubba; p. 132 above and
463 below.

Unfortunately, no catalogue survives of those actions that were covered by the
natural moral law according to Naẓẓām. In fact we do not know whether he
ever established one; nothing in the titles of his books indicates it. Only in con-
versation with the Jew Manasseh does he name a few virtues that are 'wise' in
themselves: justice, faith, honesty, charity.[5] It is surprising to find faith named
here, but he probably did not mean that faith as an attitude, as belief, is 'natu-
ral'. Faith as in religion and worship (*dīn*) was the result of divine guidance in
Naẓẓām's eyes.[6] We must recall that faith to a Muʿtazilite was always knowl-
edge of God and his justice; natural theology had always had its place here.[7]
Consequently Naẓẓām's example of something evil in itself is 'that one does

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1    See p. 414 and 429 above. Explicitly stated by ʿĀmirī, *Iʿlām manāqib al-Islām* 118, apu. f.

2    Text 228; 227, a and h.

3    Text 228, b.

4    Text 227, k–l; cf. p. 429f. above.

5    Text 223, d.

6    Text 224.

7    Cf. Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 265, 5ff.

not know God or is convinced of the existence of something anti-divine'.[8] In another place this is called 'denial' (*inkār*):[9] that one does not recognise self-evident facts such as the existence of God.

If one wanted to comprehend all the points of faith, it would be necessary to include the revelation. In that case the question became relevant of whether the revelation mentions all the 'natural' commandments as well, or not, and the lack of a catalogue of natural virtues became a problem. Naẓẓām tried to keep problems at bay by defining negatively: faith, i.e. acting according to faith, is avoiding grave sins.[10] He abided by his principle that everything that was not prohibited, was permitted,[11] laying the foundations for a long tradition: the later Basran school, for instance Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, also regarded the definition of evil, not good, as the starting point of all ethics.[12] This was much more practical for the jurist. One only has to be prepared for the possibility that more things are prohibited before God than are written in the Quran. In the Quran the threatening verses are evidence of what is a grave sin; thus they tell us whom to call a grave sinner. Such a person is not a believer any more, but has entered the intermediate state on which Naẓẓām, like all Mu'tazilites, insisted. However, we cannot rule out that there are no other grave sinners before God – because of transgressions not marked by threatening verses in the Quran.[13] God is compelled to many things for the sake of his justice, but he is not compelled to publish his every thought (*ikhbār*).[14]

Prophets do not commit grave sins, for they know more than normal humans, and take greater care. If they sin, it is only ever inadvertently;[15] their deeper insight apparently prevents them doing something evil deliberately.[16] However, for the sake of their deeper insight they must also give a reckoning of their inadvertent errors; God would not expect this of an ordinary mortal in the case of such trifles.[17] They do not infringe on the revelation; after all, the

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8    Text 228, a.

9    Text 227, h.

10   Text 225, a.

11   See p. 442 above.

12   Cf. G. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism* 48ff.

13   Text 225, b–e. Naẓẓām may have expressed these ideas in his *K. al-Wa'īd* (Catalogue of Works no. 17).

14   Cf. p. 436 and 439f. above.

15   Text 231, a and d.

16   Text 257, c, shows that Naẓẓām did not regard sin purely intellectually as ignorance but also considered the deliberate aspect (cf. the commentary on Text 258, end).

17   Text 231, b–c. Ja'far b. Mubashshir later adopted this, and may have provided an exegetical basis (cf. Text XXVII 14).

prophets do not have any influence on it. Naẓẓām is well on the way to a concept of *ʿiṣma* similar to the one we find in the Baghdad Shīʿa from the fourth century onwards; Hishām b. al-Ḥakam had still disputed the sinlessness of the prophets.[18] *ʿiṣma* and *ṣarfa* do go well together, but nowhere is it said that in his view **God** 'protected' the prophet from sin. On the contrary: if someone were protected, it would be more likely to be ordinary humans – because of their very lack of deeper insight. By moving responsibility to the fore, Naẓẓām proved himself a Muʿtazilite. When Ibn Bābōya later believed it to be possible for prophets to commit inadvertent sins, he did so only because God allows it to happen in order to show that prophets, too, are only human.[19]

The miracles of affirmation demand that one must believe in the prophets. Naẓẓām did not have only the Quran in mind. Miracles are generally possible, and in the case of other prophets they did not consist in scripture.[20] The most important thing was that they had an audience; ideally that they were addressing all humans. Consequently it was not enough for Ibn Masʿūd to claim that he had been present when the moon split; if the moon had really split, there would have been much more ado about it. As this was not so, Ibn Masʿūd's account was not to be trusted,[21] but as on the other hand the event is mentioned in the Quran (sura 54:1), one could not deny it. One has to interpret the text differently: it refers to an eschatological sign that will occur in the future; the perfect tense is a *perfectum propheticum*.[22] Apparently this had already been Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's interpretation of the verse.[23] All the same, Naẓẓām was unable to stop the advance of the Ibn Masʿūd hadith.[24] We should assume that

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18    See vol. I 441 above.

19    Cf. Madelung in EI² IV 182 s. v. *ʿIṣma*.

20    Text 234, a–c; 223, l.

21    Text 220.

22    Text 221. The *perfectum propheticum* as a **grammatical** phenomenon was justly laid to rest by the Hebraists. For older literature see Gesenius, *Lehrgebäude der hebräischen Sprache* 764; *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch (Oxford 1910) 312f. The passage quoted does not actually refer to the *perfectum propheticum* specifically.

23    Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* IX 443, 1ff.

24    Cf. the material I presented in *K. an-Nakth* 97f. and 141 (appendix). It is worth noting that even later Muʿtazilites or Shīʿites under Muʿtazilite influence like Ṭabrisī rejected Naẓẓām's interpretation (*Majmaʿ al-bayān* V 186, 15ff.; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt* 57, –7ff. and, without giving a name, *Tanzīh al-Qurʾān* 407, 2ff.). Only Kaʿbī followed him (Ṭūsī, loc. cit.). We are probably not actually looking at a *perfectum propheticum* in sura 54:1, but at the naming of an event in anticipation of the imminent Judgment. Only once it was clear that the Judgment was not happening did the passage become to be interpreted as a miracle of affirmation (cf. also Paret, *Kommentar* 463 concerning the passage, although

he regarded miracles mentioned only in hadith with even greater scepticism,[25] but to him this was ultimately a transmission issue.[26] In order to be open to prophetic miracles – and the accounts of them – at all times, he rejected the possibility that jinn might perform miracles or 'magic', not even to help a human such as Solomon. After all, a prophet can also identify himself by 'prophesying what we eat and what we store'; he cannot be permitted to have spirits at his service who then provide those very foods.[27]

### 3.2.2.2.6 *Political Theory*

Naẓẓām's political views betray his Basran origin. His belief that humans would not need authorities if only they followed God's commandments is indebted to the idealism of the Ibāḍites and of Aṣamm. If humans want a ruler, he should be the most pious man among them, a conviction based on sura 49:13.[1] Still, Naẓẓām took reality into account as well: where piety was concerned, he apparently expected only that the Quran and the *sunna* were observed;[2] a man like Maʾmūn certainly satisfied this ideal. A ruler who is already in office and who is known may demand obedience, too. He may be ignored only if one really knows nothing about him – for logical reasons: one cannot recognise what one does not know.[3] This is presumably mere theory; it might only ever have applied at the time after Amīn's death, when Maʾmūn was residing in faraway Marv and large parts of the population of Baghdad had not recognised him, or only half-heartedly. Still, Naẓẓām's pupils continued to preach it.[4]

His distant attitude towards ʿAlī was also Basran. It may be found in particular in those texts transmitted by Jāḥiẓ. Naẓẓām criticised the Rāfiḍites because they disparaged or even hated other prophets for ʿAlī's sake.[5] ʿAlī was not worth it: in his disagreement with the Khārijites he deceived those around

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I disagree slightly with the end). – The miracle of the moon splitting plays a major part with the Ahl-i Ḥaqq (Mokri, *Esotérisme kurde* 82ff. with further references).

25   Baghdādī, *Farq* 114, 7f./132, 2.

26   See p. 417 above.

27   Text 232. This may be directed against Abū l-Hudhayl (see p. 285 above).

1   Text 264, and 263, a–b.

2   Text 263, a.

3   Text 263, c–d. The argument prepares the dilemma of the *aṣḥāb al-maʿārif* (see ch. C 4.2.4.1.2 below).

4   Text 263, a.

5   *K. an-Nakth*, p. 120. Regarding Naẓẓām's discussions with Shīʿite theologians see p. 323 above.

him several times by falsely referring to the prophet. This is falsifying hadith.[6] Consequently it is not surprising that in Naẓẓām's view the early Islamic community's decision in favour of Abū Bakr was the correct one. He gave a rational reason, an argument transmitted from Ḍirār as well: Abū Bakr was poor and belonged to a clan of little influence; he could not have put pressure on anyone. The only explanation is that he must have been chosen for his religious deserts.[7] Naẓẓām was clearly a supporter of the *imāmat al-fāḍil*.[8]

He was not, however, an ʿUthmānite. When it came to evaluating ʿUthmān, he followed Abū l-Hudhayl, as he may have done in other instances as well.[9] The connections are not entirely clear as much of our information comes from collective accounts which lump several Muʿtazilites together, including in the passages where the sources examine the critical events of ʿAlī's caliphate. However, there is more to it. There was a Shīʿite interpretation of Naẓẓām's ideas which apparently had its origins in the fact that Shīʿite circles felt kinship with Naẓẓām's epistemology, his rejection of *tawātur*, *ijmāʿ* and *qiyās*. Shahrastānī in particular embraced it, presenting Naẓẓām as an outright supporter of the Imāmite *naṣṣ* theory.[10] Later Iranian authors would follow this trail,[11] which led them nowhere; but it is true that Naẓẓām believed ʿAlī's caliphate to have been lawful during the time that it was awarded to him. Here, too, he agreed with Abū l-Hudhayl.[12] It suggests that he also approved of the decisions taken by ʿAlī during his caliphate: his war against Ṭalḥa and Zubayr and his instituting the arbitration court. On the other hand Naẓẓām appears to have been keen to preserve Ṭalḥa and Zubayr's reputation.[13] He took no pains on behalf of the

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6    Ibid. 78ff.; cf. Text x 14.

7    Text 263, e–f with commentary; cf. xv 44. Briefly also Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* XX$_2$ 115, 1ff.

8    Text xv 41; here, too, named with Ḍirār.

9    Text xxi 182, a–d. Texts xv 41 and 44 name Abū l-Hudhayl together with him.

10   Text 265; cf. also his tendentious description of Naẓẓām's theory of *ijmāʿ*. Shahrastānī is well-known to have inclined towards Ismāʿīlism; cf. Madelung in: Akten VII. Kongreß UEAI Göttingen, p. 25of. (with references), and A. Hartmann in: Festschrift Khoury 19off.

11   ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Kunā* III 219, 1off., after the *ṣāḥib al-ʿAbaqāt*, i.e. Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī al-Laknawī (d. 1306/1889; regarding the work cf. EIran I 63b).

12   Text xxi 182, e–f.

13   This may be the best way of balancing the two reports xvii 59 and xxi 182, which do not agree entirely, against each other. The first one links him with Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and the Zaydites, the second with Abū l-Hudhayl. Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 290, 14ff., has some similarities with the second account as well, but he names Wāṣil and ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd besides

arbitrators; they were clearly guilty.[14] He devoted a lengthy passage to the question of why Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, too, agreed to ʿAlī's deposition. This appears to have been his response to the attempt of pro-ʿAlī, but not necessarily Shīʿite, circles at explaining the verdict of the arbitration court against ʿAlī. They suggested two reasons: Abū Mūsā was stupid, and the Yemenis wanted to keep out of the matter because the disagreement was between two Quraysh. Naẓẓām rejected these suppositions; the material he provided shows how well-informed he was concerning tribal history of the pre- and early Islamic periods.[15]

### 3.2.2.2.7    *His Legacy*

The classical Muʿtazila reached its peak with Abū l-Hudhayl and Naẓẓām. In the consciousness of the following generation they were the men who set the standards.[1] Masʿūdī was still familiar with their works.[2] Ashʿarī reveals that both schools were still in existence during his lifetime.[3] They had competed from the very first. As atomism increasingly prevailed, Naẓẓām began to be criticised more for his *kumūn* theory and because of the 'leap'. It is obvious that Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār found these theories embarrassing;[4] he also avoided discussing Naẓẓām's theories in the biography he devoted to him in *K. faḍl al-iʿtizāl*. Even a theologian such as Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, who agreed with Naẓẓām regarding the *ṣarfa*, thought him intelligent but extravagant.[5] Non-Muʿtazilites found repeating negative evaluations that much easier.[6] Even so, he was mentioned with respect for a long time to come.[7]

The division in evaluating him became apparent already in his pupil Jāḥiẓ who adopted some of his ideas, but did not really consider himself as a

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Naẓẓām. Different again Abū ʿAmmār, *Mūjaz* II 247, ult. f.; Ṭalḥa and Zubayr did penitence for their rebellion.

14    Text XVII 60, once again with Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir.

15    Text 266.

1    Cf. Anbārī, *Nusha* 170, 11, and IKh I 203, 9f., in a remark by the poet al-ʿAṭawī, who was acquainted with the theologian Najjār (regarding him see ch. C 5.2.2.2 below).

2    Shboul, *Al-Masʿūdī and His World* 38. Pazdawī also came across books by Naẓẓām (*Uṣūl al-dīn* 33, −7).

3    *Maq.* 61, 7ff.

4    *Mughnī* XII 398, 3ff.

5    *Amālī* I 187, 10ff.

6    Thus Severus b. al-Muqaffaʿ in his History of the Councils (PO VI 4, p. 541, apu. f.).

7    Cf. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn* 330, pu.

follower; often, in fact, he distanced himself clearly from genuine followers.[8] While the enthusiastic appreciation that someone like Naẓẓām was found only once every thousand years was transmitted from him,[9] it sounded more nuanced in his own words. In his *K. al-ḥayawān* he concluded a passage of praise of the Muʿtazila, and of theology in general, in the following way:

> I do not want to say definitively that the wider community of the Muʿtazila would perish if it were not for Ibrāhīm's school and the man himself, but I do say that he was a trailblazer and opened the eyes of many.[10]

He had already made clear in his *K. al-futyā*, written before *K. al-ḥayawān*, that the innovator as whom he presented him was by no means infallible:

> Ibrāhīm was one of the experts of hadith (*ḥuffāẓ al-ḥadīth*) and had (that kind of) sharp intellect and eloquent tongue that bestowed on him the liberty (to present) things that were difficult to understand,[11] to resolve what was tangled and to bring close what was remote. Even so he makes mistakes like an inexperienced man, staggering around like a drunk; he is astute and negligent, intelligent and carefree at the same time.

Or, in a similar context:

> When he spoke of the principles of legal expert opinions, all the mistakes he criticised became apparent in him, one after the other, and (he applied) the very method that so enraged him in others. If anyone there had challenged him (to respond) and had held a debate with him, he would have uncovered his (Naẓẓām's) hidden weakness and brought to light the inconsistency of his theory in such a way that it would have ruined his reputation and humiliated him. His followers, however, were not concerned with traditions, verdicts and legal expert opinions; to them the *mudākhala* was more remarkable than Quranic science, and the 'leap' more essential than the science of jurisprudence. What a miserable theory – upon my life! – he chose and made his religion![12]

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8    Thus in his *K. al-maʿrifa* or his *K. khalq al-Qurʾān* (cf. *Rasāʾil* IV 53, 1ff., and III 287, 7f.). His *K. ṣināʿat al-kalām* is addressed to a pupil of Naẓẓām's (*Rasāʾil* IV 243, 3f.).

9    *Faḍl* 265, 6f.

10   IV 206, apu. f.

11   I.e., the ability to present them in an elegant style.

12   *Nakth* 118ff.

### 3.2.2.2.7.1 ʿAlī al-Uswārī

In fact, Jāḥiẓ himself wrote a refutation of Naẓẓām.[1] Even so the number of followers he had gained remained unrivalled until Abū Hāshim's day.[2] One of his best-known pupils was a man he had enticed away from Abū l-Hudhayl:

(Abū ʿAbdallāh)[3] ʿAlī b. Khālid[4] al-Uswārī al-Kilābī.[5]

He was probably barely younger, as he had debated with the Shīʿite ʿAlī b. Mītham, which was also reported about Naẓẓām;[6] Khayyāṭ had seen the records of the meetings.[7] These probably took place in Basra; ʿAlī is the last Uswārī we meet on the field of theology.[8] He was acquainted with the ʿAbbāsid ʿĪsā b. Sulaymān b. ʿAlī,[9] whose father had been governor in Basra during Manṣūr's caliphate,[10] and he was also connected with the house of Muways b. ʿImrān; we are told that he once asked the latter's secretary for money.[11] Understandably Muways was less than pleased about it – especially as Uswārī appears to have been in need of money quite regularly. When he went to visit Naẓẓām in Baghdad, the reason was again to ask him for financial help; it was rumoured that Naẓẓām gave him 1000 dinars not least to make him go back to Basra rather than setting up in competition in the capital.[12] His lower middle-class background showed in his table manners: when invited he was incapable of controlling his greed. Jāḥiẓ could not bear to watch; he considered Uswārī to be ill-bred to the core.[13]

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1    Catalogue of Works XXX, no. 20.

2    *Faḍl* 323, ult. ff.

3    If indeed the Abū ʿAbdallāh al-A/Uswārī who recited a long poem by Naẓẓām to Maʾmūn is identical with him (Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin* 437, 12ff.).

4    Thus according to Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbīʿ* § 166.

5    Thus after *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* II 60, 9. Cf. Kaʿbī, *Maq.* 73, ult. > IM 72, 11f.; as a follower of Naẓẓām: *Faḍl* 281, 7; Baghdādī, *Farq* 114, pu./132, 11.

6    See p. 323 above.

7    Text XXIII 5, c.

8    We should probably read his *nisba* thus – disagreeing with Samʿānī who lists him under *Aswārī* (I 248, ult. ff.). The reading with *a* refers to a location near Isfahan that would be the home of many traditionists (cf. Samʿānī I 250, 7ff., and vol. II 92 above); it is entirely improbable that at this early time a Muʿtazilite might have come from there.

9    Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ* 69, 9.

10   See vol. II 97 above.

11   *Bukhalāʾ* 61, 2ff.

12   *Faḍl* 281, 7ff. > IM 72, 12ff.

13   *Bukhalāʾ* 79, 6ff., and 80, 4f.; also 56, 20ff., and 69, 9ff. The information that Uswārī enjoyed the smell of rams (*Ḥayawān* V 467, 2ff.) and confused names in early Islamic history (*Bayān* II 261, 14f.) is also part of this image.

This was probably a matter of opinion. One had to expect a lot among intellectuals; most of them were upstarts. Abū Nuwās wrote some libellous verse about him as well as Naẓẓām, describing as usual his immoral way of life and his disdain for fasting during Ramadan.[14] Maybe Uswārī was the man who continued the school in Basra after Naẓẓām left. They are mentioned together a number of times, and in many points he barely went beyond Naẓẓām. In anthropology he rendered his view more precise, to the effect that a human is not the spirit as such but merely that part of the spirit that lives in the heart;[15] this may have been a compromise with Muʿammar's teachings.[16] Abū l-Hudhayl's pupils criticised that he like Naẓẓām denied God the power to do what is unjust[17] and to deviate from his revelation. They appear to have pointed out to him that among the things God announced in the Quran some were mutually exclusive; thus he said on the one hand that humans will remain in paradise or in hell, but on the other hand called himself the first and the last (sura 57:3). In one of these points his prophecy could thus not be realised. Uswārī evaded onto the logical plane: it was only the **statement** that God announced regarding a certain thing that it would not come to pass that was incompatible with the **statement** that he could to it after all, or vice versa. This does not decide reality. Consequently each of the two statements taken by itself is valid. Uswārī had thus softened Naẓẓām's position somewhat.

This is how I should like to interpret Text XXIII 1–2. I am aware that the facts of the case are not presented entirely unambiguously here, partly because it is impossible to balance Ibn al-Rēwandī's and Khayyāṭ's claims in Text 1 altogether; later tradition also refrained from attempting this, preferring either one or the other (cf. the commentary). In favour of Khayyāṭ is that he puts Uswārī's distinctive features more clearly into relief; if we look to Ibn al-Rēwandī only, it is nearly impossible to make out a difference between Uswārī and Naẓẓām. Text XXII 190, a–c, comes very close; the objection, too, is expressed in very similar terms. Ibn al-Rēwandī is probably not describing a real situation with this objection in each case, but employing the same dialectical argument with reference to two different theologians, namely Naẓẓām and his pupil Uswārī. Uswārī's distinction as reported by Khayyāṭ shows that he responded to it, while Naẓẓām does not go beyond his usual *aṣlaḥ* theory in this point

14    *Dīwān* II 60, 10ff.
15    Text XXIII 3.
16    See p. 91 and 95 above.
17    Text XXII 191.

(see p. 439 above). The opponents are anonymous in both cases. If we be-lieve them to have been Abū l-Hudhayl's followers, it is because this issue was one of particular debate between the two schools (see p. 299 above). They were very familiar with the inconsistency of the Quranic messages they pointed out: sura 57:3, a core argument of the early Jahmites, had been used against Abū l-Hudhayl as well (Text XXI 91, g; cf. p. 282 above). The passage is used in a purely dialectical fashion here.

He deviated more strongly in other issues. It is not certain that he adopted Naẓẓām's natural philosophy. He appears to have been indebted to Thumāma's epistemology; he was counted among the *aṣḥāb al-maʿārif*.[18] This explains why people claimed that for him knowledge of God was not part of faith:[19] it was innate.[20] Samʿānī's ascribing to him the view that God 'does not command or forbid anybody anything except for the act of will' might lead to the conclusion that he adopted Thumāma's position on *tawallud* entirely.[21] When it came to political theory he, like Naẓẓām, tried to find a position between the parties, but like his contemporary Hishām al-Fuwaṭī he was said to have attempted to exonerate all the protagonists of the battle of the camel.[22] Because of this some people – presumably in particular in Basra – positively believed he was a Shīʿite.[23]

He is occasionally confused with *Abū ʿAlī* ʿAmr b. Fāʾid al-Uswārī (cf. Text 2, commentary; regarding ʿAmr b. Fāʾid cf. vol. II 94ff. above). This is the most likely explanation why Ṣafadī, entirely isolated, attributes to him the theory that 'the call to faith (*khiṭāb al-īmān*) would not stop (even) at Abū Lahab, although God had proclaimed (in sura 111:3) that he would "roast at a flaming fire"' (*Wāfī* IX 250, ult. f.). This is Qadarite doctrine as embraced by ʿAmr b. Fāʾid; the example recalls ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd (Text VI 1). However, the term 'proclaim' also creates a link to the infor-mation discussed above.

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18    See ch. C 4.2.4.1.2 below.

19    Text 4.

20    Thus Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 128, −4f.

21    *Ansāb* I 250, 1f.; cf. p. 178 above. However, the passage is entirely isolated, and furthermore it traces the view back to Naẓẓām of all people.

22    Thus Khayyāṭ in Text XXIV 40, e.

23    Text 5, a.

### 3.2.2.2.7.2    Ṣāliḥ Qubba

Some of Naẓẓām's other pupils showed even greater independence. We must not be misled by the fact that one or the other of them is referred to as his assistant (*ghulām*); this says no more than that they worked for him for a while. Jāḥiẓ is apostrophised like that;[1] we hear that when Naẓẓām and some of his colleagues went for a picnic outside the city, they sent him to the market to buy food.[2] The situation of the heresiographer Zurqān, who must have been quite young when he met him, was similar;[3] and it also applied in the case of someone who linked elements of Abū l-Hudhayl's and Naẓẓām's theology in a downright exemplary fashion without ever having been a Muʿtazilite in the stricter sense:

> Abū Bishr Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ṣāliḥ, called Ṣāliḥ Qubba.[4]

He adopted Naẓẓām's theory that only God determines many sins by qualifying and naming them as such in the revelation.[5] Like Naẓẓām he denied that humans caused *mutawallidāt* themselves,[6] and above all he adopted the theory of the spirit. As the human is identical with his spirit, he can leave his body while asleep; if someone dreams that he is far away, the 'human' is indeed there, while his body remains at the place of rest. God moved the spirit to that place. This means that the perceptions one experiences during the dream are 'real' as they come through the 'spirit'.[7]

   After all, perception is created by God in any case.[8] Ever since Bishr b. al Muʿtamir there had been agreement in the Muʿtazila that humans never perceive anything immediately but must first ensure that the conditions are right. Secondary, 'generated' acts did not, in Ṣāliḥ's view, originate with the human. More than Naẓẓām he put the responsibility for these on God; they do not occur due to the innate nature of things but due to a spontaneous intervention by the creator. With reference to perception Abū l-Hudhayl had been of a

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1   Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VIII 35, 2/V 105, 5.

2   TB VI 98, 7ff.; cf. also *Bukhalāʾ* 38, 1ff.

3   Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh* 395, 15; regarding him see ch. C 4.2.4.3 below.

4   Named as a pupil of Naẓẓām's by Ibn Ḥazm (*Fiṣal* V 19, 10, and *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* 33, 2/138, 1ff. ʿAbbās: *ghulām*).

5   Cf. Text XXIII 17–18 with Text XXII 227, where Ibn al-Rēwandī extends Naẓẓām's teachings to include 'many Muʿtazilites' (*h*); cf. p. 448 above.

6   Text 9, a; cf. p. 411 above.

7   This interpretation seems to me to be most true to Text 10.

8   Text 11 and 12, a.

similar opinion,[9] and in fact Ṣāliḥ ultimately arrived at statements that were transmitted in similar form from Abū l-Hudhayl: God could prevent wood from catching fire even if the human ensures all the conditions are present, or a rock from moving even if all humans on earth worked together and the rock itself was actually very light.[10] While Abū l-Hudhayl, however, was convinced of his theory of action and intended only that God should retain the alternative to the normal course of events,[11] Ṣāliḥ conveys the impression that he believed much more in the possibility of miracles. Going beyond Abū l-Hudhayl he cited an example that God might let someone burn in a fire without feeling pain: this is a reference to Abraham who was flung onto a bonfire by Nimrod and was rather comfortable there, contrary to expectations (sura 21:68f. and 37:97f.). He also appears to have interpreted the *mutawallidāt* differently: as that which happens 'attendant on human action', i.e. at the same time;[12] thus removing the category of causation from the model.[13]

Consequently the opponents threw absurd *topoi* in his face that they had apparently not suggested to Abū l-Hudhayl. As God can prevent perception, it should be possible not to see an elephant that is right before one's eyes,[14] or that one does not notice when in reality one is somewhere else. The latter touched on his theory of the dream and may be related to the fact that he believed 'absences' of the spirit to be possible. Ashʿarī immediately associated the related trick question of whether someone could be somewhere else in a dream if he was tied to the person sleeping next to him. This had no relevance to Ṣāliḥ's theory, but it put him in a dialectical quandary. When he maintained that he, while physically present in Iraq, might at the same time be sitting in Mecca beneath a domed tent (*qubba*) without noticing, he ended up with the nickname Ṣāliḥ Qubba, 'Ṣāliḥ with the tent'.

Text 9, l–k. We have to consider the possibility that the opponents simply imputed this conclusion to him. In that case we could dispense with the assumption that he believed in displacements or absences of the inner human core. Text 10, b, argues against this; and it would be difficult to explain why the nickname spread so widely. A tradition preserved by

9   See p. 270 above.

10   Text 9, b–i.

11   See p. 299 above.

12   Text 9, a–b.

13   Cf. also Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain* 26.

14   Text 12, b. Regarding the *topos* see Ghazzālī, *Maqāṣid* 93, 9; it is possible that in our text it is introduced only by Ashʿarī.

Majlisī shows how likely our assumed thought framework was (*Biḥār* LXI 33, no. 17): Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq was asked whether in the case of someone dreaming that he visited Mecca or Egypt the *rūḥ* had separated from the body. The imam answered in the negative: if the *rūḥ* has left once, it cannot come back – i.e., the person has died. The theory was only tenable if one assumed a separate breath of life (*nasīm*) besides the *rūḥ*, or interpreted the *rūḥ* itself as breath of life and added another superordinate identity, such as *nafs*. – *Qubba* was the name of the tapering circular leather tent of distinguished Arab chieftains (cf. E. Meyer, *Ayyām al-ʿArab* 39; regarding its shape also Reintjes, *Soziale Stellung der Frau* 153f.). It was brought along into battle in pre-Islamic times and probably contained an idol (Lammens, *Arabie occidentale* 111 and 130; critically B. Farès, *Honneur* 100f. and 163f., n. 2).

Considering all we know about preceding developments it can hardly come as a surprise that the discussion concerning *mutawallidāt* focussed on the phenomenon of perception in particular, although it may have become enriched by a new motif: the problem of illusion. The 'sophists' came to the opposite conclusion when considering the existence of dreams: as they do not represent reality, it may be that what we perceive when awake is also fantasy and figment of our imagination.[15] Ṣāliḥ's saying that, on the contrary, both are real[16] appears like deliberate opposition. This assumption is confirmed when we find that the explanation of reflection includes the same antithesis: while the 'sophists' claim that it was mere conjecture (*ḥisbān*),[17] Ṣāliḥ insisted that it was created by God and thus human like the person seeing it.[18] In his view the fact that God creates perception is guarantee of its truth; consequently the proof of absurdity with which his opponents attacked him was not relevant to him.

Both theories are reported too briefly to be unambiguous. The sceptics probably consider reflections to be 'conjecture' because they are not tangible and make fools of our senses; *ḥisbān* always denotes a pure figment of the imagination (regarding the term see *Erkenntnislehre* 232, and my essay *Skepticism in Islamic Thought* in: Abḥāth 31/1968/1ff.). Ṣāliḥ's

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15    *Maq.* 433, 8f. In Islamic sources 'sophists' usually refers to sceptics; in this context they may be Dahrite intellectuals. Regarding the application of the term cf. my *Erkenntnislehre* 232ff.

16    Text 10, a.

17    *Maq.* 434, 11.

18    Text 14.

believing, on the other hand, that a reflection was 'human like the person seeing it' sounds severe, but in fact there were certain Iranian anthropomorphists who believed that the reflection was identical with the person looking into the mirror (Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 84, 3f.); some of whom even believed God had to look into a mirror in order to be able to create Adam in his image (Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ShNB III 225, pu.). And we must not forget that in Ṣāliḥ's view, the human person was the spirit; God thus does not primarily double the body of the person looking into the mirror but actually his identity. Maybe this was Ṣāliḥ's explanation of dreams as well.

In *Mughnī* IV 59, ult. ff., Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār explores a theory that may well have come from Ṣāliḥ Qubba: 'When one looks into a mirror, one sees the same thing as one's face (once more); God is accustomed (*ajrā l-ʿāda*) to creating it in this way'. 'Accustomed' adds a new aspect, confirming what we should have assumed in any case: that all the instances of divine omnipotence Ṣāliḥ listed in the context of the *mutawallidāt* were theoretical exceptions unlikely to disturb the normal course of events. This would be the so far earliest instance of the word *ʿāda*. Jāḥiẓ' remarks on the subject of reflections in *K. al-tarbīʿ* (89 § 169f.) show, despite their playful nature, how little the issue was understood.

One of Ṣāliḥ's teachings noted by Ibn al-Murtaḍā, maybe based on Ḥākim al-Jushamī, was that perception was a *maʿnā*, i.e. something independent (*Ṭab.* 73, 2; also *Riyāḍat al-afhām* 53b). This is probably asserting once again that God creates it separately.

Unlike Naẓẓām Ṣāliḥ was an atomist like Abū l-Hudhayl, but the way in which he interpreted atomism added an entirely individual note. He rejected the geometric models Abū l-Hudhayl and Muʿammar had devised to make their theory more accessible. Atoms cannot touch six others, nor even two, as they have no sides.[19] They are points in a much stricter sense than Abū l-Hudhayl had imagined; they do not even potentially have the quality of corpuscles. They can only ever touch **one** other point, which will 'occupy the other one fully'.[20] Ṣāliḥ may have copied this approach from his contemporary Iskāfī;[21] he also had similarities with ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān.[22] The theory had passed through

19    Text 6, a–b.

20    Text 7, e–f.

21    Text 7, a; at least if Ashʿarī's identification in 7, d is correct. Cf. also the commentary, and ch. C 4.2.2.1 below.

22    See ch. C 4.1.2.1.1.3 below.

Naẓẓām's criticism, evading his objections[23] and striving successfully for great-er abstraction. However, it also generated new problems. It was more difficult than before to explain how 'compact' bodies could be composed of atoms, as Ṣāliḥ ruled out that the two atoms that are joined together might also touch a third one; together they have a bigger surface and could not be 'occupied fully' by another one.[24] Furthermore the two are in exactly the same place,[25] while the third one can only be isolated and next to them.

However, like Abū l-Hudhayl, Ṣāliḥ was probably not mainly interested in explaining how reality comes into being. Reality is due to creation, and a more autonomous creation than in Abū l-Hudhayl's model, but the theoretical reduction of reality to its original components shows how far God's omnipo-tence extends: it goes so far that God can create a bare atom without any acci-dents, or cause a created thing to disintegrate to this degree.[26] A later objection was that this could not be determined,[27] but this was of course not relevant to Ṣāliḥ. An atom, he believed with Abū l-Hudhayl, is 'substance' (*jawhar*),[28] and it is possible to imagine a substance without accidents. This does not contra-dict the fact that it usually occurs with accidents, which are not graded at all: rest and motion are in no way superior to colour or odour. The only exception to be taken into account is the composition (*tarkīb*). Being an accident, it is in-herent only to the body; after all, that is its definition. A point cannot be com-posed; physicality requires at least two points together which can be described as joined together in a composition.[29]

With this exception, the atom is able not only to adopt all accidents in the-ory, but several at once in practice.[30] They are only mutually exclusive if they are direct opposites; it is not possible for something to be alive and dead at the same time.[31] There is no reason, on the other hand, why something should not be at one and the same time capable of acting and dead; after all, some-thing may be incapable of acting ('powerless') and alive at the same time, and the two combinations are mirror images of one another.[32] As only God distrib-utes accidents among bodies or 'substances', this was in addition a reflection

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23    See p. 334f. above.
24    Text 7, f–h; also Pines, *Atomenlehre* 8.
25    Ibid., g.
26    Text 8.
27    Juwaynī, *Shāmil* 212, 1ff.
28    Text 8 with commentary.
29    Text 6, c; 7, a–c.
30    Thus according to Text 6, c.
31    Text 13, d.
32    Text 13, a–c.

about his omnipotence: God can join death and knowledge, just as he can hold a rock suspended in the air. Faith even tells us that in this instance he regularly breaks with his 'custom', in the case of the punishment of the grave. In order to explain it one need not assume that God gives the spirit leave to return to the dead body; God is able to grant the body all the knowledge it requires to remember its sins.[33] However, as a dead body does not normally have knowledge, symmetry requires that life could exist in a body separately; it does not necessarily imply the capacity to act as Naẓẓām had assumed.[34]

The capacity to act, being an accident, is a gift from God, but it is present before the action;[35] here, Ṣāliḥ Qubba is all Muʿtazilite. While he, more than others, took the sentence in the Quran seriously that God creates everything,[36] he did not include the actions of humans, least of all their sins. They, too, are created, but only in that God names and qualifies them and thus confers existence on them. This is, as we pointed out earlier, part of Naẓẓām's legacy;[37] even though Ṣāliḥ emphasises God's part more strongly by using the word 'create', he is no Ḍirārite.[38] Among the good deeds only the knowledge of God is not acquired through free decision in his view;[39] he goes back beyond Naẓẓām here, but remains within Muʿtazilite tradition.

The reason why he is sometimes counted among the Murji'ites,[40] and why Khayyāṭ does not want to regard him as a Muʿtazilite,[41] is a different one: he dismissed the *manzila bayna l-manzilatayn*.[42] He was believed to be close to Muways b. ʿImrān, claiming like him that the threatening verses in the Quran did not necessarily apply to all humans, and even less to all Muslims. God can make exceptions even if he does not say so explicitly.[43] Thus for Ṣāliḥ the Muslims remain believers even when they sin; being believers they may be spared the eternal punishment of hell, even though the Quran threatened it for

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33    Text 16. Regarding the issue in general cf. *Erkenntnislehre* 298f.

34    Text 13, e. Cf. also Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* I 120, −8.

35    Text II 35.

36    Text 18, b, if this is the right place for it.

37    See n. 5 above.

38    Of which Ibn al-Rēwandī accused even Naẓẓām (see p. 448 above). In general cf. Gimaret *Théories* 4ff.

39    Text 15.

40    Ibn Ḥazm (cf. Text II 35), Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* 20, ult. f.), Shahrastānī (106, 1/267, 3f.); also Baghdādī, *Farq* 193, 7f./205, pu.), who, however, previously listed Ṣāliḥ's school twice aming the Muʿtazilites (18, −5/24, −4, and 93, 8f./114, 7f.).

41    *Intiṣār* 93, 5ff., where his name is written incorrectly; cf. Aʿsam 148 no. 139/transl. 215.

42    *Intiṣār*, ibid.

43    Text II 36; cf. p. 208f. above.

certain transgressions irrespective of the person. Like him, Muways was often called a Muʿtazilite, but they both had roots in the Basran Murjiʾa.[44]

Ṣāliḥ's life is entirely in the dark. He may never have made it to Baghdad; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī does not mention him. There are no records of him in Basra, either; Jāḥiẓ – who includes some information on Muways b. ʿImrān – does not mention him, although his byname might have awakened interest. Aʿsam gives the date of his death as 246/860;[45] I am unable to confirm this. Two passages from Ashʿarī together allow the inference that his name was Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ṣāliḥ.[46] This tells us nothing except a rather obvious *kunya*. Khwārizmī gives his name as Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbdallāh,[47] Shahrastānī as Ṣāliḥ b. Ṣubayḥ b. ʿAmr.[48] Shortly afterwards he appears to abridge it to Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAmr. Maqrīzī would later name him as Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAmr b. Ṣāliḥ.[49] It is unlikely that the Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ṣāliḥ named by Jāḥiẓ in the extant fragment of the introduction to his *Ṭabaqāt al-mughannīn* was the same person as he was a singer and later retired from public life.[50]

We should consider the possibility of whether he was the same as the Muʿtazilite Ibn Ṣubayḥ who made himself unpopular in Egypt during the *miḥna* (Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr* 452, 6f.). After all, Shahrastānī named Ṣāliḥ among the Thawbāniyya (106, 1/267, 3f.). Still, Shahrastānī is a little generous in this case, and the form Ṣāliḥ b. Ṣubayḥ that would be necessary to confirm the hypothesis, is not confirmed.

### 3.2.2.2.7.3    Believers in the Migration of Souls

Naẓẓām's theory of the spirit led to an interesting belief developing among his pupils. If all living beings were members of the same class because they had a share in the spirit, and if being a human on earth meant that the spirit was clothed in a particular shell in which it suffered 'detractions' and from

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44    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār included him in his *Ṭabaqāt* (*Faḍl* 281, –4 > IM 73, 1f.; cf. also *Mughnī* VIII 3, 14). Ibn Baṭṭa's calling him a Rāfiḍite (*Ibāna* 92, 10) is simply an error; similarly Shahrastānī's listing him and Muways among the Khārijites (*Milal* 103, 5f./253, 7f.; cf. Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 416, n. 17).

45    *Faḍīḥa* 341.

46    Text 6, and 7, e–i with commentary.

47    *Mafātīḥ* 20, ult. f.

48    *Milal* 103, 5f./253, 7. Fakhry adopts this in: MW 43/1953/100.

49    *Khiṭaṭ* II 350, 18.

50    *Rasāʾil* III 135, pu. ff.

which it strives to free itself,[1] the idea suggested itself that humans had existed as separate spirits in their pre-earthly existence, and had perhaps been forced to enter the 'prison' of the body. Being forced sounded like a punishment, and in the course of such a punishment a spirit might tumble down beyond human existence into the animal kingdom, as animals, being living creatures, were members of the same class as humans. There were numerous narratives about metamorphoses (*maskh*) describing that this was possible; even Naẓẓām had reined in his scepticism at this point.[2] Migration of souls in the stricter sense (*tanāsukh*) had also been a well-known model for a long time. It may not have been viewed with favour everywhere, but it was not officially condemned, either.

The Quran had, of course, already spoken of people's metamorphosis into monkeys and pigs.[3] Jāḥiẓ strove to present this as 'natural' folk belief found among the Bedouins.[4] The motif developed vigorously in hadith,[5] where we also encounter the term *maskh* which the Quran itself does not use.[6] While intellectuals, especially 'Dahrites' who were wary of religion in any case, might raise their eyebrows, not even they were able to prevail entirely against the power of folklore and the fear of inexplicable disaster. Some tried to rationalise the traditions and explained metamorphoses with environmental influences; others rejected *maskh* per se, but discovered the power of providence in floods or earthquakes.[7] Others still accepted it as true. A certain Ḥakam b. ʿAmr al-Baḥrānī composed a *qaṣīda* on the wonders of creation (!) 41 verses of which Jāḥiẓ quotes in the context of this subject.[8]

The verb *tanāsakha* is already found in Kumayt, although he still uses it in the sense of passing on a 'biological' gene from one generation to the next.[9] The idea of the migration of souls was realised at the same time by his older contemporary Kuthayyir who was said to have referred to one of the Quranic

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1  These aspects are emphasised in Text XXIII 19, d–e.

2  Text XXII 234; cf. p. 416 above.

3  Sura 5:60, also 2:65 and 7:166.

4  *Ḥayawān* IV 100, 2ff.

5  *Conc.* V 216 a; cf. vol. II 59 above. Cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbīʿ* 28, –5ff. § 44/transl. Adad in: Arabica 14/1967/36; regarding a related phenomenon Viguera in: *Festschrift Pareja* 647ff. In general Pellat in EI² VI 736ff. s. v. *Maskh*.

6  The meaning of sura 36:67 is uncertain.

7  Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* IV 70, 2ff., and 73, 6ff.

8  Ibid. VI 8off.; cf. Enderwitz, *Gesellschaftlicher Rang* 76ff.

9  *Hāshimiyyāt* 3 v. 40 (= p. 84, 10/transl. 61); cf. Rubin in: IOS 5/1975/90f.

passages that would later be adduced repeatedly, namely sura 82:8.[10] However, he probably believed only in *rajʿa*,[11] while the migration of souls was a concept more often linked to the extreme Shīʿa.[12] This was not necessarily a recommendation: even the Imāmites made quite clear that they had nothing to do with it.[13] It was probably known that this was a Manichaean belief.[14] Soon, however, more reputable witnesses were discovered. Bīrūnī found that John Philoponus[15] reported that according to Plato souls may be reborn in animals; Bīrūnī then made the connection to Pythagoras. Aristotle's *Theology* presumed metempsychosis as a matter of fact.[16] In the context of theodicy it was one of the few simple solutions. Among the Jews there were followers of ʿAnan ben David who tried to explain the suffering of children in this way.[17] Later the physician al-Rāzī held that this was the only way in which to justify slaughtering animals: it might be that a condemned spirit would be liberated.[18] To him, the migration of souls was simply a consequence of the immortality of the soul.[19] The early Iranian Ismāʿīlite Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī subsequently restricted this, to the effect that it would be bound to the same species and that e.g. a human could only be reborn in another human.[20]

The Muʿtazilites, on the other hand, regarded it as a dead end.[21] They probably thought like the philosopher al-Kindī: why should the soul return to the body once it had been liberated from it?[22] Naẓẓām would probably have reacted like that, too. Consequently the dissenters who cited him were quietly ignored. Jāḥiẓ, who had a sense of the curious, mentioned one of them, but Khayyāṭ could not bring himself to repeat the details of what Ibn al-Rēwandī

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10    Balādhurī, *Ansāb* II 201, pu. f. Maḥmūdī.

11    See vol. I 330f. above.

12    Cf. e.g. Text XII 2, v. 31, or p. 11ff. above concerning the Rāwandiyya; also in the *Corpus Jābirianum* (Lory, *Alchimie et mystique* 64f.). In general see Freitag, *Seelenwanderung in der islamischen Häresie* 9ff.

13    Cf. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq's dictum reported by Ṭabrisī, *Iḥtijāj* II 89, 3ff. = Majlisī, *Biḥār* X 176, 10ff.

14    Böhlig, *Gnosis* 126 and 298.

15    *Taḥqīq mā lil-Hind* 49, 9ff./transl. Sachau 65.

16    I 11 = p. 20, 6f. Badawī after *Enn.* IV 7.14, 1f.

17    Qirqisānī, *Anwār* I 54, 18ff., and 307, 10ff.; cf. Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology* 10f., against Poznanski in: REJ 45/1903/190f.

18    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* I 90, −7ff.

19    Cf. Goodman in: Philosophical Forum 4/1972/43f.

20    Bīrūnī, *Hind* 49, 7ff./transl. Sachau I 64f.; cf. Madelung in: Festschrift Yarshater 131ff.

21    Relevant texts may be found in Vajda's essay *La refutation de la métensomatose d'après le théologien karaïte Yūsuf al-Baṣīr*, in: Philomates. Studies in memory of Ph. Meran 281ff.

22    Pseudo-Sijistānī, *Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* 118, 7ff. Dunlop.

said about them.[23] In the Muʿtazila's biographical tradition their names were expunged from Kaʿbī onwards. Not even Ashʿarī included a single note; it is possible, after all, that he was still a Muʿtazilite when he wrote part of his *Maqālāt*. Besides Ibn al-Rēwandī, we have to rely almost entirely on Baghdādī and Ibn Ḥazm. This deplorable situation explains why the form of their names are not assured. The apparently most eminent mind among them, and the only one mentioned by Jāḥiẓ, was

Aḥmad b. Khābiṭ (?).

He was a member of a well-known Baghdad family, several of whom were Muʿtazilites,[24] but he came originally from Basra and may have lived there as well.[25] He was closely associated with Naẓẓām, not only interpreting the *aṣlaḥ* concept in the same way but also believing in the 'leap' and rejecting atomism.[26] Perhaps he was the anonymous theologian whose theory of the soul Jāḥiẓ reported with a shudder.[27] When he overstepped the mark with his theory of the migration of souls the Muʿtazilites denounced him to Wāthiq who instructed Ibn Abī Duwād to embark upon an investigation. It came to nothing, allegedly because Ibn Khābiṭ died around this time, between 227/842 and 232/847.[28]

Samʿānī (*Ansāb* V 1f. no. 1280) assumes the reading Khābiṭ, which is the only form of the name known to Dhahabī in *Mushtabih* (262, 1). He also cites *al-Ḥāʾiṭ*, but only with the article. Overall Ḥāʾiṭ is much more frequent in printed works (*Intiṣār* 107, 16f. and 19; 108, 4; 110, 1ff.; *Ḥayawān* IV 288, 6f.; Baghdādī, ¹*Farq* 216 ult.; 255, 7f. and 12, and *Milal* 115, 2; Masʿūdī, *Murūj* ¹III 266, 7; Shahrastānī ¹42, 2 and 6; Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* 110, 1; Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 88, 8; Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 300, 12, and 301, 21), but the form without diacritics is more likely in the manuscripts, and it is not impossible that the editions may have been aligned. Khābiṭ is also found in Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* III 120, 6; IV 197, −5 and ult., and 198, 3. However, Ibn Ḥazm is not a reliable witness as in other places the printed version has a third form, Ḥābiṭ (I 78, 15, and 79, 11; II 112, 10). Pellat preferred this form in EI² I

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23    Text 26, e.

24    Text 26, d and k.

25    Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* I 78, 15; also III 120, 6.

26    Baghdādī, *Farq* 255, 8ff./273, 8ff; cf. also Text 26, c and f; Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* IV 197, −4.

27    Text XXII 88, cf. p. 378ff. above. Would he have described him as an 'authority', though?

28    Text 26, i. Cf., also concerning the following, Ch. Pellat's monograph in: MUSJ 50/1984/483ff.; Freitag, *Seelenwanderung* 113ff. is uncritical.

272, but only because of the place Ibn Ḥajar gave him in *Lisān al-Mīzān* I
148 no. 471, which is in no way superior to that Samʿānī accords him and
furthermore leaves the choice between *Khābiṭ* and *Ḥāʾiṭ* open. Pellat's cit-
ing Samʿānī in MUSJ 50/1984/485 is clearly a mistake. Friedländer decided
in favour of *Ḥāʾiṭ* (JAOS 29/1908/10), but only because of the 'best manu-
scripts'. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's reprint of Baghdādī's *Farq* uses the form Khābiṭ,
probably against the evidence of the manuscripts.

If Ibn Khābiṭ claimed the pre-earthly existence of humans as spiritual beings,
he did so based on his teacher's axiom that the entire creation (*khalq*) was cre-
ated at once.[29] Creation to him meant the creatures (*khalq*), but in the form of
spirits who were not distinguished as to individual species. They found them-
selves in paradise, their 'first home', and as the spirit is the seat of knowledge
and of the capacity to act, they were adult from the first, possessing 'necessary'
knowledge of God that he himself had granted them.[30] Consequently they
could recognise his commandments immediately; there was no reason why
the first paradise could not have been a place of *taklīf*. This was particularly
true if, like Ibn Khābiṭ and his teacher, one believed in a natural moral law that
did not require a revelation. This, to him, was the end of the question of how
the obligation came about in the first place; it was discussed again only later.
The first commandment for the blessed spirits to consider was borne of natu-
ral consideration: that they had to thank God for the blessings he bestowed on
them in paradise.[31] After all, he created the world for their benefit.[32]

It could be imagined that Ibn Khābiṭ linked this to sura 7:172, according to
which God had entered into a covenant with humans in the pre-existence. In
this way he created a situation in paradise that usually only applied on earth:
that humans acted differently out of their own free decision, and were conse-
quently treated differently. Those who obeyed all God's commandments, God
would keep with him as his companions (*aṣḥāb*), i.e. presumably the *aṣḥāb
al-yamīn* mentioned in sura 56:90: they are sitting 'on his right hand'.[33] Those

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29    Text 25, b, and 33, a; cf. p. 398f. above.

30    Text 19, a–c; 21, e.

31    Cf. Text 19, g, and 25, c (also the parallel in Shahrastānī 42, 14ff./89, 8ff.), and Text 20, a–b,
      each of which explains the origin of this obligation differently. In more detail p. 479ff.
      below.

32    See p. 440 above.

33    Cf. Text 24, f, and 19, a, with commentary; also the deliberations concerning Text 21, c,
      p. 472 below. We may safely assume that quoting sura 56:89 in fact refers to the entire
      passage.

who refused all obedience would be thrown into the fires of hell for eternal punishment – a variant of the, actually rather rare in Islam, motif of the fall of the demons.[34] Those who incurred guilt without actually breaking any commandments were punished with the fall (*hubūṭ*) into this world. This is the term with which the Quran describes how the first pair of humans had to leave paradise, now referring to all humanity.[35] Earthly existence thus became punishment in a temporary hell, as it were, though not entirely: the fallen spirits will not only be tormented on earth but they may also experience happiness. Like Naẓẓām, Ibn Khābiṭ saw their existence as a test, which was why prophets would be sent to them from time to time: they were given the opportunity of proving themselves and rising up again. On the other hand they may keep falling; if they add to the sins they committed in paradise – or if these were too grave to begin with – they will be transformed into animals. It is only on earth that the spirits are given a 'compact shell' (*qālab kathīf*), which differs according to their transgressions.[36] God has composed humans 'after whatever form he wished' (sura 82:8); he even said that he had 'made pairs' of humans and animals (sura 42:11).

Text 24, g. Of course this is not the accepted exegesis in both these cases. In sura 82:8 Paret translates following the *communis opinio*: 'in einer Gestalt zusammengesetzt, wie er sie (für dich haben) wollte' ('composed you in a form he wanted [for you]'); sura 42:11 is saying that humans as well as gregarious animals (*anʿām*) were each created in pairs, not that God made pairs of humans and animals by letting a human soul enter an animal's body. The second passage was apparently much too clear to be cited much; for the first, on the other hand, cf. Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān* V 449, pu. ff. – If Ibn Ḥazm thought that Ibn Khābiṭ explained the suffering of children like this, too, it is an unjustified generalisation (*Fiṣal* III 120, 7 ff.; hinted at also in Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 88, 8); Ibn Khābiṭ does not seem to have believed in the migration of souls from one human to another. The passage in Ibn Ḥazm is badly expressed in any case.

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34 Only, it seems, a variant. Ibn Ḥazm stressed – maybe too emphatically – the difference: it is not the devils who are cast out but the spirits (Text 24, a–c). The devils, on the other hand, would have been created within hell from the beginning. Nyberg compared this to the Origenist doctrine of the antemundane fall of man (*Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-ʿArabī* 52).

35 Text 21, e; cf. sura 20:123.

36 Text 19, g–m; 21, d–g.

If this development, which took place 'in loops and repetitions',[37] allowed humans the continued possibility to make decisions, there must be a law for animals in order to evaluate their actions.[38] This could be proved through exegesis, by combining suras 6:38 and 35:24. The first passage said that animals like humans form societies or communities (*umam*), while the second confirmed that a prophet was sent to every society/community.[39] Sura 16:68 provided the confirmation: it said that God 'revealed' (*awḥā*) to the bee how to build its honeycomb, which refers to a true revelation given to a prophet among the community of bees, as *awḥā* must always be understood in this, strict sense.[40] Naẓẓām had prepared this idea in his exegesis of sura 27:18, where he had demonstrated that ants, too, live in communities and act reasonably.[41]

One might draw the conclusion to practise *ahiṃsā*; Jāḥiẓ reported that some Muslims did not eat the meat of lizards and eels because they saw these animals as 'communities' of transformed humans.[42] Ibn Khābiṭ did not agree: one may kill and slaughter animals, as the spirits banished to their bodies were meant to be punished. Their punishment recalls their transgressions: those who are slaughtered in the form of a sheep or crushed in the form of fleas were themselves murderers. The principle is based on mirror images: those who killed, will now themselves be killed; those who were violent will become miserable like worms or lice; fornicators will become impotent like mules, and those who remained chaste throughout all their other transgressions may

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37    *takwīr wa-takrīr*, Text 21, g; cf. also *yatakarraru* in Text 19, l, and *kurūr* in Text 25, a. The meaning of *takrīr*, used only once by Shahrastānī, is not quite clear. I am translating it as 'loops' because the souls can ascend and descend more than once, but it could be just as possible that Shahrastānī was associating it with Ismāʿīlite terminology; *kawr* is an eon in the context of the Ismāʿīlite conjecture about the ages (as opposed to *dawr*; cf. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre* 160). Or might Ibn Khābiṭ, too, have been thinking in eons? His pupil Ibn Mānūsh continued the conjecture at this point (Text 33, n, and p. 479 below). The considerably more frequent word *takrīr* is found in the *Corpus Jābirianum*, among other sources (Lory, *Alchimie et mystique* 64f.).

38    Text 19, f.

39    Text 23. Cf. also Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* IV 288, 6f., and earlier; Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* IV 138, –7ff.

40    Text 22. Abū ʿUbayda's remark in Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān* III 371, –9ff., shows the distinction as it was applied elsewhere. Ibn Khābiṭ did not interpret 'bee' as a collective noun, as was usual. However, a prophet was capable of establishing a culture in his view, which would be shared by Ibn al-Rēwandī later (see ch. C 8.2.2.3.1.2 below).

41    Text XXII 218.

42    *Ḥayawān* VI 77, 7ff.

now enjoy unbridled sexuality in the form of a ram or a sparrow.[43] The second criterion was proportionality: the greater the guilt, the uglier the 'shell'.[44] After all, ugly and harmful animals are most likely to be killed. Some of the Qadarite hadiths that had long been known in Basra found their natural home here: 'He who kills a snake kills an unbeliever' or 'Fighting them is like fighting unbelievers. Only a doubter will fail to kill them'.[45]

At this point it makes sense to look more closely at parallels with the extreme Shīʿa, as the similarity with Nawbakhtī's and Qummī's reports of the people connected with the Ḥarbiyya and the later Kaysāniyya is surprisingly close.[46] This is particularly true of the Quranic justifications, but also of a key term such as *qālab*, the mould, as the respective 'shell' of the soul was called.[47] It is not easy to see to which Shīʿite groups the two heresiographers were referring, and where they were located,[48] but we cannot evade the question of whether Ibn Khābiṭ had any connection to them. Ibn al-Murtaḍā believed him to be a Shīʿite,[49] although Naẓẓām did not think much of them. The explanation might thus be found on the literary level. We receive the impression that the heresiographers described *tanāsukh* along the same formulaic lines every time, and it is not surprising that a Muslim wishing to legitimise the migration of souls based on the Quran would find himself looking at the same verses

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43     Text 25, d–e. Similarly later Ibn Sīnā in his *Risāla Aḍḥawiyya* (42, 9ff. DUNYĀ). See also Dante's idea of *contrappasso*.

44     Text 19, k.

45     See vol. II 59 above. Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* IV 293, 1ff., and 294, 3ff., conveys that the followers of Ibn Khābiṭ adduced these hadiths.

46     *Firaq al-Shīʿa* 32, –6ff. > Qummī, *Maqālāt* 44, pu. ff.; cf. p. 5 above.

47     Ibid. 33, 2f. > Qummī 45, 10f.; cf. Text 19 and 33, k.

48     Halm believed them to be part of the Ḥarbiyya and consequently located them in Madāʾin (*Gnosis* 73ff., also in: Der Islam 58/1981/19ff.). Numerous correspondences with an account in Pseudo-Nāshī seem to corroborate this (*Uṣūl al-niḥal* 38f. §§ 57–58; transl. in Halm 71ff.). However, neither Nawbakhtī nor Qummī state this explicitly; Qummī merely mentions the Sabaʾiyya (*Maqālāt* 44, pu.). His text also shows that Nawbakhtī's classification should not persuade us to refer the entire passage to the Khurramdīniyya: the reference to this group, which is difficult enough to define as it is, is part of the previous passage (cf. Nawbakhtī 33, 4ff. with Qummī 44, 10ff., where a few lines have been inserted). Regarding the Khurramdīniyya now Madelung in EI² V 63ff., and in *Religious Trends* 7ff., also Yusofi in EIran III 301, and Rekaya in: SI 60/1984/5ff. As late as 470/1078 a certain Maḥmūd al-ʿAlawī al-Īlāqī was said to have had in his possession fragments of their writings; however, these, too, may have been only heresiographical accounts (cf. the Text in: Oriens 27–28/1981/279f.).

49     *Munya* 73, apu. f.

again and again. One important difference remained in any case: the *ghulāt* whom Nawbakhtī and Qummī had in mind did not know an afterlife;[50] their *takrīr* consisted of a cyclical *raj'a*.[51] Ibn Khābiṭ, on the other hand, believed that the souls would ultimately reach the end of their journey, either entirely depraved in hell, or in paradise, purified for good. Every population (*umma*) has its 'time limit', according to sura 7:34, and when a hireling has finished his work, he should receive his reward before his sweat has dried.[52]

The difference is emphasised by Ibn Khābiṭ's having two paradises in mind, one in which the delights are physical in the way described by the Quran, and a second one in which the delights are purely spiritual. The latter he also discovered in the Quran, in sura 56:88f., where those who are close to God, the *muqarrabūn*, are promised 'a cool breeze and perfumed herbs' (*rawḥ wa-rayḥān*) or, perhaps more likely, according to a different exegesis, 'mercy and bounty'.[53] There are thus two kinds of blessed, some who keep their body and enjoy their rewards with it, and others who live on as pure spirits. If the text classifies them correctly, these are not the same good spirits who left the first paradise;[54] they are humans who proved themselves exceptionally admirably on earth. This was also demanded by the context of sura 56:88, which concerns humans whose soul leaves the body at the moment of death, and is immediately received into heaven.[55] At this point it becomes significant that Ibn Khābiṭ's beliefs were shared by Sufis, and that he was probably acquainted with them;[56] they would have seen themselves as chosen people of this kind. One of them is repeatedly mentioned together with him:

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50    Nawbakhtī 32, 9ff. > Qummī 45, 2ff.; also Pseudo-Nāshī 38, 14ff.

51    Nawbakhtī 33, 3 > Qummī 45, 10f. Majlisī, *Biḥār* LIII 72 no. 71, tells us that *karat* was some-times used instead of *raj'a*.

52    Text 21, h–i, after an apocryphal prophetic dictum.

53    Text 21, b–c; concerning the exegesis cf. Ṭabarī ²XXVI 211, 9ff., and Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān* V 228, 10ff., also Gimaret, *Livre des Religions* 225, n. 24. This is the only passage in the Quran where these two words are used. Ibn al-Dā'ī, *Tabṣira* 51, –6, seems to imply that he also read *'illiyyūn* in sura 83:19 in this context, but it is possible that this was the most common interpretation at the time (cf. EI² III 1132f.).

54    Cf. Text 21, e.

55    This was the most widely believed interpretation elsewhere, too (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Ahwāl al-qubūr* 150, 9ff.); although they had martyrs in mind above all. Text 21 even assumes that the 'first paradise' is different from this paradise, but Text 19 questions it. It is, indeed, not very probable. And hell, even in the opinion of Text 21, the same for all the damned.

56    Text 22, 1, after Jāḥiẓ.

Faḍl al-Ḥadathī.

He probably came from al-Ḥadītha on the Euphrates.[57] The town was a Shīʿite stronghold; later it was particularly the Nusayrians who had strong support there.[58] Even so, there is no reliable information confirming that he was a Shīʿite;[59] it is entirely possible that he merely brought with him a certain openness to ideas that flourished especially among radical Shīʿites. Pseudo-Nāshiʾ, i.e. presumably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, counted him among the *ṣūfiyyat al-Muʿtazila*; like them he rejected gainful employment and believed the authorities to be superfluous.[60] Like Ibn Khābiṭ he had studied under Naẓẓām, and like him found himself boycotted by the school when he 'grew funny in the head'.[61] There is, however, no reason to assume that they were both excluded at the same time and for the same reason; Khayyāṭ reported the events separately, and with different details.[62] In fact, it is difficult to determine on how much they agreed in their theories. Kaʿbī had great respect for Faḍl and was said to have defended him against some of Ibn al-Rēwandī's imputations;[63] apparently he would have liked to dissociate him from Ibn Khābiṭ to some degree. Jāḥiẓ only ever names this one man. While this was generally understood to mean that Ibn Khābiṭ was the greatest mind – and after all Jāḥiẓ had been the one to point out his Sufi contacts – Faḍl is linked to the theory of the migration of souls independently and separately only once.[64] This passage claims that he went beyond Ibn Khābiṭ, claiming that souls might be banished to inhabit plants and rocks.

Jāḥiẓ made similar observations in Ibn Khābiṭ's circle, too. Among the Quranic verses they were particularly fond of quoting he names the following three: sura 2:74 'for there are stones from which streams come gushing, and others split, so that water issues from them, and others crash down (from the mountains?) **for fear of God**'; sura 34:10 'O you mountains! Sing songs of penitence (?) with him!', and the passage at 33:72 that preachers on all sides like to quote to this day 'We offered the

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57    Thus after Samʿānī, *Ansāb* IV 91, 2ff., and 88, apu. f. However, other *nisba*s derived from this place were Ḥadīthī and Ḥadathānī (ibid. 93, 8).

58    Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s. v. *Ḥadīthat al-Furāt*.

59    By the (late) Abū Yaʿlā (Text 31). One would assume that when comparing Faḍl and Ibn al-Rēwandī (Text 26, f–h), Khayyāṭ would have emphasised this point.

60    Text XVIII 1, l; cf. p. 142ff. above.

61    Text 26, c and f.

62    Cf. Text 26, f and i; summary 28, b.

63    Text 30, b.

64    Text 31.

pledge (*amāna*) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they **refused** to carry it and **were afraid of it**' (*Ḥayawān* IV 288, 1ff.). The three verses have in common that they describe rocks and mountains in an anthropomorphic manner. As sura 6:38 is cited only a little earlier, it is probable that all these passages were interpreted to the effect that populations of transformed humans are acting or being addressed.

The *nisba* al-Ḥadathī is again often corrupt and not entirely assured. Ibn Ḥazm has Ḥarbī (*Fiṣal* IV 197, −5) and Ḥarrānī (II 112, 10); Abū Yaʿlā Ḥ-r-thī (*Muʿtamad* 110, 9). Friedländer notes further variants in JAOS 29/1908/11. *K. al-Intiṣār* has Faḍl al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (107, 15 and pu.; 110, 1f.). This had originally been spelled [Arabic] and was corrected to [Arabic] later; *al-Ḥadathī* may have been the original after all. Aʿsam also decided in favour of this reading (p. 300).

The theory in which Faḍl and Ibn Khābiṭ agreed most closely takes us to an entirely different region. It also shows immediately why Faḍl, being a Sufi, had a particular interest in it: they both accorded Jesus a position he hardly ever occupied in Islam in this form. They turned him into a logos being situated between the world and God, and whom God created first. Abū Manṣūr al-ʿIjlī had first embraced this belief at the beginning of the second century,[65] but his teachings had long since vanished. By now, the belief was more likely to have been connected to the ascetic tendencies characteristic of, certainly, Faḍl al-Ḥadathī, and maybe Ibn Khābiṭ's entire circle. They probably practised celibacy, as both of them were said to have criticised the fact that the prophet was married. It was remarked that Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī was much more aloof from the world than Muḥammad had been.[66] The one among the prophets to whom one could look up thanks to his asceticism and his unmarried state was Jesus; interestingly, Abū Dharr had always been compared to Jesus.[67] His disciples had been prophets, for the Quran said that God had given them revelations (*awḥaytu*, sura 5:111).[68] This could not be said of the companions of the prophet.

There were several ways in which to prove that, unlike Muḥammad, Jesus had been more than a human. Firstly, through the Quran: he is a creator,

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65    *Maq.* 9, 11f.

66    Text 29, b; cf. 26, e.

67    Cf. EI² I 114b s. n. Samʿānī polemically suggested Manichaean influence on Faḍl al-Ḥadathī: one should not beget offspring but rather engage in homosexuality (*Ansāb* IV 91, 5ff.).

68    Text 22, b.

because as a child he 'created' birds from clay (sura 5:110);[69] and then also confirmed by hadith: he is a spiritual being, an intelligence, for God created the νοῦς (*ʿaql*) first, and commanded it to show itself from the front and the back, because it pleased him greatly.[70] And ultimately also with ideas from Christian theology: Jesus is the son of God through a kind of adoption;[71] we recall that Naẓẓām had to take action against this theory among his followers.[72] God is thus moved further away. He remains the only eternal being, and the lord of the first-created logos being, known to us under the name Jesus; but he is not the creator of the world any more, and he does not guide it. Jesus does this on his behalf; he is a 'temporal God' and the 'second lord of the creation'. He takes on the function of a demiurge, the 'word of God' (*kalīmat Allāh*) fulfilling the function Abū l-Hudhayl had ascribed to the *fiat*, the word *kun*.[73]

The part played by Jesus goes far beyond this. He is not only a hypostasis, and he does not only act at the beginning of creation. He also appears at its end, as the judge of the worlds, the 'lord of the first and the last ones'.[74] People will see him, during the judgement as well as afterwards in paradise, 'like the full moon at night',[75] for although he was originally a spiritual being he has taken on the 'armour' of an earthly body.[76] He is the visible God; anthropomorphic in the true sense of the word. This resolved many difficulties. The vision of God was not a topic to be avoided any more, and one could confidently accept a number of Quranic passages and hadiths that had previously been a

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69   Text 30, a. The characteristic *bi-idhnī* 'with my (= God's) permission' is missing from the
      quotation there – incorrectly, it would seem, as Faḍl did not doubt Jesus' being subordinate to God (see below).

70   Text 27, h. Regarding the circulation of this hadith in Basra see vol. 11 196 above.

71   Text 27, b.

72   See p. 431f. above. Naẓẓām's argument was, as Jāḥiẓ' text (XXII 181, l) proves, adopted by
      the Muʿtazila; this may allow us to understand more precisely how the two outsiders
      came to be condemned by the school. Jāḥiẓ, however, does not name names, speaking of
      'theologians' in general (*b*). If he had Faḍl al-Ḥadathī in mind this would be evidence of
      his linking him to the adoption theory. However, he may also be referring to Ibn Khābiṭ,
      seeing as he regarded him as the head of the school.

73   Text 26, a; 27, a; 28, a; 29, a; 30, a. The wording may have been influenced by the heresiographers in places.

74   Text 26, b; 27, c–e; cf. sura 56:49f. It is unlikely that the reference to sura 2:210 in 27, e, is
      proof that certain cases of grave reckoning will be left to the distant God.

75   Text 26, b; 27, g.

76   Text 27, 1.

source of worry.[77] The lord will 'come' with all his angels,[78] and he will put his foot into hell to ensure it does not devour all humans.[79] The vision of God awaiting them was especially important to the Sufis; maybe they had allocated it to the second paradise of which Ibn Khābiṭ spoke. We should like to know how they interpreted Jesus' earthly existence; maybe they did indeed believe in a kind of incarnation. For while God only appointed him his son, he would be exalted before the end of time. Jesus had already created Adam in his image.[80]

There had been previous instances in Islamic theology of this splitting of the image of God: among the Bakriyya in Basra,[81] maybe also with 'Ubayd al-Muktib in Kufa[82] and with Jahm b. Ṣafwān in Iran.[83] However, by interpreting the 'temporal God' as a historical person, his subordinate position is more pronounced. Jesus may be the 'second lord of creation', but as we have seen he remains the first created being, and however independently he may act, he is still fulfilling God's plan. The heresiographers, to whom the model was anathema, probably emphasised the independence of the 'second God' too much. We must wonder whether Jesus really 'took on the armour' of an earthly body himself, or whether he was armed in it.[84] If we now try to tie this to Ibn Khābiṭ's theory of the migration of souls, this is only feasible if we assume that the faraway God did not permit his spirit beings to act of their own accord from the first. Some questions remain unanswered all the same. The texts on Ibn Khābiṭ never mention that there was a logos being among the spirit beings created in the first paradise, much less that he went before them; on the contrary, they say

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77  Shahrastānī puts this most succinctly (44, 2ff./91, 12ff. > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 301, 14ff.). However, his version was clearly informed by Neo-Platonic categories and by Ibn Sīnā's system.

78  Text 27, d–e. The combination of the two Quranic passages referred to there shows that Jesus was identified with the 'lord' rather than with the 'angel' in the former, sura 89:22. Jesus is not an angelic being; consequently *malak* may safely be read as a collective noun, as exegesis usually did (against Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology* I₂ 100). In this way a contradiction with the second Quranic passage, sura 2:210, which includes the word *malā'ika*, is avoided. In our context the focus is neither on the 'lord' nor on the 'angels' but on the anthropomorphic 'to come' (see p. 199 above; in detail Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il* IV 13, 9ff.). This also applies to sura 6:158, which Shahrastānī adduced as well (42, 11/89, 3).

79  Shahrastānī 42, 12f./89, 4f.

80  Text 27, f.

81  See vol. II 127 above.

82  See vol. I 244 above.

83  See vol. II 563 above.

84  The verb form used by our source, *tadarra'a*, leaves the decision open. It corresponds to εἰσδύεσθαι 'slipping into a (different) garment' of the Pythagoreans (cf. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft* 99). Arabic also knew the word *taqmīṣ* or *taqammuṣ*, where 'armour' was replaced with 'shirt'.

clearly that God created all of creation at once. We do not know, either, where the Adam created by Jesus in his image belongs – as a spirit being in the first paradise, or as the first human on earth, although his falling to earth could only have been a punishment. The complex of traditions we looked at under the name of Ibn Khābiṭ, and that attributed to Faḍl al-Ḥadathī, do not necessarily correspond. Once again we receive the impression that the heresiographers linked the two dissenters more closely than the facts warranted.

This impression is affirmed by the fact that Ibn Khābiṭ had some pupils who adopted and expanded his theory of the migration of souls, but probably without the 'Christology'. Where Jesus status as a 'son' was concerned, it had made use of Christian arguments, in particular the scriptural proof based on OT and NT;[85] it may have been developed in contact with Christian circles, perhaps in a kind of 'ecumenical' effort between Sufis and (Nestorian?) monks. Sometimes the word *tadarra'a* was used among Christians; it denoted the adoption of human nature in the course of the incarnation.[86] Christians were not, however, impressed by the theory of migration of the souls. In the Mu'tazila, on the other hand, it continued its separate existence for at least a century.

Before we look into this in detail we must emphasise that the split image of God found followers for some time to come as well, but these did not come from the Mu'tazila, and not from Christianity, either. The closest parallels to the anti-anthropomorphic aspect of the theory of the 'second God' were found in Judaism, with Benjamin ben Mōshē from Nihāwand, a Karaite of the mid-third/ninth century who was active not only in Iran but also in Iraq. In order to arrive at an adequate exegesis of the 'ambiguous' verses of the OT he placed the creation of the world into the hands of an angel, and also had the law revealed through him.[87] The Samaritan Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ṣūrī would later use the same device, but without arriving at quite such drastic consequences.[88] Within Islam we find the model once again among the extreme Shī'a: a Rāfiḍite group called

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85    Cf. Text XXII 181, e, with commentary.

86    Thus 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, (*Al-masā'il wal-ajwiba* 194, 6 and apu.); cf. also Shahrastānī 172, 7/523, 3 (also Monnot in: *Livre des Religions* 614, n. 7). Graf does not list this meaning in his *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini* (cf. p. 45).

87    Shahrastānī 170, 1ff./512, 7ff.; also Qirqisānī, *Anwār* 319, 4ff., and vol. I 472 above. Regarding early forms of this concept in Judaism cf. TRE XIII 637; concerning early Christian Gnosticism cf. A. K. F. Klijn and G. J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* 3ff., and Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* I 24.

88    *K. al-ṭabākh* 120, 8ff.; cf. G. Wedel in: Vorträge XXIV. DOT Cologne 1988, p. 46ff. The influence of Mu'tazilite theology on this text unmistakeable. Regarding the reading of the title cf. Macuch in: ZDMG 141/1991/174f.

the Mufawwiḍa embraced the opinion that God had 'entrusted' a demiurge with the creation, with the difference that he was not Jesus but Muḥammad.[89] Ḥallāj, on the other hand, emphasised the part played by Jesus: God in human nature (*nāsūt*) enters into the earthly reality twice, namely at the beginning of creation into Adam, and at its end into Jesus who will judge the worlds.[90] Thanks to Ḥallāj these ideas were discredited for good in orthodox ears.

Previously one of Ibn Khābiṭ's pupils who continued to believe in the migration of souls had appeared on the scene, arriving at new and very personal conclusions while more or less ignoring the 'Christology': he claimed to be the paraclete prophesied by Jesus in sura 61:6.[91] He thus referred a passage from scripture usually linked to Muḥammad, one that had led to some controversies with Christian theologians,[92] onto himself. He might have been of the opinion that Muḥammad was a prophet sent only to the Arabs, but that Jesus might well predict someone – and, being a guiding force, perhaps also send him – who should go and bring the Iranians the gospel of the migration of souls. He apparently was Iranian, and had the advantage of being called Aḥmad, which meant that sura 61:1, according to which the paraclete appeared to bear this name, fitted him much better than Muḥammad:

Aḥmad b. Ayyūb b. Mānūs/Mānush.

The grandfather's name is corrupted in several places, but it might be the first half of Manushchithra = Manōchihr (which is also found with a long vowel in the first syllable). More than in the case of Ibn Khābiṭ or Faḍl al-Ḥadathī we may consider whether we are looking at an Iranian Shīʿite who might even have been in touch with the Khurramdīniyya mentioned by Nawbakhtī in this context.

Regarding the derivation of the name cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber* 2, n. 2; adopted by Justi, *Namenbuch* 191 (which confirms the length of the *a*). Shahrastānī 43, 7/ 90, 3 has Mānūs > Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VI 261,

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89    Or ʿAlī as his successor; cf. Qummī, *Maq.* 60, ult. ff. (with further material in the commentary, p. 238f.); Baghdādī, *Farq* 238, 11ff./251, 10ff. > Isfarāʾīnī, *Tabṣīr* 112, –8ff./128, –4ff.; without the name of the sect also Ashʿarī, *Maq.* 16, 1ff., and 564, 13f.; cf. Friedländer in: JQR, NS 2/1911–12/254ff. Imāmite tradition also has God's anthropomorphic qualities transferred onto the imams (Kulīnī, *Kāfī* I 144f. no. 6).

90    Massignon, *Passion* ²III 112f./transl. III 101f.; also ibid. 173f./16of.

91    Text 32.

92    See p. 26f. above; more detail in ch. D 4.2.

no. 2749, and 302, 4, as does Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* I 90, 16f. Ibn Ḥazm also has
Mālūs (II 112, 10) and Sābūs (IV 198, −7). Baghdādī has Yānūsh or Bānūsh
(*Farq* 255, 11/273, 11; Bānūs also in Ibn al-Dāʿī, *Tabṣira* 51, −7). Masʿūdī:
Yāqūs/Yālūsh (*Murūj* III 266, 7f./Pellat II 258, −4f., restores to *Mānūs*);
Abū Yaʿlā: Nāmūs (*Muʿtamad* 110, 3). Further information on the variants:
Friedländer in: JAOS 29/1908/10; he decides in favour of *Yānūs*. Ṭabarī
mentions a certain Aḥmad b. Ayyūb al-Kātib as the reporter of the upris-
ing of the Zanj (III 1852, 2). – We should also consider the possibility that
Aḥmad b. Ayyūb may have been the first one to interpret the word *aḥmad*
in sura 61:1 as a proper name. Originally it was an elative: 'whose name is
most praiseworthy' (cf. Paret, *Kommentar* 476, on the passage); the link
to Muḥammad could be made even without reading it as a proper name.

Ibn Mānūsh began his modifications of his teacher's system by understand-
ing the spirits as atoms.[93] This was probably linked to Muʿammar, who had
thought that the *rūḥ* was an atom and not a body. These atoms, as Ibn Khābiṭ
believed of the spirits, too, had been created in the pre-existence. They are not
only members of the same class, but they are identical in every other respect,
too. This was not only a greatly controversial axiom of atomism,[94] but seems
to have been connected to divine justice in Ibn Mānūsh's understanding. In
his view God did not simply charge them with the duty to do what was right
or let them discover it by means of natural law, but he gave them the choice
of whether they wanted to submit to the test on earth, or not.[95] By using this
concept Ibn Mānūsh avoided the ambiguity concerning the interpretation of
earthly existence that was latent in his teacher's system: test and punishment
were not mixed in it any more. Furthermore the spirits were given the oppor-
tunity of rising above their own status, for whoever decided to submit to a test
and passed it would earn reward. In this way he would reach a higher level than
those who evaded the test and simply remained in the 'first home'. The theory
of the two paradises acquired a special meaning in this context.

Those who did not pass the test were left to decline into animals because of
their sins. However, as they had already taken their decision, Ibn Mānūsh did
not need to assume that the test would continue: this stage is not a punish-
ment, as there is no law among animals.[96] Consequently the spirits can leave
their bodies after the end of the punishment all purified, and once again God

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93    Text 33, b.
94    Cf. Abū Rashīd, *Al-masāʾil fī l-khilāf* 29, 3ff.
95    Text 22, d–i.
96    Ibid., k–l.

will give them the chance either of remaining in the 'first home' to which they have returned, or of undergoing the test once again. Everything they are is due to themselves to the very end. Someone who accumulates merit upon merit might in the end achieve the status of a prophet or an angel.[97] Prophethood is thus acquired, an exaggeration of the ethics of reward of the kind that the Muʿtazila could not usually achieve on the basis of its systematic premises. Even Naẓẓām, following Abū l-Hudhayl, regarded it only as entrusted (*amāna*).[98] The angels, we learn here, are superior to the spirits; they are probably now the *muqarrabūn*.

The *amāna* in sura 33:72 had, as we have seen,[99] been debated in Ibn Khābiṭ's circle, too, but they probably only saw it as conveying the fact that heaven, earth and mountain did not wish to agree to have it entrusted to them, and thus acted in an anthropomorphic fashion. One of Ibn Mānūsh's followers, on the other hand, a certain

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭabī,

emphasised what came after this passage: namely, that humans accepted the *amāna* instead. He did not have prophethood in mind specifically, but rather the obligation to abide by the law in general. In his view heaven, earth and mountains did have their own spirits; he presumably imagined that they contained some of the atoms God had created in the very beginning according to Ibn Mānūsh. They were all afraid of the test and left it to the humans. They in turn behaved in a 'sinful and foolish' way, as the end of the verse has it, but heaven, earth and mountains also suffered: they could not grow beyond themselves. This striving to excel was inherent in all the spirits, but God had let them know that he would not exalt them without previously imposing on them the obligation to abide by the law. He had thus given them a choice, but only after they had asked him to 'favour them differently', i.e. presumably: when some of them were not satisfied with their status any more. They had thought to receive the promotion free of charge, but in fact, God had only made them an offer. Only the humans accepted it, and they then bore all the consequences, too.

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97    Ibid., n–p.

98    Text IX, 10; cf. p. 308 above. Two other believers in the migration of souls, about whom we have no further information, Abū Khālid al-Hamdānī and Abū Khālid 'the blind man', apparently a tumbler from Wāsiṭ, also thought that prophethood was 'acquired through acts of obedience' (Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Ḥūr* 264, 2ff.).

99    P. 473f. above.

I have interpreted Text 34 in rather more detail than it would warrant, strictly speaking. It does not say quite so clearly how Qaḥṭabī approached the details of the exegesis of sura 33:72. The part played by the humans in particular remains in the dark; we do not even learn whether they will be subject to migration of souls after their tests. It seems likely in analogy with what was said previously, but we cannot rule out entirely that Qaḥṭabī was counted among the *aṣḥāb al-tanāsukh* only because he assumed that the 'atoms' were enclosed not only within humans but also in heaven, earth and mountains.

Qaḥṭabī, Baghdādī tells us, claimed to be a Muʿtazilite despite all his extravagances.[100] This is, of course, said with malice, but it seems to be ultimately true. While the Muʿtazilites took great care not to mention him in their biographical works, we know him from the *Fihrist*: he wrote a *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā* in which he listed the names of early Christian sects in detail unmatched ever since; he may have included further information on them, too.[101] He appears to have based it on Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, but also used a second source that was probably accessible also to al-Nāshiʾ when he was writing his *K. al-awsaṭ*.[102] It is not entirely certain that he was identical with our theologian, as Ibn al-Nadīm quoted the author with his *nisba* only. According to Baghdādī and Isfarāʾīnī the theologian's name was Aḥmad b. Muḥammad; the *nisba* is corrupted to *al-Qaḥṭī* in both these cases.[103] Isfarāʾīnī added that he was a contemporary of Jubbāʾī's; this is chronologically close to his connection with al-Nāshiʾ. Elsewhere Ibn al-Nadīm mentioned that Qaḥṭabī had a certain Ibn al-Biṭrīq translate Alexander of Tralles' treatise Περὶ πλευρίτιδος into Arabic.[104] This was probably not Yaḥyā b. al-Biṭrīq, as Dunlop assumed,[105] but the Christian Saʿīd al-Biṭrīq, i.e. Eutychius, the Patriarch of Alexandria and author of the well-known Chronicle (d. 328/939).[106] He was a physician and wrote a book on medicine.[107] Qaḥṭabī probably spent some time in an influential position in Egypt.

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100  *Farq* 255, –6f./273, apu.

101  Ibn al-Nadīm 405, 14ff.

102  Cf. the introduction to my edition, p. 7off.

103  *Farq*, ibid. > Isfarāʾīnī, *Tabṣīr* 120, 15/137, 3f.; Badr's edition has *Muḥammad b. Aḥmad* instead of *Aḥmad b. Muḥammad*. Massignon also read *Qaḥṭī* as *Qaḥṭabī* (Passion ²III 20, n. 7/transl. III 13, n. 14).

104  *Fihrist* 352, 1.

105  In: JRAS 1959, p. 146 no. 9. Based on this Ullmann, *Medizin im Islam* 86.

106  Thus Sezgin in: GAS 1/387, n. 4. He, too, has ibid. 3/164 *Yaḥyā b. al-Biṭrīq* once again.

107  GCAL II 32; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* IV 221.

All the more surprising, then, that we cannot pin him down in any other sources. He is certainly not identical with the Sufi Abū Bakr al-Qaḥṭabī mentioned by Kalabādhī.[108] We may well be closing in when we learn that the poet Mithqāl al-Wāsiṭī, who lived during the second half of the third/ninth century,[109] wrote mocking verses about a certain Qaḥṭabī.[110] Or maybe he was the one cited as the authority for Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī, the author of *K. al-zahra*.[111] Ibn Dāwūd died 297/910, and the *nisba* al-Qaḥṭabī is comparatively rare. It is true that this connection would take us to Iran, rather than Egypt, but it is not impossible, as Ibn Khābiṭ's ideas continued to thrive in Khūzistān, in the Muʿtazilite community in ʿAskar Mukram.[112] It could be imagined that this was where Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār found the inspiration for attributing to the *aṣḥāb al-tanāsukh* an idea that is not recorded anywhere else: that the spirits, once they had accepted the obligation to abide by the law could not rid themselves of it if they wanted to, as they had made a kind of vow. Consequently God had the right to hold them to account.[113] It may have been living reality to the *qāḍī*; after all, it was not far from Khūzistān to Rayy.

We are unable to find out more about Abū Muslim al-Ḥarrānī, whom Baghdādī mentioned following Qaḥṭabī (*Farq* 259, 12ff./276, −5ff. [incorrect *Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī*] > Isfarāʾīnī, *Tabṣīr* 121, ult. f./138, 7ff.). It remains to be examined whether the ideas described paved the way for the Nuṣayriyya which emerged in Iraq in the second half of the third century (cf. Halm in: Der Islam 58/1981/72ff.); the heresiographers do not mention such a connection.

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108    *Taʿarruf* 31, 5 (the *nisba* once again misspelt as *al-Qaḥṭī*; cf. 68, 8); against Massignon, who claimed the two were identical (Passion III 113, n. 3/transl. III 103, n. 18).

109    He was Ibn al-Rūmī's *rāwī*; cf. GAS 2/603.

110    Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ* 403, 7f.

111    TB V 259, 10 = Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI 94, 10.

112    Baghdādī, *Farq* 261, −4ff./278, 9ff. Regarding this community cf. also vol. II 515f.

113    Text 20, c–d.

## 3.3 The *miḥna*

In his Baghdad days Maʾmūn lived up to the image theologians such as Abū l-Hudhayl and Naẓẓām sketched of the caliph: he presented himself as teacher of the community.[1] He governed religious life by means of edicts; no-one before him had passed so many. He was the first caliph to introduce his decrees with the phrase 'In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate'.[2] It was believed that he thought himself under the protection of God (*maʿṣūm*) in his decisions; Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq and Ibn al-Rēwandī appear to have polemicised against it from the Shīʿite point of view.[3]

Independently of each other and with different emphasis, Ira Lapidus[4] and Tilman Nagel[5] both examined his self-image as ruler and the crisis he precipitated with it.[6] He addressed the public for the first time in 211/826, having a herald proclaim – presumably in the capital only – that whoever spoke well of Muʿāwiya or preferred him over any of the other companions of the prophet would forfeit his civil rights.[7] One year later, in Rabīʿ I 212/June 827, he affirmed this under the opposite aspect, issuing the proclamation that ʿAlī had been the most excellent human being after the prophet's death. At the same time, however, he proclaimed the createdness of the Quran.[8] This time his voice carried further; even a Somali history, *K. al-zanj*, mentioned the event on this date.[9] In 216/831 he – already engaged in religious war against the Byzantines in Syria – ordered his governor in Baghdad to have the troops who were left behind chant a triple *Allāhu akbar* after the communal prayer in the mosque; the first time this was carried out in full view of the general public, during Friday prayers

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1 Text XV 41. More detail cf. p. 59f. above.

2 Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākala* 31, 10, and *Taʾrīkh* 571, 12.

3 Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Safīna* (MS Ambrosiana C 32), fol. 180b, −4ff.

4 In: IJMES 6/1975/363ff., exp. 378f.

5 *Rechtleitung und Kalifat* 440ff.

6 M. O. Abu Saq's study *The Politics of the Miḥna under al-Maʾmūn and his Successors* (PhD Edinburgh 1971) does not contribute new information. Fahmī Jadʿān, *Al-miḥna. Baḥth fī jadaliyyat al-dīnī wal-siyāsī fī l-Islām* (Amman 1989), on the other hand, is worth reading.

7 Ṭabarī III 1098, 13f.

8 Ibid. III 1099, 10ff.

9 Cerulli, *Somalia* I 267. Due to the troubles in Iraq Maʾmūn had not been able to concern himself with the East African coast; now the contact and with it his authority had apparently been re-established. We cannot rule out that Ṭabarī distributed events incorrectly among the years 211 and 212; Masʿūdī – following the same source (or possibly Ṭabarī himself?) has the text of 211 s. a. 212 (*Murūj* VII 90, 5ff./IV 338, 3ff.).

in the middle of Ramadan.[10] In 218, only a few months before his unexpected death, he decreed that the important legal scholars and theologians of the capital, especially those who held an office and received their salary from the state should be tested concerning their orthodoxy in the question of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*. A significant part of the correspondence he wrote from Syria is extant.[11]

Scholars have long tried to find a common political or religious motif in all these decrees, but the answers they have arrived at differ considerably. In his ground-breaking study *Aḥmed ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna* of 1897 M. W. Patton suggested that Maʾmūn's ʿAlid politics were the reason;[12] W. M. Watt[13] and D. Sourdel[14] provided further supporting evidence of this theory. The problem arises when we try to prove why the dogma of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* should have please the Shīʿa. Patton, relying on the knowledge available at his time, found a rather too simple answer: the Shīʿites were Muʿtazilites. This is an anachronism. Watt thought that the authority the Shīʿites accorded to the imam was incompatible with overemphasis of the Quran, but he admitted that this was pure hypothesis; we have no evidence of the Shīʿites still ranking their charismatic leader above the Quran at that time – least of all those close to Maʾmūn.

Maʾmūn himself calls the Quran *imām* in his second missive (Ṭabarī III 1118, 3). A remark by Jāḥiẓ furthermore implies that the 'Rāfiḍites' rejected the *khalq al-Qurʾān* (Text XVI 15, a). Regarding the complex attitude of the Zaydites and the ʿAlids connected with them cf. Madelung in: *Festschrift Löfgren* 41ff. It is noticeable how much a Shīʿite author like Masʿūdī played down the proclamation of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*: '(Maʾmūn) held forth about (*takallama fī*) certain parts of the recitation (*tilāwa*, i.e. the recited text) being created'. However, he was not able to figure out why the caliph expressed his dislike of Muʿāwiya so harshly (*Murūj*, loc. cit.). – At first I also adopted Watt's theory (Oriens 18–19/1965–6/92f.). Madelung, on the other hand, already rejected it in JNES 30/1971/78.

In order to circumvent the difficulties inherent in this explanation, we could tie it to something else: not to the target audience whom the caliph was trying to placate, but to the group he put in its place with his actions. This was Lapidus' approach. His theory was that the population of Baghdad, guided as

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10    Ṭabarī III 1105, 5ff.

11    Ibid. 1112, 10ff.

12    P. 54.

13    First in MW 40/1950/34f.; later in JRAS 1963, p. 44f.

14    In REI 30/1962/43.

it was by members of respected Khorasanian families, was the intended audience. In that case the rejection of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* is easily explained; but it remains to be proven that the Shīʿa did not find much support in these circles. Maʾmūn was a stranger in the capital. While he knew the Iraqi intelligence, many of whom had accompanied him to Marv, he had no connection with the masses.[15] He believed the scholars who were well-liked among them to be dangerous; this may have been what induced him to force them to a profession of faith.[16] The *ʿAhd Ardashīr* on which Maʾmūn based the education of his nephew, the 'dauphin' al-Wāthiq,[17] warns the ruler that the common people (*sifla*) might know more about religion than he himself; in such a case, it says, secret leaders would emerge among them.[18] They were the threat. Maʾmūn had to respond to their anti-Shīʿite attitude that had gained ground since the fall of the Barmakids and spread among the population during the recent civil war. This should be interpreted as a primarily political necessity; the caliph had left his own Shīʿite phase behind himself by that time. The latter image thus carries greater probability; we must, however, put some of the details into greater relief.

Lapidus correctly pointed out the significance of Sahl b. Salāma's example.[19] It was thanks to him that the population of Baghdad became aware of its self-reliance in the troubles after Amīn's death. Still, we must not forget that he was not the only tribune of the people. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī had also relied on citizens' militias. They as well as their spiritual leaders were hostile to the theologians who by then had the most influence at court, above all Bishr al-Marīsī;[20] in the case of Sahl b. Salāma, this is not certain.[21] What the two movements had in common was their adherence to the *amr bil-maʿrūf*. This was an old revolutionary maxim;[22] after his arrival in Baghdad Maʾmūn had taken steps against it.[23] It seems to have had particular historic roots among the leaders, as a remarkably large number of them came from old-established Khorasanian families who had come to Iraq together with the revolutionary troops. This was true of Sahl b. Salāma himself,[24] but also of Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī who

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15 Thus already Gibb in: *Elaboration de l'Islam* 122.

16 Thus Crone/Hinds, *God's Caliph* 93 and earlier.

17 See p. 60 above.

18 Cf. Streppat in: *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 451f.

19 P. 371f.; regarding him see p. 186ff. above.

20 See p. 188ff. above.

21 See p. 187 above.

22 See vol. II 440ff. above.

23 See p. 187 and vol. II 441 above.

24 See p. 185 above.

was his associate at the time[25] and would later rebel against Wāthiq;[26] it also applied to Ibn Ḥanbal[27] and Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād.[28] A man from Marv could later permit himself the remark that only people from his city had withstood the *miḥna*;[29] the Marāwiza had their own quarter in Baghdad.[30] It is not certain whether they had already been part of the action against Bishr b. al-Marīsī under Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī; but we can safely assume that Bishr himself had not been entirely free from resentment against 'the populace' ever since that time.

The basis the Abbasids had originally had in the capital appears to have split during the civil war. The conflict towards which the development was heading looked paradoxical in that Maʾmūn, too, had been shaped by the intellectual climate in Marv – but at a time when his opponents had long moved to Iraq, evolving a new identity there. He stood for a 'progressive' concept of God focussing on transcendence, while they adhered to the older anthropomorphism that had already been in conflict with transcendentalism in eastern Iran, and whose Iraqi opponents were decried by them as 'Jahmites'. The suspicion that they would cooperate with Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī in this respect at the very least is supported by events surrounding the 'testing' of the *qāḍī* Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī,[31] one of its most important figures. Maʾmūn ordered that the former anti-caliph should himself be interrogated together with him 'because he embraced his views'.[32] This is surprising enough in itself, as Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī was not a practising jurist. And it is even more unusual that Maʾmūn would have had him beheaded if he had not complied; this degree of harshness must be indicative of old political hostility. Of course Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī had spoken out against Maʾmūn's ʿAlid politics in the past.[33]

The fact that anthropomorphism as well as the *khalq al-Qurʾān* were controversial issues is mentioned only in passing,[34] but just how much it shaped

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25    See p. 188 above.

26    See p. 510ff. below.

27    Cf. EI² I 272 b s. v. *Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*; also Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* 22.

28    See vol. II 812 above. It is worthwhile applying this approach to the biographies dedicated by Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī to the victims of the *miḥna*.

29    TB V 177, 19ff.

30    Ṣ. A. al-ʿAlī, *Baghdād* I₁ 162.

31    Regarding him see p. 149f. above; more detail p. 495 and 497 below.

32    Ṭabarī III 1126, 17ff.

33    See p. 186 above. When he was arrested in 210/825, he still had prominent followers; unlike him they were not pardoned (Ṭabarī III 1073, 15ff./transl. Bosworth 145ff.).

34    See p. 497, 502f., 505f. and 512 below.

the ideas of the most prominent victims of persecution can best be seen in the example of Ibn Ḥanbal. He was a little over fifty at the time; he had begun to study hadith in 179/795. There can be hardly any doubt that from the first he embraced the image of God that had been transported by prophetic tradition and supported from the East thanks to the influence of Muqātil b. Sulaymān. His clan, the Zuhayr b. Ḥurqūṣ, many of whom lived in Kufa, was well-known for these tendencies. This was why Ṭabarī was believed to have called a polemic he wrote against Ibn Ḥanbal *Al-radd 'alā l-Ḥurqūṣiyya*.[35] During Hārūn al-Rashīd's later years these views were not remarkable, and sometimes even expedient. For a long time Ibn Ḥanbal also followed the trend of the Baghdad *muḥaddithūn* not to recognise 'Alī as caliph as he never enjoyed unchallenged support;[36] this, too, was a view that corresponded to the official line of the authorities until Amīn's caliphate. Its most outspoken representative was Ismā'īl b. Dāwūd al-Jawzī, known as the 'Imam of the Ḥashwiyya' among Mu'tazilites, and who may have been Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's man in the past.[37]

What Ibn al-Dā'ī tells us about Ibn Ḥanbal's tribal affiliation contradicts the usual information, which goes back to a genealogy published by Ibn Ḥanbal's son Ṣāliḥ. According to him Ibn Ḥanbal was a member of the Banū Māzin b. Shaybān (*Miḥnat Ibn Ḥanbal* 267, 1ff. DŪMĪ; adopted by e.g. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 16ff.). Our suspicions are awakened, however, by its going back to Abraham. On the other hand it cannot be denied that Ibn al-Dā'ī was striving to disparage Ibn Ḥanbal. The Shī'ites believed Ibn Ḥanbal to be a descendant of the Khārijite Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr, also called Dhū l-Thudayya (*Bihar* XLIX 261 no. 1; regarding him see vol. I 26, n. 12 above); Ibn al-Dā'ī using the form Zuhayr b. Ḥurqūṣ instead could be explained either as an error or as a reference to the son of this once respected companion of the prophet. The latter was almost obliterated from the memory of posterity; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr does not have an entry for him in his *K. al-istī'āb*. His descendants probably fared hardly better. Maybe the Shī'ites associated 'Zuhayr b. Ḥurqūṣ' with the Khārijite Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr only in retrospect. After all, there were also Banū Ḥurqūṣ among the Māzin; this would bring us rather closer to the usual genealogy. Not quite as close, however, as it might appear, as these are the Māzin of the Tamīm and not of the Shaybān (cf. Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq* 203,

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35  Ibn al-Dā'ī, *Tabṣira* 106, 9ff.; the book is cited in Najāshī 225, apu. ff.

36  Pseudo-Nāshī, *Uṣūl al-niḥal* 66, 16ff.; also the traditions in Khallāl, *Musnad* 151, 5ff., and Lālakā'ī, *Sharḥ uṣūl i'tiqād ahl al-sunna* I 159, apu. f. Too pointed in Ibn al-Dā'ī 106, 14ff.

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13ff.). Still, it is worth considering that the usual genealogy might simply have been adjusted somewhat, rather than being entirely made up. The question requires further examination.

Independently of this there is the question of whether we may believe the well-known historian and Quranic commentator capable of such a text. Āghā Buzurg was the first to argue in favour of the Shīʿite Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Rustam al-Ṭabarī (*Dharīʿa* X 193f. no. 483) instead. Sezgin followed him (GAS 1/328, n. 2; cf. ibid. 540), more recently also Gilliot (*Exégèse, langue et théologie* 65f., with detailed presentation of the material). F. Rosenthal, on the other hand, cautiously sided with Najāshī and Ibn al-Dāʿī (*The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Introduction 123f.; critically once again Gilliot in: SI 73/1991/183f.). It is particularly significant that Najāshī calls the author a Sunnite (*ʿāmmī*); he would certainly not have said that of Ibn Rustam al-Ṭabarī who lived only about a century before him. Concerning the tensions between the historian al-Ṭabarī and the Ḥanbalites see vol. II 720 above, and ch. C. 6.3.1 below. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī noted secondary disagreements concerning Ibn Ḥanbal's genealogy (TB IV 413, 9ff. [Thanks to E. Kohlberg some new aspects of the controversy have been clarified. He points out that Ibn Ṭāwūs was familiar with a – probably more or less Shīʿite – *K. manāqib ahl al-bayt* by the historian Ṭabarī, and champions its authenticity (*A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work* 250f.). He also attributes the *Radd ʿalā l-Ḥurqūṣiyya* to him, hoping to equate this text with Ṭabarī's *K. al-walāya* or *Ḥadīth Jadīr Khumm* (ibid. 178ff.).]

In Maʾmūn's time, dislike of ʿAlī was often expressed as sympathy with Muʿāwiya. Yaḥyā b. Aktham from Marv,[38] who was not a friend of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* at all, was said to have warned Maʾmūn against cursing Muʿāwiya as the people, especially the Khorasanians (*ahl Khurāsān*), would not put up with it.[39] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's son ʿAbdallāh narrated how his father once took him along to the mosque in the Ruṣāfa quarter on the eastern bank when he had recently learned to walk, and how visitors there were offered water 'for the love of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān'; his father explained to him that this was an

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38    From and old Arabian family that traced its genealogy back to the famous pre-Islamic orator Aktham b. Ṣayfī (TB XIV 191, 12ff.; cf. EI² I 345).

39    Cf. e.g. Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Muwaffaqiyyāt* 41f. no. 10; also p. 212 above, and Pellat in SI 6/1956/55 with further instances. 'Khorasanians' does not, as Pellat believed, denote people living in Khorasan, but 'people of Khorasanian descent' in Baghdad. Regarding them cf. also F. ʿUmar in: Bull. Coll. of Arts Baghdad 11/1968, Engl. section 158ff.

expression of the hatred for ʿAlī.[40] This can be dated to around the time when the *miḥna* was beginning to spread, ʿAbdallāh having been born in 213/828.[41] This was not necessarily a 'culte de Muʿāwiya', as Pellat called it. The decision of whether there would be only four 'righteous' caliphs had not been taken, and by making Muʿāwiya the figure of identification one could avoid making direct remarks about ʿAlī. And Ibn Ḥanbal also said good things about ʿAlī at times.[42] It was emphasised that like him, Muʿāwiya had been a companion of the prophet.[43]

Maʾmūn had the *maqṣūra* removed from mosques in Syria because he regarded it as an innovation by Muʿāwiya,[44] putting a new emphasis on a measure first taken by al-Mahdī.[45] By ordering his soldiers to chant the triple *Allāhu akbar* in the mosque in Ruṣāfa he chose the very place to which Ibn Ḥanbal and his son had walked. Ruṣāfa had been the centre of al-Mahdī's government; the only Friday mosque besides the great mosque in the city centre was here. The event should thus also be regarded as a demonstration of power, and the choice of symbol had probably not been left to chance, either: the instruction to recite a triple *takbīr* after the prayer, sitting down and with hands raised, was written down in the *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, the legal rules attributed to the late heir to the throne.[46] However, this text is rather younger; it is clearly identical with Ibn Abī l-ʿAzāqir al-Shalmaghānī's (executed 322/934) *K. al-taklīf*.[47] Maybe this new worship practice was regarded as generally Khorasanian due to the *rafʿ al-yadayn*.[48] In any case, the event shows how matter-of-factly Maʾmūn claimed the prerogative of introducing 'innovations' in an area traditionists and legal scholars already regarded as theirs.

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40  Pellat, ibid. 54f. after Ibn al-Najjār. Regarding the later period cf. Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm* 126, 14ff.

41  Cf. GAS 1/511. His father was already in his late forties by then.

42  Khallāl, *Musnad* 169ff.; ʿAlī was the worthiest successor of ʿUthmān. Most of these passages were apparently found in his *K. faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba* (GAS 1/508).

43  Cf. the remark by Jāḥiẓ p. 508 below. Ibn Ḥanbal included this kind of tradition, too (Khallāl, *Musnad* 190, 4ff. and 17ff.); cf. also vol. I 26 above, and Madelung, *Religious Trends*, 24f. Lālakāʾī would later devote an entire chapter to the *faḍāʾil Muʿāwiya* (*Sharḥ* 1438ff.).

44  Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* 571, –7f.

45  See p. 21 above.

46  Majlisī, *Biḥār* LXXXIV 28f. no. 32, and 43 no. 54. Regarding a tradition on the subject after Muḥammad al-Bāqir cf. Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work* 99.

47  Cf. Ḥasan al-Ṣadr in: Riżā Ustādhī, *Āshnāʾī bā chand nuskha-yi khaṭṭī* (Qom 1396/1976), p. 396 and 401ff. I do not know whether it concerns the juristic questions Maʾmūn addressed to ʿAlī al-Riḍā of which Sezgin lists a manuscript (GAS 1/536 no. 5).

48  See vol. II 599 above.

Sourdel already pointed out the Shīʿite background to the measure in: REI 30/1962/42 (uncritically adopted by Lapidus in: IJMES 6/1975/378f.). However, the instance adduced by Sourdel is wrong (Qāḍī Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* I 205). Yaʿqūbī who, being a Shīʿite, would be an interesting witness, notes the event but comments only that in the meantime it had become *sunna* (*Taʾrīkh* 571, 12f.).

### 3.3.1 Al-Maʾmūn's Edicts

Maʾmūn did not stop with Baghdad. He sent the same letter to several, perhaps all, provinces; some passages of his letter to the governor of Egypt are extant.[1] However, the immediate reason for his actions may probably be found in Syria. During his stay in Damascus he had received the famous traditionist Abū Mushir al-Ghassānī, frequently cited as an authority by the historian Abū Zurʿa, in an audience, only to find that he had no understanding of the doctrine of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*; in fact, his naivety annoyed the caliph so much that he had him thrown out.[2] His governor in Raqqa, who had the duty of interrogating or 'testing' Abū Mushir, sent him to Baghdad to prevent him causing further trouble.[3] Maʾmūn had expressed the suspicion that it was people of his kind who circulated the Sufyānī prophecies that had incited the Syrians to rebellion not so very long ago.[4] After all, Sufyānī had appointed Abū Mushir *qāḍī* of Damascus;[5] he hated the Iraqis so much that he wished Alexander had built his famous wall, intended to keep out Gog and Magog, against them.[6] It seems that the religious climate in Syria, with which the caliph came in contact for the first time during this journey, brought home to him that ignorance in religious matters could have political consequences. This would explain the astounding fact that he restarted the process initiated in 212 in the capital with such fervour from afar.[7] The stupidity of the populace, and of the scholars it

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1   Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 218, 12ff., and 219, 16; more details see p. 516 below.

2   Thus Azdī, *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil* 409, 4ff.; in more detail and in the style of a legend Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik* I 418, 6ff. According to Kaʿbī, *Qabūl* 52m 8ff., he was also angry at Abū Mushir for failing to provide evidence that the prophet was circumcised. Regarding Abū Mushir cf. GAS 1/100f.

3   Confirmed by Ṭabarī II 1130, 5ff.

4   TB XI 72, 13ff., where the case is presented as if Abū Mushir had freely claimed the Quran was uncreated. This is probably later stylisation; according to Ṭabarī, loc. cit., he admitted the *khalq al-Qurʾān* after Maʾmūn threatened to have him killed. Cf. also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 256.

5   Allegedly against his wishes (Dhahabī, *Siyar* X 232, 5ff.). Cf. p. 159 above.

6   Ibid. 233, −4ff.

7   Not, in fact, from Damascus but from Raqqa. It was at his request that Muʿtaṣim wrote from there to the governor of Syria who resided in Damascus (see p. 513f. below).

followed – and not only the Khorasanians – is consequently the main subject of his letters. There is no need at all to read between the lines.

Watt saw this quite clearly, growing more cautious in his Shī'a theory as time went on.[8] Nagel in particular emphasised this aspect. The caliph, we learn at the beginning of the decrees, has the duty before God of protecting the true faith (*dīn Allāh*) and of preserving the prophetic legacy he received. He is hindered in this undertaking by 'those who use false dialectics to invite others to follow their beliefs and call themselves Sunnites'; 'they proclaim publicly that they represent truth, religion and community (*jamā'a*), and that everyone else represented only falsehood, unbelief and schism. In this way, they set themselves above people and lead the ignorant astray ...'. 'The commander of the faithful believes that they are the worst in the community, the leaders of heterodoxy, who barely have a share in the profession of the oneness of God ...'.[9] This very profession (*tawḥīd*) he had to preserve as pure as possible, because of the responsibility he had taken upon himself;[10] for 'whoever does not recognise that the Quran is created, has no *tawḥīd*',[11] as he 'accords the quality that is God's only (namely eternal duration) to something created and wrought by God'.[12] And in order to affirm that the Quran was created and 'wrought' (*maj'ūl*) Ma'mūn adduced evidence from scripture that strongly recalled Bishr al-Marīsī.[13]

The documents preserved by Ṭabarī are a source of the highest order. He not only quotes Ma'mūn's missives verbatim, but was also familiar with the records of the interrogations that took place in Baghdad. They were sent to the caliph who included sarcastic comments on individual cases in his last letter.[14] This allows us to compare the statements of several scholars. While the report may have condensed events slightly, the individual steps of the 'test' can still be distinguished easily. This has led previous researchers to dispense with source criticism, although the situation is too complex to allow this omission in the long run.

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8    *Formative Period* 179.

9    Ṭabarī III 1114, 3ff., and 1115, 2ff./transl. Bosworth 199ff., and Uhrig 249ff.; cf. also the translation of the texts in Patton 57ff., and in Ziaul Haque in: Hamdard Islamicus 8/442f, The same expressions are also found in the letter to the governor of Egypt (Ibn Taghrībirdī II 219, 3ff.).

10   Ṭabarī III 1115, 8, and 1120, 13 (*ikhlāṣ al-tawḥīd*); 116, 3 (*khulūṣ al-tawḥīd*).

11   Ibid. 1120, 13f.

12   Ibid. 1120, 1.

13   Ibid. 1118, 11ff., but with the same sense also 1113, 11ff, (= Ibn Taghrībirdī II 218, 17ff.), Cf. Text xx 20, and p. 195f. above.

14   Ibid. 1121, 4ff., and 1125, 3ff.

It does, in fact, seem that Ṭabarī did not study the documents in the public archives in person. A generation before him Ibn Abī Ṭāhir quoted them in his *K. Baghdād*, and with the same frame text. Even if Ṭabarī was not copying from his book directly, he did have access to an edited version.[15] The question now is whether the editor worked conscientiously, as he copied not only **one** missive with which the caliph set off events in Baghdad, but in fact two. Both of these are identical in long passages.[16] Only the first one is dated; the second one could be regarded as a corrected draft if it were not for the fact that the surrounding text states that it was sent separately after the first one. The addressee of both letters is Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Muṣʿab, a cousin of the first Ṭāhirid, who had been commander of police in the capital since 206/821–22 and ruled like a governor at the time.[17] We may assume that the first version is the general decree sent to all provinces,[18] while the second is a confirmatory instruction for Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, with the chancellery adhering to the first version to save time. The actions precipitated by the two letters were indeed presented differently each time.

Maʾmūn's 'strategy' is clear. He is not asking Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm to focus on ringleaders; indeed, there do not seem to have been any.[19] He does not have the investigation of every public official in mind, either. Rather, he is ordering Isḥāq to gather the judges of the city and the surrounding area and have them profess the *khalq al-Qurʾān*. They would then in turn have to 'test' the professional witnesses (*ʿudūl*) serving under them. The lever employed was the *ʿadāla*; someone who disregarded the *tawḥīd* could not bear witness.[20] The

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15    *K. Baghdād* 338, 4ff. KELLER/184, –8ff.; the text breaks off 346, 8/188, apu. compared to
      Ṭabarī 1118, 12. There are very few earlier variants (worth mentioning e.g. *naẓar* instead of
      *naṣṣ* in 1116, 4; *naṣṣ* is confirmed by 1130, 6, and 8 in the second letter; cf. Ibn Taghrībirdī II
      219, 14). Regarding Ṭabarī's dependence on Ibn Abī Ṭāhir cf. in general Keller, Intro. xiii ff.

16    The theological reasoning is slightly more detailed in the second one (see n. 13 above).
      More detail see below.

17    Ṭabarī III 1062, 6ff.; Sourdel, *Vizirat* 265. Concerning the kinship cf. Uhrig, *Das Kalifat von
      al-Maʾmūn* 153, n. 731. He died 235/850 (Ṭabarī III 1403, 9).

18    This is supported by the excerpt from the letter sent to Egypt quoted by Ibn Taghrībirdī
      (*Nujūm* II 218, 12ff.) which corresponds to the first letter as quoted by Ṭabarī (II 1112, pu.
      ff.) but does not have any exact parallels in the second one.

19    The arrest of the Quran reciter Muḥammad b. Muṣʿab al-Daʿʿāʾ, who might have been
      regarded as one, seems to have taken place before Maʾmūn's camapaign; he had called all
      those 'heretics' who claimed that God 'did not speak and would not be seen in the after-
      life' (TB III 280, 3ff. and 15ff.; Nagel 439).

20    Ṭabarī III 1115, 14ff., and 1120, 14ff.; the report of execution 1125, 9ff., states that all jurists,
      traditionists and *muftī*s were interrogated. Cf. e.g. vol. II 475f. above.

decree of 212 had already mentioned forfeiting one's civil rights in this context. Once this has been made clear by the first text, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir (or Ṭabarī) does not immediately move on to the interrogation, but instead report that Ma'mūn invited seven scholars personally to come to Raqqa, all of whom were interrogated by him there and professed the *khalq al-Qur'ān* in the course of the interrogations. They were sent back and had to repeat their statements in Baghdad, in Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm's palace 'in the presence of the *fuqahā'* and the authorities among the *ahl al-ḥadīth*'. We even learn their names: they were the crème de la crème of hadith scholarship. Among them was the historian Ibn Sa'd as well as Abū Muslim, Yazīd b. Hārūn's *mustamlī* who had literally opened his mouth extremely wide in the trial of Bishr al-Marīsī.[21] And of course we meet all those of whom we hear elsewhere that they did not think much of 'Alī: Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn (d. 233/848), Abū Khaythama b. Ḥarb al-Nasā'ī (d. 234/849), and Ismā'īl b. Dāwūd al-Jawzī. They seem to have regarded the process as a kind of loyal address; they were not going to get themselves into trouble over the *khalq al-Qur'ān*.[22] The report is also recorded elsewhere; it was probably transmitted independently.[23]

The only genuinely new point in Ma'mūn's second letter is that two of the judges Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm is ordered to summon are singled out especially: Ja'far b. 'Īsā (d. 219/834), a great-grandson of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's, whom Yaḥyā b. Aktham had appointed his successor on the eastern bank when he left Baghdad with Ma'mūn,[24] and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī, a Ḥanafite who remained in office until the end of al-Mu'taṣim's caliphate.[25] Subsequently Ṭabarī reports of a trial in Baghdad, in great detail and listing many names. The two judges Ma'mūn mentioned in his letter, however, are the very ones whom Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm does not interrogate; when asked about it he replies that they follow the caliph's line in any case.[26] This was probably true; biographical information confirms it, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq would play a significant part in the *disputatio* with Ibn Ḥanbal.[27] The seven who had weakened earlier do not

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21 See p. 189f. above.

22 Ṭabarī 1116, 13ff.; cf. Pseudo-Nāshī, *Uṣūl* 66, 17.

23 Azdī, *Ta'rīkh al-Mawṣil* 412, apu. ff.; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, *Miḥnat Ibn Ḥanbal* 35, 1ff., where one of the names is incorrectly given as *Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*. In Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 324, 7f., only three of the names correspond to those given by Ṭabarī. The list must have been an embarrassment to the families concerned.

24 Wakī', *Akhbār* III 273, 11ff.; TB VII 16off.; also vol. II 214 above.

25 He was not the governor's son, as Patton assumes (p. 74). Regarding both see also Ṣāliḥ al-'Alī in: MM'I'I 18/1969/52.

26 Ṭabarī III 1124, 4ff.

27 See p. 501f. below.

reappear, but all those among the men summoned who evaded a clear profession were then ordered to Raqqa by the caliph.[28]

### 3.3.2    *The Persecution of Ibn Ḥanbal. The Sources*

One of these was Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. This changes the availability of sources, as two close relatives reported about his *miḥna* after his death: his son Ṣāliḥ and his cousin Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq b. Ḥanbal (d. 273/886).[1] Their intention was entirely different from Ṭabarī's: they were heroicising, and we can see how a legend took shape. A contemporary, Abū ʿImrān Mūsā b. al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī from Marv, dramatized events even more vividly; his narrative was used by Abū l-ʿArab in his *K. al-miḥan*.[2] Readers and listeners desired both edification and information, a trend that would intensify over time and continues to this day. The authorities made Ibn Ḥanbal a martyr; to Sunni Muslims, he embodies the struggle of the individual against the unjust and worldly state.[3] Maʾmūn wanted the unity of power and authority, but the process he initiated shortly before his death would put it into doubt forever.

At the height of Ḥanbalite influence, in the sixth and seventh centuries AH, these accounts were collated into broader overviews;[4] Ibn al-Jawzī's *Manāqib al-Imām Ibn Ḥanbal* are the best-known instance. This involved further redacting of the contents,[5] as well as stylistic revisions.[6] Western Oriental Studies were also guided by this image. Patton wove the 'Ḥanbalite' group of sources with Ṭabarī, which was an easy task as Ṭabarī appears to have been familiar with at least the basic motifs, and did not, in fact, ignore them altogether. The result was a characteristic dramatic effect. By removing one person after another from the course of events he gradually focussed exclusively on Ibn Ḥanbal. After all, the first of the scholars interrogated had already given up during the interrogation. Most of the others bowed to pressure when in his last letter the caliph pointed out their personal weaknesses and corrupt little practices, threatening them with draconic punishment and even execution.[7] Of the four who remained steadfast, two more caved in after a day or two in

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28    Ṭabarī III 1130, 9ff. This letter from Maʾmūn is the first reaction of his to a trial to be quoted verbatim.

1    For more information about both of them cf. GAS 1/510.
2    P. 438ff.; regarding the reporter cf. TB XIII 46f. no. 7012.
3    The Shīʿites forgot the event entirely; Ḥusayn was sufficient for them.
4    Cf. GAS 1/503f.
5    Especially of Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's text (see p. 499f. below).
6    Thus Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib* 319ff., with reference to Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's text.
7    Ṭabarī III 1126, 6ff.; cf. also Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, *Miḥna* 37, −5ff.

prison.[8] Only Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-ʿIjlī was shackled and sent on the way with Ibn Ḥanbal, but he did not survive the journey.[9] Ṭabarī, on the other hand, reported that all the others were also taken to Raqqa; an explanation offered was that Maʾmūn heard from his secret service that Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī[10] pleaded mental predicament as an excuse for his tractability.[11] It is possible that two traditions were harmonised here. In the end they all got off lightly as news of the caliph's death reached them before they had even arrived.

The two kinsmen collected their information mainly from Ibn Ḥanbal himself; consequently their accounts correspond in many details. Both texts have been edited: Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Dūmī in his study *Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal bayna miḥnat al-dīn wa-miḥnat al-dunyā* (Cairo 1961, p. 266ff.), and again 'for the first time' by Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Munʿim Aḥmad (Alexandria 1401/1981); and Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's by Muḥammad Naghsh under the title *Dhikr miḥnat al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Cairo 1397/1977). There is no reasonable doubt that Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq b. Ḥanbal was a distant cousin of Aḥmad b. (Muḥammad b.) Ḥanbal despite the great difference in their ages. The biographers state it (cf. e.g. TB VIII 286f. no. 4386, and Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* I 143, 3), and Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's text confirms it several times. On p. 43, 11ff., he makes clear that there was no segment missing from his name; his father Isḥāq speaks of Ibn Ḥanbal as his nephew (43, pu. f.; 44, 4; 55, 5), and the latter addresses him as *yā ʿamm* (44, 8). Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq using the same form of address towards Ibn Ḥanbal was not due to the latter being his uncle, but to respect for the older man (42, 9; also in a tradition concerning a lecture in which he heard his *Musnad*, preserved by Ibn Abī Yaʿlā I 143, −7). This kind of age difference is more frequent in polygamous societies than elsewhere. Furthermore Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's father died at the age of thirty (Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad in Dūmī 266, 12).

It is remarkable how quickly events unfolded. The first letter was sent in Rabīʿ I 218 (Ṭabarī III 1116, 11f.); four months later, in Rajab of the same year, Maʾmūn died (1140, 7ff.), and he had other things to do in the meantime as well. Still, he was clearly in a hurry; after all, he sent his last letter by special courier and demanded a similarly speedy response (1130, 16ff.). From Baghdad to Raqqa and back the post took less than nine days (1125,

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8    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad, *Miḥna* 276, −4ff.
9    Regarding him cf. TB III 322f. no. 1425.
10   Regarding him see p. 149f. and 486 above.
11   Ṭabarī III 1131, ult. ff.

2f.). Ibn Ḥanbal's first interrogation took place in Jumāda (thus Dhahabī, *Siyar* XI 239, 10), which left two months for the transfer to Raqqa. The course of events presented by Ṭabarī is thus not impossible. We cannot, however, rely on later authors such as Ibn Taghrībirdī, as they are probably simply dependent on Ṭabarī.

If we want to add to or check Ṭabarī's account, our best source would be the biographical notes scattered throughout the *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* and elsewhere. The traditionist Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Bazzār, who had already been summoned before the caliph twice in Baghdad, was apparently taken to the army camp in Tarsus **before** Maʾmūn died (TB VII 331, 9ff.). Ṭabarī mentions neither him nor ʿAffān b. Muslim al-Ṣaffār (see vol. II 80 above), who was said to have been the first one 'tested' by Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm. According to his own account ʿAffān did not even weaken when the governor indicated that his monthly salary would be withdrawn. By that time he was over eighty years old (Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq, *Miḥna* 76, –6ff. > TB XII 271, 1ff. > *Mīzān* III 82, 2ff., and Maqrīzī in Patton 86; divergent Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 436f.). According to Ibn Ḥanbal, one man who gave up even before the persecution got under way properly was the traditionist Saʿd b. Muḥammad al-ʿAwfī (TB IX 127, 4ff.).

We know little about Ibn Ḥanbal's fellow sufferer Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-ʿIjlī. He did not play a significant part as a scholar as he was too young (TB III 323, 7f.), which raises the question of why he was called before the governor at all. He was Ibn Ḥanbal's neighbour (ibid. 322, 18). His adducing a hadith as evidence that all Muslims would go to paradise (322, 16f.) should not have been a cause for outrage; after all, Bishr al-Marīsī agreed with him. Regarding his father Nūḥ b. Maymūn, called al-Maḍrūb, cf. TB XIII 318f. no. 7288. – The persons named by Ṭabarī are discussed individually in Jadʿān, *Al-miḥna* 197ff.; among them was Faḍl b. Ghānim al-Khuzāʿī (cf. vol. II 713 above).

Ibn Ḥanbal's not being called as one of the first seven was probably due to his not yet having reached the foremost rank at the time. He was well aware of this, telling his son Ṣāliḥ later that Ibn Abī Dūwād had confided to him that he had prevented Ibn Ḥanbal being called to Raqqa with the others.[12] Maʾmūn described him as stupid or immature in his letters.[13] Consequently it is not surprising that he was not at the centre in the transcript of the Baghdad in-

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12     *Miḥna*, ed. Dūmī 282, 2f.

13     Ṭabarī III 1127, 13ff.; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 37, apu. according to his own information: *dhāka l-ṣabī*.

terrogation, although he was one of those whose statement was mentioned in some detail. Those who agreed with the createdness of the Quran, on the other hand, were mentioned only briefly; among them were e.g. the younger Ibn ʿUlayya[14] and ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs, the great-grandson of Wahb b. Munabbih.[15] Of the others, one agreed to using the word *majʿūl* instead of *makhlūq*, convinced by the verses from the Quran the caliph himself cited.[16] The hard core, on the other hand, admitted only that the Quran was 'God's speech' (*kalām Allāh*).[17] The governor was not satisfied with this; Muʿtazilites believed that, too. He presented them with a formulaic statement he had had prepared in writing that affirmed the caliph's position that nothing could be equal to God, presuming that everything that is not equal to God was created, including the Quran. This, however, was precisely what those interrogated refused to accept: they were accustomed to the older formula that the Quran was neither creator nor created.[18]

Bishr b. al-Walīd tried to evade the issue by stating merely that the Quran is not a creator.[19] Someone else found the compromise: 'The Quran is God's word. God is the creator of all things. Everything apart from God is created',[20] meaning certainly that God's word was not a 'thing' and not 'apart from God'. Ibn Ḥanbal added the phrase 'He is the one who hears and sees (everything)' to the formula presented, thus laying himself open to the suspicion that he was an anthropomorphist, despite having said it in the context of a Quranic verse (42:11). When asked how he understood these attributes, he replied that he did not know,[21] in an early indication of *bilā kayf*. The same spirit was evident in the fact that none of those interrogated claimed that the Quran was uncreated or eternal. This was not part of the tradition. Only the caliph used the word 'eternal', describing the opinion of the men he attacked in his first letter.[22]

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14  Regarding him see vol. II 475f. above; also concerning the problem that he is called *al-akbar* 'the elder' here.

15  Regarding him see vol. II 788f. above. Ṭabarī is not entirely definite about them adopting the opinion mentioned, but the fact that Maʾmūn left them in peace from then on proves that they submitted to him.

16  Ṭabarī III 1124, 10ff. It availed him nothing; he was summoned to Raqqa as well (ibid. 1132, 13).

17  Ibid. 1124, 5.

18  See p. 78 above; also concerning earlier developments.

19  Ibid. 1122, 2.

20  Ibid. 1122, ult. f.

21  Ibid. 1123, 17ff.

22  Ibid. 1113, 9.

While he drew an obvious conclusion here, he also raised the issue to another level. Ibn Taymiyya put great emphasis on this.

Much relevant information is provided by Madelung in: *Festschrift Pareja* I 508ff.; also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 330ff. Interestingly one of those questioned was willing to take the step away from tradition if the caliph commanded it; he did not wish to deny the 'imam's' superior knowledge. The governor, however, kept to his part: it was not his to command, but only to investigate (1122, 16ff.). Abū l-ʿArab tells us (*Miḥan* 450, pu. ff.) that Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm was advised by Bishr al-Marīsī, Thumāma and a certain ʿAlī al-Dārī. However, Thumāma had been dead for some years (see p. 171 above), and Bishr al-Marīsī is unlikely to have been very active any more, as he died in 218 (see p. 189 above). The information that Bishr pressed Ibn Abī Duwād to test the prominent popular leaders (Abū l-ʿArab 452, 7ff.) does not inspire more confidence. Both are probably reflections of the later 'orthodox' image of history (cf. p. 494 above).

### 3.3.2.1    The Second Trial of Ibn Ḥanbal

Madelung demonstrated that in his later years Ibn Ḥanbal took the step to the positive statement, from 'not created' to 'uncreated'.[1] Once he began to collect a school around himself, a clear standpoint was needed, but at the beginning of the persecution he had not yet reached this stage. However, it may have been during his imprisonment, which continued even after Maʾmūn's death, that he moved rather closer to the idea, for when Maʾmūn's successor al-Muʿtaṣim summoned him once again in Ramadan 220/September 835, one of the arguments he cited in his defence was that God's speech must be judged like his knowledge. And it had long been said of God's knowledge that it was eternal.

Once again the word 'eternal' is used by the opposition only, and in a polemical sense. Actually it was not one step but two: *laysa bi-makhlūq > ghayr makhlūq > qadīm*. Evidence of Ibn Ḥanbal's employing the analogy mentioned at this time is provided by accounts whose origin and tendency are clearly of opposing sides, in Jāḥiẓ (*Rasāʾil* III 294, ult. ff.) as well as in Ibn Ḥanbal's own circle (Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 278, 10ff.; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 45, 1ff.; also Khallāl, *Musnad* 462, 10ff.). It is not relevant for our concerns that the argument has a different context in both cases. According to Jāḥiẓ it was Ibn Ḥanbal's defence before the caliph, while his relatives heard

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1  *Festschrift Pareja* I 520f.; cf. Khallāl, *Musnad* 454f.

from Ibn Ḥanbal himself that even before the public debate he had used it to lure Muʿtaṣim's emissary, a man who had allegedly studied hadith, into making the heretic and old-fashioned claim that God's knowledge was created. This statement could not have been made among theologians; consequently Jāḥiẓ tells us that the argument used to refute him in the public debate was that parts of the Quran may be abrogated, God's knowledge, on the other hand, never. This argument was recorded later by Muḥāsibī (*Fahm al-Qurʾān* 364, 3f., and 368, 2ff.; cf. ch. C 6.2 below). Furthermore Ibn Ḥanbal was said to have admitted that until the time when he understood the connection between the Quran and God's knowledge, he had not thought the theory of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* unbelief (Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* 414, 10ff.). However, there was probably an intention behind this account, as it originated with the brother of one of the seven, one Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī (cf. Ṭabarī III 1116, 16); it was presumably meant to convey that his error was in keeping with the general attitudes of the time.

The appearance before al-Muʿtaṣim with the steadfast defence of the true doctrine including the flogging he underwent for it are to this day at the centre of the hagiographical mythologisation. Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's text dominated later tradition. Azdī (d. ca. 334/946) was the first to refer to it in *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil*;[2] he had received the information directly from Ṣāliḥ's son Ḥanbal. Ibn al-Jawzī occupies a key position, interrupting this account in his *Manāqib* only to add traditions from other sources.[3] This provided the model for later authors like Dhahabī[4] and Subkī.[5] Patton referred to the versions in Abū Nuʿaym[6] and Maqrīzī.[7] The possible interdependencies between these later sources have yet to be examined; Ṣāliḥ's text was transmitted by several *ruwāt* from the first.

A more important question is why Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's parallel account appears rather less important. It was at least as extensive as Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's, and based on Ibn Ḥanbal's own words like his; both texts correspond in many passages. Ḥanbal being the more distant relation compared to the son Ṣāliḥ is unlikely to have been significant; if it was seen as a drawback at all, it was outweighed by the fact that Ḥanbal's father, namely Ibn Ḥanbal's uncle (who

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2  P. 417, pu. ff.

3  P. 319ff.

4  *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, printed in the introduction to *Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal* (ed. Shākir) I 91ff.

5  *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* II 44ff.

6  *Ḥilya* IX 197, 7ff.

7  Patton 90ff.

was the same age as he), was present during most – or possibly all – of the time during the debate before al-Muʿtaṣim.[8] However, he was a problem at the same time, as it turned out that he had been the one to insist on a public debate in order to end his nephew's imprisonment. He had approached the prefect of police, a Ṭāhirid, as we have seen, with this aim, pointing out the families' ancient ties in Marv.[9] The subsequent event was thus not really a trial at all, but rather a great *disputatio* in the presence of numerous scholars many of whom were well-disposed towards him.[10] In addition the weapons used were not only *kalām* arguments, but also hadiths, and Ibn Ḥanbal admitted that one of these – his own special field – was successful in defeating him.[11] In another passage the pious editor of the text omitted three lines of the manuscript because 'they contradicted the well-known views of the imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, may God delight in him'.[12] Things had clearly grown too complex for not only him.

It is not very surprising, on the other hand, that the comparatively short and dry account Jāḥiẓ included in his *K. khalq al-Qurʾān*[13] did not leave any traces in later tradition. It has been almost ignored by scholarship so far; it was difficult to access for a long time.[14] There is a later Muʿtazilite version in Ibn al-Murtaḍā[15] the origin of which is not clear at all. It is noticeable that Ṭabarī did not mention the episode at all. It is well-known that he was not on good terms with the Ḥanbalites. While he had studied under Ibn Ḥanbal himself, he would not have agreed with glorifying his 'martyrdom' in this way.

The only way in which we can come to a conclusion as to the year in which the debate took place is by comparing the sources, as the only agreement concerns the month: Ramadan. The fast provided even then the best setting for religious events; nobody could have known that things would get out of hand. Ṣāliḥ reported that his father spent 28 months in various prisons;[16] according to Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq it was more than 30 months.[17] Counting from 218 this

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8      Cf. *Miḥna* 54, 12ff. and elsewhere.

9      Ibid. 43, 8ff.

10     Cf. also Dūmī 279, 13f.; Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil* III 292, 10f.

11     *Miḥna* 55, 9f.

12     Ibid. 60, n. 2.

13     *Rasāʾil* III 278, 4ff.; transl. Pellat/Müller, *Geisteswelt* 80ff.

14     But cf. Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 444, n. 2; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq in his knowledgeable introduction to the Arabic translation of Patton's book (Cairo 1377/1958, p. 11ff.); Aḥmad Khālid, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa-tayyārāt* 289ff.; more recently M. Hinds in: EI² VII 2ff. s. v. *Miḥna*.

15     *Ṭab.* 123, 17ff.

16     Dūmī 277, apu. ff.

17     *Miḥna* 42, 1.

takes us to Ramadan 220. Ibn Khallikān[18] and Ibn al-Murtaḍā[19] confirm this, but according to his son's account Ibn Ḥanbal was transferred from prison to the prefect's house on the eve of the 19th of that month.[20] This figure 19 was misinterpreted as a year early on, e.g. by Azdī,[21] and then by nearly all the later authors.[22] Even in Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's account we find the wrong date of '219'.[23] European secondary texts followed this approach.[24]

It had also been Ramadan when, two months after Maʾmūn's death in 218, Ibn Ḥanbal had been brought back from Raqqa a sick man.[25] Muʿtaṣim had inherited the deceased caliph's religious policy; Maʾmūn even mentioned the *khalq al-Qurʾān* in his testament.[26] It seems, however, that Muʿtaṣim did not have his predecessor's sense of mission; he had no inclination to dabble in theology himself. Consequently it was not the caliph asking the questions during the debate but the scholars present. Ibn Ḥanbal would later cite this fact to exonerate the caliph as much as possible from the bad turn the proceedings took; this was probably a matter of political sagacity even after the changes under Mutawakkil. He emphasised that Muʿtaṣim had wished to end the *miḥna*,[27] and even during a later stage of the interrogation showed pity for him, as for his own son.[28] At first the caliph had him brought to his side and against all convention – and indeed all probability – Ibn Ḥanbal opened the conversation himself. This gave him the opportunity to recall a tradition by Ibn ʿAbbās, the ancestor of the Abbasids, which listed the simple fundamental principles of faith.[29] The fault for the deterioration of the atmosphere lay nearly exclusively with Ibn Abī Dūwād, who would find barely any champions after his death and after the Muʿtazila lost its influence. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār noted that by his time some Ḥanbalites even went so far as to claim Muʿtaṣim had asked Ibn Ḥanbal's forgiveness.[30] This is probably true insofar as it shows that the caliph tried to persuade Ibn Ḥanbal to change his mind; Ibn Ḥanbal

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18    IKh I 84, apu.

19    *Ṭab.* 123, 17.

20    Dūmī 278, 6.

21    *Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil*, loc. cit.

22    Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib* 319, 10f.; Subkī II 44, 13f.; Dhahabī in *Musnad* I 91, 8f.

23    *Miḥna* 44, −5f.

24    Patton 89; Laoust in EI² I 273a etc,; more recently also Jadʿān, *Al-Miḥna* 143ff.

25    Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 41, −4ff.

26    Ṭabarī III 1136, 5ff.

27    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 280, 6; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 48, 10f.

28    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 283, pu. f.; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 55, pu. ff.

29    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 279, −8ff.; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 46, ult. ff.

30    *Tathbīt* 210, 7ff.

recollected that during the confidential talk to which the caliph invited him once during the interrogation he recalled his uncle Ṣāliḥ, Hārūn al-Rashīd's third son, who had been a pious man (*ṣāḥib sunna*) and had been his teacher in his youth.[31]

The intention of Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's text is to show that Ibn Abī Dūwād knew nothing of theology and relied entirely on his assistants from the Basran Muʿtazila.[32] The result was that Ibn Abī Dūwād barely featured in the account. While he was the caliph's evil spirit, and people believed him capable of planning to have Ibn Ḥanbal poisoned after he failed to ensure his execution,[33] he kept out of sight during the actual debate. The interrogation was apparently chaired by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī, whom we encountered before[34] and who was the third person present during the confidential talk with the caliph. Being *qāḍī* of Manṣūr's city he was the appropriate authority. His grandfather Ibrāhīm b. Salama had been one of the most important men of the Abbasid *daʿwa*;[35] he himself had at first been judge in Raqqa. In 212/827 Maʾmūn had called him to the eastern bank as successor to Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād, the grandson of Abū Ḥanīfa.[36] He was most certainly competent. However, he was not a Muʿtazilite; he was considered to be a 'Jahmite' and thus seems to have taken the place of Bishr b. al-Marīsī who had died in 218 and perhaps retired from public life even before then.

This also explains why hadith could be used as evidence in debates. Bishr b. al-Marīsī's followers were much more open to this than the Muʿtazilites. Ibn Abī Dūwād was said to have been most annoyed at this style of discussion.[37] Furthermore he was rumoured to have bribed the traditionist ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, who had recognised the *khalq al-Qurʾān*,[38] to find a mistake in the *isnād* of the *ḥadīth al-ruʾya* cited as evidence by Ibn Ḥanbal.[39] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī, on the other hand, was the one who had refuted Ibn Ḥanbal by means of hadith once, as Ibn Ḥanbal admitted himself.[40] He appeared

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31    Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 52, 4ff. Surely that must be to whom Ṣāliḥ al-Rashīdī refers.

32    Ibid. 51, 3ff.

33    Ibid. 69, 3ff.

34    Regarding him see p. 493f. above.

35    Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 86, ult. f., and Ṭabarī, Index s. n.

36    Regarding him cf. Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* III 283, 2f., and 290, 2f.; TB X 26of.; IAW I 299f. no. 795; Der Islam 44/1968/49. He was removed from office in 228/842–3 under Wāthiq, and died in 232/846–7.

37    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 280, apu. ff.

38    Regarding him GAS 1/108; also p. 509 and 514f. below.

39    TB XI 466, 2ff.

40    See p. 500 above.

to be the most moderate and sympathetic among his opponents.[41] Ibn Abī Dūwād's fellow believers, as he recalled, asked for his execution, although not even they were true Muʿtazilites; the first one among them he mentioned was the Najjārite Burghūth.[42]

Only Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq mentions him. Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad shows a simpler image, concentrating the action much more on Ibn Abī Dūwād. A certain Shuʿayb, who appears besides Burghūth, may be Ḍirār's pupil Shuʿayb b. Zurāra (see p. 67 above), or possibly the Jahmite *qāḍī* Shuʿayb b. Sahl (see p. 508 below), although the latter came from Rayy and may thus not have had a particular tie to Basran tradition. The jurist Muḥammad b. Samāʿa al-Tamīmī (d. 233/848) also took part in the discussion, pleading with the caliph on Ibn Ḥanbal's behalf, pointing out that the latter was a member of an old family (Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 55, −4ff.; cf. also 49, ult.; regarding him GAS 1/435, and p. 144 above). Regarding the part played by Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī see p. 316f. above; he may have been Muʿtaṣim's emissary mentioned above.

Jāḥiẓ confirms that the caliph remained distant, but he interprets it simply as the mark of princely benevolence: Muʿtaṣim did not want to embarrass Ibn Ḥanbal unnecessarily. It is noticeable that Jāḥiẓ was writing while the *miḥna* was still going on, as he tried to show that the trial was not mere victimisation but in fact a political measure the caliph could not evade. Consequently he had no difficulty explaining why the flogging was carried out all the same: Ibn Ḥanbal had angered the ruler with his obstinate manner. He closed his ears to reasonable arguments, and when he was cornered he simply said that he was not a theologian.[43] It was quite obvious that this was only an excuse; by equating divine speech and divine knowledge he had argued entirely dialectically. Even Ibn Taymiyya was still aware that Burghūth had thrown a typical *kalām* argument at him: if the Quran was uncreated, God had to be a body, as the Quran is of course an attribute and as such an accident which requires a physical substrate. Ibn Ḥanbal's characteristic response was sura 112; while he did not rule out that the predicate *ṣamad* might express physicality, he did not want to interpret God's word.[44] Jāḥiẓ describes the flogging as 'mild', only

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41    Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 58, −5ff.

42    Ibid. 58, −5, and 55, 10ff.; also 66, pu. f. Regarding him see ch. C 5.2.2.1 below.

43    *Rasāʾil* III 293, 6ff.; confirmed by Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 53, −5.

44    *Minhāj al-sunna* ²II 489, 4ff. Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq also tells us that Ibn Ḥanbal occasionally took note of his opponents' *kalām* arguments (59, 3ff.). Ibn Taymiyya furthermore pointed

thirty light lashes; but they seem to have been sufficient to induce Ibn Ḥanbal to recant unequivocally.[45] The other side could not, of course, admit this: the punishment was cruel, and Ibn Ḥanbal remained steadfast till the end. People claimed to have heard from him personally that he fainted from the pain.[46] That was probably the polite way of saying that he could not remember what he said. It is unlikely that he would have been let go unless he confessed.

### 3.3.3    *The Development until the Uprising of Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī*

Ibn Ḥanbal's experiences had been enough for him. He lived a secluded life from then on, the authorities leaving him in peace after his confession.[1] He was probably able to teach, but perhaps in his own house only;[2] he was not entirely uncontroversial even among the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*.[3] Muʿtaṣim refrained from making further examples of scholars, and Ibn Abī Dūwād embarked on a more long-term strategy employing literary propaganda. Jāḥiẓ acted as his mouth-piece, composing his *Radd ʿalā l-Mushabbiha* (also *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh*). The text is dedicated to Ibn Abī Dūwād's eldest son Abū l-Walīd; Jāḥiẓ wrote him a detailed letter announcing the publication.[4] However, Abū l-Walīd was still very young; Jāḥiẓ went to some lengths to prove that experience was not the only criterion.[5] Ibn Abī Dūwād may have appointed his son his successor as early as 218, immediately after he himself took office;[6] Abū l-Walīd became *qāḍī* at the age of 16.[7] Jāḥiẓ was of course aware that he addressed Ibn Abī

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out that neither Burghūth nor Ibn Abī Dūwād were Muʿtazilites (*Tafsīr Sūrat al-ikhlāṣ* 58, –6ff., and 59, 3f.).

45    *Rasāʾil* III 295, apu. ff.; thus also Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭab.* 125, 1, but with a greater number of lashes, and Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* 577, 5ff.

46    Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad 285, 10f.; emphasised also by Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq (63, 10ff.).

1    Cf. EI² I 272f.

2    The idea that he did not dare transmit hadith during this time, as the Spaniard al-Khushanī claimed (cf. the text in: Al-Qantara 6/1985/326, 1ff.), is probably only a later obsession.

3    This is evident from his quarrel with Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Tirmidhī (see vol. II 720 above).

4    *Rasāʾil* I 279ff.; also Pellat in: Mashriq 47/1953/285ff.

5    Ibid. 294, 5ff. In another place, the dedication of his *Risālat al-maʿād wal-maʿāsh*, he says that he was already acquainted with Abū l-Walīd in the latter's youth (*Rasāʾil* I 91, 9f./ transl. Vial 34ff.).

6    Thus according to a conjecture by Massignon (in: WKZM 50/1948/207). It is supported by the note in TB IX 243, 11f.

7    *Faḍl* 301, –5f. The remark is included in the passage concerning his son Abū Muḍar Walīd (regarding him see p. 542 below), but together with the following text appears to refer to him.

Dūwād through him; he praised that the family gave new life to the *sunna* and to the profession of oneness.[8] He also dedicated some of his books to the father, especially his *K. al-bayān wal-tabyīn*.

Cf. Pellat in: Arabica 31/1984/133 no. 52, i. His *K. Al-futyā* is a further instance (cf. the letter of dedication *Rasā'il* I 309ff.), and probably the *Risāla fī faḍl al-ʿilm* (cf. MMʿIA 19/1944/74). In general cf. Pellat in: RSO 27/1952/55ff. – He also proved his religious zeal at the time by writing against an apostate who was burned at the stake in 225/839 (Ṭabarī III 1302, ult.; cf. *Ḥayawān* I 9, pu.).

He said that he wanted to focus on the specific words the addressee's family wished to hear.[9] The populace (*ḥashw*), being ignorant, inclines to anthropomorphism and must be educated.[10] If, however, it fell into the wrong hands, it would become dangerous. Everyone recalled how those who 'professed the oneness of God', who did not compare God with anything, were stripped of their civil rights – presumably under Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, possibly even during the troubles preceding his rule. Consequently it was a good thing that later the *miḥna* also came down upon the opponents thanks to the efforts of the 'master' (*shaykh*), i.e. Ibn Abī Dūwād.[11] Still, by this time it had abated. The oppression had come to an end, and the prohibition of free speech had been lifted.[12] And immediately the detractors gathered for battle again. While some of them seemed to have been won over to the just cause, there were still hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) among them, and they are of no use. There is no way around the intellectual debate; Jāḥiẓ promised to furnish arguments for it in the book he was announcing.[13] Unfortunately only a few excerpts are extant. Generalising from these we can conclude that Jāḥiẓ did not touch on the *khalq al-Qur'ān*, but his reference to the *miḥna* shows that he regarded the connection with the *tashbīh* as a given. He discusses the vision of God in some detail; of course, Ibn Ḥanbal also spoke of it during the interrogation.[14]

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8    *Rasā'il* I 293, −4.

9    Ibid. 292, 9ff.

10   Regarding *ḥashw* in Ma'mūn's letter cf. Ṭabarī III 1112, ult.; in *ʿAhd Ardashīr* cf. Steppat in: *Festschrift ʿAbbās* 451f.

11   *Rasā'il* I 283, 3ff., and 284, pu. ff.

12   Ibid. 287, −6, and 288, −5ff. This provides a *terminus ante quem non*. Pellats date of 'vers 220' (in: Arabica 31/1984/159f. no. 218–9) is a little too early, probably because he, as usual, dated Ibn Ḥanbal's interrogation to 219.

13   Ibid. 288, 1ff.; cf. also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 437f.

14   Cf. *Rasā'il* IV 5ff. A passage from the dedication is translated in Pellat/Müller, *Arab. Geisteswelt* 85f.

A few years later he went on to compose, once again for Abū l-Walīd, a second text in which he tried to analyse the opposing forces growing up in the population: the *Risāla fī l-Nābita*.[15] Here the question of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* is broached, in a slightly ironic undertone: if only the opponents were consistent … they believe that God can add to or take away from the Quran, and cannot see that by saying that they have admitted to its createdness.[16] This was the argument based on abrogation that had already been used against Ibn Ḥanbal during the debate,[17] but of course the opponents were only looking at the tradition, and as the word 'created' is not used in this context there, they do not use it, either. Of course, 'un-created' is not used there, either – Jāḥiẓ assuming, once again, that they would have used the word in the first place.[18] It may be an imputation, just as it was in Maʾmūn's letters. Still, the situation had changed. A new generation had grown up, the '*nābita*', the 'young shoots' named in the title. They did not claim, like Ibn Ḥanbal, that they did not understand theology, but attacked the Muʿtazilites. Consequently they may not have felt the scruples the old gentlemen of 218 had when it came to the uncreatedness or eternity of the Quran. If we could be sure of the likely assumption that Ibn Kullāb was one of them,[19] the question would be decided easily.

The denotation *nābita* (or *nawābit*) itself was older. Towards the end of the Umayyad era ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā had called the Abbasids 'the whipper-snappers in Khorasan' (*al-nābita fī arḍ Khurāsān*).[20] The word had already had a negative association at the time. It first appeared with a religious connotation in the form *Nābitiyya* in a poem dating from 210/826 referring to those who had recognised Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī as caliph and called him a 'Sunnite'.[21] Jāḥiẓ was believed to have counted Shāfiʿī among them, who had already died in 204/820.[22] His was the only name ever given in connection with them. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār regarded them as members of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*.[23] They

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15    Cf. Pellat in: Arabica 31/1984/151 no. 162. Transl. by Pellat in ᴀɪᴇᴏ Algiers 10/1952/302ff., some passages also in *Arab. Geisteswelt* 136ff.

16    *Rasāʾil* ɪɪ 18, 11ff./transl. *Geisteswelt* 139.

17    See p. 498f. above.

18    *Rasāʾil* ɪɪ 19, 6ff./transl. *Geisteswelt* 139.

19    Regarding him see ch. C 6.1 below.

20    *Rasāʾil* 198, pu. f.; the letter was written in 128 (ibid. 201, 6).

21    Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 198, −4/109, 5; see p. 188 above.

22    Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī* ɪ 260, 12ff. (which must surely be read *nābita* rather than *nābigha*). This would agree with the fact that the Muʿtazilites' most prominent theological opponents came from Shāfiʿī Iraqi circle of pupils (see ch. C 6 below).

23    *Faḍl* 188, 2f.

combined anthropomorphism and belief in predestination;[24] they expect to see God in paradise, albeit *bilā kayf*.[25] And then, characteristically: they admire the Umayyads, and in particular their ancestor Muʿāwiya.[26] Now we have a combination of all political and theological ideas that already defined the opposition in the capital at the time of Maʾmūn, now being taken up with enthusiasm by a new generation. A generation later Ibn al-Rēwandī confirmed this trend in retrospect.[27]

The term *nawābit* was later used by Fārābī; cf. Alon in: JRAS 1989, p. 221ff. and, entirely identical (!), Arabica 37/1990/56ff. (esp. p. 77ff. regarding Jāḥiẓ' description of it). Alon considers a connection with νεόφυτοι (p. 237/p. 74), but the meanings do not correspond; these are 'upstarts', new-generation people who are yet to reach maturity of judgment. Cf. the *naw-khāstagān* in Niẓāmī-i ʿArūzī, *Chahār maqāla* 16, 10.

In one point Jāḥiẓ diverges from this image. In his view the *nābita* were *mawālī* who employed Shuʿūbite arguments to show off to the Arabs.[28] The epithet stuck to them; according to a Muʿtazilite source Muʿtaṣim himself used it.[29] It did not apply to members of old-established Khorasanian families, of course, and much less to Shāfiʿī who was, after all, a Quraysh. But the *ahl Khurāsān* may have had contacts with Iranians; furthermore, it was easy to overlook that they were in fact of Arab extraction. Ibn Abī Dūwād was descended from Syrian Bedouins; he was well-known for being proud of his Arab origin.[30] Jāḥiẓ followed his way of thinking; the opponents, he is telling us, acted out of the feeling of inferiority typical of upstarts.[31]

A third text belongs in this context because of its topic: the *K. khalq al-Qurʾān*.[32] We do not know to whom it was addressed, but it was certainly

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24  *Rasāʾil* II 15, 4, and 20, 4f.

25  Ibid. 18, 7f.; cf. AIEO 10/1952/321.

26  Ibid. 10, ult. ff./transl. 138f.; also Nagel 248ff. Cf. also Halkin in: JAOS 54/1934/1ff.; Pellat in: SI 6/1956/61ff. As in the case of Ibn Ḥanbal, this was not necessarily linked to opposition to ʿAlī, as witness Jubbāʾī's remark in Murtaḍā, *Ṭab.* 82, 13ff.

27  *Intiṣār* 102, 2f., and 112, 9f.; concerning the link with anthropomorphism ibid. 105, 10ff.

28  *Rasāʾil* II 20, −4ff./transl. 140f.

29  See ch. C 4.2.2.2 below.

30  See p. 523 and 540 below.

31  Even Ibn al-Rēwandī still described the opponents of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* as 'simple folk' (*ʿawāmm*; *Intiṣār* 48, 3).

32  *Rasāʾil* III 285ff.; concerning the contents also p. 500 above.

composed before 232/847.[33] It, too, conveys how the opponents are growing stronger, how they insist that ascetics, jurists and traditionists were on their side.[34] It offers an excuse for, rather than a justification of, the *miḥna*; one must not think that it was pure snooping.[35] And while the authorities kept aloof now, the consequences of the discrimination was only beginning to become evident. It was lamented that in some mosques, no *ʿudūl* were to be found and the judges could not carry out their duties there.[36] Anyone who still practised had surely professed the *khalq al-Qurʾān*; pious persons felt scruples about asking them for advice. Abū Ṣāliḥ Shuʿayb b. Sahl al-Rāzī, known as Shaʿbōya and appointed *qāḍī* on the eastern bank, did not admit those of other faiths as witnesses – but then he did not take any money, either.[37] He had had a banner, as we might say today, attached to the outside of the mosque in Raqqa where he sat in judgment, on which everyone could read the profession of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*.[38]

The alignment of the judiciary caused a lot of bad blood. On a Friday at the end of Rabīʿ I 227/mid-January 842, things came to a head: in the chief mosque in Ruṣāfa, long a hotbed of the opposition, two 'Jahmites' were beaten up. Afterwards the mob moved to Shuʿayb b. Sahl's house of prayer to remove the offending text. One of his servants shot arrows at them, whereupon the door of his house was set alight; this is believed to be the first time people dared do this to a judge.[39] Besides Ruṣāfa, Karkh was another hotbed of resistance.[40]

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33  Cf. Pellat in: Arabica 31/1984/154 no. 183.

34  *Rasāʾil* III 297, pu. f. The puritanical–ascetic component emerges in a passage from Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-qiyān*: the Ḥashwiyya was of the opinion that it was prohibited to look at a woman (*Rasāʾil* II 154, 3ff.). Theologians and men of letters, on the other hand, had ample opportunity at court to [meet] the female slaves who were singers there. Cf. Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love* 120ff., and Bell, *Love Theory* 127f.; in much more detail Cheikh-Moussa in: SI 72/1990/71ff.

35  Ibid. 292, 1ff.

36  TB IV 155, 12, in a defamatory poem on Ibn Abī Dūwād.

37  TB IX 243, 19f.

38  Ibid. 243, 16f.; also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 445. Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā l-Marīsī* 65, ult. f., also named him as being a member of Ibn Abī Dūwād's circle, and he may have been present at Ibn Ḥanbal's interrogation (see p. 502f. above; also Khallāl, *Musnad* 439, 6ff.). When Muʿtaṣim's Turkish troops conquered the fortress Amorium in 223/838, he and his colleague ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq had to travel to Samarra together with 328 witnesses of good repute, i.e. faithful to the government, in order to confirm how the caliph in his delight shared out his possessions (Ṭabarī III 1235, 12ff.; cf. also EI² I 449 s. v. *ʿAmmūriya*).

39  TB IX 243, 12ff.; shorter Wakīʿ III 227, 9ff. (according to whom the house was looted). Cf. Nagel 445.

40  TB IV 149, 2ff.

The rift went right through the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, as not only the 'Jahmites' were tarred with the brush of collaboration, but also all those who had given in to the pressure of the authorities. Ibn Ḥanbal was said to have severed contact with them and refused to use hadith notes compiled by them.[41] People were unsure whether a prayer performed behind Ibn Abī Dūwād on Friday in the chief mosque was still valid. ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, trying to disperse the scruples, found that people saw him in a bad light;[42] a pasquil was thrown into his house, and Ibn Abī Dūwād had to console him with a gift of money.[43] Some evaded the tension; Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿIjlī, who had grown up in Baghdad and studied hadith in Iraq moved to the Maghrib in order to live a life of undisturbed piety alone.[44]

The riot in Ruṣāfa took place just two weeks after al-Muʿtaṣim's death.[45] It is possible that people were trying to find out how the new caliph, al-Wāthiq, would react. Shuʿayb b. Sahl was dismissed at the beginning of 228/end of 842, just like ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī, which meant that the 'Jahmites' were losing their influence.[46] However, if anyone benefited from this revirement, it was Ibn Abī Dūwād, as one of his protégés was appointed Shuʿayb's successor: ʿUbaydallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ghālib, a client of the influential chamberlain Rabīʿ b. Yūnus.[47] There was no sign of a thaw at all; Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq emphasised that the *miḥna* restarted after al-Wāthiq came to power.[48] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, who had been brought to Baghdad from Egypt because of his denial, died in prison in Samarra at that time.[49] Now was the time when Ibn Abī Dūwād had the *khalq al-Qurʾān* taught even in elementary schools.[50] In 230/845 a delegation from the Syrian borderlands came to Baghdad. After their concerns had been addressed, they were interrogated regarding the controversial dogma, on the caliph's orders; they felt under so much pressure that only four of them did not answer according to his wishes.[51] This was also the

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41   TB VI 271, 7f.; Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Tab.* I 148, apu. f.

42   TB XI 470, 12ff. = Subkī, *Ṭab.* II 257, 11ff.

43   Subkī II 148, 4ff.; for more detail cf. Der Islam 44/1968/54.

44   TB IV 214f. no. 1906; esp. 215, 6f. and 10ff. Regarding him see Muranyi in: ZDMG 136/1986/514ff.

45   On 19 Rabīʿ I 227/6 Jan. 842; cf. Ṭabarī III 1322, 15ff.

46   However, Shuʿayb b. Sahl would accompany Mutawakkil to Damascus (TTD VI 322, 8f.); he did not fall out of favour for good. He died only in 246/860.

47   Wakīʿ III 277, −7ff.; TB X 319, 9f.; cf. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī in: MMʿIʿI 18/1969/53 with further instances.

48   P. 79, 9ff.

49   See vol. II 812f. above.

50   Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 81, apu. ff.

51   Ṭabarī III 1351, ult. ff.

time when a woman could divorce her husband if she could prove that he did not 'believe the commander of the faithful's doctrine on the Quran'.[52] The historian ʿUmar b. Shabba, in his mid-fifties at the time, was summoned to Samarra for an 'examination'; when he remained steadfast, his books – these were presumably his hadith notes – were torn up.[53] Sometime during this period, according to late sources in 231/846, Wāthiq even reissued Maʾmūn's edict, for the first time after the latter's death.[54]

However, it is possible that the two last-named measures were triggered by an event that gave the *miḥna* yet another dramatic twist: Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī's attempted coup. This enterprise demonstrates a paradigmatic combination of the tendencies dominating the resistance against the *khalq al-Qurʾān* in Baghdad. Khuzāʿī was the grandson of a *naqīb* of the Abbasids and member of an old Arab family in Khorasan that traced its genealogy back over more than a dozen generations.[55] As early as 201, during the period without a ruler, the people of Baghdad had pledged him their allegiance in the *amr bil-maʿrūf*;[56] and he had been one of Sahl b. Salāma's comrades-in-arms.[57] Now he was an old man and only the figurehead of the uprising. The activists who co-opted him had money;[58] they were *ahl Khurāsān* and even had connections in the police force.[59] Spiritual support came from the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*; in fact,

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52   Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 79, pu. f. with two names, the second of which should probably be read *Ibn Mālaj* instead of *Abī Ṣāliḥ*; this would refer to the traditionist Muḥammad b. Muʿāwiya al-Anmāṭī who was known as Ibn Mālaj (TB III 274f. no. 1362). Concerning his case cf. Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* III 29-, –8ff., and TB X 74, 3ff. > IAW I 290, –5ff. The latter text modifies the story, probably because the judge presiding over the trial, ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Khalanjī (d. 253/867), was regarded as an honourable man; when Mutawakkil later ordered an inquiry into his term in office, he emerged without a stain on his character. On the other hand there was no doubt that he publicly embraced the *khalq al-Qurʾān* (TB IX 73, 16); under Muʿtaṣim Ibn Abī Dūwād had appointed him *qāḍī* of Hamadan. Under Muʿtazz he was still regarded as a Muʿtazilite jurist (Ṭabarī III 1684, 10ff. s. a. 252). For more details cf. Der Islam 44/1968/50. Paradoxically Ibn Mālaj would later acquire the reputation of having been a Wāqifite, i.e. someone who did not occupy a clear position regarding the *khalq al-Qurʾān* (TB III 275, 6f.).

53   TB IX 209, 13ff.; regarding him see GAS 1/345.

54   Dhahabī, *Ibar* I 408, 2f.; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 259, 5ff.; Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ* 340, apu. f. It was said that he even had the *khalq al-Qurʾān* inscribed on the Kaʿba (Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 253, 8f.).

55   Cf. the biography in TB V 173ff. Regarding his grandfather Abū Naṣr Mālik b. al-Haytham al-Khuzāʿī cf. *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* and Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III, Indices s. n.

56   Ṭabarī III 1344, 8ff.

57   TB V 176, 9f.

58   Ibid. 176, 13ff.

59   Ṭabarī 1344, 3f.

Khuzā'ī was one of them. The enterprise had its base in a suburb. However, the plot never came to fruition; it was exposed in advance and Khuzā'ī and his fellow believers had to go to Samarra.[60]

At this point the sources start on a legend that was the equal of the story of Ibn Ḥanbal's martyrdom.[61] Even 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī put in an appearance, even though he had long lost his position as *qāḍī*; he declared Khuzā'ī guilty of a capital crime although, as the text points out explicitly, he had been his friend. Ibn Abī Dūwād was exonerated quite emphatically: he was said to have advised leniency. However, the caliph beheaded Khuzā'ī with his own hand – using the sword of the poet and companion of the prophet 'Amr b. Mad'īkarib[62] that he had someone bring from the treasure chamber. This turned out to be difficult, as a saint's head is firmly fixed to his body. The caliph had to strike twice, after which one of those present stepped in to help. In Baghdad only the martyr's head was put on show, but that for a long time: it was not taken down until six years later.[63] By that time al-Mutawakkil had long acceded to the throne; clearly he, too, refused to extend mercy. People believed to have heard the head recite the Quran.[64] The bailiffs had put a piece of paper in his ear which stated that the caliph in person had asked Khuzā'ī to profess the *khalq al-Qur'ān* and renounce anthropomorphism, but that as he had remained obstinate God would transport him to the eternal fire. The text was written by the vizier Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Malik Ibn al-Zayyāt.[65]

One might toy with the idea that this unfortunate and entirely utopian undertaking, in which the resentment of twelve years of religious persecution found its expression, was set in motion by one particular event. At the end of 230 the Arabs and Byzantines had agreed an exchange of prisoners to take place on a border river, on the feast of 'Āshūrā' 231, in the month of Muḥarram. The Muslims had found it difficult to make up numbers on their side, while the Byzantines – who had apparently taken more prisoners – insisted on an exchange person for person. Even Greek women from the caliph's harem are said to have been handed over, in order to free as many Muslims as possible. A selection criterion was needed, and the caliph is said to have told the relevant officials – Ibn Abī Dūwād's men, as we are told – to show preference towards all

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60   Ibid. 1343, 9ff., with further details.

61   Ibid. 1346, 7ff.; TB V 176, 19ff., after Ṣūlī. The trial was public, and the people are said to have attended it in large numbers (Ṭabarī 1346, ult.).

62   Regarding him cf. EI² I 453 s. v.; GAS 2/306f.

63   TB V 180, 6f.

64   Ibid. 178, pu. ff.

65   Ibid. 177, ult. ff.; Ṭabarī 1348, ult. ff., has a more extensive text. Cf. also Patton 116ff.; Lapidus in: IJMES 6/1973/381f.; Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 464; Jad'ān, *Al-miḥna* 171ff.

those who professed the *khalq al-Qurʾān* and renounced the vision of God. The event was most spectacular; 4600 persons were freed in total, some of whom had been in prison for thirty years: there had not been a similar agreement since 194 or 195.[66] The population of Baghdad is very likely to have heard of it soon, and shown a lively interest. Those signing up to be warriors for the faith usually came from the lower classes; they owed their religious education and the zeal they felt for the task to the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*. The fact that they were least likely to be released would have brough the ideological terror home to the people more clearly than ever before. The preparations for the uprising took place during the second third of the year 231; Khuzāʿī was taken so Samarra at the end of Shaʿbān.[67] There are no chronological problems, but none of the sources even mention this connection.

The same is true of the connection between the renewal of the edict and ʿUmar b. Shabba's being reprimanded. Wāthiq's letter to his governors might well have been written during the period **before** the uprising, as even when the year is mentioned, the month is never specified. Our earliest source, Kindī (*Quḍāt Miṣr* 451, 4ff.) even seems to say that the text arrived shortly after he took power in 227/842. Yaʿqūbī, too, our only eastern witness, dates it before the exchange of prisoners in 231 (*Taʾrīkh* 588, 14ff.). In the Maghrib, however, persecution began one month after Khuzāʿī's sentence (see p. 519 below). Consequently we could assume that Kindī's authorities perceived the events during Wāthiq's caliphate in retrospect as taking up rather less time than they actually did. – The remark about ʿUmar b. Shabba does not specify a date, either. Strictly speaking the events might even have taken place under al-Muʿtaṣim, as he was the founder of Samarra, where they took place. Ibn Shabba was furthermore close to the 'Nābita' as he, influenced by his Basran origins, was no friend of ʿAlī's; in a poem composed after the interrogation he mentioned only the first two caliphs after the prophet (TB IX 209, ult.). – Another victim of the *miḥna* during this time was probably the traditionist Maḥmūd b. Ghaylān al-ʿAdawī; once again we do not know a date (TB XIII 89, ult.). Aḥmad b. Ghassān, a pupil of ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Zayd named by Abū l-ʿArab (*Miḥan* 467, 3f.), may have died earlier; he was imprisoned together with Ibn Ḥanbal (ibid. 453, 1ff.). Regarding him cf. also vol. II 115, n. 47 above.

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66    Cf. in detail Ṭabarī III 1351, 14ff.; also Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh* 191, 3ff., and Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* 588, 6ff.
67    TB V 178, 18ff.

### 3.3.4    *The* miḥna *in the Provinces*

We have seen that it was probably the religious climate in **Syria** that persuaded Maʾmūn to pass his decrees of 218. Abū Mushir, with whom he had quarrelled in Baghdad, was now seen as a hero. A later account of his interrogation in Baghdad claims that the caliph's letter to Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm not only demanded the profession of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* but also renunciation of the vision of God and the punishment of the grave, as well as a confession that one must not take the scales literally and that paradise and hell were not yet created.[1] The judiciary was controlled in Syria as well as in Iraq; Muʿtaṣim, who was administering Syria on Maʾmūn's behalf, conveyed the relevant orders to Damascus in 218.[2] Theologians in exposed positions looked for compromise. Hishām b. ʿAmmār (153/770–245/859), the official Friday preacher of Damascus, a respected traditionist and Quran reciter,[3] used the formula 'praise be to God who revealed himself to his creation through his creation (i.e. the Quran)', and called the recitation of the Quran created.[4] This formula was close to the expressions Maʾmūn had used in his letter,[5] while the latter belief was one widely held in the province.[6] Thanks to his reputation a number of scholars in Mosul escaped the *miḥna*.[7]

In Mosul a tombstone dating from this time has been found, with an inscription arguing against the *khalq al-Qurʾān* and affirming the vision of God (see ch. C 6.3, end, below). Hishām b. ʿAmmār, on the other hand, appears to have interpreted the *ruʾyat Allāh* metaphorically (Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* 467, 12ff.), rather like Ibn Abī Duwād. He was the teacher of Baqī b. Makhlad, who firmly established tradition science in Spain; he had allowed him, and only him, to spend the night in the Umayyad mosque. This is why in Spain the disagreement between Hishām b. ʿAmmār and Ibn Ḥanbal is usually ignored (cf. the text in Al-Qanṭara 6/1985/325, –10ff.). Concerning Baqī b. Makhlad in general see Marín in: Al-Qanṭara 1/1980/165ff.

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1  Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik* I 418, 8ff. This is a catalogue of 'Jahmite' rather than Muʿtazilite heresies.

2  On 24 Jumādā of this year (18 June 833; TTD II 455, 10ff.). Cf. p. 490 above.

3  Regarding him see vol. I 161 above.

4  Khallāl, *Musnad* 556, –6ff.; *Mīzān* no. 9234.

5  Ṭabarī III 1118, 5f.

6  See ch. C 6.3 below.

7  TB XI 471, 11f.

When the religious scholars had to appear before the governor in **Kufa** in 218, it was Faḍl b. Dukayn, by that time an old man, who was most remarkable for his unbending stance.[8] He was acquainted with the family of Ibn Ḥanbal.[9] People contrasted his demeanour with that of Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād, one of Abū Ḥanīfa's grandsons,[10] overlooking that the latter had been dead since 212/827. He was well known for having regarded the profession of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* as a kind of family legacy,[11] thus representing Kufan tradition at its best.[12] This may be one reason why we hear so little of the later development. The *miḥna* was carried out by Ghassān b. Muḥammad al-Marwāzī, from a Khorasanian family and one of Ibn Abī Duwād's men, when he was appointed *qāḍī* of the city under Muʿtaṣim.[13] Of the 120 court witnesses he was said to have dismissed all except six, and ultimately two.[14] However, we know the name of only one of the victims: the pious traditionist Abū Ghassān Mālik b. Ismāʿīl al-Nahdī gave in to the pressure of the authorities and professed the khalq al-Qurʾān.[15] He also inclined towards the Shīʿa and may consequently not have been as involved in the matter as others; he was a follower of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy's doctrine.[16] We are not aware of any significant incidents.[17]

Maʾmūn had summoned a member of the respected family of judges the ʿAnbarī, ʿAbdallāh b. Sawwār, to Raqqa from **Basra**. He had been *qāḍī* of the city between 192/808 and 198/814, and is believed to have died on the way to Raqqa.[18] The persecution fell onto two well-known traditionists instead, one of them from the same clan: ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-ʿAnbarī, who had attended Ibn Ḥanbal's lectures in Baghdad,[19] and ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh Ibn al-Madīnī.

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8    TB XII 349, 6ff.; Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna* 276f. no. 481; also Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 448, pu. ff. (with an incorrect date). Regarding him see vol. I 271 above.

9    Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq was visiting him at the time when Ibn Ḥanbal was taken to Raqqa (p. 36, apu. ff.).

10   He is most likely to be the Ibn Abī Ḥanīfa in the relevant passage.

11   TB VI 245, 8f.; see vol. I 220 above.

12   For instance the case of the Ḥanafite Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Luʾluʾī, who had been *qāḍī* in Kufa from 194/810 onwards, and died in 208/819 (cf. Der Islam 44/1968/48).

13   Wakīʿ III 191, 4ff.; cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal* ²II 457, 4f.

14   IAW I 404, 9ff.; further material cf. Der Islam, loc. cit. 50; also vol. I 253 above.

15   Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 445, 3ff.; regarding him see vol. I 287 above.

16   *Mīzān* no. 7008; also Fasawī III 241, 1. Regarding Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ see vol. I 283ff. above.

17   Ghassān al-Marwāzī's only 'political' judgment concerned someone who had denigrated ʿAlī (Wakīʿ 191, –6ff.), but he would not have got off without a punishment in Kufa in any case.

18   Khallāl, *Musnad* 474, 1ff.; regarding him see vol. II 155 and 447f. above.

19   Regarding him TB XII 137f. no. 6590; TT V 121 etc.

The former gave in when he was flogged; Ibn al-Madīnī submitted after watching this.[20] 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-'Azīm never forgave him for this, and it would be quite difficult later to rehabilitate Ibn al-Madīnī's reputation. However, he was an authority on the field of hadith who could not be ignored; furthermore he decided, once the danger was over, to recant in public.[21] In the meantime, as we have seen, he had occasionally lent Ibn Abī Duwād a hand.[22] This provides us with a *terminus ante quem*; in all probability this persecution, too, took place during Ma'mūn's caliphate. Under Wāthiq, the *qāḍī* of the city, Aḥmad b. Riyāḥ, who had taken up office at the beginning of 223/end of 837 under Mu'taṣim, was summoned to Baghdad together with several dignitaries in order to debate with Ibn Abī Duwād.[23] He was not a Mu'tazilite,[24] but nothing could be proved against him.[25] In one of the mosques of the city an attempt had been made, as in Ruṣāfa, to use an inscription to remind those praying of the *khalq al-Qur'ān*.[26] Most intellectuals probably did not need the reminder; among the philologists al-Akhfash (probably 'the middle' one), Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, Quṭrub and later al-Mubarrad embraced the *khalq al-Qur'ān*.[27]

We are not well-informed about events in the Hijaz. Ever since Ma'mūn's day, the *qāḍī* of **Mecca** had been a certain 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Muḥammad al-Makhzūmī, a man from old-established local nobility who 'held ignoble opinions and tested people'; every Friday he had a black man proclaim all around

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20    Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq 38, ult. ff.

21    For details cf. Der Islam 44/1968/54. There is an *'aqīda* extant by him that begins with a profession of predestination and also touches on the non-createdness of the Quran (Lālakā'ī, *Sharḥ* 165ff.). He recognised only the first three caliphs.

22    See p. 502 and 509 above.

23    Wakī' II 175, 10ff. The historian Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ was among those who accompanied him to Baghdad.

24    Ibid. 175, apu.

25    Dhahabī's calling Ibn Riyāḥ a follower of Ibn Abī Duwād (*Mushtabih* 304, 5) was probably due to the information in Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's account that a certain Aḥmad b. Rabāḥ (Riyāḥ?) was sent to Ibn Ḥanbal in prison to debate with him there (278, 7ff.). Also Ibn Ḥanbal later, when asked under al-Mutawakkil his opinion of the jurists available at the time, was said to have denounced this Aḥmad b. Rabāḥ as a well-known 'Jahmite' (Dhahabī, *Siyar* XI 297, 9f.). It is difficult to say whether this was the same person. Khallāl named the follower of Ibn Abī Duwād whom Ibn Ḥanbal cursed as **Abdallāh** b. Rabāḥ (*Musnad* 439, 4ff.). – 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Mu'adhdhal wrote a defamatory poem about the judge (Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn* 97, 3ff.; regarding the author see ch. C 4.1.4 below), but this does not tell us anything about his religious views, either.

26    Khallāl, *Musnad* 455, 5f.

27    Thus Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* VII 218, 6f.; he lists selected names only.

the Masjid al-Ḥarām that the Quran was created.[28] In **Medina** the gover-
nor met with resistance from two of Mālik's pupils: Abū Muṣʿab Muṭarrif b.
ʿAbdallāh (d. 229/845) and Ismāʿīl b. Abī Uways (d. 226/841 or 227/842).[29] The
latter was put under house arrest;[30] it seems that the authorities could not
take particularly harsh action. As Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ does not include any information
about similar events of a later date we can assume that the case petered out.

This assumption becomes increasingly convincing because the same author
furnishes a fair amount of information on the tensions developing in **Egypt**
that also affected the Mālikites. Much depended on the local authorities. As in
Syria the edict was followed by an order from Maʾmūn's brother Abū Isḥāq –
who was not yet called al-Muʿtaṣim at the time; he was governor of both prov-
inces at the time. From his base in Raqqa he informed his deputy the actions
to be taken, dispensing with all theological rigmarole and using good practical
sense. The letter was dated 20 Jumādā I 218/15 June 833, i.e. four days after the
letter *Muʿtaṣim* sent to Damascus with the same objective. The *qāḍī* in office at
the time, Hārūn b. ʿAbdallāh al-Zuhrī, a Mālikite, gave in without much ado; we
hear almost nothing of protests.[31] Still, it seems that he indicated he would not
go to extremes; the great families of jurists, especially those of his own school,
appear to have been spared the 'test'.[32]

This did not suit Ibn Abī Duwād at all. As he had visited Egypt in the past,[33]
he was familiar with circumstances there, and now tried to govern past the
Mālikite *qāḍī* by cooperating with a jurist educated in Kufa who had settled
in Egypt as a bookseller (*warrāq*) and probably worked as a *muftī* occasion-
ally: Muḥammad b. Abī l-Layth al-Khwārizmī. As soon as he got the chance he
appointed him Hārūn b. ʿAbdallāh's successor in 226/841,[34] radically changing

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28    Wakīʿ I 268, −9 and −4ff.

29    Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyīn* (MS Dār al-kutub), fol. 81a, 12ff.; also Abū
      l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 450, 2ff.

30    Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* I 371, 1ff., where the information is linked incorrectly to his brother
      ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Abī Uways, who had already died in 202 or 203 (ibid. pu. f., and *Mīzān*
      no. 4764). Regarding Ismāʿīl cf. also Fasawī II 177, ult. f. (which only says *Ibn Abī Uways*, but
      presumably refers to Ismāʿīl like the rest of the book).

31    Cf. the account in Kindī, *Quḍāt Miṣr* 445, 9ff., which includes the letter verbatim; also in
      *Wulāt Miṣr* 193, 6ff., but abridged. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 218, 8ff.; 224, 15ff., and 230, 2f.,
      confuses the sources.

32    Kindī 447, 14f.; adopted by Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* I 516, −5ff., where Hārūn is, of course, shown
      in the best light. In contrast Kindī 447, 9ff. Hārūn had occupied several posts in Iraq be-
      forehand (TB XIV 13f. no. 7349). Cf. also his poem about Ibn Abī Duwād quoted by Wakīʿ
      III 275, −6ff.

33    See p. 525 below.

34    Kindī 447, 14ff.; 448, pu. ff.; 449, 7ff.; also Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* I 517, 11ff.

the situation. Ibn Abī l-Layth was a Ḥanafite from the east; as long as he knew the government on his side he had no need to be considerate of any connections in the country. He had Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād arrested, and it was also during his time in office, albeit slightly later, that Yūsuf b. Yaḥyā al-Buwayṭī, a pupil of Shāfiʿī's, was taken to Baghdad where he died in prison.[35] Many others gave in during the interrogation, among them Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh b. Bukayr, whose recension of the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* is extant.[36]

Ibn Abī Layth's lack of ties with the population is precisely the factor that renders events during his time in office so complicated. He was disliked not only because of the *miḥna*; he was regarded as a Muʿtazilite, which was quite unusual in Egypt. He was suspected of debauchery as, being a Ḥanafite, he drank *nabīdh*.[37] His judgments were according to a code of law unknown in Egypt; Mālikites and Shāfiʿites were not allowed to practise in the mosques any more.[38] Above all, however, he tried to stop the lawyers wearing the tall caps (*qalansuwa*) in which they appeared before him; in Iraq, lawyers wore the *ṭaylasān*. His employees diverted themselves by knocking the honourable gentlemen's head-coverings off; unsurprisingly this was met with great outrage.[39] He silenced a lower-class opponent by declaring him a slave because he had given unreliable testimony.[40] When he was finally removed from office under Mutawakkil in Shaʿbān 235/Feb.–March 850, the people were so happy that they performed a symbolic cleaning of the square where he had dispensed justice.[41] Mutawakkil had him cursed in the pulpits.[42] Very few people expressed understanding.[43]

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35    TB XIV 299ff. no. 7613; regarding him also Patton 119f. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* XII
       60, apu. ff., names the 'followers of Ibn Abī Duwād', and also Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm and Ibn
       al-Shāfiʿī, i.e. presumably Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī (see p. 316f. above) as those who
       were out to get him. It looks as though some random names had been collected here. The
       Muʿtazilite Aṣamm had been dead for years (see vol. II 450 above); this is probably simply
       a confusion with the *qāḍī* Ibn Abī l-Layth (see n. 44 below).

36    Regarding this and other names cf. Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 445, 8ff. Regarding Ibn Bukayr
       (d. 231/845) cf. GAS 1/460, and Muranyi, *Materialien zur mālikitischen Rechtsliteratur* 102
       and 127.

37    Kindī 467, 10ff.; *Tartīb* I 518, 4.

38    Ibid. 451, 14f., and 452, 11ff.; cf. vol. II 477 above.

39    Ibid. 460, 11ff.; also 452, 3ff.

40    Ibid. 456, 12ff.

41    Regarding this custom see vol. II 434 above.

42    Kindī 463, 13ff.

43    Ibid. 466, 14ff.

In the eyes of later authors such as the *qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ, all of this flowed together into one great religious persecution the initiators of which were found in Iraq.[44] However, we do not even know whether Wāthiq's letter, which clearly dated from 231, had any significant influence on the situation. Of course the *khalq al-Qurʾān* was at least a welcome excuse. In the mosques in Fusṭāṭ, Ibn Abī Layth had banners put up which read 'There is no God but God, the lord of the Quran'.[45] In a laudatory *qaṣīda* addressed to him – on which Kindī's account was based to a large extent, and which would also be quoted later – we learn that by that time 'everyone was proclaiming the Quran and its createdness'; Ibn Abī l-Layth, it says, 'made the Egyptians famous by means of a doctrine that was not famous'.[46] Some scholars evaded the oppression through flight, to Yemen, for instance, as the arm of the Abbasids did not reach that far,[47] but also to Syria.[48] Dhū l-Nūn retired to Upper Egypt, but was caught as soon as he dared set foot into the Delta again.[49] Ibn al-Layth's men policed lectures; if a scholar expressed himself in an unacceptable way concerning the Quran he would be chased from the mosque with his turban slipping down, and he could only tuck his *ṭaylasān* under his arm.[50] The persecution of the Banū ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, which remained engraved on the Mālikites' memory, was entwined with money matters in a most dubious way. There were no differences between the schools of law when it came to corruption.

Cf. Kindī 455, 13ff., and 462, 15ff.; also 199, 12ff.; Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ II 61, 9ff.; Rosenthal in EI² III 674f. The scandal took place in 237/851, a long time after the *miḥna*. Even so, it would later be claimed that ʿAbd al-Ḥakam b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, who died under torture at this time, in truth left his life for the uncreatedness of the Quran (Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ II 62, 12f.). His brother Muḥammad, who had also been involved in the affair, was believed to have been taken to Baghdad some years previously where he

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44      Thus e.g. *Tartīb* I 516, –5ff.; he usually refers to Ibn Abī Layth as *al-Aṣamm*.

45      Kindī 451, 12ff. It is not necessary to add *makhlūq* as the editor does; 'lord of the Quran' would have meant 'creator of the Quran' to people at the time.

46      Ibid. 453, 4. All the fragments of the poem Kindī quoted in this chapter belong together. Thus also Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, *Adabunā l-ʿarabī* 152ff.

47      Ibid. 453, 8f.

48      Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ II 72, 11f., and I 517, 5f. Cf. also ibid. II 11, 12ff. (AH 232), and I 564, pu. ff. (where the relevant verses are not dedicated, as a comparison with Kindī 454, 3f., demonstrates; the man in question had already died in 225). General information ibid. I 516, –5ff.

49      Kindī 453, 10ff. He was one who gave in (if this is what *aqarra bil-miḥna* means). Regarding him see vol. II 815 above.

50      Kindī 451, 16ff.

stood up to Ibn Abī Duwād (ibid. II 68, 12ff., after a brief note in Shīrāzī, *Ṭab.*, 99, 8f.). It is noticeable that, unlike Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, Dhū l-Nūn, or Buwayṭī, he was not mentioned by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.

We have shown elsewhere what the Egyptian theologians' view was on the question of the Quran. The historians tell us nothing about the subject. Consequently if we want to link the events of these years with the systems of the *mutakallimūn*, we must rely on conjecture. Ḥafṣ al-Fard, who had argued about the Quran with Shāfiʿī (cf. vol. II 820f. above), was dead, but he may have prepared the Egyptian public for the *khalq al-Qurʾān*. Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād may well have been imprisoned and deported because of the shocking hadiths about the vision of God he circulated (ibid. 811). Abū Muʿādh al-Tūmanī, on the other hand, supported a theology of compromise (ibid. 829).

As for the **Maghrib**, all the information we have refers to Qayrawān. The persecution did not start until 231, a month after Aḥmad al-Khuzāʿī's arrest in Baghdad, and presumably because of the letter with which Wāthiq reaffirmed Maʾmūn's edict.[51] While the *qāḍī* in Qayrawān at the time was a Ḥanafite and supported the *khalq al-Qurʾān*,[52] he had not been appointed during the *miḥna* but had been in office for 18 years. His interrogations of scholars were lax and easy to evade.[53] The Aghlabids had always preferred to see 'Iraqis' as their higher-ranking judges. The viziers, on the other hand, had ties to the Mālikites. The powers were balanced and the 'Iraqis' would not have been able to enforce the *khalq al-Qurʾān* when Maʾmūn's edict reached Qayrawān in 218. The change of direction was the result of other, political developments. In 231/846 the brother of the ruler usurped the power. As he did so against the will of the viziers and consequently the Mālikite party, he now turned to the Muʿtazilites for support. Wāthiq's letter – if indeed it was addressed to the Aghlabid governors as well – would have been very convenient indeed. In any case, he had the *khalq al-Qurʾān* proclaimed in the pulpit. Saḥnūn (160/776–240/854), at the time the head of the Mālikite scholars, went underground, i.e. moved to a Ribāṭ and requested sanctuary from a holy man.[54] When he returned voluntarily to Qayrawān, he did not receive an exemplary punishment; rather, he was put under house arrest and was forbidden to publish expert legal opinions.[55] One

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51    Regarding the following cf. Talbi, *L'Emirat Aghlabide* 222ff. and 231f.

52    *Tartīb* I 609, 12.

53    Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 454, 3ff. and –5f.; cf. also p. 509 above concerning Tripoli.

54    Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 455, 1ff.

55    Ibid. 456, 11f., and 458, 2f.; Khushanī, *Ṭabaqāt ʿulamāʾ Ifrīqiya* 296 no. 160; *Tartīb* I 610, 8ff.

year later, the tide had turned: the Muʿtazilite *qāḍī* became the victim of the counter-revolution and Saḥnūn, who became judge in 234/849, ensured that he did not survive the trial. The *khalq al-Qurʾān*, on the other hand, remained a respectable doctrine until the next century, even enjoying official support at times.[56]

Events in Qayrawān were not necessarily representative of other areas, and it would not have had influence beyond the Aghlabids' territory in any case. The Rustamids in Tāhart held different views; the imam Abū Yaqẓān Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ (r. 241/856–281/895) wrote a treatise there in which he justified the *khalq al-Qurʾān* in great detail, albeit based mainly on conventional arguments.[57] This had nothing whatever to do with the *miḥna*, but it is interesting, as the Ibāḍites did not always embrace this dogma.

In **Oman** there was a debate on the subject under Muhannā b. Ghayfar (r. 226/840–237/8510.[58] It may have been precipitated by Wāthiq's letter, but at the end the decision was in favour of moderation. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, who had supported the createdness of the Quran, had to recant.[59] There was no reason why a Khārijite should have submitted to the caliph's demands.

The information about how Maʾmūn's and his successors' politics was received in **Iran** is sparse indeed. The *Taʾrīkh-i Sīstān* mentions Maʾmūn's letter in passing, linking it to Ibn Ḥanbal's interrogation and consequently incorrectly attributing it to Muʿtaṣim.[60] When the letter was read out in the mosque of Qazwīn, all those present are said to have declared themselves to be against it.[61] There was resistance in Balkh, too; when he received the letter, the *qāḍī* Layth b. al-Musāfir (d. 226/841) tore off his cap (*kulāh*) and resigned. There was a lengthy vacancy as it seems that no-one could be found who embraced the new dogma.[62] The traditionist Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf b. Maymūn (d. 239/853), too, expressed his disapproval.[63] He was a Murjiʾite; Layth b. Musāfir Ḥanafite:

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56    See ch. C 7.7.2 below.

57    Transl. Cremonesi in: Studi Maghrebini 1/1966/16off.; cf. Cuperly, *Introduction* 209f. and 216ff.

58    ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-ayʿān* I 128; cf. Cuperly 149f., and Wilkinson in: Der Islam 62/1985/243.

59    See vol. II 797f. above.

60    P. 185, pu. ff. Hinds says in EI² VII that during his caliphate Muʿtaṣim wrote a letter of his own on the subject of the *miḥna*, but I doubt this.

61    Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ* 305f. no. 490.

62    *Fażāʾil-i Balkh* 209, 2f., and 210, 3ff.; regarding him also IAW I 417 no. 1160.

63    Regarding him see vol. II 611 above; also Madelung in: Der Islam 59/1982/37, n. 22. His views appear to have been influenced by Shaqīq al-Balkhī (cf. Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī, *Bustān al-ʿārifīn* [in the margin of *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*] 184, 6ff.).

they do not appear to have been among those who linked Abū Ḥanīfa with the *khalq al-Qurʾān*.[64]

### 3.3.5 *Some Remarks on Ibn Abī Duwād's Biography. The End of the* miḥna

The *miḥna* started with a decision made by Maʾmūn. It may have been due to Bishr al-Marīsī's influence that the *khalq al-Qurʾān* occupied such a prominent position. However, later generations – and nearly all modern experts – regard it as above all the work of the Muʿtazila. The reason for this is that ever since Ibn Ḥanbal's interrogation all eyes were focussed on Ibn Abī Duwād. Some time ago the hypothesis was proposed that he inspired and drafted Maʾmūn's edict of 218.[1] It may thus be worthwhile to look at events from a different perspective, with more focus on his biography.

The sources employed are nearly exclusively literary or historiographical; the heresiographers did not pay much attention to Ibn Abī Duwād, as he did not distinguish himself as a theologian. 'Philosophy' of the kind practised by Naẓẓām appears to have been downright distasteful to him. When Jāḥiẓ addressed the long dedication of his *K. al-futyā* to him, he hoped to inspire him to read it by saying: 'This is, thanks be to God, nothing to do with 'leap' or 'penetration', nor with 'substance' and 'accident', but concerns the entire Scripture and the (prophetic) tradition. All the community is in dire need of it'.[2]

Of course this does not mean we should not classify him at all. On the contrary, it looks as though his standpoint had been deliberately blurred, or lost from sight very soon. He probably was not a Muʿtazilite at all. While Malaṭī claimed that he studied under Abū l-Hudhayl,[3] and even a pupil of Wāṣil's was unearthed whom he was supposed to have met,[4] one of the sources closest to events, Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's account, has him advised by Burghūth, who was a Najjārite and thus much closer to the 'Jahmiyya' than the Muʿtazila.[5] He does not have his own entry in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Ṭabaqāt*; Kaʿbī lists him among the 'sympathisers', devoting a single, meaningless sentence to him.[6]

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64    Cf. vol. I p. 220 above.

1    Thus Muḥammad Abū Zahra in his book on Ibn Ḥanbal (Cairo 1947, p. 59f.).

2    *Rasāʾil* I 319, 6f. = ed. Pellat in: Festschrift Gibb 546, 5f.; also the partial translation in Pellat/Müller, *Arab. Geisteswelt* 84f. (which is not quite correct in this place).

3    *Tanbīh* 31, ult./39, 16. Later connection with Abū l-Hudhayl is implied in TB IV 142, 12 = Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-iṣr* 68, –4ff.; cf. also Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* V 171, 1f.

4    See p. 524 below.

5    See p. 503 above.

6    *Maq.* 105, apu. The previous section (105, 12ff.), incorrectly referred to Ibn Abī Duwād in the printed version, in fact concerns Muḥammad b. Shujāʿ al-Thaljī (see ch. C 6.3.2 below).

He probably had his origins in the school of the Basran Murjiʾa; he may also have acquired his juristic knowledge there. Ibn Abī l-Wafāʾ lists him among the Ḥanafites,[7] but he does not appear to have studied in Kufa at all. Masʿūdī names him as one of those who followed the Basran method, like ʿUbaydallāh al-ʿAnbarī, ʿUthmān al-Battī or Aṣamm.[8] He did not have a high opinion of hadith.[9] He transmitted barely anything,[10] and was accused of not allowing information of the sort in his trials (*majālis*).[11]

Many anecdotes about Ibn Abī Duwād were transmitted by the writer Abū l-ʿAynāʾ (d. ca. 283/896); he was a generation younger, but seems to have known him rather well. Shortly after 230, at the age of around 40, he became blind, which may have helped him remember his recollections of Ibn Abī Duwād particularly well (regarding him cf. EI² I 108 s. n., and GAS 2/519f.; Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-ʿIqd 349ff.*; regarding his relations with Ibn Abī Duwād cf. also Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* III 45, 9f.). Ibn Abī Duwād himself does not seem to have written anything, but was fond of talking about his time under al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāthiq (Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 144/IV 362f. § 2830). While Abū l-ʿAynāʾ was still living Ibn Abī Ṭāhir (d. 280/893) collected all the information he had about him – and from him? – under the title *K. akhbār Abī l-ʿAynāʾ* (GAL S 1/248); later the author Abū Naṣr Sahl b. Marzubān (d. 420/1030) did the same (Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn* IV 286).

The oldest extant biography of Ibn Abī Duwād is included in Wakīʿ (d. 306/918), *Akhbār al-quḍāt* III 294ff.); he heard some of the information directly from Ibn Abī Duwād's son Abū Mālik Ḥarīz. The biographies in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* and in Ibn Khallikān's work are valuable. Despite living rather later the latter referred to numerous sources now lost; he expresses satisfaction with his achievement himself (*Wafayāt al-aʿyān* I 91, 5). Ṣafadī (*Wāfī* VII 281ff. no. 3264) depends on him, as does Ibn Kathīr (*Bidāya* X 319ff/; he also used the *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*) in large parts. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's versioin in *Rafʿ al-iṣr* (p. 57ff.) is nearly completely conflated from *Aghānī*, *Fihrist* and *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*; the only new material comes

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7    I 56f. no. 72.

8    *Tanbīh* 356, 11ff.; also adduced by Madelung, *Qāsim* 15, n. 1. His being a Ḥanafite for all that might be supported by the passage in *Murūj* VII 49, 2f./IV 319 § 2734.

9    See p. 502 above.

10   *Mīzān* no. 374.

11   *Agh.* X 229, 10. It is noticeable that his son transmitted hadith from one of Maʾmūn's sons (see p. 542, n. 176 below).

from the Ḥanbalite al-Khallāl's (d. 311/923; regarding him cf. GAS 1/511f.) *K. al-sunna*. In his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya*, Subkī reports in detail on the part Ibn Abī Duwād played during the *miḥna* (²II 37ff.). Ibn ʿAsākir's biography, to which Ibn Kathīr referred, is lost as a whole text (in the Ẓāhiriyya MS; cf. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān in: RAAD 55/1980/108ff., esp. p. 115 no. 95); but excerpts survive in Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar* (III 66ff.).

The *K. al-masābīḫ* by one Ibn Abī Duwād, which is mentioned by Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭab.* 126, 4, with information on the death of Wāthiq, was not, as Madelung assumes (*Qāsim* 32), written by our Ibn Abī Duwād, but by the well-known hadith scholar ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Dāwūd (!) al-Sijistānī (d. 316/928; ḤKh 1702). This is also the source of the note on the Ṣaffārid ʿAmr b. Layth (executed 289/902) preserved by Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* III 99. – The Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād al-Ḥasanī mentioned in *Agh. XV* 273, 11, is probably not connected to our Muʿtazilite, either.

He was not actually an Iraqi. The family from which he came was based in Qinnasrīn.[12] This probably referred not to the city itself but to the ancient *jund*, as he valued his genuine Arab, Bedouin background. He traced his genealogy all the way back to Maʿadd, the ancestor of the North Arabs.[13] The tribal federation to which he belonged were the Banū Iyād; hence his *nisba* al-Iyādī. The clan of the Zuhr, who traced its origins to a son of Iyād b. Nizār b. Maʿadd, is also sometimes mentioned.[14] His father was known under his *kunya* Abū Duwād; later biographers would occasionally rack their brains as to what his real name was, but without result based on the available information. Ibn Abī

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12    IKh I 81, 8, after Marzubānī, *K. al-murshid fī akhbār al-mutakallimīn*.

13    Preserved by Ibn al-Nadīm in *Fihrist* 212, 6ff.; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 328, 4ff.; TB I 297, 10ff. (in the biography of his son Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād, after Marzubānī); IKh I 81, 3ff., and apparently also in Yāqūt, *Muqtaḍab fī l-nasab*, each time with slight divergences unavoidable in such a long list of names. Thus there is confusion as to whether the grandfather was called Ḥarīz or Jarīr (the rarer form *Ḥarīz* is found in TB I 297, 21; elsewhere mainly *Jarīr*). The decision will depend on the name of Ibn Abī Duwād's son Abū Mālik (once again Ḥarīz after TB I 297, 14; elsewhere Jarīr every time), as he would have been named for his ancestor. Ibn Mākūlā confirms the form Ḥarīz without any doubt in his case (*Ikmāl* II 86, 13f.; after this source also Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih* 556, 6); this is the *lectio difficilior*. – Ibn Ḥazm calling our *qāḍī* **Muḥammad** Abī Duwād is certainly an error; presumably a contamination with the name of his son Abū Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād (see p. 542 below, and earlier).

14    TB IV 142, 12ff., with an *isnad* that goes via Marzubānī and Ṣūlī. The latter confirms it using a verse by Abū Tammām that refers to the same fact (cf. his commentary on the *Dīwān*, ed. Khalaf Rashīd Nuʿmān, Baghdad 1977, I 393 v. 34). Cf. also Caskel, *Jamhara* II 611.

Duwād's contemporary Diʿbil was probably correct, calling the father Faraj and the mother Ziryāb; as this is in a poem mocking them, some painful precision can be expected.[15] This may be linked to Ibn Abī Duwād's son Ḥarsīz later claiming that his father did not have a name besides his *kunya*;[16] he probably had no wish to extend the life span of Diʿbil's verses. The mother appears to have been a Persian slave; in another passage Diʿbil could not resist calling Ibn Abī Duwād *Ibn Ziryāb*.[17] Duwād[18] (and the *kunya* Abū Duwād) seems to have been a name typical of North Arabs;[19] people remarked that Ibn Abī Duwād's sons also bore unusual names.[20] The father was a merchant with trading links to Damascus, Ibn Abī Duwād accompanied him on his travels when he was a boy.[21]

This may have been when he met Hayyāj b. al-ʿAlāʾ al-Sulamī who called himself Wāṣil's pupil; the information is found in a Syrian source.[22] However, he would have had to be rather old at the time, as Ibn Abī Duwād was born around 160.[23] He owed his career to Yaḥyā b. Aktham, who had been a young man when Maʾmūn had appointed him *qāḍī* ins Basra at the end of 202.[24] He had

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15      TTD V 240, 7 (incorrectly *Dh-r-bāb* instead of *Ziryāb*)/Zolondek no. 5. Marzubānī also states that the father's name was Faraj; Ṣūlī on the other hand has *Duʿmī* for unknown reasons (cf. TB IV 141, 15ff., and frequently repeated with reference to it).

16      The tradition is probably genuine; it is already in Wakīʿ, who had heard it directly from *Ibn Abī Duwād's son* Ḥarīz (*Akhbār al-quḍāt* III 300, 7f.); later also TB IV 141, 19ff. after a book by Ṭalḥa b. Jaʿfar al-Shāhid (d. 380/990; cf. ʿUmarī, *Mawārid al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī* 174ff.).

17      *Agh.* XX 134, 11. *Agh.* X 278, 10 shows that the name was not only given to men (such as the well-known singer) but also to women.

18      It had become common practice to read *Duʾād* instead of *Duwād*; however, this appears to be a hypercorrect form, like *Dāʾūd* instead of *Dāwūd*. The root is d-w-d; *duwād* means 'fart' (*Lisān al-ʿArab* III 167 b, 2f. s. v.; also *Qāmūs* s. v.). Ibn Mākūlā does not mention *hamza* when determining the reading of the name (*Ikmāl* III 335, 2), and neither does Ibn Khallikān (I 91, 7). Vocalisation without *hamza* also in *Agh.* XVII 155, 10, and XX 145, 19. Cf. Fischer, *Schawāhid-Indices* 295 for 10a 5.

19      Cf. the poem at *Agh.* XVIII 155, 10. The pre-Islamic poet Abū Duwād al-Iyādī, a member of the same tribal federation whose clan traced its origin to Ḥudhāqa the son of Zuhr, bore the same name (GAS 2/167ff., and Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 328, 3).

20      *Fihrist* 212, −4, and n. 2 (another indication that the son's name was *Abū Mālik* Ḥarīz and not Jarīr). Regarding the other sons see p. 542f. below. However, at this point we would need an onomastic study to allow us to be certain which names were considered unusual at the time, and which ones less so.

21      IKh I 81, 8f. Was this starting from Qinnasrīn, or after moving to Basra?

22      See vol. II 363 above.

23      Thus according to an autobiographical notice transmitted by Ṣūlī (TB IV 142, 18ff.).

24      Regarding his appointment and his juristic competence cf. IKh VI 148, 10ff.; regarding his activity in Basra Wakīʿ, *Akhbār* II 161ff. It is probably not quite correct that he was only

recommended Ibn Abī Duwād to Baghdad when Ma'mūn was looking for in-
tellectuals with whom to surround himself after his return to the capital.[25] In
this way he seems to have profited doubly from the isolation in which Ma'mūn
and his staff found themselves in Iraq at first. Ibn Aktham came from Marv;[26]
he was too unknown and too inexperienced to get by in Basra without local
advisers.[27] Perhaps he valued Ibn Abī Duwād because due to his background
he stood above the parties but had become acquainted with the circumstances
sufficiently over time; he would have been over forty at the time. Ma'mūn had
to look for his confidants outside Baghdad as the old-established families had
become alienated from him. Ibn Abī Duwād differed from Bishr al-Marīsī and
Abū l-Hudhayl in that he appeared from nowhere, as it were; his Basran time
is shrouded in darkness.

Ibn Abī Duwād would later describe his first appearance before Ma'mūn as
a great success; he claimed that Yaḥyā b. Aktham, fearing the competition, did
not want to take him along at first.[28] This account is influenced by later ex-
perience; in the long run, the two were unable to exist side by side. Still, for the
time being, Ibn Aktham had the better prospects. He remained *qāḍī* in Basra
until 210,[29] then Ma'mūn appointed him chief *qāḍī* in Baghdad.[30] Ibn Abī
Duwād, on the other hand, appears to have come into closer contact with the
caliph around 209, when he found words of consolation for the caliph who was
mourning his brother Abū 'Īsā's death.[31] A few years later, in 213/827, Ma'mūn
assigned him to his brother Abū Isḥāq, the later al-Mu'taṣim, as adviser when

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21 years old, as TB XIV 198, 20f., claims, as that would mean he was not born until after
180. However, he is said to have studied under Ibn al-Mubārak in Marv in his youth (cf.
ibid. 192, 12), who died in 181/797 in Hīt in Iraq (cf. GAS 1/95). Regarding his age cf. also
IKh I 84, 11. Jad'ān 'paints a portrait' of him (*Al-miḥna* 93ff.).

25 Ṭayfūr, *K. Baghdād* 56, pu. ff./30, 12ff.; IKh I 84, 10ff. Cf. p. 214 above. Ibn Khallikān's ac-
count seems to be related to Ṭayfūr, and may be a reworking; it does not, however, men-
tion the part played by Yaḥyā b. Aktham.

26 See p. 488 above.

27 TB XIV 198, 21ff.

28 IKh I 84, 1ff., in an autobiographical account; also Wakī', *Akhbār* III 294, 12ff., who heard
the account directly from Abū l-'Aynā', but not in autobiographical form. – In general see
*Fihrist* 212, 8.

29 Wakī' II 167, 9ff.

30 Ibid. III 273, 11ff.; Yaḥyā b. Aktham was thus not *qāḍī l-quḍāt* during all of Ma'mūn's caliph-
ate as Ṣāliḥ al-'Alī assumes in MMʿIʿI 18/1969/52.

31 *Agh.* X 191, 5ff.; this, as Ibn Abī Duwād put it, took place *fī awwali ṣuḥbatī īyāhu*. Regarding
the date of Abū 'Īsā's death cf. *ibid.* 190, –4. An anecdote in Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* III 67f. tells
us that Ibn Abī Duwād was not happy in Baghdad at first, but it may refer to an earlier
date.

he appointed him governor of Syria and Egypt.[32] This is surely an expression of trust; the account stresses that the caliph found it hard to let Ibn Abī Duwād go.[33] His family's Syrian connections may have played a part, and there might even have been some rivalry on Yaḥyā b. Aktham's part, as we hear that the idea had originally been his. We do not know how long Ibn Abī Duwād stayed in Egypt,[34] although we learn that he was there at the time when the caliph visited in person in early 217/832.[35]

Further information we have concerning his relationship with Ma'mūn cannot be dated; it is likely mainly to refer to the later time.[36] He impressed with his historical knowledge; during an audience he was the only one able to recite all participants of the meeting at ʿAqaba complete with their genealogies.[37] We hear of several occasions when the caliph drank wine in his presence; Ibn Abī Duwād appears to have taken exception only cautiously[38] – less, certainly, than the Muʿtazilite *amr bil-maʿrūf* would have demanded. Like Yaḥyā b. Aktham he disapproved of Ma'mūn's Shīʿite leanings. Mutawakkil later even claimed he was a supporter of the Umayyads,[39] but this is probably once again simply due to his Syrian origin.[40] Ibn Abī Duwād recalled later how Ma'mūn, when he was drunk, once threatened to have him killed when he refused to condemn Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[41] Still, he did not express himself in such clear terms as Yaḥyā b. Aktham who, when Ma'mūn wanted to declare the *mutʿa* (temporary marriage) to be permitted, protested firmly and dissuaded the caliph with juristic

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32    Regarding the date cf. Ṭabarī III 1100, 1.

33    Wakīʿ III 294, −4ff.; a longer and more literary version of the account in Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-iṣr* 60, −6ff.

34    *Rafʿ al-iṣr* 62, 5f., tells us that he stayed with Muʿtaṣim until he arrived in Egypt, but the date of 215/830 is probably rather too late.

35    Kindī, *Wulāt* 502, 7ff., and Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* 569, 10ff.; cf. also Ṭabarī III 1105, 2f., and 1107, 3. It is not clear whether he was part of Ma'mūn's retinue and travelled with him from Syria, or whether he was already in Egypt.

36    E. g. Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* III 377, 3ff.: autobiographical account directly to Jāḥiẓ, Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Muwaffaqiyyāt* 72, 1ff. no. 21.

37    IKh I 82, 3ff.

38    Wakīʿ III 295, 6ff.; Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* IV 213, ult. ff. (which speaks of *nabīdh*). Regarding Muʿtaṣim cf. Agh. X 106, 17.

39    Wakīʿ III 298, apu. f.

40    Ibn Abī Duwād's grandfather was said to have given sanctuary to the founder of the Spanish Umayyads, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (I) b. Muʿāwiya b. Hishām, for four months (Wakīʿ III 298, −5ff., and Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 328, 9ff., after the philosopher al-Kindī).

41    Wakīʿ III 295, 6ff. It will have to remain unanswered whether Ma'mūn really identified with this 'Rāfiḍite' stance; maybe Ibn Abī Duwād later exaggerated. Interestingly this is the same story in which he claims to have called Ma'mūn's drinking wine as *ḥarām.*

arguments.[42] In Egypt, Yaḥyā b. Aktham lost the caliph's favour and was sent back to Baghdad where he was put under house arrest.[43] Ibn Abī Duwād was believed to have been not entirely uninvolved in his downfall; Yaʿqūbī claims that he and a certain Muḥammad b. Abī l-ʿAbbās al-Ṭūsī[44] conspired in order to win Muʿtaṣim's favour.[45]

Another factor in the tensions was presumably that Ibn Aktham had reservations concerning Maʾmūn's policy regarding the *khalq al-Qurʾān*;[46] Ibn Abī Duwād had stated his position much more clearly. And finally Maʾmūn provided yet another reason: Ibn Aktham was believed to have misappropriated public funds. However, this motive is found in a text that is not above doubt; the caliph is said to have mentioned this on his deathbed to Muʿtaṣim.[47] At the same time he exhorts his successor never to dismiss Ibn Abī Duwād as his adviser and, considering the bad experience made with Ibn Aktham – namely 'the sinister way in which he dealt with people, and his reprehensible way of life'[48] – never to employ a vizier again. Things did not, of course, turn out quite like that: Muʿtaṣim appointed a vizier at the very beginning of his caliphate, al-Faḍl b. Marwān; around 221/836 he was succeeded by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn al-Zayyāt, with whom Ibn Abī Duwād did not really get on.[49] And Yaḥyā b. Aktham did indeed retire from public life until the time of Mutawakkil; Ibn Abī Duwād took over the office of chief *qāḍī*. We get the

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42    ṬB XIV 199, 10ff.; one of the accounts goes back to Ibn Abī Duwād.

43    Yaʿqūbī 569, 10ff.; he dates the event, as can be inferred from the context, to early 217. Masʿūdī, on the other hand, claims – probably less correctly – that it was 215 (*Murūj* VII 48f./IV 319 § 2734). Cf. also Sourdel, *Vizirat* 238f.

44    Unfortunately we have barely any information about him. He probably was the Shīʿite theologian Muḥammad b. Abī l-ʿAbbās about whom Bishr al-Marīsī reported that he took part in a discussion before *Maʾmūn* on the subject of *imāma* in 205, and that he married Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn's daughter (Ṭabarī III 1040, 1ff.). There might also be a connection with Muḥammad b. ʿAmr al-Ṭūsī, who was Maʾmūn's chamberlain according to *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* II 170, 12.

45    It is not clear why Muʿtaṣim should have desired the removal of the chief *qāḍī*. If we read that he revealed his ambition to succeed his brother as caliph to Ibn Abī Duwād on the way to Egypt (Wakīʿ III 295, 1ff., after an autobiographical account in Abū l-ʿAynāʾ), this is clearly narrated after the event; they could not have had any knowledge of Maʾmūn's comparatively early death at the time. Once again, Ibn Aktham was not in his way.

46    ṬB XIV 198, 7ff.; cf. p. 488 above.

47    Ṭabarī III 1139, 9ff.

48    Was this a reference to not only the misappropriation but also to the homosexuality occasionally mentioned by contemporary poets? (ṬB XIV 196, 12ff., and 195, 7ff. These suspicions, too, are of course part of the web of power politics behind the scenes.

49    Sourdel, *Vizirat* 246ff.; cf. p. 490ff. below.

impression that the account was composed to his specifications.[50] After all, he was one of the few who, in distant Tarsus, was present at the caliph's death; he claimed to have tied the jaw of all departed caliphs under whom he had served, from Ma'mūn onwards.[51] The text appears to try to present an order that never existed in reality, but seemed desirable to Ibn Abī Duwād when his conflict with the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt became more acrimonious, and his own influence began to wane during Wāthiq's caliphate.

This would also explain why Mu'taṣim's rival, Ma'mūn's son al-'Abbās, plays an entirely passive part in the text, although in reality he had a lot of support in the army and thus would not have had to abide by the demands made in this alleged testament. By the time Wāthiq succeeded, he had died and could thus be left out of the account of events. He died after an uprising in 223/838 (cf. EI² I 11ff.; Ṭabarī III 1256ff., transl. E. Marin, *The Reign of al-Mu'taṣim* 76ff.).

There is no doubt that Ibn Abī Duwād reached the high point of his career during Mu'taṣim's caliphate. People recalled how the poet al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 250/864), returning to court after being out of favour temporarily under Ma'mūn,[52] mocked him in conversation with a theologian: 'In our view, Ibn Abī Duwād does not understand language; in your view, he does not understand *kalām*; the jurists think he does not understand the law, and in Mu'taṣim's view he understands all of it'.[53] As chief *qāḍī* he did not have absolute authority in his position; according to the remit of the office he was the caliph's deputy,[54] but Mu'taṣim seems to have allowed him a great deal of influence. This is most noticeable in the trial of the Afshīn. Ibn Abī Duwād probably knew the Iranian prince well, as he, too, had accompanied Mu'taṣim to Egypt, rising to officer and later governor of Cyrenaica and helping to put down the Coptic uprising in 216/831.[55] Later, in 223/838, we find both of them taking part in Mu'taṣim's campaign to Amorium.[56] Discord appears to have arisen

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50    Interestingly, Ṭabarī was not able any more to say with certainty in whose presence *Ma'mūn* had issued his testament (III 1135, ult. ff.).

51    Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* I 456, 6ff.

52    GAS 2/518f.; regarding him see also p. 207 above.

53    IKh I 83, apu. ff.

54    E. Tyan in EI² IV 374a s. v. *Qāḍī*. Thus if we hear from time to time that he issued decrees appointing or dismissing judges (TB X 317, 5ff., or Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr* 448, 3ff., and 449, 1f.), this should be interpreted accordingly.

55    EI² I 241a s. v. *Afshīn*.

56    Ibid.; Ṭabarī III 1325, 2.

when the Afshīn wanted to have the poet Abū Dulaf al-ʿIjlī executed; Ibn Abī Duwād prevented this and persuaded the caliph to his view, too.[57] The event took place not long before the trial, as Abū Dulaf had been part of the force that captured Badhdh, the stronghold of Pāpak, under the Afshīn's command.[58] However, it is probably more a symptom and less a cause. Abū Dulaf was of Arab descent; in the case of the Afshīn, however, Ibn Abī Duwād appears to have emphasised even during the trial that he was not circumcised.[59] In a text later refuted by Maʿarrī in his *Risālat al-ghufrān*, Ibn al-Qāriḥ quotes him as saying to Muʿtaṣim 'An uncircumcised man, sleeping with an Arab woman!', probably hitting on a decisive issue.[60] Maʿarrī, incidentally, thought Ibn Abī Duwād's remark entirely in order.[61]

Consequently it comes as no surprise that people believed Ibn Abī Duwād had warned Muʿtaṣim against the Afshīn's increasing power.[62] Other reasons

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57    The story was very popular in the *adab* literature. The scene was not always described entirely consistently, occasionally it was embellished considerably. In particular the part played by the caliph remains unclear, for obvious reasons; we are unable to determine whether he had been informed of the Afshīn's plans in advance, and if he agreed with them. Cf. *e.g.* Ibn Abī Duwād's autobiographical account *Agh.* VIII 250, 6ff., adopted by Tanūkhī, *Faraj baʿd al-shidda* II 69, 9ff.; the strongly divergent and detailed autobiographical account in Tanūkhī, ibid. 70, 10ff. (after Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥātimī, d. 388/998), embellished even more in Bayhaqī, *Taʾrīkh-i Masʿūdī* (ed. ʿAlī Akbar Fayyāż) 213ff.; the version in Wakīʿ III 296, –5ff/ (after Abū l-ʿAynāʾ, who refers to a source in the ministerial bureaucracy), adopted by Tanūkhī II 69, 3ff., also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Adhkiyāʾ* 74, 1ff. (after Abū l-ʿAynāʾ > Ṣūlī) and IKh I 82, 9ff.; different again Tanūkhī II 66, apu. ff., and *Mustajād* 148 no. 68. Cf. also Herzfeld *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra* 139f.; in general on the sources also Sourdel, *Vizirat* 259, n. 2. – Regarding Abū Dulaf cf. GAS 2/632.

58    Ritter, *Geheimnisse der Wortkunst* 34, n., following Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, with commentary by Ṣūlī 283ff. vv. 31–34; differences of opinion concerning the tactics of the capture of Badhdh appear to have been a factor. Cf. EI² I 844 s. v. *Bābak*, and V 63ff. s. v. *Khurramiyya*; Yusofi in EIran III 299ff. s. v. *Bābak Ḳorramī*; also Marin, *The Reign of al-Muʿtaṣim* 36f., and Składanek, *Doktryny* 185ff. Incidentally Ibn Abī Duwād visited Pāpak, when he was imprisoned in the Afshīn's palace in Samarra, incognito and reported to Muʿtaṣim about his impressions (cf. Ṭabarī III 1229, pu. ff.).

59    Ṭabarī III 1312, 16ff.; 1317, 3ff. The motif was developed further (Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭab.* 123, 11ff.). The anecdote concerning Abū Dulaf also emphasises this factor as well as Abū Dulaf's Arab descent (Tanūkhī, *Faraj* II 72, 8ff., and 73, 1, in the most detailed version). Regarding the aversion to circumcision in Iran cf. vol. II 701f. above; Farazdaq reviled a Persian competitor as *aqlaf* 'uncircumcised' (Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir* II 766, 10f./²IX 148 no. 479).

60    *Risālat al-ghufrān* 38, 2ff.; cf. also Wakīʿ III 297, 10ff.

61    Ibid. 482, 1f.

62    Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl* 405, 18ff.

were cited as well: the Afshīn intended to poison the caliph;[63] he corresponded with Māzyār, the insurgent *ispāhbad* of Ṭabaristān, inciting him to rebellion.[64] However, these suspicions were probably voiced mainly during the trial by which time the Afshīn's fate had already been decided.[65] Ibn Abī Duwād chaired the hearing; Ibn al-Zayyāt represented the prosecution. Both were presumably acting on the orders of the caliph. In one point only might Ibn Abī Duwād have felt personal interest: when two Muslim missionaries appeared as witnesses who had desecrated a pagan sanctuary in the Afshīn's home country Usrūshana against contractual agreement, and turned it into a mosque. The Afshīn had them flogged to appease his non-Muslim subjects.[66] His view on Ibn Abī Duwād is clearly expressed in a remark he was said to have made during the trial: Ibn Abī Duwād did not even lift his *ṭaylasān* and drop it again without having sent a great number of people to their deaths.[67]

Ibn Abī Duwād's friends disagreed. They, too, stressed his position of trust, but only as being an influence for good.[68] He is said to have persuaded Muʿtaṣim to provide support when a fire left numerous merchants destitute in Karkh in 225,[69] and to have been given money by the caliph in order to have a canal in Tashkent re-dug that had crumbled long ago.[70] When an illness left him bedridden, the caliph insisted on coming to visit him.[71] He took the side of not only Abū Dulaf, but also of Khālid b. Yazīd al-Shaybānī, another man of

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63    Wakīʿ III 295, apu. ff.

64    Thus Ibn al-Qāriḥ. Regarding the uprising of Māzyār cf. Ṭabarī (transl. Marin 85ff.); *Taʾrīkh-i Ṭabaristān* 145f.; Herzfeld, *Samarra* 144f.; Spuler, *Iran in frühisl. Zeit* 65f.; Daniel, *Iran's Awakening* 477ff.; Składanek, *Doktryny* 196f.; Rekaya in Stud. Iran. 2/1973/143ff., and in EI² IV 646f. s. v. *Ḳārinids*; Gignoux in: Kappler, *Apocalypses* 362ff.

65    Regarding the trial cf. Marin, *Muʿtaṣim* 111ff.; Sadighi, *Mouvements religieux* 291ff.; Herzfeld, *Samarra* 146ff.; E. M. Wright in: *MW* 38/1949/56ff and 124ff.; Spuler, *Iran* 62ff.; Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 412f.; Bosworth in: EIran I 589ff. The *qaṣīda* in which Abū Tammām celebrated the Afshīn's execution has been translated and examined by S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age* 212ff. A literary version of events is found in J. Overhoff, *Der Verrat des Afschin* (Karlsruhe 1950).

66    Ṭabarī III 1308, 11f.

67    Ibid. III 1312, 13ff. Cf. also the eye-witness account of the flogging of Māzyār in the presence of the Afshīn before Ibn Abī Duwād and the generals in Wakīʿ III 296, 4ff.

68    In general IKh I 83, 14ff.

69    Wakīʿ III 297, apu. ff.; also TB IV 149, 2ff., and Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* VII 281, 19ff. This is probably also the context of the anecdote in Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* II 101ff.

70    Ṭabarī III 1326, 5ff.; also IKh I 83, −7ff.

71    TB IV 149, 15ff. Does one of Abū Tammām's poems (*Dīwān* III 53f. no. 117 or III 315 no. 165, with a commentary by Tabrīzī) refer to this illness? Cf. also Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 145, 10ff. – Ibn Abī Duwād's close relationship with Muʿtaṣim is also shown by the fact that

Arab descent. He had been governor of Egypt and later the district of Mosul under Maʾmūn, and fell from favour under Muʿtaṣim due to the usual suspicion of peculation.[72] Similar interventions were reported in the cases of ʿUmar b. Faraj al-Rukhkhajī, a high official of the administration, who was noted for his hatred of the ʿAlids,[73] of the Damascus prefect of police ʿAlī b. Isḥāq b. Yaḥyā b. Muʿādh,[74] and the writer Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī.[75] When Wāthiq had the secretary Sulaymān b. Wahb, who would rise to vizier under Muhtadī, thrown into prison, Ibn Abī Duwād ensured that he was treated well.[76] What these traditions emphasise is not his sense of justice: no-one says that the caliph was not justified in punishing Sulaymān. Rather, the *qāḍī* is presented as someone who did not think much of excessive severity, looking instead to the usefulness of the approach.[77] He had already advised al-Faḍl b. Marwān, the caliph's first vizier,[78] to adopt a more diplomatic demeanour and be less pointedly principled when the caliph asked for too much money.[79]

In Samarra he lived in the same quarter as Ibn al-Zayyāt and other high-ranking officials;[80] he had been party to the first plans for the city, probably in 221.[81] A poem in which he praised the merits of the city, apparently addressed to Muʿtaṣim, is extant.[82] He was acquainted, among others, with the philosopher al-Kindī,[83] who is known to have dedicated his treatise *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā* to Muʿtaṣim and educated the latter's son Aḥmad.[84] In his *Risāla fī tashīl subul*

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caliph rode in the same camel litter with him on several occasions (cf. Ṭabarī III 1325, 10ff./Marin 129).

72　Tanūkhī, *Faraj* II 6ff. (after Abū l-ʿAynāʾ > Ṣūlī); *Mustajād* 159f. no. 74; IKh I 87, 12ff. (after Abū l-ʿAynāʾ). Khālid is addressed as *sayyid al-ʿArab* there, and passes the honorific on to *Ibn Abī Duwād* (Tanūkhī, *Faraj* 62, 10f.).

73　Tanūkhī, *Faraj* IV 17ff. after the lost part of Jahshiyārī's *K. al-wuzarāʾ*.

74　Ṭabarī III 1313, 15ff./Marin, *Muʿtaṣim* 119f.; regarding ʿAlī b. Isḥāq cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar TD* XVII 198ff.

75　IKh I 82, §4ff. Regarding him see p. 220ff. above. – Cf. also the story in Tanūkhī, *Mustajād* 202, 2ff.

76　Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* V 126, apu. ff.; regarding Sulaymān b. Wahb cf. Sourdel, *Vizirat*, Index s. n.

77　Cf. also Ābī V 175, 7ff.

78　Regarding him cf. Sourdel, *Vizirat* I 246ff., and in EI² II 730b; Marin, *Muʿtaṣim 17ff.*

79　Ṭabarī III 1185f.; cf. Herzfeld, *Samarra* 93f.

80　Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān* 262, 1/transl. Wiet 54; his house is also mentioned *Agh.* XVI 7, 7.

81　Ibid. 257, pu. ff./transl. 48. Or already 220? (cf. Ṭabarī III 1179ff.). Regarding the date cf. Herzfeld 91 and 93.

82　Wakīʿ III 298, ult. ff.

83　Ibid. III 298, –5.

84　Cf. EI² V 122a. Regarding a further text dedicated to Muʿtaṣim cf. McCarthy, *Taṣānīf* 59 no. 360.

*al-faḍāʾil* he described Muʿtaṣim, and possibly the wisdom of his rule.[85] Ibn Abī Duwād is said to have been a tutor as well, maybe even of the prince Hārūn b. al-Muʿtaṣim, i.e. the future caliph al-Wāthiq.[86]

This would explain why Ibn Abī Duwād's position remained unchallenged even under Wāthiq's rule (227/842–232/847). His rivalry with Ibn al-Zayyāt, on the other hand, increased. At first the new caliph had not intended to confirm Ibn al-Zayyāt in his office,[87] but he soon gave him so much power, that he added the order for everyone to rise in the presence of the vizier. Even Ibn Abī Duwād was subject to this order; he is said to have tried to devalue the gesture by immediately afterwards turning towards the *qibla* and praying.[88] It is impossible to analyse the conflict satisfactorily based on the sources, but it is doubtful that it was merely personal enmity.[89] It is likely that it was also a clash between two institutions: the administrative bureaucracy and the judiciary.

Circumstances contributed to the development. In 229/844 the caliph forced a number of high-ranking administration officials, in some cases employing harsh punishments, to pay considerable sums out of their private means.[90] It is unclear whether he had a concrete reason besides his chronic need for funds; it was said that he reacted like Hārūn al-Rashīd had at the time when the Barmakids admonished him to exercise economy only for him to find that they themselves squandered public money.[91] Ibn Abī Duwād appears

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85  Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 144/IV 362f. § 2830; regarding the *Risāla* cf. McCarthy 31 no. 170. – In the same place we learn that Ibn Abī Duwād also passed on his recollections of Muʿtaṣim to the historians; Ṭabarī appears to have used this material (cf. III 1324ff.).

86  Ibn Rusta, *Aʿlāq* 216, 22./transl. Wiet 257, where Ibn Abī Duwād is numbered among the *muʿallimūn* with no explanation given; with a little boldness we might linked this with the story in TB IV 152, 2, in which Wāthiq's lack of education is criticised in the style of a legend; as Ibn Abī Duwād is also present, this might be aimed at him. The list in Ibn Rusta originated with Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif* 547ff., but some names – Ibn Abī Duwād's among them – were added later.

87  Sourdel, *Vizirat* 260f.

88  IKh I 85, 3ff.; also V 102, 2ff. The favouritism would have hurt him all the more if, as Ibn al-Abbār reports, it was indeed he who had brought Ibn al-Zayyāt to Muʿtaṣim's notice; the caliph was said to be looking for someone who could write an account of Pāpak's uprising (*Iʿtāb al-kuttāb* 134, 7ff.). However, the chronology is wrong: Pāpak was taken to Samarra in 223/838, but Ibn al-Zayyāt had already been present when the city was first planned (see above).

89  Sourdel in EI² III 974 b s. v. *Ibn al-Zayyāt*.

90  Ṭabarī III 1330, ult. ff.; cf. Herzfeld, *Samarra* 176f., and Sourdel, *Vizirat* 262ff.

91  Ṭabarī III 1332, 4ff. H. Töllner expresses some conjectures on the political background (*Die türkischen Garden am Kalifenhof* 55ff.).

to have used the caliph's distrust of his rival Ibn al-Zayyāt's 'organisation'. Muʿtazilite sources tell us that Wāthiq intended to appoint a religious adviser to every employee of the ministry; Ibn Abī Duwād is believed to have suggested Shaḥḥām, who was probably approaching fifty at the time, as supervisor for Faḍl b. Marwān, Muʿtaṣim's former vizier.[92] This is probably also the context of the report that Wāthiq encouraged Ibn Abī Duwād to appoint his fellow believers as governors; however, he had to decline because some of his colleagues, above all the ascetics from the Basran school, would not accept any money or, consequently, a paid position.[93]

Ibn al-Zayyāt appears to have hit back by sending several officials of the caliph's penal judiciary (*aṣḥāb al-maẓālim*) to prison and transferring the leadership from Ibn Abī Duwād to Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, long established as police chief of Baghdad.[94] This may well be the context of Wakīʿ's note that in 230 six of Ibn Abī Duwād's trusted assistants, one of them a kinsman, were wanted in Baghdad – allegedly with a bounty of 100,000 dirhams. It was said that they had incurred great guilt; some prisoners who had been arrested on Ibn Abī Duwād's orders were freed by the caliph.[95] We do not know who they were; they may have been victims of the *miḥna*, or possibly followers of Ibn al-Zayyāt. When the officials, whose possessions had been confiscated, were released from prison and even compensated, Ibn Abī Duwād was able to convey the impression that he had pleaded their cause with Wāthiq.[96]

In the same year the two rivals apparently also clashed over a matter of foreign policy. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir had died in Khorasan, and Ibn al-Zayyāt was said to have advised the caliph to seize the opportunity and send ʿAbdallāh's cousin Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, the chief of police, there as governor. Ibn Abī Duwād, on the other hand, convinced Wāthiq that it would be better to preserve the status quo and confirm ʿAbdallāh's son Ṭāhir (II).[97] This was advice in favour of reason, but of course Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm was a thorn in his side after what had

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92    See ch. C 4.1.3 below. Ibn Abī Duwād's officials seem to have had a similar function under
      al-Muʿtaṣim when the booty of Amorium was distributed (cf. Ṭabarī III 1254, 2f./Marin
      73f.; see also p. 508, n. 38 above).

93    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 283, 17ff. > IM 77, 6ff.

94    Ṭabarī III 1331, 9ff.; regarding Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm see p. 492 above.

95    Wakīʿ III 300, 13ff.

96    Tanūkhī, *Faraj* II 63ff. cites the account of one of those affected who was himself imprisoned. He dates the event to 'shortly before Wāthiq's death'. A similar account, based on
      the same informant, was also believed to have been included in the lost part of Jahshiyārī's
      *K. al-wuzarāʾ wal-kuttāb*; he had heard it from Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (ibid. 66, 11ff.).

97    Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* 140, ult. ff.

happened.[98] The caliph apparently tried to reconcile his two highest officials,[99] but without success. Ibn Abī Duwād was said to have refused point blank to meet Ibn al-Zayyāt in the caliph's presence.[100] Their hostility had spread by this time, with poets in particular becoming involved.[101] Ibn Abī Duwād persuaded ʿAlī b. al-Jahm[102] to expose the vizier in a satire. The details included were such as to make Wāthiq consider imprisoning Ibn al-Zayyāt.[103] The poet may have been cleverly selected: ʿAlī b. al-Jahm was no friend of the *khalq al-Qurʾān*; he depended on Ibn Abī Duwād's benevolent inaction. On another occasion, when he found himself in prison for some reason or other, Ibn Abī Duwād did not apparently intervene on his behalf, even though he had written a *qaṣīda* praising him.[104] Ibn al-Zayyāt did not need the poets' help; he wrote his own verses. Ibn Abī Duwād, too, mocked the 'son of the oil merchant' in defamatory verses on two occasions; Ibn al-Zayyāt responded.[105] Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī, a poet[106] and high-ranking official of the administration at the same time, is believed to have lost his post as governor of Ahwāz because he was in touch with Ibn Abī Duwād;[107] the poem he wrote in apology confirms that Ibn al-Zayyāt had broken off his connection with him.[108] His great-nephew Muḥamma b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī preserved an anecdote which has, in the style of a game among philologists, a Bedouin describe the corridors of power in Samarra in dainty words, judging Ibn Abī Duwād and the caliph favourably, but criticising Ibn al-Zayyāt.[109]

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98    Regarding the enmity between the two cf. also *Agh.* XX 272, 5f.

99    *Agh.* XXIII 72, 6ff. > Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb* 138, 1ff.

100   Ibn ʿAbdrabbih, *ʿIqd* III 194, 13ff.; different ibid. IV 50, 2ff., where he upbraids Ibn al-Zayyāt in Wāthiq's presence.

101   *Agh.* XXIII 56, 10ff.

102   Regarding him cf. GAS 2/580, and p. 204, n. 36.

103   *Agh.* XX 271, 11ff/ > Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb* 137, 4ff. *Agh.* XXIII 72, 6ff., even says that the caliph had Ibn al-Zayyāt put into prison in response to Ibn Abī Duwād's accusations, and that it was only under Mutawakkil that Ibn al-Zayyāt became vizier once again. However, this contradicts everything we know about Ibn al-Zayyāt's activities. Ibn al-Abbār tried to straighten out the report when he adopted it from his source (*Iʿtāb* 138, 1ff., according to which Ibn al-Zayyāt would then have been reinstated by Wāthiq).

104   *Agh.* X 217, 11ff.; also Wakīʿ III 301, 8.

105   *Agh.* XXIII 56, 10ff., and *ʿIqd* III 194, 5ff. Regarding Ibn al-Zayyāt as a poet cf. GAS 2/576f.

106   Regarding him GAS 2/578ff.

107   *Agh.* X 61, 3ff. > Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb* 146, 2ff.; regarding the events preceding this cf. *Agh.* X 57, 4ff. The relationship is confirmed by Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 487, 7ff.

108   *Agh.* X 61, 7. Concerning another reason cf. Sourdel, *Vizirat* 266.

109   Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 89, 1ff.; slightly differently Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 147ff./IV 364 § 2833ff.

Questions of principle like the *khalq al-Qurʾān*, which was not controversial at court, were often less important than the power struggle. We get the impression that Ibn Abī Duwād's tactics were frequently more flexible than would later be believed possible. In Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī's trial he was said to have been the one advocating clemency,[110] wishing to avoid a public execution. He occasionally appointed judges who were not professed members of the Muʿtazila.[111] He accorded the grammarian Ibn al-ʿArabī the honour of saying the prayer of the dead over him.[112] He advised the caliph to free the Mālikite Ḥārith b. Miskīn, who had been taken from Egypt to Baghdad to be imprisoned there. After all, he had not become entangled in the machinery of the law because of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* in the first place, but rather because he had shown too much appreciation of the rights of the Copts after their uprising. Wāthiq did not agree with him in this case; Ḥārith regained his freedom only under Mutawakkil in 232.[113]

Ibn Abī Duwād was present at Wāthiq's death; he led the public prayer in the caliph's stead.[114] The succession was fraught with difficulty as Wāthiq's son was a minor. The powerful men in the state – or rather: at court – among them Ibn Abī Duwād and Ibn al-Zayyāt, agreed on Wāthiq's cousin, Muʿtaṣim's son.[115] Ibn Abī Duwād was believed to have thought of the name al-Mutawakkil billāh for him.[116] One tradition, which purports to be an autobiographical account by Mutawakkil, claims Ibn Abī Duwād alone secured the caliphate for Mutawakkil, while Ibn al-Zayyāt decided in favour of Wāthiq's son.[117] And it is true that Ibn

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110    See p. 511 above.

111    Wakīʿ II 175, –4ff. The one named, Aḥmad b. Riyāḥ (see p. 515 above), might have had ties to the Basran Murgiʾa.

112    Cf. Pellat in EI² III 707a s. n.; Ibn al-ʿArabī is said to have defended the literal interpretation of God sitting on the throne against Ibn Abī Duwād (Dhahabī, *ʿUlūw* 227, 3ff.).

113    Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* 569, 4ff.; regarding him also Kindī, *Quḍāt Miṣr* 462, 5f.; Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* I 569, 6ff.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-iṣr* in Kindī 502, 6ff.; Dhahabī, *Siyar* XII 54ff. Later he, too, was turned into a victim of the *miḥna* (TB VII 216, 7f.; *ʿIqd* II 465, 3ff. = Ibn al-Jawzī, *Adhkiyāʾ* 135, 4ff.). He was not a man of many scruples: when he was *qāḍī* of Egypt under Mutawakkil, he forbade lectures by Ḥanafites and Shāfiʿites in the mosques, and had their mats removed from the pillars (Dhahabī, *Siyar* XII 57, 11ff.).

114    Ṭabarī III 1363, 17ff.; cf. also the anecdote in Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* II 73f.

115    Ibid. III 1368f.; cf. Töllner, *Türkische Garden* 59ff.

116    Ibid. III 1369, 7ff.; also Masʿūdī VII 189/V 5 § 2872.

117    The autobiographical account goes back to Ṣūlī, who is known to have disliked Ibn al-Zayyāt out of long-standing family tradition (IKh I 478, 3ff.; also Ṣābiʾ, *Al-Hafawāt al-nādira* 362, 4ff., but without naming the source). Mentioned only briefly in Ṭabarī (III 1372, 18ff.).

Abī Duwād's relationship with Mutawakkil was not bat ad all; he had once in-
tervened with Wāthiq on his behalf.[118] However, the account is above all try-
ing to find the reason why Mutawakkil had Ibn al-Zayyāt executed after only
a few weeks; people suspected, and probably not without reason, that Ibn Abī
Duwād had not been an innocent bystander in this event.[119] Together with the
secretary Abū l-Wazīr Aḥmad b. Khālid, who appears to have taken over Ibn al-
Zayyāt's position temporarily after the latter's death,[120] he was also said to have
evolved the ingenious idea of trying out the instrument of torture invented by
Ibn al-Zayyāt for his onetime victims on the inventor himself.[121] Jāḥiẓ, who had
sided with Ibn al-Zayyāt, was said to have feared he might be put to the same
punishment;[122] after a famous but certainly apocryphal anecdote he appeared
in chains before Ibn Abī Duwād.[123]

The chief *qāḍī* was indeed the young caliph's favourite. The poet Marwān
b. Abī Ḥafṣa the younger,[124] whom Wāthiq had banished from court, sent him
a *qaṣīda* when Mutawakkil acceded to power, and was recalled as a result of
Ibn Abī Duwād's intervention.[125] There was no sign of a change of direction in
religious policy. The end of Ibn Abī Duwād's political career came due to his
suffering a stroke in 233/848.[126] His right side was paralysed and his speech
impaired;[127] Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa consoled him in a poem, pointing out that
Moses became a prophet despite his stammer.[128] Marwān's 'favourite enemy'
ʿAlī b. Jahm, on the other hand, expressed schadenfreude, wishing Ibn Abī
Duwād to live paralysed for long enough to see his sons' deaths.[129] This was
almost clairvoyant, for all the malice: Ibn Abī Duwād spent nearly seven years

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118  Ṭabarī III 1371f.; also Herzfeld, *Samarra* 174.

119  Sourdel, *Vizirat* 268f. According to the account in Ṭabarī it was the Turkish *amīr* Waṣīf
      who tipped the balance in favour of Mutawakkil during the consultations.

120  Sourdel, *Vizirat* 271, and 263 n. 2.

121  Ṭabarī III 1374, 13ff.

122  Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 195, 8ff.

123  Tanūkhī, *Faraj* I 361; Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 195, 13ff. etc.; allegedly traced back to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ.
      Different Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 276, 9ff.; different still IKh V 103, 2ff., also based on Abū
      l-ʿAynāʾ. Regarding the sources see Pellat in: Arabica 27/1980/29; also RSO 27/1952/56. Jāḥiẓ
      dedicated his *K. al-ḥayawān* to Ibn al-Zayyāt (cf. Arabica 31/1984/139).

124  I.e. Marwān b. Abī l-Janūb, d. after 240/854, grandson of Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa (cf. GAS
      2/582 and 447; also Bencheikh in EI² VI 625 s. n.).

125  Cf. TB XIII 153, 18ff., and *Agh.* XXIII 210, 5ff.; also Ṭabarī III 1466, 9ff.

126  On 24 Jumādā II = 4 Feb. of the year, not long after Ibn al-Zayyāt's death (IKh I 88, −4ff.;
      also TB I 298, 6; Ṭabarī III 1379, 8; Masʿūdī, *Murūj* ²V 15 § 2898).

127  IKh I 84, ult., and TB IV 150, 6ff.

128  *Agh.* XXIII 214, 8ff. = TB IV 150, 6ff.

129  *Agh.* X 229, 6ff. TB IV 155, 5ff., attributes the same verses to the much younger Abū Shurāʿa
      al-Qaysī (d. ca. 280/893; cf. GAS 2/509); cf. also Nagel, *Rechtleitung* 445f. – Due to its pub-

paralysed. At times he was treated by Sābūr b. Sahl, a Christian physician who was the head of the hospital in Gondēshāpūr.[130]

Mutawakkil by no means welcomed the opportunity to rid himself of Muʿtazilite influence; rather, he appointed Ibn Abī Duwād's son Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad, who had assisted his father as deputy for a long time,[131] as his successor.[132] The reason why he changed course the next year after all was that it was impossible to rule against the people in the long run. He relinquished the control of teaching, and demonstrated this by showering respected traditionists with gifts and allowing them to recite hadiths concerning the vision of God and other previously forbidden beliefs in the mosques in public. It is noticeable that Ibn Ḥanbal was not among them. The caliph selected men who were similar to him in popularity and age, but who might not have been in the public eye so much: Muṣʿab b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayrī (d. 236/851), for instance, the author of *K. nasab Quraysh*,[133] or ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), the author of a well-known *muṣannaf* and *K. al-īmān*,[134] and his brother ʿUthmān. ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Shayba lectured in the mosque at Ruṣāfa, where he was said to have had an audience of 30,000. After all, the resistance against the *miḥna* had been particularly strong there from the first.[135] Traditionists were also sent to the provinces as heralds of the new policy.[136]

While this may originally have been merely a measure to balance opposing forces, it soon developed its own dynamic. Abū l-Walīd was ousted in 237/851,[137] first from his position as chairman of the military court of appeal (*maẓālim*

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licity Ibn Abī Duwād's stroke would later become proverbial (Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb* 206, 1ff.).

130    Cf. the allusion in Buḥturī, *Dīwān* IV 2290ff. no. 861 v. 8. Regarding Sābūr b. Sahl cf. GAS 3/244, as well as M. Ullmann and R. Degen in: WO 7/1974/241ff.

131    See p. 504f. above.

132    TB I 298, 5ff.; also IKh I 85, 1.

133    He was a so-called Wāqifite, neutral or at least reserved in the matter of the Quran (see ch. C 6.3.2 below). Regarding him see Pellat in EI² VIII 649.

134    Regarding him GAS 1/108f.

135    TB X 67, 9ff. > Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 357, −7ff.; transl. Schützinger in: Oriens 23–24/1974/135f. Cf. also Laoust, *Schismes* 111, and Arazi/Elʿad in: IOS 8/1978/231, n. 2. Ibn Abī Shayba apparently used the opportunity to circulate a pro-Abbasid hadith as well (Schützinger 136f.). The fact that his *Muṣannaf* survived for posterity may be seen as proof that private lectures were not entirely impossible earlier, either. – Muh. Shamsuddin Miah's study *The Reign of al-Mutawakkil* (PhD London 1963, pr. Dacca 1969) does not contain much new information; regarding religious policy see ibid. p. 75ff. Bahjat Kamil al-Tikriti's dissertation *The Religious Policy of al-Mutawakkil* (McGill, Montreal 1969) was not accessible to me.

136    Abū l-ʿArab, *Miḥan* 248, 4ff.

137    Wakīʿ III 300, 9ff.; also Ṭabarī III 1410, 11; IKh I 89, 6ff.

*al-ʿaskar*) in Samarra,[138] and then, on 25 Rabīʿ 1/26 September, as chief *qāḍī* as well. Yaḥyā b. Aktham, who had been forced to retire from public life twenty years earlier, assumed his position, in the first post, however, only after another temporary incumbent. Ibn Abī Duwād had to move to Baghdad with his son;[139] Samarra was apparently a city for courtiers and officials only. Abū l-Walīd and his brothers were arrested; the sum needed to release them was so high that the family was forced to sell all its assets.[140] We can confirm this looking at one detail: Ibn Abī Duwād had acquired some real estate in Alexandretta which passed into Mutawakkil's ownership at that time.[141] The family also owned *awqāf* in Basra;[142] it is doubtful whether these were safe from the grasp of the state. During the feast of the sacrifice Ibn Abī Duwād was cursed publicly by a popular preacher.[143] The poets had not pulled their punches for some time already. Buḥturī, who had been a Muʿtazilite for some time,[144] was expecting Ibn Abī Duwād's death in the near future[145] and distanced himself from the *khalq al-Qurʾān*.[146] Diʿbil, who had in the past mocked Ibn Abī Duwād for marrying two women of the Banū ʿIjl in a single year,[147] was very nearly invited to an audience with Mutawakkil because of another *hijāʾ*.[148]

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138    Or does *maẓālim* simply refer to the non-*sharīʿa* based penal judiciary to be expected in the army? Incidentally, IKh (1 84, ult. ff.) dates this event to 236.

139    Wakīʿ III 300, apu.

140    TB I 299, 1ff.; Ṭabarī III 1410, 17ff.

141    Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 176, 4f. Yaʿqūbī even says Ibn Abī Duwād founded Alexandretta during Wāthiq's caliphate (*Buldān* 363, 16ff./transl. Wiet 2310, but that may be an exaggeration. There had been estates there even before that time, Balādhurī tells us; Ibn Abī Duwād may have extended agricultural settlements, or had a harbour built. – In Syria Tell Mannas owed him its post station; the settlement was inhabited by members of his tribe, the Banū Iyād (Yaʿqūbī 324, 16f./transl. Wiet 171).

142    Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 302, ult. f.

143    Ibn Ḥajar, *Rafʿ al-iṣr* 68, 8ff.; we do not know in which year this was.

144    Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī* 123, 5f.; cf. the verse ibid. 123, 4, and the amended version *Dīwān* II 214, 1.

145    *Dīwān* II 782 no. 305 v. 3. He appears to have assumed that Ibn Abī Duwād would die before his son.

146    *Dīwān* IV 2290ff. no. 861 v. 5f. and 9; cf. Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī* 123, n. 6, in connection with Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ* 522, 8f. – The two defamatory verses no. 325 (= II 814) refer to Ibn Abī Duwād's genealogy and can thus not be dated with any certainty.

147    *Agh.* XX 134, 5ff., after the account by a member of the ʿIjl/*Dīwān* 206f. DUJAYLĪ. A second poem on the same event cf. TTD V 239, –4ff./transl. Zolondek 121 no. ccviii. Regarding the quarrel see also the poem Ibn al-Nadhīm listed in *Fihrist* 112, 8ff./Zolondek 121 no. lxxvi.

148    *Agh.* XX 145, 19ff. Zolondek no. v. The audience did not take place because Diʿbil was a Shīʿite.

Abū l-Walīd died in Dhū l-Ḥijja 239; his father, thought to be unable to get over his death,[149] a month later on 23 Muḥarram 240/24 June 854.[150] He was buried in his house,[151] presumably so as not to cause offence with a funeral procession. Still, he was not loathed so widely that people would not have written elegies about him. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṭawī, a *mutakallim* originally from Basra,[152] wrote several, fragments of which are extant thanks to having been preserved by philologists with ties to the Muʿtazila.[153] Abū Khālid Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, companion to Mutawakkil and consequently beholden to the opposite side, wrote some verses presenting Ibn Abī Duwād's fate as a warning: he had had twenty years of luck, and then been struck by disaster; consequently one must not grab too much in the world.[154] In the same year, however, Yaḥyā b. Aktham lost his position and had all his possessions confiscated.[155]

Ibn Abī Duwād's image in the public recollection was overall less negative than we should have expected. Of course he did grab much in the world, but – unlike his son – he was never accused of being corruptible.[156] Furthermore he reconciled detractors with his generosity; here, his fame was never obscured, even later when people regarded him above all as the figurehead of the *miḥna*.[157]

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149 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 300, 15ff.

150 TB I 297, 17, and IV 156, 11f.; Ṭabarī III 1420, 1, and 1421, 11ff. However, Marzubānī already noted that there was some disagreement on the dates of death (IKh I 89, pu. ff.). Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī preserved a note by Muʿāfa b. Zakariyyāʾ (d. 390/1000), according to which dismissal, confiscation and death did not take place until 240; Ibn Abī Duwād would then not have died until Dhū l-Qaʿda of that year. Still, the Khaṭīb thought himself this was incorrect (TB I 298, 2ff.). Ibn al-Murtaḍā, for no clear reason, has 263 as the date of death (*Ṭab.* 48, 10f.).

151 TB IV 156, 16.

152 Regarding him see ch. C 5.2.2.2 below. He died shortly afterwards.

153 *Agh.* XXIII 123, 7ff., after Akhfash the younger (d. 35/927); Zajjājī, *Amālī* 85, pu. ff., and *Akhbār* 230, 5ff. They are occasionally attributed to other poets, but certainly incorrectly; one was even claimed to be by Diʿbil (Muʿaybid, *Shuʿarāʾ Baṣriyyūn* 59ff. no. 81 and 83). Cf. also the anecdote in TB IV 150, 14ff.

154 Wakīʿ III 300, pu. ff.; regarding the poet cf. GAS 2/606.

155 Ṭabarī III 1421, 14ff. He was banished to Mecca (Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* II 152, ult.).

156 TB X 317, 5ff. Cf. also the story told by Wakīʿ (II 174, –8ff.) according to which Ibn Abī Duwād forced the newly appointed *qāḍī* of Basra, Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAnbarī, in 221/836 to release certain documents, apparently debt obligations; later, however, he retracted the demand (regarding him see vol. II 184 above).

157 Cf. Dāraquṭnī's verdict TB IV 142, 5ff.; also the stories ibid. 145, 19ff.; cf. Abū l-ʿAynāʾ in Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 300, 12. He was said to have offered female slaves to high-ranking visitors, with whom they could spend the night (Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* V 173, pu. ff.); we know

He used his position of trust to exhort the caliph and his emirs to be helpful and generous.[158] The poets regarded this as the mark of the true Arab, and may indeed have captured a facet of his self-image.[159] Abū Tammām, who dedicated a number of *qaṣīda*s to him, called him the *muʿarras al-ʿArab*, the 'host of the Arabs',[160] or, in a nearly blasphemous allusion to the prophet, 'Aḥmad the praiseworthy' (*Aḥmad al-maḥmūd*).[161] He set great store by his tribal affiliation;[162] in order to hurt him it was enough to doubt it.[163]

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　　　that this practice had also found supporters among the jurists (cf. Motzki, *Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz* 231f. concerning the school of Ibn ʿAbbās in Mecca).

158　See p. 530 above. Cf. also the anecdotes in Masʿūdī, *Murūj* VII 215ff./V 15 § 2899ff. (Tanūkhī, *Mustajād* 206, 3ff.), and Ibn ʿAqīl, *Funūn* 753f. no. 743.

159　Cf. in the two editions, Cairo (with commentary by Tabrīzī) and Baghdad (with commentary by Ṣūlī), the *qaṣīda*s and the fragments:

　　　I 356ff. no. 34 I 373ff. no. 35 (Khafīf, -*ādī*).
　　　I 369ff. no. 35 I 380ff. no. 36 (Wāfir, -*ādī*).
　　　I 383 no. 36/I 387 no. 37 (Wāfir, -*ādī*).
　　　I 384ff. no. 37/I 388ff. no. 38 (Kāmil, -*ī/ūdī*).
　　　I 400 no. 38/I 398 no. 39 (Ṭawīl, -*ī/ūdū*).
　　　II 218 no. 75/I 554ff. no. 78 (Ṭawīl, -*īrū*).
　　　II 301ff. no. 88/I 605ff. no. 88 (Kāmil, -³*ḍā*).
　　　II 308ff. no. 89/I 609ff. no. 89 (Khafīf, -*ādī*).
　　　III 53ff. no. 117/II 273ff. no. 121 (Basīṭ, -³*lū*).
　　　III 176ff. no. 136/II 385ff. no. 138 (Ṭawīl, -*imū*).
　　　III 315 no. 165 (Munsariḥ, -³*nī*; cf. *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 145, 10ff.).
　　　IV 460f. no. 435 (Ṭawīl, -*āruhā*).
　　　IV 462 no. 436 (Basīṭ, -*ūrū*).
　　　IV 487 no. 448 (Kāmil, -*amī*; cf. also *ʿIqd* I 270, 20ff.).

160　Literally 'the one with whom the Arabs stay during a journey'; cf. *Dīwān* no. 38 v. 15. Passages praising his generosity are, of course, legion in these poems (cf. e.g. no. 36/37; also TB IV 147, 18ff.); correspondingly we find reminders not to forget the poet himself (e.g. no. 435 and 448; similar no. 117/121, on the occasion of Ibn Abī Duwād's falling ill).

161　No. 136/138. v/ 17. Characteristic the praise in no. 75/78 v. 7, that while he did not wish to be called *amīr* out of modesty, he was the true *amīr*. It is understandable that the caliph al-Wāthiq found these effusions unsuitable (Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* 359, 8ff.).

162　Cf. the remarks by Abū Tammām, no. 35/36 v. 7; no. 37/38 v. 22; by Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣa the younger in TB IV 143, 4ff.: Ibn Abī Duwād is a member of the same tribal federation as the prophet. Also Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* 361, 6ff.

163　Cf. the defamatory poems by Ḥasan b. Wahb (d. ca. 247/861, also GAS 2/620) in *Agh.* XXIII 108, pu. ff., and by Makhlad b. Bakkār in *Fihrist* 212, 9ff. The anecdote *ʿIqd* IV 50, 2ff., records, presumably deliberately, that a 'Nabataean' word escaped him.

He was angry even with Abū Tammām because he had been informed that the latter had praised the Yemenis over the North Arabs (Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 147, 7ff., and 141f. regarding no. 34/35 in the *Dīwān*, esp. v. 23). No. 37/38 also mention an estrangement; Khālid b. Yazīd al-Shaybānī, a friend of Ibn Abī Duwād's, (see p. 530 above) pleaded the poet's cause (v. 33; cf. *Akhbār Abī Tammām* 154, 1ff, and 162, 6ff., Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb* 361, apu. ff., and Ritter, *Geheimnisse der Wortkunst* 132, n. 93). This *qaṣīda* was meant to bring about a reconciliation, but as Ibn Abī Duwād did not let anyone read it to him, nothing happened; Abū Tammām sent a second one (= no. 38/39) and was received into favour once more. He regarded the episode as slander spread by his detractors (cf. no. 38/39 v. 1 and 37/38 v. 48ff.). This is, of course, a stereotype (cf. similar, if not referring to the same event, no. 35/36 v. 38ff. and no. 75/78 v. 1). Regarding the relationship between Abū Tammām and Ibn Abī Duwād see also *Agh.* XVI 390, 19ff. Abū Tammām had no qualms, by the way, to sing the praises of Ibn al-Zayyāt in the same way.

He had some understanding of poetry; after all, he wrote poems himself.[164] His father had been a poet and *khaṭīb*;[165] and Diʿbil included him in his *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*,[166] even though the two did not get on at all.[167] He had his own opinion on the art of oratory: one ought to speak to be understood, and not use incomprehensible words; one must not stroke one's beard and above all not look into people's eyes.[168] He seems to have been fond of peppering his speech with Quranic quotations.[169] For a long time he loathed music[170] and is believed to have debated its merits frequently with al-Muʿtaṣim.[171] Being a jurist he probably had qualms about allowing it; it was noted that he, unlike

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164 See p. 531, n. 82, and 534, n. 105 above; also Wakīʿ III 299, 10ff. (a *marthiya* on his secretary Aḥmad b. Shihāb al-Anbārī), and 299, −4ff. (a poem on Baghdad), both transmitted by Ibn Abī Duwād's son Abū Mālik Ḥarīz; also Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ* 135, 1ff.

165 Cf. Wakīʿ III 300, 8.

166 TB IV 143, 20f, = IKh I 81, apu. ff.: after Marzubānī. Regarding the works of Diʿbil cf. GAS 2/94.

167 See p. 524f. above; he resented that he had attacked Maʾmūn and Muʿtaṣim (cf. *Agh.* XVIII 155, 5ff).

168 *ʿIqd* IV 55, 5ff.

169 *ʿIqd* II 146, 1ff. = IV 50, 8ff.; Thaʿālibī, *Thimār* 33, 4ff.; presented slightly differently by Murtaḍā, *Amālī* I 302, 3ff. A second anecdote cf. *ʿIqd* II 145, 11ff.

170 *Agh.* VIII 251, 10ff., where he sharply criticises his friend Abū Dulaf because he sang in spite of his advanced age.

171 *Agh.* X 106, ult. f.

Yaḥyā b. Aktham, was a serious man.[172] A blasphemous verse by Abū Nuwās, too, excited his outrage.[173] Even so, he was believed to have been moved to tears, and indeed possibly been converted altogether, by the art of great singers such as Mukhāriq or Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī.[174]

His entire family, who apparently continued to live in Basra, followed the Muʿtazilite creed; among Arabs in particular this was seen as unusual.[175] If we can believe this claim, his sons who were members of the school would be, besides

1.   Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād;
2.   Abū Mālik Ḥarīz b. Aḥmad;[176]
3.   Abū Ḥudhāqa ʿAbbās b. Aḥmad;[177]
4.   Abū l-Jahm Hārūn b. Aḥmad;[178]
5.   ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad;
6.   Abū Muḍar b. Aḥmad;[179]
7.   Abū Iyād b. Aḥmad;
8.   Abū Duwād[180] b. Aḥmad.

However, we have no more detailed information about any of them. A grandson, on the other hand, made his mark as a jurist: a son of (1), Abū Muḍar al-Walīd b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād. He had studied under Jāḥiẓ, and wrote a *K. al-ikhtilāf wal-iʾtilāf* a copy of which was accessible to Jubbāʾī, who found no other fault with it than that the author quoted Ibn Ḥanbal and

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172   IKh VI 148, 4f.

173   Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ* 416, apu. ff.

174   *ʿIqd* VI 5, 10f., and *Agh.* X 106, 16ff. (in the form of an autobiographical account; a parallel version is ibid. 132, 16ff., after Ibn Abī Duwād's son Ḥarīz, who had heard it from his brother).

175   Cf. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 302, –4f., and the subsequent anecdote.

176   Regarding him see n. 13 and 20 above. According to Ibn Mākūlā, *Ikmāl* II 86, 13f., he transmitted hadith from ʿAbbās, Maʾmūn's son who staged an uprising against al-Muʿtaṣim and died in prison in 838 (see p. 528 above). Ḥarīz was thus probably born around 200 at the latest. A certain Misʿar b. ʿAlī b. Misʿar in Bardhaʿa (in Armenia) transmitted from him.

177   Named TB IV 156, 16f., and Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 328, 7, where we also find the *kunya*, in the reading *Abū Ḥudhāfa*, however. *Ḥudhāqa* is my conjecture, because that name, like Ḥarīz, appears in Ibn Abī Duwād's genealogy.

178   All the following names are listed only by Ibn Ḥazm.

179   According to one of the MSS, Abū Muḍar was the *kunya* of (5).

180   This is probably the correct reading instead of *Abū Dāwūd* (see the name of his grandson below). His *kunya*, too, appears to have become his *ism*.

Ibn Rāhōya.[181] His ideas appear to have been closer to those of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*. He was a *qāḍī*, but a verse by him reveals that he was in sympathy with the ascetic ideas of Murdār and his pupil Abū Zufar.[182] In the presence of Abū 'Umar al-Bāhilī (d. 300/913), a follower of Jubbā'ī who was a member of a circle of Sufis,[183] he said that he wished he could go out into the world with him to preach the Mu'tazilite creed, but Abū 'Umar sneered at him, saying that he did not think Abū Muḍar would be able to give up his bourgeois lifestyle. The anecdote hints that he was truly determined.[184] He was living in Wāsiṭ at the time; he was probably active during the second half of the third century.

He had a brother called Abū Sā'ida,[185] whose name may have been Aḥmad.[186] A great-grandson of Ibn Abī Duwād's, Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Duwād b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād al-Iyādī, a grandson of (8), was a Shāfi'ite and Dāraquṭnī's teacher (d. 385/995).[187] In his generation at the latest the family completed its transition to orthodoxy. A late descendant was listed by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī; he was from the line of (1) Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad.[188] This shows that the family continued to exist for at least nine generations after Ibn Abī Duwād.

We know of another member of the family but cannot place him with any certainty: Abū 'Abdallāh (or 'Abd al-Raḥmān) b. Abī Du'mī.[189] His work took him among the rural population of Iraq (*anbāṭ*), and gained many followers for the Mu'tazila among them.[190] At some point he was sent to prison, possibly because of his beliefs; it seems to have been during the second half of the third/ninth century.[191]

The Duwād b. Abī Duwād mentioned by Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I 103, 7, might be a brother of Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād's.

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181  Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 301, ult. ff.; regarding Ibn Rāhōya see vol. II 681f. above.

182  Ibid. 302, 5; regarding Abū Zufar see p. 66 above.

183  Regarding him cf. ibid. 310, 1ff.; *Lisān al-Mīzān* V 320 no. 1055; p. 120 above.

184  *Faḍl* 302, 11ff.

185  Named in Tanūkhī, *Faraj* I 99, 4f., in an *isnād*.

186  The genealogy in Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih* 556, 8f., proves that Ibn Abī Duwād had a grandson of this name.

187  TB III 84 no. 1066, where Dhahabī, *Mushtabih* 280, 8, is correct in reading *Abū Duwād* instead of *Abū Dāwūd*.

188  *Tabṣīr* 556, 8f.

189  Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl* 303, 4ff. This passage calls him *Abū 'Abdallāh*, but at 303, 9, he is addressed as *Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān*.

190  Ibid. 303, 7ff.

191  Ibid. 303, 4ff. The person visiting him in prison is acquainted with Jubbā'ī.

### 3.3.6    *Appendix: Two Apocrypha*

After the end of the *miḥna*, hagiography came into its own. We have seen how the accounts of the trials of Ibn Ḥanbal and of Khuzāʿī glorified events. However, the public did not want to hear about martyrs only but also about heroes. This was how two texts came into being in which the representative of 'orthodoxy' successfully defends his faith and convinces the caliph in the process. In the first text Ibn Abī Duwād is the loser; we do not learn the name of the winner who was a 'shaykh from Adana', namely from the region where Maʾmūn set the *miḥna* in motion, and from the city where Ibn Ḥanbal learnt of the caliph's death on his way to the interrogation in Syria.[1] The old man speaks quite freely in the presence of Wāthiq, before whom the discussion takes place; telling him bluntly that he considers him to be badly educated – this probably to remind the audience that Ibn Abī Duwād had been the caliph's tutor.[2] The narrator furthermore ensures that Ibn Abī Duwād finds himself playing the part of the respondent; this was the only way in which he could be guided towards defeat. In reality this would have been unthinkable in a trial. In order to lend greater verisimilitude to the description, Wāthiq's own son, the future caliph al-Muhtadī billah (r. 255/869–256/870), is named as the narrator. For illustrative purposes, the text was as follows:

> When my father wanted to execute someone, he let us attend the hearing (*majlis*). (One day) an old man, his hair dyed with henna, was brought in in chains. My father said: Have Abū ʿAbdallāh – i.e. Ibn Abī Duwād – and his people enter! He reported: The old man was brought in while (my father) sat on his prayer mat. He said: Peace be upon you, O commander of the faithful! (My father) replied: May God not grant you any peace! The other said: O commander of the faithful, how badly you have been educated. The scripture tells us: "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet (for your part) with one fairer than it, or return it (in the same way)!" (Sura 4:86). You, however, by God, did not greet me either in the same way, or a fairer one.
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> Then Ibn Abī Duwād said: O commander of the faithful, here is someone who debates (*mutakallim*). (My father) said to him: Debate with him! He said: O shaykh, what is your view on the Quran? The shaykh replied: You are not treating me as you should – i.e., I should be the one asking the questions. He said: Ask, then. The shaykh said: What is your view on

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1   Thus according to an autobiographical account preserved by his son Ṣāliḥ (*Miḥna* 277, 8ff. Dūmī.

2   See p. 532 above.

the Quran? – (It is) created. – Is this something the prophet and Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, and in fact all the righteous caliphs taught (already)? – Something they did not (yet) teach. – Great God! And something that neither the prophet nor Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, and in fact none of the righteous caliphs taught, you teach?!

Then (Ibn Abī Duwād) was ashamed. He said: Forgive me. Ask the question again! – Yes. What is your view on the Quran? – (It is) created. – Is this something the prophet and Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, and in fact all the righteous caliphs taught (already)? – They taught it without inviting people (explicitly) to do it. – And do you not have the freedom to do the same?

Then my father stood and went to his private chamber. He threw himself on the bed, lay down on his back, putting one leg across the other and said: So this is something neither the prophet nor Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, and in fact none of the righteous caliphs taught, and you teach it? Great God! Something the prophet and Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, and in fact all the righteous caliphs taught without inviting people (explicitly) to do it. Do you not have the freedom to do the same? And he called the chamberlain ʿAmmār and ordered to take the old man's chains off, to give him 400 dinars and let him go home. Ibn Abī Duwād, however, lost the caliph's favour and would never interrogate anyone afterwards.'

In this form al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī tells the story, including a complete *isnād*;[3] Abū Bakr al-Ājurrī (d. 360/970), who also came from Baghdad, recorded it earlier in a slightly wordier version.[4] Ibn al-Jawzī *adopted* the text from al-Khaṭīb.[5] Ibn Kathīr, using the same source,[6] spotted that the *isnād* included an unknown transmitter. Subkī shortened the text to the main argument, saying that he intended to strip it down to the reliable core.[7] This caution was probably due to the fact that there was another version which, once again citing the prince as authority, retold events in much greater detail. Additional arguments

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3  TB IV 151, 15ff.

4  *Sharīʿa* 91, –7ff.; also quoted in a gloss on the *K. al-Ḥayda*, p. 141, 9ff. Ājurrī does not furnish an *isnād*.

5  *Manāqib Ibn Ḥanbal* 350, –4ff.

6  *Bidāya* X 321, 3ff.; maybe Ibn ʿAsākir served as his go-between (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar TD* III 77, 1ff.).

7  *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya* II 55, 3ff. This core corresponds to the response Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have given stereotypically to questions during his hearing (Ṣāliḥ, *Miḥna* 280, 10f., and later).

were prefaced to the debate, and the frame story, too, was longer. This version is also found in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*,[8] from where it made its way to Ibn al-Jawzī;[9] Ibn Qudāma adopted it from him in his *K. al-tawwābīn*.[10] However, this is also the version found in Masʿūdī.[11]

This tendency of wordy illustration is even stronger in the second apocryphon at which we must look. It is a book, the *K. al-ḥayda*;[12] consequently we can touch upon the subject matter only briefly. Once again the opponent of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* immediately takes the initiative, but in this case he applies for the debate himself as the persecution has not reached its climax yet. The scene is set in Baghdad, apparently shortly after the first proclamation of the dogma in 212.[13] The alleged author, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Yaḥyā al-Kinānī, comes from Mecca, the place which popular belief saw as the home of piety. During Friday prayers in the mosque of Ruṣāfa, at the centre of the resistance, he professes his faith, calling out that the Quran is God's uncreated word.[14] Maʾmūn's secretary ʿAmr b. Masʿada[15] has him arrested together with his son who is accompanying him.

Kinānī is glad to have directed attention onto himself. In order to justify himself he requests a debate in the presence of the caliph. His request is granted and he finds himself facing Bishr b. al-Marīsī in front of a large audience. Maʾmūn agrees to be the 'moderator' and arbitrator, treating Kinānī without any prejudice. As in Ibn Ḥanbal's trial the account emphasises that the caliph drew the scholar towards him gradually in order to put him at ease in the unfamiliar environment.[16] One of the guests of honour mocks Kinānī's ugly face, saying one should not bother getting involved with such a gnome. Kinānī, offended, forgets to be respectful and launches into an excursus on the trouble in which Joseph found himself because of his beauty, and that criticising someone's ugliness was ultimately criticism of the creator.[17] When the debate

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8    TB X 75, 17ff.

9    *Manāqib* 352, 5ff.

10   P. 186, 13ff. § 426–238.

11   *Murūj* VIII 21, 4ff./V 99 § 3132ff. Cf. also the gloss on the *K. al-ḥayda* 142, 14ff. Unfortunately I did not make a note of which version Ibn Baṭṭa reproduced in *Al-ibāna al-kubrā* (cf. WO 16/1985/131).

12   Ed. Jamīl Ṣalībā, Damascus 1384/1964.

13   Brockelmann has the year as 209 in GAL S 1/340, but he misunderstood the passage on which he based this (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* II 187).

14   *Ḥayda* 5, 8ff.

15   Regarding him cf. EI² I 453.

16   P. 14, pu. ff.; cf. p. 501 above.

17   P. 15, 4ff., and 21, 1ff. This detail was recounted frequently afterwards; in the meantime, tradition had discovered that the boorish remark had been made by Maʾmūn's brother

finally gets underway he puts the people of Baghdad firmly in their place. The discussion goes through a number of rounds, but Bishr loses each one of them. Muḥammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī, who tries to come to his aid, is told off by Maʾmūn for breaking the rules of the game; also for not knowing anything about *kalām* in any case.[18] Kinānī holds forth in several lengthy instructive passages which are not properly part of a debate, but the caliph is so interested in hearing them that he once even postpones the time of prayer.[19] Bishr al-Marīsī, on the other hand, falls silent quite soon as he cannot think of anything else to say. He then tries to change the subject and to distract (*ḥāda ʿan al-jawāb*); this is how the book got its name.[20]

Ḥājjī Khalīfa emended the title to *K. al-ḥayda wal-iʿtidhār*, clearly referring to the second part of the text. For when Kinānī returns to his people, presumably in Ruṣāfa, swollen with pride, they ask him to dictate an account of the course of events. He refuses at first for fear of the authorities, but cannot resist in the end, revealing at least a few details. This summary is apparently what is now called *K. al-ḥayda*. It spread like wildfire; the copyists (*warrāqūn*) at 'his' mosque cannot keep up with demand.[21] Bishr al-Marīsī and his followers are angered by the defeat and go to inform the caliph. Maʾmūn, feeling embarrassed, calls Kinānī and reproaches him. Kinānī's defence is an endless stream of Quranic quotations that even the caliph is unable to stop.[22] This is the 'apology' he presents; he claims that his indiscretion was merely acting in accordance with *amr bil-maʿrūf*. At the same time it showed that the caliph should not interfere with religion; Kinānī embodies the independent theologian who obeys only the Quran.[23]

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Muʿtaṣim (thus e.g. TB X 449, pu. ff.). By that time people also knew that Kinānī was known as *al-ghūl* 'demon of the desert (TT VI 363, pu. etc.).

18   P. 123, 4ff., and 124, 7. Regarding Muḥammad b. al-Jahm see p. 220ff. above; a gloss here incorrectly names him as the son of Jahm b. Ṣafwān (p. 4, n. 12). According to the text people like him and Bishr al-Marīsī were the only ones still permitted to teach (4, –4ff.). – Because it is such a carefully prepared text the *K. al-ḥayda* is a treasure trove of formal errors of *disputatio* (cf. REI 44/1976/33ff.).

19   P. 88, apu. ff.

20   Cf. e.g. p. 52, 1; 61, 4f.; 115, 6f.; 126, ult. The title is given p. 150, 7. Kinānī finds instances of such behaviour in the Quran, the sunna, and in poetry; according to sura 26:70ff., the heathen opponents of Abraham evaded the latter's arguments (52, pu. ff.).

21   P. 147, 5ff., and 150, 7f.

22   Cf. p. 196, 7.

23   Cf. *iʿtadhara* in 203, 4; p. 224, ult., names a *K. al-iʿtidhār* as a separate work. Regarding this part of the book cf. also Eche, *Bibliothèques* 48ff.

The more the victory is emphasised, the more one wonders why the caliph, who agreed with Kinānī so often here, then started the *miḥna* a few years later at all. This was the weakness of this apocryphon, which was impossible to dispel. It also contains some errors that could have been avoided with in-depth knowledge of the historical situation. Bishr al-Marīsī is described not only as a Jahmite but also as a Qadarite, which he was not;[24] he is alleged to believe, like Jahm b. Ṣafwān, that God had no knowledge of things before their existence, even affirming this himself.[25] Kinānī is able to call him and all those who believed in the *khalq al-Qurʾān* as 'heretics' (*mulḥidūn*) with impunity.[26] He emphasises that Bishr does not speak Arabic well enough,[27] and that Aṣmaʿī – a contemporary, in fact (d. 213/828) – showed how much the Banū Sāsān butchered the proper pronunciation.[28] I.e.: only an Arab can truly appreciate the Quran; the Persians should keep their hands off it. The only problem was that Bishr, as we have seen, probably was not a Persian at all.[29]

Even so the *K. al-ḥayda* remains an interesting *kalām* document. Kinānī argues exclusively with the Quran and is proud that, unlike his opponents, he does not accord it any kind of exegetic special treatment.[30] His approach is purely philological, and he is not disappointed in his expectation that the caliph, being a Quraysh and upholding the ideal of linguistic purity in the midst of all those barbarians, would agree with this method. In this way the 'Jahmite' equation *jaʿala = khalaqa* is disposed of,[31] and at the same time he determines which Quranic statements are to be regarded as generic (*ʿāmm*) and which as specific (*khāṣṣ*).[32] The latter is the main thrust of the argument; this is where the text goes far beyond the level of traditionist theology up to that point.

In fact Ibn al-Nadīm named the author of *K. al-ḥayda* as one of those *mutakallimūn* who, like Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī – or Ibn Kullāb – confronted the Muʿtazila and Jahmiyya with a system of their own.[33] Information about him is understandably sparse. Ibn al-Nadhīm knows only that he wrote books on ascetic and theological matters, then he names the *K. al-ḥayda*, but does not mention the date of his death. The oldest note about Kinānī is found in

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24    P. 137, −4; cf. p. 194 above.

25    P. 137, ult. f., and 138, 7ff. Ibn Ḥanbal's account of his interrogation displays a similar tendency (see p. 498 above).

26    P. 26, 5, and 27, 1; and passim.

27    P. 42, 2f., and 111, −4ff.

28    P. 106, 1ff.

29    See p. 191f. and 193 above; cf. the denotation *wuld Sāsān* vol. II 557 above.

30    P. 140, 3f.

31    P. 85, pu. ff., and 101, 8ff.

32    P. 72ff.

33    *Fihrist* 236, 7ff.; cf. also Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 309, 6ff.

Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 270/884)[34] *K. faḍāʾil al-Shāfiʿī* according to which he was a pupil of Shāfiʿī's and accompanied him to Yemen. The first of the biographies appears in *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*; much of what they say is inferred from *K. al-ḥayda*.[35] It is noticeable that the literature on the Mālikites, such as Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ's *Tartīb*, does not mention him at all, but then he was a Meccan and may never have crossed the paths of Mālik's pupils. The date of 240/854–5 for his death found in some later sources is probably inferred from an anecdote;[36] Kutubī's *ʿUyūn al-tawārīkh* suggests 221/836 instead, which seems altogether more probable.[37]

The oldest reliable witness for the *K. al-ḥayda* is, so far, Ibn al-Nadīm. By his time, however, the book was already famous, as he does not express any doubt of its authenticity. It is certainly worth examining in which version Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 387/977) preserved the text in *Al-ibāna al-kubrā*.[38] In 420/1029, towards the end of his rule, the caliph al-Qādir attempted a traditionalist restoration and to this end invited the scholars of the capital three times in order to present to them his reformatory epistle and other suitable texts. On two of these occasions the 'story of what passed between Bishr al-Marīsī and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Makkī' was read out; the dogma of the *khalq al-Qurʾān* was still a shibboleth at the time.[39] It was around the same time that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī read the text.[40] Dhahabī had sufficient insight to declare the book a falsification.[41] Subkī, while he adopted this opinion, still believed the actual discussion to have been historical fact.[42]

What remains after all this? There is no reason to doubt the historicity of the person. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kinānī was simply not important enough in the eyes of his contemporaries and immediate juniors for them to have preserved information about him. He composed a *Radd ʿalā l-Jahmiyya* a passage from which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya quoted in his *Ijtimāʿ al-juyūsh al-islāmiyya*.[43] At the end of the *K. al-ḥayda* he is described, presumably to increase confidence in its

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34   Quoted by Shīrāzī, *Ṭab.* 103, 5ff., and TB X 449, 15ff., and repeatedly after that.

35   See n. 17 above. The doxographical note in Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal* II 140, –4ff., probably also goes back to *Ḥayda* 58, 2ff.

36   Cf. e.g. Subkī, *Ṭab.* II 145, 6ff.; also II 53, 6ff.

37   After Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* V 263, n. 2. In that case he could not have had any connection with Mutawakkil, as TB V 178, 5f. presumes.

38   MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *ʿaqāʾid* 181, p. 370–382.

39   Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VIII 41, 5ff.; cf. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl* 302f.

40   Cf. his *Mashyakha*, fol. 127b, 6. Cf. ʿIshsh, *Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī* 100, no. 187.

41   *Mīzān* no. 5139.

42   *Ṭab.* II 145, 9ff.

43   P. 104, ult. ff.; this is probably the source of the account in Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī's (d. 1332/1914) *Tafsīr* (cf. Nashshār-Ṭālibī, *ʿAqāʾid al-salaf* 572, 10ff.).

reliability, as referring to a *K. al-sunan wal-aḥkām* as well as a *Risāla fī faḍl Banī Hāshim* he had written;[44] in the text itself he boasts of his connection with the Hashimids in Mecca.[45] And we can find a probable *terminus post quem* for the apocryphon in the history written by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893), who claimed that Kinānī himself told him about his appearance before Maʾmūn.[46] This account has him come across Bishr al-Marīsī as well, refuting him with ease; at the end, there is even time for some advice addressed to the caliph. The topic of the discussion, however, is a different one. It focusses on the concept of faith, introduced by epistemological deliberations. This introduction is also found in a very similar version, albeit with a more convincing development, in a Muʿtazilite anecdote which has Abū l-Hudhayl facing Bishr al-Marīsī. This has greater probability on its side, and is presumably the more original version, even though it is attested only later.[47] Ibn Abī Ṭāhir preserved the initial stage of an evolving legend. The *K. al-ḥayda*, in which we find the fully-fledged legend, was certainly not composed before the end of the third century. One passage in the *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* tells us that it was transmitted from Abū Bakr Daʿʿāʾ al-Aṣamm (d. early 320/932);[48] maybe he was the author.

There is a further version, this one of clearly later and probably Iranian origin, in which Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī, a pupil of Shaybānī and of Abū Muṭīʿ al-Balkhī, plays the part of the hero; Bishr al-Marīsī is even crucified at the end (Pazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* 54, 9ff.). The version in which Abū l-Hudhayl debates with Bishr al-Marīsī as well as the one preserved by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir includes not only epistemological issues but also points out Bishr al-Marīsī's Murjiʾite views, without, however, going into the matter in any detail. Both these texts are difficult, and probably corrupted in places; a thorough comparison will need to be undertaken in the future.

One of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kinānī's pupils was al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl al-Bajalī, a Kufan whom ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir brought to Nishapur where he worked as a theologian (see vol. II 681f. above). While he died only in 282/895, he was so very old that his student days may well have been before 221/836. In any case, he left Iraq in 227/842 at the very latest.

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44   P. 224, pu. f.

45   P. 16, −4ff.; he diplomatically refers hadiths praising the *ahl al-bayt* to Maʾmūn (154, 1ff.).

46   *K. Baghdād* 79, 3ff./42, 6ff.

47   Cf. ZDMG 135/1985/30ff., esp. 32, n. 51.

48   TB II 193, 7f.

# Supplementary Remarks

p. 6: Later, towards the end of the third century, the followers of the proto-Nuṣayrian Isḥāq al-Aḥmar, who deified ʿAlī, would gather in Madāʾin (cf. Halm in: Der Islam 55/1978/252).

p. 14, n. 30: I did not consider that green domes are found rather frequently, for instance in Ḥajjāj's palace in Wāsiṭ (they could be seen as far away as Fam al-Silḥ; Ibn Rusta, *Aʿlāq* 187, 7f.), and later above all four city gates in Baghdad (ibid. 108, 15). They might simply have been symbolic of the blue canopy of the sky (thus Bloom, *Minaret Symbol of Islam* 68f., whose philological deliberations would, however, bear some scrutiny). Thus it cannot be ruled out that there was one in Hāshimiyya as well.

p. 16: Baghdādī's account in *Farq* 242, 12ff./256, 3ff., tells us that Rizām's base was in Marv. His followers there probably survived, as can be inferred from the fact that Muqannaʿ, who became a public figure around 160/777, had originally been one of them (ibid. 243, 7/257, pu. f.).

p. 17f.: Concerning the aims Manṣūr was pursuing by giving his son the title of *mahdī*, and concerning the numismatic evidence, cf. also Bacharach in: JAOS 113/1993/271ff.

p. 21: Christian sources paint an entirely different image of the young caliph (cf. Gerö in: Journal for the Study of Pseudepigraphia 9/1991/8of.).

p. 25f.: Muḥammad b. al-Layth's text is now available in a new edition and translation by H. Eid, *Lettre du calife Hârûn al-Rašîd à l'empereur Constantin VI*; Paris 1992.

p. 30, n. 47: Cf. also Samir in: Le Muséon 105/1992/343ff., where all further secondary sources are listed. Samir proved conclusively against Dick that the name the saint bore before his baptism must be read Rawḥ. I. Guidi had already presumed this based on the Ethiopic version (in: Rendiconti Acc. Naz. Lincei, Classe di Sc. Mor., Stor. e Filol. v 31, 1922, p. 90). The name having been emended to Rawḥ b. Ḥātim Guidi considered whether he might be identical with the well-known Muhallabid who was governor of Ifrīqiyya under Rashīd. However, this Rawḥ died in 174/791; furthermore, he was no Quraysh (regarding him cf. Talbi in: EI² VIII 465f.). The Ethiopian text traces the genealogy back to ʿUmar I, but is probably the result of secondary scholarly deliberation. Bīrūnī mentions the saint in *Āthār al-bāqiya* (292, 13ff.). I am grateful to St. Gerö for assistance in this matter.

p. 46f.: Regarding Ibn Bakkūsh cf. also GIE III 133f. s. n. *Ibn-i Bakuš-i ʿAššārī*.

p. 6of.: Concerning the Nabataeans in the Kaskar region and their image cf. Fiey, *Les "Nabaṭ" de Kaskar-Wāsiṭ dans les premiers siècles de l'Islam*, in: MUSJ 51/1990/49ff.; Fiey, too, bases his remarks mainly on the chapter in Ibn al-Faqīh.

p. 102: Amir-Moezzi notes that early Shīʿite authors expected different numbers of imams (5, 7, 8, 11) (JA 280/1992/237f.). – Books written by Wāqifites on the subject of *ghayba* are listed by Madelung in EI² V 1236a; cf. also Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin* 249ff.

p. 113f.: Regarding Bishr al-Ḥāfī cf. M. Jarrar in: Der Islam 71/1994/191ff.

p. 131, commentary section: Cf. the correction vol. V 307.

p. 133f.: It might be worthwhile considering how the attribute *laṭipan* given to El in the Ugaritic pantheon should be understood exactly. It is usually translated as 'the friendly one' or 'the benevolent one' (cf. M. H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, Leiden 1955, p. 44).

p. 145: Sarakhsī quoted the entire *K. al-iktisāb* in his *Mabsūṭ* (XXX 244ff.). He traces it back to Shaybānī.

p. 158, n. 1: Cf. also T. El-Hibri in: IJMES 24/1992/461ff. The text of the 'Meccan documents' as transmitted by the historians appears to have been redacted in accordance with Maʾmūn's ideas; in reality Amīn had been appointed ruler over the entire empire by his father, while Maʾmūn (like his brother al-Muʾtamin later) was merely governor and defender of the borders. The question of authenticity is thus similar to that concerning Maʾmūn's 'testament' (p. 528 above).

p. 159: Regarding the Sufyānī cf. I. ʿAbbās, *Taʾrīkh bilād al-Shām fī l-ʿaṣr al-ʿabbāsī* (Amman 1992), p. 53ff.

p. 166: The *majālis* of ʿAlī al-Riḍā with the *ahl al-adyān* were collected by the Hashimid al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl ... b. Nawfal b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (cf. Najāshī 42, 3ff.; Ardabīlī I 253; regarding the family cf. Pellat in: EI² VII 1045f.).

p. 168f.: Abū l-Ṣalt al-Harawī had studied in Medina; he probably met ʿAlī al-Riḍā there. He was also said to have debated with Bishr al-Marīsī before Maʾmūn (Dhahabī, *Siyar* XI 447, 5ff.). Further details in GIE V 413f.

p. 188: Cf. also W. al-Qāḍī in: SI 78/1993/39ff.

p. 194: That Bishr visited Marv is suggested by Dhahabī's claim (cited in the supplementary remark regarding p. 168 above) that he debated with Abū l-Ṣalt al-Harawī before Maʾmūn.

p. 198: The hadith quoted in Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb's (who lived half a century before Bishr b. al-Marīsī) *Musnad* is a later addition adopted from Bishr b. Ghānim al-Khurāsānī (cf. vol. II 231, n. 87 above).

p. 200, 3ff.: Passage to be deleted as it is based on a misunderstanding beginning with the source (cf. the commentary on Text XXI 166).

p. 202: Bishr b. al-Marīsī also inherited Abū Yūsuf's interest in matters of tax law (cf. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 546, 2ff., and especially the quotations in Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, *K. al-kharāj*, transl. Ben Shemesh, *Taxation in Islam*, Index s. n.).

p. 219: Regarding ʿAlī al-Rayḥānī cf. M. Zakeri's essay in: Oriens 34/1994/76ff. Zakeri reads the father's name as ʿUbayda instead of the form common in the Middle East in the present day, ʿAbīda. His claim on p. 79 that Ibn Ḥajar, on whom I base my reading, was the only one besides Dhahabī to read *ʿAbīda*, and only because he adopted it from him, is misleading. We must bear in mind that Ibn Ḥajar is the only one explicitly prescribing the vocalisation *ʿAbīda* (in *Tabṣīr al-muntabih*). Elsewhere it is either not vocalised at all, or the printed section inserts vowel signs without the information of whether these are at all based on the manuscript consulted. Thus Dhahabī has *ʿAbīda* everywhere, in *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (Ṭabaqa XXII, p. 311, 5), in *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl* (no. 5888), and in *Mushtabih* (p. 234 where, however, the focus is on the *nisba* al-Rayḥānī). The same again in a footnote on *Mushtabih* 439 based on a (vocalised?) marginal note in the MS. Conversely the vocalisation *ʿUbayda* is used in the Cairo edition of Ibn Taghrībirdī's *Nujūm al-zāhira* (II 231, 2), but again without any indication that this was necessarily the only possible reading.

p. 235: Regarding Sahl b. Hārūn cf. L. A. Karp's dissertation *Sahl b. Hārūn: The Man and His Contribution to ʿAdab'* (Harvard 1992).

p. 236: Regarding the Dayr Ḥizqil cf. also Dols, *Majnun. The Madman* 203 and 360.

p. 244: An intelligent interpretation of Juwaynī's account, though not one that solves all difficulties, may be found in Dhanani, *Physical Theory of Kalām* 138, n. 131.

p. 262f.: A wealth of material on the concept of time in Islam may be found in G. Böwering, *Ideas of Time in Persian Sufism*, in Iran 30/1992/77ff.

p. 322: J. Vernet, *El Islam en España* (Madrid 1993), p. 37, also tells us that a child who was supposed to learn mental arithmetic had to fill his mouth with water.

p. 409: I misunderstood Text 151, d, slightly. Naẓẓām probably never believed that there would be no physical delights in paradise.

p. 429: The phrase 'forever' in the Arabic versions is based on *lᵉ-ʿōlām* in Exodus 31:17; cf. p. 302f. above.

p. 455f.: I unfortunately neglected to consult the passage *Maq.* 243, 15ff.; it must also be added to the texts in vol. VI 205f. It informs us that Uswārī – as one might expect – applied his theory to the case of an unbeliever as well. While one could say that God could make an unbeliever believe, this is in logical contradiction to another statement, namely that God knows that this unbeliever will not believe. Consequently the passage from Ṣafadī cited on p. 422 may well originate with Uswārī; it sums up the theory in polemic terms.

p. 46of.: Was Ṣāliḥ Qubba's theory of atoms guided by Aristotle's criticism in *Phys.* VI 1. 231 a 30ff.?

p. 481: Regarding Qaḥṭabī's list of sects see H. Preissler in: H. Preissler/H. Seiwert, *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte*, FS K. Rudolph (Marburg 1994), p. 495ff.

p. 487f.: Ṭabarī's connection with the Shīʿa is also discussed by R. Jaʿfariyyān in: Spektrum Iran 4/1991, issue 3/56ff. He explains the name Ḥurqūṣiyya through Ṭabarī's opinion that the Ḥanbalites' rejection of ʿAlī was comparable to that of the Khārijites, the followers of Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr.

p. 490, commentary section: Having consulted J. A. Nawas, *Al-Maʾmūn. Miḥna and Caliphate* (Nijmegen 1992), p. 44, it now seems to me that the quotation in Sourdel is not wrong but misunderstood; cf. *Daʿāʾim* I 205, 2ff.

p. 494: Besides Ibn al-Jawzī's *Manāqib*, the *K. miḥnat al-Imām Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. -Ḥanbal* by his contemporary ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. al-Jammāʾilī is now also available in a printed edition (ed. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, Gizeh 1407/1987). It goes into Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq's text in some detail; it would be worth exploring.

p. 496: The biographers also mention one Abū Maʿmar Ismāʿīl b. Maʿmar al-Hudhalī who was well known to be a Sunnite, but gave in in the *miḥna* all the same (TB VI 271, 7ff.; TH 471, −5f.; TT I 273, 10ff.). Is he identical with that Ismāʿīl b. Abī Masʿūd who was one of the first seven? (Ṭabarī III 1116, 16).

p. 506f.: On the usage of the term *Nābita* see, in detail, W. al-Qāḍī in: SI 78/1993/27ff.

p. 546ff.: It may safely be assumed that the tendency of the *K. al-ḥayda* was Ḥanbalite, although it may not have been explicit. By the time it was composed, Ibn Ḥanbal had long been heroicised for his demeanour during the *miḥna*; another option would have been to add detail to the account of his appearance before Muʿtaṣim. Instead it described how a Meccan brought a discussion to a successful close in front of the caliph; a man like Kinānī who was known to be part of Ibn Kullāb's circle was the perfect protagonist. – Regarding the publication history cf. also the summary in Sakūnī, *ʿUyūn al-munāẓarāt* 208ff. §§285–287. Ibn al-Dawādārī tells us that he adopted the entire text into his *K. dhakhāʾir al-akhāyir* – but in which version? (*Kanz al-durar* V 194, 7f.). Kinānī was furthermore said to have been one of the ʿAlid Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh's supporters; he was active in Daylam during Hārūn's time (Madelung, *Texts Concerning the History of the Zaydi Imams* 56, 1, and 175, 6; also van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 291). He did indeed transmit a speech the latter had given in the context of the earlier ʿAlid uprising in 169/786 (Aḥmd b. Sahl al-Rāzī, *Akhbār Fakhkh* 150, 4ff.), and reported about his conspiratorial activities after this event (ibid. 163, 3ff.) as well as about Hārūn's breach of treaty (ibid. 262, 8ff.; cf. vol. II 532f. above).