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that while the basic prosody of Qur'anic *saj'* is accentual, based on the number of stresses in adjacent verses, quantitative rhythmical parallelism becomes more important at the ends of verses and often includes penultimate feet.



The Core of the Qur'an: *Sūrat Yā Sīn* (Q. 36)

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The Prophet dubbed *Sūrat Yā Sīn* the 'core of the Qur'an'. This article attempts to explain the reasons for this. It highlights the central theme of the sura, the resurrection of the dead: *Yā Sīn* provides the longest presentation of this subject in one single sura, dealing with all the arguments the disbelievers bring up against it. Contrary to the opinions of some scholars, the structure of this sura, seen in the succession of its well-connected parts, with additional consolidation from a web of recurring expressions, is shown to be completely coherent. The article elucidates some of the stylistic features of the sura and ends with an account of the special significance of *Sūrat Yā Sīn* for Muslim believers, individually and collectively, throughout the world.



Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of *tafsīr*: Theological Dimensions of a Legacy

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The *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* is fittingly recognised as representing an important milestone in the history of the discipline of *tafsīr*: within the work, al-Ṭabarī accomplished a uniquely comprehensive exegetical synthesis of literary, grammatical, legal and theological elements, bringing a broader sense of definition and purpose to the discipline of *tafsīr*. Among the characteristic features of the scholarship of al-Ṭabarī are the objectivity and consistency he brought to his work and such qualities resonate in his gauging of theological issues and topics. While it has been customary to view al-Ṭabarī's theology as being strictly informed by a rigidly traditionalist methodology, a circumspect review of theological discussions in the *tafsīr* reveals not only the author's accomplished marshalling of the attendant arguments and theses, but also the spirit of autonomy and resourcefulness with which he assesses points of doctrine and dogma. In this article an attempt is made to analyse aspects of the intertwined theological discourses of the *tafsīr* and related treatises, bridging them with materials articulated in the biographical sources. The aim is to explore the relationship between his approach to scholarship along with the standpoints to which he adhered and their impact upon attitudes towards his remarkable work and legacy.



Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of *tafsīr*: Theological Dimensions of a Legacy

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While the earliest forms of Qur'anic exegesis were systematically constellated around treatments of the Qur'an in which selected topics and features of the text had been discretely expounded upon, it was in the *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* composed by Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224–310/839–923) that an imposingly more integrated and wide-ranging approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an was cultivated, which broached literary, legal, grammatical, and even theological issues and themes.¹ Despite relying distinctly upon the exegetical materials furnished by antecedents in the form of texts, treatises and orally transmitted materials, the synthesis offered in his *Jāmi' al-bayān* surpassed all previous efforts in the field, bringing comprehensiveness and a broader context to the discipline of exegesis.² And while over successive centuries the accomplishments of al-Ṭabarī were complemented and extensively refined by successive generations of exegetes, the precision and levels of expertise brought by him to all aspects of scholarship pored over in his monumental *tafsīr* set an important historical milestone.³ It is often assumed that this author's approach to the resolution and espousal of theological doctrines and points of dogma was essentially informed by a rigidly derived traditionalist strategy, to the extent that his *tafsīr* monotonously served as a vehicle for the articulation and defence of the credal statements and doctrinal catechisms associated with Sunnī religious orthodoxy; however, a close examination of al-Ṭabarī's treatment of theological issues reveals an underlying sophistication and exuberance which defines the meticulousness and thoroughness he brought to the traditions of learning with which he engaged.⁴ Certainly, his own 'theological orthodoxy' is instinctively shaped by traditionalist considerations, although within the *tafsīr* he adopted not only a rationally-devised exposition of dogma, but was also intrepidly prepared to employ grammatical arguments and philological constructs to advocate and expound upon theological

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premises and doctrines, furnishing aspects of the commentary with a distinctly polemical tone. Significantly, embedded within the matrices of his own theology is a determined and objective attitude to specific points of doctrine which led to his being criticised by a number of influential individuals among the *ahl al-ḥadīth* ('traditionists'), the consequences of which are reflected in various dramatic episodes in his lifetime.⁵ Additionally, one detects within the theological narratives of the *tafsīr* an attempt to rein in the excesses of speculatively-formulated strategies and constructs as pursued by rational theologians within the Sunnī camps which al-Ṭabarī felt were not conducive to the defence of orthodox doctrine, further underlining the spirit of independence which defined his scholarship. Ingeniously, through his commentary, al-Ṭabarī demonstrated that *tafsīr* was not simply a perfunctory endeavour devoted to the presentation of the exegetical statements and musings distilled from a hierarchy of early luminaries, despite the acceptance that due reverence had to be accorded to materials which were authentically sourced from them.⁶ Nor was its ultimate goal the forensic analysis of the linguistic constituents of scripture, but rather he had shown that while preceding discussions provided analogues and a substratum upon which the discipline could develop ways of engaging with and drawing inspiration from the text of the Qur'an, the craft of Qur'anic interpretation turned essentially on the locating of new relative contexts and discourses to which the interrelated narratives of exegesis could be made pertinent.⁷ Al-Ṭabarī's treatment of contentious theological issues exemplifies the manner by which this could be achieved, shedding light on key issues of concern to theologians and the solutions which were proposed to resolve them within an exegetical framework.⁸ In both the life and works of al-Ṭabarī, a gauging of the trajectories of all the interlocking intellectual discourses reveals the intricacy and profundity of his contribution to the traditions of learning associated with classical Islamic thought.⁹

The Grammarian Nexus

In a monograph devoted to the linguistic thought of the Kufan grammarian Abū Zakariyyā° al-Farrā° (d. 207/822), the Egyptian scholar Aḥmad Makkī al-Anṣārī discerningly drew attention to the fact that veiled criticisms of this scholar frequently surfaced in the course of al-Ṭabarī's commentary.¹⁰ Al-Anṣārī observed that although al-Ṭabarī rarely names al-Farrā° when discussing specific linguistic views or issues with which he was in disagreement, a circumspect review of the passages in which criticisms occur intimates that it is al-Farrā° and his *Ma°ānī al-Qur°ān* which provide an indispensable backdrop to the ensuing discussions. Among the instances in which this is evident is the pericope referring to God's *istiwā°* in Q. 2:29 (*thumma°stawā ilā°l-samā°*), and its extolling of the Almighty's ascent to the heavens.¹¹ Definitions of the semantic import of *istiwā°* within classical Qur'anic commentaries and dogmatic treatises were principally shaped by preconceived theological outlooks and

considerations: many traditionist scholars tended to promote an interpretation in which *istiwāʾ* was equated with the act of rising or ascending, adhering to the evident language used in the verse. Within this context it was asserted that there existed an incontrovertible distinction between the divine and human attributes of such an act and that the principle of *bi-lā kayf* ('amodality') had to be applied when broaching such Qur'anic statements; conversely, rationalist theologians, and indeed a number of traditionalist scholars, preferred to apply a metaphorical gloss to the term, or identify meanings which obviated any anthropomorphic imagery inferred from the use of the language in this and similar Qur'anic passages.¹² Al-Ṭabarī opens his exegesis of the verse by disclosing that there existed differences regarding the term's interpretation and that some had said that *istawā ilāʾl-samāʾ* meant *aqbala ʿalayhā*; he also cites a turn of expression which conveys this specified meaning. Al-Ṭabarī then refers to a verse of poetry, in which the phrase *aqbala ʿalayhā* occurs in a context connoting the turning of one's attention to a given matter, noting that it was adduced as evidence for the equating of *istawā* with the connotation of *iqbāl* ('advent'), an explanation he describes as being erroneous. Having dismissed the previous gloss, al-Ṭabarī focuses upon introducing a number of further periphrastic qualifications of the term *istiwāʾ*, included among which are the usage of the term denoting the actions of someone being diverted from one place to another (*taḥawwul*); the turning of one's attention or focus towards a matter or concern (*ʿamada laḥā* or *ilayhā*); and the equating of *istiwāʾ* with *al-ʿuluww* and *irtifāʿ* ('a rise' or 'an ascent'), which is supported by a dictum attributed to al-Rabīʿ b. Anas (d. 139/756).¹³ Having systematically proceeded through the gamut of explanations proffered by various scholars in respect of the semantic import of *istiwāʾ*, al-Ṭabarī concludes with a conspectus of accepted lexical explanations of the term, including those cited above and others which fall semantically within the confines of the Arabs' use of *istiwāʾ*, such as *al-iḥtiyāz waʾl-istilāʾ* ('occupation of space' and 'gaining hegemony or ascendancy'). He then pronounced that the most fitting meaning of the Qur'anic verse is the one which equates *istiwāʾ* with *al-ʿuluww* and *irtifāʿ*, adding that 'He ascended and rose over them [the heavens], giving order to them by virtue of his power and created them as seven heavens'. In the context of the allusion to al-Farrāʾ, it is the next passage of the commentary which is fascinating, as it reveals al-Ṭabarī's censure of those individuals who reject the equating of *istiwāʾ* with *al-ʿuluww* and *irtifāʿ*. He remonstrates that such a position was supposedly taken in order to steer clear of the implication that the semantic thrust of signifying an ascent and rising towards the heavens is predicated by a previous state of being beneath them; the inference is that to get from one state to the next necessitates physical displacement and motion. Al-Ṭabarī dismisses the rationale of such a stance, describing it as being a case of replacing the conventionally understood meaning with one which is unknown; he also mentions that the espousal of such an explanation offers no reprieve from what its advocate is seeking to escape.¹⁴ The corollary to this point is that favouring the term *iqbāl* over *ʿuluww* does

not circumvent the physical connotation implied by the use of the verb. It is evident that the views of al-Farrāʾ are the subject of his diatribe for the whole of the beginning of al-Ṭabarī's discussion of *al-istiwāʾ*, as well as the later passages in which he reprimands the advocate of this view, are precisely informed by the exegetical treatment of this verse in the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, as indicated by al-Anṣārī.

Still, al-Ṭabarī's reproach does not end there: posing a hypothetical question to his anonymous opponent, he states that 'it would be said to him, "You allege that the *taʾwīl* of His statement *istawā* is *aqbala* and therefore was He [in a state of] retreat from the heavens before He advanced towards them?" And should he claim that such an act does not constitute the *iqbāl* of action but rather an abstract *iqbāl*, it would be said to him, "Therefore you should say *ʿalā ʿalayhā* can likewise denote a rising of dominion and authority (*ʿuluww mulk wa-sulṭān*) and not a rising concomitant with movement and rest (*ʿuluww intiqāl wa-zawāl*)"', insinuating that such an explanation need not be understood in the sense of a physical act. Al-Ṭabarī then indicates that whatever is said in response to the aforementioned hypothetical statement would be matched with similarly binding objections, before concluding his discussion of the point by stating that if it were not for the fact that he disliked expatiating the book with matters not pertinent to it, he would have identified the flaws of every statement made in response to the above where it was found to be in conflict with the recorded dicta of the people of truth.¹⁵ Elsewhere in the *tafsīr* where Qur'anic references to *istiwāʾ* are resolved, al-Ṭabarī refers to his having mentioned differences among scholars concerning its import and that it had been adequately addressed beforehand in his *tafsīr*, although while discussing its occurrence in Q. 13:2, he simply curtly states that it connotes *ʿalā ʿalayhā* and offers the same explanation at other instances where it features.¹⁶ The dialectically structured critique of al-Farrāʾ's view together with the whole polemical thrust of the passage betrays the somewhat assertive yet informed manner by which al-Ṭabarī engages with his opponent; and indeed, it is quite arresting that throughout the *tafsīr* prominent grammarian luminaries and the linguistic explanations which they endorse are often the targets of criticism which he pursues relentlessly and unwaveringly.¹⁷ A summary review of the discussions on *istiwāʾ* as they feature in the *Maʿānī* reveals an unassumingly succinct gauging of the verse: al-Farrāʾ merely mentions two lexical explanations for *istiwāʾ*, one of which specifies that *istiwā* is used to indicate the expiry of one's youth (strength), while in the second instance, it is stated that it can connote something becoming straightened from a state of crookedness. He then introduces a third view, *ʿaqbala ilayyā wa-ʿalayyā*, which he contends is relevant to the meaning of the actual verse before modestly admitting that 'God knows best'! And he ends his exposition not only with a report ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās in which the verb *ṣaʿida* ('to climb') is used to paraphrase *istiwāʾ*, but also with the declaration that all the aforementioned examples discussed by him are

attested in the language of the Arabs, thereby confirming the existence of empirical evidence for his explanation.¹⁸

Al-Anṣārī was of the opinion that al-Ṭabarī's censure of al-Farrāʾ, although he does not directly mention his name, was motivated, in this instance and others, by his aversion to the latter's Muʿtazilī leanings.¹⁹ Classical biographical sources do allege that al-Farrāʾ had Muʿtazilī sympathies, yet the theological views he sporadically expresses in the *Maʿānī* are by no means redolent of a rampant espousal of Muʿtazilism.²⁰ This was the conclusion that Edmund Beck reached having meticulously mined the *tafsīr* for its theological content;²¹ indeed, he had spoken of parallels between the theological theses favoured by al-Farrāʾ and those which were to become the cornerstone of the brand of speculative theology eventually championed by Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935); significantly, these had been earlier nurtured by Ibn Kullāb (d. 241/854–5) and al-Qalānisi (*fl.* third/ninth century) all of whom made substantial contributions to Sunnī theological discourses.²² However, Beck's conclusions have been questioned by Joseph van Ess, who felt that he had not paid sufficient attention to al-Farrāʾ's stance on the subject of determinism and human free will.²³ Still, as can be shown, there do exist statements in the *Maʿānī* in which al-Farrāʾ clearly attempts to place distance between himself and the so-called Qadarīs and, theologically speaking, he has more in common with the movement traditionally identified with expressions of Sunnī orthodoxy than a supposed affinity with Muʿtazilism.²⁴ And, moreover, his preferred explanation of *istiwāʾ* was hardly conducive to the charge that he harboured Muʿtazilī tendencies; on the contrary, such positions were favoured by Sunnī theologians of rational persuasions as demonstrated by al-Ashʿarī's own exposition of the term in his *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna*,²⁵ which insists that while the act of *istiwāʾ* is a reality, it must be understood in terms which befit God's majesty and it is not accompanied by *ṭūl istiqrār*; namely, the strictures of time, space and location do not impinge upon it; moreover, al-Ashʿarī insists that the amodality of the act of *istiwāʾ* remains paramount. The extent to which later Ashʿarīs moved away from the traditionalist position by adopting the theological instrument of *taʾwīl* ('figurative paraphrasing'), or indeed metaphor, within interpretive strategies to circumvent anthropomorphisms in scripture becomes a key point of controversy within medieval Sunnī theological thought and the tensions between certain traditionalists and Ashʿarīs over approaches to points of dogma are palpably played out in the later literature.²⁶ Of course, it could be argued that al-Ṭabarī was averse to such tendencies even within expressions of Sunnism and this would place his theology somewhere between the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, who censured the use of speculative theology together with its reliance on dialectical schema, and the rational traditionalists within the Sunnī camps, who felt obliged to develop such strategies to counter Muʿtazilī defences of theological constructs.²⁷ Within such contexts, dogmatic positions were forged in an intensely reactionary

milieu which witnessed the crystallisation of doctrines to counter opposing and contested views.

Most Mu^ctazilī theologians tended to employ the term *istawlā* ('gaining hegemony') as a paraphrase for *istiwā*²⁷ or simply locate its lexical equivalent in the noetic notion of *qaṣd* ('abstract intention'), thereby attenuating any perceived physicality to the act.²⁸ The Mu^ctazilī luminary ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) dismissed the idea that *istiwā*²⁷ could be construed as locative or temporal and quotes the leading Mu^ctazilī scholar Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʿī (d. 303/915), who insists that it reflects the act of *qaṣd*: namely, God's turning His attention to the creation of the heaven. One significant treatise in which al-Farrāʾ's explanation of this verse surfaces is the *Majālis Tha^clab* (or "Sessions" of Tha^clab'), a work which collates philological and grammatical reminiscences of the Kufan philologist and littérateur Tha^clab (d. 291/904). In two separate passages in the text he mentions the various meanings of *istiwā*²⁷, stating in one instance that 'al-Farrāʾ and our companions say *aqbala ʿalayhā*; others say *istawlā*²⁷'; on a second occasion in a reference to Q. 20:5 (*al-Raḥmanu ʿalā'l-ʿarshi'stawā*), he states that 'the Mu^ctazilī equate *istiwā*²⁷ with *istawlā*²⁷', implying that al-Farrāʾ took a different view.²⁹ Tha^clab was renowned for his anti-*kalām* posturing; in his reference to *aqbala ʿalayhā* he uses the term *aṣḥābunā*²⁷ – he is hardly likely to have associated with a view which was Mu^ctazilī in countenance. Still, referring to the *Majālis*, al-Anṣārī made the claim that even Tha^clab associated al-Farrāʾ with the Mu^ctazilī view and he implied that the adoption of the term *iqbāl* was commensurate with their lexical paraphrase of the term, which is misleading because, as shown above, Tha^clab speaks of two different views, yet al-Anṣārī curiously omitted any reference to the further quotation in the text where Tha^clab mentions the Mu^ctazilī and *istawlā* as a view endorsed by them.³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī was a student of Tha^clab, who describes him as one of his early protégés and he was mentored by his leading charge, Abū ʿUmar al-Zāhid (d. 345/956); furthermore, Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) and Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), both of whom were renowned for their expertise in philology, are linked to him.³¹ It was by virtue of his close acquaintance with the scholarship of leading Basran and Kufan luminaries that al-Ṭabarī gained insights into the various linguistic arguments prevalent among the two schools, which he was able to adduce at length throughout the course of the *Jāmiʿ*. Tha^clab is noted for having memorised the literary legacy of al-Farrāʾ, to the extent that he was able to identify the loci of individual passages from his actual works; he would have been cognisant of any connection between al-Farrāʾ and the Mu^ctazilī on such issues.³²

Significantly, there does exist an anecdote in which the renowned scholar Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) was said to have pronounced that he used to hold the Kufan grammarian al-Farrāʾ in great esteem until he read his *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* text.³³ Given the traditionist credentials of Ibn Ḥanbal, such a statement might lead to the

impression that issues of orthodoxy and doctrine were probably upmost in his mind. However, al-Farrāʿs *Maʿānī* ostensibly focuses on the grammatical treatment of Qurʾanic readings with the aim of demonstrating the linguistic authority of *lectiones* and this is something al-Ṭabarī also engaged in to the extent that he was censured by later reader specialists for questioning the linguistic bases of a number of *lectiones* attributed to the Damascene scholar Ibn ʿĀmir (d. 118/736), a figure whose reading was designated as one of the canonical seven.³⁴ Significantly, theological musings do occasionally permeate al-Farrāʿs analyses, although these are notably incidental to the work's conceptual thrust and intended focus.³⁵ A clearer hint of what appears to lay behind Ibn Ḥanbal's statement is probably preserved in the biographical work of the Mālikī scholar al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 543–4/1149), *Tartīb al-madārik*, which includes an anecdote mentioning that Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224/838) compiled an exegetical-grammatical treatise which merged the linguistic analyses of al-Farrāʿ and Abū ʿUbayda. It is reported that Ibn Sallām was apparently half way through the text when he received a dispatch from Ibn Ḥanbal, in which he spoke of being dismayed to learn that 'you are compiling a work on *qirāʾāt* in which you have established al-Farrāʿ and Abū ʿUbayda as authorities in the area of *maʿānī al-Qurʾān*: desist from this'.³⁶ By all accounts Ibn Sallām supposedly stopped working on the text, having reached *Sūrat al-Anbiyāʿ*. One of the standard features of the *maʿānī* genre is its use of models of grammar which were methodically supported by references to profane poetry and the diction of the Arabs for the purposes of elucidation, exemplification and argumentation. This certainly would have perturbed those of a strictly traditionist persuasion who were repelled by the notion that profane materials should be used to justify the linguistic integrity of the Qurʾan, notwithstanding the fact that it was often the linguistic idiosyncrasies associated with scripture's textual transmission which were being acutely scrutinised by grammarians. The resort to use of poetry to elucidate the language of the Qurʾan in exegesis was considered to be a moot point within early exegetical strategies, as indicated by the discussions of the Kufan grammarian Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/939), who made a passionate defence of its interpretive utility.³⁷ And, criticism of the use of poetry as the basis for explicating scripture does appear in traditionist narratives, although it featured among the repertoire of exegetical tools employed in al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ*.³⁸ Indeed, historical tensions between certain traditionist scholars and al-Ṭabarī could have emanated from these and other related issues.

Placing aside debates about the implications of al-Farrāʿs supposed propensity to Muʿtazilism, the refutation outlined by al-Ṭabarī essentially countenances the idea that one could quite conceivably speak of *ʿuluww* and *irtifāʿ* in senses which do not signify physical movement, although admittedly this features within the central thrust of the lines of argumentation through which he runs in order to counter the basis of al-Farrāʿs view. However, even when mentioning the preferred view of the verse's

meaning, it is evident that al-Ṭabarī is mindfully positioning his own arguments in ways which would vitiate any objections that an opponent might raise. Still, this did not stop some commentators from suggesting that al-Ṭabarī espoused the latter view: the exegete al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076) in his voluminous commentary, *Kitāb al-basīṭ*, isolated it as al-Ṭabarī's preferred opinion: namely, that *istiḥwā'* was equated with the rising of sovereignty and dominion (*mulk wa-sultān*), as favoured by those seeking to maintain a non-literal spin.³⁹ The very nature of the discussions presented by al-Ṭabarī acutely underpins both the subtlety of his approach and the intricacies of his own theological position. When compared with the reserve and caution exercised by the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, who were distrustful of the dialectical technique, which was configured around the tenacious pursuit of the perceived logical inconsistencies of opponents' arguments, the enthusiasm and mastery with which he employs it are striking. So, not only is his defence of doctrine more intricate than hitherto accepted but his approach to issues of dogma has a markedly independent quality to it. Subtle patterns of argumentation are employed not only in his presentation of the exegesis of exempla and law, but they also feature in his discussion of grammatical and philological issues. With regards to figures such as al-Farrā' and Abū 'Ubayda, their analyses often provide the background to a not insignificant number of linguistic issues which he discusses in the course of the *tafsīr*, with 'anonymous' grammarians often being the subject of sustained criticism.⁴⁰ Interestingly, it was the frequency of the allusions to al-Farrā' in the *Jāmi'* which led al-Anṣārī to conclude, albeit exaggeratedly, that the *Ma'ānī* served as a model for al-Ṭabarī's own work.⁴¹

Discourse on the *ism* and the *musammā*

On the more conventional points of theological doctrine, al-Ṭabarī's position is generally situated within the brand of theology associated with traditionalist expressions of Sunnī orthodoxy. This is clear in his critique of Mu'tazilī doctrinal arguments on the created status of the Qur'an; the divine attributes; predestination; intercession; the beatific vision; and it extends to his critical appraisal of points of dogma promulgated by movements deemed outside the fold of Sunnī expressions of orthodoxy.⁴² Yet most salient is the manner in which al-Ṭabarī is able to defend the perceived orthodox position, employing an armoury of logical and linguistic arguments whenever he clashes with adversaries, although as is shown by his critique of al-Farrā', he was willing to criticise individuals whose own doctrinal stances sit contiguously within the confines of a traditionalist-defined theology. Such qualities are characteristic of the intellectual autonomy which he brought to his scholarship whether in *tafsīr*, *fiqh* or indeed *ḥadīth*; the notion that his work is informed by an approach to issues of theology strictly trammelled by convention is not borne out by the *Jāmi'*.⁴³ This is apparent in his treatment of *istiḥwā'* and, likewise, in al-Ṭabarī's allusions to the question of the nature of the relationship between the *ism* and the

musammā (*nomen* and *nominatum*), a topic traditional sources suggest has its provenance in the second-eighth/third-ninth centuries and which had conceptual implications for dogmatic discussions on the divine attributes.⁴⁴ From a theological perspective, the related debates turned on whether there existed a unity of identity between names (*asmāʿ*) and their referents (*musammāt*).⁴⁵ Initially, the position taken by certain orthodox scholars appeared to be shaped in response to the Muʿtazilī argument, which had posited an ontological disjunction between the *ism* and the *musammā* and proposed that the former was connected to the conventional process of naming (*tasmiyya*) in the sense that the *ism* issued from *wasf al-wāṣif* (the attribute supplied by someone), an explanation which was viewed as constituting a furtive attack on the traditional doctrine of the divine attributes and their substantive nature; and there is certainly a nexus with the undermining of the traditional doctrine of the uncreated Qurʾān.⁴⁶ According to the general Muʿtazilī thesis, God knows and has power by virtue of His unique essence in the sense that ‘attributes’ such as knowledge and power did not subsist hypostatically within it.⁴⁷ By dismissing the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā*, it was possible to argue that God’s attributes, as conceptually conceived by traditionalist scholars, were not essential properties of the essence.⁴⁸ To an extent, the so-called traditionalist position was defined by its being instinctively based on the adoption of an opposing view which upheld the notion of the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā*.

In order to appreciate the significance of al-Ṭabarī’s gauging of the subject it is worth outlining some of the positions espoused among the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, groups within the Sunnī camps and notable Muʿtazilī figures on the *ism* and *musammā* paradigm. ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dārimī (d. 280/893), a representative of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*, points out in his refutation of the doctrines of the Muʿtazilī Bishr al-Marīsī (d. 218/833) that his cohorts professed that *asmāʿ Allāh* are something other than God: the names He has were those creation devised to refer to Him; al-Dārimī countered this thesis by asserting that the *asmāʿ Allāh* embodied the essence of His attributes, ‘*taḥqīq ṣifātihi*’, and that the idea that creation provided Him with ‘names’ implies a deficiency.⁴⁹ The reasoning is that if something is other than God, then it necessarily must belong to the realm of created entities, although what may have commenced as a straightforward critique of the notion that *asmāʿ Allāh* were something other than God soon exponentially distended into a sweeping defence of the *ism* and the *musammā* being essentially one, although al-Dārimī’s discussion is concerned specifically with the unity of identity between God and His attributes, as opposed to offering a broader discussion of the intricacies of the arguments about the *ism* and the *musammā*; it was Ibn Kullāb and his companions who earlier reasoned that it should not be said that the *ṣifāt* are Him nor should it be said that they are something other than Him.⁵⁰ Certainly, many scholars were sceptical of the utility of arguments about the *ism* and the *musammā* and favoured abstaining from deliberations on the subject. In his

biographical dictionary, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī includes a report relating that the traditionist scholar Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898), a student of Ibn Ḥanbal, declared that ‘People have spoken on the subject of *al-ism* and *al-musammā*; it has reached my attention that Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā disliked talking about the *ism* and the *musammā* and I abhor for you what Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā abhors’, implying that his Kufan mentor, Thaʿlab, harboured disdain for such dialectical discourses.⁵¹ And this appears to be a position favoured by many among the *ahl al-ḥadīth* and is recorded as a stance preferred by Ibn Ḥanbal, who is reported to have plainly disavowed those who profess that God’s names are created (*makhlūqa*).⁵² Yet among later Ḥanbalī scholars, there does appear a tendency to speak more assertively about the equivalence of the *ism* and the *musammā* in broader terms not confined to the debate about the *asmāʿ* *Allāh* being something other than God: for example, it is reported that during the time of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), the Basran grammarian who was the author of the commentary *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān wa-iʿrābuhu* and a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī, the Ḥanbalīs professed the view that ‘*al-ism huwa al-musammāʿ*’. Al-Zajjāj, who aligned himself with the theological conservatism of the Ḥanbalīs, is said to have engaged in a debate on the subject with the Zāhirī scholar Ibrāhīm b. ʿArafa, better known through his sobriquet Niṭṭawayhī (d. 323/935), dismissing the latter’s contention that he was in agreement with the Ḥanbalīs on that matter.⁵³ Such reports, if authenticated, show the avidity with which certain Ḥanbalīs defended the equivalence between the *ism* and the *musammā*, which appears to have been given a much more extensive compass beyond simply referring to the attributes of God, and such a doctrinal stance would have been one which was adhered to by individuals in al-Ṭabarī’s lifetime. Among much later generations of Ḥanbalī luminaries one is able to find scholars such as al-Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā (d. 458/1066), whose own ruminations on the topic provided shaded qualifications of the traditional stance, showing that there were important strictures which had to be applied when arguing for the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā*. Al-Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā explains that by claiming that the *asmāʿ* *Allāh* are other than Him and are created, it was postulated that from eternity God had neither name nor attribute until creation devised for Him names and attributes, which is the very point al-Dārimī earlier identified.⁵⁴

Turning to early Ashʿarī luminaries, the doctrine of the ontological unity of the *ism* and the *musammā* was vigorously defended, although in the credal summary which al-Ashʿarī presents in the *Ibāna*, he does not engage in a detailed discussion of the subject but plainly declares that whoever claims that the *asmāʿ* *Allāh* are something other than God is in manifest error; an identical statement also features in his *Maqālāt al-Islamiyyīn*.⁵⁵ Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015), who was instrumental in preserving many of the doctrinal teachings of al-Ashʿarī, actually points out that he did not subscribe fully to the doctrine that the *ism* was the *musammā*, implying that his teaching on the subject was much more intricate and nuanced.⁵⁶ Ibn Fūrak refers to a quotation in

which al-Ash^carī explained that he intended to repudiate al-Jubbā^ʿī's criticisms of the *aṣḥāb al-ṣifāt* ('the traditionalists') because of their doctrine that the *ism* is the *musammā*; in the quotation it is clarified that his critique of al-Jubbā^ʿī was not expounded upon because al-Ash^carī took the view of the traditionalists, but for the reason that al-Jubbā^ʿī set out to diminish the view using parameters which contravened his own epistemological framework and were inconsistent with his tenets.⁵⁷ The Ash^carī cynosure ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) does discuss the doctrine of the *ism* and the *musammā* in the introduction to his *Tafsīr asmāʾ Allāh*, explaining that the majority of scholars among the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamāʿa* was of the view that, ontologically, the *ism* is the same as the *musammā* in form and in essence and that this was the professed belief of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), who apparently devoted a treatise to the subject.⁵⁸ Al-Baghdādī also adds that this was a view stipulated by al-Ash^carī in his commentary on the Qur'an, but that his position on the subject, which he previously outlined, was one which identifies a division of the categories of *al-asmāʾ*.⁵⁹ Later generations of Ash^carī scholars such as al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) and al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) presented trenchant defences of the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā*.⁶⁰ In his *Tamhīd*, al-Bāqillānī points out that individuals have differed over the *ism*: 'is it the *musammā* itself or an attribute found in it or a phrase other than the *musammā*?', and he then declares that 'the *ahl al-ḥaq* believe that the *ism* is the same as the *musammā* itself or indeed an attribute intrinsically connected to it; it is not (a product of) the *tasmiyya*'.⁶¹ Likewise, in al-Bāqillānī's précis of the arguments, he distinguishes between the *asmāʾ al-dhāt* ('attributes of the essence') and the *asmāʾ al-aʿāl* ('attributes of the acts'), noting that in the case of the latter they are something other than Him.⁶²

Bearing in mind the background to the discussions and their historical significance, it is notable that al-Ṭabarī's foray into the subject of the *ism* and *musammā* appears deceptively incidental, although it demonstrates the polemical turn which he frequently allows his commentary to take. He is concerned not with directly defending the idea of there being an ontological unity between the *ism* and the *musammā*, nor indeed with explicitly dismissing the connection between the two, but rather with showing the futility of discussions on the topic, although his musings draw attention to conceptual flaws in the arguments of those who champion the notion of ontological unity. Moreover, the manner in which he wrestles with the technicalities of the related debates in the *tafsīr* displays the tenacity and assertiveness with which he was to treat topics he deemed theologically significant; it also confirms his percipient grasp of the dialectical disposition of the arguments, and his ingenious use of the forum provided by his commentary to articulate an 'orthodox' response. The thrust of his prescient treatment of the subject was to influence later traditionalist approaches, all of which underlines the complexities which colour his own Sunnī allegiances and the extent to which he was prepared to defend them.

The mention of the subject of the *ism* and *musammā* features in the opening section of the *tafsīr* devoted to the explication of the *basmala* in which he underlines the verbal agency concomitant within the syntactic function of the prepositional *bā'* in the *basmala*, and the fact that in such constructions the *bā'* requires an implicit verb which determines its context and function, although there is no explicit verb present.⁶³ al-Ṭabarī points out that if one were to mention the *basmala* when reciting the Qur'an, it would be obvious to a hearer that the individual reciting the text had meant “*I recite* in the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful”; likewise, had the *basmala* been mentioned prior to one's standing, or other similar acts, it would be obvious that the speaker meant “*I stand* in the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.” Al-Ṭabarī even discounts the objection that the reference to the aforementioned function of the *basmala* created ambiguities; it would be clearer to simply state *bi'llāh*, as it might otherwise be inferred that acts were carried out through something other than God. His dismissal of this latter point turns on his highlighting the relationship between *al-ism* and *al-tasmiyya* (‘the process of naming’): he indicates that in the language of the Arabs an indeterminate relationship can sometimes pertain between the patterns of *maṣādir* (‘verbal nouns’) and the verbal forms with which they are conventionally linked; he then moves on to adduce selected verses of poetry to exemplify the phenomenon, showing that the invocation of the *basmala* simply means ‘I begin by naming God prior to a statement or an act’.⁶⁴ It is critical to draw attention to al-Ṭabarī's brilliantly effective use of Prophetic traditions and related dicta at successive stages of the arguments he is positing, as he allows them to buttress the points which he has elaborated upon. Thus, for example, a dictum he adduces includes a reference to the Prophet's being instructed by the angel Gabriel ‘to recite by mentioning God your Lord’; and to likewise ‘rise and recline in the name of your Lord’; al-Ṭabarī argues that the wording confirms the correctness of the point he made: namely, the verbal function of the *tasmiyya* within the context of the *basmala* and the fact that it connotes: ‘I recite by summoning and invoking God’.⁶⁵ When discussing the function of the *basmala*, he even uses a legal analogy to drive home the argument: namely, it was commonly accepted among the majority of classical jurists that it would be ritually incorrect to utter ‘*bi'llāh*’ when slaughtering an animal as opposed to ‘*bi'smi'llāh*’; on the basis that this would conflict with Prophetic convention and precedent.⁶⁶ The denouement of the deliberations is that there exists an unequivocal semantic distinction between *bi'smi'llāh* and *bi'llāh*.⁶⁷ At this juncture in the *tafsīr* al-Ṭabarī then goes on to pronounce ‘this is not the place for extensively elucidating as to whether the *ism* is the *musammā* or indeed something other than it; or whether it serves as its attribute for [such a discussion] would render the book lengthy’.⁶⁸

During the ensuing analysis, al-Ṭabarī draws his reader's attention to one particular line of poetry which was frequently adduced by proponents of the thesis that the

ism and *musammā* were one and he actually disputes its interpretation. Adhering to a dialectical format, he pronounces ‘How would you respond if someone were to assert: “What do you say about the hemistichs of Labīd b. Rabī‘a in which he states *ilā’l-ḥawli thumma ismu’l-salāmi ‘alaykumā // wa-man yabki ḥawlan kāmilan fa-qadi’‘tadhar?’*”⁶⁹ He then reveals to his reader that someone purportedly well versed in the language of the Arabs has proffered such an explanation: namely, that *bi’smi’llāh* means *bi’llāh* and he sets about formulating an explanation of the line of poetry, but not before firstly reasoning that if such an explanation were accepted, it would be possible to say ‘I saw *ism* Zayd’ and ‘I ate *ism* the food’ or even ‘I drank *ism* the drink’: that the Arabs would collectively refute such usages in their language signified, in al-Ṭabarī’s view, the defectiveness of such an explanation of the opening segment of Labīd’s line of poetry; he then adds that such a view would only be possible if it is accepted that in essence the *ism* is the *musammā*.⁷⁰ The figure to whom al-Ṭabarī is alluding is Abū ‘Ubayda b. Ma‘mar b. al-Muthannā (d. 210/825), a giant in the field of philology and the author of the *Majāz al-Qur’ān*. Indeed, if one were to trace this explanation to his actual text and its exegesis of the verse, Abū ‘Ubayda says ‘*bi’smi’llāh* means *bi’llāh* for the *ism* of an entity represents the very essence of that entity’;⁷¹ he then adduces the actual verse of poetry attributed to Labīd b. Rabī‘a. It is this exact explanation which is the subject of a detailed critique by al-Ṭabarī delivered within the dialectical framework of a rejoinder, although it is the linguistic aspects of the arguments only with which he is concerned. Whether the theological significance of the *ism* and *musammā* controversy was an issue in vogue at the time of Abū ‘Ubayda is open to question, although it is probable that he would have been principally concerned with fleshing out the applied linguistic implications of the discussions; this is despite his reportedly saying, ‘If you hear someone assert that the *ism* is something other than the *musammā*, then bear witness to his heresy (*zandaqa*)’.⁷² The verse of poetry and the accompanying explanations he adumbrated were subsequently utilised by enthusiastic advocates to support the thesis that the *ism* and the *musammā* are ontologically one; simultaneously, various Qur’anic verses such as Q. 55:78, *Sanctified is the name of your Lord*; Q. 12:40, *These are indeed names which you and your forebears devised*; Q. 87:1, *Exalt the name of your Lord*; and Q. 19:7, *Oh Zachariah: We give to thee glad tidings of a son whose name is John*, were axiomatically cited to defend the thesis.⁷³

Tellingly, like al-Farrā‘, Abū ‘Ubayda is accused of blatantly harbouring Mu‘tazilī tendencies in various biographical anecdotes.⁷⁴ Still, in this instance he is propounding a view which was to be appropriated by advocates of the thesis that the *ism* was identical to *musammā* and among them were a number of traditionalists and even later Ḥanbalī scholars.⁷⁵ Conversely, al-Ṭabarī is dismissing the linguistic bases of such an argument together with the wider point which flows from it. He had mentioned in his synopsis that the aim of the current discussion is to determine

whether the *ism* which forms part of the genitive construct in the *basmala* is a noun or whether it is a *maṣḍar* which possesses verbal agency via a process of *tasmiyya*. Notably in his exegesis of Q. 55:78, *tabāraka'smu rabbika dhī'l-jalāli wa'l-ikrām* (*Sanctified is the name of your Lord ...*), which is one of a number of analogous verses used to defend the thesis that the *ism* and *musammā* were equivalent, al-Ṭabarī employed lexical paraphrase to explain its structure, stating '*tabārak dhikru rabbika*'.⁷⁶

It is intriguing that there exist certain parallels between al-Ṭabarī's critique of the argument in support of the *ism* and *musammā* paradigm and its treatment in the work of the Basran grammarian and Mu^ctazilī scholar Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), who devotes a section to the *idāfat al-ism ilā'l-musammā wa'l-musammā ilā'l-ism* in his seminal philological treatise *al-Khaṣā'is*. He mentions that his mentor Abū ^cAlī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987) frequently visited this topic and was seemingly mesmerised by it and, evocatively, Ibn Jinnī insists that therein existed unassailable grammatical proof of the flawed nature of the belief which some hold that the *ism* is the *musammā*.⁷⁷ Like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Jinnī dismisses Abū ^cUbayda's reference to Labīd's poetry and his view regarding *bi'smi'llāh* being the same as *bi'llāh*. He discusses his former explanation in some detail, referring to Abū ^cAlī al-Fārisī's views on the subject and the fact that he explains it through the syntactic phenomenon of *ḥadhf al-muḍāf* (the ellipsis of the former part of the genitive construct). And he adds that he (and Abū ^cAlī) would be in agreement with regards to the *ma^cnā* suggested by Abū ^cUbayda but that the latter speaks of there being an otiose element in the verse; while, they speak of *nuqṣān*: namely there is a missing component supplied through reference to ellipsis (*thumma ism (ma^cnā) al-salām ^calaykumā*).⁷⁸ Interestingly, Ibn Jinnī described the topic of *al-ism* and the *musammā* in the language of Arabic as being abstruse (*gharīb*), and dramatically concluded that few are able to become familiar with and penetrate it.⁷⁹ The key point here is whether at the time when al-Ṭabarī had outlined and disseminated his arguments through the *tafsīr* whether those in the traditionalist camps were favouring the doctrine that the *ism huwa al-musammā*, as many later Ḥanbalīs did.⁸⁰ Be that as it may, the fact that there existed friction between al-Ṭabarī and individuals affiliated to traditionalist groups, including the later Ḥanbalīs, may well have resulted from the finer qualifications he was offering on this topic and other related issues.⁸¹

While al-Ṭabarī's commentary is replete with doctrinal discussions in which key points of dogma are painstakingly expounded upon and then appropriately endorsed in light of his own standpoint, he was also the author of two theological treatises which unambiguously introduced orthodox dogma using a credal format. According to biographical evidence, parts of the *tafsīr* were initially available as early as 270/883, while the whole of the work was in circulation between the years 283/896 and 290/903.⁸² The shorter treatises, the first of which is the *Ṣarīḥ al-sunna* and the

second, *al-Tabṣīr fī maʿālim al-dīn*, appeared subsequent to the *Jāmiʿ*.⁸³ The *Ṣarīḥ* is divided into pithy sections which discuss select points of dogma, adducing dicta sourced from the Pious Ancestors to highlight that the theological views presented in the work encapsulate the essence of a traditionally defined orthodoxy. Doctrines he addresses in this include the uncreated nature of the Qurʾān; the reality of the beatific vision; the divine creation of the human act; hierarchies among the Companions and their virtues; the status of the articulated word of God; the divisible nature of faith; the relationship between the *ism* and the *musammā*; and the gravity of falsely attributing statements to someone – the fact that al-Ṭabarī is drawing attention to this last point appears to hint at certain doctrinal allegations which were made against him and are recorded in biographical anecdotes. He uses the *Ṣarīḥ* to affirm that his positions on the key doctrinal issues are the ones outlined in the text and that anyone insinuating otherwise is an utter miscreant who deserves God’s wrath.⁸⁴ Doctrinal points are covered in greater depth and detail in the second related treatise, *al-Tabṣīr fī maʿālim al-dīn*, a work which was written for the people of Āmul, Ṭabaristān, following a request that al-Ṭabarī compose a text providing a summary of the doctrines over which the community had differed.⁸⁵ Expressing the need to avoid discord on matters of faith and also highlighting the fact that the natives of Āmul were being led by a malevolent elite who had openly sown the seeds of dissension among them, particularly the easily beguiled common folk, it is the subject of the *ism* and the *musammā* with which he commences his disquisition. Significantly, he is not concerned with explaining the intricacies of the arguments in this regard but the topic provides him with an opening gambit as he bemoans the fact that those who delve into the subject have no appreciation as to what informs the debates, often misconstruing the fact that esteemed figures such as the traditionists Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890) and Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī (d. 264/878) are said to have professed the doctrine of the *ism* being equivalent to the *musammā*, erroneously deducing from that a presumed orthodox position to which they ignorantly and crudely subscribed; al-Ṭabarī warns that they were unaware of the gravity of what they were saying.

In the *Ṣarīḥ al-sunna*, al-Ṭabarī simply states that the doctrine of whether the *ism* is the *musammā* or an entity other than it represents a senseless innovation concerning which there are no (early) dicta which might be sought for guidance on the matter, nor indeed statements attributed to respected authorities to which one might pay heed; he then advises that it suffices to follow the lead of the Qurʾānic verse which states *and to God belongs the exalted names so plead to Him through them* (Q. 7:180). It was the phrasing provided by this very verse which certain traditionalist scholars adopted when formulating their compromise solution to the quandary of the relationship between the *nomen* and *nomenatum*: namely, that *al-ism liʾl-musammā*. Later scholarship was to explain that there were occasions when the *ism* was identical with the *musammā*, just as there were instances when the two should be considered as

constituting separate identities.⁸⁶ It was also posited that the assertion of the formula *al-ism li'l-musammā* circumvented the doctrinal obstacles predicated by the Mu^ctazilī position. The formula also meant that theoretical tensions about the nature of *al-tasmiyya*, a veritable *tertium quid* in relation to the *ism wa'l-musammā*, were expediently dissipated.⁸⁷ Al-Ṭabarī had demonstrated with clinical insight and precision in the *Jāmi^c* that insurmountable logical absurdities resulted from upholding the concept of the ontological unity between the *ism* and the *musammā*. The gist of his arguments was presented with greater simplicity, but equally decisive terms in both the *Ṣarīh al-sunna* and the *Tabṣīr*, with the aim of showing that such discussions were invariable futile and best avoided as the Pious Ancestors had never intended that the paradigm should serve as a shibboleth of orthodoxy. It is worthy of note that aspects of the arguments presented by al-Ṭabarī on the subject resonated in the works of luminaries such as the Zāhirī scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), and likewise Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who presented a detailed treatment of the topic with the aim of showing that while the 'orthodox' reaction to the Mu^ctazilī doctrine was understandable, the resultant doctrine did have its flaws and undesirable consequences.⁸⁸ Indeed, in his treatment of the topic, Ibn Taymiyya quotes extensively from al-Ṭabarī, insisting that it was his position as articulated in the *Ṣarīh al-sunna* which was worthy of emulation. In the *Jāmi^c* al-Ṭabarī's mastery of the arguments is evident and he took advantage of the latitude provided by the forum of *tafsīr* to broach the topic in an allusive but effective manner, underlining the intricate disposition of his own theological standpoints and the skill with which they are synthesised; moreover, the references to the topic in his credal compositions reveal the consistency of his position.

Characterising the Theological Thought of al-Ṭabarī

In a study of al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the Qur'anic pericopes in which the beatific vision is extolled, Gösta Vitestam made the case that his theological approach was intellectual but somewhat veiled.⁸⁹ He even suggests it was distinguished from the philosophy of the Ḥanbalīs, adherents of 'naïve popular piety', and he reasoned that in certain ways al-Ṭabarī 'was bounded by the traditional *tafsīr* and did not dare to transgress its limits'. Vitestam did refer to the 'openmindedness' with which al-Ṭabarī explored certain theological topics as being rather astonishing, but seems to attribute his whole drive as being regulated by his wanting to win the confidence of the orthodox, which hints at a somewhat disingenuous aspect to the aims of his endeavour. Vitestam argues that al-Ṭabarī wanted to show he was keenly acquainted with the concept of God for which the speculative theologians stood. But on the evidence of the *Jāmi^c*, in contrast, al-Ṭabarī's foray into the realm of speculative theology is barely diffident or guarded, nor is it couched in moderate terms, but is rather vigorously and assertively pursued. He is not unctuously seeking to appease

certain theological quarters and camps, but independently aligning himself with the views he felt were representative of an accepted orthodoxy. In this respect Claude Gilliot has argued in his monograph on al-Ṭabarī that his commentary helps pave the way for the articulation of a traditionally-based orthodoxy and even hints that he did not have an explicit opponent in mind when pondering theological questions, although the aforementioned discussions and al-Ṭabarī's subtle criticism of the grammarians reveal that specific adversaries, movements and even ideas were clearly within the vista of the dialectical sweep of his own arguments.⁹⁰ And a number of traditionists proved to be implacable opponents of certain doctrinal positions al-Ṭabarī advocated. One theme evident from Gilliot's study is that the *Jāmi*^c was not principally concerned with the issues of dogma and dialectics but rather it aimed at the consolidation of an accepted orthodoxy based on theological views and discourses already in circulation.⁹¹ Franz Rosenthal concluded his influential study of the life and works of al-Ṭabarī by stating that 'there is every reason to assume that his dogmatic beliefs were basically those of the mainstream of 'orthodox' Islam as it was conceived, for instance, in the environment of Ibn Ḥanbal'.⁹² He went on to say that 'nothing to the contrary can be observed in his preserved dogmatic writings such as the *Ṣarīḥ* and the *Tabṣīr*'. Yet, as can be seen from the marked independence of thought and robust objectivity with which al-Ṭabarī forensically analysed theological topics in the *Jāmi*^c, his brand of theology possessed an adventurously intricate edge to it and he was prepared to differ not only with the Ḥanbalīs, but other key scholars as his gauging of the discourses on the *ism* and *musammā*, together with his examination of the *istiwā*³ verse, indicates.

Based on Joseph van Ess' study of the historical emergence of the Mu^ctazila and his conclusions regarding their role during the *miḥna* together with the connection between them and later Mu^ctazila, Christopher Melchert had presented a new identification of all the major opposing theological parties of the third/ninth century. He spoke of there being three main parties during the third/ninth century: traditionalists (including luminaries such as Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal), rationalists (Ḥanafī jurists and the leading Mu^ctazilī scholars) and semi-rationalists (self-proclaimed traditionalists who employed apologetic theology). He posited that traditionalists tended to be opponents of dialectics, whose approach to law and issues of theology was strictly informed by scriptural sources such as the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*. In contrast the semi-rationalists made ample use of speculative methods and constructs in approaches to theology and law, resorting to rationally based analogues. Melchert identified al-Ṭabarī as one of a number of third/ninth-century figures who harboured semi-rationalist tendencies.⁹³ However, one senses that the term 'semi-rationalist', which by Melchert's own admission retains an indistinctness, probably overlooks the fine distinctions with regards to the subtle fusion between traditionalism and rationalism within the make up of al-Ṭabarī's theological position together with the

individuality which is a mark of his work, whether it is in the realm of his approach to theology, jurisprudence, or even history. Such generalised terms overlook the dynamics of the currency of a developing orthodoxy, as al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* shows, although the classification provides some definition with regards to prevailing attitudes within the Sunnī camps. Fascinatingly, with the modern context in mind, Walid Saleh discerningly points out that 'al-Ṭabarī was never Salafī enough for the Salafīs' and that for the purposes of their agenda his work was usurped by Ibn Kathīr's Qur'an commentary.⁹⁴ Clifford Bosworth refers to the fact that al-Ṭabarī generally treated the verses of the Qur'an 'from a grammatical and lexicographical standpoint'; he also notes that the author makes both 'dogmatic theological and legal deductions from the text' and that his 'own dogmatic beliefs appear to have been basically within the framework of "orthodox" Islam as conceived, for example, in the environment of Ibn Ḥanbal just before al-Ṭabarī's time and that of al-Ash'arī after him'.⁹⁵ However there are unique characteristics to the constitution of al-Ṭabarī's dogmatic theology which sometimes place him at odds with specific points of doctrine which Ibn Ḥanbal and his students would have endorsed, and this would also apply with regards to his use of *kalām* techniques in the defence of dogma; yet by the same token he does not fully subscribe to the unfettered brand of speculative and theology with which al-Ash'arī and his later adherents are associated, making unique his own synthesis of theology and approaches to its defence. Even the position he was to take in defending or repudiating specific Prophetic traditions underlines the thoroughly objective ethic he adopted in his works.

Al-Ṭabarī in the Biographical Sources

Despite the fact that classical biographical sources generously acknowledge the distinction of al-Ṭabarī's intellectual achievements and his contribution to the classical traditions of learning, also comprised alongside the profusion of adulatory dicta are selected reports that speak of contentious issues and dramatic episodes in which his resolve on key theological, *ḥadīth*-based and legal standpoints was tested. The incidents in question provide further context to the theological discussions and perspectives which feature in the *Jāmi'*, and the bases of his own position on crucial points of doctrine. It is worth drawing attention to the provenance of the biographical sources on al-Ṭabarī, many of which emanate from materials collated by students linked with him. Two such students, al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Kāmil b. Khalaf (d. 350/961) and Abū Muḥammad °Abd al-°Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (*fl.* third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries), are said to have compiled biographies devoted to their mentor and although their works have not survived, their names appear with regularity as informants and narrators for the panoply of reports which cover his life and times in biographical literature.⁹⁶ Another student, Abū Muḥammad °Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ja°far al-Farghānī (d. 362/972–3), was the author of an important supplement (*ṣila*)

to al-Ṭabarī's seminal history, which included an obituary devoted to his mentor.⁹⁷ Ibn Kāmil is credited with a number of notable exegetical and legal works and he was responsible for promulgating the school of jurisprudence which was linked with al-Ṭabarī, who by his own admission had previously adhered to the Shāfi'ī tradition of *fiqh* for a period of some ten years, confirming the significance he attached to the notion of independent *ijtihād*.⁹⁸ Rosenthal notes that al-Ṭabarī's own works are a very 'limited source of hard biographical data' about the author, adding that the principal materials on his life were preserved in three works: the *Ta'rikh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071); the *Tā'rikh madīnat Dimashq* of Ibn °Asākīr (d. 571/1176); and the *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb* of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 629/1229), which furnished the most exhaustive account of his life – it was Yāqūt who intimated at the end of his entry on al-Ṭabarī that most of the reports on his life were sourced from the biographical works devoted to him by Ibn Kāmil and °Abd al-°Azīz. Rosenthal suggested that later writers principally relied upon the profusion of reports preserved in these compilations, although it should be noted that unique references to incidents in his lifetime are found in other historical materials.⁹⁹

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī commences al-Ṭabarī's entry in the *Ta'rikh Baghdād* by recounting that despite the fact that news of his death was not announced, those who gathered for the ritual burial prayer were numerous and that vigils were held at his grave for many months; he also reports that he was the subject of elegies composed by religious scholars and littérateurs.¹⁰⁰ Yāqūt mentions that, due to fear of the common folk, al-Ṭabarī had to be buried at night, as accusations were made against him about his Shī'ī sympathies. This is previously recorded in the work of the ethicist and historian Miskawayhi (d. 421/1030), who mentions his being interred at night due to the rabble preventing his funeral taking place during the day, adding that he was accused of 'rafḍ' and 'ilhād' ('Shī'ī tendencies' and 'heresy').¹⁰¹ In his *al-Muntaẓam fī tā'rikh al-umam wa'l-mulūk*, Ibn al-Jawzī repeats most of the detail found in al-Khaṭīb's work, but while discussing his funeral and the fact his death was not publicised he offers some thoughts as to why al-Ṭabarī was accused of harbouring Shī'ī sympathies, referring to al-Ṭabarī's opinion that the wiping over the feet associated with ritual ablution was permissible in lieu of washing them, a position favoured by the Imāmīs.¹⁰² As argued by Rosenthal, even a brief examination of the discussions of the relevant Qur'anic passage, Q. 5:7, as presented in the *tafsīr* shows that al-Ṭabarī's position is undoubtedly aligned with the perspective advanced by Sunnī scholars, with his own discussion of 'wiping' being qualified through citations of authenticated *qirā'āt* which support the different interpretations; still, the espousal of such a view was hardly evidence of any Shī'ī leanings.¹⁰³ Ibn al-Jawzī quotes from the work of the historian Thābit b. Sinān (d. 365/975) when mentioning the accusations of *rafḍ*, an important source upon which later historians relied.¹⁰⁴

Biographical works also attributed allegations of Shi'ism to the fact that al-Ṭabarī had devoted a study to the famous Ghadīr Khumm tradition which he discussed in a work he composed devoted to the virtues of al-Imām ʿAlī, *Kitāb faḍāʾil ʿAlī*; in the text he authenticated the actual tradition and appended to it *faḍāʾil* materials on Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Indeed, the subject is touched upon by Yāqūt, who hints that it was probably cited as evidence of his Shi'ism.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, there were of course earlier *ḥadīth* scholars, including Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), who had already included it in their collections.¹⁰⁶ Its citation together with discussions germane to the technicalities of its *isnād* documentation was hardly an indicator of dogmatic bias; the fact that the tradition was glossed in ways to reflect the legitimacy and primacy of the claims of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib to the office of caliphate within Shi'ism remains an entirely separate issue; besides, al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* and the two credal treatises he composed confirm his staunch loyalty to the standard doctrines on the caliphate articulated by traditionalist Sunnī scholars.¹⁰⁷ There were slight variations on the Ghadīr Khumm tradition, such as the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*, which featured in Sunnī collections, including Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*;¹⁰⁸ and indeed the dictum referred to as the *ḥadīth al-tayr*.¹⁰⁹ Although, again, the inclusion of these traditions in these extensive collections was part and parcel of *ḥadīth* scholarship.

The concerted attempts to tarnish and discredit al-Ṭabarī's Sunnī reputation appear to have their origin in some of the disputes in which he himself was embroiled.¹¹⁰ In the ensuing passages of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Muntaẓam*, the person responsible for bringing a number of allegations against al-Ṭabarī to the attention of a figure by the name of Naṣr the chamberlain is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Abī Dāwūd (d. 316/929). His father was the famous traditionist, Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath (d. 275/888), who was a distinguished student of Ibn Ḥanbal and transmitted the corpora of the *amālī* (also referred to as the *masāʾil*), constituting many of his legal responsa and whose *sunan* collection of traditions was renowned.¹¹¹ Among the accusations discussed in Ibn al-Jawzī's account is that al-Ṭabarī professed the beliefs of the Jahmīs (those with presumed Muʿtazilī inclinations) on account of his explanation of Q. 5:64, where it is mentioned that *God's two hands are stretched out*, which he purportedly paraphrased as 'God's grace' (*niʿma*), a figurative spin on the verses which many rationalists favoured; in the *Muntaẓam*, Ibn al-Jawzī reports that he denied this. Al-Ṭabarī's commentary has an extended discussion of the various explanations proffered for this verse, in which he initially points out that in the usage and poetry of the Arabs such turns of expressions were used to symbolise benevolence and munificence as opposed to ungenerousness, but he then includes a gamut of other explanations which are individually analysed.¹¹² Among these are views advocated by speculative theologians (*ahl al-jadal*) some of whom posit that 'His two hands' means 'His grace', while others equate the term with '*quwwa*' ('power'), seeking parallels with a second Qur'anic verse (Q. 38:45).¹¹³ Other explanations are listed, including *yad*

being paraphrased as representing His sovereignty and treasures (*mulk wa-khazā'inuhu*) and one which identifies *yad* as being one of His attributes, noting that it is not an organ (*jāriha*) in the form of a human hand. The final part of the discussion of the verse simply comprises separate but cogent refutations of the view that equates *yad* with *ni'ama*, which are successively listed but introduced through the formula 'they say', and it is with the refutations that he concludes the section, although the last opinion cited makes it plain that it is inconceivable in the language of the Arabs that the dual can be used to connote an entire class, as in *yadayn* for *ni'ama*. The way the *tafsīr* is structured enabled al-Ṭabarī to include all sorts of perspectives and explanations with which he did not necessarily agree, and while he regularly shares his thoughts on his preferred view, there are also many instances in which he remains silent; still, concerning this particular verse, Abū Bakr's claim appears unfounded.

The second allegation which Abū Bakr made was that al-Ṭabarī had narrated a dubious tradition which mentions that upon the Prophet's death his very soul flowed into the hands of °Alī who proceeded to ingest it; al-Ṭabarī disputes having offered such a wording, disclosing that he simply said he wiped his face with it. Ibn al-Jawzī considers the whole episode of the accusations to be highly implausible (*muḥāl*) before going on to imply that the incidents were credible because al-Ṭabarī actually responded to the charges by way of an epistle sent to Naṣr, the chamberlain, in which he elaborated 'there is no assemblage lower in Islam than this despicable group'. The fact that al-Ṭabarī referred to 'this group' using this sort of language indicates his anger at the seriousness of the allegations. Ibn al-Jawzī describes the statement as unpleasant, observing that 'he should have confronted his actual accuser and not condemn an entire group, given that he was aware of the affiliation of the individual making the accusation'.¹¹⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that al-Ṭabarī had taken stances on theological points which brought him into conflict with certain traditionist scholars, it is the disputes with Ibn Abī Dāwūd which appear to have been particularly divisive, affecting judgements about his Sunnī allegiances in the later biographical sources.¹¹⁵ Bearing in mind the more general reasons given for al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the Ghadīr Khumm report, it seems that his discussion of its authentication and transmission may have its origins in the disputes with Ibn Abī Dāwūd as some reports indicate that originally al-Ṭabarī set about authenticating the Ghadīr Khumm dictum upon hearing that Ibn Abī Dāwūd had questioned its genuineness, and this led to his working on the composition of the *faḍā'il* works, as indicated above.¹¹⁶ According to the *hadīth* critic Ibn °Adī (d. 365/976), Ibn Abī Dāwūd was renowned for his fiercely anti-Shī'ī stances, questioning not only the traditions such as the Ghadīr Khumm and the *ḥadīth al-ṭayr* dictum, which were viewed as being symbolically important within Shī'ism, but also promulgating reports which impugned °Alī's reputation; Ibn Abī Dāwūd is said to have been so sceptical of the *ḥadīth al-ṭayr* tradition that he declared

that if it were true, it would invalidate the concept of the Prophethood of Muḥammad.¹¹⁷ It is noted that having been banished from Baghdad for some years, he later returned and adopted a much more conciliatory attitude and joined the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* (*taḥanbala*); it was even stated that he set about composing a work which promulgated the virtues of °Alī, upon hearing of which al-Ṭabarī sardonically declared, 'The [slumbering] sentinel has bellowed *Allāhu akbar*', a turn of phrase used to mock someone pretending to be alert.¹¹⁸ Referring to the reports in Yāqūt's *Irshād*, Rosenthal did argue that the various questions raised by individuals about the historicity of the episode at Ghadīr Khumm impelled al-Ṭabarī to take a stand, which led to his authorship of the *Faḍā'il °Alī*. Intriguingly, Rosenthal argued that Sunnī scholarship expressed 'discomfort' with al-Ṭabarī's efforts in respect of this putative work and he goes on to argue that while al-Ṭabarī's 'personal identification with "orthodox" attitudes cannot be doubted, he appears to have tried to be evenhanded in an objective scholarly manner, much to the embarrassment of later Sunnī scholars'.¹¹⁹ However, the issue here is not that Sunnī scholars were embarrassed by the subject of his work, as other notable *ḥadīth* specialists had already pored over and validated issues surrounding the transmission of these reports, but rather their disquiet stemmed from the fact that al-Ṭabarī was being inaccurately accused of harbouring Shī'ī inclinations, a charge which was in their view unfounded. Thus, for example, in the *Mizān al-i'tidāl* of Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), al-Ṭabarī is described as having 'a slight inclination towards *tashāyu'* and *muwālāt* which is innocuous'.¹²⁰ Picking up on these points in the commentary on the text, the *Lisān al-mizān*, Ibn Ḥajar al-°Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) tactfully probes the validity of these claims, referring to an accusation by Aḥmad b. °Alī al-Sulaymānī (d. 404/1013) which contends that al-Ṭabarī used 'to manufacture' traditions for Shī'īs, which Ibn Ḥajar describes as an indiscriminately spurious charge. He then remarks that al-Ṭabarī was a distinguished and esteemed scholar who may have had faults, but that to inveigh against him with falsehoods and baseless insinuations was deplorable. He goes on to offer the interesting observation that perhaps al-Ṭabarī was being confused with his namesake, Abū Ja°far b. Rustam al-Ṭabarī, who was a renowned Shī'ī scholar.¹²¹ This same conclusion was earlier reached by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), who described seeing a two-volume work which brought together transmissions of the Ghadīr Khumm report and a similar work devoted to the *ḥadīth al-ṭayr*. Ibn Kathīr also repeats the claim, which appears to originate with Ibn Abī Dāwūd, that al-Ṭabarī was said to have professed the Shī'ī view regarding the wiping of the feet when performing ablution as opposed to the view which stipulated that washing them was obligatory. He briefly refers to the ensuing confusion between the identification of Ibn Rustam and al-Ṭabarī, arguing that the latter's *Jāmi'* clearly shows that he stipulates that washing the feet in water, together with rubbing them at the same time, was compulsory, noting that he used the expression '*mash'*', which was misconstrued by many who failed to appreciate the distinctions he intended; the implication is that al-Ṭabarī is absolved of holding such a view.¹²²

There were pre-existing hostilities between al-Ṭabarī and Dāwūd b. °Alī al-İṣfahānī (d. 270/884) the founder of the Zāhirī school. It is not insignificant that during one particular debate al-Ṭabarī had disputed with Dāwūd over a topic in which he overwhelmed him to the extent that he was unable to respond; as a result one of Dāwūd's students began to berate him, prompting al-Ṭabarī to leave. Although the student in question was reprimanded by Dāwūd, al-Ṭabarī went on to compose a text entitled *al-Radd °alā dhī'l-asfār*, a refutation evidently linked to the topics discussed in this incident.¹²³ Despite this, al-Ṭabarī was said to have held Dāwūd's scholarship in great esteem and reportedly had in his possession 80 fascicles of his works which he had actually transcribed.¹²⁴ Friction between al-Ṭabarī and the Zāhirīs persisted through Dāwūd's son, Abū Bakr, who is said to have been piqued by al-Ṭabarī's aforementioned encounter with his father. Rosenthal points out that biographical reports do recount that when by chance Abū Bakr and al-Ṭabarī were brought together, Abū Bakr implied that he had wanted to vent his annoyance at him, but that he was won over by al-Ṭabarī's excessive praise for his father and the respect he had accorded him as his son. Rosenthal concluded that this would tend to suggest that tensions between al-Ṭabarī and Abū Bakr were amicably resolved,¹²⁵ however, it seems highly likely that the antagonism between al-Ṭabarī and the Zāhirīs remained. Indeed, some centuries later it was Ibn Kathīr who reported that 'he was buried in his home because common folk among the Ḥanbalīs and the rabble attached to them prevented his burial during the day, attributing him to *rafḍ*; and there were ignoramuses who accused him of heresy'.¹²⁶ Refuting the insinuations, Ibn Kathīr contends that they were simply 'emulating Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Faqīh al-Zāhirī, who used to criticise him [al-Ṭabarī], accusing him of grave offences and *rafḍ*'.¹²⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990 or 395/1003) lists under Abū Bakr's works a text entitled *al-Intiṣār min Abī Ja°far al-Ṭabarī*, which would confirm the rivalry of sorts between the two figures.¹²⁸ One does find criticisms of al-Ṭabarī circulating in later Zāhirī literature, hinting at lingering tensions. One of the most prominent Zāhirī luminaries, the Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm, produced a detailed critique of al-Ṭabarī's supposed stance on the obligation of knowing God's attributes by way of *istidlāl* ('deductive reasoning').¹²⁹ He was of the view that al-Ṭabarī was 'a great figure among our predecessors whom we respect for his virtues', but added that his beliefs on the topic, which were derived by an elevation of the status of analogical reasoning, had to be contested.¹³⁰

Historical Trajectories of the Discord

Much more arresting in the biographical literature are the narratives which refer to al-Ṭabarī's disagreement with the emerging Ḥanbalīs, which is all very ironic given that as a young man when he left Āmul, his home town in Ṭabaristān, his intention was to study traditions with Ibn Ḥanbal in Baghdad.¹³¹ Indications that there were

issues with specific individuals who were associated with the Ḥanbalīs is evident from al-Khaṭīb's inclusion of an anecdote which records that the traditionist scholar Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma (d. 311/923) had borrowed a copy of the *Jāmi'* from a student to whom the text had been dictated by al-Ṭabarī between the years of 283/896 to 290/902–3, and that having borrowed the *tafsīr* for some years, he declared that no one was more knowledgeable than al-Ṭabarī and that the Ḥanbalīs had indeed 'wronged him'.¹³² Ibn Khuzayma also features in a connected report in which a student tells the tale that, having returned to Nishāpūr from Baghdad, where he studied traditions, he was asked by Ibn Khuzayma about his teachers there. Having alluded to the individuals with whom he studied, he was questioned as to whether he had benefited from al-Ṭabarī's knowledge. He replied, 'No', explaining that while al-Ṭabarī was in Baghdad no one was able to meet with him as the Ḥanbalīs prevented students from seeing him. Expressing his dismay, Ibn Khuzayma replied that studying with al-Ṭabarī would have surpassed learning with all those other individuals.¹³³ It was Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 772/1370), the Ash'arī apologist, who poured ridicule on the idea that the Ḥanbalīs could have wielded such influence, to the extent that they prevented individuals from seeing him, although it has been pointed out that his view of the Ḥanbalīs was somewhat prejudiced.¹³⁴ This wrangling with certain traditionalist individuals who were affiliated with the Ḥanbalīs is a recurring theme in the biographical sources, but although they are said to have been the instigators behind much of the ensuing hostility, it is evident from the rather refractory nature of al-Ṭabarī's relationship with the Zāhirīs, and indeed the traditionist Ibn Abī Dāwūd, that there existed a range of misgivings emanating from various groups and individuals, particularly with regards to points of theology and rational approaches to the defence of doctrine, and even points on jurisprudence and *ḥadīth*, which accounted for the broader antagonism between al-Ṭabarī and his opponents. Such tensions became a catalyst for a sustained outpouring of enmity and over the centuries original accusations were given further currency. Al-Ṭabarī's literary legacy, in addition to his biography, certainly indicates that he should be seen as an independently-minded individual who enjoyed mastery over key traditions of learning, all of which inevitably brought him into intellectual as well as personal disagreements with his peers, whether they were jurists, grammarians, traditionists, or indeed theologians.¹³⁵ He was prepared to clash not only with his ideological opponents among the speculative theologians of the Mu'tazilīs but also with those who belonged to the broad alliance of the Sunnī camps, including traditionists, among whom were Ḥanbalīs, and those who were advocates of a rational defence, treatment and qualification of points of dogma and theology. Indeed, it was with an independent frame of mind and even-handedness that he broached scholarly topics, a point very much discerned in Rosenthal's view of the character of his scholarship. In his biography of al-Ṭabarī, al-Farghānī speaks eloquently of his fearing no one despite the ignominy of his being treated

obnoxiously, adding that his adversaries were ignoramuses, those driven by envy, and even heretics.¹³⁶

According to the initially allusive account in Yāqūt's *Irshād*, around the year 297/907, al-Ṭabarī was sought out in the mosque by the Ḥanbalīs one Friday and questioned concerning Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and about the *ḥadīth al-julūs 'alā'l-'arsh*. The context for this seems to have been related to al-Ṭabarī's composition of the *Ihktilāf al-fuqahā'*, a work which collated the opinions of key jurists and was supposedly composed to assist him in recollecting the views of those with whom he was debating. This was one among an impressive array of works he devoted to legal topics, including the *Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*, which apparently encompassed the sum and substance of his legal views. Still, there appear to have been objections as to why Ibn Ḥanbal was not included among the authorities listed in the *Ihktilāf* work.¹³⁷ Al-Ṭabarī's response was to have said Aḥmad's views on *khilāf* are 'not deliberated over', to which came the response that other scholars have cited his views on *ikhilāf*; al-Ṭabarī countered by stating that he had 'not seen [instances] of anyone citing him in this regard and nor was he aware of any of his companions being depended upon therein'.¹³⁸ The discussions à propos the *ḥadīth al-julūs 'alā'l-'arsh* centred on an interpretation of the last part of Q. 17:79, *perchance, your Lord might bring you back to a highly extolled station*.¹³⁹ One gloss of the latter part of the verse attributed to the exegete Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722) referred to the Prophet being sat on the glorious throne. In Yāqūt's account al-Ṭabarī is said to have mentioned the *ḥadīth al-julūs 'alā'l-'arsh* and asserted it was *muḥāl* ('impossible'), apparently citing a verse of poetry to drive home his point, much to the vexation of the 'Ḥanbalīs and *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*' who leapt up and began throwing their ink pots at him. In the aftermath of this al-Ṭabarī quickly sought refuge in his home, where stones were thrown at its entrance, thereby blocking access to the property. Apparently, 'thousands' of police intervened to protect him from the common folk.¹⁴⁰ Rosenthal has suggested there are manifest elements of hyperbole in the accounts of this incident, particularly the references to 'thousands of police' being called upon to intervene, and he has even played down the suggestion that as a consequence of these events al-Ṭabarī composed an apology to the Ḥanbalīs, spending the remainder of his life praising the virtues of Ibn Ḥanbal and the sound nature of his beliefs to the extent that he inveighed against anyone who insinuated that he implied otherwise.¹⁴¹ Yāqūt remarks that it is even claimed that his work on *ikhilāf* was found buried in his home following his death and that copies were made of the text.¹⁴² Notwithstanding the formulaic elements in the accounts of these events, the fact remains that there was undoubtedly hostility between al-Ṭabarī and certain individuals who were associated with the *ahl al-ḥadīth* and the Ḥanbalīs; and it was principally theological issues which appear to be the source of his travails, although topics germane to ritual law and even traditions emerge in disputes recounted in the biographical literature.¹⁴³ Ibn

al-Jawzī reports that in the year 309/923 Abū Jaʿfar was asked to attend the home of the vizier ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā in order to debate with the Ḥanbalīs; however, even though al-Ṭabarī showed up, the Ḥanbalīs did not appear – it is stated that they had a number of specified grievances against him.¹⁴⁴ The event may well have been related to the accusations about al-Ṭabarī's theological views; in his *al-Kāmil fī'l-taʾrīkh*, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), bemoans the fact that the common folk egregiously prevented al-Ṭabarī's public funeral on account of the allegations of his inclination to *rafḍ* and *ilhād*, but in relation to the charges he indicates that it was the same vizier ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā who actually exclaimed 'By God had these people been asked to elaborate as to what is meant by *rafḍ* and *ilhād*, they would neither know nor comprehend [the meaning]'.¹⁴⁵ Ibn al-Athīr goes on to claim that some Ḥanbalī individuals were actually behind this and the common folk simply followed their lead. It is not insignificant that numerous theological points made within the *tafsīr* would have caused consternation to those of a stern religiosity, and, as has been mentioned, even the use of dialectical frameworks was spurned by arch-traditionists. Figures such as the Ḥanbalī al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941) spoke of the baleful nature of the *kalām*-based procedure, even pronouncing that such a method led to the 'igniting of doubts in the heart even though its proponent may arrive at truth and the *sunna*'.¹⁴⁶ Regarding al-Barbahārī, Rosenthal did conclude that although his 'name is not mentioned in connection with al-Ṭabarī's Ḥanbalite trouble, he must be seen as the person behind most of it'.¹⁴⁷ Yet it seems inevitable that the seeds of the disputes between al-Ṭabarī and his detractors were sown much earlier, when the *Jāmiʿ* was first composed and gradually disseminated through al-Ṭabarī's lectures, well before al-Barbahārī became active; and, intellectually, he was less influential than Ibn Abī Dāwūd, who remained a somewhat implacable foe.¹⁴⁸ Ibn Abī Dāwūd was respected in his lifetime as a traditionist, becoming a figure around whom opposition to al-Ṭabarī could consolidate. Indeed, despite its late provenance there is a report in the *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* of al-Dhahabī which provides some sense of the support which Ibn Abī Dāwūd could muster: it states that 'the Ḥanābila were the *ḥizb* ('cohorts') of Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd and that they were numerous and agitated against Ibn Jarīr, causing him harm to the extent that he confined himself to his home'.¹⁴⁹

With regards to the explanation of the verse Q. 17:79 provided in the *tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī takes the view that the *maqām* referred to the Prophet's being able to intercede on that day; and this too was a second view with which the exegete Mujāhid is associated, although he is actually cited as the source for the report that the Prophet would be seated on the throne.¹⁵⁰ However, al-Ṭabarī does include the gloss which refers to the Prophet being seated on the throne but it is one among a sequence of explanations he introduces for the verse. Significantly, having registered that view, he follows it up by categorically adducing Prophetic traditions which identifies the '*maqāman*

maḥmūdān' with the act of intercession, and these are introduced by al-Ṭabarī with the statement that they provide 'the most preferred two statements on the (subject) in terms of correctness', although he does go on to ponder at length the sundry theological implications of the discussions and viewpoints germane to the *julūs* narrative, sensitively attempting to find subtle ways of evaluating them.¹⁵¹ In his voluminous *Kitāb al-sunna*, which preserves a miscellany of legal, theological, exegetical and even paraenetic statements attributed to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the circle of scholars who were closely linked with him and the orthodoxy he espoused, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) includes a detailed section devoted to the *maqām al-maḥmūd*, quoting the Mujāhid explanation together with a selection of related materials, including dicta on the subject of *al-julūs ʿalā'l-ʿarsh* as discussed by traditionists.¹⁵² In one of the reports Ibn Ḥanbal's son, ʿAbd Allāh, reflects on a conversation he had with his father concerning the tradition's *isnād* in which the former is said to have sighed due to the fact that it had not reached him with a chain of transmission that was *ʿālī* (possessing a coveted shorter *isnād*).¹⁵³ Al-Khallāl also recalls that his mentor, Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 275/888–9), who was a student of Ibn Ḥanbal, actually had a work entitled *Kitāb al-maqām al-maḥmūd* from which he read;¹⁵⁴ al-Khallāl's discussion of the topic is exceptionally detailed, including a welter of statements arguing for the veracity of the reports that the Prophet would be seated on the throne, with various luminaries separately pronouncing that whoever rejects the Mujāhid tradition and the inference that the Prophet would be seated on the throne 'is *jahmī*'; 'is disavowed'; or deserves to be 'impeached'; figures such as Ishāq b. Rāhawayhi (d. 238/852) and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī are ceremoniously cited for their endorsements; and there are reports affirming the reliability of Layth, who transmitted the view on the authority of Mujāhid; even the interpretation of dreams is invoked to support the explanation.¹⁵⁵ It is unquestionable that this was a topic which led to passionate debates with respected traditionists offering strident defences of the interpretation; the reliability of the reports claiming that the Prophet would be seated on the throne is consistently defended throughout the section.¹⁵⁶ While, for the rationalists among Muʿtazilī theologians and certain Sunnī individuals, the physicalities regarding the Prophet's linkage with the glorious throne had implications for their notions of God's divine transcendence. As noted above, in the *Jāmiʿ* al-Ṭabarī does include Mujāhid's gloss, but with a measure of equanimity he simply qualified its importance by suggesting that there existed a preferred view: namely, that the verse in question was acclaiming the Prophet's role as an intercessor on that day. It was probably his support of such explanations which brought him into conflict with defenders of that particular interpretation of the verse; many of its supporters were figures later associated with the emerging Ḥanbalī school.¹⁵⁷ The Baṣran grammarian al-Zajjāj, in his fleeting reference to the *maqāman maḥmūdān* narrative briefly states that the best explanation is the one which equates it with the Prophet's intercession, which would suggest that in his lifetime there were figures

linked with the Ḥanbalīs who were prepared to side with such views.¹⁵⁸ The subtleties inherent in al-Ṭabarī's convoluted explanation of the *maqām* verse were seemingly lost on later scholars who seized upon one of the opinions he endorsed in the *tafsīr*: al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) actually remarks that al-Ṭabarī underpinned it (the notion of the Prophet's being seated on the throne) using an 'needlessly inflated avowal'. Al-Qurṭubī was to insist that such meanings can only be accommodated through the matrix of *ta'wīl*: namely, that it was inappropriate to imply that God was restricted to space, location and direction. He also listed next to the mention of al-Ṭabarī a view ascribed to Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, Abū Bakr's father, in which it is proclaimed that whoever denies this tradition (the Prophet's sitting on the throne) is besmirched, thereby confirming the historical tension between the position taken by certain traditionists and the one countenanced by al-Ṭabarī, suggesting the dispute, in terms of its representing a struggle of ideas, was protracted and would have intensified once al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi'*, together with his teachings, was in circulation.¹⁵⁹

The chasms one can sometimes encounter between the positions taken by al-Ṭabarī on dogmatic issues covered in the *Jāmi'* and those included in the credal treatises of the traditionists, many of whom were later associated with the emerging Ḥanbalī tradition, do, it becomes evident, account for some of the criticisms directed towards him by his detractors. A further example of this can be seen in al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the verse in which the heavenly *kursī* is mentioned (Q. 2:255), where he reports that the *ahl al-ta'wīl* differed over the semantic import of the term. He begins by mentioning that some have taken the view that the *kursī* represents God's knowledge and he adduced a dictum linked with Ibn 'Abbās which was narrated by al-Ṭabarī's mentor, Abū Kurayb (d. 248/861–2), along with an auxiliary report sourced from Ibn 'Abbās which contextualises the interpretation further. The next explanation offered is one which states that the *kursī* represents the 'position of the *qadamayn*' adding that 'it issues a groaning sound like the sigh of a riding beast ('*aṭṭ ka-aṭṭ al-raḥl*').¹⁶⁰ A sequence of dicta is adduced to clarify the explanation, one of which speaks of the *kursī* being beneath the throne ('*arsh*') in the analogical vein of a footstool upon which sovereigns place their feet when seated on a throne. The sheer magnitude of the *kursī* and the throne is animated through various Prophetic traditions, one of which further speaks of the material relationship between the two as being akin to a ring being cast into the middle of a vast desolate plain. The final report presented by al-Ṭabarī is one which cites al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 112/728), who declares that 'the *kursī* is the '*arsh*'. Having listed the various positions, it is hinted that each of the views professed 'has its foundation and mode of support' before it is affirmed by al-Ṭabarī that the most apposite explanation is the one supported by the tradition in which the Prophet refers to the throne filling the heavens and the earth and says that He will sit upon it leaving not 'four digits [of space]', and that it issues a groan like the sigh of a riding beast when first mounted due to the weight [of its load] (*inna lahu aṭṭ ka-aṭṭ al-raḥl*

al-jadīd idhā rukiba min thiqalīhi’; three separate *asānīd* bearing similar reports are listed.¹⁶¹ His tendency to include a raft of different opinions, some of which he possibly disagrees with, provides him with a means of making dexterous use of the gamut of perspectives and explanations presented for the explication of certain verses.¹⁶² Still, it is rather surprising, and even out of character, that having listed this final explanation and introduced it by announcing that it represented the preferred view, al-Ṭabarī then returns to the first gloss of the verse linked with Ibn ʿAbbās, noting ‘that the explanation explicitly verified by the Qur’an is the statement of Ibn ʿAbbās’; namely, the one which equates the *kursī* with knowledge. The next segment of the verse, *protecting them burdens Him not*, is used to articulate the argument that ‘His knowledge of them [the heavens and earth] is no encumbrance to him’.¹⁶³ The concatenation of Prophetic, lexical and poetic dicta subsequently attested by al-Ṭabarī to deliver an irrefutable connection between the *kursī* and ʿilm intimates that it was this very view that he seems to incline towards, especially as the discussion of the *kursī* narrative culminates with these points; besides, he had returned to Ibn ʿAbbās’ explanation afresh having already discussed its import. Why al-Ṭabarī would want to manoeuvre between these two seemingly contradictory standpoints is confounding, but such jockeying for position would have placed him at odds with certain traditionist contemporaries who were upholding the authenticity of the dicta which refer to the ‘groaning’ of the *kursī* and the ʿarsh.¹⁶⁴ In actual fact, even the equating of the *kursī* with knowledge was viewed as an insidious means of circumventing the perceived anthropomorphic imagery presented by the tradition; indeed early traditionist scholars such as Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Abī Shayba (d. 297/907) were composing epistles devoted to the ʿarsh and the panoply of traditions which were related about it.¹⁶⁵ Discussing what he considered to be outrageous examples of Muʿtazilī exegesis which were aimed at reconciling the meanings of the Qur’an with dubious dogmatic inclinations, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) actually included the equating of the *kursī* with God’s knowledge as one such example; so even the accommodation of such views within the body of the *tafsīr* was deemed ominous by those of a traditionist persuasion.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, formidable traditionist scholars such as Ibn Khuzayma and, in later years, Ibn Manda (d. 395/1004) along with Ibn Baṭṭa al-ʿUkbarī (d. 387/997) all defended the report in question.¹⁶⁷ It was the dissenting Ḥanbalī Ibn al-Jawzī who dismissed it in his *Shubhat al-tashbīh*, condemning his Ḥanbalī cohorts for promulgating such dogmatic views, which he felt were vapid.¹⁶⁸ Likewise Ibn ʿAsākir actually authored a work entitled *Bayān al-wahm wa’l-takhlīṭ al-wāqīʿ fī ḥadīth al-aṭīf*, pouring scorn on such interpretations and assailing the figure responsible for its narration: Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767), the author of the *Sīra*.¹⁶⁹

The opposition an interpretation such as the one outlined by al-Ṭabarī would have faced is evident from the strident and protracted defence of the physical elements of the ʿarsh and *kursī* narratives which is mounted in the denunciatory work

of the traditionist al-Dārimī in a section entitled *Bāb mā jā' bi'l-kursī*, aimed at countering the arguments of his 'historical' opponent the Mu^ctazilī Bishr al-Marīsī. Arrestingly, he starts his philippic by talking of al-Marīsī's drawn out denial of God's throne and seat, remonstrating with his preference for the dictum in which Ibn ^cAbbās equates the *kursī* with God's knowledge. Al-Dārimī sets about questioning the *isnād* documentation for the tradition, arguing that it conflicts with what was narrated by trustworthy transmitters, noting there was a much more plausible dictum also narrated on the authority of Ibn ^cAbbās which sanctioned a contrary opinion. Al-Dārimī refers to a plethora of traditions which contravene the figurative treatment of references to the throne and seat, taking the opportunity to assail his beleaguered opponent at every possible stage of his deliberations, often incorporating al-Marīsī's arguments verbatim. Also included is the very tradition which mentions '*inna lahu aḥīṭ ka-aḥīṭ al-raḥl al-jadīd idhā rukiba min thiqalīhi*, which was initially endorsed as the preferred explanation for the *kursī* by al-Ṭabarī, but then passed over in favour of the Ibn ^cAbbās report.¹⁷⁰ Al-Dārimī emphasises that although he and his fellow traditionalists accept necessarily such dicta, they also 'believe in everything with which He describes himself and how He describes himself without qualification (*bi-lā kayf*)'. The scathing tone of al-Dārimī's tirade gives some indication of the indignation aroused by the equating of the *kursī* with ^cilm among certain traditionists; yet this is the explanation with which al-Ṭabarī concluded his exegesis; notwithstanding the fact that he uses the phrase 'explicitly verified by the Qur'an' to introduce it.¹⁷¹ It was the *aḥīṭ* tradition which was adduced in ^cAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's *Kitāb al-sunna wa'l-radd ^calā'l-Jahmiyya*, in a section dealing with dicta narrated on the subject of the throne and God the Almighty's sitting on it; and moreover, in the treatise terms such as *mumāssa* ('touching') are used and any inference that the physicalities implied by such narratives infringed upon the notion of God's transcendence is trenchantly dismissed as evidence of heresy.¹⁷² It is against the background of such discourses that opponents among the traditionist scholars would have assessed the theological musings of al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi^c*.

Although it would be absurd to assert that there existed a blanket opposition of sorts setting apart al-Ṭabarī and the Ḥanbalīs along with the traditionists, one does encounter points of dogma defended in the *Kitāb al-sunna* of ^cAbd Allāh which appear at odds with the views endorsed or preferred in the *Jāmi^c*, including the *maqāman maḥmūdan* and even to an extent the discussion on the *kursī*. It was his approach to discussing and supporting theological issues such as these together with the independence of mind with which al-Ṭabarī approached legal and *ḥadīth* discussions which led to the controversies in which he became involved, engendering spurious accusations about al-Ṭabarī's inclination to *ilhād*, *rafḍ* and *i^ctizāl*. Yet, as his discussion of *istiwā^c* and his musings on the inappropriateness of the *ism* and *musammā* paradigm demonstrate, he was prepared not only to criticise indirectly

figures such as al-Farrāʿ and Abū ʿUbayda, who were not quite in the *ahl al-jadal* camp, but also to take a stance against certain aspects of arch-traditionist discourses and selected doctrines he believed were not pertinent to expressions of religious orthodoxy.¹⁷³ The vigour and passion with which contentious theological issues are tackled in the *tafsīr* bespeak volumes about the dynamic which informs his own theology, giving the distinct impression that his struggle with his opponents is one epitomised by ideas. Despite the controversies and the fact that accusations lingered in the later sources about his so-called inclination to Shiʿism and unconventional theological views, in real terms the legacy of al-Ṭabarī remained undiminished and he continued to command the respect and admiration worthy of his contribution to the key traditions of learning which distinguished the Islamic sciences. Ibn al-Nadīm describes al-Ṭabarī as being one of the eminent scholars of his era, adding that he was a paragon of many of the traditional disciplines of learning, including the Qurʾanic sciences, grammar, poetry, philology and jurisprudence.¹⁷⁴ And, when commenting on his *tafsīr*, Ibn al-Nadīm remarks that no work of the like had ever been produced, pointing out that it had since been abridged by a number of scholars. When mentioning the works ascribed to Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Ibn al-Nadīm remarked that he also compiled a *tafsīr* which emulated the *tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī, which was a subtle hint at the rivalry between the two.¹⁷⁵ Testimonies referring to the superiority of the *Jāmiʿ* were to appear in successive biographical notices, from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s biographical dictionary to the work of Yāqūt. In his *Inbāh al-ruwāt ʿalā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, a work which offered one of the most extensive ‘biographical’ treatments of grammarians, philologists, littérateurs, poets, readers and historians, straddling the early years of the Islamic tradition and extending right through to the seventh/thirteenth century, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248) included a somewhat brief account of al-Ṭabarī in which he mentions the pre-eminence of his *tafsīr*: he also refers to his works on history and jurisprudence, noting that he had kept the entry on him concise due to his having separately devoted a text to the life and legacy of this figure entitled *al-Taḥrīr fī akhbār Muḥammad b. Jarīr*, a work he openly describes as being splendid.¹⁷⁶ In recognition of al-Ṭabarī’s achievements in the context of the period, it is therefore no surprise that the Shāfiʿī traditionalist and Ashʿarī theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 406/1016) had reportedly stated that it would have not have been considered too much had one travelled to China in order to come into possession of his *tafsīr*.¹⁷⁷

Conclusions

The significance of al-Ṭabarī’s contribution to the tradition of exegesis together with the magnitude of his achievement in the field rests not only with his subtle synthesis and collating of the disparate elements of *tafsīr*, but it extends to the fact that in the course of the *tafsīr* he was able to demonstrate that the discipline of exegesis provided

an important forum which could be brought to bear on the predominant discourses and intellectual debates of his era; moreover, in his *Jāmi*^c he successfully marshalled the sources and arguments with stunning skill when grappling with theological issues, and certainly influenced subsequent approaches to the defence of doctrine, ensuring his legacy was not only unrivalled but also that it would endure. Classical literary sources frequently and appropriately commend the theological conservatism and traditionalism of al-Ṭabarī with regards to his stance on dogmatic issues, with the view often expressed that his oeuvre affirms that he staunchly defended doctrines which were considered to be touchstones of an emerging Sunnī orthodoxy. However, what is striking about al-Ṭabarī's treatment and resolution of dogmatic issues is the objective and sedate manner in which he positions his own theological standpoints and objectively defends their rationale. And although his brand of theology sits firmly within the confines of traditionalist Sunnī orthodoxy, he does not predictably adhere to all of the theological positions which were determinedly upheld within such discourses, and it was this very fact that brought him into conflict with a number of influential figures among his peers. The consequences of this were enormous, leading to aspersions initially being cast about his loyalty to traditional Sunnī orthodoxy, discussions which reverberated in the classical literature: his unswerving allegiance to it was never in question, but the independence of thought and impartiality al-Ṭabarī brought to his treatment of theological issues were emblematic of his overall approach to scholarship. Al-Ṭabarī was willing to countenance a much more active approach to defending orthodoxy, but one which shows his thorough acquaintance with the currency of dogmatic theology. Moreover, while he registered his criticisms of aspects of traditionist theological discourses with which he disagreed with candour, he was equally at pains to draw attention to shortcomings in the theological discourses of those in the Sunnī rationalist camps, especially in instances where such material was the product of speculative and reactionary theological discourses, offering key revisions and complements to dogmatic constructs devised for the defence of doctrine. The fact that al-Ṭabarī had adopted such a comprehensive approach to topics and themes pored over in the *tafsīr* meant that for some later writers the subtlety of his doctrinal musings was sometimes obliquely obscured. Of course, over successive periods the countenance of theological discourses was to change fundamentally with the advent of the philosophical theology championed by al-Ash^carī and developed further by later Ash^carī acolytes. In respect of his commentary, such findings should readily consign to history the perception which prevails regarding al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi*^c as symbolising a straightforward traditional approach informed by the opaque parameters of *tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr*. As has been shown elsewhere, such characterisations and categorisations of forms of *tafsīr* are clearly misleading.¹⁷⁸ Al-Ṭabarī had ingeniously shown that the discipline of *tafsīr* provided a unique forum from which contributions could be made to prevailing intellectual discourses and his own deliberations on theological doctrines presented in the commentary reveal him to possess mastery

over the predominant discourses to the extent that he is not merely reiterating conventionally accepted points of belief and dogma, but locating an apposite substrate for their defence, resolution and synthesis. Moreover, the true measure of his accomplishment in the realm of *tafsīr* can only be fully appreciated when it is considered in light of the intellectual and ideological debates with which the author had to contend throughout his lifetime.

NOTES

1 Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (16 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1954–68) (this is an incomplete edition as it stops at vol. 16, at the commentary on Q. 14:28. In this article the Shākīr edition has been used for citations which occur within the span of this sixteen-volume edition, thereafter references are to the edition by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī in association with Markaz al-Buḥūth waʾl-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya waʾl-Islāmiyya (26 vols. Cairo: Dār Hajar, 2001), see pp. 63–110 for an updated summary of the available manuscripts of the *tafsīr*. The al-Turkī edition has usefully included the Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī’s pagination from its 1903 version of the *tafsīr* on the margins of the text; it originally consisted of 12 vols in 30 parts. For an overview of al-Ṭabarī’s life and works, see the exhaustive account in Rosenthal’s general introduction to the first volume of the collection devoted to the translation of al-Ṭabarī’s *History* (*The History of al-Ṭabarī. General Introduction and Translation From the Creation to the Flood* (New York: Albany, 1989) and also Claude Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam: l’exégèse coranique de Ṭabarī (m. 311/923)* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1990). Gilliot has also published a number of articles which cover individual aspects of al-Ṭabarī’s legacy, including Claude Gilliot, ‘La formation intellectuelle de Ṭabarī (224/5–310/839–923)’, *Journal Asiatique* 276:3–4 (1988), pp. 203–44, which is a revised version of the chapter in *Exégèse, langue, et théologie*; and Claude Gilliot, ‘Langue et Coran selon Ṭabarī. 1. La precellence du Coran’, *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988), pp. 79–106. Further relevant work includes Clifford E. Bosworth’s entry on ‘al-Ṭabarī’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; his legacy as a historian is covered in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and his Work*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 15 (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2008); see also Tarif Khalidi, ‘Al-Ṭabarī: An Introduction’ in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian*, pp. 1–9, in which he gives a useful summary of the manner in which the *tafsīr* serves as a ‘meeting place’ for so many of the aspects of the scholarship in which al-Ṭabarī excelled, stating that his ‘*tafsīr* is a tour de force’, p. 9; and Fuʾāt Sezgin’s *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (9 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1967–84), vol. 1, pp. 323–8. For a more recent summary see Josef van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere. Beobachtungen an islamischen häresiographischen Texten* (2 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 294–7; also, Ulrika Mårtensson, and her monograph on his life, *Ṭabarī, Makers of Islamic Civilisation Series* (London: IB Tauris, 2009). For Arabic accounts of his life and works, see Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Zuḥaylī, *al-Imām al-Ṭabarī: shaykh al-mufasssīrīn wa-ʿumdat al-muʾarrikhīn wa-muqaddīm al-fuqahāʾ al-muḥaddīthīn wa-ṣāhib al-madhhab al-Jarīrī* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1990); ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAlī al-Shibl, *Imām al-mufasssīrīn waʾl-muḥaddīthīn waʾl-muʾarrikhīn Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī: sīratuhu wa-ʿaqīdatuhu wa-muʾallifātuhu* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2004); and Ibn ʿĀshūr’s *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu* (Tunis: Dār al-Kutub al-Sharqiyya, 1966), pp. 30–7.

2 In the lengthy biography devoted to him in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Yaʿqūb b. ʿAbd Allāh, *Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb* (henceforth *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*) (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1991), vol. 5, pp. 242–75, which was principally based on

biographies compiled by two of his students, the content of the *tafsīr* and its sources are discussed at pp. 256–7, and it is mentioned that these were derived from ‘*kutub al-tafsīr al-muṣannafa*’, including materials attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās via Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/714), Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722), Qatāda (d. 118/736), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), ‘Ikrima (d. 105/723–4), al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāhim (d. 102/720), ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam (d. 182/798), the *tafsīr* of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), and the *tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Ḥayyān (d. 150/767). It is claimed that that disreputable commentators were shunned and never relied upon by al-Ṭabarī, namely al-Kalbī (d. 146/763), Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) and al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822), despite al-Kalbī often being cited in the work. Undoubtedly, the exegetical endeavour attributed to exegetes such as al-Suddī (d. 127/745), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/787), ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211/826), ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/812), Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 198/814) and Yaḥyā b. Sallām (d. 200/815), provided key blueprints and points of reference which al-Ṭabarī could utilise when developing his own work.

3 For English translations of selected parts of the text, see al-Ṭabarī, *The Commentary on the Qur’ān by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī being an Abridged Translation of Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, intr. and annot. J. Cooper, ed. W.F. Madelung, Alan Jones and J. Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); and also Helmut Gätje, *The Qur’ān and its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Interpretations*, tr. Alford T. Welch (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976); Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi with Farhana Mayer (eds), *An Anthology of Qur’ānic Commentaries. Volume 1: On the Nature of the Divine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 28–9. Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi and Andrew Rippin (ed. and tr.), *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 114–18. For a summary of the Persian translations, see Elton Daniel, ‘The Sāmānid “Translations” of al-Ṭabarī’ in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and his Work*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 15 (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2008), pp. 263–97, in which insidious aims are identified with the efforts of Manṣūr b. Nūḥ (r. 350–65/961–76), who commissioned the translation of the *History* and the *Tafsīr*.

4 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, General Introduction*, vol. 1, p. 61; see for example the arguments in Gösta Vitestam, ‘AṬ-Ṭabarī and the Seeing of God’ in Alexander Fodor (ed.), *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants. The Arabist*, Budapest Studies in Arabic 13–14:1 (1995), pp. 147–55; and see the summary in Boswell, art. ‘al-Ṭabarī’ (p. 12); also Norman Calder *et al.*, *Classical Islam*, pp. 114–18; also William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998 (reprint of the 1973 edition)), p. 297. Ignaz Goldziher mentions al-Ṭabarī’s showing ‘little appreciation of independent, arbitrary, and subjective ideas, which he does not consider worth recognising’ and the notion that knowledge based from materials derived from the Pious Ancestors was indispensable for *tafsīr* (see Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), p. 87 and the translation quoted above by Wolfgang H. Behn (tr. and ed.), *Schools of Koranic Commentators with an Introduction on Goldziher and Hadith from Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums by Fuat Sezgin* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 57). Al-Ṭabarī’s reliance on *loci probantes* from poetry is also highlighted, and the fact that the work is an important source for the views of the Kufan and Basran grammarians, yet Goldziher claims that despite this he never abandons ‘his interpretation based on tradition’ (p. 92) and that in a number of passages his ideas as a theologian surface, although the suggestion is that he ‘takes the ground occupied by traditional expressions of orthodoxy’ (p. 93, and see also p. 61 in Behn, *Schools*). Goldziher did suggest that al-Ṭabarī took a position which was close to Mu‘tazilism on free will and guidance (*hudā* and *dalāl*), although he speaks of his probably not being aware of the sensitivities of the stance and that he always endeavours to present himself as an opponent of sectarian dogmatic tendencies; there are also references to his maintaining ultra-orthodox teachings and opposing

metaphorical interpretation as indulged in by rational theologians (pp. 94–5, and p. 62 in Behn, *Schools*). See also his point on p. 96, in which he speaks of his opposition to the elimination of anthropomorphic imagery in scripture and says that on occasion he does not suppress or openly censure views deemed rational on such issues (pp. 97–8, and p. 63 in Behn, *Schools*). For more on mentors and influences, see Gilliot, *Exégese, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 19–37; for al-Ṭabarī's works, see also pp. 39–68. Traditional views of the 'orthodox' quality of the *tafsīr* are summarised in Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ*, vol. 13, p. 385, although he would have been specifically judging it on its treatment of exempla and popular material.

5 Notwithstanding exceptions and nuances, the traditionists or *ashāb al-ḥadīth* tend to be individuals who are associated with a stern religiosity on matters of theological doctrine, while the traditionalists can include scholars who approve not only of the use of rational frameworks for the defence of dogma, but they are prepared to apply metaphor or figurative language to explain away literal meanings in the text. Details of the episodes are provided in the translation in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, vol. 1, pp. 58–63 and pp. 68–78. Discussions with reference to the Arabic sources are to be examined below.

6 Among the extant early works are Mujāhid b. Jabr al-Makkī, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām (2 vols. Madīnat al-Naṣr: Dār al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1989); al-Ṣanʿānī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīz al-musammā Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muṭīʿ Amīn Qalʿajī (2 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1991); Abd Allāh b. Wahb, *Al-Ġāmiʿ: Tafsīr al-Qurʾān (Die Koranexegese)*, ed. and annot. Miklos Muranyi (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993). See also Miklos Muranyi, *al-Ġāmiʿ: Tafsīr al-Qurʾān Koranexegese 2 Teil I* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995) and *ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb: al-Ġāmiʿ. Die Koranwissenschaften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992); Harald Motzki, 'The Author and His Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries: The Case of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaḥ*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003), pp. 1–31. Parts of Yaḥyā b. Sallām's *tafsīr* have been published by Hind Shalabī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004). The issue of whether fixed literary texts existed in the early tradition continue to be debated, although al-Ṭabarī is often referring to texts which are not extant, or indeed views which were circulating on the authority of luminaries from the early tradition.

7 In his brief biographical entry, Clifford Bosworth speaks of commentaries which antedate al-Ṭabarī's, adding that he took over al-Ṣanʿānī's commentary 'in its entirety for his own work' (Bosworth, art. 'al-Ṭabarī'). He also mentions Horst's argument that al-Ṭabarī utilised earlier commentaries which are no longer existent (see Heribert Horst, 'Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar at-Ṭabarīs', *Zeitschriften der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 103 (1953), pp. 290–307). He did utilise previous elements but perhaps al-Ṭabarī's achievement is best understood in terms of his refining the hermeneutical framework within which materials collated from different works could be placed and contextualised. One has to bear in mind that the *Tafsīr* was a commentary which was forged in the context of a number of predominant intellectual discourses: the first of which was informed by the quest for a consensus for the articulation of a traditionally defined orthodoxy; the second related to establishing the legitimacy of *tafsīr* among the traditional sciences; the third was about circumscribing epistemological and methodological frameworks through which the explication of the text should proceed; while the fourth turned on demonstrating how the popular treatment of exempla could play an important role in contextualising and giving relevance to the sacred word. See also ʿAlī b. Faḍḍāl al-Majāshīʿī, *al-Nukat fi'l-Qurʾān*, ed. Ibrāhīm ʿAlī (Riyadh: Dār al-Rushd, n.d.), in the introduction to this work he reports, on the authority of al-Ṭabarī, that the aims of the Qurʾān are encompassed in three areas: *tawḥīd*, *akḥbār* and *diyānāt* (p. 9). It was Theodor Nöldeke who remarked of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* that if it were available all other commentaries would be rendered secondary (see Goldziher, *Die Richtungen*, p. 86; and Behn, *Schools*, p. 57). See also the seminal work by Theodor Nöldeke and Friedrich Schwally, *Geschichte des Qurans*, 2nd edn (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909–38).

8 See Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vol. 5, p. 254 and p. 267, where his student and biographer °Abd al-°Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī praises his 'orthodoxy' at length. Firstly, his proficiency in the methods of disputation is extolled (p. 267) and then testimony is included stating that with regards to the sum and substance of his theological standpoints Abū Ja°far adhered to positions espoused by the 'majority' and the Pious Ancestors. We are also informed of his always differing with the Mu°tazilīs whenever they contravened the consensus of the 'jamā'a' on issues such as predestination; the non-created status of the Qur'an and the denial of the beatific vision; the status of the sinner; the Prophet's role as an intercessor; and their opinion regarding 'the capacity to act exists prior to the commission of an act' and that all acts are created by God. See the translation of this passage in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, vol. 1, p. 61. Also, see Claude Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue et théologie en Islam*, pp. 207–78 ('Chapitre VIII Le Combat De Ṭabarī Pour L'Orthodoxie').

9 For various studies, see Norman Calder, 'Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham' in G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (eds), *Approaches to the Qur'ān* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 101–40; Abdulkader Tayob, 'An Analytical Survey of al-Ṭabarī's Exegesis of the Cultural Symbolic Construct of *fitna*', also in Hawting and Shareef (eds), *Approaches*, at pp. 157–72; Sahiron Syamsuddin, 'Muḥkam and mutashābih: An Analytical Study of al-Ṭabarī's and al-Zamakhsharī's Interpretations of Q. 3:7', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1:1 (1999), pp. 63–79; Sahiron Syamsuddin, 'Exégèse et sémantique institutionnelle dans le commentaire de Ṭabarī', *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), pp. 41–94; Ulrika Mårtensson, 'Through the Lens of Modern Hermeneutics: Authorial Intention in al-Ṭabarī's and al-Ghazālī's Interpretation of Q. 24:35', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11:2 (2009), pp. 20–48; Ulrika Mårtensson, "'The Persuasive Proof': A Study of Aristotle's Politics and Rhetoric in the Qur'ān and in al-Ṭabarī's Commentary', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008), pp. 363–420; Anthony H. Johns, 'Three Stories of a Prophet: al-Ṭabarī's Treatment of Job in *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'*, 83–4 (Part 1)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3.2 (2001), pp. 39–61. Peter Heath, 'Creative Hermeneutics: A Comparative Analysis of Three Islamic Approaches', *Arabica* 36 (1989), pp. 173–210; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 'The Tasks and Traditions of Interpretation' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 181–209.

10 Aḥmad Makki al-Anṣārī, *Abū Zakariyyā° al-Farrā° wa-madhhabuhu fī'l-naḥw wa'l-lughā* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-°Alā li-Ri°āyat al-Funūn wa'l-°Ādāb wa'l-°Ulūm al-Ijtimā°iyya, 1964). Despite almost 50 years having passed since the work's publication, it remains an invaluable study of the legacy of al-Farrā°, which is some achievement given the fact that it was produced when many of his works were only available in manuscript form.

11 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 428–34. These positions are summarised by al-Qurṭubī, Abū °Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, *al-Jāmi° li-aḥkām al-Qur°ān wa'l-mubayyin li-mā taḍammnahu min al-sunna wa-āy al-Furqān* (21 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 176–7. Beginning his discussions by stating that the verse represents one of the *mushkilāt* ('intricately challenging') verses, he lists all the different views held by exegetes and concludes with the principle which holds for this and similar verses: averting (meanings) which convey the sense of physical movement or displacement. He actually speaks of three camps with regards to the interpretation of such verses: those who advocate accepting the truth of the verses and refrained from their qualification or interpretation; others who upheld the literal meaning of such verses, interpreting them in ways consistent with the tenor of their literal meanings and usage (al-Qurṭubī labels those who accept such views as being *mushabbihā*, 'corporealists'); and a third camp who recite and promote explaining away and averting the literal explanation of such verses. The sensitivities are carried over in translations of the Qur'an: J.M. Rodwell used the terms 'proceeded to the heaven' and 'sitteth on his throne' (p. 94 and p. 340) for Q. 2:29 and Q. 20:5 respectively (J.M. Rodwell, *The Koran*

(London: Dent, Everyman Library, 1963, first published in 1909)); Marmaduke Pickthall favoured ‘Then turned He to the heaven’ and ‘The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne’ (p. 36 and p. 228) for the same set of verses (Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York; Toronto: New American Library, 1975)); Arthur J. Arberry had ‘then He lifted Himself to heaven’ and ‘sat Himself upon the Throne’ (p. 5 and p. 311 of *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)); while M.A.S. Abdel Haleem favoured ‘He turned to the sky’ and ‘The Lord of mercy established on the throne’ (p. 6 and p. 196, *The Qur’an: A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)). For the various groups, see also Binyamin Abrahamov, ‘The *Bi-la Kayfa* Doctrine and its Foundations in Islamic Theology’, *Arabica* 42:3 (1995), pp. 365–79. However, it is worth bearing in mind that specific sects such as the Karrāmiyya and the so-called Sālimiyya were renowned for adhering to an anthropomorphic reading of this and other connected verses; see van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, p. 598 and vol. 2, p. 1,009f.

12 This is also true for notable Shī‘ī luminaries: see al-Ṭabrisī, Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan, *Majma‘ al-Bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān* (5 vols. Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 156–7. Among his listed interpretations are ‘*qāṣada li’l-samā’*’, ‘*istawlā ‘alā al-samā’*’ and ‘*istawā amruhu ilā’l-samā’*’ (p. 156). Cf. Maher Jarrar, ‘Some Aspects of Imāmī Influence on Early Zaydite Theology’ in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens P. Laut and Ulrich Rebstock (eds), *Islamstudien ohne Ende. Festschrift für Werner Ende* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 201–23). See also al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur‘ān*, ed. Aḥmad Wānli’ūghlī, rev. Bakr Ṭūpāl’ūghlī (17 vols. Iṣtānbūl: Dār al-Mizān, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 68–70, in which he comments on several Qur’anic verses referring to *istiwā’* and their allusions to motion and stresses the importance of avoiding anthropomorphic glosses of their import; he even advocates applying more general lexical paraphrase to obviate such physical glosses. For more on the developments within the Māturīdī school, see van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 2, pp. 794–6; and the recently published ‘A Critical Edition of al-Hādī in Māturīdī Doctrine of the Ḥanafīte-Māturīdī Imām ‘Umar al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292)’ by Ayedh Saad Aldosari (unpublished PhD Dissertation: Trinity Saint David University of Wales, 2013).

13 Al-Ṭabarī does explain that even those who equated *istiwā’* with *irtafa‘a* differed over the subject of the verb: is it the Creator of the heavens or indeed the ‘vapours’ which sat over the recently created heavens (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 434). Cf. the discussion in Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 238–41 (‘La session de Dieu sur le Trône’), especially p. 239.

14 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 434. Al-Ṭabarī seems to be implying that al-Farrā’ said that there was a ‘compelling’ reason why he actually favoured this explanation, although this is not evident in the passages of the *Ma‘ānī*; it may well be the case that the original musings of al-Farrā’ have not survived in the extant copies of the work.

15 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 434–5. This is an expression he uses elsewhere in the text. Note how al-Khaṭṭābī described *istiwā’*, stating it represents ‘*‘alā’ al-majd wa’l-sharaf*’ (al-Khaṭṭābī, Abū’l-Sulaymān, *Shā’n al-du‘ā’*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq (Beirut, Damascus: Dar al-Mā’ mūn li’l-Turāth, 1984), p. 66.

16 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 333. See also vol. 12, p. 483; cf. vol. 15, p. 18, in which the term *dabbara* is used to denote God’s attending to ‘or governing’ his affairs, having established himself on the throne. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, ed. al-Turkī, vol. 16, p. 11, in which he explains Q. 20:5, ‘*al-Raḥmān ‘alā ‘arshihi irtafa‘a wa-‘alā’*’, and vol. 18, p. 591 and vol. 22, p. 387, ‘*irtafa‘a ‘alayhā wa-‘alā’*’. With regards to al-Farrā’’s gloss, it could also be argued that *iqbāl* was the corollary of will and intention.

17 Examples of the criticisms of *ahl al-‘Arabiyya*, which includes both al-Farrā’ and indeed Abū ‘Ubayda, are found throughout the *tafsīr* and he usually uses the formula ‘some among the

ahl al-ʿArabiyya claim' or simply 'the grammarians' in general: see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 223, in which he criticises in detail the views of some grammarians who speak of the otiose function of the *ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿa*; and vol. 1, p. 132, where he describes one grammarian as being someone whose acquaintance with the interpretation of *ahl al-taʾwīl* is feeble and whose 'narration of the statements of the Pious Ancestors from among the scholars of *tafsīr* is scant'. The figure to whom he is referring is Abū ʿUbayda and he is questioning his locating the meaning of *al-Raḥmān* within the semantic compass of '*dhū raḥma*': '*al-Raḥmān majāzuhu dhū'l-rahma*'. There are also instances where he explicitly discusses key differences over grammatical topics by Kufan and Basran grammarians (vol. 1, p. 184); although, as pointed out by al-Anṣārī, al-Farrāʾ is often the subject of a rebuke (vol. 4, p. 301); the *maʿānī* based works of al-Quṭrub (d. 206/881), al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/804), al-Farrāʾ, Abū ʿUbayda (d. 210/825), al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) provided discussions and arguments which were referred to in the course of the commentary. See also Gilliot, *Exégese, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 168–203, which focuses on the treatment of grammatical issues in the *Jāmiʿ*.

18 Abū Zakariyyāʾ al-Farrāʾ, Yaḥyā b. Ziyād, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī and Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Najjār (3 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1955–72), vol. 1, p. 29.

19 Al-Anṣārī also took the view that al-Ṭabarī based large sections of the linguistic discussions in the *tafsīr* on the work of al-Farrāʾ without appropriately acknowledging his source, even accusing him of plagiarising him; there are many instances in which he highlights where al-Ṭabarī alludes to him and includes discussions which can be sourced to the *Maʿānī*, but such views appear exaggerated, especially when one takes into account the sheer scope of al-Ṭabarī's work and the nature of citation within the framework of such works: see pp. 321–4 of al-Anṣārī, *Abū Zakariyyāʾ al-Farrāʾ*. Notably, a PhD thesis on the subject of the traditionalist outlook of al-Ṭabarī did refute these allegations in detail; see Aḥmad al-ʿAwāyisha, *al-Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī wa-difāʿuhu ʿan ʿaqīdat al-salaf* (unpublished PhD dissertation: Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1983), pp. 122–34. And this is discussed by Aḥmad Ṣaqr in the introduction to his edition of Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb tafsīr gharīb al-Qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1978). See page 'dāl' of the introduction, where he also states that al-Ṭabarī quotes the statements of these figures without due acknowledgement. See also Gilliot, *Exégese, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 187–9.

20 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vol. 5, p. 620, in which al-Farrāʾ is described as 'a jurist conversant with juridical differences; the pre-Islamic battles of the Arabs; their histories together with poetry; medicine and astrology (astronomy); and who was a *mutakallim* inclined towards Muʿtazilism, who also philosophised in his works, applying the terminologies of the philosophers'. The Muʿtazila did claim him as one of their own.

21 Al-Farrāʾ's theological leanings were highlighted in the work of Edmund Beck, 'Die dogmatisch religiöse Einstellung des Grammatikers Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrāʾ', *Le Muséon* 64 (1951), pp. 187–202. See the English translation of this article, as 'The Dogmatic Religious Stance of the Grammarian Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrāʾ' in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Qurʾān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1999), pp. 137–58; also Rafael Talmon, 'The Philosophising Farrāʾ: An Interpretation of an Obscure Saying Attributed to the Grammarian Thaʿlab' in Kees Versteegh and Michael Carter (eds), *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II. Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Arabic Grammar* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1990), pp. 265–79; also Edmund Beck, 'ʿArabiyya, Sunna und ʿĀmma in der Koranlesung des zweiten Jahrhunderts', *Orientalia* 15 (1946), pp. 180–224; Edmund Beck, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Kūfischen Koranlesung in den Beiden Ersten Jahrhunderten', *Orientalia* 17 (1948), pp. 326–55; Edmund Beck, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Kūfischen Koranlesung in den Beiden Ersten Jahrhunderten, III', *Orientalia* 20 (1951), pp. 316–28.

22 For more on Ibn Kullāb, see Joseph van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991–5), vol. 4, pp. 200–2; and his ‘Ibn Kullāb und die *Mihna*’, *Oriens* 9–10 (1967), pp. 92–142. For al-Ash‘arī, see van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, pp. 454–1. Ibn Ḥajar reports that Ibn Kullāb was condemned by Ibn Ḥanbal for his brand of speculative theology, as were his colleagues (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mīzān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghudda (10 vols. Beirut: Maktab al-Maṭbū‘āt al-Islāmiyya, 2002), vol. 4, pp. 486–7); his theological thought and ideas are constantly flagged in the works of Ibn Taymiyya. See also Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (2 vols. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 350–2, and vol. 2, pp. 225–6. For Qalānisī, see Daniel Gimaret, ‘Cet autre théologien Sunnite: Abū l-‘Abbās al-Qalānisī’, *Journal Asiatique* 277 (1989), pp. 227–61.

23 Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, p. 87 and vol. 4, p. 746.

24 See Mustafa Shah, ‘Expressions of Traditional Orthodoxy: the Kufan Grammarian al-Farrā’ and the Allegations of *i‘tizāl*’, forthcoming. Reinhart questions the view that Sunnī orthodoxy should be seen as the default term for Islam as he argues that it has its own history as one of many movements within the traditions of Islam (see Kevin Reinhart’s ‘Sunni Sectarianism’ in Yasir Suleiman (ed.), *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 209–25); however, Reinhart’s view does not pay sufficient regard to the overbearing prominence of Sunnī discourses across the traditional religious sciences, and the sample of works he uses to make his points is too confined. See also Brett Wilson, ‘The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of Orthodoxy in the Study of Islam’, *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3:2 (2007), pp. 169–94. The mistaken idea that most early grammarians were of a Mu‘tazilī persuasion is a common perception although the sources do not fully substantiate that view.

25 Al-Ash‘arī, Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl, *al-Ibāna ‘an uṣūl al-diyāna*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Bayān, 1999), pp. 97–103. For the arch-traditionist approach, see works such as Ibn Khuzayma, Abū Bakr, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd wa-ithbāt ṣifāt al-rabb ‘azza wa-jalla* (Riyadh: Dār al-Rushd, 1988), pp. 231–40, and the discussion of *istiwā’*; Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū l-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn, *Daf‘ shubhat al-tashbīh bi-akaf al-tanzīh* (Beirut: Dār al-Hijra, 1990); Nader El-Bizri, ‘God: Essence and Attributes’ in Tim Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 121–40; also al-Juwaynī, ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd Allāh, *al-‘Aqīda al-Niẓāmiyya*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zubaydī (Beirut: Dār Sabīl al-Rashād & Dār al-Nafā’is, 2003), p. 166–8, in which he speaks of such verses being *mushkilāt* and that it was best to avoid the elaboration of meanings such as *istiwā’*. The idea that the divine essence can be a substrate for temporal acts is dismissed within classical Ash‘arism, as a figure such as al-Rāzī would argue this would mean that such acts would have to exist concomitantly with His essence, which is impossible (al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-muḥaṣṣal fī uṣūl al-dīn aw muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa’l-muta’akhhirīn min al-‘ulamā’ wa’l-ḥukamā’ wa’l-mutakallimīn*, ed. Ḥusayn Aṭāwa, 1st edn (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1991), p. 158). See also p. 187, where al-Rāzī refers to al-Ash‘arī’s affirming that *istiwā’* was a *ṣifa*, but stating that there is no proof of either denying or affirming that this and others such as the *yad* are *ṣifāt* and that a non-committal stance was appropriate in such instances. These were referred to as the *ṣifāt al-khabariyya*: namely, those which are substantiated by the scriptural sources; the terms *sam‘iyya* or indeed *naqliyya* are also used.

26 This is evident in the work of the later Ash‘arīs who devised rational constructs and postulates when faced with interpreting such dicta. Ibn Taymiyya argues that many of the Ash‘arīs took this position on *istiwā’* for the simple reason that they rejected the notion that accidents can subsist within the divine essence; this would apply to the elective attributes such as those associated with God’s being pleased or angry (see Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘*, vol. 6, pp. 217–68).

It is suggested that the Ash^carīs predicate a concomitance between the *fi'īl wa'l-maf'ūl*, in the sense that the *istiwā* becomes a created act in respect of the throne (see Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, p. 121 and pp. 141–9; also the *Uṣūl* of al-Baghdādī cited below, p. 112, n. 58).

27 Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (4 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1987), vol. 1, p. 146. Al-Ghazālī mentions that the *ahl al-ḥaqq* were compelled to resort to *ta'wīl* ('explaining away a literal meaning') when faced with such dicta. This is also associated with the notion of *tafwīd* ('delegating').

28 Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad Zarzūr (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1969), pp. 72–5. Cf. al-Ash^carī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, vol. 1, p. 285; Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad, *al-Fiṣal fi'l-milal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad Naṣr and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Umayra (4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 289–92.

29 Abū'l-'Abbās Tha'lab, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā, *Majālis Tha'lab*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, 5th edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'arif, n.d.), see p. 174 and p. 269. This and other quotations are discussed at greater length in the forthcoming Shah, 'Expressions of Traditional Orthodoxy'. See Anṣārī, *Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā'*, p. 82, where he simply states that al-Ṭabarī's dislike of Mu^ctazilism led him to rail against al-Farrā'; one of the conclusions reached by al-Anṣārī in his study was that al-Farrā' had Mu^ctazilī leanings.

30 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (4 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1956), vol. 1, p. 177. It is also significant that the Shi'ī commentator al-Ṭabrisī mentions that Tha'lab was asked about the meaning of *istiwā*, and he replied that 'our companions say: *al-iqbāl*'. So it is clear many non-Mu^ctazilī scholars would not have considered it a controversial view (al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 157).

31 Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, vol. 3, pp. 89–91; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vol. 5, pp. 242–75, especially pp. 254–7. For more on these figures see Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā'*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Samarā'ī (al-Zarqā': Maktabat al-Manār, 1985), pp. 145–8 and pp. 191–4. Ibn Durayd composed touching dirges in his honour.

32 Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat*, pp. 173–4; and Jamāl al-Dīn, *Inbāh*, vol. 1, p. 138.

33 Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Majmū' fatāwā shaykh al-Islam*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim (38 vols. Riyadh: Maṭba'at al-Riyāḍ, 1961–74), vol. 16, p. 155; and Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb al-I'tirāḍāt al-Miṣriyya 'alā'l-futyā al-Ḥamawīyya*, ed. Muḥammad Shams (Jeddah: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, n.d.) pp. 9–31, in which criticisms are made of the controversial 'Arabiyya-based treatment applied in exegesis and the use of poetry. For more on al-Farrā', see al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, vol. 4, pp. 6–23. Cf. Ibn al-Wazīr, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Murtaḍā, *Iyḥār al-ḥaqq 'alā'l-khalq fi radd al-khilāfāt ilā'l-madhdhab al-ḥaqq min uṣūl al-tawḥīd*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987) p. 146 ff for the best forms of *tafsīr*.

34 Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Dimashqī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya fi ṭabaqāt al-qurrā'*, ed. Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl (2 vols. Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda, 1935), vol. 2, pp. 106–8; see also vol. 1, p. 424 and vol. 2, p. 19, to which Rosenthal refers with regards to Ibn al-Jazarī's dismissal of al-Ṭabarī's criticisms of the reading of Ibn 'Āmir (Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, vol. 1, p. 58, n. 225). Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429) refers to the fact that Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ṣaḥībī (d. 590/1194) mounted a defence of Ibn 'Āmir and criticised al-Ṭabarī.

35 Beck, 'Die dogmatisch religiöse', pp. 187–202, *passim*.

36 Ismā'īl b. Iṣḥāq al-Azdī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Āmir Ḥasan Ṣabrī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2006). A useful source providing details of Ismā'īl b. Iṣḥāq's legacy is Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Maṣīra, 1988), p. 40. Fragments from the original text feature in Miklos Muranyi, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ḥadīth- und Rechtsgelehrsamkeit der*

Mālikiyya in Nordafrika bis zum 5. Jh. D.H.: Bio-bibliographische Notizen aus der Moscheebibliothek von Qairawān, Quellenstudien zur Ḥadīth- und Rechtsliteratur in Nordafrika (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997). See also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. °Alī, *Ta°rikh Baghdād* (14 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 6, pp. 284–90 and pp. 285–6, for a description of his exegetical works; al-Qādī °Iyād, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-ma°rifat a°lām madhhab Mālik*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim Hāshim (2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 463–72. Such was al-Jahḍamī°s erudition in the linguistic sciences that it is said of him that had he not been engrossed in his work as judge, he would have competed with both Mubarrad and Tha°lab as the leading grammarian of his age (al-Qādī °Iyād, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik*, vol. 1, pp. 463–72). See p. 471 for the discussion on Abū °Ubayd.

37 See the detailed defence of the use of poetry in Ibn al-Anbārī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, *Kitāb ṭdāḥ al-waqf wa°l-ibtidā°*, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān Ramaḍān (2 vols. Damascus: Majma° al-Lughā al-°Arabiyya, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 99–102.

38 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-I°tirādāt al-Miṣriyya*, pp. 9–31.

39 Al-Wāḥidī, Abū°l-Ḥasan °Alī b. Aḥmad, *Tafsīr al-basīṭ*, ed. Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ b. °Abd Allāh b. Fawzān (25 vols. Riyadh: Jāmi°at Muḥammad b. Sa°ūd al-Islāmiyya, 2009), vol. 2, p. 299f. The editor of the text actually contests that this was the view that al-Ṭabarī had preferred, arguing that it was mentioned in the framework of his rejoinder; he then goes on to refer to the early discussions, arguing that al-Ṭabarī did side with the view that it meant *iritifa°* in the plainer sense.

40 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 394 (examples of criticisms of al-Farrā°); vol. 22, p. 244 (°za°ama ba°d ahl al-°Arabiyya°). See the examples discussed above in note 17.

41 This is a point observed in Muḥammad al-Mālikī, *Dirāsāt al-Ṭabarī li°l-ma°nā min khilāl tafsīrihi Jāmi° al-bayān °an ta°wīl āy al-Qur°ān* (Ribāt: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa°l-Shu°ūn al-Islāmiyya, 1996), pp. 88–90. For a review of the nature of his theological views, see pp. 189–205. Concerning the *tafsīr*, Franz Rosenthal argued that °during his lifetime, it probably was considered his outstanding scholarly achievement, even more so than his great works on law and ḥadīth° (Rosenthal, *The History*, p. 105).

42 See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 162–3, in which he dismisses the views of *ahl al-qadar* when discussing the notion of *tafwīḍ*, in the context of free will and the capacity to act, as al-Ṭabarī explains that without seeking God°s support man is unable to find his way to divine guidance (see also p. 168). See also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 5, pp. 403–7, which includes dicta on God°s speaking to Moses; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 7, pp. 260–3 and the reference to the span of one°s life (*ajal*); and al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 19, p. 575, and the reference to God°s creation of man°s acts; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 22, pp. 160–3, and the authority of *qadar*; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 24, pp. 384–9, where al-Ṭabarī countenances the physicality of God°s advent on the Day of Judgement; and al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 20, p. 145f, where he refers to God°s creating Adam with His hands; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 21, p. 605, where it is stated that the Prophet is in our sight. But one does come across exceptions such as Q. 20:39 (*before my sight*), where he ponders the two contrasting explanations, one of which refers to the idea of °flourishing before us°, endorsing it on the basis of its being consistent with the preferred *lectio*: al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 16, pp. 57–60. Still, his overall position on points of dogma is confirmed in the two credal works he composed which are discussed below: al-Ṭabarī, *Šarīḥ al-sunna*, ed. Badr b. Yūsūf al-Ma°tūq, 2nd edn (Kuwait: Dār al-Khulafā li°l-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 2005); and al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tabṣīr fi ma°ālim al-dīn*, ed. °Alī b. °Abd al-°Azīz b. °Alī al-Shibl (Beirut: Dār al-°Āšima, 1996). It is also known under the alternative title *Tabṣīr uli°l-nuḥā wa-ma°ālim al-hudā*. Folios are missing from the end of the *al-Tabṣīr* manuscript,

rendering it incomplete. For the polarity between the views of al-Ṭabarī and Shī'ism, see Watt, *The Formative Period*, p. 368, n. 88.

43 See the discussion in Mårtensson, *Tabari*, pp. 22–3, where she speaks of theology requiring more discursive reasoning than history.

44 See for more on this discussion see Aḥmad al-°Awāyisha, *al-Imām b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī*, pp. 344–53; cf. Cornelia Schöck, 'Name (*ism*), Derived Name (*ism mushtaq*) and Description (*wasf*) in Arabic Grammar, Muslim Dialectical Theology and Arabic Logic' in Shahid al-Rahman, Tony Street and Hassan Tahiri (eds), *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition: Science, Logic, Epistemology and their Interactions* (n.p.: Springer, 2008), pp. 329–60; al-Qāḍī °Abd al-Jabbār, Aḥmad al-Asadabādī, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-°adl*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Khuḍayrī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya li'l-Ta'°lif wa'l-Tarjama, 1965), pp. 160–5; Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. Muḥammad al-Nawāwī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Fajr al-Jadīd, 2006). See al-Ghazālī's view in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Lawāmi° al-bayyināt sharḥ asmā' Allāh ta°ālā wa'l-°ṣifāt*, ed. Ṭaha °Abd al-Ra°ūf Sa°ad (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, 1976). The *Majmū°* has a whole section devoted to the subject (Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū° fatāwā shaykh al-Islam*, vol. 6, pp. 185–212; Michel Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Ash°arī de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965); Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 111–234; Merlin Swartz, *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism: Ibn al-Jawzī's Kitāb Akhbār al-°ṣifāt: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text with Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 111–12; Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 84; Taneli Kukkonen, 'Al-Ghazālī on the Signification of Names', *Vivarium* 48 (2010), pp. 55–74 (Kukkonen notes that the native Islamic context of the discussions should not be dismissed but that in al-Ghazālī's broaching of the topic a philosophical analogue is used); and Jamal Elamrani, 'La question du nom et du nomme (*al-ism wa'l-musammā*) entre la dialectique et la grammaire: à propos d'une épître d'al-Batālyusī', *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 15 (1985), pp. 80–93.

45 This is also explored in arguments about the status of homonyms, synonyms and antonyms. See Bernard Weiss, 'Ilm al-waḍ°: An Introductory Account of a Later Muslim Philological Science', *Arabica* 34 (1987), pp. 339–56. For more on the relationship between words and the process of positing meanings, see Mustafa Shah, 'Classical Islamic Discourse on the Origins of Language: Cultural Memory and the Defense of Orthodoxy', *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions*, 58:2–3 (2011), pp. 314–43. See also the discussions in Daniel Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam: exegese lexicographique et theologique* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), pp. 37–50, which mainly focus on the implications for *tawqīf* and *iṣṭilāḥ* and the origins of language.

46 See the discussions in °Uthmān b. Sa°īd al-Dārimī, *Radd al-Imām al-Dārimī °Uthmān b. Sa°īd °alā Bishr al-Marīsī al-°Anīd*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqhī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, n.d.), p. 7. For more on Bishr, see Watt, *The Formative Period*, pp. 196–9; and van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, p. 90 and p. 283f; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, band 3, pp. 175–88; and the discussion about al-Marīsī as a Ḥanafī and cf. Melchert, *The Adversaries* p. 238.

47 See Mānkadīm Shashdīw, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Kitāb sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. °Abd al-Karīm °Uthmān (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1965), pp. 182–3. °Abd al-Jabbār is frequently presented as the author of the text.

48 It is worth considering al-Ṭabarī's account of the *miḥna* in the *Ta°rīkh* in which he preserves the discussions between Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and his accusers, particularly where his Mu°tazilī opponent mentions the link between the ear and 'all hearing' and sight and 'all seeing', before citing a Qur'anic verse which Ibn Ḥanbal is asked to explain and he responds by saying 'huwa

kamā waṣafa nafsahu (al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abūʾl-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (11 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1969), vol. 8, p. 639).

49 ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dārimī, *Radd ʿalā Bishr al-Marīsī*, p. 7.

50 See al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, vol. 2, p. 225.

51 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, vol. 5, pp. 209–10. See also al-Qifī, *Inbāh*, vol. 1, p. 177.

52 Al-Qāḍī b. Abī Yaʿlā, Abūʾl-Ḥusayn Muḥammad, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, ed. Muḥammad Hāmid al-Faqī (2 vols. Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 299–300. Appended to the work is a summary of the creed attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal which states that he considered the subject of the *ism* and *musammā* to be grave, although his companions took different positions. See Ṭāriq b. ʿAwaḍ Allāh (ed.), *Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad: riwāyat Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī* (Riyadh: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1999), p. 369. See also Muḥammad al-Bīṭār and Rashīd Riḍā (eds), *Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad: riwāyat al-Tammār al-Baṣrī ʿan Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī* (Damascus: n.p. n.d.), p. 262, where he responds to a question about whether the names of God are created.

53 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vol. 5, p. 170; cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abūʾl-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl, *al-Bidāya waʾl-nihāya*, ed. A. Muḥim, A. ʿAṭwī, F. Sayyid, M. Nāṣir al-Dīn and A. ʿAbd al-Sātīr (8 vols in 2. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1986), vol. 6 (parts 11–12), p. 195, where it is mentioned that the *raʾīs al-Ḥanābila*, ʿAlī al-Barbahārī, led his funeral prayer.

54 Al-Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Wādī Z. Haddad (Beirut: Dar El-Machreq, 1986), pp. 70–2, although Abū Yaʿlā offers important distinctions between his position and the Ashʿarī one (p. 71), aspects of the Ashʿarī position are replicated. One should bear in mind that Abū Yaʿlā was renowned for his broaching of speculative frameworks for the defence of the traditionalist doctrines of the Ḥanbalīs, although he did disagree with some of their positions.

55 Al-Ashʿarī, *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna*, p. 44; al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*. For the Shīʿī position on this see Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (5 vols. Najaf: al-Maṭbaʿat al-ʿIlmiyya, 1957/1376), vol. 1, p. 20, where he dismisses the equivalence between the *ism* and the *musammā*. See also al-Ṭabrisī, Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan, *Majmaʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (5 vols. Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 42–3, where he replicates many of al-Ṭabarī’s arguments; al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, vol. 17, pp. 165–6. For medieval implications of the discussions, see Niẓām al-Dīn, Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī, *Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān*, ed. Zakariyyāʾ ʿImrān (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), vol. 1, p. 64.

56 Ibn Fūrak, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Mujarrad maqālat al-shaykh Abīʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī: (exposé de la doctrine dʾal-Ashʿarī)*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1987), pp. 38–9. See al-Ashʿarī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 44; and al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, vol. 1, p. 345 and vol. 2, p. 211, for the discussion of the relationship suggested by the Muʿtazilīs between *al-waṣf waʾl-ṣifa*.

57 Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālat*, pp. 38–9.

58 ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī’s *Tafsīr asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*, MS British Library Or. 7547, fol. 1–2, and indeed in his *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul: Madrasat al-Ilāhiyyāt bi-Dār al-Funūn, 1928, p. 112) (I should like to thank Andrew Rippin for bringing the manuscript to my attention back in 2009). Rippin has also devoted a recent article to the legacy of al-Baghdādī: Andrew Rippin, ‘ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī and the Study of the Qurʾān’, *al-Bayān* 10:1 (2012), pp. 1–15. For more on al-Baghdādī, see van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, pp. 667–716.

59 For more on the various attitudes and positions see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im* 2. 3., vol. 4, pp. 200–1, in which he discusses Ibn Taymiyya’s references to differences on the

subject between al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Kullāb. The implication is that the latter's notion about the attributes being neither the same as the *ism*, nor different from it, was at the centre of arguments as al-Muḥāsibī questioned this and spoke of an ontological equivalence.

60 Al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr b. Ṭayyib, *Kitāb tamhīd al-awā'il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā'il*, ed. °Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ḥaydar (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1993), p. 258; al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-irshād ilā qawāṭi' al-adilla fī uṣūl al-i'tiqād*, ed. As'ad Tamīm (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1996), p. 135f. Other paragons of Sunnism, al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998), al-Lālakā'ī (d. 418/1027) and al-Baghawī (d. 510/1117), also took similar positions. See al-Lālakā'ī, Abū'l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh, *Sharḥ uṣūl i'tiqād ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*, ed. Sayyid °Imrān (2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 153–60; and al-Baghawī, al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd, *Sharḥ al-sunna*, ed. Shu'ayb Arna'ūṭ and Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh (16 vols. Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 187–8. There are of course legal implications: al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1970), vol. 1, p. 403, where he mentions al-Shāfi'ī's stating that if one swears an oath and invokes the names of God and fails to uphold it, he must expiate. Al-Ghazālī did recoil from the Ash'arī position and qualify the rationale of his arguments in his *al-Maqṣad al-asnā*; see the summaries of the 'Ouvrages Spécifiques' in Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam*, pp. 16–29.

61 Al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb tamhīd al-awā'il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā'il*, pp. 260–2.

62 Al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb tamhīd al-awā'il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā'il*, pp. 260–2.

63 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 114–34 for the whole section (and pp. 114–15), which begins by extolling the importance of the *basmala*, adding that its mere mention allows one to reconstruct the intended, yet inner, meaning of its speaker, which is elided. See the discussion in Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 242–4.

64 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 116. For more on this phenomenon see Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, vol. 3, pp. 34–51; al-Ṭabarī points out that Arabic is replete with examples of this syntactic trait and produces poetic verses to demonstrate this.

65 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 117.

66 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 118. This point is discussed in Aḥmad al-°Awāyisha, *al-Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī*, pp. 122–34.

67 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 117–18.

68 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 118. It is worth noting that the text's editor, Aḥmad Shākir, considered al-Ṭabarī's explanation of the arguments about the *basmala* and the links with *tasmīyya* as being inspired, and indicative of his perceptive grasp of the issues: see the discussion in the footnote at pp. 118–19.

69 These lines were from a poem composed for his two daughters by the *mukhaḍram* poet Labīd on his deathbed in the *kāmil* meter. He died during the caliphate of °Umar. See Ibn Qutayba, Muḥammad °Abd Allāh b. Muslim, *al-Shi'r wa'l-shu'arā'*, ed. M. Qamīḥa and N. Zarzūr, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1985) pp. 154 ff. A detailed commentary of the verse is provided in °Abd al-Qādir b. °Umar al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab wa-lubb lubāb lisān al-°Arab: wa-huwa sharḥ °alā shawāhid sharḥ al-kāfiya li'l-raḍī*, ed. °Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (13 vols. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1347–51/1928–32), vol. 4, pp. 337–42 (*shāhid* no. 305). The point is that the *ism* in the poetry is the equivalent of *al-salām*. In the line of poetry he was instructing his daughters that it would suffice if they mourned his passing for a year. For al-Ṭabarī's discussion of the line, see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 119. He says that there are two possible meanings of the line, neither of which coincides with Abū °Ubayda's view, which sees the *ism* being the *musammā*. The first meaning, his preferred view, is having mourned for a year the two daughters should adhere to (the mention of) God's name and His remembrance and desist from thinking of their father and

crying over him, suggesting it was a form of *ighrāʾ* ('exhortation'); for the second explanation al-Ṭabarī refers to its reflecting a process of *tasmiyya*: namely, that may God's name be over you ('*tasmiyyatī Allāh ʿalaykumā*, as in *ism Allāh ʿalayka*'), whereby someone seeks the refuge and protection of the Almighty.

70 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 119.

71 Abū ʿUbayda, Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā, *Majāz al-Qurʾān*, ed. Fuʾāt Sezgin, 2nd edn (2 vols. Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1981), vol. 1, p. 16. See also the discussion in al-Zajjājī, Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Ishāq, *Ishṭiqāq asmāʾ Illāh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Husayn al-Mubārak, 2nd edn (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1986), p. 217, where he seems to suggest that by taking such a view of the *ism* being the *salām*, Abū ʿUbayda was being held hostage to the notion that the *ism* is the *musammā*, although al-Zajjājī simply dismisses the argument that the existence of linguistic phenomena such as synonyms and antonyms impacted upon the idea of the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā* is discussed in Ibn al-Anbārī, Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, *Kitāb al-addād*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyya, 1987) p. 13.

72 Al-Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 155. Khalaf b. Hishām al-Bazzār, the renowned Kufan reader, is also quoted, showing that many traditionalists were simply stating the *ism* was the *musammā*. There are similar statements attributed to al-Shāfiʿī.

73 Al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb tamhīd al-awāʾil wa-talkhīṣ al-dalāʾil*, p. 258. The reasoning is that the Qurʾanic dicta show that the *ism* must be the same as the *musammā* for God would not command mankind to exalt or glorify something other than him. While the arbitrary naming of deities is condemned in Q. 12:40; this has a nexus with the origins of language and the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* debate. It was the Muʿtazilī ʿAbbād b. Sulaymān (d. 252/864) who asserted that the change in the name of something would lead to a change in the essence of its identity: Naysābūrī, Abū Rashīd Saʿīd b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd, *al-Masāʾil fī'l-khilāf bayn al-Baṣriyyīn wa'l-Baghdādiyyīn*, ed. M. Ziyāda and R. al-Sayyid (Beirut: Maʿhad al-Inmāʾ al-ʿArabī, 1979), p. 161. Cf. the discussions in ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-ʿadl*, vol. 5, pp. 160–6.

74 His Khārijī inclinations are dismissed in Wilferd Madelung, 'Abū ʿUbayda Maʿmar b. Muthannā as a Historian', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 3:1 (1992), pp. 47–56. See also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vol. 5, p. 509; al-Zubaydī explicitly mentioned that his books and views cannot substantiate the claim of his being inclined to Muʿtazilism (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1973), pp. 175–7).

75 Al-Qādī b. Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 2, pp. 299–300.

76 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* (ed. Turkī), vol. 22, p. 278.

77 Ibn Jinnī, Abū'l-Faṭḥ ʿUthmān, *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Najjār, 2nd edn (3 vols. Cairo: n.p., n.d.), vol. 3, pp. 24–32. Ibn Jinnī's treatment of this topic is couched using a terminology and framework which fleshes out the linguistic dimensions of the arguments.

78 Ibn Jinnī moves on to elaborate by referring to the difference between the lexeme for sword (*sa/yf*) and its orthographical denotation in which it is the *ism* and retains a wholly abstract quality; and, conversely '*ḍarabtuḥu bi'l-ḥadīd*' which constitutes the actual weapon (*al-musammā*) wrought from iron.

79 Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ*, p. 32. Intricately entwined in the discussions is the notion of the derivation of the term '*al-ism*', which became one of the key subjects of *khilāf* between Basran and Kufan grammarians. The grammarians' interest in the topic was principally concerned with issues such as the relationship between words and the concepts they embody, including discourses about the origins of language and the process of naming, although the arcing of the conceptual boundaries of the associated discourses meant that aspects of the discussions of key

grammarians regularly surfaced in the constructs and premises ruminated over by theologians. It is the grammarian al-Zajjājī (d. 337/949), who earlier provided a detailed discussion of the linguistic ramifications of the arguments in his *Īdāḥ fī 'ilal al-naḥw*, using points raised by Sībawayhi as the background for positing his thoughts on the topic (al-Zajjājī, Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ishāq, *al-Īdāḥ fī 'ilal al-naḥw*, ed. Māzin al-Mubārak (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Madani, 1959)). See also the translation by Kees Versteegh, *The Explanation of Linguistic Causes, al-Zajjājī's Theory of Grammar* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1995). Versteegh reasoned that al-Zajjājī had Mu'tazilī inclinations on the basis that he appeared to discount the unity of identity between the *ism* and the *musammā*, but it is quite plain that this could not be used as an indicator of such leanings; moreover, there is nothing in his works to suggest that his theology is not of the brand defended by scholars associated with traditional Sunnism.

80 See note 75.

81 Yāqūt does query the correctness of one aspect of al-Ṭabarī's theological positions as presented by his biographer 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, arguing there is a hint of strict determinism detected in his belief with regards to the 'sealing of the non-believers' hearts' yet the references to his theological beliefs in the entry present an individual whose 'orthodoxy' was consistent with traditional Sunnī beliefs (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vol. 5, pp. 267–8).

82 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 255, where Ibn Kāmil states al-Ṭabarī dictated 150 verses of the *tafsīr* before continuing to complete the Qur'an, adding that this was done in 270/883–4 and that it gained a reputation. Rosenthal (*The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 106–7), cites 190 verses, while the Iḥsān 'Abbās edition of the *Mu'jam* lists 150 verses.

83 See Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 106; while Yāqūt includes various reports in his *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vol. 5, p. 243, p. 248, p. 255, p. 256 and p. 260. See also van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, pp. 294–5.

84 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ṣarīḥ al-sunna*, ed. Badr b. Yūsūf al-Ma'tūq, 2nd edn (Kuwait: Dār al-Khulafā' li'l-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 2005), p. 40. It was the subject of a study by Dominique Sourdel, 'Une profession de foi de l'historien al-Ṭabarī', *Revue des Études Islamiques* 36 (1968), pp. 177–99. See also Claude Gilliot's summary of his works in *Exégèse, langue, et théologie*, pp. 39–68; also Mårtensson, *Tabari*, pp. 18–23.

85 Al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tabṣīr fī ma'ālim al-dīn*, p. 103f.

86 Al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Shu'ab al-īmān*, ed. Muḥammad al-Sa'īd Zaghlūl (17 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2000), vol. 1, pp. 124–6. Cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, vol. 6, pp. 175–85.

87 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, vol. 1, p. 105.

88 Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fī'l-mīlāl*, vol. 5, pp. 135–46; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, vol. 6, pp. 175–212, see p. 187.

89 Gösta Vitestam, 'AṬ-Ṭabarī and the Seeing of God', pp. 147–55. See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 12, pp. 12–23.

90 Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 207–78 ('Chapitre VIII: Le Combat De Ṭabarī Pour L'Orthodoxie'), especially p. 207, where he states that 'Un commentaire coranique n'est pas un traité d'hérésiographie, pourtant la polémique contre les groupes sectaires n'en est pas absente. Ceux-ci sont parfois désignés, mais le plus souvent, tout au moins dans le Commentaire de Tabari, ils sont laissés dans l'anonymat, et ce n'est que la connaissance des débats qui ont animé la communauté musulmane jusqu'à son époque qui permet parfois de les identifier.' Also, with regards to the Qādarīs, see p. 276 and his point that 'Il est impossible d'identifier précisément les groupes ou les personnages qu'il vise dans sa polémique anti-qadarite'.

91 See Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam*, at p. 207, p. 221, p. 228, pp. 223–37 and pp. 276–8, and the conclusion offered on p. 281; and see the comments by Mårtensson, *Tabarī*, p. 23.

92 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, vol. 1, p. 61.

93 See Christopher Melchert's 'The Adversaries of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal', *Arabica* 46 (1997), pp. 234–53. With regards to al-Ṭabarī, Melchert mentions that 'medieval sources give various accounts of the accusation against him, but most have to do with semi-rationalist positions in either theology or jurisprudence' (p. 247). Melchert identified the following as semi-rationalists: al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), al-Ḥusayn al-Karābīsī (d. 248/862), Abū Thawr (d. 240/854), al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), Dāwūd b. Khalaf al-Zāhir (d. 270/884), al-Muzanī (d. 264/878) and al-Ṭabarī, although one senses that he was more concerned about the characterisation of approaches to law. Cf. Mustafa Shah, 'The Early Arabic Grammarians' Contributions to the Collection and Authentication of Qur'ānic Readings: The Prelude to Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-sab'ā'*, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6:1 (2004), pp. 72–102, at p. 76f. The underlying theme of Melchert's argument is that Ibn Ḥanbal was perturbed more by the semi-rationalists than the Mu'tazila (p. 235), and that semi-rationalism became the matrix of the classical schools of law (see p. 250). Melchert also questions whether Rosenthal was right to identify *tout court* the Mu'tazilīs with rationalism.

94 Walid A. Saleh, 'Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of *tafsīr* in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010), pp. 6–40, p. 13. Reproduced in Mustafa Shah (ed.), *Tafsīr: Interpreting the Qur'ān*, Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies (4 vols. London: Routledge, 2013), vol. 1, pp. 289–324.

95 Boswell, art. 'al-Ṭabarī'.

96 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 7–8. In addition, see the lengthy entry which features in Ibn 'Asākir, Abū'l-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan, *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. 'Umar b. Gharāma al-'Amrawī (75 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), vol. 52, pp. 188–208 (biography no. 6160).

97 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 244; Rosenthal's *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 10; also Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 52, p. 193, where he mentions al-Farghānī's *dhayl*.

98 Al-Subkī, *Tāj al-Dīn, Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāhī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilw (10 vols. Cairo: Maṭba'at 'Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964–76), vol. 3, p. 123. See also the entry on Ibn Kāmil in al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Shu'ayb Arna'ūṭ and Ma'mūn al-Ṣāghirjī (25 vols. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1990), vol. 15, pp. 544f.

99 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 10. Although he states 'that unless there is irrefutable proof to the contrary, we must assume that the reports reflect reality, and that idealising descriptions depict, if not reality, then something equally or more important, namely, the perception of contemporaries'. Such materials, he says, are legitimate sources for the biographer although caution must be exercised when using them.

100 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, vol. 2, pp. 162–8. He actually uses the term *samā'*, which connotes active audition, to highlight the mode of contact between al-Ṭabarī and the figures he mentions. For more on the modes of transmission, see Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī, *Fath al-mughūth sharḥ alfiyyat al-ḥadīth*, ed. Ṣalāḥ 'Uwīda (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), pp. 187–229; Ibn Khallād al-Rāmḥurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāsil bayn al-rāwī wa'l-wā'ī*, ed. M. al-'Ajājī al-Khaṭīb, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1404/1984), pp. 420–80; al-Khaṭīb mentioned that once al-Ṭabarī had settled in Baghdad he remained there until his death and includes an anecdote in which the author of the *Kitāb al-sab'ā'*, Ibn Mujāhid, actually left his own congregational prayers during the month of Ramaḍān in order to listen to al-Ṭabarī recite

from the Qur'an. Among al-Ṭabarī's works was a text devoted to collating *variae lectiones*. Al-Dhahabī highlighted his legacy to the tradition of *qirā'āt* in his biographical dictionary of leading readers, mentioning his work which collated 20 readings (al-Dhahabī, Shams al-Dīn, *Ma'rifat al-qurrā' al-kibār*, ed. M. Jādd al-Ḥaqq, 1st edn (2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 212–13).

101 Miskawayhi, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, *Tajārib al-umam wa-ta'āqub al-himam*, ed. Sayyid Kasrawī Ḥasan (7 vols. Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2003), vol. 5, p. 48. Also, for a later account, see Shihāb al-Dīn b. ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Arnāʾūt and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Arnāʾūt (10 vols. Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1989), vol. 4, p. 53. Watt, *The Formative Period*, p. 297, mentions that the idea that al-Ṭabarī had Shīʿī leanings was 'given verisimilitude by the existence of an Imāmīte scholar of almost the same name, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Rustam at-Ṭabarī'.

102 Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū'l-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Muntaẓam fī tāʾrīkh al-umam wa'l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (18 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), vol. 13, pp. 215–17.

103 In Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 52, pp. 201–2, where Ibn ʿAsākir gives an example of the anger he displayed when told that someone has impugned Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. See also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, p. 269.

104 For more on this source see Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies* (London: IB Tauris, 2004), pp. 25–6. Cf. Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 92. Even the work entitled *al-Mustarshid fī'l-imāmā* was erroneously ascribed to him. Sinān's work was a *dhayl* to al-Ṭabarī's history.

105 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, p. 247. Yāqūt includes an anecdote in which Abū Bakr b. Kāmil relates that an individual not only claimed that ʿAlī was in Yemen at the time of the so-called incident, but he also composed a poem which listed the various regions of the Arabian Peninsula and mentioned Ghadīr Khumm, recounting in it that numerous false reports about it had been concocted. This perturbed al-Ṭabarī, who authored the *Fadāʾil ʿAlī* and listed the paths of transmission for the Ghadīr Khumm dictum, which attracted the attention of Shīʿīs who began inveighing against the Companions. This consequently caused al-Ṭabarī to collate materials on the virtues of the Companions; he was then asked to collate those of Banī ʿAbbās.

106 See Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, ed. Shuʿayb Arnaʾūt and ʿĀdil Murshid (50 vols. Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla), vol. 32, pp. 56–7, for the tradition in which he refers to the incident at Ghadīr Khumm; also see vol. 32, pp. 11–12 for the tradition cited in n. 111. See also al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-mukhtaṣar min al-sunan ʿan rasūl Allāh wa-maʿrifat al-ṣaḥīḥ al-maʿlūl wa-mā ʿalayhi al-ʿamal* in *al-Kutub al-Sitta: mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf*, ed. Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Āl-Shaykh (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1999), p. 2,034, *ḥadīth* nos. 3712 and 3713 in which the term '*man kuntu mawlāhu fa-ʿAlī mawlāhu*' is mentioned in the section '*Manāqib al-Imām ʿAlī*'. Separate discussions were conducted on issues of transmission, authenticity, and indeed significance, in the attendant commentaries on such works. Within Sunnī scholarship the issue was whether al-Tirmidhī's transmission included *ziyāda* ('elements of interpolation') of the dictum (see Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawīyya fī naqḍ al-Shīʿa wa'l-Qadariyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (9 vols. Riyadh: Jāmiʿat Muḥammad Ibn Saʿūd, 1985), vol. 7, pp. 393–7).

107 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*: he concludes that it was probably a desideratum that the collected lectures on the virtues of all these Companion figures be collated in a single work but this never materialised (pp. 91–3), although the point is made that his 'personal identification with 'orthodox' attitudes cannot be doubted' (p. 93).

108 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in *al-Kutub al-Sitta: Bāb manāqib al-Imām ʿAlī*, p. 1,102 (*ḥadīth* no. 6225), in which Zayd b. Arqam related that the Prophet had delivered a sermon at the pools of

Khumm between Mecca and Medina, and having declared that he was a mortal whose passing was imminent he went on to state that he had bequeathed to the community ‘*al-thaqalayn*’ (‘the two substantial matters’); the first of which was the Qur’an, to which it should steadfastly hold on; and the second was ‘*ahl-baytī*’, to whom reference was repeatedly made in the form of an advisory. Cf. al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā’l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā’ (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), vol. 3, pp. 117–8 (*Bāb ma‘rifat al-sahāba*). The *Mustadrak* can include additions as well as variations of traditions not featured in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, although its methodology was questioned by some later traditionists.

109 The *ṭayr* tradition relates that roasted hen was prepared for the Prophet, but before eating it he supplicated, desiring that the person most loved in God’s eyes would share the meal with him. His servant, Anas b. Mālik heard the prayer, before whispering, ‘Let it be someone from my people (*al-anṣār*)’, only for ‘Alī to arrive. ‘Alī was refused entry by Anas, who informed him that the Prophet was otherwise engaged, but upon finally having been allowed access after three attempts, he was asked what had kept him by Muḥammad, whereupon he explained that he was rebuffed by Anas, who, when in turn asked by the Prophet what caused him to act in such a way, replied that it was his wish that the person who shared the Prophet’s meal would be a man from his own people, to which Muhammad responded, ‘He loves his people’ (al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā’l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 3, pp. 141ff. (see *ḥadīth* nos. 4650, 4651 and 4652).

110 He was born in Āmul, Ṭabaristān, which is situated on the Caspian Sea. He speaks of memorising the Qur’an when he was seven; leading prayers when he was eight; and recording traditions when he was nine (Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, p. 247).

111 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 288. See also the version of the *Fihrist* edited by Aymān Fu’ād Sayyid (3 vols. London: Mu’assasat al-Furqān li’l-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2009) at vol. 3, pp. 117–24.

112 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 10, pp. 450–6.

113 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 10, p. 454.

114 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 60, Rosenthal did feel that the ambiguous nature of the last passage in Ibn al-Jawzī’s text meant that it was difficult to ascertain who were the actual subjects in the various verbs. He also speaks of Ibn al-Jawzī referring to the rejection of the tradition as ‘absurd’ and that the rest of the passage might be the narrative from Thābit b. Sinān’s history: see n. 233. He also reasons that the episode had nothing to do with the Ḥanbalīs (pp. 60–1.) He explains ‘that the criticism of al-Ṭabarī’s unfairness in blaming the entire group for the error of one of its members is difficult to ascribe to Ibn al-Jawzī’. Rosenthal does associate the discussions with the tradition but it appears to be more about the whole episode of the allegations.

115 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, vol. 13, pp. 221–38; see p. 230, in which the enmity between him and al-Ṭabarī is mentioned along with Ibn Ṣā‘id (d. 318/930), a respected *ḥadīth* specialist.

116 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 52, pp. 197–8. Cf. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, vol. 14, p. 274. A work also seen as emanating from the *Faḍā’il* is a text entitled *al-Radd ‘alā’l-hurqūsiyya*. Rosenthal speculates that this might have been a refutation of Ibn Abī Dāwūd (Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 123–4) had argued that Brockelmann’s earlier suggestion that it was a refutation of the Ḥanbalīs was incorrect (Sezgin’s *Geschichte*, vol. 1, pp. 328–9). The work is mentioned in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s *Ahl al-bayt fī’l maktabat al-‘Arabiyya* (Qom: Mu’assasat Ahl al-Bayt li’l-Turāth, 1417 AH), (work no. 327), pp. 191–2; it is claimed therein that the Shī‘ī scholar Ibn Ṭawūs (d. 673/1274–5) used to cite from it.

117 ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Adī al-Jurjānī al-Qaṭṭān, *al-Kāmil fī ḍu‘afā’ al-rijāl*, edited by committee (7 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), vol. 4, pp. 1,577–8. In al-Dhahabī’s account above (p. 228)

Ibn Sā'id, his foe, is said to have remarked that it suffices what his father said about him: namely, that he was a liar; and that Abū Dāwūd also exclaimed that it was a calamity that he was seeking a judgeship. Ibn °Adī even states 'I know not what had been revealed to his father regarding him'. Ibn Abī Dāwūd was accused of being from the *nawāṣib* ('enemies of °Alī'). Al-Dhahabī, who discusses the report, simply explains that Ibn Abī Dāwūd's comments were lamentable especially as the tradition, whether it is authenticated or not, has a largely neutral significance (p. 232 of *Siyar*). Al-Jurjānī completed his entry on Ibn Abī Dāwūd by stating that if it were not for the fact that he had stipulated including in his work all those 'censured', he would have omitted mention of him (Ibn °Adī, *al-Kāmil*, p. 1,578): Incidentally, it was Ibn °Isā who allowed Ibn Abī Dāwūd to return out of exile from Wāsiṭ, where he had been banished by Ibn al-Furāt. The *ḥadīth* scholar al-Dārāquṭnī is said to have remarked of Ibn Abī Dāwūd, 'He is *thiqa*, except he is prone to errors with regards to traditions' (al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'riḫ Baghdād*, vol. 9, p. 468). Intriguingly, Nāzūk, the head of police mentioned in the story of the stoning of al-Ṭabarī's home, had to facilitate Ibn Abī Dāwūd's funeral due to the great numbers who attended.

118 Al-Jurjānī al-Qaṭṭān, *al-Kāmil*, p. 1,577.

119 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 92–3; and for more on Rustam, see p. 13, p. 57 and p. 118.

120 Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-i'tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad Bijāwī (4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), vol. 3, pp. 498–9; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mīzān*, vol. 7, pp. 25–9 (biography number 6580).

121 Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mīzān*, vol. 7, p. 26. He even reasons that if one were to swear on oath that al-Sulaymānī had intended Ibn Rustam it would have been validated. Rosenthal dismisses the attempts to attribute the work to Ibn Rustam. Ibn Ḥajar does mention the fact that the Andalusian exegete Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344) was so beguiled by what al-Sulaymānī had to say about al-Ṭabarī that when presenting one of his exegetical views in his *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, he described him as 'a leading authority from among the *Imāmīs*!' Although, one of the recent printed versions has the reference to Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī. Al-Dhahabī also expresses his surprise at the persuasiveness of al-Ṭabarī's study of the Ghadīr Khumm reports.

122 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, vol. 6 (part 11), p. 157f. Ibn Rustam, also from Āmul, was noted for his strident Shi'ism and was a prominent grammarian praised for his learning (see Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuḥat al-alibbā'*, p. 180; and al-Qifī, *Inbāh*, vol. 1, p. 163). In his *Ta'riḫ*, al-Ṭabarī did make extensive use of the materials narrated by Abū Mikhnaf, who was criticised by Sunnīs for his 'Shi'ī bias', but he made it evident in the introduction to his work that he was merely narrating the materials and that many would find materials which were objectionable. See also Khalīl Athamina, 'The Historical Work of al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī: The Author's Attitude Towards the Sources' in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and his Work*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 15 (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2008), pp. 141–55; and in the same work, Sebastian Günther, 'Al-Nawfalī's Lost History: A Shi'ī Sourced Used by al-Ṭabarī and Abū'l-Faraj', pp. 157–73. For materials on narrators cited in his works, see Muḥammad Ṣubḥī b. Ḥasan Ḥallāq, *Rijāl tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jarḥan wa-ta'dīlan min taḥqīq Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān li-Aḥmad Shākir wa-Maḥmūd Shākir* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1997); and Akram al-Fālūjī al-Atharī (ed.), *al-Mu'jam al-ṣaḥīr li'ruwāt al-Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī* (2 vols. Ammān: Dār al-Atharīyya and Dār Ibn °Affān, 1425 AH).

123 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, pp. 265–6.

124 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 260.

125 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, pp. 265–6, Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 68–9.

126 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, vol. 6, p. 157. And Bosworth states that al-Ṭabarī had debates and discussions with Abū Bakr but that these took place 'on the level of courtesy and mutual respect' (Bosworth, art. 'al-Ṭabarī').

127 One suspects that Ibn Kathīr may have confused Ḍawūd al-Zāhirī's son with Ibn Abī Ḍawūd al-Sijistānī as many of the allegations which are bandied about, including references to terms such as *ilhād* and *rafḍ*, emanated from the latter figure. Still, certain Zāhirī scholars, such as Ibn Ḥazm, remained critics. In the Turkī manuscript of *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya* the words 'zāhirī' and 'faqīh' are omitted, but the name is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd (vol. 14, p. 849) and this is due to variants between manuscripts.

128 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 272.

129 In the opening section of his seminal history, al-Ṭabarī uses the argument from *ḥudūth* ('temporality of the world'), to prove the existence of God, which was a *kalām*-based proposition censured by traditionists. Ibn Ḥazm deals with al-Ṭabarī's views on the necessity of *istidlāl* ('inductive reasoning') in determining the existence of God, pointing out he was close to the Ash'arīs on this point (Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fī'l-milal*, vol. 4, pp. 67–78).

130 Ibn Ḥazm, *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī*, ed. Iḥsān °Abbās (4 vols. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-°Arabīyya li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Nashr, 1983), vol. 4, pp. 291–2. Ibn Ḥazm stated that by virtue of this statement, he died ('entered his grave') in utter ignorance, but he mentions seeking God's forgiveness for him.

131 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 248.

132 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdād*, vol. 2, p. 164. Cf. Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 30, in which the relationship with this figure is assessed. Also, p. 19, where he claims that the notion that he went to study with Ibn Ḥanbal may have been fabricated to alleviate tensions with the Ḥanbalīs.

133 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdād*, vol. 2, p. 164. He is the author of the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* and the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. See also Ibn °Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 52, p. 195, as the account differs slightly. It should be noted that Ibn Khuzayma apparently accompanied al-Ṭabarī on his journey to Miṣr and they shared accommodation there. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 246.

134 Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-kubrā*, vol. 3, p. 125.

135 This can be seen in the reports about his debates with traditionists; his refusal of official positions; his rejection of gifts from the vizier (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 270 ff).

136 Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-kubrā*, vol. 3, p. 125. Cf. Watt, *The Formative Period*, p. 297. Watt speaks of al-Ṭabarī making concessions to the views of the Mu' tazilīs in the *tafsīr* and that he was bitterly opposed in the last years of his life by the Ḥanbalīs. Firstly, the idea that al-Ṭabarī made concessions is strictly out of character; and, secondly, the opposition mounted by the Ḥanbalīs and indeed some of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*, such as Ibn Abī Ḍawūd, persisted throughout extended periods of his life.

137 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 253. The passages in which Yāqūt mentioned al-Ṭabarī's reference to al-Aṣamm have been the subject of dispute, particularly the reference to the term *sahw*: see Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 100; Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue et théologie en Islam*, pp. 42f; and Stewart, 'Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's *al-Bayān*' (cited below at note 142), p. 328. It is possible that the term is simply a reference to the town (Sahw) in Egypt mentioned by Yāqūt in the *Mu'jam al-buldān*, as al-Ṭabarī did spend some time in Egypt (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1991), vol. 3, p. 291). He was included among the notable ('strangers', *ghurabā'*) who stayed in Egypt: see Ibn Yūnus °Abd al-Raḥmān, *Ta'riḫ Ibn Yūnus al-°Sadafī*, ed. °Abd al-Fattāḥ Fathī °Abd al-Fattāḥ (2 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 195–6, 'ta'riḫ al-ghurabā''.

138 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, p. 253. For more on the *Latīf*, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, p. 262; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 291; Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue et théologie en Islam*, pp. 39 f; and Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 113–4. It is mystifying that the figures who are supposed to have led the ‘Ḥanbalī’ charge against him are rather obscure: Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Jaṣṣās, Jaʿfar b. ʿArafa, and Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Bayādī (see Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 72–3; also Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue, et théologie en Islam*, pp. 252–4 for an assessment of the account; cf. Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), specifically his chapter on the Ḥanbalīs of Baghdad, pp. 114–44; also the discussion on pp. 116–17 and at n. 14 on p. 117, for his reference to the stoning of al-Ṭabarī’s home).

139 See the discussions in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 69–78; cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, pp. 252–4; and also Mujāhid b. Jabr al-Makkī, *Tafsīr Mujāhid*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām (2 vols. Madīnat al-Naṣr: Dār al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1989).

140 The variations in the accounts are noticeable: the verse of poetry is said to have been transcribed by al-Ṭabarī over the entrance to his home, whereupon the head of the police erased it and the so-called *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* came along and replaced it with several lines of poetry confirming the Prophet’s station at the side of the Almighty, which ended with a hemistich stating that ‘thus it was narrated by al-Layth on the authority of Mujāhid’. See also Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 69–78.

141 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 78 and p. 105 (also p. 73).

142 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, pp. 253–4. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-taḥṣīl al-thābit ʿan rasūl Allāh*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (5 vols. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1982). Classical writers such as Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Khaṭīb and Yāqūt all mention that the author died before he could complete the *Tahdhīb*, although all are agreed that it reflected a highly acclaimed piece of scholarship and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī referred to it as a wonder amongst his works (see Shākīr’s introduction to the *Tahdhīb*). His arrangement of the traditions and analysis of them underline his proficiency and mastery of the relevant scholarship. The *Tahdhīb* discusses areas such as the *ʿilal* of the traditions and their paths of transmission; legal significance; the differences among scholars in their regard; and coverage is extended to lexical analysis. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.); see also the version edited by Joseph Schacht, *Das Konstantinopler Fragment des Kitāb ikhtilāf al-Fuqahāʾ* (Leiden: Brill, 1933). Related articles include Claude Gilliot, ‘Le traitement du *ḥadīth* dans le *Tahdhīb al-āthār* de Ṭabarī’, *Arabica* 41:3 (1994), pp. 309–51; and Devin J. Stewart, ‘Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī’s *al-Bayān ʿan uṣūl al-aḥkām* and the Genre of *uṣūl al-fiqh* in Ninth-Century Baghdad’ in James Montgomery (ed.), *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies, Cambridge 6–10 July 2002* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 325–49. Stewart suggests that developments within the field of *uṣūl al-fiqh* were well advanced within the tradition when al-Ṭabarī’s work was written and that much of the scholarship in the work feeds off earlier endeavours in the field attributed to leading Ḥanafī as well as Muʿtazilī authorities. Also important is F. Kern’s study, ‘Ṭabarī’s *Ikhtilāf alfuqahāʾ*’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 55 (1901), pp. 61–95.

143 The issue of the Ghadīr Khumm and *ṭayr* traditions has already been discussed at length, particularly in the context of the disputes with Ibn Abī Dāwūd. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 5, p. 252, recounts a discussion about the *asānīd* and the spread of transmission of traditions in which al-Ṭabarī exchanged views with Ibn Ḥamdān, highlighting the latter’s errors.

144 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī tāʾrīkh*, vol. 13, pp. 215–17; further unrest is cited with regards to the stirrings of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Barbahārī, the ‘leader of the Ḥanbalites’, who instigated riots (p. 317).

145 Ibn al-Athīr, °Izz al-Dīn °Alī b. Abī al-Karam, *al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rikh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq (11 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1987), vol. 7, pp. 8–10. For more on the clash with the Ḥanbalīs, see Bakr b. °Abd Allāh Abū Zayd, *al-Madkhal al-mufaṣṣal ilā fiqh al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal wa-takhrījāt al-aṣḥāb* (2 vols. Jeddah: Dār al-°Āṣima, 1417 AH), pp. 361–8. He discusses the relationship between al-Ṭabarī and the Ḥanbalīs and refers to the fact that al-Khallāl was the first individual to collate the teachings of Ibn Ḥanbal, which has implications for the claim that the anecdote in which al-Ṭabarī is supposed to have angered certain Ḥanbalī figures due to his omitting the legal opinions of Ibn Ḥanbal presents something of an anachronism on account of the latter's legal views being firstly collated and promulgated by al-Khallāl. For the role of al-Khallāl, see al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, vol. 3, pp. 785–6. The point Abū Zayd makes is that the 'madhḥab' of Ibn Ḥanbal would not have been around at that time and so to refer to a clash with Ḥanbalīs is absurd. However, this does not obscure the fact that figures who identified with Ibn Ḥanbal and his theology took positions which brought them into opposition with al-Ṭabarī. See also Abdul Hakim al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyya: Conflict or Conciliation* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006) – a discussion of Ibn Ḥanbal's legal legacy features in the first chapter, especially pp. 10–15; and al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a°lām al-nubalā°*, vol. 14, pp. 267–82, especially p. 274.

146 Al-Barbahārī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. °Alī, *Sharḥ al-sunna*, ed. Khalid b. Qāsim (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ghurabā° al-Athariyya, 1993), p. 71. Some have referred to his censure of al-Ash°arī regarding his authorship of the *Ibāna*, although it has also been suggested the story is suspect (see his biography below in note 147). See also Richard Frank, 'Elements in the Development of the Teaching of al-Ash°arī', *Le Muséon: Revue D'Études Orientales* 104 (1991), pp. 141–90, esp. pp. 171–2, where Frank examines the significance of the report.

147 Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 72, and see the discussion in n. 278. See his biography in al-Qāḍī b. Abī Ya°lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, pp. 300–9.

148 For more on him, see Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*, p. 114ff. And there were obviously points of disagreements which were sourced to other works and views.

149 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a°lām al-nubalā°*, vol. 14, p. 277. Also, see his entry in al-Qāḍī b. Abī Ya°lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 2, pp. 51–5 and the poem he composed summarising his faith.

150 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, ed. al-Turkī, vol. 15, p. 47.

151 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, ed. al-Turkī, vol. 15, pp. 47–54. It is striking that Muqātil b. Sulaymān, who is accused of abject anthropomorphism, does accentuate the theme of intercession in his *tafsīr* of the verse. Ibn Taymiyya did claim that his views were misrepresented in doxographies (Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 618–20), (p. 78). See also Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, Appendix A, on pp. 149–151, which translates parts of al-Ṭabarī's discussion of the *julūs* narrative in the *Jāmi°*. Having stated his preference with regards to the *shafā°a* explanation, he never specifically discounts the Mujāhid report, but states that it represents a belief whose veracity cannot be disregarded in terms of the content of the actual report or indeed its rational basis. He uses the *argumentum e silentio*, noting there are no reports from the pious ancestors rejecting the notion before embarking upon a detailed exposition of the different arguments.

152 Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn, *Kitāb al-sunna*, ed. °Aṭīyya al-Zahrānī (7 vols. Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1989), vol. 1, pp. 209–56. The *Kitāb al-sunna* is also referred to as the *al-Musnad* due to the fact the term is mentioned in its opening lines. Some seventy-odd reports are devoted to the subject, many of which directly endorse the Prophet's being sat on the throne. See also Henri Laoust, *La Profession de foi d'Ibn Baṭṭa* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1958); Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 76–7, where he discusses the perceived physical sensitivities predicated by the Mujāhid tradition. It is frequently pointed out that the codification of the legal views and musings of Ibn Ḥanbal was the accomplishment of Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, whose efforts contributed significantly

to the emergence of the school of jurisprudence which was posthumously linked with him. Although it is unlikely he studied with Aḥmad, he was closely linked with one of his pupils Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī and his works remained critical sources for the emerging school.

153 Al-Khallāl, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 212 (report no. 239). The editor of the text questions the very authenticity of this report, quoting al-Dhahabī, who asserted Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said that there were no reliable reports which exist on this subject.

154 Al-Khallāl, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 217.

155 For more on the Jahmiyya, see Josef van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie: zwei antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Hīgra*, Beirut Texts and Studien, Bd. 14 (Beirut: in Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1977); and van Ess, *Der Eine und das Andere*, vol. 1, pp. 311–14 and p. 528f. In Bosworth, art. 'al-Ṭabarī', Bosworth describes the Ḥanbalīs as being 'belligerent and uncompromising' referring to al-Ṭabarī's tribulations with the Ḥanbalīs as being 'acerbic' and saying that they 'may well have had a disturbing and unsettling effect on al-Ṭabarī's life'. He makes the point that during al-Ṭabarī's lifetime Ḥanbalism had 'struggled to carve a niche for itself alongside the existing three *madhhabs*'. He suggests its 'advocates were both pugnacious and often unscrupulous, being ready to whip up the mindless Baghdad mob'. Bosworth sees the dispute as stemming from al-Ṭabarī's omission of Ibn Ḥanbal's legal opinions in his work which enraged the 'baying Ḥanbalite mob'. Still, it should be evident from the material covered thus far in the article that the roots of this discord and dissent are much more intricate than hitherto suggested by Bosworth; differences about key theological issues and discussions about traditions are also fuelling the tensions and it is Ibn Abī Dāwūd who is particularly prominent as a major rival. See also Cook who plays down the Ḥanbalī role in al-Ṭabarī's difficulties (Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*, pp. 114–44).

156 Al-Khallāl, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 214–15, especially the report which features Abū Dāwūd. See also Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, pp. 71–3, where he discusses Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī.

157 There are parallels with al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lam al-nubalā'*, vol. 18, p. 284; and al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, vol. 3, p. 1,183. Rosenthal would suggest that the 'role of Ḥanbalite hostility, though real, seems to have been exaggerated in connection with his death as it was in his life' (Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 78).

158 Al-Zajjāj, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa-i'rābuhu*, ed. A. Shalabī (5 vols. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1988), vol. 3, p. 256.

159 Al-Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, *al-Jāmi' lī-ahkām al-Qur'ān wa'l-mubayyin li-mā tadammnahu min al-sunna wa-āy al-Furqān*, joint editors (21 vols in 42 parts. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1988), vol. 5 (part 2), pp. 201–2. See also Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*, p. 116, in which he discusses Ḥanbalī disturbances which took place in 317/929 as a result of the arguments about this verse.

160 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 5, pp. 398–402. Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-sunna wa'l-radd ʿalā'l-Jahmiyya*, ed. Aḥmad al-Qufaylī (Cairo: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2008), pp. 231–5. The editor of the text has supplied full critical notes, often pointing out that the traditions cited are weak or even questionable; yet it is evident that such materials were deemed significant within arch-traditionist discourses, particularly in al-Ṭabarī's era. The term *aṭī*, derived from the verb *aṭṭa*, is paraphrased by Ibn Durayd as 'the groaning or moaning of a riding beast or camel', which is also associated with its carrying an onerous load; a tradition is also included mentioning the screeching of the gates of Paradise as a result of the thronging (crowds). See Ibn Durayd, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Jamharat al-lughā*, ed. Ramzī Baalbaki (3 vols. Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li'l-Malayīn, 1987), vol. 1, p. 58. Also note

Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, vol. 1, pp. 285–6, where the term is discussed in respect of differences among theologians about the throne and the issue of the *aḥī* ('groaning').

161 The 'four digits' narrative is discussed at length in Ibn Taymiyya's *Majmū'*, vol. 13, pp. 414–20 and vol. 16, pp. 435–6; also Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 628–31.

162 This is a point observed in Muḥammad al-Mālikī, *Dirāsāt al-Ṭabarī li'l-ma'ānā min khilāl tafsīrihi Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* (Riḥā: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa'l-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya, 1996), pp. 88–90. For a review of the nature of his theological views, see pp. 189–205.

163 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 5, p. 401. A brief review of the footnotes reveals that the editor of the *tafsīr*, Aḥmad al-Shākir, was startled by the contradiction presented by al-Ṭabarī's exegesis of the verse.

164 The debate about its authenticity has spilled over into modern discussions with the late traditionist Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī including it in his collection of weak traditions, *Sisilat al-aḥādīth al-ḍa'īfa wa-athāruhā al-sayyi' fi'l-umma* (14 vols. Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif li'l-Nashr, 1993), vol. 6, pp. 146–7 (no. 2639). Al-Albānī points out that the figure who is pivotal in the *isnād* of the tradition is Ibn Ishāq, the author of the famous *sīra*, who is technically classed as a *mudallis*, which, among other traits, can denote an individual who is known to conceal deliberately the sources from whom he quotes due to the fact that they are often unreliable, although he notes that in the *isnād* he uses the *'an'ana* form. Cf. the discussion in Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, vol. 6, pp. 545–84, cited below, especially pp. 556–7 and vol. 16, pp. 435–6. See the defence of such dicta, including the *maqāman maḥmūdān* in Ibn Qayyim's *al-Kāfiya al-Shāfiya fi'l-intiṣār li'l-firqā al-nājiya (al-qaṣīda al-nūniyya)*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *et al.* (3 vols. Jeddah: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 318ff and p. 473ff.

165 Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān b. Abī Shayba, *Kitāb al-'arsh*, ed. with a study by Muḥammad b. Khalīfa al-Tamīmī (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1998), pp. 436–8. See also Abū Bakr b. Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, ed. Bāsim b. Fayṣal al-Jawābira (2 vols. Riyadh: Dār al-Aṣma'ī, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 392–3.

166 Ibn Qutayba, Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim, *Ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth fi'l-radd 'alā a'dā' ahl al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, n.d.), p. 46.

167 Ibn Khuzayma, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, p. 104, although on p. 106 he rejects one report including the same language due to reservations he has about the *isnād*.

168 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf' shubhat al-tashbīh*, pp. 89–90.

169 Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Taymiyya both covered the topic in some detail, attempting to find ways of accommodating the various interpretations (al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'arsh*, ed. Muḥammad b. Khalīfa al-Tamīmī (2 vols. Medina: Islamic University of al-Madīnah al-Munawwara, n.d.). See also Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, vol. 6, pp. 545–84 and vol. 16, pp. 435–6. For the Ash'arī response, see Ibn Fūrak, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Kitāb mushkil al-ḥadīth aw Ta'wīl al-akhbār al-mutashābiha*, ed. and comm. Daniel Gimaret (Damascus: Institut Français d'études arabes de Damas, 2003), pp. 230–2. It became standard in rational discourses to associate descriptions like *istiwā'* with created phenomena confined to the throne in sense that the act (*fi'il*) is manifested only by virtue of its object (*ma'fūl*); it is not something of which the divine essence partakes. See also 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Naysābūrī's *al-Ghunya fi uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. 'Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1987), pp. 77–8.

170 It was Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī who earlier included the tradition in his *sunan* collection. The wording does differ slightly regarding the terms used (*madd* for *qāla*). The tradition relates a request for intercession which perturbs the Prophet, who reacts by referring to the majesty and

greatness of God and in this context the throne is mentioned. At one stage the Prophet expressed a point by illustrating with his fingers. For more on the notion of *al-riwāya bi'l-ma'nā*, see Mustafa Shah, art. 'Hadīṭ, Language of' in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

171 Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *al-Sunan*, ed. Shu'ayb Arna'ūṭ *et al.* (7 vols. Damascus: Dār al-Rasā'il al-Ālamiyya, 2009), vol. 7, pp. 106–7 ('*innahu laya'īṭu bihi aḥīṭ al-raḥl bi'l-rākib*'); discourse on the *arsh* features in the introductory part of Ibn Kathīr's history (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, vol. 1, pp. 7–9).

172 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-sunna wa'l-radd 'alā'l-Jahmiyya*, pp. 231–5, at p. 234, where he states the Almighty will sit on the throne. The same text has a section in which Abū Ḥanīfa is rebuked by numerous luminaries for various issues (pp. 155–63). It is reported by Ibn Kāmil that when al-Ṭabarī was dictating the *Dhayl al-mudhāyyal*, he highly praised Abū Ḥanīfa, which upset one of his companions, al-Ṣawwāf, who began to inveigh against al-Ṭabarī; it was said that al-Ṭabarī refused to pardon his conduct (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. 5, p. 268f).

173 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, vol. 6, pp. 156–7.

174 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 288. Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qur'ān Commentary of al-Tha'lābī* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 10–12, does question the influence of al-Ṭabarī's work and its overall impact; he is concerned with the assertion that al-Ṭabarī perfected the tradition and everything that came after him was an inert variation on his work. Certainly, one needs to appreciate that al-Ṭabarī continues the achievements of earlier scholarship and enhances its discourses, to which later scholars substantially contributed, augmented and improved upon. As he states, *tafsīr* is by no means 'a static enterprise', and in al-Ṭabarī's work an attempt is made to qualify and refine the intellectual discourses of his day, which he did. See also pp. 207–9, although one needs to assess al-Ṭabarī's work on the basis of its contents and the debates with which it engaged.

175 Al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 288. This is also a point identified by Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: General Introduction*, p. 59 and p. 110. On the author's Shi'ī inclinations, see Devin Stewart, 'The Structure of the *Fihrist*: Ibn al-Nadīm as Historian of Islamic Legal and Theological Schools', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39:3 (2007), pp. 369–87.

176 Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, vol. 3, pp. 89–91. It was al-Qifṭī who also included an entry for al-Ṭabarī in his work entitled *al-Muḥammadūn min al-shu'arā'*, where he also refers to the *Tahrīr*, although on this occasion he describes it as being a gratifying work ('*muqni'*' as opposed to 'splendid'); see al-Qifṭī, *al-Muḥammadūn min al-shu'arā'*, ed. Ḥasan Ma'marī (Paris: Jāmi'at Paris, Kulliyat al-Ādāb wa'l-ʿUlūm al-Insāniyya, 1970), pp. 187–9. Unfortunately, the *Tahrīr* has not survived. Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī (d. 575/1179) mentions the transmission paths for a number of al-Ṭabarī's works which had reached him and were circulating in al-Andalus (Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Khayr al-Ishbīlī, *Fahrāsa* (Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998): *al-Jāmi'*, p. 52; the *Tahdhīb al-āthār*, p. 169; *al-Ta'rīkh (dhayl al-mudhāyyal)*, p. 195; *Kitāb al-farā'id*, p. 230; and the *Kitāb ādāb al-nufūs*, p. 256). For more on his works, see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafādī, *al-Waḥī bi'l-wafayāt*, ed. Aḥmad Arnā'ūṭ and Turkī Muṣṭafā (29 vols. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2001), vol. 2, pp. 212–4. Bosworth does speak of there being a hiatus between the fourth/tenth century and the time of al-Qifṭī as far as biographical interest in the life of al-Ṭabarī is concerned, but this is incorrect and would have had little bearing on the fact that his literary legacy remained influential and attracted the sustained interest and attention of scholarship; and his achievements continued to be recorded in the biographical literature. The fact that the Sāmānid Amīr commissioned the translation which sought to 'hijack al-Ṭabarī's name and reputation', confirms the esteem in which his work was held (Daniel, 'The Sāmānid "Translations"', p. 297).

177 Cf. Abū'l-Muẓaffar al-Isfarāyīnī, *al-Tabṣīr fi'l-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya 'an al-firaq al-hālikīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kawtharī, reprint (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya

lil'l-Turāth, 1999); see p. 191 and the reference to the fact that (scholarship in) *tafsīr* lay in the hands of al-Ṭabarī. Other relevant sources include Ibn Khallikān, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān °Abbās (8 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968), vol. 4, pp. 191–2; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, vol. 3, pp. 120–8; and al-Sam°ānī, °Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad, *al-Ansāb*, ed. °Abd Allāh °Umar al-Bārūdī (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Jinān, 1988), vol. 4, pp. 46–8. Al-Sam°ānī appears to rely on al-Khaṭīb for the bulk of his information on al-Ṭabarī, repeating the details mentioned by the author. This is also true of Abū'l-Zakariyyā° al-Nawawī's *Tahdhīb al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* (4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 77–9, which includes a reference to al-Ṭabarī's having links with al-Rabī° b. Sulaymān; he also notes an evaluation of one of his legal views by the Shāfi'i scholar al-Ramlī (d. 1004/1596), author of the famous *Nihāyat al-muḥtāj ilā sharḥ al-minhāj*. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, vol. 14, pp. 267–82; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, ed. °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu°allamī (4 vols. Hyderabad: Dā°irat al-Ma°ārif al-°Uthmāniyya, 1374 AH), vol. 3, pp. 710–15; al-Ṭabarī is identified as having a separate legal school of thought ('*lahu madhhab fi'l-fiqh ahkiārahu li-nafsihi*') and indeed one of his students composed a work in defence of it (vol. 3, p. 121). For more on his school, see Ibn °Asākir, *Ta°rikh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 52, p. 200; Ibn al-Nadīm also associates him with a number of leading scholars of *ḥadīth* and praised him for having sought so-called shorter *asānīd*, travelling to Egypt, Syria, Kufa, Basra and Rayy. These were *asānīd* which possessed fewer intermediaries separating the first narrator of a tradition from the actual originator of the tradition and were the *raison d'être* of the *riḥla*; Rosenthal simply mentions these constituting brief visits to local authorities, but they are very significant within the context of the acquisition of knowledge in *ḥadīth* scholarship. Luminaries such as Sufyān al-Thawrī and Ibn Ḥanbal are noted for having extolled those who set out on such quests, and indeed it is described as a *sunna*: see Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib al-rāwī fi sharḥ taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. °Abd al-Wahhāb °Abd al-Laṭīf (2 parts in 1. Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1972), vol. 2, p. 160f); also Leonard Librande, 'The Categories High and Low as Reflections on the *Riḥlah* and *Kitāba* in Islam', *Der Islam* 55:2 (1978), pp. 267–80.

178 Saleh, 'Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of *tafsīr*', p. 20. His point is that the reference to al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* being *ma'thūr* was ideologically and not factually driven.

The principal texts discussed in this article are provided as supplementary material online (see www.eupublishing.com/toc/jqs/15/2)

Appendices

al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān, Istiwā'*

A

القول في تأويل قوله تعالى : { ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ } . قال أبو جعفر : اختلفوا في تأويل قوله : " ثم استوى إلى السماء فقال بعضهم : معنى استوى إلى السماء ، أقبل عليها ، كما تقول : كان فلان مقبلاً علي فلان ، ثم استوى علي يشاتمني - واستوى إلي يشاتمني. بمعنى أقبل علي وإلي يشاتمني. واستشهد على أن : الاستواء بمعنى الإقبال بقول الشاعر
أَقُولُ وَقَدْ قَطَعْنَا بِنَا شُرُورِي... سَوَامِدٍ ، وَاسْتَوَيْنَ مِنَ الضُّجُوعِ
فزعم أنه عنى به أنهم خرجوا من الضجوع ، وكان ذلك عندهم بمعنى : أقبلن. وهذا من التأويل في هذا البيت خطأ ، وإنما معنى قوله : " واستوين من الضجوع " ، استوين على الطريق خارجات من الضجوع ، بمعنى استقمن عليه
وقال بعضهم : لم يكن ذلك من الله جل ذكره بتحوّل ، ولكنه بمعنى فعله ، كما تقول : كان الخليفة في أهل العراق يواليهم ، ثم تحوّل إلى الشام. إنما يريد : تحوّل فعله. [وقال بعضهم : قوله : " ثم استوى إلى السماء " يعني به : استوت] . كما قال الشاعر
أَقُولُ لَهُ لَمَّا اسْتَوَىٰ فِي تَرَابِهِ... عَلَىٰ أَيِّ دِينٍ قَتَلَ النَّاسَ مُصْعَبُ
وقال بعضهم : " ثم استوى إلى السماء " ، عمد لها . وقال : بل كلُّ تارك عملاً كان فيه إلى آخر ، فهو مستو لما عمد له ، ومستو إليه
وقال بعضهم : الاستواء هو العلو ، والعلو هو الارتفاع. وممن قال ذلك الربيع بن أنس حدثت بذلك عن عمار بن الحسن ، قال : حدثنا عبد الله بن أبي جعفر ، عن أبيه ، عن الربيع بن أنس :
" ثم استوى إلى السماء " . يقول : ارتفع إلى السماء
ثم اختلف متأولو الاستواء بمعنى العلو والارتفاع ، في الذي استوى إلى السماء. فقال بعضهم : الذي استوى إلى السماء وعلا عليها ، هو خالقها ومنشئها. وقال بعضهم : بل العالي عليها : الدخان الذي جعله الله للأرض سماء
قال أبو جعفر : الاستواء في كلام العرب منصرف على وجوه : منها انتهاء شباب الرجل وقوته ، فيقال ، إذا صار كذلك : قد استوى الرجل. ومنها استقامة ما كان فيه أود من الأمور والأسباب ، يقال منه : استوى لفلان أمره. إذا استقام بعد أود ، ومنه قول الطرّمّاح بن حكيم
طَالَ عَلَى رَسْمٍ مَهْدِدٍ أَبْدَهُ... وَعَفَا وَاسْتَوَىٰ بِهِ بَلَدَهُ

B

والعجب ممن أنكر المعنى المفهوم من كلام العرب في تأويل قول الله : " ثم استوى إلى السماء " ، الذي هو بمعنى العلو والارتفاع ، هرباً عند نفسه من أن يلزمه بزعمه - إذا تأوله بمعناه المفهوم كذلك - أن يكون إنما علا وارتفع بعد أن كان تحتها - إلى أن تأوله بالمجهول من تأويله المستنكر. ثم لم ينجح مما هرب منه؛ فيقال له : زعمت أن تأويل قوله " استوى " أقبل ، أفكان مدبراً عن السماء فأقبل إليها ؟ فإن زعم أن ذلك ليس بإقبال فعل ، ولكنه إقبال تدبير ، قيل له : فكذلك فقل : علا عليها علو ملك وسلطان

، لا علو انتقال وزوال. ثم لن يقول في شيء من ذلك قولاً إلا ألزم في الآخر مثله. ولولا أنا كرهنا إطالة الكتاب بما ليس من جنسه ، لأنبأنا عن فساد قول كل قائل قال في ذلك قولاً لقول أهل الحق فيه مخالفاً . وفيما بينا منه ما يشرف بذي الفهم على ما فيه له الكفاية إن شاء الله

al-Farrā³ Ma'anī al-Qur'ān, Istiwā³ :

A

وقوله : ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ ... الاستواء في كلام العرب على جهتين : إحداهما أن يستوى الرجل [و] ينتهي شبابه ، أو يستوي عن اعوجاج ، فهذان وجهان. ووجه ثالث أن تقول : كان مقبلاً على فلان ثم استوى على يشاتمني وإلى سواء ، على معنى أقبل إلى وعلى فهذا معنى قوله : ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ. وقال ابن عباس : ثم استوى إلى السماء : صعد ، وهذا كقولك للرجل : كان قائماً فاستوى قاعداً ، وكان قاعداً فاستوى قائماً. وكل في كلام العرب جائز

Al-Ṭabarī and the *basmala*: the *ism wa'l-musammā*

A

وذلك أن الباء من " بسم الله " مقتضية فعلاً يكون لها جالباً ، ولا فعل معها ظاهرٌ ، فأغنت سامعَ القائل " بسم الله " معرفته بمراد قائله ، عن إظهار قائل ذلك مراده قولاً إذ كان كل ناطق به عند افتتاحه أمراً ، قد أحضر منطقاً به - إماماً معه ، وإماماً قبله بلا فصل - ما قد أغنى سامعه عن دلالة شاهدة على الذي من أجله افتتح قلبه به . فصار استغناءً سامع ذلك منه عن إظهار ما حذف منه ، نظير استغناءه - إذا سمع قائلاً قيل له : ما أكلت اليوم ؟ فقال : " طعاماً " - عن أن يكرر المسئول مع قوله " طعاماً " ، أكلت ، لما قد ظهر لديه من الدلالة على أن ذلك معنا ، بتقدم مسألة السائل إياه عما أكل. فمعقول إذاً أن قول القائل إذا قال

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم " ثم افتتح تالياً سورةً ، أن إتباعه " بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم " تلاوة " : السورة ، ينبىء عن معنى قوله : " بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم " ومفهومٌ به أنه مرید بذلك : أقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. وكذلك قوله : " بسم الله " عند نهوضه للقيام أو عند قعوده وسائر أفعاله ، ينبىء عن معنى مراده بقوله " بسم الله " ، وأنه أراد بقبيله " بسم الله " ، أقوم باسم الله ، وأقعد باسم الله. وكذلك سائر الأفعال

B

قيل : إن العرب قد تخرج المصادر مبهمَةً على أسماء مختلفة ، كقولهم : أكرمتُ فلاناً كرامةً ، وإنما بناءً مصدر " أفعلت " - إذا أخرج على فعله - " الإفعال " . وكقولهم : أهنتُ فلاناً هواناً ، وكلمته كلاماً .
: وبناءً مصدر : " فعلت " التفعيل. ومن ذلك قول الشاعر
أَكْفُرًا بَعْدَ رَدِّ الْمَوْتِ عَنِّي... وَيَعِدُ عَطَانِكَ الْمِئَةَ الرِّتَاعَا
: يريد : إعطائك. ومنه قول الآخر
وَإِنْ كَانَ هَذَا الْبُخْلُ مِنْكَ سَجِيَّةً... لَقَدْ كُنْتُ فِي طَوْلِي رَجَاءَكَ أَشْعَبَا
: يريد : في إطالتي رجاءك. ومنه قول الآخر

أَطْلَيْمُ إِنْ مُصَابَكُمْ رَجُلًا... أَهْدَى السَّلَامَ تَحِيَّةً ظَلَمَ
يريد : إصابتكم. والشواهد في هذا المعنى تكثرُ ، وفيما ذكرنا كفاية ، لمن وُفِّقَ لفهمه

C

ولا خلاف بين الجميع من علماء الأمة ، أن قائلًا لو قال عند تذكّيته بعض بهائم الأنعام " بالله " ، ولم يقل " بسم الله " ، أنه مخالف - بتركه قيل : " بسم الله " ما سنَّ له عند التذكية من القول. وقد علم بذلك أنه لم يرد بقوله " بسم الله " " بالله " ، كما قال الزاعم أن اسم الله في قول الله : " بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم " هو الله. لأن ذلك لو كان كما زعم ، لوجب أن يكون القائل عند تذكّيته ذبيحته " بالله " ، قائلًا ما سنَّ له من القول على الذبيحة. وفي إجماع الجميع على أن قائل ذلك تارك ما سنَّ له من القول على ذبيحته - إذ لم يقل " بسم الله " - دليل واضح على فساد ما ادعى من التأويل في قول القائل : " بسم الله " ، أنه مراد به " بالله " ، وأن اسم الله هو الله وليس هذا الموضع من مواضع الإكثار في الإبانة عن الاسم : أهو المسمى ، أم غيره ، أم هو صفة له ؟ فنظيل الكتاب به ، وإنما هذا موضع من مواضع الإبانة عن الاسم المضاف إلى الله : أهو اسم ، أم مصدر بمعنى التسمية ؟

D

فإن قال قائل : فما أنت قائل في بيت لبيد بن ربيعة

إلى الحول ، ثم اسم السلام عليكما ، ... ومن يبيك حولا كاملا فقد اعتذر

فقد تأوله مُقدِّم في العلم بلغة العرب ، أنه معني به : ثم السلام عليكما ، وأن اسم السلام هو السلام قيل له : لو جاز ذلك وصح تأويله فيه على ما تأول ، لجاز أن يقال : رأيتُ اسم زيد ، وأكلتُ اسمَ الطعام ، وشربتُ اسمَ الشراب ؛ وفي إجماع جميع العرب على إحالة ذلك ما ينبئ عن فساد تأويل من تأول قول لبيد : " ثم اسم السلام عليكما " ، أنه أراد : ثم السلام عليكما ، وادعائه أن إدخال الاسم في ذلك وإضافته إلى السلام إنما جاز ، إذ كان اسم المسمى هو المسمى بعينه ويسأل القائلون قول من حكينا قوله هذا ، فيقال لهم : أتستجيزون في العربية أن يقال : " أكلتُ اسمَ العسل " ، يعني بذلك : أكلت العسل ، كما جاز عندكم : اسم السلام عليك ، وأنتم تريدون : السلام عليك ؟

فإن قالوا : نعم ! خرجوا من لسان العرب ، وأجازوا في لغتها ما تخطئه جميع العرب في لغتها. وإن قالوا : لا سئلوا الفرقَ بينهما : فلن يقولوا في أحدهما قولاً إلا ألزموا في الآخر مثله فإن قال لنا قائل : فما معنى قول لبيد هذا عندك ؟

قيل له : يحتمل ذلك وجهين ، كلاهما غير الذي قاله من حكينا قوله أحدهما : أن " السلام " اسمٌ من أسماء الله ، فجائز أن يكون لبيد عنى بقوله : " ثم اسم السلام عليكما " ، ثم الزما اسمَ الله وذكره بعد ذلك ، ودعا ذكري والبكاء علي ؛ على وجه الإغراء. فرفع الاسم ، إذ أحر الحرف الذي يأتي بمعنى الإغراء. وقد تفعل العرب ذلك ، إذا أحرَّت الإغراء وقدمت المغرَى به : ، وإن كانت قد تنصب به وهو مؤخر. ومن ذلك قول الشاعر (يا أيها المائح دليوني دونكا!... إني رأيت الناس يحمدونكا

: فأغرى ب " دونك " ، وهي مؤخرية ، وإنما معناه : دونك دلوي. فذلك قول لبيد
* إلى الحول ، ثم اسم السلام عليكما *
يعني : عليكما اسم السلام ، أي : الزما ذكر الله ودعا ذكرى والوجد بي ، لأن من بكى حولا على امرئ
_ميت فقد اعتذر. فهذا أحد وجهيه

Ibn Jinnī al-Khaṣā'is

A

باب في إضافة الاسم إلى المسمى والمسمى إلى الاسم
هذا موضع كان يعتاده أبو على رحمة الله كثيراً ويألفه ويأثق له ويرتاح لاستعماله.
وفيه دليل نحوي غير مدفوع يدل على فساد قول من ذهب إلى أن الاسم هو المسمى.
ولو كان إياه لم تجز إضافة واحد منهما إلى صاحبه لأن الشيء لا يضاف إلى نفسه.

B

وإنما ذلك بعد عن إدراك هذا الموضع.
وكذلك قال أبو عبيدة في قول لبيد: إلى الحول ثم اسم السلام عليكما ومن بيك حولا كاملا فقد اعتذر
كأنه قال: ثم السلام عليكما.
وكذلك قال في قولنا بسم الله: إنما هو بالله واعتقد زيادة اسم.
وعلى هذا عندهم قول غيلان: لا ينعش الطرف إلا ما تخونه داع يناديه باسم الماء مبعوم يدعوني بالماء
ماء أسود والماء: صوت الشاء أي يدعوني - يعني الغنم - بالماء أي يقلن لي: أصبت ماء أسود.
فأبو عبيدة يدعى زيادة ذي واسم ونحن نحمل الكلام على أن هناك محذوفاً.
قال أبو علي: وإنما هو على حد حذف المضاف أي: ثم اسم معنى السلام عليكما واسم معنى السلام
هو السلام فكأنه قال: ثم السلام عليكما.
فالمعنى - لعمرى - ما قاله أبو عبيدة ولكنه من غير الطريق التي أتاه هو منها ألا تراه هو اعتقد زيادة
شيء واعتقدنا نحن نقصان شيء.
ونحو من هذا اعتقادهم زيادة مثل في نحو قولنا: مثلي لا يأتي القبيح ومثلك لا يخفى عليه الجميل أي أنا
كذا وأنت كذلك.
وعليه قوله: مثلي لا يحسن قولاً ففجع أي أنا لا أحسن ذلك.

وكذلك هو لعمرى إلا أنه على غير التأول الذي رأوه: من زيادة مثل وإنما تأويله: أي أنا من جماعة لا يرون القبيح وإنما جعله من جماعة هذه حالها ليكون أثبت للامر إذ كان له فيه أشباه وأضراب ولو انفرد هو به لكان غير مأمون انتقاله منه وتراجعه عنه.

فإذا كان له فيه نظراء كان حري أن يثبت عليه وترسو قدمه فيه.

وعليه قول الآخر: ومثلي لا تنبو عليك مضاربه فقله إذًا: باسم الماء واسم السلام إنما هو من باب إضافة الاسم إلى المسمى بعكس الفصل الأول.

ونقول على هذا: ما هجاء سيف فيقول في الجواب: س ي ف.

فسيف هنا اسم لا مسمى أي ما هجاء هذه الأصوات المقطعة ونقول: ضربت بالسيف فألسيف هنا جوهر الحديد هذا الذي يضرب به فقد يكون الشيء الواحد على وجه اسما وعلى آخر مسمى.

وإنما يخلص هذا من هذا موقعه والغرض المراد به

Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntazam*

A

وفى ذى القعدة احضر ابو جعفر محمد بن جرير الطبرى دار على بن عيسى لمناظر الحنابلة فحضر ولم يحضروا فعاد الى منزله وكانوا قد نقموا عليه اشياء قال المؤلف سنذكر قصتهم معه عند ذكر وفاته ان شاء الله تعالى

B

...

توفى ابو جعفر الطبرى وقت المغرب من عشية الاحد ليومين بقيا من شوال سنة عشر وثلثمائة ودفن وقد اضحى النهار يوم الاثنين برحبة يعقوب فى ناحية باب خراسان فى حجرة بازاء داره وقيل بل دفن ليلا ولم يؤذن به احد واجتمع من لا يحصيهم الا الله وصلى على قبره عدة شهور ليلا ونهارا وذكر ثابت بن سنان فى تاريخه انه انما اخفيت حاله لأن العامة اجتمعوا ومنعوا من دفنه بالنهار وادعوا عليه الرفض ثم ادعوا عليه الالحاد قال المصنف كان ابن جرير يرى جواز المسح على القدمين ولا يوجب غسلهما فلهذا انسب الى الرفض وكان قد رفع فى حقه ابو بكر ابن ابى داود قصة الى نصر الحاجب يذكر عنه اشياء فأنكرها منها انه نسبه الى رأى جهم وقال انه قائل بل يداه مبسوطتان اى نعمتاه فأنكر هذا وقال ما قلته ومنها انه روى عن روح رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لما خرجت سألت فى كف على فحساها فقال انما الحديث مسح بها على وجهه وليس فيه حساها قال المصنف رحمه الله وهذا ايضا محال الا انه كتب ابن جرير فى جواب هذا الى نصر الحاجب لاعصابة فى الاسلام كهذه العصابة الخسيسة وهذا قبيح منه لأنه كان ينبغى ان يخاصم من خاصمه وأما ان يذم طائفته جميعا وهو يدرى الى من ينتسب.

Yāqūt: *Irshād al-Arīb*

A

قال غير الخطيب ودفن ليلا خوفا من العامة لأنه كان يتهم بالتشيع وأما الخطيب فإنه قال ولم يؤذن به أحد فاجتمع على جنازته من لا يحصي عددهم إلا الله وصلي على قبره عدة شهور ليلا ونهارا ورتاه خلق كثير

من أهل الدين والأدب

قال وسمع محمد بن عبد الملك بن أبي الشوارب وأحمد بن منيع البغوي وأحمد بن حميد الرازي وأبا همام الوليد بن شجاع وأبا كريب محمد بن العلاء وعدد خلقا كثيرا من أهل العراق والشام ومصر وحدث عنه أحمد بن كامل القاضي وغيره واستوطن بغداد وأقام بها إلى حين وفاته

B

فلما قدم إلى بغداد من طبرستان بعد رجوعه إليها تعصب عليه أبو عبد الله الجصاص وجعفر بن عرفة والبياضي وقصده الحنابلة فسألوه عن أحمد بن حنبل في الجامع يوم الجمعة وعن حديث الجلوس على العرش فقال أبو جعفر أما أحمد بن حنبل فلا يعد خلافه فقالوا له فقد ذكره العلماء في الاختلاف فقال ما رأيته روي عنه ولا رأيته له أصحابا يعول عليهم وأما حديث الجلوس على العرش فمحال ثم أنشد (سبحان من ليس له أنيس ولا له في عرشه جليس)

الرجز

فلما سمع ذلك الحنابلة منه وأصحاب الحديث وثبوا ورموه بمحابرهم وقيل كانت ألوفا فقام أبو جعفر بنفسه ودخل داره فرموا داره بالحجارة حتى صار على بابه كالتل العظيم وركب نازوك صاحب الشرطة في عشرات ألوف من الجند يمنع عنه العامة ووقف على بابه يوما إلى الليل وأمر برفع الحجارة عنه وكان قد كتب على بابه

الرجز (سبحان من ليس له أنيس ولا له في عرشه جليس)

فأمر نازوك بمحو ذلك وكتب مكانه بعض أصحاب الحديث

(لأحمد منزل لا شك عال إذا وافى إلى الرحمن وافد)
(فيدنيه ويقعه كريما على رغم لهم في أنف حاسد)
(على عرش يغلفه بطيب على الأكباد من باغ وعاند)
(له هذا المقام الفرد حقا كذاك رواه ليث عن مجاهد)

الوافر

فخلا في داره وعمل كتابه المشهور في الاعتذار إليهم وذكر مذهبه واعتقاده وجرح من ظن فيه غير ذلك وقرأ الكتاب عليهم وفضل أحمد بن حنبل وذكر مذهبه وتصويب اعتقاده ولم يزل في ذكره إلى أن مات ولم يخرج كتابه في الاختلاف حتى مات فوجدوه مدفونا في التراب فأخرجوه ونسخوه أعني اختلاف الفقهاء هكذا سمعت من جماعة منهم أبي - رحمه الله

The Throne and Seat

القول في تأويل قوله تعالى : { وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ } قال أبو جعفر : اختلف أهل التأويل في معنى " الكرسي " الذي أخبر الله تعالى ذكره في هذه الآية أنه وسع السموات والأرض . فقال بعضهم : هو علم الله تعالى ذكره .

ذكر من قال ذلك : حدثنا أبو كريب وسلم بن جنازة ، قالا حدثنا ابن إدريس ، عن مطرف ، عن جعفر بن أبي المغيرة ، عن سعيد بن جبير ، عن ابن عباس : " وسع كرسيه " قال : كرسيه علمه حدثني يعقوب بن إبراهيم ، قال : حدثنا هشيم ، قال : أخبرنا مطرف ،

عن جعفر بن أبي المغيرة ، عن سعيد بن جبير ، عن ابن عباس ، مثله وزاد فيه : ألا ترى إلى قوله : " ولا يؤوده حفظهما " ؟

وقال آخرون : " الكرسي " : موضع القدمين . ذكر من قال ذلك * :

حدثني علي بن مسلم الطوسي ، قال : حدثنا عبد الصمد بن عبد الوارث ، قال : حدثني أبي ، قال : حدثني محمد بن جحادة ، عن سلمة بن كهيل ، عن عمارة بن عمير ، عن أبي موسى ، قال : الكرسي : موضع القدمين ، وله أطيظ كأطيظ الرجل .

حدثني موسى بن هاوون ، قال : حدثنا عمرو ، قال : حدثنا أسباط ، عن السدي : " وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض " ، فإن السموات والأرض في جوف الكرسي ، والكرسي بين يدي العرش ، وهو موضع قدميه .

حدثني المثنى ، قال : حدثنا إسحاق ، قال : حدثنا أبو زهير ، عن جويبر ، عن الضحاك قوله : " وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض " ، قال : كرسيه الذي يوضع تحت العرش ، الذي يجعل الملوك عليه أقدامهم ،

حدثنا أحمد بن إسحاق ، قال : حدثنا أبو أحمد الزبيري ، عن سفيان ، عن عمار الدهني ، عن مسلم - البطين ، قال : الكرسي : موضع القدمين

حدثني عن عمار ، قال : حدثنا ابن أبي جعفر ، عن أبيه ، عن الربيع : " وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض " ، قال : لما نزلت : " وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض " قال أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : يا رسول الله هذا الكرسي وسع السموات والأرض ، فكيف العرش ؟ فأنزل الله تعالى : (وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ) إلى قوله : (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ)

حدثني يونس ، قال : أخبرنا ابن وهب ، قال : قال ابن زيد في قوله : " وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض " قال ابن زيد : فحدثني أبي قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " ما السموات السبع في الكرسي إلا كدراهم سبعة ألقيت في ترس قال : وقال أبو ذر : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : ما الكرسي في العرش إلا كحلقة من حديد ألقيت بين ظهري فلاة من الأرض . وقال آخرون : الكرسي : هو العرش نفسه

ذكر من قال ذلك

حدثني المثنى ، قال : حدثنا إسحاق ، قال : حدثنا أبو زهير ، عن جويبر ، عن الضحاك ، قال : كان - الحسن يقول : الكرسي هو العرش

* * *

قال أبو جعفر : ولكل قول من هذه الأقوال وجه ومذهب ، غير أن الذي هو أولى بتأويل الآية ما جاء به الأثر عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وهو ما

حدثني به عبد الله بن أبي زياد القطواني ، قال : حدثنا عبيد الله بن موسى ، قال : أخبرنا إسرائيل ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن عبد الله بن خليفة ، قال : أتت امرأة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فقالت : ادع الله أن يدخلني الجنة فعظم الرب تعالى ذكره ، ثم قال : إن كرسیه وسع السموات والأرض ، وأنه ليقعد عليه فما يفضل منه مقدار أربع أصابع - ثم قال بأصابعه فجمعها - وإن له أطيطا كأطييط الرجل الجديد ، إذا ركب ، من ثقله

حدثني عبد الله بن أبي زياد ، قال : حدثنا يحيى بن أبي بكر ، عن إسرائيل ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن عبد الله بن خليفة ، عن عمر ، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، بنحوه . حدثنا أحمد بن إسحاق ، قال : حدثنا أبو أحمد ، قال : حدثنا إسرائيل ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن عبد - : . الله بن خليفة ، قال : جاءت امرأة ، فذكر نحوه

وأما الذي يدل على صحته ظاهر القرآن فقول ابن عباس الذي رواه جعفر بن أبي المغيرة ، عن سعيد بن جبیر ، عنه أنه قال : " هو علمه " . وذلك لدلالة قوله تعالى ذكره : " ولا يؤوده حفظهما " على أن ذلك كذلك ، فأخبر أنه لا يؤوده حفظ ما علم ، وأحاط به مما في السموات والأرض ، وكما أخبر عن ملائكتهم أنهم قالوا في دعائهم : (رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا) ،

. " فأخبر تعالى ذكره أن علمه وسع كل شيء ، فكذلك قوله : " وسع كرسیه السموات والأرض " قال أبو جعفر : وأصل " الكرسي " العلم . ومنه قيل للصحيفة يكون فيها علم مكتوب " كراسة " ، ومنه : قول الراجز في صفة قانص : حتى إذا ما احتازها تكرسا .

al-Ṭabarī's exegesis of Q. 17:79

al-Maqām al-maḥmūd

وقوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) وعسى من الله واجبة ، وإنما وجه قول أهل العلم : عسى من الله واجبة ، لعلم المؤمنين أن الله لا يدع أن يفعل بعباده ما أطمعهم فيه من الجزاء على أعمالهم والعوض على طاعتهم إياه ليس من صفته الغرور ، ولا شك أنه قد أطمع من قال ذلك له في نفعه ، إذا هو تعاهده ولزمه ، فإن لزم المقول له ذلك وتعاهده ثم لم ينفعه ، ولا سبب يحول بينه وبين نفعه إياه مع الأطماع الذي تقدم منه لصاحبه على تعاهده إياه ولزومه ، فإنه لصاحبه غار بما كان من إخلافه إياه فيما كان أطمعه فيه بقوله الذي قال له . وإن كان ذلك كذلك ، وكان غير جائز أن يكون جل ثناؤه من صفته الغرور لعباده صح ووجب أن كل ما أطمعهم فيه من طمع على طاعته ، أو على فعل من الأفعال ، أو أمر أو نهى أمرهم به ، أو نهاهم عنه ، فإنه موف لهم به ، وإنهم منه كالعدة التي لا يخلف الوفاء بها ، قالوا : عسى ولعل من الله واجبة .

وتأويل الكلام : أقم الصلاة المفروضة يا محمد في هذه الأوقات التي أمرت بإقامتها فيها ، ومن الليل فتهدج فرضاً فرضته عليك ، لعل ربك أن يبعثك يوم القيامة مقاماً تقوم فيه محموداً تحمده ، وتغبط فيه .

ثم اختلف أهل التأويل في معنى ذلك المقام المحمود ، فقال أكثر أهل العلم : ذلك هو المقام الذي هو يقومه صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم القيامة للشفاعة للناس ليريحهم ربهم من عظيم ما هم فيه من شدة ذلك اليوم .

ذكر من قال ذلك :

حدثنا محمد بن بشار ، قال : ثنا عبد الرحمن ، قال : ثنا سفيان ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن صلة بن زفر ، عن حذيفة ، قال : يجمع الناس في صعيد واحد ، فيسمعهم الداعي ، وينفذهم البصر ، حفاة عراة كما خلقوا ، قياماً لا تكلم نفس إلا بإذنه ، ينادى : يا محمد ، فيقول : لبيك وسعديك والخير في يديك ، والشر ليس إليك ، والمهدي من هديت ، عبدك بين يديك ، وبك وإليك ، لا ملجأ ولا منجأ منك إلا إليك ، تباركت وتعاليت ، سبحانه رب هذا البيت ؛ فهذا المقام المحمود الذي ذكره الله تعالى .

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى ، قال : ثنا محمد بن جعفر ، قال : ثنا شعبة ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن صلة بن زفر ، عن حذيفة ، قال : يجمع الناس في صعيد واحد . فلا تكلم نفس ، فأول ما يدعو محمد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فيقوم محمد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فيقول : لبيك ، ثم ذكر مثله .

حدثنا سليمان بن عمرو بن خالد الرقي ، قال : ثنا عيسى بن يونس ، عن رشدين بن كريب ، عن أبيه عن ابن عباس ، قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاماً محموداً) قال : المقام المحمود : مقام الشفاعة .

حدثنا ابن بشار ، قال : ثنا عبد الرحمن ، قال : ثنا سفيان ، عن سلمة بن كهيل ، قال : ثنا أبو الزعراء ، عن عبد الله في قصة ذكرها ، قال : ثم يؤمر بالصراف فيضرب على جسر جهنم ، فيمر الناس بقدر أعمالهم ؛ يمر أولهم كالبرق ، وكمر الريح ، وكمر الطير ، وكأسرع البهائم ، ثم كذلك حتى يمر الرجل سعياً ، ثم مشياً ، حتى يجيء آخرهم يتلبط على بطنه ، فيقول : رب لما أبطأت بي ، فيقول : إني لم أبطأ بك ، إنما أبطأ بك عملك ، قال : ثم يأذن الله في الشفاعة ، فيكون أول شافع يوم القيامة جبرائيل عليه السلام ، روح القدس ، ثم إبراهيم خليل الرحمن ، ثم موسى ، أو عيسى قال أبو الزعراء : لا أدري أيهما قال ، قال : ثم يقوم نبيكم صلى الله عليه وسلم رابعاً ، فلا يشفع أحد بعده فيما يشفع فيه ، وهو المقام المحمود الذي ذكر الله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاماً محموداً) .

حدثنا محمد بن بشار ، قال : ثنا ابن أبي عدي ، عن عوف ، عن الحسن في قول الله تعالى (ومن الليل فتهدج به نافلة لك عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاماً محموداً) قال : المقام المحمود : مقام الشفاعة يوم القيامة .

حدثنا محمد بن عمرو ، قال : ثنا أبو عاصم ، قال : ثنا عيسى : وحدثني الحارث ، قال : ثنا الحسن ، قال : ثنا ورقاء ، جميعاً عن ابن أبي نجيح ، عن مجاهد ، في قول الله تعالى (مقاما محمودا) قال : شفاعة محمد يوم القيامة .

حدثنا القاسم ، قال : ثنا الحسين ، قال : ثني حجاج ، عن ابن جريج ، عن مجاهد ، مثله .

حدثنا القاسم ، قال : ثنا الحسين ، قال : ثنا أبو معاوية ، عن عاصم الأحول ، عن أبي عثمان ، عن سلمان ، قال : هو الشفاعة ، يشفعه الله في أمته ، فهو المقام المحمود .

حدثنا بشر ، قال : ثنا يزيد ، قال : ثنا سعيد ، عن قتادة ، قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) وقد ذكر لنا أن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خير بين أن يكون نبيا عبدا ، أو ملكا نبيا ، فأوماً إليه جبرائيل عليه السلام : أن تواضع ، فاختار نبي الله أن يكون عبدا نبيا ، فأعطي به نبي الله ثنتين : أنه أول من تنشق عنه الأرض ، وأول شافع . وكان أهل العلم يرون أنه المقام المحمود الذي قال الله تبارك وتعالى (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) شفاعة يوم القيامة .

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الأعلى ، قال : ثنا محمد بن ثور ، عن معمر ، عن قتادة (مقاما محمودا) قال : هي الشفاعة ، يشفعه الله في أمته .

حدثنا الحسن بن يحيى ، قال : أخبرنا عبد الرزاق ، قال : أخبرنا معمر والثوري ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن صلة بن زفر ، قال : سمعت حذيفة يقول في قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) قال : يجمع الله الناس في صعيد واحد حيث يسمعهم الداعي ، فينفذهم البصر حفاة عراة ، كما خلقوا سكوتا لا تكلم نفس إلا بإذنه ، قال : فينادى محمد ، فيقول : لبيك وسعديك ، والخير في يديك ، والشر ليس إليك ، والمهدي من هديت ، وعبدك بين يديك ، ولك وإليك ، لا ملجأ ولا منجى منك إلا إليك ، تباركت وتعاليت ، سبحانك رب البيت ، قال : فذلك المقام المحمود الذي ذكر الله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) .

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الأعلى ، قال : ثنا محمد بن ثور ، عن معمر ، عن أبي إسحاق ، عن صلة بن زفر ، قال حذيفة : يجمع الله الناس في صعيد واحد ، حيث ينفذهم البصر ، ويسمعهم الداعي ، حفاة عراة كما خلقوا أول مرة ، ثم يقوم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيقول : " لبيك وسعديك " ، ثم ذكر نحوه ، إلا أنه قال : هو المقام المحمود .

وقال آخرون : بل ذلك المقام المحمود الذي وعد الله نبيه أن يبعثه إياه ، هو أن يقاعده معه على عرشه .
ذكر من قال ذلك :

حدثنا عباد بن يعقوب الأسدي ، قال : ثنا ابن فضيل ، عن ليث ، عن مجاهد ، في قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) قال : يجلسه معه على عرشه .

وأولى القولين في ذلك بالصواب ما صح به الخبر عن رسول الله .

وذلك ما حدثنا به أبو كريب ، قال : ثنا وكيع ، عن داود بن يزيد ، عن أبيه ، عن أبي هريرة ، قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) سئل عنها ، قال : " هي الشفاعة " .

حدثنا علي بن حرب ، قال : ثنا مكى بن إبراهيم ، قال : ثنا داود بن يزيد الأودي ، عن أبيه ، عن أبي هريرة ، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) قال : " هو المقام الذي أشفع فيه لأمتي " .

حدثنا أبو عتبة الحمصي أحمد بن الفرج ، قال : ثنا بقية بن الوليد ، عن الزبيدي ، عن الزهري ، عن عبد الرحمن بن كعب بن مالك ، عن كعب بن مالك ، أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " يحشر الناس يوم القيامة ، فأكون أنا وأمتي على تل فيكسوني ربي حلة خضراء ، ثم يؤذن لي ، فأقول ما شاء الله أن أقول ، فذاك المقام المحمود " .

حدثني محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الحكم ، قال : ثنا شعيب بن الليث ، قال : ثني الليث ، عن عبيد الله بن أبي جعفر ، أنه قال : سمعت حمزة بن عبد الله بن عمر يقول : سمعت عبد الله بن عمر يقول : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " إن الشمس لتدنو حتى يبلغ العرق نصف الأذن ، فبينما هم كذلك استغاثوا بآدم عليه السلام ، فيقول لست صاحب ذلك ثم بموسى عليه السلام ، فيقول كذلك ، ثم بمحمد فيشفع بين الخلق حتى يأخذ بحلقة الجنة فيومئذ يبعثه الله مقاما محمودا .

حدثني أبو زيد عمر بن شبة ، قال : ثنا موسى بن إسماعيل ، قال : ثنا سعيد بن زيد ، عن علي بن الحكم ، قال : ثني عثمان ، عن إبراهيم ، عن الأسود وعلقمة ، عن ابن مسعود ، قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " إني لأقوم المقام المحمود " فقال رجل : يا رسول الله ، وما ذلك المقام المحمود ؟ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " ذاك إذا جيء بكم حفاة عراة غرلا فيكون أول من يكسى إبراهيم عليه السلام ، فيؤتى برطتين بيضاوين ، فيلبسهما ، ثم يقعد مستقبل العرش ، ثم أوتى بكسوتي فألبسها ، فأقوم عن يمينه مقاما لا يقومه غيري يغبطني فيه الأولون والآخرين ، ثم يفتح نهر من الكوثر إلى الحوض .

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الأعلى ، قال : ثنا محمد بن ثور ، عن معمر ، عن الزهري ، عن علي بن الحسين ، أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " إذا كان يوم القيامة مد الله الأرض مد الأديم حتى لا يكون لبشر من الناس إلا موضع قدميه ، قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : فأكون أول من يدعى وجبرائيل عن يمين الرحمن ، والله ما رآه قبلها ، فأقول : أي رب إن هذا أخبرني أنك أرسلته إلي ، فيقول الله عز وجل : صدق ، ثم أشفع ، قال : فهو المقام المحمود .

حدثنا الحسن بن يحيى ، قال : أخبرنا عبد الرزاق ، قال : أخبرنا معمر ، عن الزهري ، عن علي بن الحسين ، قال : قال النبي : " إذا كان يوم القيامة " ، فذكر نحوه ، وزاد فيه : " ثم أشفع فأقول : يا رب عبادك عبدوك في أطراف الأرض ، وهو المقام المحمود " .

حدثنا ابن بشار ، قال : ثنا أبو عامر ، قال : ثنا إبراهيم بن طهمان ، عن آدم ، عن علي ، قال : سمعت ابن عمر يقول : إن الناس يحشرون يوم القيامة ، فيجيء مع كل نبي أمته ، ثم يجيء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في آخر الأمم هو وأمته ، فيرقى هو وأمته على كوف فوق الناس ، فيقول : يا فلان اشفع ، ويا فلان اشفع ، ويا فلان اشفع ، فما زال يردّها بعضهم على بعض يرجع ذلك إليه ، وهو المقام المحمود الذي وعده الله إياه .

حدثنا محمد بن عوف ، قال : ثنا حيوة وربيع ، قالوا ثنا محمد بن حرب ، عن الزبيدي ، عن الزهري عن عبد الرحمن بن كعب بن مالك ، عن كعب بن مالك ، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " يحشر الناس يوم القيامة فأكون أنا وأمّتي على تل ، فيكسوني ربي عز وجل حلة خضراء ، ثم يؤذن لي فأقول : " ما شاء الله أن أقول ، فذاك المقام المحمود .

وهذا وإن كان هو الصحيح من القول في تأويل قوله (عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا) لما ذكرنا من الرواية عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأصحابه والتابعين ، فإن ما قاله مجاهد من أن الله يقعد محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم على عرشه ، قول غير مدفوع صحته ، لا من جهة خبر ولا نظر ، وذلك لأنه لا خبر عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، ولا عن أحد من أصحابه ، ولا عن التابعين بإحالة ذلك . فأما من جهة النظر ، فإن جميع من ينتحل الإسلام إنما اختلفوا في معنى ذلك على أوجه ثلاثة : فقالت فرقة منهم : الله عز وجل بائن من خلقه كان قبل خلقه الأشياء ، ثم خلق الأشياء فلم يماسها ، وهو كما لم يزل ، غير أن الأشياء التي خلقها ، إذ لم يكن هو لها مماسا ، وجب أن يكون لها مباينا ، إذ لا فعال للأشياء إلا وهو مماس للأجسام أو مباين لها . قالوا : فإذا كان ذلك كذلك ، وكان الله عز وجل فاعل الأشياء ، ولم يجز في قولهم : إنه يوصف بأنه مماس للأشياء ، وجب بزعمهم أنه لها مباين ، فعلى مذهب هؤلاء سواء أقعد محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم على عرشه ، أو على الأرض إذ كان من قولهم إن بينوته من عرشه ، وبينوته من أرضه بمعنى واحد في أنه بائن منهما كليهما ، غير مماس لواحد منهما .

وقالت فرقة أخرى : كان الله تعالى ذكره قبل خلقه الأشياء ، لا شيء يماسه ، ولا شيء يباينه ، ثم خلق الأشياء فأقامها بقدرته ، وهو كما لم يزل قبل خلقه الأشياء لا شيء يماسه ولا شيء يباينه ، فعلى قول

هؤلاء أيضا سواء أقعد محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم على عرشه ، أو على أرضه ، إذ كان سواء على قولهم عرشه وأرضه في أنه لا مماس ولا مباين لهذا ، كما أنه لا مماس ولا مباين لهذه .

وقالت فرقة أخرى : كان الله عز ذكره قبل خلقه الأشياء لا شيء ولا شيء يماسه ، ولا شيء يباينه ، ثم أحدث الأشياء وخلقها ، فخلق لنفسه عرشا استوى عليه جالسا ، وصار له مماسا ، كما أنه قد كان قبل خلقه الأشياء لا شيء يرزقه رزقا ، ولا شيء يحرمه ذلك ، ثم خلق الأشياء فرزق هذا وحرم هذا ، وأعطى هذا ، ومنع هذا ، قالوا : فكذلك كان قبل خلقه الأشياء يماسه ولا يباينه ، وخلق الأشياء فماس العرش بجلوسه عليه دون سائر خلقه ، فهو مماس ما شاء من خلقه ، ومباين ما شاء منه ، فعلى مذهب هؤلاء أيضا سواء أقعد محمدا على عرشه ، أو أقعد على منبر من نور ، إذ كان من قولهم : إن جلوس الرب على عرشه ، ليس بجلوس يشغل جميع العرش ، ولا في إقعاد محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم موجبا له صفة الربوبية ، ولا مخرجه من صفة العبودية لربه ، كما أن مباينة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ما كان مباينا له من الأشياء غير موجبة له صفة الربوبية ، ولا مخرجته من صفة العبودية لربه من أجل أنه موصوف بأنه له مباين ، كما أن الله عز وجل موصوف على قول قائل هذه المقالة بأنه مباين لها ، هو مباين له . قالوا : فإذا كان معنى مباين ومباين لا يوجب لمحمد صلى الله عليه وسلم الخروج من صفة العبودية والدخول في معنى الربوبية ، فكذلك لا يوجب له ذلك قعوده على عرش الرحمن ، فقد تبين إذا بما قلنا أنه غير محال في قول أحد ممن ينتحل الإسلام ما قاله مجاهد من أن الله تبارك وتعالى يقعد محمدا على عرشه .

فإن قال قائل : فإننا لا ننكر إقعاد الله محمدا على عرشه ، وإنما ننكر إقعاده .

حدثني عباس بن عبد العظيم ، قال : ثنا يحيى بن كثير ، عن الجريري ، عن سيف السدوسي ، عن عبد الله بن سلام ، قال : إن محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم القيامة على كرسي الرب بين يدي الرب تبارك وتعالى ، وإنما ينكر إقعاده إياه معه ، قيل : أفجائز عندك أن يقعده عليه لا معه . فإن أجاز ذلك صار إلى الإقرار بأنه إما معه ، أو إلى أنه يقعده ، والله للعرش مباين ، أو لا مماس ولا مباين ، وبأي ذلك قال كان منه دخولا في بعض ما كان ينكره وإن قال : ذلك [ص : 533] غير جائز ؛ كان منه خروجا من قول جميع الفرق التي حكينا قولهم ، وذلك فراق لقول جميع من ينتحل الإسلام ، إذ كان لا قول في ذلك إلا الأقوال الثلاثة التي حكيناها ، وغير محال في قول منها ما قال مجاهد في ذلك .

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‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (folios 1-2)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وبه نعتي وقرأ
الحمد لله مع الحق وناصره ومدليه ومد لا باطل وقامه
 ومزليه ذبي النعم السوايق والنعم الدوامع الذي لاوه لا تجازي ولا توارى
 وسلطانة لا يجازي وبرهانه لا يباري وصلى الله على من قرن شرعه
 بالناييد ووكده عونه بالناييد وفتي له بما يريد وان زعم السطك
 المريد وعلى اليان الايمان وحكم الاحكام الذي اذهب الله عنهم
 الرجس وطهرهم من الادناس ولم نسلما كبيرا برحمته هذا
 كتاب جمعنا فيه بين طرق المتكلمين ومناهج النحويين ولطائف اهل
 الاشارة والعبارة في تفسير اسم الله جل ثناوه على اصول اهل السنة
 والجماعة الذين سلكوا سبيل بواحي الدليل فصاروا شجيا في خلق
 اهل الخاد والخرق والعتاد وذكرنا في تفسير كل اسم من اسمائه سبحانه
 ما يتعلق به من مسابيل التوحيد والصفات وفوائد الكفاة والايات ونسألك
 ما يتفق بها من ابواب التعديل والتجوير والوعيد والاسماء والاحكام
 وكشفنا عن شبه الخالفين فيها مقروفة بما يرد منها من الحجج البواع والبراهين
 الباهرة والتوقيف من نعم الهداية الله والسؤال المند الانعام
 بالثواب عليه ان خير مستبول واكرم مامول **باب**
 في بيان حذو الاسماء والصفات وهو على قسمين احدهما في بيان معنى
 الاسم وحده وحقيقته وبنهما وبيني الموصوف بهما وكس تذكره
 ذكر واحد منهما على فضيلتي ما يقتضيه شرط **الفصل الاول**
 في بيان معنى الاسم وحده وحقيقته واختلفوا في معنى الاسم وقال
 الشيخ ابو الحسن الأشعري رحمه الله عليه ان الاسماء صفات وهي منقسمة
 كالنفسام الصفات فاسم هو المسمى وهي الصفة التي هي الموصوف
 واسم هو غير المسمى وهو الصفة التي هي غير الموصوف واسم لا يقا فيه
 انه المسمى ولا انه غيره وهي الصفة التي لا يقال فيها انها الموصوف
 ولا انها غيره وتفضيل هذا الاقسام يأتي بعد هذا **وقال**

الجمهور

الجمهور من اهل السنة والجماعة ان الاسم هو المسمى بعينه وذات نفسه
 والتسمية الدالة على غيرها انما قيل انها اسم مجازا وهي اسم لنفسها
 على الحقيقة واليهذا القول ذهب الحارث بن اسد المحاسبي وابو العباس
 الفلاس الرازي ومن تبعهما من اصحابنا وللحدث في هذا الباب كتاب
 مفرد وقد نقل الشيخ ابو الحسن الأشعري هذا القول في كتابه الذي سمي
 في تفسير القرآن الا ان اختياره هو القول بان الاسماء منقسمة
 انقسام الصفات وقد ذكرنا اختياره لهذا القول في نقض اصول
 الجسائ واختلف الخوارج في معنى الاسم وحده بعد اجماعهم على انه
 حبس من الكلم مخصوص منهم من قال الاسم ما دل على معنى مفرد واحترق
 بذلك عن الحرف والفعل لان الحرف لا يدل بنفسه دون قرينته ولذلك
 قيل ان الحرف كلمة معناه في غيرها والفعل يدل على حدث وزمان
 والحدث والزمان شيان فلذلك قال الاسم ما دل على معنى مفرد وقال
 المبرد الاسم ما صح دخول حرف الجر عليه ولذلك قال الخوارج ان
 اسم كقولهم جيت من عن يميني وخودك وقد عبر المبرد عن هذا
 المعنى بعبارة اخري فقال الاسم وقال اكثر النحويين ان الاسم
 ما حوذا من سمو وسمو علي وزن علي وعلو وحنو وحنوقا
 الزجاج الاسم مشتق من سمو والسمو الرفعة والاصل فيه سمو
 بالواو علي وزن جمل وجمعة اسما مثل قنو واقناء وحنو واخاء
 ومن قال **الاسم** انه ما حوذا من سمت وسمت وسمت فقد غلط
 لانا لا نعرف شيئا رطله الفالوصل مما حذفت فاوه وعني الزجاج
 بذلك فالفعل نحو الوال التي بنزلة الغاني وعلته ووزن لما
 حذقت الوالوصها صارت تقديرها عدة ووزن ولم يدخل عليها
 الالف الوصل ولم يقل فيها اعد ولا ازن كذلك الاسم لو كان
 اصلا من الوصل وحذقت الوالوصه وصارت سنة لما جاز دخول الف
 الوصل عليه فلما دخلت الف الوصل عليه فقيل اسم دل على انه سمو فقيل