

The Jewish and Muslim reception of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*: A survey of relevant sources*

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Abstract

The Mu‘tazila was not an exclusively Muslim phenomenon, since their teachings were also adopted by medieval Jewish savants. In recent years, a number of Mu‘tazilī works were rediscovered or substantially completed by adopting a comparative methodology, which was based on both Muslim and Jewish sources. This article deals with a lost work composed by *qādī* ‘Abd al-Jabbār, entitled *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. In the following, I will give an overview of the sources in Zaydī and Karaite collections that provide us with a more detailed picture of the dissemination of the text. On the basis of quotations by later theologians, I will propose a hypothesis on the content of *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. I will then discuss a possible relationship between ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s text and a manuscript from the Firkovitch collection in the Russian National Library, which has recently been identified as a work entitled *Tā‘līq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*.

Keywords

Mu‘tazila, ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*, Karaites, ‘Alī b. Sulaymān, Genizah studies, Firkovitch collection, Ibn Mattawayh, Zaydīs

As is well-known, the Mu‘tazila was relatively early banned from mainstream Muslim theology. As a result, the school’s literature was gradually lost in Sunni Islam and eventually fell into complete oblivion. However, Mu‘tazilī thought continued to flourish in the Islamicate world among minority groups—Muslims and non-Muslims—, specifically the Zaydīs, Karaite and Rabbanite Jews.¹ If we have access to an important number of primary sources, it is largely thanks to the reception of Mu‘tazilism by Jewish scholars, who, along with the Zaydīs, preserved these texts in their libraries.

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¹ For an outline of the continuity of Mu‘tazilī teaching after its decline in Sunni Islam see Schwarb, “Mu‘tazilism in the Age of Averroes”.

Modern scholarship started exploring the Mu‘tazila on the basis of Jewish and Zaydī sources as early as the second half of the 19th century. Among the pioneers who studied Mu‘tazilism at the turn of the century were also scholars who taught at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums* in Berlin, including Martin Schreiner (1863–1926) and Arthur Biram (1878–1967). These early scholarly efforts came to a sudden end when the *Lehranstalt* was closed by the Nazi regime. It was only in the 1950s that research on the Mu‘tazila experienced an entirely new dynamic. Scholarly interest was awakened by spectacular finds of Mu‘tazilī text in Yemen. After the rediscovery of these works, it still took many years for researchers to have access to one of the most important collections of former Karaite libraries—namely the Firkovitch collection in St Petersburg—or even to become aware of their enormous relevance for the study of Mu‘tazilism.²

Recently, however, comparative and cross-denominational research on the Mu‘tazila became ever more important. Thanks to this transdisciplinary approach, ground-breaking progress has been achieved, also because Karaite manuscript often supplement the findings from Yemen.³ Since much of the material remains unexplored, significant progress is likely to be made in the near future.⁴

In this article, I will adopt the transdisciplinary approach of recent research in order to provide a survey of relevant materials which could help us to reconstruct an apparently lost work by the prominent Mu‘tazilī theologian ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), entitled *Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. The chief judge also authored an autocommentary on this work, which is equally lost. In the following, I will collect quotations from these texts found in Muslim and Jewish sources. I will then contextualise these text passages in the framework of the Mu‘tazila’s teachings and propose a hypothesis on

² See, for example, Ben-Shammai, “A Note on Some Karaite Copies”.

³ For recent results see e.g. al-Baṣrī, *Taṣaffiḥ al-adilla*; Schwarb, “Découverte”; Hamdan and Schmidtke, “Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī on the Promise and Threat”; *Nukat al-Mughnī*.

⁴ Among other relevant projects, Omar Hamdan and Gregor Schwarb are currently preparing a critical edition of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, which has only been preserved in Karaite repositories. The Zaydīs only knew a commentary by ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s student Ibn Mattawayh.

the content of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s treatise. Finally, I will discuss the question of whether a text recently identified as *Ta’līq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* is in any way related to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*.

1. *Quotations from and references to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Kitāb al-jumal wa-l-‘uqūd in sources of Karaites and Zaydī provenance*

As mentioned above, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* and his autocommentary *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* are among the many texts by the chief judge which have as yet not been found in manuscript form.⁵ Until recently, all we new about these works was their titles. ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Uthmān was the first modern scholar to mention the two texts. He listed both titles in the bibliographical section of his monograph on the *qāḍī* ‘Abd al-Jabbār, relying on the following two sources:⁶ (1) a 5th/11th century biography of ‘Abd al-Jabbār written by the Khurasanian Mu‘tazilī theologian al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101) as part of the *ṭabaqāt* section of his multi volume *Sharḥ ‘Uyūn al-Masā’il*, in which he mentions both *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* and the autocommentary;⁷ (2) a theological work that was later edited under the title *al-Kāmil fī l-istiḡṣā*’ by a certain Taqī l-Dīn al-Najrānī, which quotes from *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*.⁸

It is possible that Taqī l-Dīn, the author of the latter source, did not himself have direct access to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s autocommentary. The *Kāmil* is a critique of the Bahshamiyya—that is the branch of the Mu‘tazila to which ‘Abd al-Jabbār belonged—from the standpoint of the teachings of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 426/1044) and his later follower Rukn al-Dīn Ibn al-Malāḥimī (d. 536/1141). Both Abū l-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Malāḥimī undermined some of the fundamental principles of Bahshamī theology with the specific aim of defending Mu‘tazilī theology against its detractors.

⁵ See Schwarb, *Handbook*, nos 192:58 and 59.

⁶ The two works are listed under four titles: *al-Jumal*, *Sharḥ al-Jumal*, *Sharḥ al-‘Uqūd* and *al-‘Uqūd*; see ‘Uthmān, *Qāḍī l-quḍāt ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī*, p. 65, no. 26, p. 67, no. 39 and p. 71, nos 66 and 67.

⁷ See the partial edition of *Sharḥ ‘Uyūn al-Masā’il* in Sayyid, *Faḍl al-‘itizāl*, p. 369.

⁸ Taqī al-Dīn al-Najrānī, *al-Kāmil*, p. 324.

tors. Earlier research has shown that the *Kāmil* relies in various places on Ibn al-Malāḥimī's *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fi uṣūl al-dīn* and explicitly cites the work.⁹ Consequently, it is probably no coincidence that we find in *al-Mu'tamad* a quotation of the same passage of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd*.¹⁰ It is likely that Taqī l-Dīn only cited Ibn al-Malāḥimī's quotation without ever consulting 'Abd al-Jabbār's original work.

While all of the aforementioned references are found in Zaydī copies of Mu'tazilī texts made in Yemen, there is no positive evidence that either *al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* or 'Abd al-Jabbār's autocommentary ever reached the country. However, Yemeni Zaydīs must have had some knowledge of *al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* via a commentary authored by 'Abd al-Jabbār's student Ibn Mattawayh. In a treatise entitled *Kayfiyyat kashf al-aḥkām wa-l-ṣifāt 'an ḥaṣā'is al-mu'aththirāt wa-l-muqtaḍiyāt* the 6th/12th century Yemeni theologian al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ (d. 584/1188) discusses an idea presented by Ibn Mattawayh in his *Ta'līq al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd*.¹¹ In all likelihood, this work was Ibn Mattawayh's commentary on his teacher's *al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd*.

In contrast to the Zaydīs, Karaite theologians inclined to Mu'tazilism actually studied and copied 'Abd al-Jabbār's original texts. This assumption is based on several Genizah documents. The title *al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* appears three times in a medieval inventory of a commercial bookseller (*warrāq*)—most likely a Karaite—found in the Cairo Genizah.¹² The text is not attributed to any author and, consequently, this reference leaves some room for speculation as to whether it actually refers to 'Abd al-Jabbār's treatise or to a homonymous work by a different author.¹³ The inventory also lists a number of Muslim and, in particular, Mu'tazilī *kalām* texts and authors, including al-Labbād, that is 'Abd al-Jabbār's student Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd al-Labbād (known as

⁹ Madelung, "Das Problem der transzendenten sinnlichen Wahrnehmung," p. 128; see also the introduction in Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Mu'tamad*, p. ix and Shihadeh, "The Argument from Ignorance," pp. 214–17.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Mu'tamad*, p. 257.

¹¹ See Thiele, "Propagating Mu'tazilism," p. 544.

¹² MS Oxford, Bodleian, Heb. f 22, ff. 25b–52b; see the edition of this list in Allony, *Jewish Library*, p. 163, no. 40:147, p. 166, no. 40:236 and p. 167, no. 40:251.

¹³ A homonymous work was authored by Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) (*al-Ṭūsī, Jumal*).

“Qāḍī Labbād”),¹⁴ and a text entitled *al-Dawāʿī wa-l-ṣawārif*, a well-known title from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s oeuvre.¹⁵ It can therefore be concluded that the *warrāq* in question did sell Bahshamī texts by Muslim authors and that it is consequently not unlikely that the mentioned *Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* actually was ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s work.

A quotation from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* is found in a fragment of a theological text held by the British Library in London (Or. 2572, fols 68–108). It once belonged a Karaite synagogue.¹⁶ The first page of the fragment is damaged to such extent that its title and author can no longer be deciphered. According to a cross reference in the manuscript, the author of this work also composed an otherwise unknown *Kitāb al-Bayān*. As long as we cannot identify the author of this *Kitāb al-Bayān*, little more can be deduced than that he probably belonged to the milieu of Karaite theologians inclined to the Bahshamiyya. That he actually refers to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* and not to a homonymous work is, however, beyond any doubt, although ‘Abd al-Jabbār is not explicitly mentioned: in addition to the *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd*, the passage also refers to another work by the same author, namely the *Kitāb al-Muḥīt*, a text that was also composed by ‘Abd al-Jabbār.¹⁷

An additional reference to “commentaries” (*shurūḥ*) on *al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* is found in a text that was identified as the First Refutation (*Naqḍ*) of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s theology composed by the 5th/11th century Karaite scholar and Bahshamī theologian Yūsuf al-Baṣīr (d. c. 431/1040). A first fragment of this work, incomplete at the beginning and the end, was found in the Firkovitch collection of the Russian National Library in St Petersburg. The manuscript, originally written in Hebrew script but apparently copied from a manuscript in Arabic characters, was critically edited by

¹⁴ Allony, *Jewish Library*, p. 162, no. 40:142–3, p. 166, no. 40:237, 167, no. 40:255–6.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 159, no. 40:57&61, p. 160, no. 40:65, p. 162, no. 40:142–3, p. 167, no. 40:252&255–6.

¹⁶ Cf. Margoliouth, *Catalogue*, vol. 3, p. 201f.

¹⁷ The quotation from *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* is found on fols 85b–86a and the reference to *Kitāb al-Bayān* on fol. 102b; Gregor Schwarb, to whom I owe this information, suggested that the text should be identified as Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s *Kitāb Aḥwāl al-fāʿil* mentioned in *al-Kitāb al-Muḥṭawī*. For the manuscript see Ibid., p. 3:199, no. 896.

Wilferd Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke.¹⁸ Recently, a second fragment of the same text was discovered in al-Maktaba al-Gharbiyya, one of the two collections of the Great Mosque in Ṣan‘ā’. This find, which partly overlaps with the Karaite copy and includes the beginning of the text, puts a question mark over its original identification as Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s *Naqd*. What is even more relevant for the purpose of this article is that the “commentaries” on *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* are quoted in this second fragment.¹⁹

Consequently, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s treatise must have been transmitted among the later scholarly communities of Mu‘tazilites—although in different ways. With some probability, copies of *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* were available to medieval Jewish scholars. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* was still known within the circle of 6th/12th century Kh^wārazmian Mu‘tazilites. Possibly, the Karaites even knew several commentaries on *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*, among which ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s autocommentary can be clearly identified. According to the current state of knowledge, Zaydī theologians from 6th/12th century Yemen only knew a commentary on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s work by his student Ibn Mattawayh, whereas ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s original text and his autocommentary were never transmitted to the southern Arabian Peninsula.

2. The topic of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*

The title of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* does not tell us much about its content. The terms *jumal* and particularly *‘uqūd* tend to have a juridical connotation. We may think of Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī’s (d. 460/1067) *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd fī l-‘ibādāt*, a work on *fiqh*.²⁰ However, the extant quotations from the commentaries on *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*, discussed below in detail, leave no doubt about the theological content of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s treatise.

¹⁸ Madelung and Schmidtke, “Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s First Refutation”.

¹⁹ In a forthcoming article (Ansari, Madelung and Schmidtke, “Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s First Refutation”), Hassan Ansari, Wilferd Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke are further discussing the identification of the text. The quotation from *shurūḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* we are concerned with here is found in MS Ṣan‘ā’, al-Jāmi‘ al-Kabīr, al-Maktaba al-Gharbiyya, *kalām* no. 797, fol. 5a.

²⁰ See above n. 13.

2.1. MS British Library, Or. 2572

This manuscript partly preserves the second part (*juz'*) of an originally multi volume theological treatise (fol. 68a: *al-juz' al-thānī min Kitāb [...]*). The fragment contains the entire two first chapters and substantial parts of the third chapter, all of which are dealing with various aspects of the Bahshamī theory of attributes. The first chapter outlines the principle that the distinction made between the modes of speech in communication is not meant to refer to actual attributes of utterances: commanding, asserting, forbidding etc. are consequently not considered as attributes of speech (*faṣl fī anna laysa li-l-kalām bi-kawnihi amran wa-khabaran wa-nahiyan ilā ghayr dhālik ṣifa wa-mā yattaṣilu bi-dhālika*; fols 68bff.).

The second chapter argues that acts do not have an attribute when they are qualified as being good or evil (*faṣl fī anna laysa li-l-fi'l bi-kawnihi ḥasanan aw qabiḥan ṣifa wa-mā yattaṣilu bi-dhālika*; fols 85aff.). Evil acts are defined by Bahshamī theologians as those acts that occur in such a way (*wajh*) that the agent deserves blame (*dhamm*). In contrast, acts are considered as good whenever the doer does not deserve blame or even deserves praise (*madh*). Consequently, that which is termed *wajh* is directly related to the moral consequences of our acts: Whether an agent actually deserves blame or praise depends on a variety of conditions, including his moral knowledge and his motivation. For example, a child would not be accountable for an act for which adults would be blamed because it lacks moral knowledge.²¹ In the context of this doctrine, the anonymous author of our manuscript defines the term *wajh* as the modality under which the act comes into existence (*kayfiyya fī l-ḥudūth*). In accordance with the Bahshamī doctrine, he further explains that an act has such a modality whenever its originator has specific intentions whilst performing it (*ḥudūthuhu min qāsid amran makhṣūṣan*): doing injustice, harm or lying are consequently the effect

²¹ For the Bahshamī understanding of good and evil acts and the conditions for deserving praise and blame see Vasalou, *Moral Agents*, pp. 95–102.

of reprehensible intentions and therefore deserve blame, while gracious and helpful acts are among the ethically good acts that deserve praise.

The incomplete third chapter then deals with the “modalities” by which attributes become actual (*faṣl fī dhikr jumla mimḡā yadullu ‘alā kayfiyyāt al-ṣifāt min kawn al-ṣifa mutajaddida aw kaw-nihā azaliyya wa-mā yattaṣilu bi-dhālika*; fols 95aff.). The Bahshamīs differentiate between various “modalities” of attributes whenever such properties as “being capable of actions” are univocally predicated of God and His creatures. While the Bahshamīs considered the meaning of “being capable of actions” to be identical in both cases, they held that God is necessarily capable of actions whereas human abilities are only possible ones. Necessity and possibility are considered as two “modalities” of the same attribute.

The quotation from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḡ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* is found in the second chapter of the treatise. After having defined the term *wajh*, the author discusses the specific case of good acts that do neither deserve praise nor gratitude. Following the teaching of prominent theologians, he outlines that any such good acts that do not deserve praise are simply good because they do not occur under circumstances which cause them to be evil. However, the mere absence of circumstances that do not cause an act to be evil is, in itself, not sufficient for an act to deserve praise. According to the anonymous author, ‘Abd al-Jabbār already adopted this view in *Sharḡ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. As we are furthermore told, his position on this matter was not consistent: in *al-Muḡīṭ* he reportedly adopted a different opinion, arguing that acts cannot be ethically good if there is no ground for it; he therefore concluded that the absence of any such circumstances that cause an act to be evil are tantamount to circumstances that cause them to be good.²²

وأما الحسن الذي لا مدخل له في استحقاق مدح [ولا] شكر، فإنّ قول أكابر علماء المتكلمين فيه أنّه يحسن لا لوجه، بل إنّما يحسن لانتفاء وجوه القبح عنه معما فيه من عرض لأنّه قد تكون وجوه القبح منتفية عن الفعل وهو غير حسن، فلا بدّ من أمر زائد وهو ما في الفعل من الغرض، وهذا هو قول بعض الشيوخ

²² The corresponding passage in Ibn Mattawayh’s commentary on *al-Muḡīṭ* appears to be the chapter *bāb fī kayfiyyat istiḡāq al-madh‘ ‘alā l-af‘āl* (Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmū‘*, vol. 3, p. 301–2).

المد [...] وهو المخصوص (؟) أيضًا في شرح [٨٦و] الجمل والعقود، وإن كان الموجود لهذا العالم في كتاب المحيط ما ظاهره خلاف ذلك وهو أن لا بدّ في كلّ فعل حسن من وجه حسن وأنّ وجه الحسن يكون له التأثير بشرط انتفاء وجوه القبح.

2.2. The “commentaries” on al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd in the Refutation of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī

In the anonymous refutation of Abū l-Ḥusayn’s epistle, the “commentaries” on *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* are quoted in the first chapter. Here, the author argues that “states” (*aḥwāl*) cannot be immediately known in detail (*faṣl fī anna l-aḥwāl lā yaṣīḥḥu an tu‘lama ḍarūratan ‘alā sabīl al-taḥṣīl*). The issue of the ‘knowability’ of the *ḥāl* relates to the ontological nature of attributes as conceived of by the Bahshamiyya. This chapter addresses the subject via numerous interjections in the typical dialectical style “if it is said... we say”.

The concept of *ḥāl* was introduced into *kalām* by Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī. It helped him solve the logical quandary of reconciling the plurality of God’s eternal attributes with the idea of His oneness. Abū Hāshim posited that such predications as “God is knowing” refer to a *ḥāl*. The concept of *ḥāl* was borrowed from the grammarians and is often rendered in modern studies as “state” or “manner of being”. The *ḥāl*’s particularity consists in the fact that it is not conceived as a thing or entity (*shay’/dhāt*), which, by definition, is either existent or non-existent. Whenever we affirm that a thing has a “state” or a specific “manner of being” (such as “being knowing”), this does not necessarily imply the existence of something distinct from the object characterised by the *ḥāl*.

The idea of the *ḥāl* as a non-entity has additional implications directly related to the passage of the anonymous text under discussion: since only things or entities can be objects of knowledge, the *ḥāl*, as an ontological category distinct from “things”, is not knowable. Instead, the Bahshamīs argued that “things” can be known and are distinguishable from one another by virtue of a *ḥāl*.²³ We can see from the following extract how our anonymous author substantiates this position

²³ For Abū Hāshim’s conception of attributes as non-entitative *aḥwāl* see Frank, *Beings*, pp. 8–38.

against that of a hypothetical follower of Abū l-Ḥusayn and refers to the “commentaries” on *al-Jumal-wa-l-‘uqūd* which outlined it in detail:

فإن قال من نحا نحو صاحب هذا الكتاب: فنحن ننظر في كون ما اعتقدناه من الحال غيراً للمحلّ فنعملها بما يدلّ على أنّ المتحرّك غير الجسم بل قد فعل ذلك صاحب الكتاب، قيل له: إنّ الحال محال أن تُعلم فكيف يصحّ أن يُعلم كونها غيراً للموصوف بها بل الموصوف يُعلم على الصفة التي يتميّز بها. وقد سُرح ذلك وبيّن في شروح الجمل والعقود بما لا حاجة بنا إلى ذكره، لأنّ التغيّر لا يصحّ إلا بين ذاتين معلومتين مستقلّتين بأنفسها، فإنّ عنى بالحال ذات الحركة التي يصحّ أن تُعلم مخالف للعلم بذات الجسم فهو إذاً مخالف في عبارة والمعنى صحيح ولا مُعتبر بالاختلاف فيما هذا سبيله.²⁴

2.3. *Ibn al-Malāḥimī's and Taqī l-Dīn's quotation from 'Abd al-Jabbār's Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*

Ibn al-Malāḥimī's quotation from 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* is found in a chapter entitled *bāb fī nafī al-mā'yya 'anhu ta'ālā*. Here he argues against the position of an early Mu'tazilī theologian, Ḍirār b. 'Amr (d. ca. 200/815), who posited that God has a “quiddity” (*mā'yya*) which is only known to Himself. Ibn al-Malāḥimī begins the chapter by exploring the soundness of Ḍirār's doctrine of *mā'yya*. On the one hand, he approves of the concept on condition that *mā'yya* is understood as referring to the true nature or reality of God Himself (*ḥaqīqat dhātīhi*). That is to say, for Ibn al-Malāḥimī God's uniqueness is such that He is distinguishable from all other entities by virtue of His very being (*'anā bihā anna dhātahu ta'ālā dhāt makḥṣūsa mubāyana bi-nafsihā li-ghayrihā min al-dhawāt*). On the other hand, Ibn al-Malāḥimī rejects the idea that God's reality can only be known to Himself. Ḍirār's notion of *mā'yya* also implied that the believers can perceive God's “quiddity” via a sixth sense with which they will be endowed in the hereafter. Ibn al-Malāḥimī counters this doctrine by absolutely refuting the view that God's “self” (*dhātuhu ta'ālā*) is in any way perceptible (*maḥṣūsa*). Knowledge of God can therefore only be achieved by rational reflection based on evidence found in the created world.²⁵

²⁴ Cf. §15 of the critical edition of the extant parts of this text in Ansari, Madelung and Schmidtke, “Yūsuf al-Baṣīr's First Refutation”.

²⁵ Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Mu'tamad*, p. 252f.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī then explores a possible alternative interpretation of ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s concept of *māʿiyya*. He considers the possibility that this *māʿiyya* might only be something supplemental (*amr zāʿid*) to God’s reality or an additional “state” (*ḥāla zāʿida ʿalā ḥaqīqat dhātihī taʿālā*). In this case, Ibn al-Malāḥimī argues, we would have to concede the possibility of there being something for which we have absolutely no means of knowing (*tajwīz li-mā lā ṭarīq ilayhi*). However, this entails positing things that are unknowable, which is categorically rejected by Ibn al-Malāḥimī. His line of reasoning is based on a principle that had already been outlined by earlier Muʿtazilī theologians, namely the so-called “argument from ignorance”. According to this principle, the absence of evidence for X entails that X cannot possibly exist and so has to be negated (*mā lā* [read *dalīl* instead of *DYLY*] *ʿalayhi yajibū nafyuhu*).²⁶ At this point, Ibn al-Malāḥimī refers to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, whose *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* substantiated this principle on the basis that if the “argument from ignorance” were not valid we would have to conceive of the possibility of unknowable accidents (*maʿānin*) being able to inhere in a substratum (*maḥall*):²⁷

واحتجّ قاضي القضاة رحمه الله في شرح الجمل والعقود لنفي تجويز ما لا طريق إلى العلم به بأنّ تجويز ما هذا حاله يلزم منه تجويز معانٍ في المحلّ لا طريق إلى العلم بها.²⁸

In the *Kāmil*, Taqī al-Dīn quotes the same passage in a similar context. A chapter of this text deals with the question of whether God can have attributes apart from those affirmed by the Muʿtazilīs (*masʿala fī annahu hal yajūzu an yakūna li-llāh taʿālā ṣifa ghayr mā athbatū min al-ṣifāt am lā*). To answer this question, Taqī al-Dīn refers to Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār as two proponents of the “argument from ignorance”—or “the evidence from the absence of evidence”, as he terms it (*dalālat nafī l-dalāla*).²⁹ In his discussion of the “argument from ignorance”, Taqī al-Dīn eventually quotes the passage from *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd*, in which ʿAbd al-Jabbār attempts to

²⁶ For the “argument from ignorance” and its defence by Muʿtazilī theologians in general and by Ibn al-Malāḥimī in particular see Shihadeh, “The Argument from Ignorance”.

²⁷ Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Muʿtamad*, p. 256f.

²⁸ For a brief discussion of the passage cited by Ibn al-Malāḥimī from *Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd* cf. also Shihadeh, “The Argument from Ignorance,” p. 182f.

²⁹ On this chapter see *Ibid.*, pp. 214–17.

establish this principle by way of negating the possibility of unknowable accidents inhering in a substratum:

والوجه الثاني ما ذكره قاضي القضاة في شرح الجمل والعقود أنّ تجويز ما هذا حاله يلزم تجويز معان في المحلّ لا طريق إلى العلم بها.³⁰

2.4. Al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ' citation of Ibn Mattawayh's Ta'liq al-Jumal wa-l-'uqūd

Al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ' text entitled *Kayfiyyat kashf al-aḥkām wa-l-ṣifāt 'an khaṣā'is al-mu'aththirāt wa-l-muqtaḍiyāt* is a detailed account of the theory of *aḥwāl*, that is the Bahshamī theory of attributes. This text is structured around four categories of attributes, which are classified according to the manner or modality by which they become actual (*thabata*). The citation of Ibn Mattawayh's *Ta'liq al-Jumal wa-l-'uqūd* is found in the chapter devoted to the category of those attributes that are said to be caused or "entailed" (*muqtaḍāt*) by other attributes.³¹ Alongside other examples, al-Raṣṣāṣ applies this category of "entailed attributes" to the attribute of being perceiving (*kawnuhu mudrikan*). The reasoning behind this was that, according to Bahshamī doctrine, living beings are perceiving whenever an object of perception exists, on condition that they do not suffer from physical defects. Consequently, it was argued that perception is effected by the attribute of being living (*kawnuhu ḥayyan*). When discussing the attribute of perception in his chapter on "entailed attributes", al-Raṣṣāṣ reports—and actually rejects—a position that Ibn Mattawayh formulated in his *Ta'liq al-Jumal wa-l-'uqūd* and his famous *Tadhkira*. As we can see in the following extract, Ibn Mattawayh posited in these two texts that the attributes of visual and tactile perception of atoms (*kawnuhu mudrikan li-l-jawhar ru'iyatan wa-lamsan*) are alike (*mutamāthilatān*).³² He argued that in both cases the object of perception is the same. Al-Raṣṣāṣ counters that we know from our experience the

³⁰ Taqī al-Dīn al-Najrānī, *al-Kāmil*, p. 324.

³¹ For this category of attributes see Frank, *Beings*, pp. 58–92; for al-Raṣṣāṣ conception of this category see Thiele, *Theologie*, pp. 166–75.

³² For the quoted passage from the *Tadhkira* see Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, vol. 2, p. 738f.

difference between the perception of things by our various senses, and that consequently visual and tactile perception of atoms must be distinct attributes (*ṣifātān mukhtalifātān*)³³:

قلنا: الصحيح عندنا في كون³⁴ أحدنا مدرِّكًا للجوهر رؤيةً ولمسًا وكون القديم تعالى³⁵ على مثل صفة الواحد منا³⁶ بكونه مدرِّكًا للجوهر رؤيةً ولمسًا³⁷ أنّهما صفتان مختلفتان في حقنا وفي حق القديم سبحانه أيضًا، وذلك لأنّ أحدنا يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا للجوهر رؤيةً³⁸ وبين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا له لمسًا،³⁹ ويُعلم اختلاف هاتين الصفتين عليه كما يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا للون وبين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا للحرارة والبرودة وكما يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا للطعم وبين حاله إذا كان مدرِّكًا للصوت وأجلى الأمور ما يجده الإنسان من نفسه. فكما وجب القضاء باختلاف صفته بكونه مدرِّكًا لهذه⁴⁰ المدرِّكات فكذلك⁴¹ يجب في صفتيه⁴² بكونه مدرِّكًا للجوهر رؤيةً ولمسًا يبيّن ذلك ويوضحه أنّهما لو كانتا متماثلتين⁴³ لما جاز أن يختلف شرطهما في الواحد منا لأننا قد بينّا أنّ الجنس الواحد من الصفات المقتضاة لا يجوز أن⁴⁴ يختلف شرطه إلا بحسب اختلاف كيفية مقتضيه في الذوات ومقتضي هاتين الصفتين في أحدنا لم يختلف كيفيته فيه فلما اختلف شرطهما دلّ ذلك على اختلافهما. وقد ذكر الشيخ أبو محمد الحسن بن أحمد بن متّويه رحمه الله في كتاب التذكرة وكتاب تعليق الجمل والعقود أنّ هاتين الصفتين متماثلتان لإيجاد متعلّقتهما⁴⁵.

The above outlined references allow us to define the content of 'Abd al-Jabbār's text more precisely. Our material from *al-Jumal wa-l-'uqūd* is exclusively found in texts or chapters of texts dealing with attributes of God and His creatures. The quoted passages deal with a variety of related subjects, including the attributes of acts, epistemological aspects and discussions on the precise mea-

³³ The following passage is edited on the basis of four manuscripts: MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Glaser 80, fol. 84b (أ), MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Glaser 29, fol. 33a (ب), MS Ḍaḥyān, Maktabat Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-'Azīm, p. 97 (ص) and MS Leiden UB, OR 6355/5, fols 202b–203a (د); for the MSS of al-Raṣṣāṣ' *Kayfiyya* see Thiele, *Theologie*, p. 29.

³⁴ كون: فوق السطر، ص

³⁵ تعالى: سبحانه، أ ص

³⁶ منا: فوق السطر، ص

³⁷ وكون ... لمسًا: - ل؛ في الهامش ب

³⁸ رؤية: + لمسًا، ل

³⁹ له: فوق السطر، ص

⁴⁰ لهذه: + الصفات، ل

⁴¹ فكذلك: + فكذلك (مشطوبًا) أ

⁴² صفتيه: صفته، ب

⁴³ متماثلتين: متماثلين، ل

⁴⁴ يجوز أن: - ب

⁴⁵ متعلّقتهما: متعلّقتها، ب

ning of the attribute of perception. This suggests that ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* and its commentaries comprehensively dealt with attributes and their specific ontological conception as *aḥwāl* in Bahshamī theology.

3. *MS St Petersburg, RNL Firk Arab. 112: extracts from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s work?*

In the recent catalogue of the Firkovitch collection of Mu‘tazilī manuscripts in Arabic language and script figures a text entitled *Ta‘līq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* (Firk Arab. 112).⁴⁶ This text is the first volume (*juz’*) of a Bahshamī commentary on an earlier theological treatise. The manuscript itself is badly damaged and often illegible because of poor attempts to preserve the book. Therefore, the precise wording of the title can no longer be securely established.

Nonetheless, the evidence presented in the catalogue for identifying the title as *Ta‘līq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* is plausible. While the title page does not provide any information with regard to the identity of the text, the introduction repeatedly uses the words *jumal* and *‘aqd/‘uqūd*.⁴⁷ Since it was common for this genre of literature to take up words from the title in the introduction, this suggests that the words *jumal* and *‘aqd/‘uqūd* were actually used in the title.

The colophon of the manuscript is also severely damaged and only remains partly legible.⁴⁸ It allows us to identify the text as the first part (*al-juz’ al-awwal min...*) of this work. This piece of information must have been followed by the title, whose beginning is, however, illegible. Only the last character of the first word may be read with some caution as a *qāf*. Since our text is a commentary, it would make sense to interpret it as being the last letter of *ta‘līq*, but this remains speculative. The next word is, almost certainly, *al-jumal*, possibly followed by a *wāw* and three further characters which are undoubtedly to be read as *alif-lām-‘ayn*. The next characters are again unclear, but could represent the letters *qāf-wāw-dāl*, and so the reading *wa-l-‘uqūd* is well possible.

⁴⁶ Schmidtke, “Mu‘tazilī Manuscripts,” pp. 441–443, no. 24.

⁴⁷ See Plate I, lines 2 and 5 of fol. 1b.

⁴⁸ See Plate II.

The next line of the colophon poses less problems and reveals that the second part of the work starts with an outline of the doctrine that God is necessarily existent (*al-juz' al-thānī [...] fī ithbāt wajh al-wujūb fī kawnihi mawjūdan*).⁴⁹

The following two lines of the colophon—*‘allaqahu ‘Alī bin Shlūmū bi-Tinīs fī Shawwāl sana sit wa-thalāthīn wa-arba‘ mī’a*—were interpreted in the catalogue as referring to ‘Alī b. Sulaymān as being the author of the work. ‘Alī b. Sulaymān is well-known as a Karaite scholar and copyist, who was born c. 1020. It therefore appeared the commentary preserved in MS Firk Arab. 112 could not possibly be related to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. The author of the commented text was still alive when our commentary was composed.⁵⁰ ‘Abd al-Jabbār died, however, only around five years after ‘Alī b. Sulaymān was born and the manuscript is even dated 20 years after ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s death, in 436/1045.

Yet the assumption that ‘Alī b. Sulaymān actually was the author of the commentary seems questionable to me. The expression *‘allaqahu*, which is found in the colophon, has not necessarily the meaning of “he composed a *ta‘līq* (i.e. a commentary) of it”, as was suggested. Rather, it is a common formula that scribes employed in colophons to identify themselves as the copyist.⁵¹ The manuscript may therefore be a—possibly partial—copy of an earlier work. In fact, ‘Alī b. Sulaymān was less an original author than a writer of excerpts, abbreviations and compilations of both Jewish and Muslim works. A great number of these texts are extant in autograph. The handwriting of MS Firk Arab. 112 is very similar to some of these autographs.⁵²

⁴⁹ This is also confirmed by the end of the last chapter of this codex. Here, the author announces the textual structure of what follows in his work (cf. fol. 48b:5–9):

واعلم أنه لا بدّ | من أن [نبيّ]ن في ذلك أنّ كونه تعالى موجودًا حيًّا عالمًا قادرًا مدركًا يثبت فيه وجه | الوجوب وما يتّصل بذلك وأنّ ثبوت وجه
الوجوب في الصفة يقتضي المنع من تعليلها | بعلة [...] ولا يقتضي المنع من اشتراطها بشرط وما يتّصل بذلك ونحن نبيّن | ذلك في [فصول]؟ إن
شاء الله.

⁵⁰ The author of the commented text is referred to by the eulogy *ayyadahu llāh*, which is only used for living persons.

⁵¹ See Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*, p. 101.

⁵² See Plate III, showing ‘Alī b. Sulaymān’s handwriting in a manuscript of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā’s (d. 436/1044) *Dhakhīra* dated 472/1079–80 (For the manuscript see Schmidtke, “Mu‘tazilī Manuscripts,” pp. 422–28 and Sabine Schmidtke’s contribution to this volume). ‘Alī b. Sulaymān’s hand often tends to be inclined to the right, to omit the

Assuming ‘Alī b. Sulaymān was not the author but the scribe of MS Firk Arab. 112, its relationship to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* is no longer excluded. The manuscript could then contain excerpts or even a full copy of the first part of one of the commentaries on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* (though definitely not the latter’s autocommentary). Nonetheless, the question of its actual authorship is left open. Ibn Mattawayh, whose *Ta‘līq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd* was transmitted to Yemen, appears not to have been known to Karaite Mu‘tazilīs. At some point, the question might be resolved by the identification of another text quoted by the commentator: he apparently also authored a work entitled *Kitāb al-Illa wa-l-ma‘lūl* (f. 46a), which is presently unknown.⁵³

Finally, the question has to be asked whether we can find any parallels between MS Firk Arab. 112 and the quotations from the commentaries on *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. Since none of these passages can actually be traced in MS Firk Arab. 112, we have to look for more general thematic commonalities. As previously outlined, the quoted passages of text are found in contexts dealing with attributes. This is fully consistent with the topics we find in MS Firk Arab. 112. The text covers a wide range of issues related to attributes of beings in general and of God in particular.⁵⁴

With some probability, we can therefore assume that MS Firk Arab. 112 actually contains material from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd*. Consequently, the manuscripts would be a promi-

upper bar of the *kāf*, or to make ligatures between descenders (such as in *wāw* or *rā’*) and the following letter which sits on the baseline (cf., for example, lines 3, 4, 6 and 7: *yūjibuhu*, *al-wajh*, *yarji’u* and *kawnuhu*; a similar ligature is found in MS Firk Arab 112, fol. 48b, lines 1, 6 and 7 (cf. Plate II): *wujūd*, *kawnuhu*, *wajh*). However, Sabine Schmidtke came to the conclusion that MS Firk Arab 112 seems to have been written by another hand (Ibid., p. 441).

⁵³ See Ibid.

⁵⁴ See Ibid., p. 442f. for the chapter headings found in MS Firk Arab. 112. Some missing words in these headings can be completed by means of parallel texts and short outlines of the textual structure provided at the end of a number of chapters:

fol. 15b: فصل في أنّ الذات لا [بد] من صحّة العلم بها تفصيلاً على سائر ما هي عليه ... صح ذلك فيها وما يتصل بذلك (cf. fol.: فاشتمل ذلك على أنّ الذات لا بد من صحّة العلم بها مفصلاً)

fol. 20b: فصل في أنّ تلك الصفة لا يصحّ أن تُعلّل بأمر سوى الذات وأنها لو علّلت لا ينقص كون الذات ذاتاً ولخرجت من باب ما يصحّ أن يُعلم ولخرجت الصفة من أن يكون لها الحكم [م] الذي ذكره

واعلم أنه [...] يفصل ذلك فصلاً [...] ومنها أن الوجود شرط في (cf. fol. 25b: فصل [في أنّ الوجود شرط] على إيجاب صفة الذات ذلك الإيجاب)

واعلم أنه لا بد (cf. fol. 42a: فصل فيم[ا] له جعل أحد الجاذبين على الآخر شرطاً ... لم يجعل ذاته تعالى [...] شرطاً ولا على [م] كيفية تعليل

For the first chapters of the second part (*juz’*) of the work see note 49.

sing trace to be followed in further attempts to reconstruct ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s treatise. Due to the rudimentary state of research on Jewish fragments of Mu‘tazilī texts, it is not unlikely that additional parts of the text will be discovered within the widely unstudied Genizah materials.

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Plate I: MS St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Firk Arab. 112, fol. 1b (with kind permission)

Plate II: MS St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Firk Arab. 112, fol. 48b (with kind permission)

Plate III: MS St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Firk Arab. 111, fol. 107b (with kind permission)