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’tazili 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 qādi‘ Abd al-Jabbār, entitled al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd. In the following, I will give an overview of the sources in Zaydi and Karaites 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 Ta’liq al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd.

Keywords


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’tazili thought continued to flourish in the Islamicate world among minority groups—Muslims and non-Muslims—, specifically the Zaydis, Karaite and Rabbanite Jews. 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 Zaydis, preserved these texts in their libraries.

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† For an outline of the continuity of Mu’tazili 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'tazili 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'tazili theologian 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), entitled Kitāb al-Jumal wa-l-'uqiūd. 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

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² See, for example, Ben-Shammai, “A Note on Some Karaite Copies”.
³ For recent results see e.g. al-Baṣrī, Ṭaṣaffūḥ al-adīla; Schwarb, “Découverte”; Hamdan and Schmidtke, “Qādī '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-Mulūḥ bi-l-takīf, which has only been preserved in Karaite repositories. The Zaydis 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 Ṭa’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 Karaite and Zaydi 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 qādī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, relying on the following two sources:6 (1) a 5th/11th century biography of ‘Abd al-Jabbār written by the Khurāsānī Mu’tazīli theologian al-Ḥākim al-Jishumi (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 fi l-istiqṣā’ 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-Malāḥimi (d. 536/1141). Both Abū l-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Malāḥimi undermined some of the fundamental principles of Bahshami theology with the specific aim of defending Mu’tazīli theology against its detrac-

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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-Malāḥimi’s Kitāb al-Mu’tamad fī ʿusūl al-dīn and explicitly cites the work. Consequently, it is probably no coincidence that we find in al-Mu’tamad a quotation of the same passage of ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd. It is likely that Taqi l-Dīn only cited Ibn al-Malāḥimi’s quotation without ever consulting ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s original work.

While all of the aforementioned references are found in Zaydi copies of Muʿtazili texts made in Yemen, there is no positive evidence that either al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd or ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s autocommentary ever reached the country. However, Yemeni Zaydis must have had some knowledge of al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd via a commentary authored by ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s student Ibn Mattawayh. In a treatise entitled Kayfīyyat kashf al-ʾākhbām wa-l-ṣifāt ‘an ḥasāʾīs al-mu’aththirāt wa-l-muqṭādiyāt the 6th/12th century Yemeni theologian al-Ḥasan al-Rasās (d. 584/1188) discusses an idea presented by Ibn Mattawayh in his Taʿliq al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd. In all likelihood, this work was Ibn Mattawayh’s commentary on his teacher’s al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd.

In contrast to the Zaydis, Karaite theologians inclined to Muʿtazilism actually studied and copied ʿAbd 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. The text is not attributed to any author and, consequently, this reference leaves some room for speculation as to whether it actually refers to ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s treatise or to a homonymous work by a different author. The inventory also lists a number of Muslim and, in particular, Muʿtazili kalām texts and authors, including al-Labbād, that is ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s student Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd al-Labbād (known as


\[10\] Ibn al-Malāḥimi al-Khwārazmī, Muʿtamad, p. 257.


\[12\] MS Oxford, Bodleian, Heb. f 22, ff. 25b–52b; see the edition of this list in Allony, Jewish Library, p. 163, no. 40347, p. 166, no. 40236 and p. 167, no. 40251.

\[13\] A homonymous work was authored by Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) (al-Ṭūsī, Jumal).
“Qādi Labbâd”), 14 and a text entitled al-Dawâ‘i wa-l-ṣawā‘if, a well-known title from ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’s œuvre. 15 It can therefore be concluded that the warrāq in question did sell Bahshami texts by Muslim authors and that it is consequently not unlikely that the mentioned Kitâb al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd actually was ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’s work.

A quotation from ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’s Sharh al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd 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 Kitâb al-Bayān. As long as we cannot identify the author of this Kitâb al-Bayân, 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-Jabbâr’s Sharh al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd and not to a homonymous work is, however, beyond any doubt, although ‘Abd al-Jabbâr is not explicitly mentioned: in addition to the Sharh al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd, the passage also refers to another work by the same author, namely the Kitâb al-Muhît, a text that was also composed by ‘Abd al-Jabbâr. 17

An additional reference to “commentaries” (shurûh) on al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd is found in a text that was identified as the First Refutation (Naqḍ) of Abû l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrî’s theology composed by the 5th/11th century Karaite scholar and Bahshami theologian Yusuf al-Baṣîr (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

17 The quotation from Sharh al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqûd is found on fols 85b–86a and the reference to Kitâb al-Bayân on fol. 102b; Gregor Schwarb, to whom I owe this information, suggested that the text should be identified as Yusuf al-Baṣîr’s Kitâb Aḥwâl al-fîl mentioned in al-Kitâb al-Muḥtawi. For the manuscript see Ibid., p. 3199, no. 896.
Wilferd Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke.\textsuperscript{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-Bašīr’s \textit{Naqd}. What is even more relevant for the purpose of this article is that the “commentaries” on \textit{al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd} are quoted in this second fragment.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd} were available to medieval Jewish scholars. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s \textit{Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd} was still known within the circle of 6th/12th century Khūrazmian Mu’tazilites. Possibly, the Karaites even knew several commentaries on \textit{al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd}, among which ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s autocommentary can be clearly identified. According to the current state of knowledge, Zaydi 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. \textit{The topic of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd}

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

\textsuperscript{18} Madelung and Schmidtke, “Yūsuf al-Bašīr’s First Refutation”.

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

\textsuperscript{20} See above n. 13.
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 Bahshami 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 (fāṣl fi anna layṣa lī-l-kalām bi-kawnīhi amran wa-khabaran wa-nahīyān īlā ghayr dhālīk šīfa wa-mā yattāsilu bi-dhālika; fols 68bff.).

The second chapter argues that acts do not have an attribute when they are qualified as being good or evil (fāṣl fi anna layṣa lī-l-fīl bi-kawnīhi hasānan aw qabīḥan šīfa wa-mā yattāsilu bi-dhālika; fols 85aff.). Evil acts are defined by Bahshami theologians as those acts that occur in such a way (wajh) that the agent deserves blame (dhammad). In contrast, acts are considered as good whenever the doer does not deserve blame or even deserves praise (madḥ). 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 fi l-ḥudūth). In accordance with the Bahshami 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 Bahshami 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 (fuṣūlī dhikr jumla mimma yadullu ‘alā kayfiyyāt al-ṣifāt min kawn al-ṣifā mutajaddida aw kawnīhā azaliyya wa-mā yattasīlu bi-dhālīka; 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 Sharh 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 not 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 Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-‘uqūd. As we are furthermore told, his position on this matter was not consistent: in al-Muḥīṭ 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

وَأَمَّا الْحَسَنِ الَّذِي لَا مَدَخِلٌ لَهُ فِي اسْتِحْفَاقِ مَدِجٍ [وَلَا] شَكْرٍ، فَإِنَّ فَوْلُ أَكْبَرْ عَلَمْ عِلَمَائِ المَكْتُوْمِينَ فِيِّهِ أَنَّهُ يَحْسَنُ لَوْجَهُ، بِلَ إِنَّمَا يَحْسَنُ لاتَقْلَفُ وَجْوُهُ الْقَحْيَ عَنْهُ مَعْمَانُ فِيهِ مِنْ عَرْضٍ لَّا أَنَّهُ فِي وَجْوُهُ الْقَحْيِ مَتَقْلِفٌ عَنْ أَفْعَالِ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ حَسَنٍ، فَلَا بَدِّ مِنْ أَمْرٍ زَائِدٍ وَهُوَ مَا فِي الْفَعْلِ مِنْ الْغَرْضِ، وَهَذَا لَا مَوْلُ بَضَعُ الشَّيْخِ

2.2. The “commentaries” on al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd 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-ʿuqūd are quoted in the first chapter. Here, the author argues that “states” (ahwāl) cannot be immediately known in detail (faṣl fi anna l-ahwāl là yāṣiḥṣu an tuʿlāma ʿdārūratan ʿalā sabīl al-taṣfīl). 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 Ḥāshim al-Jubbāʿī. It helped him solve the logical quandary of reconciling the plurality of God’s eternal attributes with the idea of His oneness. Abū Ḥāshim 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 (shayʾ/ḍhāt), 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.2

We can see from the following extract how our anonymous author substantiates this position:

2 For Abū Ḥāshim’s conception of attributes as non-entitative ahwāl 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-ʿuqūd which outlined it in detail:

Ibn al-Malāḥimi’s and Taqī l-Din’s quotation from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd

Ibn al-Malāḥimi’s quotation from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd is found in a chapter entitled bāb fi naṣī al-māʾyya ʾanhu taʿālā. Here he argues against the position of an early Muʿtazili theologian, Dirār b. Ṭmr (d. ca. 200/815), who posited that God has a “quiddity” (māʾyya) which is only known to Himself. Ibn al-Malāḥimi begins the chapter by exploring the soundness of Dirār’s doctrine of māʾyya. On the one hand, he approves of the concept on condition that māʾyya is understood as referring to the true nature or reality of God Himself (ḥaqīqat dhātīhi). That is to say, for Ibn al-Malāḥimi God’s uniqueness is such that He is distinguishable from all other entities by virtue of His very being (ʾanā bihā ʾanna dhātahu taʿālā dhāt makhṣūṣa mubāyana bi-nafsihā li-ghayrihā min al-dhawāt). On the other hand, Ibn al-Malāḥimi rejects the idea that God’s reality can only be known to Himself. Dirār’s notion of māʾyya 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-Malāḥimi counters this doctrine by absolutely refuting the view that God’s “self” (dhātuhu taʿālā) is in any way perceptible (maḥṣūṣa). 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, Made lung and Schmidtke, “Yūsuf al-Asir’s First Refutation”.
²⁵ Ibn al-Malāḥimi al-Khwārazmī, Muʿtamad, p. 252f.
Ibn al-Malāḥīmī then explores a possible alternative interpretation of Dirār’s concept of mā‘yya. He considers the possibility that this mā‘yya might only be something supplemental (āmr zā‘īd) to God’s reality or an additional “state” (ḥāla zā‘ida ʿalā ḥaqiqat dhātihi ta‘ālā). In this case, Ibn al-Malāḥīmī 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 ǧarīq ilayhi). However, this entails positing things that are unknowable, which is categorically rejected by Ibn al-Malāḥīmī. His line of reasoning is based on a principle that had already been outlined by earlier Mu’tazili 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 yajibu nafyu). At this point, Ibn al-Malāḥīmī refers to ‘Abd 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 (ma‘ānin) being able to inhere in a substratum (maḥall):

واحتجّ قاضي القضاة رحمه الله في شرح المجلّ والعقود لبني تجوؤ ما لا طريق إلى العلم به بِأنّ تجوؤ ما هذا
حالة يلزم منه تجوؤ معانٍ في المجلّ لا طريق إلى العلم بها.  

In the Kāmil, Taqī al-Din 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 Mu’tazilīs (maṣ’ala fī annahu hal yajazū an yakūna li-llāh taʿālā šīfā ghayr mā athbatū min al-sifāt am lā). To answer this question, Taqī al-Din refers to Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār as two proponents of the “argument from ignorance”—or “the evidence from the absence of evidence”, as he terms it (dalālat naft l-dalāla). In his discussion of the “argument from ignorance”, Taqī al-Din eventually quotes the passage from Sharḥ al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd, in which ‘Abd al-Jabbār attempts to

26 For the “argument from ignorance” and its defence by Mu’tazili theologians in general and by Ibn al-Malāḥīmī in particular see Shihadeh, “The Argument from Ignorance”.
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 فاضي القصة في شرح الجمل والعقود أن تجوؤ ما هذا حاله يلزم تجوؤ معان في الجمل لا طريق إلى العلم به.

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

Al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ’ text entitled Kayfīyyat kashf al-aḥkām wa-l-ṣifāt ‘an khasāʾis al-muʿaṭthirāt wa-l-muqtaḍiyyāt is a detailed account of the theory of aḥwāl, that is the Bahshami 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-ʿuqūd is found in the chapter devoted to the category of those attributes that are said to be caused or “entailed” (muqtaḍāt) by other attributes. 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 Bahshami 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-ʿuqūd 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 ruʿiyatan wa-ʿamsan) are alike (mutamāṭhilātān). He argued that in both cases the object of perception is the same. Al-Raṣṣāṣ counters that we know from our experience the

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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 consequentially visual and tactile perception of atoms must be distinct attributes (sifatān mukhtalifātān)\textsuperscript{33}:

\[
\text{قلنا: الصحيح عندنا في كون\`4 أحدنا مدركًا للجعور رؤيةً وملسًا وكون القديم تعالى\textsuperscript{35} على مثل صفة الواحد منا يكون مدركًا للجعور رؤيةً وملسًا\textsuperscript{36} وهم صفات مقابلة في حقنا وفي حق القديم سبحانه أيضًا، وذلك لأن

أحدنا يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدركًا للجعور رؤيةً وملسًا\textsuperscript{37} وبين حاله إذا كان مدركًا له\textsuperscript{38}، ويعلم اختلاف هاتين الصفتين عليه كما يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدركًا للون وبين حاله إذا كان مدركًا للحرارة والبرودة وكما يفصل بين حاله إذا كان مدركًا للطعم وبين حاله إذا كان مدركًا للصوت وأجل الأور ما يجلد الإنسان من نفسه. فكلما وجب القضاء باختلاف صفة بكونه مدركًا له\textsuperscript{39}، المذكرات بذلك:\textsuperscript{40} يجب في صفته\textsuperscript{41} يكون مدركًا للجعور رؤيةً وملسًا بين ذلك ويوضح أنهما لو كاتان متماثلين\textsuperscript{42} لما جاز أن يختلف شرطهما في الواحد منا لاننا قد بينا أن الجنس الواحد من الصفات المتناقضة لا يجوز أن يختلف كيفية منصبه في الدوافع والمقتضى هاتين الصفتين في أحدنا لم يختلف كيفيته فيه بلما يختلف شرطهما دل ذلك على اختلافهما. وقد ذكر الشيخ أبو محمد الحسن بن أحمد بن مطية رحمه الله في كتاب التذكرة وكتاب تعلق

الجمل والعقود أن هاتين الصفتين متماثلان لإيجاد متماثلةهم\textsuperscript{43}.)

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The above outlined references allow us to define the content of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s text more precisely. Our material from \textit{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-

\textsuperscript{33} The following passage is edited on the basis of four manuscripts: MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Glaser 8o, fol. 84b (\textdegree\textdegree\textdegree), MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Glaser 29, fol. 33a (ب. ب.), MS Daḥyān, Maktabat Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīm, p. 97 (ص. ص. ص. ص.), and MS Leiden UB, OR 6355/5, fols 202b–203a (ل. ل.). For the MSS of al-Rāḍā’i’s \textit{Kāfīyya} see Thiele, \textit{Theologie}, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{34} كون: فوق السطر، ص. 34

\textsuperscript{35} تعالى: سبحانه، أص. 36

\textsuperscript{36} مان: فوق السطر، ص. 37

\textsuperscript{37} كون ... لمن: في الهاش ب. 38

\textsuperscript{38} رؤية: + لمن، ل. 39

\textsuperscript{39} ثم: فوق السطر، ص. 40

\textsuperscript{40} لهذها + الصفة، ل. 41

\textsuperscript{41} فكذلك + صفة: صفحته، ب. 42

\textsuperscript{42} متماثلين: معاط، ل. 43

\textsuperscript{43} متصل: متصل، ب. 44

\textsuperscript{45} متصل: متصل، ب.
ning of the attribute of perception. This suggests that 'Abd al-Jabbâr's al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd and its commentaries comprehensively dealt with attributes and their specific ontological conception as ʿahwâl in Bahshami theology.

3. MS St Petersburg, RNL Firk Arab. 112: extracts from 'Abd al-Jabbâr's work?

In the recent catalogue of the Firkovitch collection of Muʿtazili manuscripts in Arabic language and script figures a text entitled Taʿliq al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd (Firk Arab. 112). This text is the first volume (juz') of a Bahshami commentary on an earlier theological treatise. The manuscripts 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 Taʿliq al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd 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 ʿaqd/ʿuqūd. 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 ʿaqd/ʿuqūd were actually used in the title.

The colophon of the manuscript is also severely damaged and only remains partly legible. 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 taʿliq, 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-ʿayn. The next characters are again unclear, but could represent the letters qāf-wāw-dāl, and so the reading wa-l-ʿuqūd is well possible.

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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 [...] fi ithbāt wajh al-wujūb fi kawnīhi mawjūdan).

The following two lines of the colophon—ʻallaqahu ʿAlī bin Shinābī-Tīnis fi Shawkāl sana sit wa-thalāthīn wa-arba’ miʿā—were interpreted in the catalogue as referring to ʻAlī b. Sulaymān as being the author of the work. ʻAlī 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 ʻAbd al-Jabār’s al-Jumal wa-l-ʻuqūd. The author of the commented text was still alive when our commentary was composed. ʻAbd al-Jabār died, however, only around five years after ʻAlī b. Sulaymān was born and the manuscript is even dated 20 years after ʻAbd al-Jabār’s death, in 436/1045.

Yet the assumption that ʻAlī 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 taʾlīq (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. The manuscript may therefore be a—possibly partial—copy of an earlier work. In fact, ʻAlī 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.

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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. 48b5–9):


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


52 See Plate III, showing ʻAlī b. Sulaymān’s handwriting in a manuscript of al-Sharīf al-Murtada’s (d. 436/1044) Dakhira dated 472/1079–80 (For the manuscript see Schmidtke, “Mu’tazili Manuscripts,” pp. 442–28 and Sabine Schmidtke’s contribution to this volume). ʻAlī b. Sulaymān’s hand often tends to be inclined to the right, to omit the
Assuming 'Ali 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-ʿuqūd 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-ʿuqūd (though definitely not the latter's auto commentary). Nonetheless, the question of its actual authorship is left open. Ibn Mattawayh, whose Taʿlīq al-Jumal wa-l-ʿuqūd was transmitted to Yemen, appears not to have been known to Karaite Muʿtazilīs. 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-ʿIlla wa-l-maʾlūl (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-ʿuqūd. 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-ʿuqūd. Consequently, the manuscripts would be a promi-

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53 See Ibid.
54 See Ibid., p. 44.f. 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. 158b: (cf. fol. 158b) فاشتمل ذلك: "ففصل في أن الذات لا [بد] من صحة العلم بها فصولاً على سائر ما هي عليه ... صح ذلك فيها بما يفصل بذلك (على أن الذات لا بد من صحة العلم بها فصولاً)

fol. 208b: (cf. fol. 208b) ففصل في أن تلك الصفعة لا يصح أن تعلّل بأمر سوى الذات وأنها لو علّلت لا ينقص كون الذات ذاتًا ونحوه من باب ما يصح أن يعلّل ولا السابقية من أن يكون لها الحكمة الذاتي ذكره

fol. 328b: (cf. fol. 328b) واعمل أنه ... يفصل ذلك فصولاً [...] ومنها أن الوجود شرط في إيجاب صفة الذات (ذلك الإيجاب)

fol. 428a: (cf. fol. 428a) ففصل فيما [ه] له جعل أحد الجاذبين على الآخر شرطاً ... لم يجعل ذاته تعالى [...] شرطًا ولا عقلية [...] من [...] فيما له يصح أن بجعل أحد الجاذبين شرطًا والآخر [...] شرطًا ولا [...] له في شيء من ذلك [...] 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 ʿAbd al-Jabbār’s treatise. Due to the rudimentary state of research on Jewish fragments of Muʿtazilī texts, it is not unlikely that additional parts of the text will be discovered within the widely unstudied Genizah materials.

References


———, Handbook of Muʿtazilite Works and Manuscripts, forthcoming.


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)