

The History of al-Ṭabarī

VOLUME I

General Introduction
and
From the Creation to the Flood



TRANSLATED BY FRANZ ROSENTHAL

General Introduction
and
From the Creation to the Flood
Volume I
Translated by Franz Rosenthal

Volume I of the thirty-eight volume translation of Ṭabarī's great *History* begins with the creation of the world and ends with the time of Noah and the Flood. It not only brings a vast amount of speculation about the early history of mankind into sharp Muslim focus, but it also synchronizes ancient Iranian ideas about the prehistory of mankind with those inspired by the Qur'an and the Bible. The volume is thus an excellent guide to the cosmological views of many of Ṭabarī's contemporaries. The translator, Franz Rosenthal, one of the world's foremost scholars of Arabic, has also written an extensive introduction to the volume that presents all the facts known about Ṭabarī's personal and professional life. Professor Rosenthal's meticulous and original scholarship has yielded a valuable bibliography and chronology of Ṭabarī's writings, both those preserved in manuscript and those alluded to by other authors. The introduction and first volume of the translation of the *History* form a ground-breaking contribution to Islamic historiography in English and will prove to be an invaluable source of information for those who are interested in Middle Eastern history but are unable to read the basic works in Arabic.

SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies

Said Amir Arjomand, Editor

ISBN: 0-88706-563-5

SUNY
P R E S S
State University of
New York Press
www.sunypress.edu

ISBN 0-88706-563-5



9 780887 065637

THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME I

General Introduction

and

From the Creation to the Flood



The History of al-Ṭabari

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The general editor acknowledges with gratitude the support received for the execution of this project from the Division of Research Programs, Translations Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.



Bibliotheca Persica
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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME I

General Introduction
and
From the Creation to the Flood

translated and annotated
by

Franz Rosenthal

Yale University

State University of New York Press

The preparation of this volume was made possible by a grant from the Division of Research Programs of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.

Published by

State University of New York Press, Albany

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Printed in the United States of America

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For information, contact State University of New York Press, Albany, NY
www.sunypress.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Ṭabarī, 838?- 923.

[Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk. English. Selections]

General Introduction, and, From the Creation to the Flood

/ by Franz Rosenthal.

p. cm. – (SUNY series in Near Eastern studies) (The history of al-

Ṭabarī=Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk, v. 1) (Bibliotheca Persica)

Translation of extracts from: Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk.

Bibliography: p.

Includes Index.

ISBN 0-88706-562-7. ISBN 0-88706-563-5 (pbk.)

1. History, Ancient. 2. World history—Early works to 1800.

3. Bible. O.T. Genesis I-IX—History of Biblical events—Early

works to 1800. 4. Bible. O.T. Genesis I-IX—History of

contemporary events—Early works to 1800. I. Rosenthal, Franz,

1914-. II. Title, III. Title: From the Creation to the Flood.

IV. Series. V. Series: Ṭabarī, 838?- 923. Ta 'riḫ al-rusul wa-al

-mulūk. English : v. 1. VI. Series: Bibliotheca Persica (Albany, N.Y.)

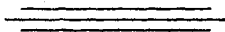
DS38.2.T313 1985 vol. 1

[D17]

909'. 1 s—dc19

[930'.2]

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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General Editor's Preface

The History of Prophets and Kings (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), rendered in the present work as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915.

In 1971, I proposed that UNESCO include a complete translation of Ṭabarī's History in its Collection of Representative Works. At a meeting chaired by the late Roger Caillois, UNESCO agreed; but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities, mostly of a literary kind. At the time I was in charge of UNESCO's Collection of Persian Representative Works, a program which was managed within the framework of the activities of the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication (*Bungāh-i Tarjama wa Nashr-i Kitāb*). Failing to enlist the support of the Arab Commission, I persuaded the Institute to undertake the task.

My interest in the translation of Ṭabarī's history derived not only from the desire to see an outstanding historical work made available to non-Arabists, but also from the fact that Ṭabarī is

the most important source for Iranian history from the rise of the Sasanian dynasty in the third century to the year 915. By rights, the task should have been undertaken by a scholar of Islamic history and classical Arabic, in neither of which fields can I claim any expertise; but I thought it a pity to let the rare opportunity presented by the sponsors of the project to be lost. Fully aware of my limitations and convinced of the importance of the participation of specialists in the project, I enlisted the assistance of a number of excellent scholars in the field.

Preliminary work on the project began in 1974 and I invited Professor Franz Rosenthal of Yale University to bring the benefit of his scholarship and experience to this venture. An Editorial Board originally consisting of Professors Rosenthal, Ihsan Abbas of the American University in Beirut, and myself was envisaged. I later invited Professors C.E. Bosworth of the University of Manchester and Jacob Lassner of Wayne State University to cooperate as members of the Board of Editors. We then began a steady search for able and willing scholars to take part in the project. Ideally we were looking for historians of medieval Islam with a command of classical Arabic.

The Leiden edition was the obvious text on which to base the translation of the History as it is thus far the only critical and scholarly edition. It was prepared by a number of competent scholars in the last quarter of the nineteenth century under the able direction of the Dutch scholar M.J. de Goeje, and published by E.J. Brill of Leiden, Holland, in fourteen volumes with an index volume and a supplementary volume, between 1879 and 1901.

One of our first tasks was to divide the text into manageable sections to be assigned for translation and annotation. The text was divided arbitrarily into 38 sections of about 200 pages each, but in a manner that allowed each section, as far as possible, to be used independently. The general size of the sections was dictated by the desire to leave adequate space for annotation, and to make it possible for the best and busiest scholars in the field to participate. Each section was given a separate title as a short guide to its contents.

It was obvious that in a project of this size, given the differ-

*See pp. 141 ff. of Professor Rosenthal's introduction to the present volume for more details on this edition and the merits of the Cairo edition.

ent viewpoints on translation among scholars and their different styles of rendering Arabic into English, we needed clear guidelines to ensure an essential modicum of consistency. It was necessary to make the translation of some frequently used phrases and expressions uniform. For instance, *Amīr al-mu'minīn*, the title of the caliphs, can be, and has been, translated in different ways. It was important that we used a single rendering of the term ("Commander of the Faithful"). Furthermore, we had to insist on uniformity in the spelling of place-names. To accommodate these concerns, we established a series of guidelines which addressed the questions of format, rubrics, annotation, bibliography, and indexing. According to the guidelines, which were communicated to participating scholars, the project aimed at a translation both faithful and idiomatic—an ideal which we realized was nevertheless far from easy to accomplish. Concern for consistency required that the volumes be carefully edited by an Arabic scholar thoroughly familiar with the guidelines established by the Editorial Board.

This task was originally entrusted to Professor Lassner, but as the number of manuscripts claimed more of his time than he could devote to editing, Professor Bosworth's assistance, too, was enlisted; Professor Rosenthal has also been generously giving of his time for editorial purposes. Naturally this does not mean that all the volumes of *Ṭabarī* follow the same style or that all Arabic terms have been translated in exactly the same way. Variations do occur, but every effort has been made to ensure not only accuracy and readability, but also consistency.

The system of romanization commonly employed by present-day Arabists and Islamicists in the English-speaking world was chosen. Although the system is not universally accepted in all its details, it is hoped that it meets the requirements of accurate transliteration.

Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chains of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by the individual links in the chain separated by a dash (—). Thus, "according to the Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that *Ṭabarī* received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle variations in the original Arabic have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as imām and dirham, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful. Initially, each volume was to have a brief, general introduction; however, after the first few volumes, it was deemed useful to expand the scope of the introductions so that they would include a discussion of the historical context of the volumes and Ṭabarī's method of relating the events. Again, it was left to the translators to decide what was pertinent and helpful to say in their introductions. Translators were also encouraged to provide maps and genealogical tables.

Rather than give further detail of the editorial policy and principles, I reproduce here, for those who may be interested, the Guidelines set forth by the Editorial Board.

Guidelines for Translation, Annotation, and Indexing

I. Translation

1. The purpose of the translation is to provide an accurate but literate text.
2. Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Medina and the

like retain their accepted English forms. Less well-known place names are to be romanized accurately.

3. Amīr al-mu'minīn should be rendered "Commander of the Faithful". The English spelling "Caliph" is retained.

4. *Bāya'a*, *bay'ah* should be consistently translated as "to give/render the oath of allegiance".

5. Familiar technical terms, when reasonably accurate English equivalents are available, should be translated; thus, vizier (*wazīr*), judge (*qāḍī*), cubit (*dhirā'*). Other technical terms should be retained in transliteration without italics, e.g., muftī, imām, ṣūfī, dirham (drachma), dīnār (denarius), shaikh. In general, Arabic terms should be avoided as much as possible.

When a less familiar term like *dihqān* is left untranslated, an explanatory footnote with reference to the secondary literature (usually *El*) may be called for. Unfamiliar and untranslatable technical terms, e.g., *raṭl* or *dāniq*, should be rendered in italics and footnoted.

6. Referents should be supplied for pronouns as required by English usage.

7. It is unnecessary to translate the common terms of blessing after God, the Prophet, etc., except when the formula has some special import.

8. It is not always obligatory to follow the exact sequence of Arabic syntax or literary style; this should be determined by the text and idiomatic English usage. Occasionally, it may be useful to turn direct Arabic speech into indirect speech in the translation to enable the English text to flow smoothly. However, direct speech adds to the liveliness of the translation and preserves the flavor of the original text; thus it should be retained unless other considerations prevail.

II. Annotation

1. Annotations are meant to provide a better understanding of the text. Proper names as well as technical terms unfamiliar to the non-specialist require annotation.

2. A search should be made for relevant parallel sources, and these should be cited when deemed necessary.
3. Philological and stylistic comments are for the benefit of the Arabist. They should be limited to explicating the text where it presents problems.
4. Major geographical areas, e.g., Hījāz, Khurāsān, Sind require no comment. Less well-known places should be identified by referring to the secondary literature, such as *EI*, *EIr*, *Le Strange*, Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, or Schwartz's *Iran*. Fuller comments are necessary only when identification of a particular place is critical to understanding the sense of the text.
5. In rare cases when the explication of the text requires more extensive treatment, this should take the form of an excursus at the end of the translation.
6. Maximum space allowed for the annotation of each volume, including excursuses, should not exceed about one-third of the text.
7. Authors should be cited by name only, except in those cases where the same author has written other works likely to be cited. Thus, Ṭabarī III/I, 250 but Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* (Leiden), I, 250 or Ya'qūbī, *Buldān* (BGA, VIII), 250.
8. Titles should be abbreviated and follow the format of *EI*² and *EIr* (but with the romanization used in this series).
9. References should generally be to standard editions. Where several editions exist, the translators should indicate their choice.
10. Passages that pose textual problems should be romanized and reproduced in footnotes.

III. Editions of the Arabic Text

The Leiden edition should serve as the basis of the translation (see above, p. x). The Cairo edition should, however, be consulted and, if the Topkapı Sarayı manuscripts used in this edition differ significantly from the Leiden edition, the difference should be taken into account and footnoted.

IV. Format and Style

A. General

1. The pagination of the Leiden edition is to be indicated in the margin in square brackets.
2. Hijrah dates are always given with corresponding Western dates; the two are separated by a /, e.g., 145/762.
3. Chains of transmission (*isnād*) should be introduced by "according to" followed by the names of the transmitters in sequence, separated by a —, with a colon after the last name; e.g., "According to Abū Ja'far—Muḥammad b. 'Umar—Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ."
4. *Kunyah* and *nisbah* are always romanized and not translated, e.g., Abū al-Ḥasan al-Khayyāṭ (not "Father of al-Ḥasan the Tailor").
5. Translations are followed by a bibliography giving full publication details for all works cited.
6. The translation of a *bayt* consisting of two hemistichs should be typed as two lines. The first line should begin with a capital letter and be indented; the second line should be further indented and begin with a lower case (small) letter, unless the first line ends with a period, in which case the second line should begin with a capital letter. If any of the hemistichs exceeds one line, the remainder is placed on the next line and is similarly indented. *Bayts* should be separated by an extra space.

B. Rubrics

1. Reigns of Caliphs should be capitalized, e.g.

THE CALIPHATE OF MARWĀN B. MUḤAMMAD

2. The year should be capitalized and beneath it the equivalent Western date should be given parentheses, e.g.,

THE YEAR 280
(March 23, 893—March 12, 894)

When indicated in the text add:

The Events of This Year

3. Other rubrics should be rendered as English titles and underlined, e.g.,

The Reason for...

4. Rubrics may often be cumbersome and difficult to translate, particularly when introduced by "mention of" or the like. In the interest of brevity, one may omit this element of the formula, e.g., instead of:

Mention of the Accounts Concerning the Death of...

translate:

The Death of...

5. The form for rubrics that merge with the text is:

The Reason for this was the killing of...

C. Pre-Islamic Names and Letters

Ancient Iranian names should be romanized according to their Arabic spelling. For biblical names, the standard English forms (see *The Westminster Bible Dictionary*) should be used. Classical names are to be rendered according to standard English practice.

In the case of titles, it will at times be desirable to put the original forms in brackets after the translation, e.g., "general" (*iṣbahbadh*).

D. Paragraphs

Translators may exercise considerable license in paragraphing; however, the introduction of an *isnād* as a rule calls for a new paragraph.

Occasionally, transmitters insert lengthy addresses, sermons, doc-

uments, etc. into the text. These should be set off in special paragraphs in quotation marks. Key short passages of this kind need not be set off.

V. *The Index*

A. Contents

1. There is to be only one index.
2. It should be as complete as possible (too much is better than too little).
3. It should contain:
 - a. All personal proper names in Ṭabarī's text.
 - b. All geographical names (cities, countries, rivers, etc.) in Ṭabarī's text.
 - c. All personal and geographical names in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval context. For instance, if a note states that M.b.A. al-Baghdādī is not identical with the M.b.A. al-Kūfī mentioned by Ṭabarī, M.b.A. al-Baghdādī requires a separate entry in the index.

References to medieval sources are also to be included. Thus, if Miskawayh is cited in the note, "Miskawayh" will appear in the index.

However, proper names of modern scholars are not to be included. With respect to the notes, some selective judgment will be needed; however, if in doubt, add!

B. Form

1. Place a capital A, B, etc. at the head of each new letter of the alphabet.
2. The definite article is to be disregarded for purposes of alphabetization. al-Ṭabarī thus appears under Ṭ, but "al-" is retained.
3. If an entry under Ibn is needed, it should appear under I. Thus: Ibn M. (The same applies to Bint).
4. Abū M. appears under A. (Also Akhū; Umm under U).

5. The main entry of a name with page references is listed under the forms of the name considered to be most characteristic. Of course, the "most characteristic" form is not always obvious; one's choice may be arbitrary at times. If different forms of an individual's name appear in the text, all must be listed separately, with cross references to the main entry. For instance, assuming that Ṭabarī appears in the text or the notes under the various components of his name, the following entries are needed:

Abū Ja'far, see al-Ṭabarī

Ibn Jarīr, see al-Ṭabarī

Muḥammad b. Jarīr, see al-Ṭabarī

al-Ṭabarī (Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr), 35, 46, 109 (n.83), 72

In the main entry, the other forms of the name should be repeated; however, it is not necessary to supply them where they do not occur. Thus "Miskawayh" is sufficient; his given names need not be supplied.

VI. General

1. The translators are expected to provide a substantial introduction that places the volume in historical perspective. The introduction may contain not only a summary of the volume's contents, but also comments on the significance of the events, an evaluation of Ṭabarī's reporting, and a discussion of parallel sources.

2. Maps and genealogical tables are helpful, in fact, welcome, provided the translator is able to furnish them.

E.Y.



Acknowledgments



My foremost thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities and its Division of Research Programs for their continued support and encouragement.

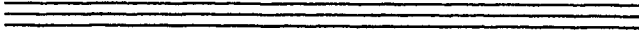
I also wish to thank sincerely the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their valuable assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professors C.E. Bosworth and Jacob Lassner for their painstaking and meticulous editing; Professor Michael Morony of the University of California at Los Angeles for undertaking the task of dividing the text into volume portions; and Dr. Susan Mango, formerly of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and her successor, Dr. Martha Chomiak, for their genuine interest in the project and their advocacy of it.

I am grateful to the State University of New York Press for volunteering to undertake the publication of the series; to its Director, Mr. William D. Eastman, for showing himself earnestly committed to the project; and to Professor Said Arjomand, the editor of the Middle Eastern Series of SUNY Press, for bringing the project to the attention of the Board of the Press.

Special thanks are due to Dina Amin, who as Executive Secretary has managed with great care the administrative aspects of the project, and to Mrs. Patsy King of Columbia University's Office of Projects and Grants for her patient handling of the bureaucratic matters pertaining to the project. I trust that the completion of

the project and the publication of the index volume will provide me with a second opportunity to express my gratitude to others who have assisted the project.

E.Y.



General Introduction





Translator's Foreword



This volume contains the first part of the Ṭabarī translation, a biographical sketch, and a discussion of what can be said at present about Ṭabarī's literary output, as well as some remarks on the English translation of the History. Much work remains to be done before all the data are clarified and Ṭabarī's works and his intellectual position in his environment have been fully studied. Although considerable effort has been expended to this end in recent years, it can truly be said that the task has just begun.

It has been deemed advisable that the General Introduction and the translation of Volume I be kept as separate as possible, even if they appear under the same cover. However, continuous pagination has been adopted, and entries for the Bibliography and for the Index have been combined. On the other hand, the numbering of footnotes starts afresh in the Translation. Therefore, in the General Introduction, cross-references to footnotes in the Translation are prefaced by "translation." Inversely, in the Translation, cross-references to footnotes in the General Introduction are marked accordingly. In view of the different character of this volume as compared to the other volumes of this series, the Index should, perhaps, have been considerably modified, but this has been done only to a very small degree, as stated in the note at the head of the Index.

Some of Ṭabarī's works still in manuscript have remained inaccessible to me. I am grateful to the Escorial Library for having provided me with a microfilm of the manuscript of *Tabṣīr* and to

the Beinecke Library of Yale University for making me a copy of the Ṭabarī biography from the Landberg manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir. I have discussed the "praiseworthy position" (below, 71 ff.) with a number of colleagues—foremost among them Josef van Ess to whom I am indebted for essential references. Gerhard Böwering helped me out with a xerox from his copy of the biography of Ṭabarī in Dhahabī's *Nubalā'*. My former student, Dr. Elise Crosby, was instrumental in obtaining for me a copy of the *Ḥadīth al-himyān*. Yale University Library and its former Near East librarian Dr. Jonathan Rodgers have been as helpful to me in connection with this work as the library staff has always been during the past thirty years.

Franz Rosenthal

The Life and Works of al-Ṭabarī

A Remark on the Sources

The information we have on Ṭabarī's life and works is unusually instructive in a number of ways, but it leaves many large gaps in our knowledge. Important questions have to be asked for which no definite answers are available. In writing his biography, it is also necessary, and has been attempted here, to distinguish as clearly as possible between securely known data and what appears to be valid information but in fact remains the result of unverifiable speculation.¹

Ṭabarī shows himself very reluctant to talk about his personal life, at least in the preserved works, which constitute only part of his large literary production. Although it is by no means certain, he may have revealed more about his personal situation in some of his lost writings, for instance, the original *Dhayl al-mudhayyal* in which he discussed his teachers.² He does provide his biographer with the names of numerous scholars with whom he had personal contact. There can be no doubt that the "I was told" and "we were told" at the opening of the chains of transmitters³ have as a rule to be taken literally as indicating direct personal contact or contact within the setting of public lectures and instruction. In most cases, however, it is unfortunately not clear how close such

1. Biographical notices such as the one by R. Paret in the first edition of *EI*, s. v. al-Ṭabarī (see also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 556 f.), contain the elementary data and may serve for quick information.

2. See below, 89 f. For the *Ḥadīth al-himyān*, see below, 98 ff.; whatever one may think about its genuineness, it does not qualify as a "work by" Ṭabarī.

3 See below, 147.

contact may have been. Knowledge of the circle of individuals among whom Ṭabarī moved is invaluable for understanding the events of his life. It has been imperative therefore to try to learn as much as possible about his authorities, colleagues, students, and acquaintances, and to establish their relations with him. Conversely, where it proved impossible to identify an individual, we are left in the dark with respect to potentially important, even crucial, nexuses.

As a scholar convinced of the preeminence of the material with which he dealt, Ṭabarī was not inclined to waste time and space on such mundane matters as when and where he had contact with his authorities. Occasionally, he might very well have indicated such data, for it was the custom to keep notes including the name of a teacher and the time of attendance at his classes. In fact, Ṭabarī did so as a young student; he may have continued the custom later in his life, but for his own information and not for publication.⁴ It must also be assumed that he often referred to someone with whom he undoubtedly had some personal contact; but later, he used the source that was transmitted to him by that individual in its written (published) form and quoted from it while pretending all the time to rely upon oral transmission. This was no doubt the manner in which he handled quotations in *Tafsīr* from earlier Qur'ān commentaries. It also seems very likely that he relied on written (but presumably unpublished) "books" when transmitting information that had been preserved as the heirloom of a particular family such as that of Muhammad b. Sa'd.⁵ In certain cases, the function of Ṭabarī's direct informant seems to have been hardly more than to legitimize the use of a recension of a work in its written form, as in those of Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī as the transmitter of Abū Ma'shar,⁶ or of al-Sarī b. Yaḥyā as a transmitter of Sayf b. 'Umar.⁷ Al-Sarī, it should be noted, transmitted Sayf's historical information to Ṭabarī by written communication; under the circumstances, it is rather doubtful whether there was indeed personal contact between him and Ṭabarī where

4. See *Irshād*, VI, 431, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 51, and below, 21.

5. See below, translation, n. 337.

6. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 292; Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1141 and frequently. It seems uncertain whether Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī is identical with the person listed in Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 44; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, I, 143, as suggested in Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 796.

7. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 311 f.

the formula "he told me/us" is used.⁸

In sum, we are faced with the fact that Ṭabarī's own works, as far as they are preserved, are a very limited source of hard biographical data. They do provide us with many important leads, and they are of the greatest value to us because they reveal his scholarly personality and attitude.

No biographies of any length appear to have been written during Ṭabarī's lifetime, but there were a number of men who had known him personally and who wrote on his life and works.

Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Kāmil (260-350/873[4]-961),⁹ who had a distinguished career as a judge and productive scholar, was on familiar terms with him. He was among those present when Ṭabarī died. An early follower of Ṭabarī's legal school, he seems to have veered away from it later in his life.¹⁰ His monograph became a prime source for Ṭabarī biographers.

While Ibn Kāmil's prominence earned him obituary notices in a number of reference works, another individual who wrote a biography and seems to have been close to Ṭabarī, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, remains obscure. We can place neither him nor his supposed monograph.¹¹

Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ja'far al-Farghānī (282-362/895[6]-972[3]),¹² prepared an edition of Ṭabarī's *History* and wrote a continuation (*Ṣilah*) to it. He had personal contact with Ṭabarī as a student, but it is difficult for us to say how extensive this contact may have been. He devoted a long obituary notice to Ṭabarī in his *Ṣilah*, which served as an important source

8. As, for instance, Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1845, 1848, 1851, etc., as against the use of the verb "to write" in I, 1749, 1921, etc. Written information from a certain 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-'Ijlī is mentioned in Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1311. See also, in particular, the reference to Ziyād b. Ayyūb in I, 3159, below, n. 210. See also below, n. 455, on al-Mas'ūdī's relationship with Ṭabarī.

9. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 523 f. We cannot pinpoint the exact location of Ibn Kāmil's East Baghdad residence on Shāri' 'Abd al-Ṣamad in Suwayqat Abī 'Ubaydallāh (see *TB*, IV, 357, l. 11; Miskawayh, in *Eclipse*, II, 184; Lassner, *Topography*, 78-80). It was probably closer to Ṭabarī's mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash than to his home. Miskawayh, who made very extensive use of *History*, studied the work with Ibn Kāmil. He read some of it to him and received his permission (*ijāzah*) to use the rest, see *Eclipse*, II, 184. Cf. J. Kraemer, *Humanism*, 223.

10. See below, nn. 251 and 301.

11. His work, as that of Ibn Kāmil, is specifically stated by Yāqūt to have been a monograph; see *Irshād*, VI, 462, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 94.

12. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 337, and *History*, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv, n. 7.

of biographical information. Another valuable document from al-Farghānī's hand is an *ijāzah* giving permission to a certain 'Alī b. 'Imrān and (?) a certain Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad to teach a number of Ṭabarī's works which al-Farghānī himself had studied with Ṭabarī. It was originally affixed to a volume of *Tafsīr*, no doubt the one used by the mentioned student(s), and dated from Sha'bān 336/February–March 948.¹³

Another follower of Ṭabarī's legal school inserted much information on Ṭabarī in his historical work that depended on (continued?) Ṭabarī's work. We know not much more about him than his name, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Ḥabīb al-Saqatī al-Ṭabarī. He can be assumed to have lived while Ṭabarī was still alive.¹⁴

Among those who were born during Ṭabarī's lifetime but had no personal contact with him, the Egyptian historian Abū Sa'īd b. Yūnus (281–347/894–958) may be mentioned. It was natural for him to include a notice on Ṭabarī in his work on "Strangers in Egypt," because Ṭabarī had visited Egypt for purposes of study.¹⁵ Others in his generation who wrote biographical works would certainly not have overlooked a man of Ṭabarī's stature. However, as far as our information goes, another biography in monograph form was not written for about three hundred years, at which time the Egyptian scholar al-Qiftī (568–646/1172–1248) compiled a Ṭabarī biography, entitled *al-Taḥrīr fī akhbār Muḥammad b. Jarīr*.¹⁶ Al-Qiftī was a great admirer of Ṭabarī, for he not only wrote this monograph but took the opportunity to list Ṭabarī in other works of his, such as his dictionaries of grammarians and of poets named Muḥammad; neither work, especially the latter, necessarily required mention of Ṭabarī.

None of the early biographies, including al-Qiftī's monographs, has come down to us. We have to rely on excerpts preserved by later scholars. These excerpts give us some idea of the contents of those biographies, and they furnish the most reliable information at our disposal. Among the biographical sources that are

13. The text of the *ijāzah* is quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 426 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44 f. Two recipients of the *ijāzah* seem to be mentioned, but a singular pronoun is used to refer to them.

14. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 24.

15. Ibn Yūnus is referred to in connection with Ṭabarī by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXII, and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 192. For Ibn Yūnus, see *El*², III, 969b, s. v.

16. See Qiftī, *Inbāh*, III, 90, and *Muḥammadūn*, 264.

preserved, the oldest is the *History of Baghdad* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463/1002–71), cited here as *TB*.¹⁷ The Khaṭīb's biographical notice was quoted by practically all later biographers. Since Ṭabarī spent some time in Damascus on his western journey, Ibn 'Asākir (499–571/1105–76) devoted to him a long and informative entry in his *History of Damascus*. He went beyond *TB* and added much information from the old sources.¹⁸ By far the most extensive coverage of Ṭabarī's life and works is the one we owe to the great geographer and biographer Yāqūt. He was a contemporary and long-term associate of al-Qifṭī, whose enthusiasm for Ṭabarī he apparently shared. Yāqūt's article on Ṭabarī in his *Dictionary of learned men and litterateurs*, cited here as *Irshād*, reproduces long excerpts from the old sources. It seems that he quotes them quite literally. The available text is not free from mistakes. In all likelihood, however, they do not affect anything essential.¹⁹

Ṭabarī's fame was such that no biographer in subsequent centuries who touched on Ṭabarī's age and fields of scholarly activity could afford not to mention him. Biographical notices are numerous, if often quite perfunctory. Some provide valuable bits of additional information not found elsewhere, but that is rare.²⁰ As a rule, they do not offer noteworthy biographical data beyond what is found in the works of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Yāqūt. Among the longer notices, reference may be made here, without prejudice, to those in the *Muntaẓam* (VI,

17. See *TB*, II, 162–9.

18. Attention to Ibn 'Asākir's biography of Ṭabarī was first drawn by Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit." In a letter to T. Nöldeke, he mentions that this edition was a difficult task, see Róbert Simon, *Ignác Goldziher*, 197. Goldziher published only the part dealing with Ṭabarī's works. The manuscript he used is now in the Yale University Library, Ms. L-312 (Cat. Nemoy 1182), fols. 109a–117b. On the basis of the same manuscript, the complete text was published in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, LXIX–XCVI, with comparison with and additions from other biographies, in particular, those of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, and al-Maqrizī, *Muqaffā*, also Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, as well as brief passages from al-Dhahabī and al-Nawawī. (Al-Dhahabī's source is now available, see Mu'āfā, *Jalīs*, I, 472, quoted in *TB*, X, 98 f., in the biography of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, see below, n. 464).

19. See *Irshād*, VI, 423–62, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40–94. Rifā'ī offers some suggestions and corrections. For Yāqūt's sources, see Bergsträsser, "Quellen," 201 f. For his biography, see Sellheim, "Neue Materialien," 87–118, and *Materialien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, I, 226–31.

20. See, for instance, below, n. 123.

170–2) of Ibn al-Jawzī (507–97/1126–1200), the *Nubalā'* (XIV, 267–82) of al-Dhahabī (673–748/1274–1348),²¹ and the large *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (III, 120–8) of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (727–71/1327–70). Other works have, of course, been mentioned here wherever indicated.²²

Not surprisingly, the critical evaluation of the available material presents difficult problems. The reports we have are expectedly partial to Ṭabarī. In fact, they can be suspected of an attempt to idealize him. Since Ṭabarī expressed views on nearly every aspect of religion, law, and society, he inevitably made many enemies. They left no biographical notices known to us, and their views are rarely heard.²³ We may question whether the anecdotes told about him actually occurred and whether he did in fact do all the things and make all the remarks attributed to him. Furthermore, there was, and is, the temptation to suppose that a famous person had contact with any other famous person in his time and place. Thus, there is occasionally some doubt as to whether the individuals named in anecdotes, on which we must rely for reconstructing some of the data of Ṭabarī's life, were accurately reported.²⁴ In view of these and other difficulties, the only sound procedure is the one followed here: Unless there is irrefutable proof to the contrary, we must assume that the reports reflect reality, and that idealizing descriptions depict, if not reality, then something equally or more important, namely, the perception of contemporaries. In either case, they provide legitimate material for the biographer, to be used, it is true, with appropriate caution.

His Early Life

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was born in Āmul, the principal capital city of Ṭabaristān, located in the lowlands of the

21. Al-Dhahabī had occasion to come back to Ṭabarī in other works. His *Ta'rikh al-Islām* presumably contained a lengthy obituary notice. It was not available to me.

22. For instance, the biographies in Ibn Khallikān and al-Nawawī were already edited and translated by Hamaker, *Specimen*, 21–32. For Ḥājji Khalīfah and d'Herbelot, see, in particular, below, 138.

23. Some hostile Ḥanbalite information seems to have entered the biographical mainstream; see below, 73 f.

24. The often crucial dates for individuals connected with Ṭabarī are unfortunately not always as certain as we might wish; see below, translation, v f.

region at a distance of about twenty kilometers from the southern shore of the Caspian.²⁵ It was sometime during the winter of A.D. 839, when al-Mu'taṣim ruled as caliph in Baghdad. Ṭabarī himself was not quite sure whether his birth fell near the end of the hijrah year 224 or in the beginning of 225. According to local memory, it coincided with some noteworthy happening, but those whom he asked at some later time in his life were uncertain what that happening had been. Ṭabaristān certainly went through an eventful time at this period of its history, though the political circumstances may not have been responsible for the particular happening by which Ṭabarī's birth was remembered. In the years 224 and 225, the governor of the region, Māziyār b. Qārin, a recent convert to Islam and a member of the Bāwandid dynasty who were still non-Muslims,²⁶ rebelled against control by the Ṭāhirid dynasty of governors and thus against the central authorities of the caliphate. In the course of the rebellion, heavy taxes were placed upon the landowners of Āmul, and the city itself was laid waste. We do not know in which way and to what degree these events affected Ṭabarī's family. It is possible that the attempt to levy new taxes on farms and real estate had a temporary unsettling effect on it. With the victory of the Ṭāhirids, Āmul seems to have entered upon a prosperous phase of its history.

Ṭabarī retained close ties to his hometown throughout his life. At some later date, he wrote an essay detailing his religious principles, and addressed it to the people of Ṭabaristān. He felt that erroneous doctrines, such as those propounded by Mu'tazilites and Khārijites, were spreading there.²⁷ Shī'ah influence also was strong. 'Alids and their supporters achieved political hegemony when the Zaydī dynasty came into power in 250/864. Probably about 290/903, on his second (and, apparently, last) of his recorded visits home, his outspoken defense of the virtues of the first two caliphs against Shī'ah attacks caused him much trouble. Reportedly, he had to leave the region in a great hurry. An old man who had given him timely warning of the danger awaiting him was severely beaten by the authorities; cognizant of his indebtedness

25. See "Āmol" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, I, 980 f.

26. See "Bāwand" in *EI*², I, 1110. On the Ṭāhirids, see, for instance, C.E. Bosworth, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, IV, 90 ff.

27. On *Tabṣīr*, below, 126 f.

to him, Ṭabarī had him brought to Baghdad where he treated him hospitably.²⁸ There may be no special significance to the fact that men from Ṭabaristān were rather numerous in the historian's circle of acquaintances and that *History* pays a good deal of attention to events in Ṭabaristān, but it could be another indication of Ṭabarī's attachment to the land of his birth.

Information on the more remote history of Ṭabarī's family is restricted to the names of his ancestors on his father's side. Yazīd is reasonably well-established as the name of his grandfather. It is mentioned regularly, and it also occurs in Ṭabarī's own works, though rarely and with somewhat doubtful authenticity.²⁹ Beyond Yazīd, the names of Ṭabarī's great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather appear as Kathīr b. Ghālib in one tradition, while another less common one knows only of a great-grandfather named Khālid.³⁰ These are all good Arabic Muslim names and as such contain no hint at ancient non-Muslim roots on his father's side. They would lead into the mid-second/eighth century before Ṭabaristān came, in a way, fully under Muslim control. It is thus not entirely excluded, if far from certain, that Ṭabarī's paternal forebears were Muslim colonists who migrated to Āmul and settled there at some date. Ṭabarī himself discouraged speculation about his ancestry. When he was asked by a certain Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Jumhūr³¹ about his ancestry, he replied by quoting a verse of Ru'bah b. al-'Ajjāj, in which the famous Umayyad poet deprecated pride in one's pedigree.

(My father) al-'Ajjāj has established my reputation,³² so call me

28. See *Irshād*, VI, 456, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 85 f.

29. We can never be sure whether "b. Yazīd" goes back to Ṭabarī's own text or was added in the course of the manuscript transmission. See *Tafsīr*, III, 107, l. 14 (beginning of sūrah 3). The subscription of the ancient manuscript of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, x, refers to Yazīd, but the text later on [p. 242] does not have it. It is, however, frequent in Kern's edition of *Ikhtilāf*.

30. Thus Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, l. 9. His source was al-Mu'āfā, who might have had reliable information; still, the majority opinion seems to be correct. See also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 191.

31. He cannot be further identified. He appears to have been a follower of Ṭabarī's school. His name is given only in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIII f., who indicates that his information goes back to al-Mu'āfā.

32. Cf. Qur. 94:4. Ru'bah's *Dīwān* does not have "my." A reading *dhikrā*, and not *dhikrī*, has nothing to recommend itself.

by my name (alone)! When long pedigrees are given
(for others), it suffices me.³³

Perhaps, Ṭabarī wished to express disdain for the view that merit was based upon ancestry rather than individual accomplishment (even if Ru'bah's verse is not a good example for it). This was a topic hotly debated in Islam at all times. On the other hand, it could merely mean that Ṭabarī did not have memorable ancestors whom he knew about or cared for.

A strange family relationship was claimed for Ṭabarī on the basis of a couple of verses ascribed to the well-known poet Abū Bakr (Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās) al-Khuwārizmī, whose death is placed about 383/993 or a decade later.³⁴ The verses speak about the poet's relationship to the "Jarīr family (*banū Jarīr*)." He states that he was born in Āmul and boasts that the Banū Jarīr were 'Alid extremists (*rāfiḍī*) through the female lineage (*'an kalālah*), while he himself was a *rāfiḍī* by paternal inheritance.³⁵ The relationship was supposed to be as close as that of nephew and uncle (?), which would be chronologically impossible. The little we know about Ṭabarī's family does not support such a relationship or the existence of an extended "Jarīr family." As suggested by Yāqūt, the connection of the verses with the historian may have been the work of hostile Ḥanbalites who wished to brand him as a Shī'ite. But we also hear from a Shī'ite source that the other Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, whose grandfather's name was Rustam and who was the likely author of *al-Mustarshid* (see below, 118 f.), applied the verses to himself, with the difference that he claimed maternal relationship while someone else claimed paternal lineage for their Shī'ah loyalties.³⁶ At any rate, the story can be safely disregarded as absurd and unhistorical, as far as Ṭabarī is concerned.

His father, Jarīr, was a man of property, although he was not

33. See Ru'bah, *Diwān*, 160, no. 57, ll. 8 f., translation, 215; Ibn 'Asākir (above, n. 31); *Irshād*, VI, 428, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 47.

34. See Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 635 f. Abū Bakr al-Khuwārizmī was also called al-Ṭabarkhazī, because his father came from Khuwārizm and his mother from Ṭabaristān; see Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 37 f.; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 400; and Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, III, 191. See further *EP*², IV, 1069, s.v. al-Kh^wārazmī.

35. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, 68. Yāqūt rejects the story as malicious Ḥanbalite slander picked up by the Shī'ah poet, but it appears to have been accepted by scholars such as Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 192, and Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 284, III, 192.

36. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, I, 301.

rich. As long as he lived, he provided his son with an income, and Ṭabarī inherited (his share of) the estate after his father's death, the date of which is not known to us. According to an anecdote placed in the time of the wazirate of Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh b. Khāqān, who became wazīr in 299/912, even at that late period of Ṭabarī's life, the pilgrim caravan brought the proceeds from his lands (*day'ah*) in Ṭabaristān to Baghdad—as usual, it seems, in the form of merchandise rather than cash. It was Ṭabarī's custom to use the occasion to make gifts to friends and acquaintances to whom he was obligated. This time, he selected³⁷ a sable estimated to be worth fifty dīnārs, wrapped it up in a large parcel, and had it conveyed to the wazīr, who was surprised when the parcel was opened in his presence and he saw the valuable gift. He accepted it, but he indicated that he did not want Ṭabarī to give any more such presents to him in the future. On his part, Ṭabarī had intended the precious fur as a countergift for one the wazīr had offered him, and it was to serve as a hint that as a matter of principle, he felt he could not accept any large gifts from the wazīr or anybody else.³⁸

The modest degree of financial independence which Ṭabarī enjoyed throughout his life enabled him as a student to travel, and it gave him some freedom to follow his scholarly and moral ideals when he was an established scholar and other potential sources of income were readily at his disposal. Living and traveling at rather large distances from his source of income, it could happen that his father's stipend did not reach him on time, and he experienced some temporary inconvenience. Once, he was forced to sell some of his garments, such as the long sleeves characteristic of the scholar's robe.³⁹ In Egypt, he and his friends even had to go

37. Yāqūt is not very clear as to whether Ṭabarī bought the fur from the proceeds or whether it was part of the merchandise he had received. There is good reason to assume the latter. It could conceivably suggest that the total value of the merchandise was substantial.

38. See *Irshād*, VI, 457 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 88 f. The informants here, Abū al-Tayyib al-Qāsim b. Ahmad b. al-Shā'ir and Sulaymān b. al-Khāqānī (if these are the correct forms of their names), cannot be identified. Ṭabarī's attitude toward gifts will come up repeatedly here, as it is a recurrent motif in his biography. The exchange of gifts played an important role in Muslim society and found much attention among jurists (see, for instance *EL*², III, 342-40, s. v. *hiba*). For Ṭabarī's views on the acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims—a subject that had major political implications—one may compare his discussion in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, 207-21.

39. See below, n. 69. Ibn Abi Ḥātim, *Taqdimah*, 363 f., reports a similar experi-

hungry until a local dignitary miraculously came to their rescue and sent them a large amount of money.⁴⁰

At a young age, Ṭabarī displayed his precociousness, which was remarkable even in a world where precociousness was not unusual and was carefully nurtured by parents and teachers. As an old man probably in his seventies, he recalled that he knew the Qur'ān by heart when he was seven, served as prayer leader when he was eight, and studied (lit., "wrote down") traditions of the Prophet when he was nine. This remark may sound a little boastful, but there is no reason to doubt it. The words appear to be those actually used when he wanted to convince the father of a nine-year-old boy, the young son of his future biographer Ibn Kāmil, that it was not too early for Ibn Kāmil to have the boy study with him and that he should not use the boy's tender years and lack of preparation (*qillat al-adab*) as an excuse for not doing so. In order to stress his point, he told Ibn Kāmil of a dream which his own father had once had about his young son. "My father," Ṭabarī reminisced, "had a dream concerning me. He saw me standing before the Prophet with a bag filled with stones, and I was spreading some of them in front of him. A dream interpreter told my father that the dream signified that I would be a good Muslim as an adult and a strong defender of the religious law of the Prophet. As a consequence, my father was ready to support my studies ('my quest of knowledge' *ṭalab al-'ilm*) when I was still a small boy."⁴¹

Whether it was an actual dream or a literary fiction does not really matter. Dreams commonly served as a means to express basic convictions. In this case, the dream mirrored the desire of Ṭabarī's father to further his son's education, although he himself most likely had no specialized scholarly training. He encouraged him to leave home "in quest of knowledge," when he reached puberty (*tara'ra'a*). We are told reliably that young Ṭabarī left home

ence of his father.

40. See below, n. 109. It was, of course, nothing rare for students and many other young men to live on paternal bounty. Thus, Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, II, 179, tells about a Khurāsānian who every year received his annual allowance through the pilgrim caravan. Unable, or unwilling, to stretch it to last the entire year, he compiled debts to be paid off when next year's caravan arrived, only to get into a very tight situation when the caravan did not bring anything for him one year because his father had been seriously ill.

41. See *Irshād*, 429 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 49. On Ṭabarī's good-humored banter with the boy's names on this occasion, see below, n. 163.

in 236/850-1, when he was only twelve.⁴² It often was a wrenching decision, especially for a mother, to send a child off to college, for this is what "traveling in quest of knowledge" really meant in cases of young boys such as Ṭabarī. The situation was aggravated by the fact that there were no organized "colleges" in his day (as there were in later centuries) which could have provided institutional support. Providing for proper living arrangements for the youngsters was left to individuals, family connections, or, preferably, teachers. We know nothing about Ṭabarī's mother, not even if she was still alive when he left home. If she was, she might have felt like the mother of Ibn Bashshār, one of Ṭabarī's influential teachers, when her son was faced with the decision of going away to study. She did not want him to leave, and he heeded his mother's advice and stayed, at least for the time being. Later, he felt that it was on account of this act of filial piety that he was blessed with a successful career.⁴³

Young Ṭabarī left to receive his further schooling in the nearest metropolis, al-Rayy, on the site of present-day Teheran. The teachers in Āmul whom his father had engaged for him naturally did not measure up in prestige to those in al-Rayy. It was there that, during a stay of apparently close to five years, Ṭabarī received the intellectual formation that made him the scholar he was to become. There is no record of his having visited other scholarly centers before leaving for Baghdad, where he arrived "shortly after the death of Ibn Ḥanbal" in the latter half of 241, that is, late in 855 or early in the following year.⁴⁴ "Traveling in quest of knowledge" could mean brief visits to famous authorities. Frequently, however, and no doubt in the case of very young students such as Ṭabarī, it entailed an extended stay and the systematic attendance at regular courses rather than occasional lectures. A teacher would quiz his students in the evening on the material they had taken down during the day. When the students happened to take a course with a teacher who lived outside the city limits, they had to run back "like mad (*ka-al-majānīn*)" in order to be on time for

42. The source for the precise date is Maslamah b. al-Qāsim, as quoted by Ibn Ḥajar. See below, n. 123.

43. See *TB*, II, 102, ll. 3 f.

44. See *Irshād*, 430, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 50.

another class.⁴⁵

Most prominent among his teachers in al-Rayy was Ibn Ḥumayd. Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd al-Rāzi⁴⁶ was in his seventies at the time, and he died a decade later, in 248/862. He became one of Ṭabarī's most frequently cited authorities. Ibn Ḥumayd had lectured in Baghdad and had been welcomed there by Ibn Ḥanbal, who is even said to have transmitted traditions on his authority. If it is correct that Ibn Ḥanbal's son 'Abdallāh (213-90/828[9]-903)⁴⁷ had studied with him, his stay in Baghdad cannot have been very much in the past, unless, of course, 'Abdallāh was a small child when he attended his lectures, which is quite possible. In Ṭabarī's time, Ibn Ḥumayd had apparently retired to his native city. We have no information that he returned to Baghdad during his remaining years, in which case Ṭabarī could have continued his studies with him there. Thus, the material he quoted on Ibn Ḥumayd's authority was acquired by him in al-Rayy. No doubt he filled his notebooks with it for future reference, but he can also be assumed to have checked it all against the books upon which Ibn Ḥumayd had based his teaching, and supplemented it from them.

Another teacher from Ṭabarī's days in al-Rayy was al-Muthannā b. Ibrāhīm, whose *nisbah* was al-Āmulī (rather than al-Ubullī as found in *Irshād*).⁴⁸ Practically nothing more is known about him, but he also served as an important source of information for Ṭabarī's writings. Another, even less-known teacher of Ṭabarī was a certain Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dawlābī. His main claim to distinction was that he had been a student of the reputable Sufyān (b. 'Uyaynah).⁴⁹ It must be said that our lack of knowledge about these men does not mean that their standing in the world of contemporary scholarship was low in any respect.

It is significant that the instruction which Ṭabarī received from Ibn Ḥumayd in al-Rayy extended to the historical works of Ibn

45. See *Irshād*, 430, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 49 f.

46. For Ibn Ḥumayd, see below, translation, n. 26. *Irshād*, VI, 424, l. 2. ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 41, l. 2, had Aḥmad for Muḥammad by mistake (misprint?).

47. See below, 70. For Ibn Ḥumayd's connection with Ibn Ḥanbal and the latter's son 'Abdallāh, see *TB*, II, 259, ll. 4 f., 12, and 260, ll. 4 f.

48. See below, translation, n. 179.

49. See *History*, below, I, 1806; *Tafsīr*, VI, 3, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 4:148), XI, 94, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 10:64), XVIII, 60, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 24:5).

Ishāq, famous above all as the author of the life of Muḥammad (*al-Sīrah*). He thus learned about pre-Islamic and early Islamic history. Knowledge of it was needed by religious scholars in general. In Ṭabarī's case, more importantly, it would seem that in the process, the seeds were planted for his wider interest in history which later culminated in the writing of his great *History*. According to Yāqūt, Ibn Kāmil is supposed to have reported that it was under the guidance of the just-mentioned Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dawlābī on the authority of Salamah⁵⁰ that Ṭabarī studied Ibn Ishāq's *Mubtada'* and *Maghāzī* and thus laid the groundwork for *History*.⁵¹ However, in *History* itself, the *isnād* is always Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq. The reference to Ibn Ḥammād in this connection is no doubt a mistake, which, however, could hardly have occurred in Ibn Kāmil's original text but must have crept in during the course of transmission.⁵² Ṭabarī later on continued his study of Ibn Ishāq. In al-Kūfah, both Hannād b. al-Sarī and Abū Kurayb transmitted to him information from Ibn Ishāq according to another recension, that of Yūnus b Bukayr (d. 199/814[5]).⁵³ At that time, Ṭabarī probably did not receive instruction in special courses devoted entirely to Ibn Ishāq. It was rather through incidental reference that he learned more about him there.

Ibn Ḥumayd's status as an authorized transmitter of Ibn Ishāq's *Maghāzī* through Salamah was attacked by an otherwise unknown 'Alī b. Mihrān. Ibn Mihrān claimed plagiarism on the part of Ibn Ḥumayd. According to him, Ibn Ḥumayd did not receive the material directly from Salamah but through him. Therefore, he contended, a certain Ishāq b. Mansūr (possibly the bearer of the name who died in 251/865?), who had studied with Ibn Ḥumayd just like Ṭabarī, was right when he classified Ibn Ḥumayd as

50. For Salamah b. al-Faḍl, judge of al-Rayy, see below, translation, n. 49.

51. See *Irshād*, VI, 430, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 50.

52. It is possible that both Ibn Ḥammād and Ibn Ḥumayd (who also taught Qur'ān commentary) lectured on the same material from Salamah from Ibn Ishāq in al-Rayy at the same time, but it does not seem very likely.

53. For Hannād (below, translation, n. 71), see *History*, I, 970, and for Abū Kurayb (below, translation, n. 77), see *History*, II, 311, III, 52. For Ibn Bukayr's recension, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 289, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 434 f., where Hannād and Abū Kurayb are listed among Ibn Bukayr's transmitters.

a "liar."⁵⁴ Quarrels of this kind were not uncommon, but even if there was some truth to the accusation directed against Ibn Ḥumayd, it would in no way reflect upon Ibn Ḥumayd's decisive role in Ṭabarī's development as a scholar.

A continuation of his studies in the center of the Muslim world, the capital city of Baghdad, was a natural choice for Ṭabarī, who by then was not yet seventeen years old. Baghdad not only counted many of the greatest representatives of Muslim scholarship among its residents, but scholars as well as litterateurs also came to lecture there for longer or shorter periods. Many stopped over on their way to or, more commonly, from the pilgrimage to Mecca, offering students the opportunity to add to their store of knowledge. In fact, if we can believe the *Story of the Belt* (below, p. 99), Ṭabarī himself went on the pilgrimage in 240/855, possibly before his first arrival in Baghdad (and not in the time between his arrival in Baghdad and his study trip to southern Iraq). The date of Ṭabarī's arrival in Baghdad is fixed by the statement that what attracted him to Baghdad was the expectation to study with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (164-241/780-855), but Ibn Ḥanbal died shortly before his arrival.⁵⁵ It cannot be entirely ruled out that this report was invented to defuse later Ḥanbalite animosity against Ṭabarī. There is, however, nothing inherently impossible in it, even though Ibn Ḥanbal was no longer fully active at the time. Ibn Ḥumayd might very well have suggested to his bright young student that it was advisable for him to profit from contact with the great traditionist, no matter how slight such contact would be.

Rather soon,⁵⁶ Ṭabarī left Baghdad in order to continue his study and research in the great towns south of Baghdad, al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah, including Wāsiṭ on the way. A number of famous authorities, mostly men already at least in their seventies, lived and taught there. It would have been possible for Ṭabarī to make repeated trips while spending some time in between in Baghdad, but a student was hardly likely to do this; thus, it can be confidently

54. See *TB*, II, 262 f.

55. See above, n. 44.

56. The assumption of Hūfī, 35, that Ṭabarī left Baghdad right away seems unlikely. *Irshād*, VI, 430, ll. 19 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 50, states that he began to study in Baghdad and then left for al-Baṣrah. His tutorship, which has been assigned by me to a later date (see below, 21 f.), could conceivably fall into this time, but this would seem improbable.

assumed he undertook just one extended journey. The date when it started can be established with reasonable accuracy. Some of the authorities with whom he studied, such as the Baṣrans Ḥumayd b. Mas'adah, who is often quoted in *Tafsīr*, and Bishr b. Mu'adh al-'Aqadī,⁵⁷ died at the latest in 245/859-60; but one of the Kūfan scholars, Hannād b. al-Sarī, who also provided him with much information for *Tafsīr*, is said to have died already in 243/857 as a man in his nineties.⁵⁸ Assuming that this date is correct, Ṭabarī's first stay in Baghdad lasted hardly more than a year, and he had gone south already in 242/856-7.

Scholars in al-Baṣrah whom Ṭabarī met during his visit there included men quoted again and again in his works. Among them were Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Ṣan'anī (d. 245/859[60]),⁵⁹ Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Ḥarashī (d. 248/862),⁶⁰ and Abū al-Ash'ath Aḥmad b. al-Miqdām (d. 253/867).⁶¹ Others, such as Abū al-Jawzā' Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān (d. 246/860), are cited less frequently.⁶²

In al-Kūfah, he encountered, among others, Ismā'il b. Mūsā al-Fazārī (d. 245/859), whom Ṭabarī considered to be a grandson of al-Suddī,⁶³ and Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥammād al-Ṭalḥī (d. 252/866), an expert in Qur'ān reading who showed himself willing to test Ṭabarī's knowledge and qualifications in the field.⁶⁴

The two men from whom he profited most in those years were Muḥammad b. Bashshār, known as Bundār (167-252/783[4]-866),⁶⁵ in al-Baṣrah, and Abū Kurayb Muḥammad b. al-'Alā' (d. in his

57. For Ḥumayd b. Mas'adah, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 49. He is often quoted in *Tafsīr* as well as *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 429. For Bishr, see below, translation, n. 196.

58. See above, n. 53.

59. See below, translation, n. 101.

60. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 482, no. 778.

61. See below, translation, n. 970.

62. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV 206 f. He is mentioned in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1051, and *History*, I, 1147.

63. For al-Fazārī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 335 f. His relationship to al-Suddī (below, translation, n. 276) was disputed.

64. For Sulaymān al-Ṭalḥī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 206 f.; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Ghāyah*, II, 107, and I, 314, ll. 13 f. ('*araḍa 'alayh al-imām Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī*). Ibn al-Jazārī, like al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā* (Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, XCVII), depends on al-Dānī. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 285, l. 5, and Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, also mention that Ṭabarī studied Qur'ān reading with him. It is not certain that he met him in al-Kūfah. Al-Ṭalḥī is mentioned in *Tafsīr*, XVI, 61, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 19:31).

65. See below, translation, n. 44.

eighties in 247 or 248/861-2)⁶⁶ in al-Kūfah. As appears from the innumerable times that they are cited as transmitters, both Ibn Bashshār and Abū Kurayb exercised a great influence on him. Abū Kurayb was a difficult person, but Ṭabarī did not fail to mollify him from the start of their acquaintance by his extraordinary ability. When he came to his house together with other *ḥadīth* students clamoring for admission, he found the great scholar looking out of a window and asking for those who could recite from memory the traditions they had written down on his dictation. The assembled students looked at each other and then pointed to Ṭabarī as the one who would be able to do that. Abū Kurayb examined him and found him able to recite every tradition he was asked, with the exact day on which Abū Kurayb had taught it.⁶⁷

Ṭabarī probably spent less than two years traveling in southern Iraq and may have returned to Baghdad about 244/858-9. It was not until eight years later that he undertook his next major research trip that took him to Syria and Egypt. During that interval between journeys, we should possibly date his first attested gainful employment. He accepted a position as tutor to a son of the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān.⁶⁸ The boy was called Abū Yaḥyā. As the story suggests, he probably was the wazīr's son by a slave girl. Since Ibn Khāqān was out of office and in exile between 248 and 253, Ṭabarī would have held his tutorial position sometime between 244/858-9 and 248/962. The report we have is introduced by the words "when Ṭabarī entered Baghdad" and could refer to his first arrival in the capital. However, a rather high salary is involved, which seems more than could have been commanded by a very young and unknown student such as Ṭabarī was when he first came to Baghdad. Moreover, the story shows Ṭabarī already firmly committed to legal ethics, which is hardly in keeping with someone seventeen years of age. Ṭabarī, we are told, had merchandise to provide for his living expenses (sent, no doubt, by his father). It was stolen, and he was in dire straits,

66. See below, translation, n. 77.

67. See *Irshād*, VI, 431, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 51. "Difficult person" renders *sharis al-khuluq*. This characterization, which fitted other scholars as well, is also used for the grammarian Tha'lab (*Irshād*, VI, 438, l. 7, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60).

68. See *IF*², III, 824a, s. v. Ibn Khākān (2). The future wazīr was a student of Ibn Ḥanbal; see Ibn Abi Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 204. On another son, the wazīr al-Khāqānī, see below, n. 129.

so much so that he had to sell part of his clothing.⁶⁹ A friend of his knew that the wazīr was looking for a tutor for his son, and the friend asked Ṭabarī whether he was willing to accept the position if it was offered to him. Ṭabarī agreed, no doubt eagerly. The friend was able to arrange matters. After first providing him with the proper clothes, he introduced him to the wazīr. Ibn Khāqān gained a good impression of him. He offered him the position and agreed to pay ten dīnārs per month. In addition, he had a contract drawn up specifying the time Ṭabarī⁷⁰ was allowed to devote to study, prayer, eating, and resting, and even gave him upon his request a one-month advance. A well-equipped classroom (*hujrat al-ta'dīb*) for the boy was assigned to Ṭabarī. He instructed him in writing, and his pupil appears to have quickly learned how to write. The writing tablet that demonstrated the boy's newly acquired skill was taken by servants to his mother and the other slave girls who had borne children to their master (*ummaḥāt al-walad*) as proof of the good news. The overjoyed ladies filled a tray with dirhams and dīnārs and sent it with the servants back to Ṭabarī. He, however, refused to accept the money. He had, he said, a contract with the wazīr to be paid a certain sum and was not entitled to any further compensation. The matter was submitted to the wazīr who summoned him and told him that he was wrong to reject the well-meant gift of the women and had offended them by not accepting it. Ṭabarī argued that the women were slaves and legally owned no property of their own. He obviously implied that it was really the wazīr who was the source of the money and who therefore was paying more than had been agreed upon in the contract. Ṭabarī learned a lesson from this occurrence. Later on, when friends would bring him a gift of food, it was his established custom (*sunnah*) to accept it as being, in contrast to money, merely a token gift; but, prompted by his socially proper attitude (*mu-ruwwah*), he would make an appropriate return gift. This taught

69. The manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir has *k-s-y qamiṣ-h*, which was emended to *kummay...* "the long sleeves of his shirt" in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, LXXV. The correction is confirmed by Dhahabī's quotation in *Nubalā'*, XIV, 271 f. In a brief statement reported by Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 125, Ṭabarī is quoted by al-Farghānī as having said, "My father's allowance for my living expenses did not arrive on time, so that I was forced to cut off the sleeves of my shirt and sell them." Al-Subkī no doubt refers to the same event.

70. The Arabic pronoun clearly refers to Ṭabarī, and not to his young pupil.

his friends that it would be inadvisable to press gifts on him.⁷¹

Being in his late twenties, Ṭabarī was an acknowledged scholar—a “recent Ph.D.” in our parlance—when he left Baghdad for further study in the West, that is, in the countries located to the west of Iraq. His goal was Egypt, but his journey included visits to Syria and Palestine both on the way to Egypt and on a sidetrip from Egypt before his eventual return to Baghdad. Beirut was an especially important stop because it gave him the opportunity to study with al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd b. Mazyad al-‘Udhri al-Bayrūtī (ca. 169–270/785[6]–883[4]).⁷² Al-‘Abbās instructed him in the variant readings (*ḥurūf*) of the Qur’ān according to the Syrian school. Moreover, he was instrumental in conveying to him through his father al-Walīd the legal views of al-Awzā‘ī, Syria’s most prominent jurist who had died in Beirut about a century earlier.⁷³

Ṭabarī’s precise itinerary in Syria and Palestine is not known to us. Some of the places he visited can be deduced from the names of the authorities cited in his works. The scholars named Ḥimṣī, Ramlī, or ‘Asqalānī could, of course, have been in Iraq or in Egypt when Ṭabarī studied with them. However, even if it is not expressly attested that a given scholar resided in his native town at

71. See Ibn ‘Asākir, LXXV f., and Dhahabī, *Nubalā’* (above, n. 69).

72. See Ibn ‘Asākir, LXIX and LXXII; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 355, II, 107; al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā* (Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, XCVI). For al-‘Abbās and his father (who was also always the source of his traditions in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, index, 1061), see below, translation, n. 98. Al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd’s authority is said to be Khallād b. Khālīd (d. 220/835; see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 274 f.). Ṭabarī, according to *Irshād*, VI, 427, ll. 9–12, ed. Rifā‘ī, XVIII, 45, taught Qur’ān reading—which he supposedly did rarely, and only to selected individuals—according to the tradition of ‘Abd al-Ḥamid b. Bakkār al-Kalā‘ī. ‘Abd al-Ḥamid was also a teacher of Qur’ān readings (*ḥurūf*) to al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd; see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, VI, 109; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, 355, 360. No contradiction is involved here, inasmuch as al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd transmitted material from both authorities to Ṭabarī.

In his second passage, Ibn ‘Asākir quotes a work entitled *Talkhiṣ qirā’at al-Sha’miyyīn* by a certain Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣbahānī. Regrettably, the quotation is out of context: “Abū Ja’far, that is, Muḥammad b. Jarir al-Ṭabarī, stayed in Beirut several days, spending seven nights in the main mosque until he finished the Qur’ān according to this (!) transmission, reciting it to al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd. Then, after the reading, he listened to the Book being read by al-‘Abbās. He informed him that he had thus read the Qur’ān to ‘Abd al-Ḥamid b. Bakkār twice, and so on.”

73. For al-Awzā‘ī, see below, translation, n. 95. The *isnād* “al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd—his father—al-Awzā‘ī” occurs, for instance, in *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, 20, l. 4, etc., ed. Schacht, 148.

about the time Ṭabarī visited there, there are additional indications for their places of residence, such as, for instance, their permanent close ties to a given town, their having been visited there by contemporary students such as Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (ca. 240–327/854[5]–939) and his father Abū Ḥātim (195–277/810[1]–90[1]), their interconnections with other scholars of the region, their failure to be listed in *TB*, and the like.⁷⁴

Ḥimṣ (Ḥoms, Emesa) was famous for its special tradition of *ḥadīth* transmission. Among the Ḥimṣīs who were Ṭabarī's authorities, mention may be made of 'Imrān b. Bakkār al-Kalā'ī,⁷⁵ Abū al-Jamāhir Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān,⁷⁶ a certain Abū Shuraḥbil,⁷⁷ Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Ma'dikarib al-Ru'aynī,⁷⁸ Muḥammad b. Ḥaḥṣ al-Waṣṣābī,⁷⁹ Sa'id b. 'Uthmān al-Tanūkhī,⁸⁰ and the outstanding representative of the Syrian *ḥadīth* school at the time, Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Tā'ī.⁸¹ Another Ḥimṣī, Sa'id b.

74. Another father-and-son team traveling in quest of knowledge among Ṭabarī's contemporaries was Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd (see below, n. 229) and his father Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath, see *TB*, IX, 464.

In connection with these pages, it is particularly regrettable that most of Ibn 'Asākir's *History of Damascus* was unavailable to me.

75. Imrān b. Bakkār died in 270/883–4; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 124. His family had old roots in Ḥimṣ. Ṭabarī refers to him frequently, for instance, *History*, I, 210; *Dhayl*, III, 2425, ed. Cairo, XI, 591; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1066, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 435 f.; *Tafsīr*, II, 353, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 2:238), V, 163 f. (*ad Qur.* 4:11), on *ṣalāt al-khawf*, etc. In *Aghānī*, VIII, 161 (= *Agh.* 3, IX, 273), Ṭabarī is quoted as reporting an Umayyad family tradition through him.

76. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, III, 2, 327, where Ibn Abī Ḥātim says that he studied with him in Ḥimṣ; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1054; *Tafsīr*, XIV, 15, l. 28 (*ad Qur.* 15:22). His authority in the *Tafsīr* passage, Abū Rawḥ 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Mūsā, was also a Ḥimṣī. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī studied with Abū Rawḥ in Salamyah, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 2, 397.

77. See *History*, I, 1140; *Tafsīr*, XIV, 32, l. 11 (*ad Qur.* 15:75), XXI, 56, l. 27 (*ad Qur.* 31:34); *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 432.

78. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 217; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 1, 140 f.: "he died before I came to Ḥimṣ." In *Tafsīr*, XX, 53, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 28:48), his authority is another Ḥimṣī, al-Baqīyyah b. al-Walid.

79. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, III, 2, 237. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1071; *Tafsīr*, XXVII, 108, ll. 29 f. (*ad Qur.* 56:37).

80. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 1, 47. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index 1058, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 431; *Tafsīr*, XVI, 80, l. 7 (*ad Qur.* 19:65); *Dhayl*, III, 2501, 2512, ed. Cairo, XI, 646, 655.

81. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Ḥimṣī died in 272–3/885–6; see below, translation, n. 56; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, IV, 1, 52 f.; Laoust, in *Mélanges Massignon*, III, 13. He appears also, for instance, in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1074, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 440 f.; *Tafsīr*, VI, 184, l. 4 (*ad Qur.* 5:54), XXIII, 17, l. 17 (*ad*

'Amr al-Sakūnī,⁸² is almost always cited by Ṭabarī together with the Ḥimṣī Baqiyyah b. al-Walid⁸³ as his authority; it is most likely that Ṭabarī's contact with him took place somewhere in Syria or Palestine, if not directly in Ḥimṣ. The same applies to Abū 'Utbah Aḥmad b. al-Faraj, although he is known to have been a frequent visitor to Baghdad.⁸⁴

Ramlīs, from al-Ramlah in Palestine and presumably visited there by Ṭabarī, included Mūsā b. Sahl,⁸⁵ 'Alī b. Sahl,⁸⁶ 'Īsā b. 'Uthmān b. 'Īsā,⁸⁷ Ismā'il b. Isrā'il al-Sallāl,⁸⁸ al-Ḥasan b. Bilāl (who had moved from al-Baṣrah to take up residence in al-Ramlah),⁸⁹ and 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Yaḥyā.⁹⁰ Ayyūb b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm lived and

Qur. 36:65), XXVII, 130, ll. 7 f. (*ad Qur.* 57:14); *Dhayl* III, 2397, 2414, 2422 f., ed. Cairo, XI, 569, 582, 588 f.

82. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 67 f. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 431; *Tafsīr*, III, 104, l. 31 (*ad Qur.* 2:286), etc.; *Dhayl*, III, 2391. ed. Cairo, XI, 565. 83. For Baqiyyah [115-97[8]/733-813], see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 473-8.

84. Ahmad b. al-Faraj died in Ḥimṣ in 271/884-5; see *TB*, IV, 339-41; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 67-9. See, for instance, *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1051, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 424; *Tafsīr*, IX, 80, l. 29 (*ad Qur.* 7:172), X, 15, l. 1 (*ad Qur.* 8:50), XV, 98, l. 26 (*ad Qur.* 17:79, on *maqāman maḥmūdān*), XXII, 23, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 35:36 f.), XXVII, 4, l. 16 (*ad Qur.* 51:41).

85. See below, translation, n. 232; Ibn Abī Hātim, IV, 1, 146. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1076; *Tafsīr*, V, 120, l. 9 (*ad Qur.* 4:86), XIII, 114, l. 30 (*ad Qur.* 13:39), XVI, 142, l. 22 (*ad Qur.* 20:73); *Ṣariḥ*, 195 f.

86. See below, translation, n. 45. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1064, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 434; *Tafsīr*, XVI, 29, ll. 22 f. (*ad Qur.* 18:107), XVIII, 54, l. 13 (*ad Qur.* 24:2), XXVII, 142, l. 2 (*ad Qur.* 57:28); *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, 146; *Ṣariḥ*, 198; *Dhayl*, III, 2369, 2490, 2492, ed. Cairo, XI, 549, 638 f. Although he was a Ramlī and transmitted from Ramlīs, it is not certain that Ṭabarī met him in his hometown.

87. According to Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 220, 'Īsā b. 'Uthmān died in 251/865. The date, if correct (which may not be the case), would mean that Ṭabarī could not have met him in al-Ramlah but presumably met him earlier in Baghdad. 'Īsā b. 'Uthmān's chief authority, his uncle Yaḥyā b. 'Īsā (d. 201/816[7]), was a well-known Ramlī. See, for instance, *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1066, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 436; *Tafsīr*, II, 84, l. 31 (*ad Qur.* 2:184), VI, 87, l. 15 (*ad Qur.* 5:6), VII, 168, l. 11 (*ad Qur.* 6:82), VIII, 71, l. 17 (*ad Qur.* 6:158), X, 51, l. 4 (*ad Qur.* 9:3), XIV, 42, l. 25 (*ad Qur.* 15:90 f.), XVII, 80, l. 33, 82, l. 7 (*ad Qur.* 21:105), XIX, 26, l. 28 (*ad Qur.* 25:68), XX, 51, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 28:46), XXI, 43, l. 23 (*ad Qur.* 31:12), XXVII, 50, l. 28 (*ad Qur.* 54:1).

88. See Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 158. Ibn Abī Hātim has al-Sallāl, whereas *Tafsīr* has al-La'al (?); see VII, 63, l. 6 (*ad Qur.* 5:105), XXVII, 78, l. 33 (*ad Qur.* 55:29). A Muḥammad b. Ismā'il b. Isrā'il al-Dallāl occurs *Tafsīr*, V, 144, ll. 25 f. (*ad Qur.* 4:97). Read Abū Muḥammad Ismā'il... (?).

89. See below, translation, n. 601.

90. See *Tafsīr*, IV, 8, l. 16 (*ad Qur.* 3:96), XIII, 65, l. 7, 68, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 13:4), XVIII, 3, l. 18 (*ad Qur.* 23:1 f.), XX, 24, l. 5 (*ad Qur.* 28:10). His authority was Ḍamrah b.

taught in Baghdad and Egypt in addition to al-Ramlah, and he died in Baghdad in the 250s or 260s (ca. 865–82); thus, we cannot be quite sure where Ṭabarī studied with him.⁹¹

‘Asqalānīs are represented by Muḥammad b. Khalaf,⁹² ‘Ubayd b. Ādam b. Abī Iyās,⁹³ and ‘Iṣām b. Rawwād b. al-Jarrāh.⁹⁴ It may have been in Jerusalem that Ṭabarī met ‘Ubaydallāh b. Muḥammad al-Firyābī.⁹⁵ Ibrāhīm b. Ya‘qūb al-Jūzajānī died between 256/870 and 259/872–3 in Syria, probably in Damascus, and Ṭabarī may have studied with him there a few years earlier. He is described as the leader of the anti-‘Alid faction in Syria. In the course of time, he was mistakenly identified as a follower of Ṭabarī’s legal school, as his *nisbah* Ḥarīzī was misread Jarīrī; this error caused later Muslim historians to exercise their critical acumen.⁹⁶

The individuals mentioned, numerous as they are, do not exhaust the list of those who were Ṭabarī’s informants during his stay in Syria and Palestine. In many cases, we know quite little about them, but they all enjoyed great esteem as scholars in their time. Their number is a good illustration of the intensity with which scholars such as Ṭabarī (but, of course, not only he)

Rabī‘ah al-Filastīnī al-Ramlī (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 460).

91. See *TB*, VII, 9 f. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, index, 1052, *Musnad ‘Alī*, index, 426; *Tafsīr*, X, 128, l. 11 (*ad Qur.* 9:74).

92. See below, translation, n. 621; Ibn Abī Hātim, III, 2, 245. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, index, 1071, *Musnad ‘Alī*, index, 439; *Tafsīr*, V, 80, l. 23 (*ad Qur.* 4:48) and elsewhere; *Dhayl*, III, 2379, 2414, 2515, ed. Cairo, XI, 557, 582, 657.

93. ‘Ubayd b. Ādam died in 258/872; see below, translation, n. 221. His father, a prominent scholar of Marwan origin, was born in Baghdad and died in ‘Asqalān; see Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 268. Cited in *Tafsīr*, XXI, 39, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 31:6); *Dhayl*, III, 2424, ed. Cairo, XI, 590.

94. See Ibn Abī Hātim, III, 2, 26; and, for his father Rawwād, I, 2, 524. Cited in *Tafsīr*, III, 54, l. 29, 55, l. 26, 56, ll. 24 ff. (*ad Qur.* 2:267), XVII, 69, l. 17 (*ad Qur.* 21:96), XVIII, 20, l. 13 (*ad Qur.* 23:50), XX, II, l. 5 (*ad Qur.* 27:82), XXII, 72, l. 23 (*ad Qur.* 34:51).

95. Ibn Abī Hātim, II, 2, 335, states that al-Firyābī resided in Jerusalem and that his father studied with him. One of his authorities was Ḍamrah b. Rabī‘ah (above, n. 90). Al-Firyābī appears in *Tafsīr*, VII, 193, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 6:98), IX, 143, l. 9 (*ad Qur.* 8:24), XV, 148, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 18:19), XXI, 20, l. 1 (*ad Qur.* 30:15); *Ṣarīḥ*, 196.

96. See Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 148 f.; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, I, 75 f.; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 181–3; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, II, 149 f.; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 278. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, index, 1050, *Musnad ‘Alī*, index, 424; *Tafsīr*, XII, 24, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 11:38), XIV, 197, l. 25 (*ad Qur.* 16:88), XVI, 161, l. 4 (*ad Qur.* 20:115). He may be meant in *Ṣarīḥ*, 196, where Ya‘qūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī is mentioned (?).

pursued their "quest of knowledge."

The year Ṭabarī came to Egypt is indicated in one passage as 253/867, and in another as 256/870.⁹⁷ It is tempting to consider the former date as referring to his first arrival in the country, and the second as the date of his return after the excursion to Syria and Palestine. This may have been so, in particular, since both dates appear to go back to one authority, Ibn Kāmil. The context in which the dates are embedded seems to confirm the first date as quite certain. It depicts Ṭabarī as comparatively unknown when he reached Egypt, and willing to have his scholarly competence tested by someone about his own age, a certain Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Sirāj. In this connection, Ibn Sirāj is rather strangely described as a sort of arbiter of the Egyptian intellectual establishment whose word was taken as the ultimate endorsement of someone's standing as a scholar and man of general culture.⁹⁸ The second date, 256/870, is connected with an anecdote that shows Ṭabarī as a newcomer unfamiliar with life in Egypt and indicates a great scholar as his host. Taking all these small indicia into account, it seems that while the year 253 can be taken as correctly dating his first arrival in Egypt, the date of 256 for his return visit to the country is much less certain.

Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā (170-264/787-877)⁹⁹ was Egypt's leading scholar in the fields of *ḥadīth* and Qur'ān reading. Ṭabarī profited from Ibn 'Abd al-A'lā's knowledge in these disciplines, as he certainly did from other competent Egyptian scholars. But no doubt the greatest boon which Ṭabarī reaped from his sojourn in Egypt was an increased understanding of the legal systems of Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī. His host, al-Rabī' b. Sulaymān (174-270/790[1]-884),¹⁰⁰ who welcomed him to Egypt and who made a living as muezzin of

97. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, l. 7, and 434, l. 4, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 52 and 55. Ibn 'Asākir, LXXII, quoting Ibn Yūnus, *Ghurabā'*, has 263. This is no doubt a mistake (in the Ibn 'Asākir manuscript?) and should be corrected to 253.

98. Since Ibn Sirāj is supposed to have died in 308/920, shortly before Ṭabarī's death, he could at best have been ten years older. See *TB*, XI, 431-3 (where he is described as a resident of Baghdad); Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 283; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, II, 252. The wrong date of death (358/968[9]) appears in Dhahabī, *Mizān*, III, 131, and Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, IV, 320 f. The information we have about him does not support the role he is assigned in connection with Ṭabarī's stay in Egypt.

99. See, for instance, below, translation, n. 220; *Dhayl*, III, 2372, ed. Cairo, XI, 551, and elsewhere; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 406 f., Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 170-80.

100. See below, translation, n. 736.

the Mosque of 'Amr, had been connected with al-Shāfi'ī and was a transmitter of his works. It is very likely that Ṭabarī also met the other leading exponent of Shāfi'ism, al-Muzanī (175-264/791[2]-878), and discussed with him matters such as general consensus (*ijmā'*), which came to constitute an important element in Ṭabarī's legal thought; his biographers, however, do not seem to have been quite clear about whether there was a meeting and what was discussed at it.¹⁰¹

Among his many contacts in Egypt, the most important was probably the one with the eminent Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam family.¹⁰² Its members had been intimately connected with the imām al-Shāfi'ī, next to whose grave they found their final resting places.¹⁰³ They also were outstanding representatives of Mālik's legal school. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam, who headed the family in those years,¹⁰⁴ attracted scholars from all over the world to come and study with him. He had the distinction of being both a student of al-Shāfi'ī and a Mālikite jurist, and he possessed the reputation of being the outstanding expert on law and *ḥadīth* among contemporary Egyptians.¹⁰⁵ Years before, he had traveled to Baghdad in connection with the infamous inquisition concerning the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. Like Ibn Ḥanbal, he had shown himself to be a stout defender of its uncreatedness. We do not know whether he ever went back to Baghdad in his later years, but this is highly unlikely. His brother 'Abd al-Raḥmān is best known as a historian. He contributed information to the *History* as well as *Tahdhīb* and *Tafsīr*.¹⁰⁶ A third brother, Sa'd, did not do much, if any, publishing. He is known to have taught in Mecca for some time, presumably in connection with his pilgrimage, but this seems to have been a brief interlude

101. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, l. 16, 433, ll. 15, 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 53 f., and below, 67 f. For al-Muzanī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 492 f. Ṭabarī's friend Ibn Khuzaymah, who was in Egypt at the same time, studied with al-Muzanī, see Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, II, 93.

102. See *EP*², III, 674 f., s. v. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam.

103. See *Irshād*, VI, 395, ed. Rifā'ī, XVII, 323, in the biography of al-Shāfi'ī.

104. See below, translation, n. 93. He is mentioned often (I have noted more than twenty-five references) in *Tafsīr*, where his authorities are his father and other Egyptian scholars. See also *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1072.

105. See Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujūm*, III, 44.

106. See below, translation, n. 712. As he was to die in 257/871, Ṭabarī may have still been in Egypt at the time of his death.

in his teaching career in Egypt.¹⁰⁷ It was no doubt in Egypt that Ṭabarī received from him the information which he incorporated in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*.¹⁰⁸

We hear little about Ṭabarī's contemporaries who were his friends rather than merely colleagues or teachers. This makes an anecdote concerning his experiences in Egypt valuable as a source of information, even if it is of doubtful historicity. Four scholars, all named Muḥammad, were together in Egypt when they ran out of money and had to go hungry. The four Muḥammads were, in addition to Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Rūyānī (from Ṭabaristān), and Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzaymah al-Nīsābūrī—all, it may be noted, men of Persian origin. They cast lots in order to determine who would go out and beg for food. Ibn Khuzaymah was chosen, but before he could leave, a messenger from the governor (? *wālī*) of al-Fuṣṭāṭ came with fifty *dīnārs* for each of the four. The governor was sending them the money because he had just had a dream about hungry Muḥammads and, pious as he was, wished to alleviate their plight.¹⁰⁹ There is much

107. See Ibn Abī Hātim, II, 1, 92.

108. His transmission in *Tafsīr* (and, with one exception, in *Tahdhīb*) is always on the authority of Ḥafs b. 'Umar or Abū Zur'ah Wahballāh b. Rāshid. See *Dhayl*, III, 2391, ed. Cairo, XI, 565, and elsewhere; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1058; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 24, l. 14; *Tafsīr*, VIII, 102, l. 25 [*ad Qur.* 7:17], XII, 79, l. 30, 86, l. 34 [*ad Qur.* 11:114, 118], XV, 166, l. 4 [*ad Qur.* 18:46], XVIII, 96, l. 29 [*ad Qur.* 24:31], XX, 16, l. 12 [*ad Qur.* 27:90], XXII, 38, l. 6 [*ad Qur.* 33:70 f.], XXIV, 60, l. 16 [*ad Qur.* 41:6 f.].

The reference to a certain Yūnus b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam in *Tafsīr*, VII, 199, l. 18 [*ad Qur.* 6:103] is apparently a mistake. The source of Yūnus there, Khālid b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, is listed as an authority of Muḥammad and Sa'd (b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam); see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 103.

109. See *TB*, II, 164 f.; Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIV f.; *Irshād*, VI, 427 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 46 f.; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 250 f. Yāqūt states that he did not use *TB* for this story, but the work of al-Sam'ānī, however, Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 40 ff., does not contain it. For al-Marwazī (202–94/817[8]–906[7]), see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 494; for al-Rūyānī (d. 307/919[20]), see *GAS*, I, 171; and for Ibn Khuzaymah, see *GAS*, I, 601. In a different context, Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 102, speaks of "four Muḥammads." Al-Rūyānī is replaced by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir al-Nīsābūrī, who, according to Subkī, died in 309 or 310/921–2, but possibly a few years later; see Sezgin, *GAS*, I 495 f. The existence of a motif of "four Muḥammads" casts further doubt on the historicity of the story. The large amount of money involved and the premise of extreme financial hardship experienced by scholars as well-connected and welcomed to Egypt as Ṭabarī is described as having been make it appear a legend. It was, however, a common occurrence for traveling students to run out of money,

in the story that hardly permits it to be taken literally. Its basic assumption, however, appears to be factual. The four had come to Egypt on research trips and knew each other and probably roomed together. Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī was about twenty years older than the other three and was clearly an established scholar and jurist in his fifties. Although already esteemed as scholars, the others fell hardly into the same category, being in their late twenties or early thirties. Among them, Ibn Khuzaymah, born a year earlier than Ṭabarī and outliving him by one year, qualified well as a personal friend. His path may have crossed with that of Ṭabarī before, as he had studied with the same teachers, such as Ibn Bashshār and Bishr b. Mu'ādh in al-Basrah and Abū Kurayb and Ismā'īl b. Mūsā al-Fazārī in al-Kūfah.¹¹⁰ Ibn Khuzaymah became a very productive scholar in the same fields as Ṭabarī. He spent his life in his hometown of Nīsābūr; but he showed lasting loyalty to his former fellow student. On every possible occasion, he strongly defended Ṭabarī against Ḥanbalite attacks, and he missed no opportunity to praise his scholarship. A student returning from Baghdad who reported that he had not dared to study with Ṭabarī because of a Ḥanbalite boycott was told by Ibn Khuzaymah that he would have profited more from attending a lecture of Ṭabarī than he did from all his study with the other teachers in Baghdad.¹¹¹ And when Ibn Khuzaymah found out that a certain Ibn Bālawayh had written down the entire *Tafsīr* on Ṭabarī's dictation between 283/896 and 290/903, he asked him to lend him his copy. He returned it after a long time¹¹² with the comment: "I perused it from beginning to end. I know of nobody upon the face of the earth who is more learned than Muḥammad b. Jarīr. He has been wronged by the Ḥanbalites."¹¹³ This is as much in-

even if, as in the case of Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, they were sons of prominent scholars; see *TB*, IX, 466 f.

110. Ibn Khuzaymah also studied with Ahmad b. Manī' in Baghdad. Ibn Manī' was an authority of Ṭabarī in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*. As he died in his eighties in 244/859 (see *TB*, V, 160 f.), Ṭabarī might have met Ibn Khuzaymah in his early period in Baghdad. Ibn Khuzaymah further studied with Ṭulayq b. Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī in al-Baṣrah (see Ibn Khuzaymah, 179). Ṭulayq also occurs in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*, but his date of death is not known.

111. See *TB*, V, 164; Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVIII; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 272.

112. The proposed reading "two years" in Ibn 'Asākir, as against the attested "several years," may or may not be correct.

113. See above, n. 111, and *Irshād*, VI, 425, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 42 f. Ibn Khuzay-

formation about a lifelong friendship between fellow students as we can expect to gather from sources that usually tended to disregard personal aspects of scholarship.

His Fifty Years of Scholarly Activity in Baghdad

The person

It is not known how much time Ṭabarī spent in Egypt after 256/870 before returning to Baghdad.^{113a} It is tempting to assume that during his western journey, and before his return, he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, either during his sidetrip to Syria and Palestine or on the way back to Baghdad. The date of 256/870, which appears in the *Story of the Belt* (see below, 99), seems to be more than just a lucky guess and may well have preserved a true fact from Ṭabarī's biography. Scholarly pilgrims often remained in the Sacred Territory for considerable periods of time. However, since nothing is known about his having studied with resident scholars in the Ḥijāz,¹¹⁴ any time he might have spent there for the performance of the pilgrimage would not have been very long.

With his return to Baghdad, his formal education was completed and his student days were over. The time had come for him to devote himself entirely to teaching and publication. The tremen-

mah shared Ṭabarī's negative view of Ibn Ḥanbal as a jurist. A young scholar, who later became famous, Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl [291-365/903[4]-975[6], see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 497 f.), visited Ibn Khuzaymah and told him that he was on his way to study with a Ḥanbalite jurist, whereupon Ibn Khuzaymah exclaimed: "Say, a Shāfi'ite, for Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was just one of al-Shāfi'i's young men." See *Irshād*, VI, 379, ed. Rifā'i, XVII, 298, in the biography of al-Shāfi'i. Al-Qaffāl is said to have studied with Ṭabarī, see Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, IV, 112, l. 16; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 201, l. 1. This must have been in the last years of the lives of Ṭabarī and Ibn Khuzaymah, when al-Qaffāl was still in his teens.

Only the last two sentences of Ibn Khuzaymah's statement appear in Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 42; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 16 f.

113a. Ferré, "Vie de Jesus," 8, is convinced that Ṭabarī returned in 258/871[2].

114. The statement of Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 41, l. 1, that Ṭabarī's travels took him to the Ḥijāz, seems to be offhand and cannot be relied on. A reference to the various nationalities of his teachers makes no mention of the Ḥijāz; see *TB*, II, 165, ll. 5 f., quoted in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIII, l. 3; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 170, l. 21. I have so far not succeeded in identifying any authority of Ṭabarī whom he could have met only in Mecca and Medina. See also below, n. 344a.

dous volume of work he accomplished evoked the admiration of his contemporaries as well as later generations. Some attempts at quantification were undertaken. Necessarily they were crude. In his continuation of Ṭabarī's *History*, al-Farghānī stated that some unnamed disciples of Ṭabarī had figured out that if one took the number of folios of his works and divided it by the number of days from his puberty to his death at the age of eighty-six, one would find that he wrote fourteen (!) folios every single day (which would amount to roughly 350,000 folios).¹¹⁵ And the grammarian 'Alī b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Simsimī (d. 415/1024) told his student, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, that Ṭabarī used to write forty (!) folios each day for forty years (which rather shortens the time of his publishing career for the sake of round figures).¹¹⁶ Such statistics were of course not needed to convince anyone that Ṭabarī was unusually prolific in an age that boasted of many prolific authors.

Productivity on such a scale required not only a rarely gifted type of personality but also the existence of material conditions that were conducive to sustained work. Before discussing Ṭabarī's scholarship, it might be well to pause and review what is known of his life as a mature individual in the complex and sophisticated society of a large Muslim city.

Apparently soon after his return to Baghdad, although the only date we have indicates that it was after 290/903, he took up residence in East Baghdad's Shammāsiyyah district to live there until he died.¹¹⁷ It was, we are told, a neighborhood which had been home to many grammarians in the past.¹¹⁸ His house was located at the Baradān Bridge.¹¹⁹ It presumably was identical with the house in Ya'qūb Square, in which he is said to have died and which is described as being in the neighborhood of the Khurāsān Gate—not, of course, the Khurāsān Gate in the Round City but the one through which the Khurāsān Road leaves al-Shammāsiyyah

115. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44.

116. See *TB*, II, 163, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVII. For al-Simsimī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 184.

117. See *Irshād*, VI, 435, ll. 3 f., 438, ll. 11 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 56, 60 f.

118. For the grammarians mentioned in this connection, see below, 107.

119. Marked no. 53 on map V in Le Strange, *Baghdad*. The map is reproduced in Lassner, *Topography*, 203.

and the city.¹²⁰ Ya'qūb Square is not listed in the topographical descriptions of Baghdad, but Baradān Bridge and Khurāsān Road might easily have been used for indicating the same location. Ṭabarī's mosque—that is, the neighborhood mosque where he regularly worshiped—was situated at some distance from his house in Sūq al-'Aṭash (presumably, "Thirst Bazaar") of the adjacent Mukharrim district. It is mentioned in a report by Abū 'Alī al-Ṭūmārī.¹²¹ One night during the last third of the month of Ramaḍān, al-Ṭūmārī served as lantern (*qindīl*) bearer for Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid when he headed toward his mosque for the nightly services (*tarāwīḥ*). Ibn Mujāhid passed his mosque and went on to the mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash, where Ṭabarī could be heard reciting sūrah 55 (al-Raḥmān). To the question of the astonished al-Ṭūmārī of why he was keeping the people in his mosque waiting for him while he listened to the Qur'ān recitation of someone else in another mosque, Ibn Mujāhid replied that he did not think that there was any other human being in the world who could read the Qur'ān as well as Ṭabarī.¹²² House and mosque no doubt circumscribed much of Ṭabarī's daily life. At home, he did his research and writing. He taught, it seems, mainly in his mosque.

Ṭabarī appears never to have married. A Spanish scholar, Maslamah b. (al-)Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964) traveled in the Near East in the decade after Ṭabarī's death, when he was in his twenties. Probably in his *Ṣilah*, a biographical dictionary, he has the following information, evidently obtained from someone who knew Ṭabarī: "He was celibate (*ḥaṣūr*) and did not know women.

120. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 172; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 282. The Khurāsān Gate is marked no. 58 on map V, and no. 17 on Le Strange's map VIII. See also Lassner, *Topography*, 263, n. 13. A Ya'qūb Road (*darb*) is mentioned in the biography of Aḥmad b. 'Alī (Ibn) al-Bādā (see below, 100) in *TB*, IV, 322.

121. Abū 'Alī 'Isā b. Mūsā b. Aḥmad al-Ṭūmārī was born in 262/875 and died in 360/970, see *TB*, XI, 176 f. Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-'Abbās b. Mujāhid, the great authority on Qur'ān reading, was born in 245/859 and died in 324/936. He was born and buried in Sūq al-'Aṭash, more precisely, near al-Khursī (al-Ḥarashī) Square (*TB*, V, 145, l. 7). See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 31; *TB* V, 144–8; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 14; Shawqī Dayf's introduction to his edition of Ibn Mujāhid's *Sab'ah*, and also below, 67 and nn. 293, 337.

122. See *TB*, II, 164, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXV.

The approximate location of Sūq al-'Aṭash is marked no. 66 on map V of Le Strange.

Ṭabarī's reputation for excellence in Qur'ān reading and recitation was well-attested; see below, n. 337.

In (2)36, when he was twelve, he left his town to travel in quest of knowledge. He never ceased to pursue knowledge eagerly until he died."¹²³ There is no reason to doubt this information, even if there is little to either confirm or refute it. He was not married when he went to Egypt. This we learn from one of those innocent dialect jokes, so greatly enjoyed by Egyptians, that was played on him when he came there. He was looking for furniture for his domicile and was told to buy certain necessary items, including, among other puzzling objects, something as strange as "two donkeys." He replied that not only had he no use for two donkeys and the other things mentioned to him, but his stipend did not allow such heavy expenditures and should not be wasted on something that was of no value for his studies. It turned out that the entire purchase did not cost more than two and one-third dirhams, a very affordable small sum. The "two donkeys" in reality referred to a wooden bed frame, with a mattress of woven palm leaves (*sud-dah*). The raised bed was needed for protection against vermin which bothered those who had to sleep on the ground; fleas in the clothes, in particular, were a terrible plague, and clothes had to be hung up before going to bed. The Egyptians had mentioned a *zīr* as a needed item. To Ṭabarī, *zīr* recalled something connected with music, and piety forbade him to have anything to do with it. In fact, it meant a receptacle for water. And the *qaṣriyyah* which they considered indispensable was a bread bowl. Ṭabarī apparently had understood *qaṣriyyah* in its ordinary meaning of (chamber) pot, and possibly he thought of small children whom he did not have or expected, for he indignantly exclaimed that he "had not let down his pants for either a forbidden or a permitted (sexual activity)."¹²⁴ It was not unusual for an ambitious young scholar under thirty to stay unmarried for a while. Ibn Hanbal, for instance, got married only after he had passed forty.¹²⁵ Thus, the one apparently true element in the amusing story—that is, that Ṭabarī was not married during his visit to Egypt—gives no indication of what was the situation later in his life.

There is, however, a possible reference to a son of his from his

123. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, V, 102. For Maslamah, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, VI, 35 f.; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 437, n. 2.

124. See *Irshād*, VI, 434, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 55 f.

125. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 373.

old age. It is an incidental remark in another anecdote illustrating Ṭabarī's scrupulousness with respect to gifts. A certain Abū al-Faraj b. Abī al-'Abbās al-Iṣfahānī al-Kātib was studying ("reading") Ṭabarī's works with him. He found out that Ṭabarī was interested in a mat for a small sofa,¹²⁶ so he went and took the measurements of the sofa and had a mat made that fitted it. He thought that a small gift of the sort would endear him to his revered teacher. He put it in its place and presented it to him, but "when he left, he called his son and gave him four dīnārs"—quite a large sum—"but he did not want to take them and Ṭabarī wanted to accept the mat only if (his counter-gift of four dīnārs was accepted)."¹²⁷ This intentionally literal translation seems to imply that it was Ṭabarī's son to whom his father gave the money to act as messenger, but this

126. For *ṣuffah*, see, for instance, Sadan, *Mobilier*, 124 n.

127. See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 87. It seems an open question whether this Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī can be identified with the famous author of *Aghānī*. The latter was born in 284/897 and began his scholarly studies at an early age. If the year of his birth is correctly stated, he could have had a child old enough near the end of Ṭabarī's life to play the role indicated in the story. Abū al-Faraj often mentions Ṭabarī as his authority for historical information in *Aghānī* as well as *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. He indicates that Ṭabarī "told" him a certain story or that he "read" it in his presence. Once he states that Ṭabarī told him a story "from memory" (*Aghānī*, IV, 138, *Agh.*³, V, 28). Some of his Ṭabarī quotations cannot be traced in *History*. He may not have derived all of them from Ṭabarī *viva voce* or may not accurately have remembered what he had learned; and, on occasion, he may have used Ṭabarī's published work in order to supplement his information. However, the basic fact that he studied with Ṭabarī cannot be denied. His contact with Ṭabarī may have fallen any time after 299/911–2 when Ṭabarī can be assumed to have lectured on his *History* in preparation for its forthcoming publication.

In his magisterial biography of Abū al-Faraj, 108, Muḥammad A. Khalafallah mentions the story but does not comment on the identity of the Abū al-Faraj mentioned in it, evidently, because he ruled out the possibility that he could be the author of *Aghānī*. In fact, the patronymic of his father (here Abū al-'Abbās) is, it seems, not attested anywhere. In contrast to other family members of the famous litterateur, his father remained completely in the shadows; he may have died young and left no record of any noteworthy activities. Still, our lack of knowledge about his *kunya* is no decisive argument against the identification. For the lively discussion about the dates of birth and death of the author of *Aghānī*, see Khalafallah's work and the introduction by Ṣalāh al-dīn al-Munajjid of his edition of Abū al-Faraj's *Adab al-ghurabā'*. On p. 88 of the edition, Abū al-Faraj indicates that he was still alive in 362; this year gives a *terminus post quem* for his death. To add to the confusion, a story placed by him in the time of his youth is dated in the late 350s. While this may seem to cast doubt on the indicated date of his birth, it would seem that he cannot have been born much later and could have had a son able to walk in Ṭabarī's lifetime. See also *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, I, 282 f., s. v. Abu'l-Faraj Eṣfahānī.

is not certain. It could be the donor's son to whom Ṭabarī gave the money for handing over to his father, who then refused acceptance. Thus, the evidence for a son of Ṭabarī (possibly the son of a slave girl) remains inconclusive. His *kunyah* Abū Ja'far, of course, does not require the existence of a son called Ja'far. If he had surviving children, our sources might very well have had occasion to mention them. As it is, the evidence clearly favors the assumption that Ṭabarī never married throughout his life.

His financial status was no impediment to founding a family. Scholars less fortunately situated often saw having many children as detrimental to their scholarly activities. Ṭabarī, as we have seen, had a private income, and all the opportunities for a religious scholar with the right connections to earn money were open to him. He had no difficulty in his youth finding a position as tutor to the son of a high official.¹²⁸ But he apparently never accepted a position in the government or, as would have been natural for him, in the judiciary. There is an anecdote that reflects his attitude toward official employment. It fits Ṭabarī's personal situation; therefore, it is presumably not just another illustration of the common motif that scholars ought to be reluctant to enter public service. When al-Khāqānī, the son of his former employer just referred to, was appointed to the wazirate in 299/312,¹²⁹ he sent him a large sum of money as a gift. Ṭabarī refused to accept it. The new wazīr then offered him a judgeship, only to meet with another refusal, and then a third refusal when he offered to appoint him to the *mazālim* jurisdiction.¹³⁰ His friends and students urged him to accept the *mazālim* position, since it was in need of the prestige of a renowned jurist at the head of it. He angrily rebuked them and said that they more than anybody else should not encourage him to accept the position but rather discourage him from accepting it.¹³¹ The determining element in his attitude was not, it seems, a general objection to service in government and the judiciary but his total immersion in scholarly activity. The students

128. See above, 16 ff.

129. See *ET*², III, 824, s. v. Ibn Khākān (3). We have no information on his personal relations with his (half-)brother Abū Yaḥyā.

130. The *mazālim* court dealt with cases outside the competence of the qāḍis of the shari'ah jurisdiction.

131. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXV; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 275. The source was al-Farghānī.

should have recognized the importance for themselves of having him available for teaching unencumbered by official duties. The thought of an office as a sinecure would, of course, not have occurred to someone like Ṭabarī.

Teaching could have been a source of income for him. He hardly belonged to those who refused compensation for all teaching as a matter of unbending principle. The number of students who attended his lectures seems to have varied greatly. There were very many at certain times, and a few carefully selected ones at others. The former was probably the rule. Especially in his later years, young students flocked to him to hear the famous man and to be able to say that they had studied with him.¹³² He probably neither wanted nor needed to derive any appreciable income from his students. Another potential source of income was legal advice of some kind or other. The only reported instance of such activity, solicited by the government of al-Muktafi, tells of a gift in lieu of a fee and rather relates to the stories of stipends and gifts which in his later years appear to have been showered upon him and which frequently involved substantial sums. As stated before, those stories were meant to be illustrative of Ṭabarī's attitude toward the giving of gifts and the legal and moral propriety of accepting them.¹³³

In the case of al-Muktafi, protocol required that the Caliph deal not personally with Ṭabarī. Al-Muktafi told his wazīr, al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan,¹³⁴ that he wished to hear Ṭabarī's views on a planned endowment, so that it would be set up in a way that could not be contested. A meeting was arranged to be conducted by two officials,

132. See, for instance, al-Qaffāl, above, n. 113. Many who claimed to have studied with Ṭabarī are known to have died in the second half of the fourth century and thus were probably born not much before 290. Yāqūt mentions 'Alī (b. Muḥammad) b. 'Allān al-Ḥarrānī, who died in 355/966 (*Mu'jam*, II, 232), Sahl (Suhayl) b. Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Riwandī, who died as early as 350/961-2 (*Mu'jam*, II, 891), and Abū Bakr Yūsuf b. al-Qāsim b. Yūsuf al-Mayānājī, who supposedly died as late as 375/end of 985 (*Mu'jam*, IV, 708). Like Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Mimadhī (*Mu'jam*, IV, 718), for whom no dates are available, all these men are rarely mentioned in the sources, and nothing is known about their relationship, if any, to Ṭabarī.

133. See above, n. 38.

134. Al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan was al-Muktafi's wazīr from 291/904 to the caliph's death four years later; see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 149, 189. On his sponsorship of Ṭabarī's *Khafif*, see below, 112.

Şāfi al-Ḥurāmī (d. 298/911) and Ibn al-Ḥawārī (d. 311/923).¹³⁵ The Caliph listened from behind the curtain to Ṭabarī's lengthy disquisition on the subject at hand, and when Ṭabarī was on the point of leaving, he had a splendid gift brought out and presented to him. Ṭabarī did not want to accept it, but the two officials warned him that this was unseemly behavior. A caliphal gift was not to be rejected. It was customary to reward those who had rendered a service to a caliph with presents or the fulfilment of a wish expressed by them. The idea of expressing a wish appealed to Ṭabarī since, presumably depending on the nature of the wish, it was unobjectionable. Ṭabarī's wish was that the police be ordered to see to it that petitioners not be admitted to the prayer enclosure (*maqşūrah*) in the mosque until the Friday sermon was finished, so that there was no disturbance and interruption of it. The wish was fulfilled, and Ṭabarī gained great admiration all around.¹³⁶ For Ṭabarī, the acceptance of a gift was conditioned upon the recipient's making, or at least having the ability to make, a counter-gift of equivalent or greater value. As an aspiring politician, Abū al-Ḥayjā', the founder of the Ḥamdānid dynasty, sent Ṭabarī a gift of three thousand dīnārs. Ṭabarī refused to accept the magnificent present on the ground that he could not afford a return gift of similar value. He was confronted with the argument that no counter-gift was required in this case, since Abū al-Ḥayjā' meant his gift to be a good deed that was pleasing to God and would secure for him a heavenly reward (*al-taqarrub ilā allāh*). It proved of no avail.¹³⁷ We cannot help feeling that under the circumstances, the gift may have had some political purpose, such as obligating Ṭabarī to the donor and assuring support for him in the legal community and civilian administration. Ṭabarī may have sensed that and, therefore, shied away from a gift which could become embarrassing at some time in the future.

The same Khāqānī who had offered Ṭabarī a high position in the judiciary made Ṭabarī a present of pomegranates at some other time. Ṭabarī accepted the pomegranates and distributed them

¹³⁵. For Şāfi, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 103, n. 516. For Ibn al-Ḥawārī, see 'Arīb, 113; Hamadhānī, *Takmilah*, 42; Miskawayh, in *Eclipse*, index; Bowen, index, s. v. Ibn al-Ḥawwārī

¹³⁶. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVI; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 270, from al-Farghānī.

¹³⁷. See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 87, For Abū al-Ḥayjā', see *EJ*², III, 126 f., s. v. Ḥamdānids.

among his neighbors. Hearing about it, al-Khāqānī, either because he was touched by Ṭabarī's generous spirit or because he thought that his gift was considered too insignificant, sent Ṭabarī a basket with a purse which was filled with ten thousand dirhams. An accompanying note asked Ṭabarī either to accept the money for himself or distribute it among deserving friends, as he had done with the pomegranates. The messenger was probably unaware of the contents of al-Khāqānī's note, but as it came from a high-ranking personality, he thought that it was important, and he insisted upon being admitted into Ṭabarī's house. He was not aware or did not care that he was disturbing Ṭabarī during hours that he was reserving for writing and during which he had given strict orders that nobody was to bother him. Ṭabarī read the note and told the messenger that it was alright to accept the gift of pomegranates, but he could not accept the money. When it was pointed out to him that he was given the option of distributing the money among his needy friends (*aṣḥāb*), he remained unpersuaded and replied that the wazīr himself should distribute the money since he knew better who needed money and could make the best use of it.¹³⁸ A very similar remark is ascribed to Ṭabarī on another occasion.¹³⁹

Ṭabarī had good relations with humbler folks in the neighborhood, where he was certainly looked up to as one of its most distinguished residents. When a neighbor called Abū al-Muḥassin al-Muḥarrir (thus, presumably, a professional scribe) made him a present of two chickens, he gave him a garment in return, something obviously more expensive,¹⁴⁰ thereby following the principles that governed his attitude toward gifts. In spite of his eminence, Ṭabarī was in general easy for his neighbors, be they scholars or ordinary people, to get along with. He went with them on picnics¹⁴¹ and gave them advice for their children.¹⁴²

Certain remarkable traits and attitudes that guided his daily life apart from his scholarly pursuits were fortunately recorded for posterity. His physical appearance showed a darkish brown

138. See *Irshād*, VI, 457 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 87 f. For al-Khāqānī, see above, nn. 128 and 129.

139. In connection with the composition of *Khafif*, see below, 112.

140. See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 87.

141. See below, 41.

142. See below, 50.

complexion and large eyes, as well as a long beard—hardly very characteristic features. Equally commonplace was the statement that he was well-spoken and eloquent. It was more noteworthy that his hair and beard stayed quite black until he was in his eighties. He was tall and lean.¹⁴³ His leanness may have contributed to his vigor and good health throughout his long life. As far as our knowledge goes, he was seriously ill only during his last ten years when he suffered from attacks by an illness diagnosed as pleurisy (*dhāt al-janb*).¹⁴⁴ It may have been illness or old age that caused him to stop lecturing some time before his death.¹⁴⁵

His leanness may not exclusively have been an accident of heredity. He was very diet-conscious. The noteworthy feature of the diet favored by him is that it was one that would find qualified approval among today's dietitians.¹⁴⁶ He avoided fat and ate red meat plainly prepared (*al-ṣirf*), cooked with nothing but raisins (raisin juice *zabīb*). He ate only white bread (*samīdh*), because it was baked with refined wheat flour (*ghasl al-qamḥ*).¹⁴⁷ He liked *rāziqī* grapes, *wazīrī* figs,¹⁴⁸ fresh dates (*ruṭab*), and *ḥiṣrim* ("unripe fruit")¹⁴⁹ in season to go with his meals. He counseled

143. See *TB*, II, 166, quoted by *Irshād*, VI, 423, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 170; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 282. Ibn 'Asākir, XCI, considered the little-changed hair color noteworthy.

144. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 94. "Pleurisy" is a conventional translation. It is impossible to guess what illness was really meant according to modern terminology.

145. See below, 83 and 120.

146. All the information on Ṭabarī's diet discussed here appears in *Irshād*, VI, 459 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 90 ff.

147. *Samīdh*, an ancient Semitic word, is connected with Greek *semidalis* and, possibly, also with *semolina*. See Fraenkel, *Fremdwörter*, 32, and, for instance, Brockelmann, *Lex. Syr.*², 479b, and von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, (II), 1018a. For the suggested relation of Latin *simila* (from which *semolina* is derived) with the Semitic word, see, for instance, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1763a.

148. For the *rāziqī* grape, see Lane, 1077a; Heine, *Weinstudien*, 121; and, for instance, Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, III, 987 f.; Ibn Abī 'Awn, *al-Ajwibah al-muskitah*, 166. The *wazīrī* fig remains to be identified. Both the *wazīrī* fig and the *rāziqī* grape are mentioned as noteworthy 'Irāqī products by Abū Bakr al-Khuwārizmī, *Rasā'il*, 49. Cf. also Jāhiz, *Ḥayawān*, VIII, 8; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jam'*, 291 (Cairo 1372/1953).

149. *Ḥiṣrim* is mentioned, for instance, by Rāzī, *Hāwī*, XX, 300, XXIII, 1, 44. For a potion (*sharāb*) made from it, see *Hāwī*, XXI, 1, 118; it is possibly identical with the thickened juice (*rubb*) of *ḥiṣrim* mentioned by Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 483. For the dish called *ḥiṣrimiyah*, see Rosenthal, "Hidden illness," 59, n. 89. The reference to *ḥiṣrim* is continued with the remark that "in the summer, he often did not go without *ḥays* (date meal mixed with butter and curd), basil, and nenuphar."

against the consumption of sesame, honey, and dried dates (*tamr*), to which he ascribed unpleasant side effects, such as overloading (*l-ṭ-kh*, lit. soiling) the stomach, weakening one's eyesight, and ruining the teeth;¹⁵⁰ and in the case of sesame and honey, also causing bad mouth odor. His favorite food was a special milk dish cooked until the milk was condensed, with bread crumbs added, and then eaten cold with milk, seasoned with marjoram/thyme (*ṣ/sa'tar*), *ḥabb al-sawdā'*,¹⁵¹ and olive oil. He also enjoyed *isfidhbāj* and *zīrbāj*, kinds of pies made with meat or chicken and gruel.¹⁵² When he overindulged occasionally, as he had to in order to be good company during a picnic with his neighbors in the countryside, and ate too much of a bean dish,¹⁵³ he later treated himself at home with a variety of medicines including electuaries.¹⁵⁴

His diet was clearly based upon the views and practices of contemporary medicine, in which he considered himself well-versed. It owed little, if anything, to the delight in high cuisine widespread among the upper crust of society and the intellectuals moving among them, or the squeamishness affected by the *zurafā'*, the refined dandies.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, his insistence on good table manners, while certainly in keeping with prevailing fashions, derived mainly from the religious law which paid much attention to the subject. His appearance projected the cleanliness demanded by religion and society, just as it reflected his inner purity.¹⁵⁶ He

150. See below, n. 237.

151. Unidentified.

152. *Zīrbāj(ah)*, approximately "underlaid gruel," appears, for instance, in Ṭabarī, *Firdaws* 476; *Arabian Nights*, ed. Mahdi, 304; Dozy, I, 618b; Steingass, 633b (*zīrbā*); Rodinson, "Recherches," 134, n. 3, 137, 149 ("poulet en gelée"). *Isfidhbāj* "white gruel" is listed in Dozy, I, 22b; Steingass, 58b; *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 31 f., trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 46. Dishes in Ṭabarī's time commonly had Persian names; Ṭabarī's Persian origin had nothing to do with their use by him.

153. *Qarāh al-bāqillā*, approximately "clear bean broth," may be identical with *mā' al-baqillā* described in *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 33, trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 47.

154. "Electuaries (*juwārishnāt*)" have a long chapter in Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 474-81. See also *Wörterbuch, K*, 365b, s. v. *kammūnī*; Steingass, 1100b (*guwārish*, *guwārish* [!]).

155. For the social stratum of *zurafā'*, see, for instance, Washshā', *Muwashshā*, 129 ff.; Ghazi, "Raffinés," 39 ff. In connection with Ṭabarī's leanness mentioned before, see *Muwashshā*, 50, where the Arab ideal of leanness is discussed.

156. See *Irshād*, VI, 456, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 86.

would put his hand into the bowl and take a morsel, then, when coming back for a second time, he would wipe clean the part of the bowl that had become besmeared the first time, so that only one side of the bowl would be soiled.¹⁵⁷ He took a bite of food with his right hand as was proper, but he simultaneously also covered his beard with his left, lest it be soiled by dripping sauce or the like. He daintily used his napkin to wipe his mouth, and he did not spit in public. Such spitting was hardly less of a social sin than was frequently swearing by God. He studiously avoided both.¹⁵⁸

Less commendable, it seems to us, was his attitude toward another guest at a banquet who noticed how longingly a waiter looked at one of the dishes and sneaked him a morsel from it. Ṭabarī shamed the man by asking pointedly who had given him permission to do that.¹⁵⁹ And again, his general fastidiousness provoked him to gossipy criticism of a great scholar, Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī. He told others that he had seen Abū Ḥātim applying stibium (*kuhl*) to his eyes so clumsily that some of it ran down on his beard and from there on his clothes in front. In a way, for Ṭabarī, that seemed to disqualify Abū Ḥātim from being considered a respectable scholar.¹⁶⁰

All these small details are no doubt to be taken as factual. It is hard to imagine that anyone would have bothered to invent them. It was more perfunctory to describe Ṭabarī as living the true religious life, as someone who was abstemious and observed the religious law punctiliously. Even if it was perfunctory, it is not difficult to believe that it described him accurately. His daily routine is also described in an interesting manner. As customary, it began with the preceding night. He slept in (a room cooled with dampened?) felt in a short-sleeved shirt perfumed with sandal oil and rose water.¹⁶¹ He rose early for the morning prayer at home, then did research and writing until afternoon. He prayed the afternoon

157. Ibn Kāmil has the following introductory remark: "I have never seen anyone eat in a more refined manner (*azraf aklan*)."

158. See *Irshād*, VI, 459, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 90, from Ibn Kāmil. For the use of the napkin, see the forthcoming article "mandil" in *ET*².

159. See *Irshād*, VI, 458 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 89.

160. See Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 101, from Ibn Kāmil. Zubaydī, 65, seems to quote the year of Ṭabarī's death from al-Farghānī.

161. For the manifold uses of *ṣandal* and *mā' al-ward* in perfumes, see, for instance, Kindī (pseudo-), *Kimīyā'*, 342, ff., 268 f.

prayer in public, presumably in his mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash. He recited the Qur'ān and taught Qur'ān reading there until evening. Finally, before returning home, he taught jurisprudence and studied (having students study jurisprudence and other subjects) until the time of the late night prayer.¹⁶² The details here appear a bit schematic and hardly characteristic of Ṭabarī as an individual. But the description of his daily routine makes the obvious point that he led a highly disciplined life.

Urbanity and wit combined in Ṭabarī with a sense of humor. Along with the ability to write occasional verse with reflections on man and society—for Ṭabarī's poetical efforts, see below, 48—all this was very much part of the picture of the good Muslim. Meeting the nine-year-old son of Ibn Kāmil, he would playfully comment on his names and their auspicious omen.¹⁶³ A witty remark might express his strong conviction that religious scholarship deserved precedence over political prominence. A person whose turn had come to read the Qur'ān hesitated when he noticed that the great wazīr al-Faḍl b. Ja'far b. al-Furāt had just entered the room. "Your turn is now," Ṭabarī told him, "so don't be disturbed by either the Tigris or the Euphrates (*Furāt*)!"¹⁶⁴ A conversation with Abū al-Faraj b. al-Thallāj¹⁶⁵ was on a less elevated level. It was about cooking and involved the preparation of a dish called *ṭabāhajah*. Abū al-Faraj pronounced it *ṭabāhaqah* and defended his pronunciation with the (quite correct) observation that Persian *g* appeared in Arabic as either *j* or *q*. Ṭabarī rejoined that in this case, his name should be Abū al-Faraq b. al-Thallāq. This was meant as light banter and not in any way as indicative of Ṭabarī as a stickler for philological accuracy.¹⁶⁶ In fact, he was not above making fun, as philologists were wont to do, of the pedantry of many of their colleagues. He complained that a certain Abū Bakr b. al-Jawālīqī overdid things to the point of nausea (*bughḍah* "ha-

162. See *Irshād*, VI, 460, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 92.

163. See above, 15.

164. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, ll. 13 f. For the Ibn al-Furāt family of officials, see *EP*², III, 767 f., s. v.

165. See below, n. 195.

166. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 93. For *ṭabāhajah*, see *Tabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdi, 16 f., trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 37. Ṭabarī cannot have been ignorant of the equivalence of *j* and *q* in Arabicized Persian words. The well-known sweet dish *fālūdhaj* was no doubt known to him in this form, but he writes *fālūdhaj* in *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, I, 105.

tred"). The unfortunate fellow became known as *Baghiḍ al-Ṭabarī*, approximately "Ṭabarī's pet hatred."¹⁶⁷ Yet, Ṭabarī's friendly joking in company was never permitted by him to degenerate into conflicting with the seriousness required of scholars.¹⁶⁸

Ṭabarī's life as a human being is presented as that of an individual living up to the best ideals of his society. Major flaws, if there were any,¹⁶⁹ are not indicated in our biographical sources. The picture before our eyes may indeed have been composed of real, historically true fragments from the life of an exceptional man.

The scholar

Even as a child, Ṭabarī used to say in later life, he had wanted to write a Qur'ān commentary along the lines of his great *Tafsīr*.¹⁷⁰ His scholarly productivity, indeed, constituted an uninterrupted continuum from his early youth to his death. Publication of his principal legal works came first and never stopped, followed by that of his Qur'ān Commentary and, finally, the *History*. His primary focus was jurisprudence. Like other scholars of the time,¹⁷¹ he specialized in three fields, which had to be mastered by every legal scholar to some degree: legal theory as such and as it applied to legal practice, Qur'ānic science, and history in the restricted sense of a few dates of the lives of individuals. An understanding of the science of *ḥadīth* was basic to all three subjects. Ṭabarī's contribution to all of them was gigantic. It was his particular merit that he eventually went beyond the religious and legal interest of his colleagues in biographical data and expanded it into a historical work that dealt with the entire sweep of history known to him.¹⁷²

167. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 93 f. The source (Ibn Kāmil ?) continues with an anecdote about the foolishness of the man.

168. See *Irshād*, VI, 456 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 86.

169. On questionable character traits, see below, 58 f. They are rare and doubtful.

170. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 11 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 62.

171. The works of Ibn Ḥanbal, who was averse to publishing, included a *Tafsīr* and a *Ta'rikh* (at least according to his biographer Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 248 f.) Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 229, makes no mention of a *Ta'rikh*.

172. Earlier or contemporary histories that were written by jurists are apparently not preserved.

The central position of the law in Muslim society required its theoreticians and practitioners to possess a certain familiarity with most aspects of Muslim civilization. As a genius whose accomplishments allowed viewing him as the perfect scholar, Ṭabarī was credited with exceptional learning in a variety of disciplines. It could easily be deduced from his *Tafsīr* that he was well-versed in grammar and lexicography.¹⁷³ Excellence was claimed for him also in other fields of philology classified among the Arab linguistic sciences. His personal contacts with philologists of all descriptions were quite numerous, if much less so than his contacts with traditionists and legal scholars. For instance, he visited the philologist Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, possibly in those early years when he studied in al-Baṣrah. He appears to have been repelled by his disregard for cleanliness,¹⁷⁴ and, in addition to a few *ḥadīths*, he did not learn much more from him than a far-fetched etymology for his native Ṭabaristān as derived from "land of the axe (Persian *tabar=ṭabar*)" so named because the early Muslim settlers there were forced to clear the woods with axes.¹⁷⁵

His interest in foreign languages deserves notice, in particular, because it is connected with his attitude toward the intensely debated question of the occurrence of non-Arabic words in the Qur'ān. He naturally knew Persian, even if sporadic quotation of Persian verses does not mean very much in this respect.¹⁷⁶ In *Tafsīr*, he discussed the relationship of Persian and Arabic (I, 7) and the Ethiopic loan words (I, 6–8). From al-Farrā', he learned that *fātiḥ* or *fattāḥ* apparently meant "judge" in the language of 'Umān (IX, 3, l. 12, *ad* Qur. 8:89), clearly a South Arabian (South Semitic) term. *Mūsā* could be derived from Coptic "water" and "tree" (*moou* and *sei* [?])^{176a} (I, 222, l. 2, *ad* Qur. 2:51).

173. See *Irshād*, VI, 437, l. 14, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60. *Tahdhīb* is mentioned there as providing additional evidence, as, in fact, it does by its regular sections on strange words in the traditions under discussion.

174. See above, n. 160.

175. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 5–11, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 48. The etymology is repeated with some modifications by Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 39, and Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 503.

176. See *History*, text below, II, 193, 1494, 1602, f., and von Grünebaum, "Bemerkung," 224; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 135, n. 1.

176a. Bentley Layton calls my attention to *ṣēn* as the common Coptic word for "tree," and to *še/ē/i*, meaning "wood." The word meant here may, in fact, be *ṣēn*. It would render the second part of the name of Moses according to its Hebrew/Aramaic form and point to a Jewish or, more likely, Christian origin of the

He was aware of the fanciful suggestion that *ṭāhā* is "O man" in Nabataean/Syriac [XVI, 102 f., *ad Qur.* 20:2], but he apparently rejected the (Byzantine) Greek derivation of *firdaws* [XVI, 29, l. 22, *ad Qur.* 18:107]. All this is traditional material long at home in Qur'ān commentaries,¹⁷⁷ yet, it underlines Ṭabarī's concern with language.

He is said to have studied poetry with the great philologist Tha'lab (200–91/815[6]–904) and to have been one of his early students. Tha'lab had a reputation for severity in his judgment of other scholars and was considered to be a difficult person to deal with, but he called Ṭabarī one of the most sagacious Kūfan (grammarians). He lived to see him achieve great fame with his *Tafsīr*.¹⁷⁸ Ṭabarī was also acquainted with Tha'lab's disciple, Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid, known as Ghulām Tha'lab (261–345/874[5]–957), who praised the *Tafsīr*'s accuracy in grammar and language.¹⁷⁹ While still in his youth, Ṭabarī acquired an expert knowledge of Arabic poetry. It stood him in good stead in Egypt when Ibn Sirāj asked him about the seventh-century poet al-Ṭirimmāh, whose poetry was no longer known in Egypt. Ṭabarī knew al-Ṭirimmāh's poems by heart and was able to recite and explain them in public.¹⁸⁰

Another anecdote, however, tries to belittle Ṭabarī's knowledge of poetry and related subjects. The Ḥanafite judge and litterateur Aḥmad b. Ishāq b. al-Buhlūl (231–317 or 318/845–929 or 930) entered into an animated conversation on many subjects with a person he did not recognize who was sitting next to him at a funeral. Ibn al-Buhlūl's son, Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad (d. 348/959), told him that his conversation partner was the famous Ṭabarī. Then, on an-

etymology taken over by the Qur'ān commentators. The neglect of the final *n* of *ṣēn* may have been triggered originally by thinking of the accusative ending of the name in Greek. See Crum, 317a (*sei*), 568b (*ṣēn*), and 546a (*ṣe/ē/i*).

177. As are phonetic observations such as the exchangeability of *th* and *f* (*Tafsīr*, I, 247, l. 9, *ad Qur.* 2:61 XXX, 47, l. 7, *ad Qur.* 81:11), *s* and *z* [VIII, 157, ll. 8 f., *ad Qur.* 7:71], and *k* and *q* [XXX, 47, l. 5, *ad Qur.* 81:11].

178. See *Irshād*, VI, 438, ll. 1–6, 439, l. 6, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60, 62, l. 4. For Tha'lab, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 140–2. Since Tha'lab had finished his studies already in 225/240 and was by then a popular teacher (see *TB*, V, 205, l. 6, 209, l. 21), it seems rather implausible that Ṭabarī studied with him before he had many students.

179. See *Irshād*, VI, 439, ll. 12–15, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 62. For Ghulām Tha'lab, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 147 f.

180. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, ll. 14–16, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 53. *Tahdhīb* repeatedly quotes his poetry.

other similar occasion, he engaged Ṭabari in reciting poetry and biographical data (*siyar*, connected with poetry). Ṭabari frequently faltered, but Ibn al-Buhlul was able to recite all the verses without a hitch and give all the answers.^{180a}

The theory of versification as embodied in the science of prosody (*ʿarūd*) was known to Ṭabari. How solid his knowledge was, is another question. He was asked about prosody in Egypt and supposedly learned all there was to know about it overnight from a borrowed copy of al-Khalil's fundamental work on the subject.¹⁸¹ Someone of his intellectual caliber could probably become proficient in any subject by just reading one book about it.

Ṭabari seems to have enjoyed discussing evidential verses in *Tafsir* and, especially, in *Tahdhīb* for the explanation of rare words in traditions. He inserted poetical quotations in *History* when they served to enliven the narrative or to support the historical argument, whether he chose the verses himself or, which is much more likely in most cases, quoted them from the sources used by him. He was fond of reciting verses and composing some of his own, and he engaged in occasional poetic exchanges with friends and acquaintances; this, of course, was the custom of all educated persons in medieval Islam.¹⁸²

He often recited verses that al-Awzāʿi had earlier been fond of; they dealt with the advisability of decent persons remaining aloof and keeping concealed what they knew and could do, when conditions in the world were topsy-turvy and stupidity and meanness prevailed.¹⁸³ He is credited with verses extolling *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth* scholars. For him, they represented all that is of true value for Muslims; he incidentally used the opportunity to excoriate any interest in "innovations" (*bidaʿ*).¹⁸⁴

The verses most generally ascribed to him speak of his con-

180a. See *TB*, IV, 32 f.; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Qurashī, I, 58 f.

181. See *Irshād*, VI, 434 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 56. Another reference to Ṭabari's competence in prosody is found in *Irshād*, VI, 427, l. 6, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 45, l. 9, in a quotation from *al-Iqnāʿ fi ihdāʾ ash-rata qirāʾah* by al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Ahwāzī [362-446/972]3]-1054; see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 720).

182. See above, 43.

183. See Mu'āfā, *Jalīs*, I, 168 f.

184. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI f. Although the verses are introduced as "by" Ṭabari, he may have merely quoted them. This is even more likely with four verses addressed to Mayyās, which are a satire on an irrelevant [person?]; see Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII. On Ṭabari's attitude toward "innovations," see below, 61.

tempt for worldly riches and the negative qualities commonly associated with wealth and poverty:

When I am in financial difficulties, my companion won't know it.
When I am wealthy, my friend will be wealthy.

My sense of shame preserves me my decency
as well as my gentility (*rifqī*) in making demands on my
companion (*rafīqī*).

Were I willing to squander my decency,
it would be easy for me to become rich.

Perhaps they also reflect the middle-class circumstances in which he grew up and spent his entire life:

I do not like two character qualities and what they represent:
the arrogance of wealth and the humility of poverty.

When you get wealthy, don't get arrogant,
and when you get poor, show your disrespect for fate!¹⁸⁵

To a high ranking 'Alid who had written him complaining about the difficulty of finding reliable friends and distinguishing between good and bad ones, Ṭabarī—apparently assuming that the writer could possibly have meant him by “someone,” although he eagerly desired to be esteemed by him—replied:

My amīr has a bad opinion of someone seriously concerned.
Would there were a way to obtain his good opinion!

(Re)consider, my amīr, what you have thought and said,
for a good opinion from you is something beautiful.¹⁸⁶

185. These verses are found in all major biographical notices, all of which depend on *TB*, II, 165, so that the occasional variant readings they contain are of no significance. The exception is Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, who does not mention the verses. In this context, it may be meaningful that the Prophetic tradition quoted by Ṭabarī to the author of *Aghānī* (see above, n. 75) condemns the arrogant treatment of others as inferiors by expecting them to rise (for the *ḥadīth*, see Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 91, 95).

186. See *TB*, II, 166, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, *LXXXVIII, Irshād*, VI, 426, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 43. The circumstances of the poetical exchange were apparently unknown to the author of *TB*. The writer, Aḥmad b. 'Īsā al-'Alawī, remains unidentified. Others named Aḥmad b. 'Īsā, such as the one who died in 323/935 (*TB*, IV, 280 f.)

All these verses are pleasant enough, but they are nothing out of the ordinary. Al-Qifṭī exaggerated more than a little when he described Ṭabarī's poetry as "above the poetry of scholars,"¹⁸⁷ even if scholarly poetry, it must be said, never enjoyed any critical acclaim to begin with. The last word on Ṭabarī as a poet or critic of poetry belonged to the prominent litterateur al-Ṣūlī. He moved in court circles and may well have caught at least occasional glimpses of Ṭabarī in his old age. Confronted with a variant reading in a verse as quoted in *History* (text below, I, 759), he ruled out the possibility that Ṭabarī's text might be correct. He remarked tartly that Ṭabarī was not as great an authority on rare words in poetry as he was on other subjects.¹⁸⁸

Ṭabarī's acquaintance with the exact sciences such as arithmetic and algebra was hardly intimate. He can be assumed to have had some knowledge, such as was needed by jurists.¹⁸⁹ A mastery of logic, dialectics, and, indeed, *falsafah* ("Greek philosophy")¹⁹⁰ was attributed to him. Contemporary speculative theology was saturated with philosophical thought, and Ṭabarī had to know and make use of the various techniques of philosophy as tools for the refutation of sectarian (Mu'tazilah) views and the defense of his beliefs.

Medicine was one of his great interests. As many other learned men were accustomed to do, he sometimes dabbled in the practice of it. A fellow Ṭabarī, 'Alī b. Rabban, was the author of an important medical encyclopaedia entitled *Firdaws al-ḥikmah*. This work became Ṭabarī's medical bible. Ibn Rabban, we hear, considered the study of medicine (as well as some knowledge of moral philosophy) indispensable for a maturing boy of fourteen.¹⁹¹ Little is known about his biography, except that he was a government

or the one mentioned below, n. 352, are no doubt not the same person. The place where he wrote to Ṭabarī may be identical with al-Balad near Mosul.

187. See Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 264.

188. See Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rādī wa-al-Muttaqī*, 39, trans. Canard, I, 84; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 53.

189. See *Irshād*, VI, 438 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 61.

190. For logic and dialectics, see *Irshād*, loc. cit. (n. 189), and, for dialectics, *Irshād*, VI, 437, ll. 15 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60. According to Ibn 'Asākir, XC, Ṭabarī studied "the theories of the philosophers and physicists."

191. See Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 99. It may be noted that Ṭabarī was well aware of al-Shāfi'ī's position with regard to (Greek) books on medicine taken as booty; see *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, 179; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 75, n. 5.

official in his native country in earlier years and that he remained a Christian for much of his life before he converted to Islam during the reign of al-Mutawakkil.¹⁹² Ṭabarī may in fact have known him personally, possibly during his early years in Baghdad, not long before Ibn Rabban's death. The *Firdaws* had been completed a few years before. There is a report, which cannot be verified, that Ṭabarī studied with him the entire work and wrote it down. According to Ibn Kāmil, he had a copy of it in six parts in his possession. He even kept it under his prayer carpet.¹⁹³

Ṭabarī occasionally gave medical advice to his friends and students when one of their children became sick. When Abū al-Faraj b. al-Thallāj, who later was a jurist of Ṭabarī's legal school, fell ill, Ṭabarī suggested a cure to his father Abū al-'Abbās. The worried father was only too willing to give it a try, for he reasoned that coming from a man like Ṭabarī, it no doubt enjoyed divine blessing. Ṭabarī described his suggested remedy and the way it was to be applied in these words: "Shave his head and prepare very greasy cakes smothered in (chicken) fat."¹⁹⁴ Let him eat them until he is full, then take the rest and put it on his pate and let him sleep in this condition. If God wills, he will be all right."¹⁹⁵ The remedy proved effective—and certainly could not have done any harm—and Abū al-Faraj recovered, but Ṭabarī outlived him, and Abū al-Faraj died a short while before him. Ṭabarī also treated himself when he was ill. He described to a Christian physician sent to him by the wazīr 'Alī b. Īsā what he had done to cure himself. The physician had to admit that he himself could not have done better. With rather heavy flattery, he added that if Ṭabarī were a Christian, his coreligionists would consider him one of the apostles.¹⁹⁶

192. See Ullmann, *Medizin*, 119–22; Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 236–40.

193. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 48.

194. For *jūdhābah* (Persian *gūdhāb*), see, for instance, *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 71 f. (ch. 8), trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 208 f. and 28 f. where Arberry translates a couple of poems on *jūdhābah*. See also Rodinson, "Recherches," 103, 133.

195. See *Irshād*, VI, 460, f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 93. On Ibn al-Thallāj, see above, n. 165.

196. See *Irshād*, VI, 461 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 94. On Ṭabarī's illness, see above, n. 144. The story is remarkable for showing Ṭabarī in direct contact with a non-Muslim. It is hard to say how much other contact with Christians and, perhaps, Jews he might have had. His familiarity with Jewish and Christian historical/religious material does not imply any sort of personal acquaintance. For this

There was a religious side to Ṭabarī's concern with medicine. A quotation from *al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah* (see *Ādāb al-nufūs*, below, 82) recommends the effectiveness of a procedure for relief in unpleasant situations. It had been suggested by an early Muslim and consisted of reciting sūrahs 91 and 92, each seven times, and asking God for help. Relief would come in the first, third, fifth, or, maybe, seventh night. The recipe was tried by someone who felt great pain and did not know what to do about it. He said the prescribed prayer before going to bed. Falling asleep, he immediately dreamed that two men came and sat down, one at his head and the other at his feet. The one told the other to feel his body. When he came to a certain place of his head, he ordered him not to shave the spot but wash it with *khaṭmiyyah* and then draw blood there by means of cupping, with the added suggestion that he ought also to recite sūrah 95. In the morning, he tried to find out why he was told to use *khaṭmiyya*, and he was told that it was for stopping the flow of blood from the wound caused by the bloodletting.¹⁹⁷

As a man of general education, Ṭabarī was thus interested in numerous aspects of contemporary intellectual life. Even those aspects which were viewed with growing suspicion by the legal and religious scholarship, of which Ṭabarī was a foremost representative, were not excluded. He did not contribute actively to them but restricted his serious scholarly efforts to his prime concerns, law and *ḥadīth*, Qur'ānic science, and history. He was conscious of the fact that each of these large fields had its own vocabulary and technique of exposition, but it can be observed that his treatment of them always shows the same general traits characteristic of his approach to scholarship.

His large literary output required considerable discipline in his daily routine and scholarly habits.¹⁹⁸ He paid attention to such comparatively minor details as the best way of reading books in connection with his research. As reported by one of his students,

material, see *History*, translation, Vols. I and II, and Abdalmajid Charfi, "Christianisme."

197. See Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, I, 19, f. For *khaṭmī* (*khiṭmī*) "marshmallow," see, for instance, Lane, 768a; Rosenthal, "Hippocratic Oath," 68 ff.; and, in particular, Rāzī, *Ḥāwī*, XX, 398-401. *Khaṭmiyyah* is presumably the salve for wounds made from it alone or a concoction with honey water (*melikraton*) mentioned by al-Rāzī in the first place, quoting Dioscurides, III, 146, 1, ed. Wellmann, II, 155, ll. 4 f.

198. See above, 39 and 42 f.

Ibn al-Mughallis, he would systematically go twice through the works he wished to consult, carrying them from one corner of his house to another and then, when he had finished with them, returning them to their original place.¹⁹⁹ He appears to have done all his research by himself without assistants. Only once do we hear that he asked for help in his research. It was near the end of his life that he requested from a bookseller named Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Ḥubaysh that he assemble for him the available titles on *qiyās*. They were more than thirty books. When he returned them to the bookseller, it was discovered that he had marked them with red ink,²⁰⁰ apparently his way of locating suitable references to be used by him at some later date.²⁰¹ His lecturing, when a large audience was present, required the customary use of repetitors (*mustamlī*), but the name of only one of them is preserved, Abū Saʿīd ʿAmr b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Dīnawarī.²⁰²

Like other students and scholars, Ṭabarī kept his notebooks and occasionally made reference to them. Quoting an interpretation of Qur. 79:3 by Mujāhid, he indicates that he found it "in my book," presumably a notebook dating back to the time when he studied with Abū Kurayb.²⁰³ A reference to his notebooks is also found in connection with information derived from al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ.²⁰⁴ When there was a question whether ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar or ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr (b. al-ʿĀṣ) was meant, he called attention to

199. See *Irshād*, VI, 444, ll. 1–6, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 68 f. For a translation of the passage in context, see below, 110. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mughallis died in 324/936. He was a follower of the school of the Zāhirite Dāwūd b. ʿAlī, for whose relations with Ṭabarī see below, 132. For Ibn al-Mughallis, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 218, ll. 4–9; Dhahabī, *Ibar*, II, 201. He provided Ibn Kāmil with much information.

200. See *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 5–8, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 81, and the translation of the passage below, 120. Booksellers customarily served as lending libraries.

201. Possibly, the statement might refer to annotations made by Ṭabarī.

202. He was the transmitter of *Ṣarīḥ*, see text, 193, trans., 186. He is the Abū Saʿīd al-Dīnawarī who is said to be Ṭabarī's *mustamlī* in Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 280, and *ʿUluww*, 150. It does not seem impossible that he is identical with Abū Saʿīd ʿUmar b. Aḥmad al-Dīnawarī who played an unhappy role in connection with *ʿĀdāb al-nufūs*; see below, n. 308. Another Dīnawarī, Abū Saʿīd ʿUthmān b. Aḥmad, who reported the anecdote involving Ibn al-Furāt (above, n. 164), is certainly a different person.

203. See *Tafsīr*, XXX, 20, ll. 6 f. The published recension of Mujāhid's commentary does not mention the quotation.

204. See *Tafsīr*, XV, 166, ll. 31 f. (*ad* Qur. 18:46). Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ died in 249/863; see *TB*, VII, 330–2; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, II, 289 f.

the fact that it was Ibn 'Umar that was found "in my book."²⁰⁵

Ṭabarī derived the materials for his major publications almost exclusively from written works, despite the pretense of oral transmission which obscures the picture to some degree by preventing more specific reference. In *History*, the written sources used by him are usually transparent, even though they are not preserved,²⁰⁶ but it is very rare indeed that title and author are expressly mentioned, as in the case of the *History of the Baṣrans* (*Kitāb Akhbār ahl al-Baṣrah*) by 'Umar b. Shabbah.²⁰⁷ It was also unusual for him to quote his prime source, in this case, Sayf b. 'Umar, with express reference to "his book."²⁰⁸ He was, of course, aware of the intermediate written stages through which his material reached him, but he only exceptionally mentioned them in the way he did with a book of Abū Qilābah which Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī said he had read.²⁰⁹ The "books" of contemporaries he made use of naturally remained mostly unmentioned, but he tells us how he received information from Ziyād b. Ayyūb. Dallawayh, as Ziyād was called, was a very old man when Ṭabarī met him in Baghdad. He produced for him (*akhraja ilayya*) "a book containing traditions on the authority of several shaykhs who, he said, had been his direct authorities. Some of it he taught me *viva voce*, some he did not. The latter (material) I copied from it (or him, *katabtuhū minhu*)."²¹⁰ A prophetic *ḥadīth* transmitted through Sufyān al-Thawrī described the coming of the Sufyānī at the end of time. It had found much attention in Syria, and Ṭabarī, who obviously did not like it, discussed it there with Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-'Asqalānī. In this connection, Ṭabarī mentions that he also saw

205. See *Dhayl*, III, 2490, ed. Cairo, XI, 638.

206. Ṭabarī's use of them helps to reconstruct them. For recent works on the Ṭabarī sources Abū Mikhnaf and al-Madā'inī, with a thorough discussion of the problems involved, see U. Sezgin, *Abū Mikhnaf*, and Rotter, "Überlieferung." Noth, "Charakter," takes issue (principally on Sayf b. 'Umar) with J. Wellhausen who is reputed to have been among the first to deal with Ṭabarī's sources.

207. See *History*, text below, II, 168.

208. See *History*, text below, I, 2391.

209. See *Tafsīr*, XXX, 174, l. 2 (*ad* Qur. 99:7); Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 68. See also U. Sezgin, *Abū Mikhnaf*, 83, in connection with *History*, II, 881 f.

210. See *History*, text below, I, 3159. Ziyād b. Ayyūb, who was born in 166/782[3], had begun already his serious study of *ḥadīth* at the age of fifteen. He died in 252/866. See Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1, 315; *TB*, VIII, 479-81; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 355.

it in "the book of al-Ṣudā'ī."²¹¹ As in the case of Ziyād b. Ayyūb, al-Ṣudā'ī's book appears to have been an unpublished notebook.

Since quotations make up the bulk of the contents of Ṭabarī's major works, the question of his accuracy in quoting arises constantly. It cannot be satisfactorily answered in a general way, since most of his sources are not preserved. Even where they are, it is always possible that Ṭabarī used another text or recension than the one preserved. Small changes in the wording or carefully chosen omissions or the deliberate failure to take account of all available sources can make a big difference and even alter the entire picture, particularly in the interpretation of historical data. It is a safe assumption that Ṭabarī used such procedures on occasion intentionally (and, presumably, most frequently when contemporary 'Abbāsīd interests were involved), or it just happened to him without his being fully aware of the consequences. Modern historians, for whom this is a crucial question, have mostly restricted themselves to raising it in connection with certain points of historical information. This is probably the most that can be done at present.²¹² The assumption that Ṭabarī's quotations can in general be relied upon as being accurate has not been disproved and, as matters stand, remains valid.

At the core, his honest and solid attitude toward scholarship is indisputable. His reverence for scholarship, often stressed by his biographers, is obvious, and so is his desire to present what he considered factual information, hard facts, to his students and to contemporary and future readers. He wished to be concise and to disregard irrelevant data. A cherished anecdote tells of his initial concept of the size of *History* and *Tafsīr*. It was to produce much larger works than he finally did. But when he asked his students whether they possessed the energy to study such enormous works, he found to his dismay that they thought they would not be able to read them in a lifetime. He concluded that their attitude showed a general lack of noble ambition. So he cut the size of the works

211. See *Tafsīr*, XXII, 72 f. (*ad Qur.* 34:51). On al-'Asqalānī, see above, n. 92, and on al-Ṣudā'ī, see below, translation, n. 168. Ṭabarī's attitude toward the belief in the expected Sufyānī is attested, for instance, below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 181. On notebooks, see also above, 17 and 21.

212. For individual studies, see above, n. 206, and, for a general judgment, see Cahen, "L'historiographie arabe," 149 and 160.

down to what it eventually became.²¹³ The anecdote is almost certain to be an invention without any basis in fact, but it shows a true understanding not only of Ṭabarī's tremendous capacity but also of his concern with the essentials in all his publications. He continually stressed that he wanted to be brief or that he did not want to repeat himself.²¹⁴ Statements of this sort take the place of accurate cross-referencing, for which there existed no practical methods in the manuscript age.²¹⁵ Their frequency also reveals his realization of the need for economy in dealing effectively with a body of knowledge which already in his time had grown to almost unmanageable proportions.

The most remarkable aspect of Ṭabarī's approach is his constant and courageous expression of "independent judgment (*ijtihād*)."²¹⁶ After having quoted his sources and the views represented by them, he states what he considered the most acceptable view. With respect to legal and dogmatic differences, Ṭabarī is not reluctant to make his preference known, as is clear from *Ṭabṣīr* and the preserved parts of *Ikhtilāf* and *Tahdhīb*. Expectedly, this feature is much more prominent in *Tafsīr* than it is in *History*. His own views are consistently introduced by "Abū Ja'far says". He carefully argues and documents what he believes to be the "most likely" report or opinion.²¹⁶ His conclusions, it may be added, usu-

213. See *TB*, II, 163, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII, Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, IX, 42, *Irshād*, VI, 424 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 42; Dhahabi, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274 f.; and *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, II, 252.

214. All of Ṭabarī's major works, but particularly *Tafsīr*, state more frequently that there is no need for repetition (*i'ādah*) than that making the work unnecessarily long is to be avoided (*iṭālāh*). For *History*, see text below, I, 251, (translation, Vol. II, 46), and I, 671.

215. Such cross-referencing as there is was not very convenient even for learned Qur'ān scholars. See *Tafsīr*, VI, 29, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 4:175), referring back to the verse on inheritance (Qur. 4:12) earlier in sūrah 4, or *Tafsīr*, XIII, 155, l. 1 (*ad Qur.* 14:37), referring back to sūrah 2 (verses 125 ff.).

216. In *Tafsīr*, the most commonly used term is "the correct view (*al-ṣawāb*) in my/our opinion." Elsewhere, the expression "the truth in my opinion (*al-ḥaqq 'indī*)" is also found. *Ṭabṣīr* uses both indiscriminately. The situation in *Ikhtilāf* is slightly puzzling. In Schacht's text, Ṭabarī does not explicitly indicate his preferences. Kern's text, on the other hand, has at first a number of instances of *al-ḥaqq 'indī* (I, 13, 19, 22, 24, 29); later, it is quite regularly *al-ṣawāb 'indī* (over twenty-five occurrences) or simply "our opinion." There are two possible explanations: The books of *Ikhtilāf* were written at different times or what is preserved represents different (perhaps also abridged) recensions. Either explanation is applicable, it would seem, according to the various parts of the preserved text.

ally deserve respect to this day. It is, of course, clear that he was a "compiler," in the sense that he reported the evidence derived from his sources without immediate comment or basic distortion. Most scholarly works in Muslim civilization followed this highly recommendable method. It was, however, an unfortunate misjudgment on the part of Brockelmann (*GAL*, I, 142, *GAL*,² I, 148) to speak of him as unoriginal ("kein selbständiger Kopf"), when he was undeniably concerned above all with seeing things his way, that is, being original and independent in his approach.

His own views often leaned toward moderation and compromise. He stated innumerable times that two of the suggested readings of a Qur'ānic passage were both possible and can be accepted and used as correct.²¹⁷ It was not only readings but also interpretations that challenged his tendency toward compromise. Two examples may be mentioned.

A particularly knotty problem presented itself in Qur. 5:6, the verse which somehow gave rise to one of the famous distinctions between Shī'ites and Sunnīs—the Shī'ah practice of "wiping" (the boots, although neither *khuffayn* nor any other footgear is mentioned in the Qur'ān) as against the sunnī practice of "washing" the feet in the ritual ablution before prayer.²¹⁸ It hinges on whether one reads the word "feet" as either a genitive or an accusative. Both readings, Ṭabari argues, yield the same meaning as far as the legal requirement is concerned. However, he gives preference to the genitive on the basis of his interpretation of the meaning of "wiping" in the verse and for syntactic reasons. The philological

While the occurrences in *Tafsīr* are legion, there are fewer occasions for them in *History*; but they are not entirely absent, if in rather different forms. Thus *History*, text below, I, 416, speaks of one statement as more likely true (*ashbah bi-al-ḥaqq*) than another. Or Ṭabari's opinion is given conditionally: "If this version is correct, then the first statement is wrong" (*History*, text below, I, 1367). *Wa-al-ṣawāb 'indi* appears in *History*, III, 1436.

217. On the expression of preference with respect to Qur'ān readings (*ikhtiyār*), see Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 132 ff. There may be more than two readings involved, as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, XXVII, 16, ll. 27 f. (*ad Qur.* 52:21). Occasionally, Ṭabari expressly states his own preference for one reading as the only one that is acceptable to him as correct, as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, V, 209, ll. 13 f. (*ad Qur.* 4:135 end).

218. See *Tafsīr*, VI, 81, l. 3–87, l. 22. Ṭabari's conclusion appears on pp. 83, l. 19–84, l. 13. For a concise exposition of the problem in relation to Qur'ānic data, see Paret, *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*, 115 f. See also Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 141.

point he makes in favor of the genitive is absolutely correct. Yet, the accusative became the Kūfī reading adopted in the canonic text, so as to leave no doubt about the "washing" of the feet. Ṭabarī's interpretation of "wiping" amounts to wiping the feet in their entirety *with water* (not mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse but somehow deducible from the sand ablution [*tayammum*] in Qur. 4:43) by using one's hand or its equivalent; thus wiping *and* washing are one process (which makes for more problems, such as whether washing without wiping is in compliance with the law). The discussion of this legal point of ritual is extraordinarily long, given Ṭabarī's concept of what his Qur'ān commentary should legitimately deal with.²¹⁹ He takes great pains to weaken or reinterpret traditions that would favor the Shī'ah practice, and pleads for the correctness of the sunnī view. His plea fell on deaf ears in certain circles prejudiced against him. He was accused of sympathy with the Shī'ah on this point. His expressed preference for the genitive reading could easily be seen as tilting toward the Shī'ah, no matter how consistently he argued for the sunnī practice, which he clearly accepted as the proper one.²²⁰ The balancing feat he performs gives the impression of being a compromise between his scholarly instincts and the religious practices which he felt it necessary to uphold at all costs.

Another similar example is the way in which he argues both sides of a sensitive issue of a dogmatic nature that had arisen in

219. The subject of *aḥkām*, the legal data furnished by the Qur'ān, was a well-established subdiscipline of Qur'ānic science by the time of Ṭabarī. It was treated apart from general commentaries. Ṭabarī considered legal excursions not appropriate in *Tafsīr*. Thus, he declared a detailed discussion of unintentional (*khaṭa'*) killing to be out of place, since "our intention in this work (*Tafsīr*) is the explanation of the Revelation, and *khaṭa'* is not mentioned in it." He referred the reader to *Latīf* instead. See *Tafsīr*, VII, 28, ll. 30 ff. (*ad* Qur. 5:95); similarly, VII, 203, ll. 9 ff. (*ad* Qur. 6:103). Nevertheless, Ṭabarī was inevitably drawn into legal discussions on subjects such as retaliation (*qisās*) (II, 60, *ad* Qur. 2:178), inheritance law (II, 74, *ad* Qur. 2:182), fasting (II, 103, *ad* Qur. 2:187), pilgrimage (II, 153, *ad* Qur. 2:193), divorce (II, 270 ff., *ad* Qur. 2:228 f.), prayer (II, 352, *ad* Qur. 2:238), abrogation (III, 12, *ad* Qur. 2:256, and elsewhere), entering the shops of merchants (XVIII, 90 f., *ad* Qur. 24:29). See also the preceding note and the discussion of *Latīf*, below, 113 ff.

220. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 172. Ibn al-Jawzī seems to express here his own view (see also below, n. 233). Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, V, 103, makes the hardly plausible suggestion that the statement that Ṭabarī was satisfied with wiping the feet in the ritual ablution might refer to the Shī'ite Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (see below, 118 f.).

connection with *maqāman maḥmūdan* in Qur. 17:79.²²¹ While the ablution problem concerned the entire Muslim community, his compromise in the case of *maqāman maḥmūdan* was dictated by the need to defend himself against personal attacks. Compromise by Ṭabarī, however, must never be confused with an absence of firm conviction.

The preoccupation with legal issues and the religious problems inextricably connected with them dominated the course of his life as a scholar. His stance was moderate to some degree, at least in minor matters. He might use the harsh word "obtuse" for someone who, he thought, did not understand him correctly;²²² but he also expressed himself in speaking about other scholars with a certain politeness ("I fear that shaykh erred").²²³ On occasion, he was ready with sharp remarks, such as the observation that he had seen al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad al-Dūrī so intoxicated that "the walls were hitting him".²²⁴ On his part, his reputation protected him from criticism in later centuries, but not entirely. His alleged attacks on Ibn 'Amīr, one of the seven early Qur'ān readers, were criticized.²²⁵ The historian Ibn al-Athīr would frankly object to some aspect of Ṭabarī's approach to history,²²⁶ and there is an intriguing statement that "various criticisms were made of him (*takallamū fih bi-anwā'*)," which originated in circles with strong ties to Ṣūfism.²²⁷ These criticisms may very well have been of an

221. See below, 71 ff. and Appendix B.

222. See *Tafsīr*, II, 269, l. 5 (*ad Qur.* 2:227).

223. See *Tafsīr*, II, 91, l. 5 (*ad Qur.* 2:185).

224. See *TB*, XII, 145, ll. 12–14, from Ibn Kāmil. Al-Dūrī (185–271/801–84) is mentioned quite frequently as an authority of Ṭabarī. It may be noted that he was an authority of Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Zāhiri (see *TB*, V, 256, l. 2). He was also one of those who supported the authenticity of the attribution to Mujāhid of the disputed interpretation of *maqāman maḥmūdan*, and was repeatedly cited in this connection by Khallāl, *Musnad*; see also Dhahabī, *Uluww*, 143. For Ṭabarī on Abū Ḥatīm al-Sijistānī, see above, n. 160, and on Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, below, n. 229.

225. See Ibn al-Jazārī, *Ghāyah*, I, 424, ll. 19 f.

226. See below, translation, introduction, n. 3.

227. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVIII f. Ibn 'Asākir had the remark from Abū al-Muzaffar 'Abd al-Mun'im b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (445–532/1053–1137[8]), a son of the author of the *Risālah*, the famous handbook on Ṣūfism. It went back to al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) who collected Ṣūfī biographies in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. Not much is known so far about Ṭabarī's attitude toward Ṣūfism. He used Ṣūfī material in *Ādāb al-nufūs*; see below, 82. He certainly was opposed to the ecstatic mysticism which spread rapidly during his lifetime; see *History*, text below, III,

objective nature, but already his contemporaries felt that he was the innocent target of harmful and malicious slander "by enviers, ignoramuses, and heretics."²²⁸

Some fragments of a bitter controversy tell us of an occasion where Ṭabarī had to defend himself against such harmful and malicious backbiting. He was denounced by Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd²²⁹ to the influential chamberlain of al-Muqtadir, Naṣr al-Qushūrī. He was accused of Jahmite inclinations²³⁰ and extremist pro-'Alid views and was forced to issue a denial.

Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd had sent a memorandum (*qiṣṣah*) concerning Ṭabarī to Naṣr, the Chamberlain. It contained several things, which he (Ṭabarī) denied. Thus he attributed to him Jahmite opinions in interpreting Qur. 5:64 ("and His two hands are both stretched out"), in that he gave to "His two hands" the (metaphoric meaning) of "His two favors (*ni'matāh*)."²³¹ (Ṭabarī) denied that and said, "I did not say that."²³¹ Another of those things was that (according to

2289, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 199 f. It must be left an open question whether the Ṣūfis' religious and ethical outlook appealed to him. It might very well have impressed him favorably to a certain degree. For a possible personal Ṣūfī contact, see below, n. 298.

228. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII.

229. Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, 'Abdallāh b. Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath, lived from 230/844[5] to 316/929 and thus was about six years older than Ṭabarī and survived him by six years. See *TB*, IX, 464 ff., in particular, 467 f. On him and his father, see also above, n. 74. He competed with Ṭabarī in writing a Qur'ān commentary; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 232, l. 28 (see below, 110).

TB, loc. cit., has a statement which is interesting in connection with the history of the composition of *Faḍā'il* (below, 91). Abū Bakr is said to have always stressed that he was willing to forgive every critic except one who accused him of hatred for 'Alī (using the same expression as was used by Ṭabarī with respect to *bid'ah*; see below, n. 237). The reason for his remark was his awareness of being suspected of a well-concealed but deep aversion for 'Alī and his partisans. Ṭabarī shared this suspicion. When he learned that Abū Bakr was lecturing on the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of 'Alī, he made the snide remark: "Praise of God [a call to prayer] from a watchman (*takbīrah min ḥāris*)!" This would seem to be a proverbial statement for someone who does not practice what he preaches. *Ḥāris* might mean here "thief" (see Lane, 546b).

The first appearance in *History* of Naṣr al-Qushūrī is text below, III, 2144, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 20, n. 114.

230. On Jahm and the Jahmiyyah, see *EP*², II, 388, s.v. Djahm, Djahmiyya.

231. Ṭabarī refers to this interpretation in *Tafsīr*, VI, 194, l. 25, mentioning no names but including it among interpretations of the dialecticians (*ahl al-jadal*, see below, n. 416). His long discussion suggests that he does not accept it. The decisive

Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, Ṭabarī) transmitted the statement that the spirit of the messenger of God, when it left (him at death?), flowed into the palm of 'Alī who then covered (slowly swallowed?)²³² it. He (Ṭabarī, or rather Abū Bakr?) said that the *ḥadīth* says only that he wiped his face with it, and does not contain "covered (slowly swallowed?) it".

This author²³³ said: This is also absurd. However, Ibn Jarīr (Ṭabarī) wrote in reply to Naṣr, the Chamberlain: "There is no group in Islam like that contemptible group."²³⁴ This is an ugly remark for him to make. For while it is necessary for him to counter an adversary, it is ugly in the extreme to blame his entire sect (*tā'ifah*) when he knew²³⁵ who deserved to be blamed.²³⁶

The report is, unfortunately, not as clear and detailed as one might wish, but it illustrates Ṭabarī's dogmatic difficulties better than the general accusations of dogmatic heresy and extremist Shī'ah sympathies which we hear about mainly in connection with quarrels with the Ḥanbalites (who, in this case, presumably

element for Ṭabarī apparently was the use of the dual in "two hands," as against the immediately preceding "hand of God" in the singular. God's benefactions are innumerable, and this could be expressed by either the singular or the plural of *ni'mah*, but not by the dual. In *Tabṣīr*, fol. 88b, Ṭabarī explains the two hands as "stretched out with favors (*bi-al-ni'am*) for the creation, not withdrawn from the good."

232. The word is *ḥ-s-w* in the Hyderabad edition of Ibn al-Jawzī and *j-'-y*, according to the introduction of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, I, 10, nn. 3 and 4; see Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, XCIX. The lexicographers, who tried hard to establish the meaning of *j-'-y*, thought of "to conceal" as the principal meaning of the root; see, for instance, Azharī, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 132 f.; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, XVIII, 138 f. They apparently do not list the tradition. De Goeje gives the impression that they did, he may have had a reference to it. Until it is located elsewhere, it will be difficult to decide what is really involved here.

233. The historian Thābit b. Sinān, who continued Ṭabarī's *History* to a few years before his death in 365/976, is mentioned by Ibn al-Jawzī in the context, but the speaker here may rather be Ibn al-Jawzī himself. However, the criticism of Ṭabarī's unfairness in blaming the entire group for the error of one of its members is difficult to ascribe to Ibn al-Jawzī. Only the rejection of the tradition as "absurd" may go back to Ibn al-Jawzī, while the rest comes from his unidentified source(?).

234. The "group (*iṣābah*)" is not named. Possibly, the students and sympathizers of Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd are meant(?).

235. Thus the Hyderabad edition of Ibn al-Jawzī. The text in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, has "did not know," which is hardly correct.

236. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 172. The text in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, XCVIII f., is taken from the Paris manuscript of the *Muntaẓam*.

cannot be held responsible).

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. Nothing to the contrary can be observed in his preserved dogmatic writings such as *Ṣariḥ* and *Tabṣīr*. He appears as an implacable foe of "innovations (*bid'ah*, pl. *bida'*)." When he was close to death and Ibn Kāmil asked him to pardon his enemies, he supposedly said that he would forgive them all except one individual who had accused him of "innovation". The person who had run afoul of him was his colleague Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Ṣawwāf (d. 310/December 925). He had objected to the praise which Ṭabarī showered on Abū Ḥanīfah, when he lectured on *Dhayl*.²³⁷ In general, Ṭabarī is described as unswerving in his faithful adherence to the orthodox views of the ancient Muslim scholars in "most of his dogmatic views (*jull madhāhibihī*)." The qualifying "most" implies that there were exceptions. Regrettably, they are not mentioned. Only the fundamental points of dogma championed by the Mu'tazilah, with which Ṭabarī firmly disagreed, are enumerated in this connection.²³⁸

The politically most explosive aspect of Muslim dogmatics always was the imāmate, the leadership of the Muslim state and community. In the time of Ṭabarī, the focus was on the claims made for 'Alī, his descendants, and the Shī'ah as the legitimate rulers of Islam.²³⁹ It is a moot question whether or not Shī'ism was numerically the majority party in the Muslim world at the time. It was the party that was out of power in most regions and, as far as the central government in Baghdad was concerned, it constituted a threat of subversion that had to be kept under control. Thus, the accusation of pro-Shī'ah sympathies was an easy

237. See *Irshād*, VI, 455, ll. 1-8, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 84. For al-Ṣawwāf, see *TB*, VII, 297 f. He was the one who boasted that he had been eating dried dates all his life, when Ṭabarī expounded upon their harmfulness (above, n. 150). Ṭabarī was vindicated when al-Ṣawwāf's teeth fell out, and he lost much weight; see *Irshād*, VI, 459 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 91.

238. See *Irshād*, VI, 453 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81 f.

239. Other sectarians, such as Khārijites and the pro-Umayyad Shī'ah, played a less important role, although they were by no means insignificant; see, for instance, below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 48 ff., for the pro-Umayyads, and *passim* for the Khārijites.

weapon against personal adversaries. Its effects probably varied greatly according to prevailing circumstances in each individual case. Sometimes, it could do permanent damage to the reputation of the accused. One of Ṭabarī's students, for example, Ibn Ayyūb (Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Ayyūb al-Qaṭṭān) was described to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī as a sound transmitter of material from Ṭabarī but also as an extremist Shī'ite who held highly objectionable views. The Khaṭīb discussed the matter with another of his authorities who had studied with Ibn Ayyūb and was told by that person that he had never heard Ibn Ayyūb make unacceptable statements with pro-Shī'ah bias. His only crime was that he expressed himself in favor of recognizing 'Alī superior position (*tafdīl 'Alī*).²⁴⁰ This shows that Shī'ite tendencies could be deduced from open admiration of Alī. They could also be invented as malicious slander. In most cases, it is not possible for us to determine reasons and motivations. Old Ṭabarī appears to have been the victim of a campaign of slander by certain Ḥanbalites. They propagated the idea that he was a Shī'ah extremist and, ultimately, a heretic.²⁴¹ How successful they were, it is hard to say; quite a few people no doubt believed what they were told, although their numbers seem to have been inflated by rumor and tendentious reports. At any rate, there is not the slightest evidence for Ṭabarī's alleged Shī'ism. His roots in Ṭabaristān seem to have been in no way intertwined with local Shī'ism. His family rather belonged to the opposite camp.²⁴² If by any chance he harbored a deep down, secret animus against the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, he concealed it from his contemporaries as well as posterity. His works certainly do not support the accusation of Shī'ism or worse, though it must admitted that Ṭabarī would have avoided to mention things that might give reason to believe that the accusation was justified, even if it was. Opinions of his, such as the one ex-

240. See *TB*, V, 465. The Khaṭīb's informant on Ibn Ayyūb's alleged Shī'ism was his frequently cited authority Abū al-Qāsim al-Azhārī (see Lassner, *Topography*, 234, n. 12, and index). The lenient view was taken by Judge Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Dāwūdī (353–429/964–1038; see *TB*, III, 38).

241. As Miskawayh (see *Eclipse*, I, 84) states, this was the belief of the Ḥanbalite crowd (*al-'āmmah*) who caused the riot at the time of this death. Strangely, he makes no comment on the matter. See also *Irshād*, VI, 423, l. 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40, ll. 11 f. (see below, n. 292).

242. See also above, 13.

pressed in connection with wiping and washing in the ritual ablution, required considerable twisting in order to provide minimal support for it.²⁴³

The biographical sources depict him as a stout defender of the preeminence of all the first four caliphs. He felt compelled to defend 'Alī against attacks and took every opportunity to profess his veneration of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. In a discussion with a certain Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-A'lam about 'Alī, Ṭabarī asked him what he thought about those who claimed that Abū Bakr and 'Umar were not legitimate caliphs (*imāmā hudā*). Al-A'lam replied that such claim was an "innovation." Considering Ṭabarī's rejection of any thought of *bid'ah*, that should perhaps have pleased him, but he was outraged by the reply and emphatically insisted that it was not strong enough. Anyone who did not acknowledge the exalted status of the first two caliphs ought to be killed.²⁴⁴ Reports of this sort could have been invented as a reaction to Ḥanbalite attacks, but Ṭabarī's orthodoxy with respect to the imāmate and Shi'ah beliefs seems to be beyond doubt.

Ṭabarī's struggle with the Ḥanbalites might be seen as a consequence of his independent judgment in matters of law. Just as pronouncements on points of Qur'ān interpretation must have made enemies for him among those who differed from his conclusions—and the competition was strong, as there were numerous Qur'ān scholars around and numerous laymen who had their own opinions on everything connected with the Qur'ān—anyone who insisted upon his own juridical and dogmatic views could expect to encounter determined hostility. Two such hostile encounters, the vicious Ḥanbalite attacks and the less grave conflict with the Zāhirites, will be discussed later in some detail.

Ṭabarī at first considered himself a Shāfi'ite, and many later Shāfi'ites were proud to claim him as one of their own.²⁴⁵ For a

243. See above, 56 f.

244. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, quoted in a slightly shortened form by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 275. Dhahabī's dependence on Ibn 'Asākir can hardly be doubted, but it remains to be explained why he replaced Abū al-Faṭḥ Muhammad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥāfiẓ in the *isnād* by the equally correct form Abū al-Faṭḥ b. Abī al-Fawāris (see *TB*, I, 352 f.). Dhahabī might have used an intermediate source, unless our text of Ibn 'Asākir is faulty(?).

245. See Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 251. The opinions of al-Rāfi'ī and Abū 'Āṣim al-'Abbādi on Ṭabarī's position among Shāfi'ites were reported by Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*,

period of ten years, he functioned as a Shāfi'ite.²⁴⁶ This may have been after his return from Egypt, and thus in the decade that ended about 267/880(1). By then, his own legal production had become extensive. His *Latīf* was a comprehensive exposition of both the basic principles (*uṣūl*) and the case law (*furū'*) of presumably the entire shari'ah; at least parts of the work were then already in existence. Given his *ijtihād*, the legal views expressed in it must have included many which, not by themselves but in the aggregate, set Ṭabarī's legal thought apart from the other legal schools of his time. It was therefore a natural development for him and his circle of students to constitute themselves into a special legal school, the "Jarīrī *madhhab*." The phrase "our *madhhab*" used in *Ikhtilāf*²⁴⁷ in one place apparently does not understand *madhhab* as the view under discussion but refers to his "school"; however, because of the uncertainties connected with the dating of *Ikhtilāf*, the passage does not provide us with a *terminus ante quem* for the formal birth of the Jarīrī *madhhab*. Naming a sect or school after the father of the founder was a common practice. With respect to "Jarīrī", it is clear that neither Ṭabarī's given name nor the name of his country of origin would have made a distinctive designation for the school. It is not known, however, when the name "Jarīrī" was introduced, nor is there any precise information as to when the outside world began to look at Ṭabarī as the founder of his *madhhab*.

During his later years, his students were considered Jarīrīs or considered themselves as followers of Ṭabarī's legal views. Some wrote works on the Jarīrī *madhhab* or in defense of it. One of these Jarīrīs was considerably older than Ṭabarī, which is a testimony to Ṭabarī's reputation and, perhaps, his personal magnetism. He was Abū Muslim al-Kajjī, who was born in 200/815[6] and died in 292/904[5]. An authority on Qur'ān interpretation, he was an extraordinarily successful teacher. He had large numbers of students and is said to have employed no less than seven *mustamlīs*. Many of the students were standing with their inkpots in their hands during his lectures, because they could not be accommodated in

I, 70. See 'Abbādī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 52. Al-'Abbādī has even less biographical information than Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 76.

246. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIV, from al-Farghānī.

247. Ed. Kern, II, 61.

the normal manner.²⁴⁸ It probably was important for Ṭabarī to have a man of this stature as a follower of his *madhhab*. Others identifiable as belonging to the early core of Jarīris during their master's lifetime were the government official (*kātib*) Ibn Abī al-Thalj (238-322/852[3]-934)²⁴⁹ and Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Maṣṣūr, who died in his early seventies in the year 327/938[9]. He was a member of the Ibn Munajjim family, and his pedigree clarifies his position in it. The Ibn Munajjims had produced several generations of courtiers and litterateurs. Some were also well-known as speculative theologians. Abū al-Ḥasan wrote *An Introduction to and support of Ṭabarī's school* as well as other works on his *madhhab*.²⁵⁰

Aḥmad b. Kāmil, Ṭabarī's biographer, also belonged to the original group of Jarīris. As a judge in al-Kūfah under the jurisdiction of the chief judge in Baghdad, Ibn Kāmil was in the position to promote the legal school to which he belonged. It seems, however, that he was a somewhat self-important and difficult personality. His juridical views were said to have been eclectic and in a way probably produced yet another legal school.²⁵¹

The best known Jarīrī of the next generation who no longer had personal contact with Ṭabarī was al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyyā' al-Nahrawānī, also referred to as Ibn Ṭarrār al-Jarīrī. Among other works, al-Mu'āfā wrote a large commentary on the Qur'ān; but his fame among posterity derived mainly from a literary work,

248. Also Kashshī or Kachchī, Abū Muslim Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh b. Muslim has an entry in *TB*, VI, 120-4. He appears as Ṭabarī's authority in *Tafsīr*, II, 152 f., 233, l. 22, and 234, l. 6 (*ad Qur.* 2:197, 233); IV, 15, l. 12 (*ad Qur.* 3:97). Another scholar older than Ṭabarī but a transmitter of material from him was Abū Shu'ayb 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan (206-95/821[2]-907[8]). See Ibn 'Asākir, LXIX f.; *TB*, IX, 435-7. However, he does not appear to have been a Jarīrī.

249. See *TB*, I, 338.

250. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 143 f.; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, VIII, 246 f.; Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 164; Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 439; Stern, "Abū 'Isā," 438. Ibn al-Nadīm also listed him among the Mu'tazilah; see Fück, "Neue Materialien," 307, and Dodge's translation of the *Fihrist*, I, 428 f.

One wonders whether Ṭabarī's interest in "time" (see below, translation, 159 and 169 ff.) was in any way connected with the *Kitāb al-Awqāt* written by Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Munajjim or with the *Kitāb al-Zamān* of Ibn Kāmil (see *Irshād*, II, 17, ed. Rifā'i, IV, 105. *Irshād* cites *Fihrist*, where, however, this title and some other titles of Ibn Kāmil's publications do not appear on p. 32).

251. For Ibn Kāmil as a Jarīrī, see also below, 67. For another old Jarīrī, see above, n. 14.

entitled *al-Jalis al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfi wa-al-anīs al-nāṣiḥ al-shāfi* (cited here as Mu'āfā, *Jalis*). He served as judge for Bāb al-Ṭāq, a section of Baghdad which enjoyed long-standing fame as a center of literary and scholarly activity. In Yāqūt's words, al-Mu'āfā attempted to promote the Jarīrī *madhhab* by supporting (as Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Munajjim had done), calling attention to, and defending it.²⁵²

The Jarīrī *madhhab* never gained a foothold strong enough to guarantee its survival in the harshly competitive world of politics dominated by the large and powerful legal sector of society. As Ibn Kāmil's career exemplifies, there were many persons practicing *ijtihād* and acting as potential founders of schools. Understandably, the competition was particularly brutal in the capital of the Empire, but even a powerful provincial base, such as had been enjoyed by al-Awzā'i, often failed to ensure success. From all we know, it appears that Jarīrism was not distinctive enough to make it on purely intellectual grounds, and its followers were not sufficiently aggressive, or lacked political opportunity, to infiltrate the judiciary on a large scale so as to acquire the momentum necessary for gaining and perpetuating power,

By the time of Ṭabarī, certain legal schools, such as the Ḥanafites, Mālikites, and Shāfi'ites, had become firmly entrenched and, as history was to show, could no longer be displaced. Wherever there was acute rivalry for political control through the judiciary, the atmosphere was easily poisoned, and often lasting division resulted that affected even personal relations.²⁵³ Normally, however, a certain harmony appears at least outwardly to have been prevalent. A debate about whether the formula "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate (*basmalah*)" was

252. On al-Mu'āfā, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 236; *Irshād*, VII, 162-4, ed. Rifā'i, XIX, 151-4; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 522 f.

Makhlad b. Ja'far al-Bāqarī (d. 370/981) supposedly studied with Ṭabarī and, at the end of his life, claimed the right to (the transmission of?) Ṭabarī's *History*. Nothing is said about his having been a Jarīrī, but his son Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm (325-410/937-1020) was so described. See *TB*, XIII, 176 f., and VI, 189-91, in particular, 190, l. 3. For their role in the transmission of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūsiyyah*, see below, 123 f. Further Jarīris mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, 135, cannot be traced elsewhere. Lists of Jarīris compiled by modern scholars may be found, for instance, in the introduction to the edition of Mu'āfā, *Jalis*, I, 44.

253. An example on the large scale is the apparent gradual development of bad relations between Ḥanafites and Shāfi'ites in Nisābūr during the fourth/tenth century, see Bulliet, *Patricians*, 31 ff.

to be counted as part of the first sūrah of the Qur'ān that took place not long after Ṭabarī's death, is a good illustration of the generally peaceful state of affairs.

Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: One night, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-'Abbās b. Mujāhid came to us, while we were studying with him the large work on the Qur'ān reading of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā'.²⁵⁴ He found us engaged in a debate with some Shāfi'ite colleagues as to whether the *basmalah* belonged to the Book or did not belong to it. The meeting room was crowded with Shāfi'ites, Mālikites, Ḥanafites, and our colleagues (that is, Jarīris). Because of my studying (Qur'ān reading) with him, Ibn Mujāhid occasionally called me Kisā'ī.²⁵⁵ So now he said to me: What is it that all of you here are engaged in? I told him, and he said: To which juridical school do you belong? I replied: That of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī. He said: May God show mercy to (the late) Abū Ja'far! He told us the *ḥadīth* of Nūḥ b. Abī Bilāl—Sa'īd al-Maqburī—Abū Hurayrah about the *basmalah*.²⁵⁶

Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid then started to praise Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī. He said: We have heard that he met with al-Muzanī, but don't ask how he bested him with all those Shāfi'ites present who were listening to him! (Ibn Mujāhid) did not mention anything that happened between the two.

254. Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived roughly from the 60s/684-9 to about 154/770. See, for instance, *EF*², I, 105 f., s. v., Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 158; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 5 f., 17; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 288-92. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 31, Ibn Mujāhid (see above, n. 121) wrote a large and a small work on Qur'ān reading, as well as a work on the Qur'ān reading of Abū 'Amr. This work is probably the one meant here. The scene described is a meeting of some of those who were students of Ibn Mujāhid in Qur'ān reading, at which Ibn Mujāhid dropped in. He should have known, however, that Ibn Kāmil was a Jarīri without having to ask him on that particular occasion. Perhaps the plural is meant, so that the question was about others in the gathering.

255. Ibn Mujāhid, who was known for his friendly banter (*mudā'abah*), is comparing his gifted student Ibn Kāmil with the famous second/eighth-century Qur'ān reader and philologist, see *EF*², V, 174 f., s. v. al-Kisā'ī. Ibn Mujāhid's authority Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā known as the younger Kisā'ī (see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 279) is hardly meant.

256. For Ṭabarī on the *basmalah*, see *Tafsīr*, I, 37, where he refers back to *Latīf* and promises an exhaustive treatment for a later major work; see below, 113. The Prophet's *ḥadīth* on the various names of the first sūrah (*Tafsīr*, I, 36, ll. 22 ff.) may not be the one meant here.

Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: I (had earlier?) asked Abū Ja'far about the problem he had debated with al-Muzanī, but he did not mention it. He was not the person to boast about having gained the better of an adversary²⁵⁷ in a discussion. Abū Ja'far used to stress al-Muzanī's excellence; he praised him and always said what a good Muslim he was.²⁵⁸

Ṭabarī's altercation with Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī (255-97/869-910), the son of the founder of the Zāhirite school, was potentially troublesome, but ended peaceably. Basically, it reflects an amicable environment in which scholars of different outlooks in the fields of law and *hadīth* lived and worked together. Dāwūd b. 'Alī (200[2]-70/815[8]-84) did not, we are told, measure up to Ṭabarī's all encompassing scholarship. He was an excellent, highly skilled debater. He also tended toward exhibiting a certain playfulness. Ṭabarī found it totally out of place whenever serious scholarly problems were under discussion. He studied with Dāwūd for some time and copied many of his works and lectures. After his death, as many as eighty fascicles of Dāwūd's treatises were found, written in Ṭabarī's fine hand.²⁵⁹ Among them was a discussion of a subject that continued to be hotly debated, that of the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. It had taken place between Dāwūd and the Muṭazilite Abū Mujālid al-Ḍarīr in the time of al-Muwaffaq, that is, in the last decade of Dāwūd's life.²⁶⁰ Once, apparently near the end of Dāwūd's life, Ṭabarī got the better of him in a debate held in the presence of Dāwūd's followers. One of them, provoked by seeing his master being defeated, made some acerbic remarks against Ṭabarī who left in a huff and wrote a treatise against Dāwūd. Dāwūd's son Abū Bakr came to his father's aid, apparently shortly after the latter's death. Like Ṭabarī,

257. Following the emendation in *Irshād*, ed. Rifā'ī.

258. See *Irshād*, VI, 433, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 53 f. See also above, n. 101.

259. It is conceivable, as suggested by the paragraphing of the text in *Irshād*, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 78, that the reference is to Dāwūd and his library and fine hand, but this seems unlikely.

260. Abū Mujālid Ahmad b. al-Ḥusayn, an active Mu'tazilite and a client of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim, died in 268/862, according to Ibn Kāmil, rather than in the following year. See *TB*, IV, 95 f.; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, VI, 33 (where 270 is indicated as the date of death); 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsah*, 294 (with further references). For Ṭabarī's views on the subject, see, in particular, *Tabṣīr*, fols. 101a-102a, and *Ṣarīḥ*, passim.

Abū Bakr had been a precocious child. At the age of sixteen, he took over his deceased father's teaching (*ḥalqah*) and issued legal opinions (*fatwā*).²⁶¹ He often seems to have done so in the same lighthearted spirit which led to the composition of his most famous work, an anthology of love poetry entitled *Kitāb al-Zahrah*. It is possible that his *Kitāb al-Intiṣār 'alā Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī* was the work in defense of his father.²⁶² Abū Bakr also attacked Ṭabarī in a work of his on the principles of jurisprudence (*al-Wuṣūl ilā ma'rifat al-uṣūl*). The issue was the interpretation of consensus (*ijmā'*). In *Ikhtilāf*, he alleged, Ṭabarī defined consensus as the agreement only of those legal authorities whose views he discussed in that work. Abū Bakr, insisting on *ijmā'* as the consensus of all legal authorities, seems to have taken this definition as Ṭabarī's general view on *ijmā'* beyond that particular work.²⁶³ The controversy went on for a long time. Then one day, when Abū Bakr by chance visited a common acquaintance named Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid, Ṭabarī happened to be there, too. He was Abū Bakr b. Dāwūd's elder by thirty years, but he treated him with the greatest courtesy and remembered his father with high praise. This put an end to their hostility.²⁶⁴

Ṭabarī's relationship with the Ḥanbalites was of a totally different character. It is pictured as having had an important and disturbing impact on his life. This seems, in fact, to have been the case in some respect. The reports we have about it are all close to his time, but they are confused and contradictory. Their historicity has been denied.²⁶⁵ However, while they reflect propaganda and appear to have been put into circulation by Ṭabarī's Ḥanbalite opponents, there is no good reason to go quite that far.

What caused the enmity of contemporary Ḥanbalites toward

261. See *TB*, V, 256, l. 13.

262. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 255, ed. Pellat, V, 196; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 217, l. 28. The suggestion, made *ad* Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVII, n. g, that the author of *Intiṣār* was Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd is unsupportable.

263. The Zāhirite view of *ijmā'* is discussed in Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 32 ff.

264. For a translation of the report on the episode, see below, 121 ff. It may be noted that there was bitter animosity between Ibn Ḥanbal and Dāwūd which was started by the former, see *TB*, VIII, 373 f., quoted by Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 130; Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 134.

265. See Kern's introduction to his edition of *Ikhtilāf*, 8 f. Kern's biographical sketch of Ṭabarī there and in his article on *Ikhtilāf* was an astonishing accomplishment in its time.

Ṭabarī? He was originally attracted to Baghdad by the fame of Ibn Ḥanbal,²⁶⁶ and he continued to express the greatest respect for him.²⁶⁷ His authorities and older contemporaries were students of Ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Ḥanbal's younger son 'Abdallāh (213-90/828[9]-903),²⁶⁸ who was the chief transmitter of his father's large collection of traditions, was only ten years older than Ṭabarī, and there was a constant overlap between 'Abdallāh's and Ṭabarī's teachers. Direct contact between Ṭabarī and Ibn Ḥanbal's family appears not to be attested, but they must have known one another. The final break between him and the Ḥanbalites is likely to have occurred with the publication of *Ikhtilāf*, which completely disregards Ibn Ḥanbal.²⁶⁹ Ṭabarī is alleged to have expressed the opinion that he did not think of Ibn Ḥanbal as a jurist whose work in the field of jurisprudence compared with that of other great authorities but rather as an important *ḥadīth* scholar.²⁷⁰ This observation is quite accurate and was endorsed by posterity as well as shared by some Ḥanbalites. It is, however, understandable that it could have led to riots if it was ever expressed *ex cathedra*. Another statement to the effect that he had not seen anyone transmitting legal opinions from Ibn Ḥanbal or any followers of his that were considered authoritative²⁷¹ was a slap in the face of contemporary Ḥanbalites. Ṭabarī may not have been so imprudent as to make these remarks in public in the form in which they are preserved; they may have surfaced in Ḥanbalite attacks against him and reflect Hanbalite suspicion as to how he felt about their school.

Another, and possibly decisive, factor was the situation in

266. See above, n. 44.

267. See *Ṣariḥ*, text, 198, trans., 191. For the strange report on an apology full of praise for Ibn Ḥanbal and his school, see below, 104.

268. One of the authorities for the dates of 'Abdallāh's birth and death was al-Ṣawwāf, on whom see above, n. 237. Like Ibn Kāmil, al-Ṣawwāf was a student of 'Abdallāh. See *TB*, IX, 376, ll. 14 f.

269. The only reference to Ibn Ḥanbal ('Abū 'Abdallāh') traced so far in *Ikhtilāf* is an indirect one; see ed. Schacht, 139, l. 14, and Schacht's introduction, XV.

270. Since the basic sources do not seem to mention this remark, its historicity is slightly suspect. According to Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ihtilāf*," 66, l. 1, the authorities mentioning it are Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*; Abū al-Fidā', *Annales*; Ibn al-Shiḥnah (in the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Būlāq, 1290, VIII, 110), all under the year 310, and Ḥājji Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 33. When it came to enumerate the fields in which Ibn Ḥanbal was a leading authority, mention of him as *imām al-ḥadīth* came first; see Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 5.

271. See *Irshād*, VI, 436, ll. 5 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 58.

which Ḥanbalism found itself in Ṭabarī's time. It was the latest of the then prominent and active legal schools²⁷² and was still struggling to become securely established when Ṭabarī, along with others, was a potential rival. The Ḥanbalites, moreover, counted in their ranks fighters determined to the point of fanaticism to promote themselves and their *madhhab*. Their readiness to use violence was effective as a deterrent to many scholars; they may have been less courageous than Ṭabarī, who refused to be intimidated.²⁷³

The Ḥanbalite struggle for ultimate success required a rallying point in the form of a slogan that could serve as a touchstone for true belief. A strange interpretation of the "praiseworthy position (*maqāman maḥmūdān*)" promised to the Prophet in Qur. 17:79 was chosen. It should be remembered that in Ibn Ḥanbal's life, the issue of the createdness or uncreatedness of the Holy Book had played a similar role. That issue was, of course, vastly more important, but it may not be quite as farfetched as it seems that his followers unconsciously felt that they, too, needed a dramatic issue to make themselves heard in the rough-and-tumble of religious politics.

Qur'ān 17:79 was generally explained as eschatological²⁷⁴ and the "praiseworthy position" as referring to Muḥammad's role as intercessor with the Deity on the Last Day. There was, however, a tradition reported from Mujāhid (but not found in the preserved recension of his commentary on Qur. 17:79) which reached Ṭabarī by way of 'Abbād b. Ya'qūb al-Asadī—Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl—Layth b. Abī Sulaym. It states that the "praiseworthy position" means that Muḥammad will be seated by God on his divine Throne.²⁷⁵ Ḥanbalite championship of the tradi-

272. The latest authority frequently quoted in *Ikhtilāf* is the Shāfi'ite Abū Thawr (Ibrāhīm b. Khālid), who died in 240/854, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 491.

273. A number of contemporaries who did not want to tangle with Mujāhid's tradition are named in Dhahabī, *'Uluww*, 124-6; see also 75, 94, 99. It seems they did not offer resistance as Ṭabarī did eventually, even if, as was his nature, he too compromised on the issue for some time. The father of Abū Bakr, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, is mentioned as an advocate of the permissibility of transmitting Mujāhid's tradition in Khallāl, *Musnad*, and Qurtubī, *Jāmi'*, X, 311.

274. In fact, the eschatological meaning of the verse does not seem certain and appears to be based solely on the use of the root *b-'-th*.

275. For the transmitters, see below, translation, nn. 1139, 239, and 54. Al-Layth is described as the son of Abū Sulaym in Khallāl, *Musnad*, and Dhahabī, *'Uluww*,

tion produced vehement outpourings of hatred against those who opposed it, allegedly with equal immoderation. They were called by every conceivable epithet; they were branded as innovators, liars, ignoramuses, heretics (*zindīq*), and unbelievers. Above all, they were seen as Jahmīs, that is, speculative theologians (Mu'tazilites). Their nefarious intent—or, at any rate, the result of their attitude—was to deny a singular distinction to the Prophet, and, in the process, they defamed the exemplary Muslim that was Mujāhid. Already Ibn Ḥanbal's principal successor as spokesman for his legal school, Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 275/888),²⁷⁶ was strongly partial to Mujāhid's tradition and appears to have employed the "praiseworthy position" question as a sort of shibboleth. Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī's student and successor as the principal Ḥanbalite scholar of his time, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923), took up the subject. He reproduced his teacher's arguments at length and thus preserved them for posterity.²⁷⁷ His younger contemporary, al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941),²⁷⁸ then made the most of it. He missed no opportunity to proclaim Qur. 17:79 as referring to the Prophet's being seated on the divine Throne. Although al-Barbahārī's name is not mentioned in connection with Ṭabarī's Ḥanbalite trouble, he probably must be seen as the person behind much of it.

125, l. 3. He was a transmitter of Mujāhid; the better-known al-Layth b. Sa'd was born too late for that.

This interpretation is, of course, not incompatible with Muḥammad's position as chief intercessor. See Khallāl, *Musnad*, 83.

276. For Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Hajjāj al-Marrūdhī, see Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 56–63; Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, XII, 201 f.; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, IV, 506, s. v. Marw al-Rūdh. According to Dhahabī, 'Uluww, 125, l. 2, he wrote in defense of Mujāhid's tradition (see below, n. 277). Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 60, states that al-Marrūdhī was asked about the Jahmiyyah's rejection of the "story of the Throne." This may refer to alleged Mu'tazilah views on the location of the Throne, rather than, specifically, to the tradition of Mujāhid.

277. For Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 511 f. I wish to thank J. van Ess for providing me with a xerox copy of Khallāl, *Musnad*, 75–99.

278. For al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Khalaf al-Barbahārī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 512; Laoust, in *Mélanges Massignon*, III, 22–5. Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 18–45, gives a good picture of his generally extremist positions. "Whenever al-Barbahārī attended a meeting, he would mention that God seats Muḥammad with Himself on the Throne." In 323/935, he was in hiding and his followers were strictly forbidden to assemble. One of them was accused of having set a disastrous fire in al-Karkh, see Hamadhāni, *Takmilah*, 79 f., ed. Cairo, XI, 294–6. See further Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 344, and the indexes of *Eclipse* and Massignon, *Passion*², as well as Allard, *Attributs*, 103 f.

The actual course of the events affecting Ṭabarī can be reconstructed only with difficulty, because supporters on both sides apparently circulated conflicting reports. Matters appear to have come to a head after the year 290/903. In that year, Ṭabarī returned to his home town in Tabaristān on a second, and apparently last, visit. He no doubt used the Khurāsān Road that took him through such large cities as Dīnawar and Hamadhān. In Dīnawar, he stopped to meet with scholars there and to give lectures; he may very well have done the same in other towns along the road, thus making his journey profitable intellectually and, possibly, economically. On his return to Baghdad, three Ḥanbalites, who do not seem further identifiable,²⁷⁹ asked Ṭabarī about his views on Mujāhid's tradition. Ṭabarī is said to have declared bluntly that it was absurd. Moreover, he added a flippant jingle ridiculing it:

Praised be the One Who has no confidant
and has no one to sit on His Throne.

Enraged Ḥanbalites thereupon stoned his residence and caused a serious disturbance which had to be subdued by force.

Trouble with the Ḥanbalites that took a similar form is also reported at the time of Ṭabarī's death. In connection with it, Nāzūk is mentioned as chief of police. He was appointed to this position only in 310/922[3], the year Ṭabarī died, but he appears to have held high positions in the police before and may already have been in charge of Ṭabarī's protection against potential Ḥanbalite violence. In 309/921[2], the wazīr 'Alī b. 'Īsā had offered Ṭabarī the opportunity to debate the matter with the Ḥanbalites in his residence. Ṭabarī agreed, but the Ḥanbalites did not show up.²⁸⁰ However, shortly before his death, Ḥanbalite rioters supposedly

279. The three were Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jaṣṣās, Ja'far b. 'Arafah, and al-Bayāḍī. The identification of al-Bayāḍī with Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. 'Īsā al-Bayāḍī was proposed by the editor of *Irshād*, VI, 436, n. 1, but requires confirmation. This individual, whose family claimed 'Abbāsīd descent, wrote on Qur'ān reading. He was killed by the Qarmatians in 294/906 on his return from the pilgrimage, see *TB*, II, 401; Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, 384.

On the incident, see also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 158 (II, 168, of the original German). Goldziher's reference was to Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 161, whose source scurrilously attributes this information to a storyteller in the streets of Baghdad.

280. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 159, also Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCVIII, Bowen, 187 f.

pelted his house with stones so numerous that they formed a large wall in front of it. The verse just quoted was discovered written on the wall of Ṭabarī's house. After the riot subsided, someone wrote underneath it:

Aḥmad²⁸¹ will no doubt have a high position
when he comes to the Merciful One,

Who will draw him near and seat him nobly
to spite an(y) envier,

Upon a throne enveloping him²⁸² with perfume
to make livid an(y) obnoxious liar.

(He has) truly this unique position (*al-maqām*).

This has been transmitted by Layth from Mujāhid.

Inscriptions in verse or prose on the walls of houses are a standard device of the Arabic literary imagination. It seems most unlikely that a man in Ṭabarī's position and at his advanced age would have been so childish as to write inflammatory verses on the walls of his house. Someone else might have done it in order to provoke the Ḥanbalite mob. Presumably, however, the mural poetry was a literary embellishment invented by Ḥanbalites which crept into the vague reports about the event.²⁸³ The fact that historians report another bloody incident about *maqāman maḥmūdān* involving followers of the late Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī for the year 317/929²⁸⁴ neither confirms nor invalidates the historicity of the

281. "Aḥmad" apparently is meant to refer to the Prophet, but Ibn Ḥanbal's name was also Aḥmad. The undetermined singular of envier and liar in the following verses might be a veiled reference to a specific person, namely, Ṭabarī.

282. The translation "upon a throne enveloped with perfume" is possible, but the text in Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, I, 656, ll. 4 f. (Beirut, 1963) = III, 224, ll. 15 f. (Cairo, 1379/1959), speaks against it.

283. The entire preceding account is not in *TB* and Ibn 'Asākir. It appears in *Irshād*, VI, 436, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 57-9, and (quoted by?) Ṣafādī, *Wafī*, II, 286 f. See also Kern's introduction to his edition of *Ikhtilāf*, 8 f.

284. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, VIII, 157 f., and, with only minor differences, a Berlin manuscript described as al-Birzālī's *History* and quoted in the introduction of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, 9. The incident is, however, unreported in the other sources consulted by me. Schreiner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 436 f. (= ZDMG 52 [1898], 535 f.), refers to a ninth/fifteenth-century author.

event involving Ṭabarī.

The circumstances surrounding the debate about the "praiseworthy position" deserve some more clarification. In his *Musnad*, Ibn Ḥanbal includes no traditions that support the interpretation of the phrase as referring to the Prophet's being seated on the divine Throne.²⁸⁵ One might argue that the very fact that Ibn Ḥanbal has nothing to say about the impossibility of Mujāhid's interpretation could indicate that it could not be ruled out, using a type of argument employed by Ṭabarī in his discussion of the matter. This, however, is very unlikely. Ibn Ḥanbal may have simply disregarded Mujāhid's tradition as irrelevant or objectionable. After all, it had no *isnād* going back to more ancient authorities or the Prophet, while there were traditions having the Prophet's seal of approval that referred to intercession. Clearly, this made it necessary to invent an appropriate Prophetical tradition for Muḥammad's place on the divine Throne, and this was done. Ibn Battah (d. 387/997) listed one such tradition with the *isnād* Nāfi'—'Abdallāh b. 'Umar—the Prophet.²⁸⁶ He is certain not to have invented it himself. When it made its first appearance is hard to say; evidently, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl in the early years of the century did not yet know it.

In *Tafsīr*, Ṭabarī has a long and interesting discussion of the "praiseworthy position."²⁸⁷ It again shows him to be the great compromiser. He admits that intercession is the interpretation that is solidly documented and which therefore has the best claim to being correct. However, he says, the other interpretation cannot entirely be ruled out. As the composition of *Tafsīr* antedates

285. See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 375 f., 398 f., III, 354, for traditions on intercession. For the tradition of Gabriel sitting "on a footstool" or "on the throne," presumably the divine Throne, between heaven and earth, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, III, 306; Ibn Hajar, *Fath*, X, 305.

286. See Laoust, *Profession de foi d'Ibn Batta*, text, 61, trans., 112 f., especially note 1. In addition to Mujāhid, al-Wāhidī (d. 468/1075) refers to a tradition of Ibn Mas'ūd, see Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXI, 32. He may have the same tradition in mind, mixing up, as it sometimes happens, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar and 'Abdallah b. Mas'ūd. A tradition of 'Ā'ishah on the subject is discussed in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf*, 81, *ḥadīth* no. 39.

287. See *Tafsīr*, XV, 97, l. 10–100, l. 22. See the translation below, Appendix A, below, pp. 149–51. For another partial translation, see Andrae, *Person*, 270–2. For Ṭabarī's real feelings about Mujāhid and his tradition, it may be indicative that he rejects a view expressed by him with unusual harshness in connection with his commentary on the same verse of the Qur'ān, see *Tafsīr*, XV, 96, ll. 26–31.

the events described, it might be argued that Ṭabarī interpolated the discussion in *Tafsīr* after publication when Ḥanbalite hostility took such a truly ugly turn.²⁸⁸ This cannot be proved. It might be assumed that he took at first a conciliatory attitude such as is displayed in *Tafsīr* and renounced it at some later date when he got disgusted with Ḥanbalite violence. This seems more likely, but again there is no hard evidence for it. Whatever it was, the view expressed in *Tafsīr* did nothing to assuage Ḥanbalite opposition to him which appears to have had deeper roots than merely disagreement about a catchy slogan.

The arguments marshalled by Ṭabarī for the purpose of making Mujāhid's tradition admissible were derived from speculative theology and show him adept in its ways of thinking and debating. The basic issue, as he sees it, is the problem of contiguity (*mumāssah*). It had its proper place in physics but was transferred to theology by religious thinkers.²⁸⁹ Al-Ash'arī (ca 260–324/873[4]–935[6]), who lived most of his life in al-Baṣrah and was but a generation removed from Ṭabarī, considered the matter important enough to refer to it in his discussion of anthropomorphism (*tajsīm*). God is not upon the Throne, except in the sense that He is above it but does not touch it. According to Hishām b. al-Hakam, God's location is in one specific place (*fī makān dūn makān*). His place is the Throne, and He is in touch with it. The Throne encompasses and delimits Him. Another view holds that the Creator fills the Throne and is in touch with it. At this point, al-Ash'arī adds that some *ḥadīth* scholars hold that the Throne is not filled by Him and that He (is thus able to) seat His Prophet with Himself on the Throne.²⁹⁰ Ṭabarī considers the problem of God completely filling the Throne. He remarks on His contiguity and finds that only three possibilities apply to it. For him, however, the crucial point that must be made is that God's seating of Muḥammad on the Throne, with or without Himself, does not imply divinity ("lordship" *rubūbiyyah*) for the Prophet or deny his status as a human being ("servantship" *'ubūdiyyah*). In fact,

288. The information that he went even a step farther and apologized to the Ḥanbalites is suspect, see below, 104 f.

289. See Pines, *Atomenlehre*, 8 f., and, for instance, Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, 455 ff.

290. See Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 210 f., and, in different connections, 35, 155, 221, 301–4.

the implied hint at Muḥammadan divinity would appear to be the most objectionable feature of Mujāhid's tradition. In touching upon this aspect, Ṭabarī comes close to the possible reason why Mujāhid might have made this seemingly un-Islamic statement. Christianity speaks of the Son not only as sitting on a throne but also of some mysterious being as sitting together with the Father in His Throne (Rev. 3:21). Even in remote Mecca, Mujāhid could have heard about these views or seen one of the many representations of the Trinity or the enthroned Christ.²⁹¹ He may very well have felt that Muḥammad should be similarly distinguished as was the prophet of Christianity.

The Ḥanbalites were probably to be blamed for occasional difficulties Ṭabarī experienced in scheduling his lectures and for deterring a few out-of-town students from attending them or otherwise receiving instruction from him. Those who knew Ṭabarī best always played down the inconveniences he suffered from the Ḥanbalites. Considerable uncertainty attaches to the reports of what went on at the time of his death. Ṭabarī is said to have been virtually prevented from leaving his house. When he died, some questionable sources report that it was necessary to bury him "at night"²⁹² in his courtyard, apparently in order to forestall any untoward incidents at the funeral. It was not unusual for individuals to be buried in their houses,²⁹³ but it would not have been done ordinarily under the cover of darkness. If there was in-

291. Not much can be made in this connection of the allegation that Mujāhid used material provided by Christians and Jews in his Qur'ān commentary. See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 344, l. 7, and the remark transmitted through Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh (below, translation, n. 72) in Dhahabī, *Mizān*, III, 439; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, X, 43; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 29. As one would expect, Dhahabī refers to Mujāhid's view of *maqāman maḥmūdān* with disapproval.

On Mujāhid and the vibrating of the divine Throne, see Goldziher, *Richtungen*, 108 f.

A similar but different idea was already expressed in Khallāl, *Musnad*, 82. The Muslims would be the laughing stock of Christians if they denied to Muḥammad the honor of sitting on the divine Throne, while granting semidivine status to Jesus.

292. This key element appears in Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, I, 84; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 172; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, VIII, 98; *Irshād*, VI, 423, l. 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 40, ll. 11 f. Yāqūt remarks that he had this information from an unspecified source. The principal sources agree that Ṭabarī was buried on the morning after his death.

293. For instance, Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid was buried in a *turbah* in the harem of his house in Sūq al-'Aṭash. See above, n. 121.

deed noisy picketing of his home by Ḥanbalites which posed a threat of violence, it would have been taken care of expeditiously, and "tens of thousands soldiers" (used figuratively for enormously many) would hardly have been required. It is virtually unthinkable that someone of Ṭabarī's prominence and social standing would have been left without a well-attended funeral, unless he himself wanted it that way, and that anyone could have stopped such a funeral from taking place. Half a century earlier, something seemingly similar had happened, possibly also as the result of Ḥanbalite machinations. The great mystical writer al-Muḥāsibī was prevented from teaching, and, when he died, only four persons dared to attend his funeral.²⁹⁴ There is no proof that the events supposedly surrounding Ṭabarī's death and funeral were merely a calque on what was believed to have happened earlier to al-Muḥāsibī. At any rate, the latter was not as important a public figure as was Ṭabarī, whose death reverberated through all the leading and influential circles in Baghdad. It is more likely that if there were not very many people present when he was buried, it was because he himself had expressed the wish that it should be that way. The role of Ḥanbalite hostility, though real, seems to have been exaggerated in connection with his death as it was in his life.

His Death

Death came to Ṭabarī on Monday, Shawwāl 27, 310/February 17, 923.²⁹⁵ He was buried in his house the following morning. People prayed at his grave night and day for some time after his

294. See van Ess, *Gedankenwelt*, 10 f.

295. The complete dates found in *TB*, II, 166, were the only ones known to later biographers. The slight divergences between them can be interpreted in favor of the Monday date accepted here. Ibn Kāmil, who was present when Ṭabarī died, has Sunday evening, at two nights remaining of the month of Shawwāl. Converting the date to Shawwāl 27, this would be Monday, February 17. Another of Ṭabarī's students, who presumably was also there at the time, was 'Īsā b. Ḥāmid b. Bishr al-qāḍī [d. 368/979; see *TB*, XI, 178 f.]. He has Saturday evening, at four nights remaining. This would be Shawwāl 25, corresponding to Saturday, February 15. Ṣafadi, *Wāfi*, II, 284 f., understands this date to refer to Shawwāl 26, which, however, would correspond to Sunday, February 16. The decisive factor in favor of the Monday date is the incidental reference by al-Farghānī to the fact that Ṭabarī died on a Monday. See below, n. 300.

death.²⁹⁶ As was customary, many eulogies were composed. One by the famous philologist Ibn Durayd, with whom Ṭabarī was acquainted,²⁹⁷ is preserved in its entirety. A few verses are quoted of the eulogy of Abū Saʿīd b. al-Aʿrābī, apparently the mystic Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād.²⁹⁸

Legends, as they were commonly invented to glorify the last moments of life of great men, were also reported about Ṭabarī. He was told in his dying hours about a particular prayer unknown to him. He called for ink and paper to record it. Asked why he did that in his hopeless condition, he replied: "Everybody should use any opportunity to acquire new knowledge until he is dead."²⁹⁹ On the Monday on which he died, al-Farghānī reports, he asked for water to make the ablution for the noon prayer. When it was suggested to him that, weak as he was, he should combine the noon prayer with the afternoon prayer, he refused.³⁰⁰

He had a last word for his assembled students and friends, among them Ibn Kāmil, who asked for advice that would be beneficial for them to achieve salvation. His answer was worthy of the single-minded scholar he had been all his life: "My advice for you is to follow my religious practice and to act in accordance with what I have explained in my books—or something like it," the reporter rather lamely adds. "Then he repeated the confession of faith and mentioned God many times. He wiped his face with his hand and used it to close his eyes. When he let go, his spirit had left his body."³⁰¹

296. This fact is always stressed, apparently on the authority of Ibn Kāmil. See *TB*, II, 166, l. 19.

297. On Ibn Durayd (223–321/838–933), see *El*² III, 757 f., s. v. He reported Ṭabarī's remark on Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, see above, n. 160.

298. See *TB*, II, 166–9; Ibn 'Asākir, XCI–XCVI, and the other biographers for his and Ibn Durayd's eulogies. For Ibn al-Aʿrābī (246–341/860–953), see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 660 f. The addition of "Abū Saʿīd" in Ibn 'Asākir and Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 282, makes the identification virtually certain. It would seem unexpected to find a writer on mystical topics among the mourners of Ṭabarī (see above, n. 227). Moreover, as far as we know, Ibn al-Aʿrābī had no ties to Baghdad. Ibn 'Asākir, XCII, further quotes verses by a certain Muḥammad b. al-Rūmī, apparently a *mawlā* of the Ṭāhūrīd family.

299. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIV. The transmission of the report involved al-Muʿāfā and a member of the Ibn al-Furāt family.

300. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII f. Al-Farghānī had the information from Abū Bakr (b. Sahl) al-Dīnawarī

301. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIX, continuing the preceding report. For another

There were always dreams conveying messages from the other world. Ṭabarī, too, had his message for a dreamer. Everything that had happened to him, and which others would have to face when they died, was really and truly good, he insisted. The dreamer then asked him whether he had been welcomed by God and would be willing to remember him to God. Ṭabarī took his wrist into his hand and pressed it to his breast, exclaiming: "You ask *me* to remember you to God, when we are taking you to the Messenger of God to give you his support?"³⁰² The Prophet, he meant to say, was more effective than he could be, and entry to the Prophet was assured to someone like him who had devoted more than seventy years to Islam with his immortal labors as a jurist and expert in traditions, Qur'ān interpreter, and historian.

His Works

The major works of Ṭabarī were first "dictated" in lectures. He worked on them at various times throughout his life. Their subject matter allowed for separate treatment of parts dealing with self-contained subjects. There is a considerable difference between the dates of final publication and the earlier dates when substantial portions of a given work got into circulation. This is the main reason why what seem to be the same works are referred to under different titles and what seem to be different titles are really books forming part of the final publication of one and the same work.

Ṭabarī's method of citing his own works is not uniform and raises at times some doubt as to whether the same work is meant. He prefers reference to subject matter. Formal titles were usually disregarded by him, if, in fact, they ever existed. Some works are described as having been incomplete at the time of his death. In his eighties, he had many incompleting large-scale projects; he must have worked on them for a long time and presumably used them in his lecturing. Their titles were naturally never fixed.

Another complicating factor affecting earlier bibliographers as

deathbed story involving Ibn Kāmil, see above, n. 237.

302. See Ibn 'Asākir, XCVI. The dreamer was a Hāshimite, al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. He was in charge of public prayers (*ṣāhib al-ṣalāh*) at the mosque of al-Ruṣāfah, and he died seventy-five years old in 333/945. See *TB*, VI, 339.

well as us is the loss of the lists of Ṭabarī's works in their original forms. Those who preserved extracts from the bibliographies also had no longer any knowledge of many of the works listed. They also could not check the fate of supposedly unfinished books.

We have a certain amount of external and internal evidence for the order of his works as to the time of composition or publication. Our information is, however, incomplete. Thus, it is not advisable to arrange the following bibliography chronologically. The safe procedure chosen here is to follow an alphabetical arrangement according to the first words of known or presumptive titles and to provide ample cross-references.

Listings in square brackets are to titles which appear to be parts of other works, or to works wrongly attributed to Ṭabarī. The alphabetization disregards *kitāb*, *risālah*, and the preposition *fī*. For an attempt to present the works according to chronological order and to subject matter, see Appendix B, below, pp. 152–54.

[*Al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīсах* and slightly different forms: See *Ādāb al-nufūs*]

[*Ādāb al-ḥukkām* "The proper ways of procedure for judges": See *Basīṭ*]

Ādāb al-manāsik "The proper ways of performing the ritual of the pilgrimage"

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI f.³⁰³:

Kitāb Ādāb al-manāsik. The work deals with what a pilgrim needs from the day he leaves (for the pilgrimage) and what he should choose to take care of³⁰⁴ for the beginning of his journey, what he should say and what prayers he should say upon mounting and descending, and the noteworthy sacred places (*al-manāzil wa-al-mashāhid*) he should see, and so on, during his entire pilgrimage.

Irshād VI, 453, l. 1, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, l. 3, mentions only

303. Ibn 'Asākir seems to have been quoted by Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*.

304. This translates *al-itmām*, but the reading is dubious. De Goeje's correction to *al-ayyām* "the days he should select" may be preferable.

the title which he states to be *Mukhtaṣar manāsik al-ḥajj*. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, l. 4, shortens Ibn 'Asākir's title to *Kitāb al-Manāsik*.³⁰⁵

Ādāb al-nufūs "The proper ways of spiritual behavior"

The work is quoted under the title of *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīṣah* by al-Tanūkhī (see above, n. 197) and *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-nafīṣah wa-al-akhlāq al-ḥamīdah* by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 277, ll. 12 f. There are other variants, but there can be no doubt as to their referring to *Ādāb al-nufūs*. The use of the title in quotations may indicate that manuscripts bearing it were in circulation. The former title also appears in Ḥājji Khalifah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 42, from which it was derived by d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 52b.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI:

He started on the *Ādāb al-nufūs*. It is another of his precious works. He structured in it man's religious duties according to all parts of the human body beginning with the heart, the tongue, the eyes, the ears, and so on. It includes the traditions on the subject from the Prophet, the Companions, the Followers, and all those who can be used as evidence. In the work, he also mentions and refers to as evidence the discussions of Sūfīs and pious men, including their reported deeds and all that is clearly correct there. He did not complete the work.

Irshād, VI, 449, l. 18–450, l. 14, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 76, l. 14–77, l. 15:

One of his fine works is the one entitled *Adab*³⁰⁶ *al-nufūs al-jayyidah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīṣah*, often called by him *Adab al-nafs al-sharīfah wa-al-akhlāq al-ḥamīdah*. In its introduction (*tarjamah*), he went into great detail with respect to the religious sciences, excellence, asceticism, sincere de-

305. A passage in Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, V, 352, l. 1, cites Ṭabarī as reporting *fi al-manāsik* a tradition from Mujāhid's Qur'ān commentary. It may refer to this work, but the subject matter dealt with has no explicit connection to the pilgrimage and the reference could be to any of Ṭabarī's legal works.

306. The singular *adab* is used in the passage, instead of the usual plural *ādāb*.

votion, gratitude, and the discussion of hypocrisy, haughtiness, submissiveness, humility, and patience³⁰⁷ as well as the command to do good and the prohibition to do evil. He began with a discussion of Satanic inspiration (*waswasah*) and psychologically motivated human actions (*a'māl al-qulūb*). Then he mentioned a good deal about prayer (*du'ā'*), the excellence of the Qur'ān, and the moments and indications as to when prayer is heard. He included the traditions on the subject transmitted from the Prophet's practice (*sunan*) and the statements of the Companions and the Followers. He discontinued lecturing (on the work, *imlā'*) at some point in the discussion of the command to do good and the prohibition to do evil. About five hundred folios were made public by him.

He had done four parts which had not yet been made public in lectures. (Those four parts) were in the hands of the copyist/bookseller (*al-warrāq*) Abū Sa'īd 'Umar b. Aḥmad al-Dīnawarī³⁰⁸ when (the latter) left for Syria with them. He was waylaid on the road. Only two parts remained in his possession. They contained the discussion of man's duties to God in connection with his senses of seeing and hearing. He had begun (those four parts) in 310/922. He died a short while after having discontinued lecturing. He used to say: "If this book is made public, it will be a beauty." For after the discussion of man's rights and duties, he wanted to continue it to (indicating) the protection thereby offered against the dangers of the Day of Resurrection and the conditions governing it and the circumstances and happenings in the other world and mention Paradise and the Fire.

Irshād, VI, 437, ll. 16–18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60, ll. 4–6, and similarly VI, 456, ll. 14 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 86, ll. 5–7, refers to *Ādāb al-nufūs* as indicative of Ṭabarī's asceticism, abstinence, humility, integrity, purity of action, sincerity of intent, and propriety in whatever he died.

The title *Ādāb al-nufūs* appears again in Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 4, with no further information.

Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274, ll. 2 f., was confused by Ibn

307. It may be noted that all these topics were treated in Ṣūfī handbooks.

308. See above, n. 202.

'Asākīr's text, on which he drew, and considered *Tartīb al-'ulamā'* mentioned immediately before as an independent work, while it is presumably a part of *Basīt*. This results in his stating that "the *Tartīb al-'ulamā'* is one of his precious works. He started out in it with the *Ādāb al-nufūs* and *Şūfī* statements. He did not complete the work."

For al-Tanūkhī's quotation from the work, see above, n. 197. The passage preserved in Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, 277, was quoted as an example of Ṭabarī's stylistic elegance. It reflects the pietistic tone of the work. It consists of a chapter heading and the beginning words of the chapter, apparently taken from the work's opening pages:

The explanation of [the state] which makes it necessary³⁰⁹
for a human being to check his state with respect
to his psychologically motivated activity
for God

There is no state of the believer where his enemy (Satan) who is in charge of him does not try to entice him to his own way and to lie in wait for him, so as to block his (progress along) the straight roads of his Lord. Thus Satan said to his Lord, as he was made by Him one of those hoping for "postponement": "I shall lie (in wait) for them along Your straight path. Then I shall approach them from in front and from behind."³¹⁰ He was hoping to make his hostile expectation come true, as expressed in what he said to his Lord: "If You grant me postponement to the Day of Resurrection, I shall indeed take over control of (Adam's) progeny with few exceptions."³¹¹ It is therefore every intelligent person's duty to train himself strenuously to make (Satan's) expectations not come true, to frustrate his hope, and to make every effort to humiliate him. Nothing in human activity is more detested by Satan than man's obedience to his Lord and disobedience to his own (Satan's) command, and nothing gives him greater joy than (man's) disobedience to his Lord and his

309. Read *yūjibu* for *yajibu*.

310. Qur. 7:14-17.

311. Qur. 17:62.

following his own (Satan's) command.

[*Ādāb al-quḍāh* or *Adab al-qāḍī* "The proper ways of procedure for judges": See *Basīṭ*]

Al-Ādar (?) *fī al-uṣūl* "? on the principles"

Irshād, VI, 453, l. 4, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 6 f.:

He promised the *Kitāb al-'-d-r fī al-uṣūl* but made nothing of it public.

The "principles" are presumably those of jurisprudence, here to be treated in monograph form. Neither editor of *Irshād* indicates what '-l-'-d-r could possibly mean. Assuming some slight corruption in the text, *fī al-uṣūl* may not be part of a title, and something totally different may be concealed under the reading '-l-'-d-r.

[*Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām* "The laws of the Muslim religion"

This was the working title for a comprehensive exposition of the sharī'ah that Ṭabarī had apparently planned but never executed as intended. See *Tafsīr*, I, 37 (translated below, 113), and II, 352, l. 16 [*ad Qur.* 2:238].]

[*Fī ahl al-baghy* "On wrongdoers (rebels)": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Risālat al-Akhlāq* "On moral behavior": See *Mūjaz*]

[*Amthilat al-'udūl* "Forms for attorneys"

This is said to be the title of a book on document forms (*shurūṭ*), a part of *Laṭīf*.]

[*al-'Aqīdah* "(Ṭabarī's) Creed": See *Ṣarīḥ*]

Listed as a separate title in Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 8, the "Creed" is identical with *Ṣarīḥ*. A quotation from it in Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 280, and 'Uluww, 150, corresponds to *Ṣarīḥ*, text,

198, trans., 192.]

[*Al-Aṭ'imah* "Dietary laws": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Baṣīr fī ma'ālim al-dīn*: See *Tabṣīr*]

Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'ī' al-Islām "A plain and simple exposition of the laws of the Muslim religion"

This title was used by Ṭabarī in *History*, I, 1455. He says there with reference to divergent statements as to how the Prophet performed the "prayer of fear" upon meeting with potential enemies during the raid of Dhāt al-riqā': "God willing, I shall mention the different statements in our book entitled *Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'ī' al-Islām* in the book on the prayer of fear."³¹²

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, ll. 22–24:

Kitāb al-Basīṭ fī al-fiqh. He did not complete it. The following books of it have been made public: The large book on document forms (*shurūṭ*), records and documents (*al-mahādir wa-al-sijillāt*), last wills (*al-waṣāyā*), the procedure for judges (*adab al-qāḍī*), ritual purity, prayer, and charity taxes.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI:

He started on his book *al-Basīṭ*. He made public its book on ritual purity in something like 1,500 folios. (The size was that large) because in each chapter, he mentioned the disagreements of the Companions, the Followers, and others according to their ways of transmission (that is, the various recensions in which their statements were transmitted). He also mentioned their reasons for the views chosen by them

³¹² *History*, I, 1453 ff., places the raid of Dhāt al-riqā' in the year 4/626. The circumstances were very much debated, and no agreement appears to have been achieved about the date of the raid and about the prayer of fear (*ṣalāt al-khawf*) connected with it. See the long exposition in Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, VIII, 420–33. See also, for instance, Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, ed. Wüstenfeld, 661 ff., trans. Guillaume, 445–57. Ibn Ḥajar, 426 f., refers to the passage in *History*, I, 1455, in a rather unclear manner; his reference to *Tafsīr* may refer to *Tafsīr*, VI, 94 (*ad Qur.* 5:11).

as their *madhhab* and added his own preference and the arguments for it at the end of each chapter. He made public most of the *Basīṭ*'s book on prayer and the entire *Ādāb al-ḥukkām*,³¹³ as well as the book on records and documents and the classification of scholars (*Tartīb al-'ulamā'*).³¹⁴

Irshād, VI, 448, l. 18–449, l. 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 75, l. 7–76, l. 13:

One of his excellent works is the one entitled *Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. He prefaced it with an interesting book entitled *Marātib al-'ulamā'*.³¹⁵ He included in it the invocation (*khuṭbah*) of the work and urged the reader to acquire religious and legal knowledge. He strongly criticized those of his colleagues³¹⁶ who restricted themselves to transmitting it without using its contents in their juridical activities. Then he mentioned the scholars among the Companions of the Messenger of God who held legal views like himself (*tafaqqaha 'alā madhhabihī*),³¹⁷ and the jurists of the major centers of the following four (generations) who successively transmitted that material. He started with Medina as the place to which the Prophet emigrated as well as his successors Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, and those after them.³¹⁸ (He continued with) Mecca, the Noble Sanctuary, followed by the two Iraqs al-Kufāh and al-Baṣrah, and then Syria and Khurāsān. After discussing ritual purity, he worked on the book on prayer. In this work (that is, the entire *Basīṭ*), he mentioned the disagreements and agreements among scholars exhaustively with clear explanations of (the views expressed by them) and the indication of who held a particular view, and then he stated what was correct (in his

313. The correct reading *al-ḥukkām*, as against the text's *al-aḥkām*, is attested by Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, and Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*. The work is identical with *Adab al-qādī/Ādāb al-quḍāh*.

314. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 21–274, l. 2, has an abridged version, as does Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 122. Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 4, merely has *Basīṭ al-qawl*.

315. *Tartīb al-'ulamā'*.

316. The pronominal suffix refers to his own colleagues and students (see also n. 317). His criticism was no doubt held in general terms without naming names.

317. The pronominal suffix does not refer to the Prophet but to his own legal school.

318. Note that 'Ali is not mentioned.

opinion in each case).³¹⁹ He made public about two thousand folios.

He (also) published the *Basīṭ's Kitāb Ādāb al-quḍāh*, an outstanding accomplishment that is highly esteemed among his (publications, *al-ma'dūdah laḥū*) because, after the invocation (*khuṭbah*), he mentioned in it the praiseworthy character of judges and their secretaries. (He discussed) how judges must act after being appointed, what they must accept and what they must look at critically and then reverse earlier legal judgments. (He also included) a discussion of records (*sijillāt*), legal testimony (by experts, *shahādāt*), claims (of litigants, *da'āwī*), and evidence (*bayyināt*).³²⁰ It was to include a discussion of all the legal knowledge needed by judges (*al-ḥākim*), until he would finally be through with it. It is one thousand folios.

Ṭabarī used to recommend to his colleagues and students to devote serious study to *Basīṭ* and *Tahdhīb* in preference to any other of his works.

[*Al-Bayān fī uṣūl al-aḥkām* "A clear exposition of the legal principles": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Dalālah 'alā nubuwwat (Rasūl Allāh)* "Evidence for the Prophethood of the Messenger of God"]

Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl., I, 218, lists this title with reference to *History*, I, 1146:

Abū Ja'far says: Reports on the Prophethood (of Muḥammad) are innumerable. Therefore, if God wills, a monograph should be devoted to them.

Such a monograph may actually have been written by Ṭabarī and become part of one of his other publications, or he may have intended to write one and never did, but *al-Dalālah...* was cer-

319. See above, n. 216.

320. These are the ordinary elements of court proceedings. If the rest of the paragraph is correctly translated, it means that the entire work was to include much more legal material of interest to jurists and judges, but only a thousand folios were so far available of the chapter on judges.

tainly never meant to be an actual title and was merely a description of the contents.]

Dhayl al-Mudhayyal "The Appendix (with historical information on religious scholars, needed in connection with *History*)"

The public presentation of *Dhayl* started after 300/912-3; see below.

The skimpy selection (*muntakhab*) from the work that is preserved and was published with *History*, III, 2295-2561, ed. Cairo, XI, 492-705, repeatedly refers to "*al-Mudhayyal*" as if this were another work (and *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal* a supplement to it), but presumably, the complete text of the work, now lost, entitled *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*, was meant.³²¹

Al-Farghānī's *Ijāzah* refers to "*Kitāb Ta'rikh al-rijāl* 'History of personalities (= religious scholars)', entitled *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*."³²² In fact, the work is often listed as *Ta'rikh al-rijāl*; see Ibn 'Asākir (below); Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 8-10; Ṣafādī, *Wāfī*, II, 285, ll. 20 f.; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 9.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX:

Also complete is *Ta'rikh al-rijāl*, dealing with the Companions, the Followers, and their successors down to his own authorities from whom he wrote down (*kataba*) information.

Irshād, VI, 445, ll. 6-17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 70, l. 9-71, l. 3:

His book entitled *Kitāb Dhayl al-mudhayyal*. It includes the history (dates, *ta'rikh*) of the Companions of the Messenger of God who were killed or died during his life or after his death, in order of their relative closeness to him and to the Quraysh with respect to tribal affiliation. He then mentioned (the dates of) death of the Followers and the ancient Muslims after them, then their successors and down to his own teachers with whom he studied (*sami'a*). He in-

321. For the references, see *Dhayl*, III, 2321, 2335, 2358, 2476, ed. Cairo, XI, 512, 523, 540, 628.

322. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44, l. 18.

cluded a number (*jumalan*) of their traditions and opinions (*akhbārihim wa-madhāhibihim*), speaking up in defense of the outstanding scholars among them who were accused of holding opinions they did not, as, for instance, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ṭkrimah,³²³ and others. (On the other hand,) he also mentioned the weakness³²⁴ and softness of transmitters who were considered weak and soft. At the end, the work contains fine chapters on those whose brothers transmitted traditions from them, fathers and sons (who transmitted from one another), and those who were not known by their names but by their patronymics, and vice versa. It is a truly excellent work which *ḥadīth* students and historians are eager to have. He made it public in lectures after the year 300/912-3. It is about one thousand folios.

In another context, *Irshād*, VI, 454, l. 15, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 83, l. 10, adds that the beginning of *Dhayl* dealt with objectionable sectarian views, presumably, if the statement is correct, those falsely ascribed to early Muslims (?). In its lecture form, the work contained high praise for Abū Ḥanīfah; see above, n. 237.

Al-Faḍā'il "The virtues (and remarkable accomplishments and statements of certain ancient Muslims)"

Ṭabarī worked at different times on a project to collect comprehensive information on the "virtues" of the first four caliphs³²⁵ as well as al-'Abbās, the ancestor of the ruling 'Abbāsids. The formal titles of these works, if there were any, are in doubt.

The *Faḍā'il Abī Bakr wa-'Umar* are listed as an unfinished work in *Irshād*, VI, 452, l. 18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 80 f. According to *Irshād*, VI, 455 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 85, ll. 5 f., Ṭabarī wrote his work in response to extremist Shī'ah slander of the Prophet's Companions and began with Abū Bakr and 'Umar. The *Faḍā'il al-'Abbās* are

323. For these ancient Muslims, see below, translation, nn. 642, 64, and 161. The preserved excerpt of *Dhayl* appears to contain the accusations leveled against Ṭkrimah, see III, 2483-85, ed. Cairo, XI, 633-5.

324. *Irshād*, ed. Rifā'ī, has a meaningless *ṣirf* for *ḍa'f*.

325. 'Uthmān is only mentioned in Ibn 'Asākir in a rather perfunctory fashion. It is impossible to be sure, but he may have been intentionally excluded from the *Faḍā'il* series, despite Ṭabarī's ordinary view of the first four caliphs.

listed in the immediately following lines. In the second passage, *Irshād* adds: "He began with a fine invocation (*khutbah*) and lectured on some of it. He discontinued all lecturing before his death, because he considered it too bothersome a task." It is not entirely clear whether this refers to the *Fadā'il* of Abū Bakr and 'Umar or those of al-'Abbās, or both. Most likely it refers to all of Ṭabarī's lecturing activity.

The *Fadā'il 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, which also remained incomplete, constitute a special case, as intimated in the sources.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII, used by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274, ll. 6-9:

When Ṭabarī learned that Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī³²⁶ spoke critically about the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm,³²⁷ he composed the *Kitāb al-Fadā'il*. He started with the virtues of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī and critically discussed and argued in favor of the soundness of the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm. His work came to an end with what he mentioned of the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī.

Irshād, VI, 452, ll. 16 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 80, ll. 15-17, briefly states that "in the beginning of the *Kitāb Faḍā'il 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, he critically (and favorably) discussed the soundness of the traditions (*akhbār*) on Ghadīr Khumm and had this discussion followed by the virtues (of 'Alī). He did not finish the work."

Ibn Kāmil's report as reproduced in *Irshād*, VI, 455, l. 11-456, l. 1, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 84, l. 13-85, l. 7, is more detailed:

One of the scholars in Baghdad³²⁸ had declared the Ghadīr Khumm (episode) to be untrue because, he said, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was in the Yemen at the time when the Messenger of God was at Ghadīr Khumm. In a *muzdawwij* poem contain-

326. See above, n. 229.

327. On the celebrated and controversial designation by Muḥammad of 'Alī as his putative successor at the Pool of Khumm, see *Et*², II, 993 f., s. v. Ghadīr Khumm.

328. His identity as indicated in Ibn 'Asākir is no doubt correct. It would be interesting to know whether the omission of the name was due to Ibn Kāmil and, if so, why he might have omitted it.

ing descriptions of each place and station (in Arabia, connected with the Prophet's biography [?]), that man inserted the following lines alluding to the significance of the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm:

Then we passed by Ghadīr Khumm,
Subject to a large number of fraudulent statements
About 'Alī and the illiterate Prophet (*al-umm[i]*).

When Abū Ja'far learned about it, he started on a discussion of the virtues of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and mentioned the various recensions of the tradition of Khumm. Many people flocked to listen to (his lectures on) the subject.

Some extremist Shī'ites, who unseemingly slandered the Companions, came together. So Ṭabarī started (to write) on the virtues of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Then the 'Abbāsids asked him about the *fadā'il* of al-'Abbās. He began.... (see above)."

In view of the importance of the subject for Shī'ah history, notice was occasionally taken of Ṭabarī's work among Shī'ites. The Shī'ah bibliographer al-Ṭūsī commented on it as follows:

The historian Ṭabarī, not (his) Shī'ah (namesake), composed a *Kitāb Ghadīr Khumm*, commenting on the subject. We were informed about it by Aḥmad b. 'Abdūn—Abū Bakr al-Dūrī—Ibn Kāmil—Ṭabarī.³²⁹

Later sunnī discomfort with Ṭabarī's effort was expressed by the fourteenth-century Ibn Kathīr.

(Ṭabarī) concerned himself with the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm and composed two volumes³³⁰ on the subject. In those volumes, he reported the various recensions as they were transmitted and by whom. His discussion is a mixed bag of valuable and worthless, sound and unsound information. This is in keeping with the custom of many *ḥadīth*

329. See Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, 178. The only individual in the *isnād* not commonly connected with Ṭabarī is Aḥmad b. 'Abdūn. He is said to have been known as Ibn Ḥāshir; see the editor's introduction of Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, II.

330. See Kern's introduction of his edition of *Ikhṭilāf*, 12, where the manuscript said to contain the history of al-Birzālī is quoted as referring to two substantial volumes.

scholars who (merely) report the information they have on a subject and make no distinction between what is sound and what is weak.³³¹

The tentative conclusion which we may draw from all these statements would seem to be as follows: Ṭabarī occasionally lectured on the "virtues" (as he did on the traditions; see *Tahdhīb*) of some of the famous Companions. When an attack on the reliability of the report on the famous Shī'ah episode of Ghadīr Khumm was published, he felt impelled to discuss the subject and could not avoid continuing with a substantial account of 'Alī's "virtues." The caliphal court then naturally suggested that equal time be given to their side and the virtues of al-'Abbās be properly extolled. Much politics of some sort or other was clearly involved in Ṭabarī's dealing with all those matters important alike to the Shī'ah, the sunnī orthodoxy, and the government authorities. While Ṭabarī's personal identification with "orthodox" attitudes cannot be doubted, he appears to have tried to be even-handed in an objective scholarly manner, much to the embarrassment of later sunnī authors. He may have thought of putting all his lectures together in one major work on the "virtues" of the leading early Muslims. If he did, he did not live long enough to execute the project. Individual installments circulated for a while. It apparently did not take very long for them to become generally unavailable. Religio-political rancor and rivalry no doubt again played a role in their gradual disappearance.

[*Kitāb al-Fatwā* "On legal decisions": See below, n. 343]

Al-Faṣl bayn al-qirā'ah "The (schools of) variant readings of the Qur'ān presented in separate detail"

This seems to be an approximately correct rendering of the rather strange title. In this form, it occurs only in *Irshād*. It appears to have figured in Ibn Kāmil's bibliography. Everywhere else,

³³¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, V, 208. Ibn Kathīr continues with a reference to Ibn 'Asākir who, he says, also reported many recensions of the Prophet's speech at Ghadīr Khumm. The entire statement may go back to an older source, perhaps Ibn 'Asākir. It is rather unlikely that Ibn Kathīr would have known Ṭabarī's work.

the work is simply described as dealing with the variant readings of the Qur'ān (*Kitāb fī al-qirā'āt*).

For a manuscript of the work preserved in al-Azhar, which has not yet been published, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 9, and Gilliot, "Les sept lectures."

Al-Jāmi' is also mentioned as a title. Quoting al-Dānī, Ibn al-Jazarī states that Ṭabarī's "fine work on *qirā'āt*" was entitled *al-Jāmi'*.³³² Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, who also relied on al-Dānī, does not mention the title. It may derive from a confusion with *Jāmi' al-bayān*, the title of *Tafsīr* which, of course, was concerned with variant readings. In fact, Hājji Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, 1319a, lists Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-bayān* (!) among works on *qirā'āt*, although elsewhere (see n. 332), he has *al-Jāmi' on qirā'ah*. From the sources available to him, Pretzl also concluded that *al-Jāmi'* was not a different work.³³³ It is, however, not entirely impossible, if unlikely, that a monograph on variant readings entitled *al-Jāmi'*, as distinct from the work on *qirā'āt*, was produced by Ṭabarī, perhaps based on *Tafsīr*, or circulated under his name.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, I. 4, has *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt* and lists no further title on Qur'ān readings.

Among Ṭabarī's completed works, Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX, mentions *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt wa-al-tanzīl wa-al-'adad*, apparently one and the same work. This means that it also dealt with subjects such as the dates of the revelation of various sūrah's and statistical data such as the number of their verses.³³⁴

Irshād, VI, 441, I. 17-443, I. 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 65, I. 13-68, I. 7, has much detail. Most of it derives from Ibn Kāmil. It is however, unclear what was found in his bibliography or went back to some other Ibn Kāmil tradition unconnected with the discus-

332. See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 107, ll. 5 f.; also idem, *Nashr*, I, 33: "a very substantial book containing over twenty (schools of) variant readings." The passage from *Nashr* was reproduced (directly or from a common source) by Hājji Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 576, under *al-Jāmi' fī al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*.

333. See Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, 208, n. 7. From their work, Brockelmann, *GAL*², I, 149, derived the title *Jāmi' al-qirā'āt min al-mashhūr wa-al-shawādhḥ wa-'ilal dhālika wa-sharḥuhū*.

334. Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 285, ll. 5 f., states that Ṭabarī "wrote a work on *qirā'āt*" and lists it on 285, I. 20, as *al-Qirā'āt wa-al-'adad wa-al-tanzīl wa-ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*. He apparently understood *ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'* as referring to differences with respect to Qur'ān readings, and not as a reference to *Ikhtilāf*.

sion of the work on Qur'ān readings. An obvious intrusion is a quotation from al-Farghānī. The repeated reference to Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām also speaks for different sources. With the exception of the Farghānī passage, the following translation renders the entire text of *Irshād*, which is instructive in many important respects:

Kitāb al-Faṣl bayn al-qirā'ah. He mentioned in it the differences of the Qur'ān readers with respect to the variant readings (*ḥurūf*) of the Qur'ān. It is a very good work. He specified in it the names of the Qur'ān readers in Medina, Mecca, al-Kūfah, al-Baṣrah, Syria, and elsewhere. He gives separate details on each reading. He mentions it as is (*wajh*), its interpretation (*ta'wīl*),³³⁵ the views expressed on it by each reader, and his own preference for what is correct on the basis of clear proof for the soundness of his preferred reading. It clearly shows his ability to interpret (*tafsīr*) and establish the correct linguistic form (*i'rāb*), an ability which nobody would deny is unmatched by other Qur'ān readers, even though they were excellent scholars and enjoyed priority. He introduced the work with an appropriate invocation (*khuṭbah*). Such was his custom in his books. He started a given work with an invocation outlining its topic (*ma'nā*) and then constructed its contents in accordance with (the outline presented in) the invocation.³³⁶

Abū Ja'far was famous for his Qur'ān recitation. Qur'ān readers from afar and other people came to pray behind him in order to hear him read and recite the Qur'ān.³³⁷

When Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid, says Ibn Kāmil, mentioned Ṭabarī, he praised him highly: "Nothing like his book on the subject (of *qirā'āt*) has ever been written," and he said to us: "I have never heard anyone who was a better Qur'ān reader in the prayer niche (*miḥrāb*) than Abū Ja'far," or words to this effect.

335. In *Tafsīr*, Ṭabarī refers to Qur'ān interpreters commonly as *ahl al-ta'wīl*, and much less frequently as *ahl al-tafsīr*.

336. A good example is the *khuṭbah* "invocation/introduction" of *History*. See below, n. 445, and translation, n. 6.

337. The proximity to the mention of Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid (see above, n. 121) in the following paragraph makes it likely that this paragraph also goes back to him.

Ibn Kāmil continued: Abū Ja'far originally followed the Qur'ān reading of Ḥamzah,³³⁸ before he settled on his own reading.

(A more detailed description of the development of Ṭabarī's work in the field of Qur'ān reading is inserted here following al-Farghānī.)

Ibn Kāmil continued quoting Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid: After having highly praised his work on variant readings (*kitābahū fī al-qirā'āt*), (Ibn Mujāhid) said: But I have found an error in it. He mentioned it to me, and I was astonished, since Ṭabarī followed the reading and recitation of Ḥamzah. It was because Ṭabarī based his work upon that of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām.³³⁹ Abū 'Ubayd had neglected that particular variant reading, and Ṭabarī copied it that way.

Ibn Kāmil continued: Abū Ja'far told us the following: I heard about a Qur'ān reader in Sūq Yaḥyā.³⁴⁰ I went and read the Qur'ān to him from the beginning to Qur. 2:26: "God is not ashamed (*yastahyī*) to coin a simile." I repeatedly tried to make it clear to him that there were two *yā's* (in *yastahyī*). He objected, and eventually I said: Do you want still more of an explanation for the two *yā's* with an *i* vowel after the first?³⁴¹ He did not know what I was talking about. So I got up and never went back to him.

He continued: Ṭabarī had in his possession the recension of Warsh—Nāfi' as transmitted to him by Yūnus b. 'Abd al-

338. Ḥamzah, one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived during the first three-quarters of the second/eighth century. See *Et*², III, 155, s. v. Ḥamzah b. Ḥabīb.

339. The remark is repeated at the end of the quotation. For the important author Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 166 f. (many of his works have meanwhile been published). Ṭabarī often cites him in *Tafsīr* as an indirect source ("I was told on the authority of . . ."). Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Tha'labī (d. 273/886, see *TB*, V, 218 f.), mentioned below, appears repeatedly as the intermediate transmitter. His *nisbah* is also given, probably incorrectly, as Taghlibī.

340. The Yaḥyā Bazaar was located in al-Shammāsiyyah near the Tigris Bridge, according to Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 199 ff. and Map V (marked no. 45); Lassner, *Topography*, index.

341. The Egyptian edition of the Qur'ān spells *yastahyī* with one *yā'* and indicates that the following *i* vowel is to be read as a long *ī* (thus avoiding the implication that the alternate form *yastahī* may be meant). This appears to be the situation which Ṭabarī wished to explain to the man who proved to be inordinately obtuse.

A'lā from Warsh.³⁴² (Students) came to Ṭabarī on account of it. As I was told, Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid wanted to have private instruction in that recension from Ṭabarī. Although (Ibn Mujāhid) was a recognized scholar and esteemed by Ṭabarī, the latter refused. (He told him) that he would teach it only, if others were present together with him. This did not sit well with Abū Bakr (b. Mujāhid). Ṭabarī's reasons for the refusal was that he disliked to let anyone have any knowledge that he did not (equally) impart also to others. This was his moral stance. When a number of students studied a book with him, and one of them was unable to be present, he would not permit only some (of the students in class to continue) to study. And if someone wanted to study a book (with him) in absentia, he would not teach him the book until he presented himself in person. An exception was the book on legal decisions (*Kitāb al-Fatwā*).³⁴³

His work on variant readings comprises the work of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām. It was in his possession as transmitted by Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Tha'labī on Abū 'Ubayd's authority. He based his own work on it.

Irshād, VI, 427, ll. 6–9, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 45, ll. 10–14, quotes from a work on Qur'ān reading entitled *al-Iqnā'* by Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Ahwāzī (d. 446/1054[5]:

(Ṭabarī's work) on *qirā'āt*, a truly great work (or a massive, large work?). The copy I have seen was in eighteen volumes, albeit written in a large script. He mentioned in it all the readings, both those generally accepted (*mashhūr*) and those that are unusual, with the reasons for each reading and comments on it. He did not diverge from what was generally known with respect to any reading he preferred (as being acceptable to him).

342. For Uthman b. Sa'īd, nicknamed Warsh (110–97/728[9]–812[3]), see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 11; Ibn al-Jazari, *Ghāyah*, I, 502 f. Nāfi' b. ('Abd al-Rahmān b.) Abī Nu'aym, one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived in and beyond the first half of the second/eighth century, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 9 f. Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā has been mentioned above, n. 99, as one of Ṭabarī's authorities during his visit to Egypt.

343. No such title is mentioned among Ṭabarī's works. It could be part of one of his other legal works, or it may not be a specific work but a file of legal decisions kept by him, in case he was asked to render a decision on a problem.

[*Ghadīr Khumm*: See *Faḍā 'il*]

[*Ḥadīth al-himyān*: "The story of the Khurāsānian whose belt was lost in Mecca"]

In the biography of Ibn al-Maḥāmīlī (368-415/978[9]-1024), a Shāfi'ite jurist and an early teacher of al-Khaṭīb al-Baḡhdādī, this item is mentioned as a report (*khābar*) of Ṭabarī.³⁴⁴ It was, the Khaṭīb says, the only bit of information he was ever able to elicit from Ibn al-Maḥāmīlī. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 49, merely quotes *TB* without adding anything to it. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 10, refers to a manuscript of the treatise in Cairo. Through the good services of Dr. Elise Crosby, I am in the possession of a microfilm enlargement of the text (Ms. 1558 [ḥadīth], pp. 439-45, dating from the ninth/sixteenth century). It turns out not to be a work by Ṭabarī, but it presents itself as a reminiscence from Ṭabarī's younger years told by him to Abū Khāzim al-Mu'allā b. Sa'īd al-Baḡhdādī al-Bazzār, who died about 353/964 (see *TB*, XIII, 190 f.). It was in Egypt in 346/964 that al-Mu'allā reported that he had heard Ṭabarī tell him the story in 300/912[3]. The gist of the story is as follows:

Ṭabarī was in Mecca in 240/855 (the pilgrimage in that year took place around the end of April). There he heard a Khurāsānian advertise the loss of a belt containing one thousand dīnārs. As we learn later, these thousand dīnārs were one-third of the amount of money his father had left him with the admonition that he give them to the most worthy person he might encounter on the pilgrimage. An old man, whose name was Abū Ghiyāth al-Ja'farī (being a client of Ja'far b. Muḥammad, apparently the sixth imām of the Shi'ah, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq), approached the Khurāsānian and suggested that a reward of ten percent be given to the finder if he came forward. When the Khurāsānian refused, he came down in the following two days to, at first, one percent and, then, a single dīnār. Ṭabarī suspected that the old man himself was the finder of the belt. He followed him to his house the first time, but he stayed at home the next day, as he was occupied with copying the famous work on Qurashite genealogy (*Kitāb al-Nasab*) by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870).^{344a} Ṭabarī had been right. The old man had

344. See *TB*, IV, 372 f.; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 10.

344a. I have no decisive information that Ṭabarī studied personally with al-

the belt. His wife asked him to keep it, but he did not want to bring disgrace upon himself in his old age, no matter how grinding the poverty in which he lived together with his household consisting of his wife, his mother-in-law, two sisters, and four daughters. Thus, on the third day, when the Khurāsānian again refused to offer a monetary reward, he took him to his house, with the two of them being followed by Ṭabarī. The Khurāsānian identified the belt and its contents as his and was about to leave with it when he remembered his father's deathbed admonition. He realized that the honest old man was, among all the people he had met on his journey, the one most deserving of the money. So he gave the money to him and left. Ṭabarī also wanted to leave but was called back by the old man, who then distributed the money coin by coin to his family of nine, including Ṭabarī as the tenth person to receive a share of a hundred dinārs. Ṭabarī lived on the money for a number of years and used it to defray all his study expenses. When he was in Mecca again after 256/870, he learned that the old man had died a few months after the episode with the belt. The four daughters and her husbands and offspring were still alive, but, as Ṭabarī was told, they were all gone in 290/903.

In the biography of al-Mu'allā, Dhahabī, *Mizān*, IV, 148, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, VI, 63 (both quoted in the margin of the Cairo manuscript), expressed themselves convinced that the story was invented by al-Mu'allā but gave no proof except claiming that al-Mu'allā was an untrustworthy transmitter. They may have a point. The story is of the type of the "four Muḥammads" (above, 29 f.) and even more unbelievable. The way in which Ṭabarī came into the possession of his share seems fanciful and hardly reflects credit on him. There are pro-Shī'ah overtones, which may point to Ḥanbalite propaganda directed against him. On the other hand, it might just be possible that the two visits to Mecca, the one in 240 when Ṭabarī was about sixteen, and the other after 256, during or after his stay in Egypt, have a basis in fact and supply us with an otherwise missing bit of biographical information. There is, of course, nothing unusual with a young student undertaking

Zubayr b. Bakkār. In *History*, he is mostly introduced as an indirect, possibly written, source. *Haddathanā*, in I, 1314 and 3072, may reflect a misuse of the term. On the other hand, Ṭabarī may very well have met al-Zubayr in Baghdad or in Mecca where, however, he became judge only in 242 (according to Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 317).

the pilgrimage, perhaps in the company of fellow students and teachers.

According to the sources, the story came into circulation during the fourth/tenth century. Beyond al-Mu'allā, the chain of transmitters, as indicated in the manuscript, is flawless: Ṭabarī—al-Mu'allā—Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Shādhān al-Bazzār (298-383/910-93, see *TB*, IV, 18-20)—Aḥmad b. 'Alī (Ibn) al-Bādā (d. 420/1029, see *TB*, IV, 322; he taught the story in Rabi' II, 417/May-June 1026. Al-Bādā, of uncertain origin, looks rather like al-Bārā in the manuscript)—Abū Muḥammad Rizqallāh b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Tamīmī *al-wā'iz* (d., eighty-eight years old, in 488/1095, see Dhahabī, *Ibar*, III, 320 f.)—Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Nāṣir b. Muḥammad (467-550/1074[5]-1155, see Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 524, n. 2; Eche, *Les Bibliothèques arabes*, 180 f.), who received permission to transmit the story from Rizqallāh but also copied it from a manuscript by a certain Abū al-Ḥasan al-...^{344b}—Ibn al-Jawzī, the famous Hanbalite scholar and historian (510-97/1116[7]-1201)—Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Latif b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥarrānī (587-672/1191-1273, see Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, V, 336)—Ṣadr al-dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Maydūmī (664-754/1266-1353, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, IV, 157 f.)—Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (745-836/1344[5]-1433, see Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, II, 106 f.). Some of the individuals mentioned were very young when they received permission to transmit the story. This agrees with its edifying moral character which was thought particularly suitable for young children.]

'Ibārat al-ru'yā "On dream interpretation"

Irshād, VI, 452 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 2 f., states that Ṭabarī worked on "a book on dream interpretation containing traditions

^{344b}. The manuscript has al-...ādhānī, which I have so far been unable to identify. There was an Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baradānī who died in 469/1077 (and was possibly born in 388/998, if 308 in the *Muntaẓam* is to be corrected to 388). See Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, II, 144, and Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VIII, 311. However, the correction of Barādhānī to Baradānī is not self-evident, and the first two consonants can be read in a large variety of ways.

(on the subject) but died before he could produce it." It was another of those projects on which Ṭabarī was still working at the time of his death. As indicated, it was a work on *ḥadīth*.

Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The disagreements of the scholars in the major centers with respect to the laws of the Muslim religion"

This is the full title of the celebrated work, which is partly preserved (see below). It is often referred to in an abridged form, such as *Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār*,³⁴⁵ *Ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*,³⁴⁶ or simply *al-Ikhtilāf*. The title *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'* is found, notably in Ibn al-Nadīm but also elsewhere.³⁴⁷ It is the title used in the printed editions of the preserved parts of the work. See also Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf*," 65.

A report in *Irshād* (see below, 85) apparently is of Ḥanbalite inspiration. It speaks of the publication of the work after Ṭabarī's death, if this is what the rather strange report really means. Probably, the reference to *Ikhtilāf* figured in it only by some sort of obfuscation. *Ikhtilāf* was also considered Ṭabarī's first literary production. In view of the fact that *Laṭīf* is cited in it and was considered by Ṭabarī in the choice of its contents,³⁴⁸ this may also seem a strange statement. It is well possible, however, that parts of *Ikhtilāf* came out before the publication of any part of *Laṭīf* and that quotations from *Laṭīf* occurred only in later parts of *Ikhtilāf* or were subsequently added by Ṭabarī in those earlier parts already published. No absolute publication dates are mentioned in the sources.

As in the case of *Laṭīf*, Ṭabarī also wrote, or started on, an introductory *risālah* to *Ikhtilāf* dealing with the basic principles (see below, n. 356).

Irshād, VI, 445, l. 17–447, l. 18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 71, l. 4–73, l. 5, presents a full discussion of the history of the work:

345. See al-Farghānī, *Ijāzah*, in *Irshād*, VI, 427, l. 2, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 45, ll. 4 f.; Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 12; Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, II, 286, l. 2.

346. See 'Abbādī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 52.

347. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 5; *Irshād* (see below); Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf* (see below, n. 361).

348. See below, 116.

His work famed for excellence in East and West entitled *Kitāb Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. His intention was to mention in it the statements of the following jurists: (1) Mālik b. Anas, the leading Medinese jurist, according to two recensions, (2) 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr al-Awzā'i, the leading Syrian jurist, (3) the Kūfan Sufyān al-Thawrī, according to two recensions, (4) Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'i, according to the transmission of al-Rabī' b. Sulaymān³⁴⁹ on al-Shāfi'i's authority, the Kūfans (5) Abū Ḥanifah al-Nu'mān b. Thābit, (6) Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, and (7) Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, a *mawlā* of the Shaybān, and (8) Abū Naṣr Ibrāhīm b. Khālid al-Kalbī.³⁵⁰

In his work, Ṭabarī had originally included one of the Mu'tazilites (*ahl al-naẓar*), namely, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān, because at the time when (Ṭabarī) was working on (*Ikhtilāf*), (Ibn Kaysān's) views were not used as the basis for a(n unacceptable) legal school.³⁵¹ After some time, however, (Ibn Kaysān's) colleagues and students expressed poorly informed legal views, and Ṭabarī excluded him from his work.

I heard Ṭabarī respond to a question (about the history of *Ikhtilāf*) he was asked by Abū 'Abdallāh Aḥmad b. 'Īsā al-Rāzī.³⁵² He said that he had first undertaken to work on it in order to mention the views of those opposed to his (own views). The work then gained wider circulation, and he was asked by his colleagues and students (who were adherents of his school) to lecture on it.

When Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī³⁵³ published his book known under the title of *al-Wuṣūl ilā ma'rifat al-uṣūl*,

349. Ṭabarī studied with him in Egypt; see above, n. 100.

350. He must be Abū Thawr, although Abū Thawr's *kunya* was doubtful and is sometimes said to have been Abū 'Abdallāh, while Abū Thawr was a nickname; see Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 74; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 118. For Abū Thawr, see above, n. 272. The numbering has been added in the translation.

351. Possibly the famous Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān al-Aṣamm, who died long before Ṭabarī was born, is meant. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 624 f.; Ritter, in his edition of Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 617.

352. He is certainly not identical with the 'Alid mentioned above, n. 186, and remains unidentified. This is particularly regrettable, since knowing about him might have clarified who the speaker here was.

353. See above, 68 f.

he mentioned in the chapter on general consensus (*ijmā'*) as the view of Ṭabarī that *ijmā'* meant the consensus of the afore-mentioned eight jurists to the exclusion of everybody else. He based himself on Ṭabarī's statement: "They agreed (*ajma'ū*), and thereby agreement was reached on the point being argued." (Ṭabarī) then said in the introduction of the chapter on disagreement (*khilāf*): "Then they disagreed. Mālik held one view, al-Awzā'ī another, and so-and-so still another." (Combining the two statements, Muḥammad b. Dāwūd concluded) that those for whom Ṭabarī reported consensus were identical with those for whom he reported disagreement.³⁵⁴ This is an error on the part of Ibn Dāwūd. Had he considered what Ṭabarī had written in the *Risālah* of *Laṭīf* and the *Risālah* of *Ikhtilāf* (and) in many of his works, namely, that *ijmā'* is the uninterrupted transmission of traditions agreed upon by the Companions of the Messenger of God, and not something based on opinion or deduced by analogical reasoning, he would have realized that the view expressed by him (as to Ṭabarī's understanding of *ijmā'*) was a grievous error and obvious mistake.

Abū Ja'far thought highly of his *Ikhtilāf*, which was the first of his works (to be put in publishable form, *ṣunnifa*). He often said to me: "I have written two books that are indispensable for jurists, *Ikhtilāf* and *Laṭīf*."

Ikhtilāf is about three thousand folios. In order not to repeat himself, he did not deal in it with his own preferences (as to what he considered the correct view in each case),³⁵⁵ because he had done a good job in this respect in *Laṭīf*.

He had written for *Ikhtilāf* an introductory *risālah*, which he later dropped.³⁵⁶ In it, he discussed general consensus and traditions originating with single authorities of recognized probity (*al-āḥād al-'udūl*), additions³⁵⁷ not in *Laṭīf*, as

354. Ergo, the jurists considered in *Ikhtilāf* represented consensus in every sense.

355. But see above, n. 216.

356. Or: "which he later stopped lecturing on," which is the same thing. It does not mean: "which he separated (from *Ikhtilāf* and treated as a separate work)."

357. This translation seems possible and has therefore been preferred to the text in ed. Rifā'ī. Supplying the preposition 'inda, it yields the rather different sense: "discussing consensus and traditions . . ., he mentioned additions not in *Laṭīf* . . ."

well as *marāsīl* traditions³⁵⁸ and abrogation (*al-nāsikh wa-al-mansūkh*).

Irshād, VI, 437, ll. 1–6, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 59, ll. 2–8, also reports the following dubious statement in connection with the Ḥanbalite affair discussed above, 73 ff.:

Ṭabarī secluded himself in his house and produced his well-known book containing his apology (*i'tidhār*) to the (Ḥanbalites). He mentioned his own legal views (*madhhab*) and dogmatic beliefs. He declared unreliable those who thought differently about him with respect to these matters. He lectured to them (*qara'a 'alā*) on the book. He extolled Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and mentioned his legal views (*madhhab*) and dogmatic beliefs as being correct. He continued to refer to him constantly until he died. His book on *ikhtilāf* was not made public by him before he died. It was buried in the ground and made public and copied (*n-s-kh*, by the Ḥanbalites) — I mean *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*. I heard this from a number of people, including my father.³⁵⁹

Ikhtilāf is listed in Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl. I, 218, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328. For the editions of Kern and Schacht, see below, Bibliography, under *Ikhtilāf*. The reprints of Kern's edition mentioned by C. Gilliot, in *Studia Islamica*, 63 (1986): 189–92, were not available. The title of the manuscript published by Schacht is *Mukhtaṣar Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār* (see p. IX); there may be at least some truth to the statement that it was indeed an abridgment (see also above, n. 216).

In *Tabṣīr*, fol. 92b, Ṭabarī refers to his *Kitāb Ahl al-baghy* "On wrongdoers (rebels)." Since *Tabṣīr* is greatly concerned with differences of opinion and *Ikhtilāf* had a book on the subject (see ed. Schacht, X), it stands to reason that the reference is to *Ikhtilāf* and not to another of Ṭabarī's legal writings.

358. A *mursal* tradition is one with an *isnād* that does not lead back all the way to the Prophet.

359. Perhaps, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Hārūn(?), mentioned *Irshād*, VI, 435, l. 5, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 56, l. 14, is meant as the son of Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz mentioned in *Irshād* a few lines later. Abū 'Alī Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz appears as a transmitter of information from Ṭabarī in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII, l. 17, and LXXXIV, l. 16 (see below, 106 f.). All this is more than uncertain. The suspicion remains that the narrator was perhaps an unidentified Ḥanbalite.

Irshād, VI, 435, ll. 12 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 57, l. 5, refers to the *Kitāb al-Janā'iz* "On funerals" of *Ikhtilāf*. A few possible cross-references to non-preserved parts of *Ikhtilāf* are listed by Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf*," 65. In his edition, I, 50, Kern includes a reference to *Kitāb al-Aymān wa-al-nudhūr* "On oaths and vows."³⁶⁰ He also reproduced (II, 123–5) the text of two quotations found in Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, dealing with Ṭabarī's discussion of masturbation and anal intercourse in *Ikhtilāf*.³⁶¹ Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī wrote this section of his large work in 1168/1755. Thus, as late as the middle of the twelfth/eighteenth century, Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf* was used, apparently directly. See further Muranyi, "*Kitāb al-Siyar*," 84 f.

[*al-I'tidhār* "Apology (to the Ḥanbalites)": See *Ikhtilāf*]

This is obviously not a formal title. It was not a work published by Ṭabarī and may have existed only in Ḥanbalite wishful thinking.]

Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān "The complete clarification of the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān"

This official title of Ṭabarī's great Qur'ān commentary (*Tafsīr*) is mentioned in *History*: see below, text, I, 87, translation, n. 562. It never gained much popularity and was almost always replaced by the simple *Tafsīr*.³⁶² The work is mentioned in all Ṭabarī biographies, large and small, and usually praised very highly. During his lifetime, it probably was considered his outstanding scholarly achievement, even more so than his great works on law and *ḥadīth*. It has retained its outstanding importance to this day. It says much for the general esteem accorded to the work that the Christian philosopher and theologian Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, who died

360. Other similar references are believed by Kern to be derived from *Laṭīf* (see below, 116). He concluded, it seems, that this was so from the phrase "in our book, the book on . . .". In contrast, Ṭabarī here does not have "in our book" but only "*Kitāb al-Aymān . . .*"

361. See Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, V, 306 and 375. He introduces the quotation as coming from *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*.

362. *Irshād* omits *āy* in one instance (misprint?). The work is quoted exceptionally as *al-Bayān* in Zarkashī, *Burhān*, I, 214.

in his eighties in 363/974, reportedly copied it twice for sale to provincial rulers.³⁶³

The work took many years to complete. In 270/883[4],³⁶⁴ a substantial portion was made public by Ṭabarī in the form of public lectures. Between 283/896 and 290/903, if not earlier, the entire work was ready for publication.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah* was written on a volume of *Tafsīr*. He referred to the work as "*Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, entitled *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*."³⁶⁵ Al-Farghānī also provided the information to be found in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX.³⁶⁶

Among his completed works is his excellent *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. He explained in it the legal data derived from the Qur'ān, its abrogating and abrogated verses, its difficult passages, and its rare words. (He also discussed) the disagreements between commentators and religious scholars with respect to the Qur'ān's legal data and its interpretation together with an indication of what he considered the correct view in each case, its proper vocalization (*i'rāb ḥurūfihī*), the condemnation of heretics in it, the (biblical and other) stories, the reports on the nations (of the world), the Resurrection, and other wise statements and marvelous matters. He did that word by word, verse by verse, from the beginning where the formula "I take refuge in God" is used, to the letters of the alphabet.³⁶⁷ If a scholar claimed that he could write ten books based on it, of which each would deal with a special remarkable subject that is exhaustively presented, he could do it.

Al-Farghānī, at least in part through Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz,³⁶⁸ also told the following anecdotes, as reported in Ibn 'Asākir,

363. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 264, ll. 9 f.

364. It is tempting to think of a mistake for 290, but this common error seems to be most unlikely in this case; see below, n. 371.

365. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 16, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44, ll. 15 f.

366. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 373, ll. 6–8, depends on Ibn 'Asākir.

For a succinct survey of the numerous publications on the various topics of Qur'ānic science, which existed in the fourth/tenth century, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*.

367. The formula *a'ūdhu bi-Allāh* used before the recitation of the Qur'ān is discussed in *Tafsīr*, I, 37 f. For the letters of "*abū jād*," see below, n. 379.

368. See above, n. 359.

LXXXII, ll. 17–9, and l. 19–LXXXIII, l. 2:

For three years before I went to work on the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, I asked God for permission to produce the work and for His help in doing what I had in mind, and He did help me.

Al-Farghānī (through Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ?) said: A chaste neighbor³⁶⁹ of Abū Ja'far told me: I had a dream in which I saw myself in the classroom (*majlis*) of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī when his *Tafsīr* was studied with him. I heard a voice coming from in between heaven and earth say: He who wants to study the Qur'ān as it was revealed should study this work.

Irshād, VI, 439, l. 3–441, l. 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 61, l. 17–65, l. 13, is an obvious composite of sources, but most of the factual information appears to come from 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī's monograph, through Ibn Kāmil:

His book entitled *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*.³⁷⁰ Abū Bakr b. Kāmil says: He dictated (*amlā*) to us one hundred and ninety verses of the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*. Thereafter, he continued to the end of the Qur'ān and read (the entire work?) to us. This was in 270/883[4].³⁷¹ The work (soon) became very famous. Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Tha'lab and Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, the great authorities on grammar and semantics (*i'rāb* and *ma'ānī*), were still alive at the time, as were other expert Arab grammarians such as Abū Ja'far al-Rustamī, Abū Ḥasan b. Kaysān, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salamah, al-Ja'd, and Abū Ishāq al-Zajjāj.³⁷² The *Tafsīr* achieved wide distribution in East and West. All contemporary scholars read it, and all considered

369. This is the hardly credible meaning of the text. *Irshād*, VI, 439, ll. 17 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 63, l. 2, has "a shaykh from the Bridge of Ibn 'Afīf" (= "chaste"). To my knowledge, no such bridge occurs in the topographical works, but it is likely to be the correct reading. Ibn 'Asākir may have miscopied the same source, or the corruption may have occurred in the textual tradition of his work. Though missing in *Irshād*, "neighbor" may be original, thus placing the man in al-Mukharrim or nearby in East Baghdad.

370. See above, n. 362.

371. While the preceding sentence seems to speak of the entire work, the date appears to be intended for those lectures on the first sūrah and part of the second sūrah.

372. All the authors named in this and the following paragraphs of the quotation

it truly excellent.

Abū Ja'far said: I felt the inner urge to write the work when I was still a child.

'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī quoted Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid³⁷³ as saying: For a long time, I made my living collating books with people. (Once) I asked Abū Ja'far about the interpretation of a verse. He said: Collate (*qābil*) this work (*Tafsīr*) from beginning to end! (I did) and could not find a single wrong reading (*ḥarf*) with respect to grammar and lexicography.

Abū Ja'far said: (This and the next paragraph have been translated above from Ibn 'Asākir.)

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Mujāhid said: I heard Abū Ja'far say: I wonder how anyone who reads the Qur'ān and does not know its interpretation can enjoy reading it.³⁷⁴

He started the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr* with an invocation (*khuṭbah*). The introductory essay (*risālah*) of *Tafsīr* proves the eloquence, inimitability (*i'jāz*), and clarity of expression (*faṣāḥah*), not matched anywhere else, with which God has distinguished the Qur'ān. Among introductory topics (*muqaddamātin*), he discussed commenting on (*tafsīr*) and ways of interpreting (*wujūh al-ta'wīl*) the Qur'ān, the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of what is known³⁷⁵ and what has been indicated as permitted to comment on (*tafsīr*) as well as what is forbidden (see *Tafsīr*, I, 25-27, 31 f.). He discussed the Prophet's statement that "the Qur'ān was revealed in seven letters" (see *Tafsīr*, I, 9-25),³⁷⁶ further, in which tongues the

are so well-known that it would be superfluous to comment on them. For chronological purposes, it is interesting to notice that Tha'lab died in 291/904 (above, n. 178), and al-Mubarrad in 285-6/898-9. For Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rustam [d. about 310/922], see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 160 f.; for Abū (al-)Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Kaysān [d. about 299/911 or later?], see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 170, Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 158-60; for al-Mufaddal b. Salamah [d. about 290/903], see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 191, *GAS*, IX, 139 f.; for Muḥammad b. Uthmān al-Ja'd [d. about 320/932], see *GAS*, IX, 163; and for Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī al-Zajjāj [d. 310/922 or later], see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 170, *GAS*, IX, 81 f.

373. See above, n. 179.

374. A rather similar remark is ascribed to Sa'id b. Jubayr in *Tafsīr*, I, 28, ll. 12 f.: "He who reads the Qur'ān and then does not interpret it is like a blind man or a Bedouin." "Muḥammad" is a mistake for Aḥmad.

375. Or "can be known, is knowable" by human beings, and not only by God.

376. See *Concordance*, I, 448b, and Gilliot, "Les sept lectures."

Qur'ān was revealed, and he refuted those who said that it contains non-Arabic words (see *Tafsīr*, I, 6 ff.).³⁷⁷ He mentioned the interpretation of the names of the Qur'ān and the sūrahs (see *Tafsīr*, I, 32-35), and other such introductory matters. He had this followed by the interpretation of the Qur'ān letter by letter. He mentioned the statements of the Companions, the Followers, and those who followed the Followers, the discussions of the Kūfan and Baṣran grammarians (*ahl al-i'rāb*), and a number (*jumal*) of Qur'ān readings and the variant readings of (the schools of) Qur'ān reading concerning root forms (*maṣādir*), lexicography/dialectology (*lughāt*), plurals, and duals. He discussed the abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qur'ān, its legal data, and differences in this respect. He mentioned some of the statements of the speculative theologians (*ahl al-naẓar*)³⁷⁸ as made by some innovators, and he refuted them according to the views (*madhāhib*) of the affirmers (*ahl al-ithbāt*, the "orthodox") and as required by the traditions (*sunan*), all the way to the end of the Qur'ān. He had this followed by the interpretation of the alphabet and its letters, the different opinions of people concerning them, and how he himself preferred to interpret them.³⁷⁹ Nobody could add anything to it, nor would he find the subject treated as completely by anybody else.

He used in it the (earlier) commentaries by Ibn 'Abbās in five recensions, Sa'īd b. Jubayr in two recensions, Mujāhid b. Jabr in three, and often more, recensions, Qatādah b. Di'āmah in three recensions, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in three recensions, 'Ikrimah in three recensions, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim in two recensions, and 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd in one recension. He further used the commentaries of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam, Ibn Jurayj, and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān. Moreover, (*Tafsīr*) contains well known traditions on the authority of the Qur'ān commentators and others. It includes all that is needed of traditions transmitted with an

377. See, however, above, 45 f.

378. See, for instance, Appendix A, below, 149-51.

379. The discussion of phonetics and orthography is not included in the introduction of *Tafsīr*. As indicated here, it supposedly appeared at the end of the entire work. The text as published does not contain it.

uninterrupted chain of transmitters mainly from the Prophet (*musnad al-ḥadīth*).

He paid no attention to unreliable (commentators). Thus, the work contains no (traditions) from the works of Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, or Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, because he considered them suspect (as Qur'ān and ḥadīth scholars). But when he referred to history, biography, or Arab stories, he did include reports from Muḥammad b. Sā'ib al-Kalbī, his son Hishām, Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, and others, whatever was needed and could be found only in their works.³⁸⁰

In *Tafsīr*, he mentioned numerous discussions and suggested meanings (*ma'ānī*) from the books of 'Alī b. Ḥamzah al-Kisā'i, Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrā', Abū al-Ḥasan al-Akhfash, Abū 'Alī Quṭrub, and others, whenever needed as required by the discussion. These (famous grammarians and lexicographers) were the ones who discussed the meanings and provided (explanations for Qur'ānic) meanings and grammar (*ma'ānī al-i'rāb*). When he quoted from them, he often did not mention them by name.

This work comprises ten thousand folios, or fewer, depending on the size of the script. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī said: I have seen a manuscript in Baghdad which comprised four thousand folios.

The task of commenting on *Tafsīr* and condensing it started early. A Mu'tazilite of Turkish origin, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Bayghjūr, known as Ibn al-Ikhshēd, who lived in Sūq al-'Aṭash and died in 326/938, wrote an abridgment.³⁸¹ A commentary written by Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī in competition with Ṭabarī was judged by history to have been a failure.³⁸² Among Abū Bakr's authorities, we find Ibn Bashshār and Ibn al-Muthannā who figure so prominently in Ṭabarī's works.

380. The sharp distinction made by Ṭabarī between historians and specialists in other fields is noteworthy.

381. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 173 (also 34, l. 14, and 235, l. 3); *TB*, IV, 309. *M.-j-w-r*, as his ancestor's name is spelled in *Fihrist*, is an implausible form. The reading *B-y-gh-j-w-r* of *TB* is more likely as a Turkish-Persian name. See, for instance, Bakjūr (*Eclipse*, index, s. v. Bekjūr).

382. See above, n. 229.

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl., I, 218, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 327, for literature and editions. *Tafsīr* became known in Europe only about the time that the publication of *History* started.³⁸³ It was first printed in Cairo 1321/1903 and 1323/1905, reprinted in Beirut, 1400/1980. The edition Cairo 1323 is considered the better of the two.³⁸⁴ Modern printings, such as one edited by Maḥmūd M. Shākir and A. M. Shākir (Cairo, 1961), regrettably fail to indicate the paginations of the earlier editions.

An abridged French translation by Pierre Godé has been appearing in Paris since 1983. An English translation by J. Cooper has been announced for 1986. The first volumes of Godé's work have been seen by me.

[*Al-Jāmi' fī al-qirā'āt* "The complete collection of variant readings in the Qur'ān": See *Faṣl*]

[*Al-Janā'iz* "On funerals": See *Ikhtilāf*]

[*Al-Jirāh* "On wounds": See *Laṭīf*]

Al-Khafīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The light work on the laws of the Muslim religion"

This full title of what was a condensed version of *Laṭīf* appears in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXX, ll. 2 f.,³⁸⁵ and *Irshād*; see below. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, has *al-Khafīf fī al-fiqh*, followed somewhat incongruously by the word *laṭīf*. Ibn 'Asākir similarly states that the work, which was completed by Ṭabari, was "a slim abridgment (*mukhtaṣar laṭīf*)." A law book of four hundred folios could indeed be called "slender,"³⁸⁶ but it is tempting to assume with Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit," 364, n. 11, that in the *Fihrist* as well as Ibn 'Asākir, the intended meaning was "an abridgment of *Laṭīf*." Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, ll. 10 f., describes the work merely as "a short work (*mukhtaṣar*) on jurisprudence." The reference to *Laṭīf* in Qiftī, *Inbāh*, III, 90, is followed by one to

383. See Loth, "Ṭabari's Korancommentar."

384. See Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 240.

385. Reproduced by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 13.

386. On the double meaning of *laṭīf*, see below, 113 and 115.

another work described as "a treatise (*maqālah*) on jurisprudence used by scholars (in their legal work)." *Khafif* is presumably meant here.

The composition of *Khafif* must be dated between 291/904 when al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan was appointed wazīr, and 296/908 when he lost his life. One might assume that al-'Abbās may not yet have been wazīr (and al-Muktafī not yet caliph) at the time Ṭabarī wrote *Khafif*; this, however, seems unlikely. It should be noted that the *nisbah* al-'Azīzī indicated in *Irshād* is not attested elsewhere for the wazīr, nor is any other *nisbah*, as far as I know. On the other hand, the *kunya*h Abū Aḥmad seems confirmed by the existence of a son of his named Aḥmad.³⁸⁷

Following al-Farghānī, Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, l. 18–LXXVII, l. 2, combines the anecdote of Ṭabarī's refusal of al-Muktafī's gift (see above, 37 f.), in which the wazīr al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan played a role, with a similar anecdote involving the reason for the composition of *Khafif*:

Al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan³⁸⁸ sent a message to Ṭabarī telling him that he wished to study jurisprudence, and asked him to produce a short work (*mukhtaṣar*) according to his legal school for him. Ṭabarī wrote for him the *Kitāb al-Khafif* and dispatched it to him. When al-'Abbās sent him a thousand dinārs, he did not accept the money but returned it to him. He was told to use it for charity. He did not want to do that. He said: You (using the plural addressing al-'Abbās) know better how to use your money and to whom to give charity.

The fullest information is found in *Irshād*, VI, 448, ll. 8–12, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 74, ll. 11–18:

One of his excellent works is the book entitled *Kitāb al-Khafif fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*, an abridgment of the *Kitāb al-Laṭif*. Abū Aḥmad al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan al-'Azīzī wanted to look into some legal matters and corresponded with Ṭabarī concerning an abridgment of one of his works. Ṭabarī produced this book in order to facilitate the under-

387. See 'Arib, 63.

388. In Dhahabī's very abridged quotation (*Nubalā'*, XIV, 270, ll. 14 f.), *al-wazīr* replaces the proper name. In the similar anecdote, above, 39, the wazīr is al-Khāqānī.

standing of the subject. It is about four hundred folios. It is a book that makes the subject easy for the person who studies it. It contains (the discussion of) many problems which both scholars and beginning students would do well to memorize.

According to Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, al-Mu'āfā wrote a commentary on *Khafīf*.

Al-Laṭīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The slim³⁸⁹ work on the laws of the Muslim religion" or, more commonly, *Laṭīf al-qawl*... "The slim discussion of ...".

The second form of the title appears *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern (II, 29, 79, 83, 90 f.) with the substitution of the synonymous *al-dīn* for *al-Islām*. The first form is found in the introduction of *Tafsīr* (I, 37, ll. 13 ff.):

We have explained briefly what we considered the correct statement here in our book *al-Laṭīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. God willing, we shall give an exhaustive explanation and report the statements of the Companions, the Followers, and ancient and recent scholars in our great work on the laws of the Muslim religion (*kitābunā al-akbar fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*).³⁹⁰

In *Tafsīr*, the work is constantly cited under slightly different titles, such as *Laṭīf al-qawl fī sharā'i' al-Islām* (XVIII, 68, l. 12), or ...*aḥkām sharā'i' al-dīn* (VIII, 16, l. 7) as in *Ikhtilāf*, or *Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām al-sharā'i'* (VIII, 28, l. 31), or simply *al-Laṭīf* (II, 252, l. 17, 289, l. 11).³⁹¹ But the work is also referred to by the title or contents of its individual "books," with no reference to the overall designation.

389. The source of *Irshād* (below, 115) claims that Ṭabarī himself did not intend *laṭīf* in its physical meaning but in its metaphorical meaning of "subtle." However, Ṭabarī, in fact, meant to imply that in comparison to the enormous mass of data to be discussed, *Laṭīf* was, in spite of its considerable size, a slim and concise work. The flattering interpretation was no doubt owing to a student and admirer.

390. See also above, under *Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*.

391. *Tafsīr*, VI, 44, l. 16, has a dubious *al-Laṭīf (l) al-qawl fī al-aḥkām* (misprint?). Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 10, lists *Laṭīf* as "*Kitāb Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*, composed in accordance with the results of his independent judgment." The form of the title possibly results from a confusion with the larger planned work.

The title *al-Laṭīf min al-bayān ‘an aḥkām sharā’i’ al-Islām* (*Tafsīr*, II, 264, ll. 11 f.) includes *al-bayān*, which properly belongs to the title of the introductory *risālah* on legal principles (see II, 269, l. 10, where, in the same context, *uṣūl* is included). The *risālah* was no doubt at times published separately and then carried the title of *al-Bayān ‘an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (I, 404, l. 4, II, 31, ll. 1 f., V, 7, l. 16, VI, 159, l. 19, XV, 59, l. 21, XVIII, 99, l. 15). Here the operative word is *uṣūl* "principles." It is also combined with *laṭīf* to yield such hybrids as *Laṭīf al-qawl min al-bayān ‘an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (I, 276, l. 24, II, 269, l. 10, also *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, 770, where *fī* replaces *min*), or *Laṭīf al-bayān ‘an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (III, 12, l. 14, VII, 200, ll. 15 f., X, 29, l. 27), or even *al-Laṭīf ‘an uṣūl aḥkām* (VIII, 79, l. 11). The short title *al-Laṭīf min al-bayān* (II, 222, l. 15) clearly refers to the *risālah*.

The work is widely listed in Ṭabarī biographies. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, has two references. On p. 234, l. 24, we read: "*Kitāb al-Laṭīf* on jurisprudence. It comprises..., " while ll. 20 f., states:

Kitāb al-Laṭīf on jurisprudence. It comprises a number of books on the order of juridical works *fī al-mabsūṭ*.³⁹² The number of books of *Laṭīf* is....

The missing number is supplied by Ibn ‘Asākir, LXXIX f., from al-Farghānī:

Also complete is *Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā’i’ al-Islām*. It represents his legal school with his own preferred views well presented³⁹³ and argued. It consists of eighty-three books, including *Kitāb al-Bayān ‘an uṣūl al-Islām*, which is the [general introductory] essay (*risālah*) of *Laṭīf*.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah*, as quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 19 f., ed. Rifā‘ī, XVIII, 43, ll. 1 f., has *Kitāb Laṭīf al-qawl wa-khafīfihī fī sharā’i’ al-Islām*. This may possibly refer to *Laṭīf* and its condensation *Khafīf*. A translation "A slender and light discussion

392. In the context, this hardly refers to a specific work entitled *al-Mabsūṭ* (such as the one by the Hanafite al-Shaybānī). It is probably to be understood as a work on laws well-organized and easily understandable, such as was the case with works given *Mabsūṭ* as a title.

393. Read *jawwadahū*, as is found in Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 285 f., and Dhahabī, *Nubalā’*, XIV, 273, ll. 10 f., who both depend on Ibn ‘Asākir.

of Muslim laws" makes little sense, even if *Irshād* in the passage to be quoted associates the two descriptive terms with the work.

Irshād, VI, 447, l. 11-448, l. 7, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 73, l. 8-74, l. 10, describes *Laṭīf* as follows:

His book entitled *Kitāb Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'ī' al-Islām*. It is the sum total of his legal school and is relied upon by all its followers. It is among the most valuable of his own books and those of other jurists as well, because it is the best and most instructive of any textbook of a legal school. God willing, this will be obvious to everybody who reads it carefully.

Abū Bakr b. Rāmīk³⁹⁴ used to say: No better book on a legal school has ever been produced than the *Laṭīf* of Abū Ja'far on his legal school.

In the beginning of the work, Ṭabarī much apologized for its brevity. The books of *Laṭīf* exceed those of *Ikhtilāf* by (!) three, namely, *Kitāb al-Libās* "on clothing," *Kitāb Ummahāt al-awlād* "on slave girls giving birth to children by their masters," and *Kitāb al-Shurb* "on drink."³⁹⁵ *Laṭīf* is one of the very best books. Ṭabarī is unique with respect to it. Nobody should think that by calling it *al-Laṭīf* ("slim" or "subtle"), he meant to imply that it was of small size and its content of light weight. He wished the title to be understood as referring to the subtlety of the ideas expressed in it and the numerous critical discussions (*nazar*) and indications of reasons (for points of law) it contains. It is about 2,500 folios. It includes a good book on *shurūṭ* (document forms) entitled *Amthilat al-'udūl* from *Laṭīf*.³⁹⁶ The work has

394. Ibn Rāmīk remains to be identified.

395. It is understandable that Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 286, ll. 3 f., thought of independent treatises.

396. See above, under *Amthilat al-'udūl*. Ḥājī Khalīfah, ed. Yaltkaya, II, 1046, refers to Ṭabarī's "exhaustive treatment of *shurūṭ* in a book according to the legal principles of al-Shāfi'ī," which was "plagiarized" by Abū Ja'far al-Ṭahāwī (see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 441) when he wrote on the subject. Al-Ṭahāwī outlived Ṭabarī by only a few years. Wakin, *Documents*, 23, n. 6, doubts the correctness of Ḥājī Khalīfah's statement. It may be noted that Ibn Kāmil also wrote on *shurūṭ* (see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 32, l. 14). He would seem to be a more likely candidate for dependence on Ṭabarī. It was, of course, a common topic.

a *risālah* in which there are discussed the principles of jurisprudence, consensus (*ijmā'*), traditions going back to only one transmitter (*āḥād*),³⁹⁷ *marāsīl* traditions,³⁹⁸ abrogations as they affect the legal situation, and traditions (*akhbār*) and commands and prohibitions which are summary and require explanation (*muǧmal*) and which are interpreted (*mufassar*), the actions of the messengers, (passages with) general and specific (application, *al-khuṣūṣ wa-al-'umūm*), and independent judgment, the invalidity of expressing unsupported legal opinions (*istiḥsān*), and other debated matters.

Some information on *Laṭīf* is provided by cross-references in other works of Ṭabarī. It is, however, not always clear which section of *Laṭīf* is precisely aimed at. All the references in *Ikhtilāf* (ed. Kern, II, 29, 79, 83, 90 f., 103, 115) concern certain aspects of *kafālah* "surety bond, bail." This, however, need not mean that they all go back to the same book of *Laṭīf*. The discussion of surety bond in cases of contractual manumission (*mukātabah*, ed. Kern, II, 79, 83) may have had its place in that context. In fact, a *Kitāb al-Rahn* "On surety deposits" and a *Kitāb al-Ghuṣūb* (!) "On laws concerning robbery/rape by force" (ed. Kern, II, 103, 115) are indicated as sources in connection with problems of *kafālah*.³⁹⁹ The situation with regard to the remaining citations is more ambiguous.

Tafsīr often refers to the introductory *risālah* of *Laṭīf* for problems of the general and specific (*al-khuṣūṣ wa-al-'umūm*),⁴⁰⁰ abrogation (*al-nāsikh wa-al-mansūkh*),⁴⁰¹ command and prohibi-

397. See *Tahdhīb, Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, 770.

398. See above, n. 358.

399. See above, n. 360.

400. *Tafsīr*, I, 276, ll. 24 f., *ad Qur.* 2:69, expressly refers to the subject of *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ*. Further references in *Tafsīr*, I, 404, l. 4. *ad Qur.* 2:116, II, 269, l. 10, *ad Qur.* 2:228, V, 7, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 4:24.

401. See *Tafsīr*, II, 222, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 2:221, III, 12, l. 14, *ad Qur.* 2:256 (possibly referring to *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ*), VI, 159, l. 19, *ad Qur.* 5:142, VIII, 79, l. 11, *ad Qur.* 6:159. The passage *Tafsīr*, VII, 200, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 75:22 f., referring to the beatific vision, may also have to do with abrogation. Discussions of abrogation, such as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, IX, 135, l. 17, *ad Qur.* 8:16, or X, 58, l. 5, *ad Qur.* 9:6, are quite likely to belong to the introductory *risālah*, even though they occur unassigned.

tion (*al-amr wa-al-nahy*),⁴⁰² and, possibly, consensus (*ijmā'*)⁴⁰³ and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*).⁴⁰⁴ The reference in *Tahdhīb, Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, II, 770, concerns the permissibility of acting on the basis of a tradition transmitted from a single authority (see above, n. 397) and thus goes back to the *risālah*.

References to other parts of *Laṭīf* are usually more difficult to assign: *Tafsīr*, I, 37, ll. 13 f., on the "seven verses" of the first sūrah and the inclusion of the *basmalah* in the count (possibly from the *risālah* ?), II, 252, l. 17, *ad Qur.* 2:226, on oaths (or on intercourse), II, 264, ll. 11 f., 289, l. 11, *ad Qur.* 2:228 and 229, on divorce, [II, 352, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 2:238, on prayer, to be dealt with in the planned larger work, above, n. 390], V, 134, l. 13, *ad Qur.* 4:94, on blood money, VI, 44, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 5:3, on the meat of dead animals, VII, 28, l. 31, *ad Qur.* 5:95, on hunting (in the Sacred Territory), VIII, 16, l. 7, *ad Qur.* 6:121, on the meat of properly slaughtered animals (see above, n. 404), XIV, 93, l. 8, *ad Qur.* 16:67, on intoxication, thus probably from *Kitāb al-Shurb*, and XVIII, 68, l. 12, *ad Qur.* 24:9, mentioning *bāb al-li'ān* "the chapter on the *li'ān*⁴⁰⁵ formula of divorce."

[*Al-Libās* "On clothing": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Maḥāḍir wa-al-sijillāt* "On records and documents": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Manāsik* "On the pilgrimage ritual": See *Ādāb al-manāsik*]

[*Marātib al-'ulamā'* "On the classification of scholars": See *Basīṭ*]

Al-Mūjaz fī al-uṣūl "A concise treatment of the (legal) principles"

Irshād, VI, 453, l. 3, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81, ll. 5 f.:

Kitāb al-Mūjaz fī al-uṣūl. He began it with a treatise on

402. See *Tafsīr*, X, 29, l. 27, *ad Qur.* 8:66, XVIII, 99, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 24:33 (dealing with contractual manumission). A connection with *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ* may exist in *Tafsīr*, XV, 59, l. 21, *ad Qur.* 17:33.

403. See *Tafsīr*, II, 31, ll. 1 f., *ad Qur.* 2:158.

404. See *Tafsīr*, VIII, 16, l. 7, *ad Qur.* 6:121, listed in the following paragraph.

405. See *EP*, V, 730-2, s.v. *li'ān*.

moral behavior (*risālat al-akhlāq*), but then discontinued (lecturing on it).

The title is also listed in Şafadī, *Wāfī*, II, 286, ll. 6 f. We do not know whether Ṭabarī stopped work on it because of old age or because he had other projects to which he gave priority. See also above, *al-Ādar (?) fī al-uṣūl*.

Mukhtaṣar al-farā'id "A short work on the religious duties"

No more than the title is known about this presumptive monograph mentioned in *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 1 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 3 f.

[*Mukhtaṣar Manāsik al-ḥajj* "A short work (abridgment of the work ?) on the ritual of the pilgrimage": See *Ādāb al-Manāsik*]

[*Mukhtaṣar Ta'riḫ* ... "The short work on the history of...": See *Ta'riḫ*]

[*Musnad Ibn 'Abbās* "The Prophetical traditions transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās": See *Tahdhīb*]

[*Al-Musnad al-mukharraj* "The Prophetical traditions made public".

Ibn 'Asākir mentions *Tahdhīb* but also refers in another place (Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII) to this title and describes the work as "unfinished and containing all the traditions, sound or unsound, transmitted by the Companions on the authority of the Messenger of God." It is, however, reasonable to assume that the work is identical with *Tahdhīb*, and the title derives from another bibliographical tradition.]

[*Al-Mustarshid* "The seeker of guidance"

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, has this title among the works of Ṭabarī. However, as discovered by Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit," 359, Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, 187, states that the author of *Mustarshid* was, in fact, not the historian but a certain Abū Ja'far

Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Rustam al-Ṭabarī.⁴⁰⁶

Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 540, lists *Kitāb al-Mustarshid* on the imāmate of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as existing in manuscripts and having been printed in al-Najaf (not available to me). He further lists as works of the same Ibn Rustam two more titles, *Dalā'il al-imāmah* and *Bishārat al-Murtaḍā*. According to Sezgin, the author of all three works probably died in the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century. However, the published text of *Dalā'il al-imāmah* dealing with the twelve imāms (al-Najaf, 1369/1949) cites al-Mu'āfā among its authorities. This precludes a composition of the work in its present form before the end of the century at the earliest. On the other hand, the text also refers to its supposed author (?) Abū Ja'far as having, among his authorities, Sufyān b. Wakī' (d. 247/861)⁴⁰⁷ — his father, an *isnād* much used by Ṭabarī. Our admittedly defective knowledge of *Dalā'il al-imāmah* suggests that it was a compilation of post-Ṭabarīan date.

The situation with respect to *Bishārat al-Muṣṭafā li-Shī'at al-Murtaḍā* is equally uncertain. The title was listed erroneously by Brockelmann among Ṭabarī's works (see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, no. 7). Modern scholars ascribe its authorship to various unknown individuals. In the edition al-Najaf, 1383/1963, the name of Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī is found. Ibrāhīm, in the introduction to his Ṭabarī edition (ed. Cairo, I, 20) (see also Hūfī, 253) refers to *al-Dharī'ah ilā muṣannafāt al-Shī'ah*, III, 117, for the information that the author's name was Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muslim al-Ṭabarī al-Āmulī. Aghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shī'ah*, 242, names Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'Imād al-dīn al-Ṭabarī al-Āmulī. Only one thing is clear: Ṭabarī had nothing to do with the work.

Reference to the present title, *al-Mustarshid fī al-imāmah*, was also made by Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 266. Najāshī informs us that he received the *Mustarshid*, as well as other works by Ibn Rustam, through Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Nūḥ—al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamzah al-Ṭabarī, who died in 358/968[9].⁴⁰⁸ This *isnād* would seem to confirm that

406. See above, 13.

407. See below, translation, n. 66.

408. See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 48. Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Nūḥ is mentioned in *Rijāl*, 63, but without a date.

Mustarshid was, in fact, written early in the fourth/tenth century. Ibn al-Nadīm might have seen the work and, perhaps, considered it a work of Ṭabarī, provided he had not read it or had mixed up his notes.⁴⁰⁹

See, further, the discussion of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah*, below.]

[*Fī al-Qirā'āt* "On Qur'ān readings": See *Faṣl*]

[*Al-Qiṭ'ān* "The two sections [of *History*, dealing with the dynasties of the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids]": See *Ta'rīkh*]

Fī al-Qiyās "On analogical reasoning"

This is not a title but a description of the contents of a work on the principle of analogical reasoning which Ṭabarī thought of writing but never did. See *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 4–8, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 7–13:

He wanted to produce a book on analogical reasoning but did not do it. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Ḥubaysh, the copyist/bookseller (*al-warrāq*), said: Abū Ja'far had asked me to collect for him scholarly works on analogical reasoning, and I collected some thirty books. They remained with him for a short while. As is known, he then discontinued lecturing on traditions, several months before his death. When he returned the books to me, I found red markings he had made in them.⁴¹⁰

Al-Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār "A refutation of the one with the tomes (?)"⁴¹¹

This is the work which Ṭabarī wrote against the founder of the

⁴⁰⁹ Old uncertainty as to the authenticity of the one or other title ascribed to Ṭabarī will come up in connection with *Ramy*, below.

⁴¹⁰ See above, n. 200.

⁴¹¹ *Asfār* here means presumably "books," and not "travels". It is not clear whether this is an allusion to donkeys carrying books (Qur. 62:5), or what else may be behind it, except that it obviously refers to Dāwūd, perhaps, as the author of the many fascicles mentioned(?).

Zāhirite school, Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī (see above, 68 f.). The only circumstantial report available is that preserved in *Irshād*, VI, 450, l. 16–452, l. 11, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 78, l. 1–80, l. 9.⁴¹² It goes back, in part or in its entirety, to Ibn Kāmil:

His book entitled *al-Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār*, his refutation of Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī. The reason why he wrote this book was as follows: Abū Ja'far had been in close contact with Dāwūd b. 'Alī for a while and had written down many of his books. In his inheritance, we found eighty fascicles from his books in his⁴¹³ fine hand. (This material) included the problem debated between Dāwūd b. 'Alī and the Mu'tazilite Abū Mujālid al-Ḍarīr in Wāsiṭ on going out to al-Muwaffaq when there was dissension about the createdness of the Qur'ān.⁴¹⁴

Dāwūd b. 'Alī possessed some knowledge of speculative theology (*naẓar*), traditions, disagreement (among jurists?), and (religious) laws (? , *sunan*) but not very much. He was eloquent and well-spoken and in full control of himself. He had colleagues and students who were strongly inclined to levity and developed a certain approach to employ in discussions (*naẓar*), so as to cut off their adversaries. It sometimes happened that Dāwūd b. 'Alī debated (with someone about) definite proofs for a legal problem. When he saw that (his adversary)⁴¹⁵ was deficient in traditions, he would steer (the discussion) to it. Or, when he would discuss traditions with him, he would steer him to jurisprudence. Or, when he saw that he was (not?) deficient in both (traditions and jurisprudence, he would steer him) to logical disputation (*jadāl*).⁴¹⁶ He himself was deficient in grammar and lexicography, even

412. The title is mentioned in Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 5.

413. See above, n. 259. I understand the pronoun to refer to Ṭabarī, here and in connection with "his inheritance."

414. See above, n. 260. "Going out" could be "switching to the side of," but this is hardly meant. Probably, on one of his frequent stays in Wāsiṭ, al-Muwaffaq convoked a disputation on the subject.

415. According to a footnote in Rifā'ī's edition, the meaning would be: "saw himself deficient." It seems, however, that Dāwūd was the one who cleverly did the switching to another subject when he noticed that his adversary had a weakness in it.

416. The science of *jadāl* is Aristotle's topics.

though he had some acquaintance with these subjects. Abū Ja'far, on the other hand, was well informed in every discipline that came up in a debate. To his dying days, he disliked and refrained from behavior that was unbecoming for scholars. He preferred seriousness under all circumstances.

One day, a problem was discussed by Dāwūd b. 'Alī with Abū Ja'far, and the discussion stopped Dāwūd b. 'Alī (short, so that he was unable to make a retort). His colleagues and students were chagrined, and one of them made acerbic remarks to Abū Ja'far. The latter left the meeting and produced the book under discussion. He made public successive portions of it, amounting eventually to a fragment of about one hundred folios. He started with an invocation (*khutbah*), which, however, he did not lecture on (*min ghayr imlā'*). It is among the best and most eloquent of Abū Ja'far's works, containing....⁴¹⁷

After the death of Dāwūd b. 'Alī, he discontinued (working and lecturing on) the subject. Only as much of the work as was written down by his outstanding (*muqaddamūn*) colleagues and students got into the hands of his⁴¹⁸ colleagues and students, and (the material) was not passed on (to others). Among those who wrote down this book were Abū Ishāq b. al-Faḍl b. Ḥayyān al-Ḥulwānī — Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said that we studied (*sami'nāh*) it with him —, Abū al-Tayyib al-Jurjānī, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣawwāf,⁴¹⁹ Abū al-Faḍl al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad (b.?) al-Muḥassin, and others. Al-Ru'āsī, one of Dāwūd b. 'Alī's outstanding colleagues, said that Dāwūd forbade that man who had made the (offensive) remarks to Abū Ja'far to participate in discussions for one year as a punishment for the incident he had caused.

Then, Dāwūd b. 'Alī's son Muḥammad undertook to respond to Abū Ja'far's refutation of his father. He did so in a particularly harsh manner with respect to three problems and took to slandering Abū Ja'far. This was the book of his

417. The text as printed defies grammar and sense and requires correction.

418. Possibly, the pronoun refers to (Abū Bakr b.) Dāwūd b. 'Alī's people, but it seems rather Tabarī who is meant.

419. With the exception of al-Ṣawwāf (see above, n. 237), the individuals mentioned still await identification.

addressed to the refutation of Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr.

Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Mughallis⁴²⁰ said: Abū Bakr (Muḥammad) b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī said to me: Abū Ja'far's attack on my father was always on my mind. When I came one day to Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid,⁴²¹ Abū Ja'far was there, and Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid said to him: This is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī. Being aware of my position (in scholarship), Abū Ja'far welcomed me cordially when he saw me. He started to heap praise upon my father and complimented me in a manner that completely disarmed me.

[*Al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* "A refutation of the Ḥurqūṣiyyah"

This title was brought to the attention of scholars by L. Massignon in a particularly impenetrable footnote of his immortal *Passion*.⁴²² Massignon's source appears to have been *Tabṣīrat al-'awāmm* of Abū Turāb Murtaḍā b. al-Dā'ī,⁴²³ which unfortunately has remained inaccessible to me. Without further specifying his sources, Massignon assumed that Ḥurqūṣiyyah referred to a certain tribal group, Zuhayr b. Ḥurqūṣ, as ancestors of Ibn Ḥanbal. According to Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, n. 2, the prominent early Khārijite Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr⁴²⁴ might be meant. Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, furthered the discussion by adducing Najāshī, *Rijāl*.⁴²⁵ There, it is stated expressly that a non-Shī'ah ('āmmī) Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was the author of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah*, in which he mentioned the recensions (of the reports) on the Day of the Pool (= Ghadīr Khumm). Al-Najāshī's authorities were Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Makhlad (al-Bāqarjī) — his father (Makhlad b. Ja'far). Both belonged, it seems, to Ṭabarī's circle (see above, n. 252). Thus, the work could indeed have been by Ṭabarī. It may, however, be noted that Makhlad became "confused" in his later years. His son persuaded him to claim (being

420. See above, n. 199.

421. Unidentified.

422. See Massignon, *Passion*², III, 154, n. 5, English trans., III, 142 n. 140.

423. See Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 711.

424. See *EI*², III, 582 f., s. v.

425. See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 225 [= 246 in the later edition cited by Sezgin, I, 328, n.2].

an authorized transmitter of?) a number of works, among them Ṭabarī's *History*, while, in reality, he just relied upon purchased copies. This casts doubt also on his reliability with respect to *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* but not sufficiently so as to justify rejecting the attribution to Ṭabarī out of hand.

The connection with Ghādīr Khumm suggests that Ḥurqūṣiyyah could have served as a nickname for Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (above, nn. 229 and, especially, 326), but no evidence for this assumption is available. For the time being, it is not implausible to suggest that *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* was part of *Faḍā'il*.]

Fī al-Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam 'alā Mālik "A refutation of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's statement on certain views of) Mālik"⁴²⁶

Irshād, VI, 453, ll. 2 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 55, ll. 3-5, lists this title (which, however, was not a real title), adding that the work "did not reach his students and colleagues." *Irshād*, VI, 434, ll. 1-4, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 55, ll. 1-4, explains further, apparently relying on Ibn Kāmil:

We have heard that he was asked in al-Fuṣṭāṭ to refute Mālik on some point, and he did so in connection with something that Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam had discussed. (Ṭabarī's) work has not come into our hands. Perhaps it was one of the things that the adversaries (*al-khuṣūm*) prevented from being circulated (*nashr*).

It is not quite clear who the "adversaries" were and why there was opposition to the work. The Mālikites may have objected to it, even though Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam would not have attacked Mālik in an unseemly manner, and Ṭabarī himself is unlikely to have attacked Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (but may have been critical of Mālik).⁴²⁷

Since the work originated during Ṭabarī's stay in Egypt and presumably was made public at the time, it can claim to be his earliest publication of which we have notice, seeing that the earliest publication dates of *Laṭīf* and *Ikhtilāf* cannot be

426. The member of the Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam family meant here is no doubt Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh (above, n. 104).

427. The Ḥanbalites are certainly not meant in this context.

precisely established.

[*Al-Ramy bi-al-nushshāb* "On arrow shooting"]

Irshād, VI, 453, ll. 8–11, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 14–18, declared the work to be supposititious:

'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad said: A small book on arrow shooting has come into my possession. I know of nobody who studied it with him, nor of anybody to record and confirm his authorship or attribute it to him. I am afraid that it is wrongly ascribed to him.

If it was a legal treatise, Ṭabarī might have been the author, since the subject of shooting was of great concern to jurists.⁴²⁸ However, Ṭabarī's biographer 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad knew the contents of the work, and we do not. Thus, we ought to accept his opinion. If it was a technical treatise on archery, Ṭabarī's authorship is indeed most unlikely. The assumption of a confusion with *Kitāb al-Wādīḥ fī al-ramy bi-al-nushshāb* by a certain 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī seems farfetched, even if this author did not live in the seventh/thirteenth century but in or before the historian's time.⁴²⁹

[*Ṣalāt al-khawf* "The prayer of fear": See *Basīṭ*]

Ṣarīḥ al-sunnah "The essence of orthodox Muslim belief"

The work was also known as Ṭabarī's "Creed" (*al-'Aqīdah*, see above, 85) and, it seems mistakenly, as *Sharḥ al-sunnah* "Explanation of...." Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII, refers to it as "a slender (*laṭīf*) book, in which Ṭabarī explained his (theological) views (*madh-habahū*) and religious theory and practice in the service of God

428. Among others, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Hakam wrote a book on [horse] racing and shooting; see Ibn Farḥūn, *Dībāj*, 232. Ṭabarī himself paid attention to the prowess in archery of some early Muslims, see *Dhayl*, III, 2301, 2312, 2362, ed. Cairo, XI, 497, 506, 543.

429. See Brockelmann, *GAL*², I, 149, no. 8, Suppl. I, 906. The work is preserved in a number of manuscripts. It was quoted extensively by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Furūsiyyah*, 110 ff.; its authorities, as quoted in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, cannot easily be identified for dating purposes.

[*wa-mā yadīnu Allāha bihī*].⁴³⁰ *Irshād*, VI, 452, ll. 14–16, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 80, ll. 13–15, echoes this description with only slight differences: "Also, his treatise known as *Kitāb Ṣariḥ al-sunnah* in several folios. He mentioned in it his (theological) views, religious theory and practice, and beliefs."

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, no. 6, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, nos. 6 and 8. *Ṣariḥ* was edited on the basis of an Istanbul manuscript and translated by D. Sourdel (see Bibliography, under *Ṣariḥ*).

[*Al-Ṣalāh* "On prayer": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Sariqah* "On theft": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Sharḥ al-sunnah* "An explanation of orthodox Muslim belief": See *Ṣariḥ*]

[*Al-Shudhūr* is a title listed by Ḥājjī Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, 1429, who ascribed it to the historian whom he calls a Ḥanbalite (!), no doubt a meaningless misattribution]

[*Al-Shurb* "On drink": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Shurūṭ* "On document forms": See *Basīṭ* and *Laṭīf* (above, n. 396)]

Tabṣīr ulī al-nuhā wa-maʿālim al-hudā "An instruction for the intelligent and directions toward right guidance"

This is the title as it appears in the Escorial manuscript, 1514, fols. 81a–104b. Elsewhere, it is plain *Tabṣīr*, at times enlarged with *fi uṣūl al-dīn* or *fi maʿālim al-dīn*.

Ibn ʿAsākir, LXXX, quotes al-Farḡhānī:

430. "Allāha" also appears in the manuscript used for the edition of *Ṣariḥ*, text, 199, n. 1. *Irshād* may have omitted it for simplification. Note further that Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 274, l. 4, reads *Sharḥ al-sunnah* following Ibn ʿAsākir. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 6, has *Ṣariḥ al-sunnah*.

Also completed is his book entitled *al-Tabṣīr*, a treatise (*risālah*) addressed to the inhabitants of Āmul in Ṭabaristān. He comments in it on the principles of the religion of Islam (*uṣūl al-dīn*), which he has been following (*yataqallad*).⁴³¹

Irshād, VI, 452, ll. 10–14, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 80, ll. 10–13, shows an obviously incorrect *al-Baṣīr*:

Among Abū Ja'far's writings is his treatise entitled *al-Baṣīr fī ma'ālim al-dīn* addressed to the people of Ṭabaristān concerning the disagreement that had arisen among them on (matters such as the identity or non-identity of) name and thing named (*al-ism wa-al-musammā*)⁴³² and the doctrines (*madhāhib*) of innovators.⁴³³ It is about thirty folios.

The work is partly preserved in the mentioned Escorial manuscript;⁴³⁴ see Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, no. 2, Suppl. I, 218, no. 5, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 5. Attention was first drawn to it in 1901 by Becker, "Ṭabarī's sogenannte Catechesis Mahometana." In the introduction, Ṭabarī says that the people of Ṭabaristān had asked him to write such a treatise because of the large number of confusing, sectarian, and divisive views that were causing trouble among them.

Without indicating a title, Ibn Ḥazm quotes *Tabṣīr*, fol. 85b, for

431. *Yataqallad* is doing the opposite of what innovators do. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 14 f., has a shortened version of Ibn 'Asākir. Both Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 7, and Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 11, list the title of the work as *Kitāb al-Tabṣīr fī uṣūl al-dīn*.

432. This intensively discussed problem of speculative theology was considered a sort of touchstone showing whether religious scholars had the correct attitude. They were strongly warned against paying attention to it. Ṭabarī's Egyptian authority Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā, for instance, is supposed to have said: "I heard al-Shāfi'ī say: When you hear someone say that the name is different from the thing named or the name is identical with the thing named, testify against him (and say) that he is a Mutakallim and has no religion" See Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 174. Ṭabarī himself refers to the *ism-musammā* problem in the introduction of *Tabṣīr* (fol. 82b) among the abominable indications of unbelief current at the time in Ṭabaristān. See also *Ṣarīḥ*, text, 198, trans., 192.

433. The "innovators" were mainly the speculative theologians, the Qadariyyah/Jahmiyyah. Their scandalous heretical views were gaining the upper hand in the region, which also suffered under the dominance of incompetent troublemakers (*tara'us al-ruwaybiḍāh*, "dregs of the population" [see trans., Vol. XXXII, 55, n. 177], an allusion to the Shī'ite sectarian rulers?), see *Tabṣīr*, fol. 82b.

434. I wish to thank the authorities of the Biblioteca de El Escorial for providing me with a microfilm of the work.

the need of Muslims at an early age to know about names and attributes in order to avoid being branded as unbelievers.⁴³⁵

Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 279, l. 6–280, l. 4, and 'Uluww, 150 f., has a somewhat shortened and mangled quotation from the chapter on divine attributes known through statements of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. It appears on fol. 87b of the Escorial manuscript.

[*Al-Tafsīr* "Qur'ān commentary": See *Jāmi' al-bayān*]

[*Al-Ṭahārah* "On ritual purity ": See *Basīṭ*]

Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-tafsīl ma'ānī al-thābit 'an Rasūl Allāh min al-akhbār "An improved treatment and detailed discussion of the traditions established as going back to the Messenger of God"

Ṭabarī's most ambitious work on traditions is more commonly referred to as *Tahdhīb al-āthār* or, simply, *al-Tahdhīb*.⁴³⁶ It is mentioned by all Ṭabarī biographers. It remained unfinished but apparently began to circulate rather early in Ṭabarī's career. The fact that *Latīf* is quoted in it does not help very much to fix the time of the first appearance of parts of it.⁴³⁷ *Tahdhīb* was possibly meant to rival Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. In fact, though, it was much more than a mere collection of traditions. Its singular conception was to provide an exhaustive and penetrating analysis of the philological and legal implications of each *ḥadīth* mentioned and to discuss its meaning as well as its significance for religious practice and theory. Thus, it contains what amounts to monographs on a number of important topics.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah* as quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 20–427, l. 1, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 45, ll. 2 f., mentions that he studied the Prophetical traditions transmitted (*musnad*) by the Ten⁴³⁸ and by Ibn 'Abbās down to the traditions on the Prophet's heavenly journey (*mi'rāj*) from the *Kitāb al-Tahdhīb*.

It was presumably Ibn Kāmil who used the long title of the

435. See Ibn Ḥazm, *Fisal*, IV, 35, as mentioned by van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre*, 49.

436. See also above, *al-Musnad al-mukharraj*.

437. See above, 117.

438. For the Blessed Ten, the ten old Muslims who were assured of Paradise, see *EI*², I, 693, s. v. al-'ashara al-mubashshara.

work. According to *Irshād*, VI, 448, ll. 12–18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 74, l. 17–75, l. 6, he said:

Kitāb Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-tafṣīl al-thābit 'an Rasūl Allāh min al-akhbār. It is a work, the like of which it would be difficult for any other scholar to produce and complete. Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: After Abū Ja'far's death, I have not seen anyone who possessed more religious knowledge, knew more about the works of religious scholars and the disagreements of jurists, and had a greater command of all scholarly disciplines. (I know) because I tried hard to produce a work on the Prophetic traditions transmitted (*musnad*) by 'Abd-allāh b. Mas'ūd in the way Abū Ja'far had done (with the *musnads*) of others. I was unable to do a good job, and it did not come out right.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, ll. 4 f., states his intention to mention the published parts of the unfinished *Tahdhīb*, but the text contains a blank space.

TB, II, 163, ll. 10 f., called Ṭabarī's unfinished work entitled *Tahdhīb al-āthār* unequalled in the treatment of its subject, as far as he knew. His remark was quoted by nearly all later biographers.⁴³⁹

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXX f., quotes al-Farghānī at length to bring out the importance of the work:

He started on the composition of *Tahdhīb al-āthār*. It is one of his most remarkable works. He began with the traditions of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq that in his opinion⁴⁴⁰ were transmitted with sound chains of transmitters. He discussed each one of them with their weaknesses (*'ilal*),⁴⁴¹ their recensions, and their contents as to law, the practice of the Prophet

439. For instance, Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 41; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 171; *Irshād*, VI, 424, l. 12, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 41, ll. 14 f.; Safadī, *Wāfi*, II, 285; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāya*, II, 107; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 270, ll. 1 f.; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 22, ll. 9 f.; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, XI, 145; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, III, 205, ll. 13 f.

440. Read *'indahū*, as in the quotation from Ibn 'Asākir in Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, ll. 12–16.

441. As understood in *Tahdhīb*, *'ilal* are the illnesses, affecting practically exclusively the chains of transmitters, which are potential reasons for considering a given tradition as "sick (*saqīm*)."

(*sunan*), and the disagreements and arguments of scholars. (He also discussed) their contents with respect to meanings (*ma'ānī*) and their rare words, and (he reported) the attacks of heretics on them and refuted them and explained the corruptness of their attacks. He made public of the work the Prophetical traditions transmitted by the Blessed Ten, the people of the House, and the *mawlās* as well as a large fragment of Prophetical traditions transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās. It was his intention to report every last sound tradition of the Messenger of God and discuss them all in the way he had started, so that nobody would ever be able to attack any part of the knowledge of the Messenger of God. He also intended to report all that is needed by religious scholars, as he had done in *Tafsīr*. Thus, (if he had been able to complete the work), he would have dealt with the (entire) science of the religious law (*al-sharī'ah*) on the basis of the Qur'ān and the traditions and practice of the Prophet (*sunan*). He died before the completion of the work. Thereafter, there was nobody to interpret and discuss a single one of those traditions the way he had done.

After repeating most of this information, Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 15–20, expressed what appears to be his personal opinion: "If the work had been completed as planned, it would have to come to a hundred volumes." This, of course, was an offhand guess, but it is hardly an exaggeration.

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl. I, 217 f., and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 327. The preserved fragments of the *Musnads* of 'Alī and 'Abd-allāh b. al-'Abbās were published in three volumes in 1982 by Maḥmūd M. Shākir. The *Musnad* of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb remains to be published.

Al-Ta'rikh "The History"

Because of its fame, the work was commonly referred to simply as Ṭabarī's *History*. Its most authentic title is the one indicated by Ṭabarī himself in the colophon of one of the manuscripts. It is *Mukhtaṣar ta'rikh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk wa-al-khulafā'* "The

short work on the history of messengers, kings, and caliphs."⁴⁴² Similarly, Ṭabarī refers to it as *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*.⁴⁴³ It seems that Ṭabarī had a predilection for "short work" as an expression of modesty and an indication that a subject required a much longer treatment than the one it was receiving from him.

We also find titles such as "History of the messengers, prophets, kings, and caliphs" (al-Farghānī) or "History of nations and kings" (TB), as well as "History of the messengers and kings" expanded to "and their historical record and all those who lived in the time of each one of them" (Ibn Kāmil).⁴⁴⁴ Scribes who copied the work for a patron presumably often preferred some impressive title to put on the title page, but the simple *Ta'riḫ* really needed no amplification. There could never be any doubt as to which work was meant.

According to *Irshād*, VI, 427, ll. 17 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44, ll. 16–18, al-Farghānī referred in his *ijāzah* to:

Kitāb al-Rusul wa-al-anbiyā' wa-al-mulūk wa-al-khulafā'
and the two sections (*al-qiṭ'ān*, on the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids) of the work. However, I did not study it (with Ṭabarī directly) but used it by (written) permission (*ijāzah*).

Ibn Kāmil's full and perceptive description of the work appears in *Irshād*, VI, 443, l. 17–445, l. 6, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 68, l. 6–70, l. 9:

Among his works is his great *History* entitled *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk wa-akhbāruhum wa-man kān fī zaman kull wāḥid minhum*. He began with an invocation (*khuṭbah*) that (briefly) summarizes the significant aspects of its contents (*ma'ānī*).⁴⁴⁵ He then discussed what time is and the du-

442. See translation below, Vol. XXXVIII, p. xvii.

443. See *Dhayl*, III, 2358, ed. Cairo, XI, 540.

444. A rather similar title appears in a Leiden manuscript and seemed to Kosegarten, the first editor of large portions of *History*, who used a Berlin manuscript, to be the authoritative title of the work: *Ta'riḫ al-mulūk wa-akhbāruhum* (Kosegarten: *a'māruhum!*) *wa-mawālid* (K. *wa-mawālid*) *al-rusul wa-anbā'uhum wa-al-kā'in alladhī* (K. *deest*) *kān fī zaman kull wāḥid minhum*. See Hamaker, *Specimen*, 19, and Kosegarten, I, IV and 3.

445. See above, n. 336. The general accuracy of Ibn Kāmil's analysis of the con-

ration in time (of the world) according to the divergent opinions of the Companions and others and the nations opposed to our view on the subject. A chapter like this can be found only in his work.⁴⁴⁶

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mughallis, the jurist,⁴⁴⁷ said: Of all the scholars we have ever seen, he possessed the best understanding and had the greatest concern for knowledge and research. Because of his concern with scholarly research, he had his books all laid out on one side of his residence,⁴⁴⁸ then went through them for the first (time) one by one, in the process carrying them to the other side, until he was through with them; then he studied them again and returned them to their original place.⁴⁴⁹ (Ibn al-Mughallis) said one day: Nobody has ever done what Abū Ja'far did with respect to writing and giving a full presentation of history (*ta'riḫ al-zamān*). (Ibn Kāmil) continued: Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Mughallis said to me one day while we were talking about scholarship and the excellence of scholars: By God! I do think that Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī forgot as much of what he knew by heart till his death as so-and-so—naming an important scholar—ever knew by heart all his life.

Abū Ja'far continued in *History* with the discussion of the creation of time as days and nights and (argued) that God alone created them. He mentioned the first (thing) that was created, namely, the Pen, as well as everything (created) thereafter one by one according to the traditions (*āthār*) on the subject and the different opinions of scholars about it. He then mentioned Adam and Eve and the accursed Iblīs as well as Adam's descent (fall to earth). He continued with brief histories of each prophet, messenger, and king, down to

tents of *History* can easily be verified by the reader of this translation.

446. The correct wording of the text cannot easily be established, but there is no doubt about its meaning.

447. On Ibn Mughallis, see above, n. 199. Although this paragraph refers to *History* only in the second of its three statements, it is obvious that all of it goes back to Ibn Kāmil and, presumably, his Ṭabarī bibliography.

448. Ed. Rifā'ī suggests to read *ḥā'ir* with the putative meaning of "quiet (corner)," but this seems dubious. *Ḥāratihī* in the text may have its ordinary meaning of "residential quarter of a town" (and hence, residence ?).

449. See above, n. 199.

(the time of) our Prophet, including also the history of minor successor kings (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*) and the kings of the Persians and the Rūm. He then mentioned the birth of the Messenger of God, his genealogy, his male and female ancestors, his children, his wives, (the origin of) his Prophetic mission, his raids and expeditions, and the situation of his Companions. Then he mentioned the rightly guided caliphs after (the Prophet's death). He continued with the history of the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids in two sections, one devoted to the Umayyads, and the other to the 'Abbāsids, with the historical comments he made in *History (wa-mā sharahaḥū fī Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh)*. This (portion of *History*) was made public by way of *ijāzah* down to the year 294/906[7]. He did not continue with the subsequent years, because the reign of al-Muqtadir (which extended throughout Ṭabarī's remaining years) fell into them. He had been asked to comment on the two sections (dealing with the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids), and he complied and called (this portion of *History*) the "two sections (*at-qit'ān*)."

This work is of unique excellence and distinction in the world. It brings together many religious and worldly disciplines. It is about five thousand folios.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, l. 24–235, l. 2, adds information on continuations of *History* and ends with a remarkable statement on the necessary qualifications for writing history:

Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh, with the two sections (on the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids). He finished dictating it in 302/915 and stopped there.

A number of people have abridged the work and omitted the *isnāds*, among them a man known as Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Hāshimī,⁴⁵⁰ and another one, a secretary known as.... Among Mosulites, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Shimshāṭī al-Mu'allim⁴⁵¹ and a man known as al-Salīl b. Aḥmad.⁴⁵² A

450. Unidentified.

451. Possibly, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-'Adawī al-Shimshāṭī, a teacher of Nāṣir al-dawlah's son Abū Taghlib? See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 154, ll. 22–28, and the index of Dodge's translation, II, 1099 f.

452. Possibly, the informant of the Ibn Jinnī mentioned in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, II,

number of people have made additions covering the period from where it ends to our time. Their additions are not reliable, because (the men who wrote them) were not connected with the government (*dawlah*), nor did they have knowledge.⁴⁵³

Since the work was so well known, many biographers felt no need to say much about it. *TB*, II, 163, l. 9, merely mentions Ṭabarī's famous work, *Ta'riḫ al-umam wa-al-mulūk*. As in the case of *Tahdhīb*, *TB* was quoted by most later biographers. This was also the title cited by Ḥājji Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 297, and from there, it became known in seventeenth-century Europe through d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 866b, s. v. *Tarikh AlThabari*; see below, 138 f.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX, used as usual by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 8, merely mentions as completed his "*Ta'riḫ* that extends down to Ṭabarī's own age." And Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, III, 89, l. 6, described the *Kitāb al-Ta'riḫ* as the greatest work in its field. In another work, al-Qifṭī has a passage on the continuators of Ṭabarī. It was inserted in his biography of Thābit b. Sinān and was, perhaps, derived from al-Qifṭī's monograph on Ṭabarī.⁴⁵⁴

More information on *History* will be found in the following pages and, of course, in all the volumes of this translation.

[*Ta'riḫ al-rijāl* "The history of personalities": See *Dhayl*]

[*Tartīb al-'ulamā'* "The classification of scholars": See *Ādāb al-nufūs* and *Basīṭ*]

[*Ummahāt al-awlād* "On slave girls giving birth to children by their masters": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Waṣāyā* "On last wills": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Zakāh* "On charity taxes": See *Basīṭ*]

490, l. 3, as suggested in the index of Dodge's translation of *Fihrist*.

453. In other words, they were neither government officials nor scholars (of religion and law) and thus had no access to important historical information and no understanding of the processes of history. See also below, n. 455.

454. See Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 81-83.

The *History* and Its English Translation

The History in Islam and the West

The preceding long list of Ṭabarī's writings contains very few titles devoted predominantly to historical or biographical research, and a perusal of the biographical sketch presented here makes it quite clear that the outward course of his life was comparatively little influenced by his occupation with history. These are incontrovertible facts. Even the availability of more bibliographical information than we have is unlikely to refute them. Ṭabarī's importance as a scholar in his time and his role as a participant in contemporary affairs were the result of his scholarly activities in the legal and religious sphere. Yet, the outstanding significance of *History* was realized while he was still alive. It was welcomed by the students who heard Ṭabarī lecture on it or received his *ijāzah* to study and transmit it. They went on to use it in their own works, as was done, for instance, by the author of *Aghānī* (see above, n. 127). Its uniqueness was praised by a contemporary such as Ibn al-Mughallis (see above, p. 132). A writer on world history writing in a rather different tradition, al-Mas'ūdī, was acquainted with Ṭabarī as an important historian. About a generation after Ṭabarī's death, he spoke of *History* as "a work superior to all other historical works because of the abundant information it contains" and declared it "an extremely useful work," for, he reasoned, Ṭabarī's position as the leading jurist and religious scholar of his time made it possible for him to know all there was to know about history.⁴⁵⁵

455. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, I, 15 f., ed. Pellat, I, 15; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 508. For government experience as a necessity for the historian, see

Ṭabarī became known primarily by his *History*. It was, as M. J. de Goeje put it, the great work "whose fame has never faded from his own day to ours."⁴⁵⁶ His biographers would, of course, not fail to praise his other accomplishments, and they mention those in the field of history as merely one aspect of his work and not the first and foremost;⁴⁵⁷ but for Muslims, he was the historian of Islam. When it was necessary to distinguish him from other Ṭabarīs, it was as Ṭabarī the historian.

As was already suggested by O. Loth,⁴⁵⁸ the explanation for this development is not far to seek. Ṭabarī's works on jurisprudence and *ḥadīth* continued to be admired, and his Qur'ānic scholarship set an enduring and always respected standard of excellence. Yet, works on law and religion always were at the center of an enormous literary activity, and no matter how traditional much of it was or seemed to be, new tendencies and concerns constantly left their changing imprint on them. *History*, on the other hand, was, in accordance with the basic character of Muslim historiography, never really superseded. It remained the unique source for the period it covered, even when other sources for it were still available. Later historians constantly used Ṭabarī's work, at first directly, but then, in the course of time, usually indirectly through other histories such as the one of Ibn al-Athīr. The new works offered much of Ṭabarī's information in a shortened form and, naturally, added much subsequent history. Thus, they were easier to handle and had the advantage of being of greater interest for the ma-

above, n. 453. Al-Mas'ūdī's relationship with Ṭabarī is problematic. He once mentioned Ṭabarī as his oral authority (Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 267). Thus, it would seem that he knew him personally(?). See also Khalidī, *Islamic Historiography*, 148. *Murūj* (IV, 145, ed. Pellat, II, 145) expressly refers to *History* and elsewhere mentions Ṭabarī as a source of historical information (*Murūj*, V, 8, 40, ed. Pellat, II, 184, 202). None of the references can, however, be traced to *History*. Could al-Mas'ūdī have quoted from memory what he had heard long ago in Ṭabarī's lectures?

456. See de Goeje in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XXIII, 3b (Edinburgh, 1888). I owe this reference to Muth's work.

457. *Irshād*, VI, 423, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40, introduces Ṭabarī as "a *ḥadīth* scholar, jurist, Qur'ān reader, and historian" (in this order). Dhahabī, *Ibar*, II, 146, mentions *Tafsīr* first, and then *Ta'rikh*. On the other hand, Qiftī, *Muḥammadūn*, 263 f., speaks of "the author of the famous *History* and *Tafsīr*." Of course, not much can be made of this.

458. See Loth, "Ṭabarī's Korancommentar," 590. Loth says that (in contrast to *Tafsīr*), *History* had no competitors. This, however, rather oversimplifies the situation.

jority of readers who wanted to learn about events close to their own times. Some, if not many, later historians continued to use Ṭabarī and even seek out earlier sources, but manuscripts became increasingly difficult to find. Ibn Khaldūn copied a document at first from Ibn al-Athīr and was only later able to collate the text as it appears in Ṭabarī.⁴⁵⁹ This was more like the exception that confirmed the general rule. Ṭabarī always remained the historian of Islam, but his original work receded from general view.

Early translations into Persian and Turkish languages further attest to the fame of *History*. They show, however, a similar tendency toward adaptations of the original text. According to our philological understanding of the term, they could hardly be called translations. A Turkish translation, incidentally, was published already in 1844 and served as a source for some studies by contemporary Western scholars.

The history of the European acquaintance with Ṭabarī's *History* in a way constituted a reversal of the chronological process. The Arabic and Muslim works which attracted the curiosity of early Orientalists were generally those of more recent dates and, in particular, those of current use in the Near East. The historians whose works were introduced in seventeenth-century Europe, such as the histories of al-Makīn and Abū al-Fidā', were acquainted with Ṭabarī's work as a rule only at second or third hand.⁴⁶⁰ Only later did the search for the original text start. It was a slow process, and it began in earnest only at the end of the eighteenth century. After the publication of the Leiden edition in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the stage was reached where the later excerptors and adapters of Ṭabarī in Arabic as well as Persian and Turkish were disregarded by modern historians, except, of course, for whatever information not found in Ṭabarī they were able to contribute.

The name of Ṭabarī the historian had, however, been long familiar in the West. B. d'Herbelot (1625–95), whose *Bibliothèque Orientale* was published posthumously in 1697, featured a substantial article on "Thabari" (*Bibliothèque*, 1014). He started out by describing him as "the most famous of all Ṭabarīs on account

459. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, II, 139, n. 751.

460. For instance, L. Marracci knew *History* through al-Makīn. See Nallino, "Le fonti arabe," II, 96, n. 1. Marracci did not know *Tafsīr*, of course.

of the general *History* from the creation of the world to the time in which he lived that was published by him." The special article he devoted to *History* (*Bibliothèque*, 866 f.) gives as good a summary of the work's history as could be found in the West until more than a century had passed. It deserves to be quoted here in full on account of its historical interest. Practically all of its contents was derived by d'Herbelot from the great bibliographical work of Hājji Khalifah (1609–57), whose lifetime overlapped with his own.⁴⁶¹

TARIKH ALThabari. C'est le titre d'une Histoire fort celebre, qui passe pour le fondement des autres Histoires Musulmannes. Elle a été composée par Abou Giafar Mohammed Ben Gioraïr, natif du Thabarestan, qui mourut l'an 310. de l'hegire. Elle commence à la Creation du Monde, & finit en l'an 300.⁴⁶² de l'hegire. Elle porte encore le titre particulier de ,Tarikh alomam v almolouk. Elle est aussi souvent citée sous le titre de ,Tarikh Giafari, & les Persans la nomment aussi ,Tarikh pesser Gioraïr, l'Histoire du fils de Gioraïr.

Ebn ALGiouzi écrit, que cette Histoire dans son Original contient plusieurs volumes, & que l'Edition que nous avons entre les mains n'en est qu'un Abregé, & Ebn ALSobki rapporte dans ses Thabacat, que Thabari ayant demandé à ses amis, s'ils prendroient plaisir à lire une Histoire de tous ce qui étoit arrivé dans le Monde jusqu'à son temps, ils luy répondirent, qu'ils la liroient volontiers s'il étoit possible de la trouver, & que cet Auteur leur ayant dit, qu'il avoit compilé trente mille feüilles sur cette matière, ses amis luy repliquerent, que tout le temps de leur vie ne suffiroit pas pour les lire. Sur cecy, Thabari leur dit, qu'il l'abregeroit autant qu'il pourroit, & c'est cet Abregé, dit ,Sobki, qui nous est resté entre les mains.

Cet Abregé a été traduit en Langue Persienne par Abou Al'i Mohammed Aliâli,⁴⁶³ Vizir des Sultans Samanides, du

461. D'Herbelot used Galland's manuscript of Hājji Khalifah. See Laurens, *Barthélemi d'Herbelot*, 17. For his indirect use of Ṭabarī, see Laurens, 58. Hājji Khalifah's lengthiest Ṭabarī entry is in connection with *History*; that on *Tafsīr* is much briefer. See Hājji Khalifah, ed. Yalatkaya, 297 f.

462. Hājji Khalifah has 309 (for the latter date, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv).

463. I. c., a misreading of al-Bal'amī.

temps de Mansour Ben Nouh, l'an 352. de l'hegire.

Cette même Histoire a été traduite en Langue Turquesque par un Auteur incertain, & c'est celle que l'on trouve communément entre les mains des Turcs.

Abou Mohammed A'bdallah Ben Mohammed AlFargani a fait la continuation de l'Histoire de Thabari, & l'a publiée sous le titre de ,Selat.

Abou Hassan Mohammed Ben A'bdalmalek AlHama-dhani, mort l'an 521. de l'hegire, y a fait un autre Supplement.

In the nineteenth-century West, "history" was about to replace "philosophy" as the fundamental culture symbol of the age. With it came a long period of the avid study of everything that could be understood as "history." The occupation with Ṭabarī's historical work gained in intensity, as is chronicled in F.-C. Muth's very useful survey of Ṭabarī's *History* as mirrored in European scholarship published in 1983. Ṭabarī's other works meanwhile continued to be all but unknown to Western scholars. It was only near the end of the century that O. Loth called attention to *Tafsīr*, when a manuscript of the work had become known (see above, n. 383).

Not surprisingly, if quite inaccurately, Ṭabarī was described—shades of Herodotus!—as "Vater der arabischen Geschichte" by A. D. Mordtmann, who in 1848, relying on the recently published Turkish translation, collected *History's* information on Ṭabaristān (see Bibliography, below, under Mordtmann). After the publication of the Leiden edition, the interest of scholars soon turned to the challenging task of disentangling the source situation in the original text of *History*. This was a promising undertaking, owing to the fact that Ṭabarī himself, in his way, was careful to hint at the sources employed by him throughout his work. The name of J. Wellhausen should be mentioned here as that of the highly regarded pioneer in this field (see above, n. 206). The work has been continued with a good measure of success, but much more remains to be done.

It was, and has remained, more difficult to gain an insight into the manner in which Ṭabarī used his sources. In other words, what was his approach to the writing of history and his view of history in general and the historical data he surveyed in his work? What

considerations determined his choice of a given source in preference to other sources that might have been available to him? What, if anything, did he omit, thereby altering trends and historical interpretation, be it consciously or unconsciously? Beyond a general Baghdad-centrism that was indicated by his own residence in the capital and by the audience for which he was writing, what were his views on historical events and personalities? We hear, for example, that he predicted the failure of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's revolt as soon as it happened. When he was informed about it, he inquired about the new wazir and chief judge. Hearing their names, he expressed the view that the choice of such accomplished men who were ahead of their times in a period of general retrogression was wrong and Ibn al-Mu'tazz would not last.⁴⁶⁴ If this is the correct understanding of the reported remark, he seems to have meant that the course of historical events depended upon prevailing trends and the government must conform to the trends of the times in order to master them. Such express statements are rare in Ṭabarī's case. They are also often, as in the given example, of dubious historicity. The answers to the questions raised must be sought by means of internal evidence.

The present translation has as one of its purposes that of furthering this discussion. Whatever might come of it, the fact remains that Ṭabarī's *History* is our greatest single source of information for much of the early centuries of Muslim history. The existence of a standard work of this kind is apt to exercise a certain restrictive influence and to promote the tendency to rely on it unduly. Such was arguably the case with Ṭabarī's *History* for quite some time. It hardly is any longer. His *History* is now ready to take its proper place in Muslim historiography—not at the head, but at the very center.

464. The report goes back to al-Mu'āfā, with a suspiciously vague *isnād* connecting it to Ṭabarī. See Mu'āfā, *Jalis*, I, 472, quoted in *TB*, X, 98 f. (above, n. 18). The name of the chief judge is al-Ḥasan b. al-Muthannā, he must be the same individual as Abū al-Muthannā Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb, mentioned below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 189–91. It may be noted that Ṭabarī figures among the transmitters of the story of 'Ā'ishah that promotes the idea of a steady deterioration in history; see Rosenthal, "Sweeter than Hope," 25.

The Text

Scholars interested in the history of libraries in Islam usually cite the Egyptian historians al-Musabbiḥī and Ibn Abī Ṭayyī', who lived, respectively, around the turn of the fourth/tenth and sixth/twelfth centuries. Brief remarks from the works of these historians illustrate the large size of Muslim libraries in general as well as, in particular, the high esteem in which Ṭabarī's *History* was held. According to al-Musabbiḥī, the Fāṭimid caliph al-'Azīz, who reigned from 975 to 996, spent one hundred dīnārs for a copy of *History* that was offered to him. He then found out that his library already contained more than twenty copies of the work, including one in Ṭabarī's own hand. According to Ibn Abī Ṭayyī', 1,220 copies of *History* were in the library of the Fāṭimid palace complex when Saladin took over in 567/1171.⁴⁶⁵ We are not told whether these were complete sets or individual volumes. Whatever it was, the figure of 1,220 seems to be a somewhat exaggerated guess. It is, however, quite possible that an autograph of Ṭabarī found its way into the possession of royal bibliophiles and that the Fāṭimid rulers, conscious of their position in history, collected as many volumes as they could of a work that reflected the past glory of Islam to which they themselves aspired in vain. At a much later date, the Ottoman sultans had the same abundant means and the same motivation for acquiring choice copies of *History*. It is thus not by chance that today, the best of the preserved manuscripts are found in Istanbul and complete sets can be reconstructed from the library holdings there. While Ṭabarī manuscripts are preserved in numerous European and Middle Eastern libraries, it is usually only individual volumes and not the entire work.

For modern scholars trained in the proper technique of text edition, it was natural to look especially to Istanbul for manuscripts to be used in the planned edition of *History*. In the second half of the nineteenth century, this was no simple task; but M. J. de Goeje and his co-workers succeeded admirably in obtain-

465. See Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, I, 408 f., cited, for instance, by Mez, *Renaissance*, 164 f.; Pedersen, *Arabic Book*, 118 f. Al-Maqrīzī has 1,200 but the correct 1,220 is preserved in Abū Shāmah, *Rawḍatayn*, I, 200, l. 4, ed. Cairo, 1956, I, 507, l. 7, and Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, XII, 266, year 567. See Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 50. One may wonder whether 20 in 1,220 has something to do with the figure of "more than twenty" in al-Musabbiḥī.

ing the necessary manuscript material and preparing an edition which presented an accurate text with a full critical apparatus and a good deal of additional information. In addition to the chief mover of the project, de Goeje (1836-1909), the honor roll of famous Orientalists of the past century who participated in the enterprise included J. Barth (1851-1914), S. Fraenkel (1855-1909), I. Guidi (1844-1935), S. Guyard (1846-84), M. Th. Houtsma (1851-1943), P. De Jong (1832-1890), D. H. Müller (1846-1912), Th. Nöldeke (1836-1930), E. Prym (1843-1913), V. Rosen (1849-1908), and H. Thorbecke (1837-90).⁴⁶⁶ The publisher was the great house of E. J. Brill, which accomplished the difficult task of printing between the years 1879 and 1901. All editorial material, such as the brief summaries of the contents accompanying the individual volumes, the introduction, the glossary of noteworthy terms, and the model index, was written in Latin, as was fitting at the time for an inter-European enterprise. The full Latin title of the edition, which chose *Kitāb Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk* for the Arabic title page (see above, 131), was *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, which led scholars often to refer to it as *Annales*.

The Leiden edition had practically nothing in the way of predecessors,⁴⁶⁷ and it has as yet not been replaced. Manuscripts in the collections of the Topkapısarayı in Istanbul were not accessible at the time. As far as our present knowledge goes, they are the only significant manuscript material not used in the Leiden edition, although the chance of making new discoveries remains. It would seem that the oldest portion of a manuscript of *History* is a number of folios bound into Ms. Köprülü, I, 1047, covering the years 64-66.⁴⁶⁸

The Istanbul material was largely used by the editor of the Cairo edition, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, who had made himself a respected name as the editor of many important texts. His edition began to appear in 1969 and was reprinted repeatedly. Ibrāhīm omitted the critical apparatus of the Leiden edition. He basically

466. See Fück, *Arabische Studien*, in particular, 212 ff.

467. See Muth, *passim*.

468. The Istanbul manuscripts have been studied by R. Stephen Humphreys, who presented a preliminary report on his findings at the meeting of the American Oriental Society in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in April 1985.

restricted himself to indicating the variant readings of the Topkapisarayı manuscripts, with the exception of Ms. Revanköşk, no. 1555 (Karatay, *Catalogue*, no. 5735, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv f.). He also used some manuscript material from Egypt and India. It seems that he mainly listed variants he considered significant. He adopted the sound principle of showing the pagination of the standard Leiden edition in the margin of his text and thereby established the proper manner of reference for all who work on *History*. This procedure must be continued in any future edition, including the new scientific edition which it is hoped will some day be published and supersede the Leiden edition.

In connection with establishing the Arabic text, there was no pressing need to consult the Persian and Turkish versions. No case has as yet been made that these reworkings of the original could be of any real help, except, perhaps, with respect to additions not appearing in the available manuscripts. Even less useful are all the abridgments of the Arabic, the retranlations of the Persian version into Arabic, and the like. However, the difficult task of a bibliographical description of all this material remains to be undertaken, even if the results promise to be meager, at least as far as Ṭabari's original text is concerned.

A work such as *History* allows the incorporation in the text of additions at certain stages of the manuscript tradition. Such additions might have entered the text during Ṭabari's lifetime, coming from his own hand or that of others who might or might not have acted with his knowledge and approval. Later authors who used *History* show some such additions or corrections to the accepted text. There is a strong likelihood that they were not responsible for them but followed some manuscript authority. The chronological arrangement, in particular, facilitated insertions. Professional copyists would not normally have tampered with the text they copied, but scholarly readers might have made marginal additions which eventually entered the text. Usually, additions that came about in this manner cannot be expected to have left an express indication of their origin in the text; but *History*, II, 1368-72, contains what is specifically stated to be "an addition in the biography of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz not from the work of Abū Ja'far, to the beginning of the caliphate of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān." The situation is less clear in *History*, II, 835-43. The

passage which raised doubts already in the mind of its editor is poorly attested in the manuscript tradition. It is also not found in the Topkapısarayı manuscript. It is thus difficult to accept it as a Ṭabarīan addition, although this is not entirely precluded; the passage may go back to notations which Ṭabarī had made for himself and which he had intended to insert in the appropriate places. In all the minor instances of additions or omissions, the decision as to whether they go back to Ṭabarī must be made in each case individually. Probably, very many can indeed be considered as somehow connected to Ṭabarī (see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xvii ff.). Such small problems remain to be solved, before a definitive text of *History* is in our hands. Nothing of the sort, however, can be assumed to affect the understanding of the historical contents as Ṭabarī meant it to be understood.

Previous Translations

Arabists are fond of recalling that the various editors of *History* were supposed to provide translations of the volumes edited by them, but only Theodor Nöldeke took up the idea and published his justly celebrated *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1879, reprinted Graz, 1973). His translation covered *History*, I, 813–1067; he omitted some brief portions as having no immediate bearing upon Persian history (I, 890, l. 4–892, l. 13, 901, l. 1–917, l. 17, 966, l. 15–981, l. 2).⁴⁶⁹ It is regrettable that the other editors did not follow Nöldeke's example. Their long and intimate occupation with the text uniquely qualified them for the task. Their translations, had they been published, would have been most helpful to subsequent translators and might have stimulated translations into other languages. Above all, the existence of *History* in translation would have constituted a strong incentive for historians who were not Near Eastern specialists to make use of it in their work.

Under the direction of G. E. von Grunebaum, Elma Marin trans-

⁴⁶⁹ When Nöldeke was urged to prepare a second edition of his Ṭabarī translation, he spoke of it as "perhaps the best I have ever done" (letter to Goldziher, dated September 11, 1910; see Róbert Simon, *Ignác Goldziher*, 340).

Ṭabarī's much less detailed and scattered treatment of ancient Iranian mythological history was translated by Christensen (see below, translation, n. 151).

lated Ṭabarī's treatment of the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim from *History*, II, 1164–1329. Her work was published by the American Oriental Society in New Haven in 1951. Individual passages of some lines to a number of pages in length have, of course, been translated in many publications, as was dictated by their particular subject matter.

It can be assumed that quite a few Arabists dreamed of preparing a complete translation, but their names went unrecorded, or, at least, are unknown to this writer.⁴⁷⁰ J. A. Williams contemplated the task, and D. M. Dunlop tried to organize a collaborative effort while being a professor at Columbia University. A translation of the whole by one person has certain advantages. It makes for much greater uniformity in approach and execution. As it demands a total long-term immersion in the text, it holds the promise of yielding unexpected insights. However, the chances of bringing such a major enterprise to final fruition are small. Collaboration by a number of scholars offers a better chance for success. Upon the initiative of Ehsan Yarshater of Columbia University, such a collaborative effort was initiated in 1971. It proved possible for Michael G. Morony, a participant in the project, to arrange for a division of the entire text into portions of about two hundred pages each, distributed over thirty-eight volumes. Thus, the chore of finding capable and willing translators could begin. It was thought impractical to postpone publication until all volumes were completed. The first three volumes (XXVII, XXXV, and XXXVIII) appeared in 1985 under the aegis of the State University of New York Press, which, like E. J. Brill before, had voluntarily declared itself ready to undertake the difficult work of publication in the service of scholarship. The present hope is that the entire task will be completed by 1995. As was the case with the Leiden edition, financial support had to be found. Strenuous efforts on the part of Ehsan Yarshater succeeded in surmounting this hurdle, but the search for funds has to continue in order to keep the enterprise going.

Toward the end of achieving a desirable degree of uniformity in presentation and format, some directions were deemed necessary

⁴⁷⁰ See also Muth, I.

*As of December 1987, nine volumes of the English translation have been published.

to be given to the translators. At the same time, it was realized that the quality of the work might be enhanced if each translator relied primarily on his own judgment and expertise. A generous allowance of space was set aside for annotation, but again, it was left to the individual translator to make the difficult choice of what required annotation and how much information the footnotes should contain. General introductory remarks for each volume were suggested in order to provide all the necessary observations to be made in connection with a given volume, while keeping in mind the quite different character of the various sections of *History*.

The system of transliteration employed in the translation follows by and large a practice that has by now become standard in the scholarly publications of Arabists and Islamicists. This writer wishes, however, to express disagreement with the choice of *-iyy- [-uww-]* for *-īy- [-ūw-]*. Under the influence of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, this transliteration is widely used. It is plainly wrong, and not just a simple matter of convention. For the rendering of names of localities, exact transliteration was recommended as the norm, except for a very few place names that have accepted English forms of long standing, thus al-Kūfah (with the retention of the definite article), but Mecca, and not Makkah. Doubts as to what constitutes an accepted form are many. With the growing Western familiarity with Near Eastern geography, these doubts have not diminished but rather have increased. Accurate transliteration thus seemed preferable. The definite article in the names of frequently mentioned and quoted authors has often been omitted, especially in bibliographical references, and it is (almost) always Ṭabarī, instead of al-Ṭabarī.

A special concern has been how to best serve those readers who might not know Arabic. In fact, it is hoped that specialists will find the translation useful, but a translation primarily addresses itself to those not fully familiar with the original language. This regard for non-Arabists has led, for instance, to the insistence upon an unambiguous rendering of dates and upon providing chapter headings. It has also influenced the choice of the secondary literature in the footnotes, with the understanding that Arabic and Islamic studies have not yet progressed to the state where the secondary literature is sufficiently developed to make possible reliance on it exclusively. For Qur'ān quotations, the translation of

A. J. Arberry was suggested with some hesitation, but again, it was left to the individual translator to decide upon the most suitable renditions.

There was never any doubt as to which edition should constitute the basis for the translation, as the Leiden text is the only scientific edition in existence. Translators were, however, aware of the Cairo edition and the need to consult it wherever it was thought to contain a superior text. No priority was assigned to consulting manuscripts. Translators who had the opportunity were encouraged to do so. The gain to be obtained from the consultation of manuscripts did not loom large as a rule, but it is undeniable that in any occupation with ancient texts, no matter how carefully edited, recourse to manuscripts is of value, if only for the purpose of ascertaining that the available printed editions are indeed reliable.

The hope was expressed that the translations should be accurate and faithful to the original and, at the same time, idiomatic and fluent in English. This great ideal, if constantly invoked, is rarely achieved anywhere. Editorial and stylistic help has been provided to the extent possible. The translator's individuality could never be entirely suppressed nor, indeed, should it be.

The only liberty that the translators were asked to take with the Arabic text affects the presentation of *isnāds*, the chains of transmitters that served Ṭabarī as an indication of his sources. A literal translation would typically run like this: "A told me that B told us: C told us on the authority of D, on the authority of E that F said...." A less clumsy rendering was chosen to take its place, to wit: "According to A — B — C — D — E — F" Occasional exceptions as required by the flow of the narrative were permitted. The simplification is fully justified in view of the less cluttered text page resulting from it and the amount of space saved. It conceals, however, the numerous variations in the form of the *isnāds* indicated by Ṭabarī. These variations are important for a more precise understanding of the source situation. Scholars concerned with source problems must have recourse to the Arabic text.

At this time, the halfway mark in the project is not far off. When the entire work is completed, a retrospective on its genesis and execution will improve and enlarge upon the present brief and preliminary remarks.

Appendix A

A Partial Translation of Tafsīr on Qur. 17:79 (Above, pp. 75 f.)

Tafsīr, XV, 99, l. 21–100, l. 22:

“Even though the traditions we have mentioned on the authority of the Prophet and his Companions and the Followers indicate the correct interpretation of *maqāman maḥmūdān* in Qur. 17:79 (as referring to Muḥammad’s role as intercessor on the Day of Resurrection), Mujāhid’s statement that God will seat Muḥammad on His Throne remains one whose soundness cannot be rejected either on the basis of tradition (*khābar*) or on the basis of speculation (*naẓar*). This is so because there is no tradition from the Messenger of God or anyone of his Companions or the Followers that declares it to be impossible.

With respect to speculation, all adherents of Islam differ on the implication of (such seating) in only three ways:

One group (*firqah*) says: God is separate from His creation. He was so before He created the things. Then He created the things but was not contiguous with them. He Himself remained as He had always been, except that being not contiguous with the things He created, He is necessarily separate from them, since any maker of the things must be either contiguous with the material substances (*ajsām*) or separate from them. So they said. As this is so, and God is the maker (*fā’il*) of the things and, according to their statement, He is not permitted to be described as being contiguous with the things, their line of thought makes it necessary to

assume that He is separate from them. According to their theory (*madhhab*), it is the same whether he seats Muḥammad on His Throne or upon earth, since their statement implies that His separateness from His Throne and His separateness from His earth mean the same, since He is (equally) separate from both and is not contiguous with either.

A second group says: Before God created the things, there was no thing for Him to be contiguous with or separate from. Then He created the things. He set them up by His power, remaining Himself as He had always been before His creation of the things, not being contiguous with nor separate from any thing. According to their statement, too, it is the same whether He seats Muḥammad on His Throne or upon His earth, since according to their statement, His Throne and His earth are the same with respect to His being neither contiguous with nor separate from the one or the other.

A third group says: Before God created the things, there was no thing for him to be contiguous with or separate from. Then He created (*aḥdatha* and *khalāqa*) the things. He created for Himself a throne, upon which He sat straight and with which He became contiguous. Correspondingly, before He created the things, there was no thing for which He would provide sustenance or which He would deprive of it. Having created the things, He provided sustenance for one thing and deprived another of it, gave to one and withheld from another. So they said. Thus likewise, before He created the things, there was no thing for Him to be contiguous with or separate from. He created the things and then He was contiguous with the Throne by sitting on it but no other creature. He may be contiguous with or separate from any of His creatures He wants. According to their theory, too, it is the same whether He seated Muḥammad on His Throne or seated him on a pulpit of light, since their statement implies that God's sitting on His Throne is not by way of occupying the entire Throne, nor is seating Muḥammad (on it) necessitating the attribute of divinity (for Muḥammad) or depriving him of the attribute of humanity (*rubūbiyyah-ʿubūdiyyah*), just like Muḥammad's being kept separate from the things he is kept separate from does not necessitate for him the attribute of divinity or deprive him of the attribute of humanity (merely) because he is described as being kept separate

from them as, according to those who make this statement, God is described as being separate from them. So they say. If the meaning of being separate (*mubāyin*) and being kept separate (*mubāyan*) does not necessitate for Muḥammad to be deprived of the attribute of humanity and to enter into the conceptual realm (*ma'nā*) of divinity, then his sitting on the Throne of the Merciful One does not necessitate that.

From what we have said, it has become clear that it is not impossible for an adherent of Islam to say what Mujāhid has said, namely, that God will seat Muḥammad on His Throne. If someone says: We do not disapprove of God's seating Muḥammad on His Throne (in view of the following tradition transmitted by) 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-'Azīm—Yaḥyā b. Kathīr—al-Jurayrī—Sayf al-Sadūsī—'Abdallāh b. Salām:⁴⁷¹ 'On the Day of Resurrection, Muḥammad will be on the Lord's footstool (*kursī*),' but we disapprove of God's seating him *together with Him*, it should be said: Is it then permissible in your opinion that He seat him on it but not together with him? If he permits this, he is led to affirming that either he is together with Him, or God seats him (on the Throne) while being Himself either separate from it or neither contiguous with nor separate from it. Whatever alternative he chooses, he thereby enters into something that he disapproves. If he says that it is not permissible, he deviates from the statements of all the groups we have reported. This means diverging from the views of all adherents of Islam, since there is no other possible statement than those three, according to each of which Mujāhid's statement in this sense is not impossible."

471. (Al-)'Abbās b. 'Abd al-'Azīm al-'Anbarī died before 250/864 (see *TB*, XII, 127 f.; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, V, 121 f.). His authority, Yaḥyā b. Kathīr (al-'Anbarī), died after 200/816 (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 266, no. 536). Yaḥyā's authority was Salm b. Ja'far (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 127 f.), omitted in *Tafsīr*. Abū Mas'ūd Sa'īd b. Iyās al-Jurayrī died in 144/761[2] (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 5-7). The unidentified Sayf al-Sadūsī and the famous 'Abdallāh b. Salām (see below, translation, n. 178) are suspect. The tradition appears in Khallāl, *Musnad*, 76, 86, 92 f.



Appendix B



A Classification and Chronology of Ṭabari's Literary Production

The following classification of Ṭabari's work according to subject matter is slightly uncertain where it deals with works that are not preserved.

- Law: *Ādāb al-manāsik*
Al-Ādar (?) fī al-uṣūl
Basīṭ
Ikhtilāf
Khafīf
Laṭīf
Mūjaz
Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam
- Qur'ān: *Faṣl (fī al-qirā'āt)*
Jāmi' al-bayān (Tafsīr)
- Ḥadīth: *'Ibārat al-ru'yā*
Tahdhīb
See also *Faḍā'il*
- Theology: *Dalālah*
Faḍā'il
Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār

Sarīh
Tabṣīr

Religious Ethics: *Ādāb al-nufūs*
See also *Fadā'il* and *Mūjaz*

History: *Dhayl*
Ta'rikh

Any attempt to establish a relative chronological order must reckon with the fact that Ṭabarī worked on his large works throughout his career. He also started on projects, worked and lectured on them sporadically, and maybe never published them. In a number of cases, no sufficient data are ascertainable.

Works that can be dated with reasonable certainty:

1. *Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam* (about 255)
2. *Latīf* (quoted in *Tafsīr*, *Ikhtilāf*, *Tahdhīb*)
3. *Ikhtilāf*
4. *Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār* (before 270, left incomplete ?)
5. *Tafsīr* (270–90) (cited in *Ta'rikh*)
6. *Tabṣīr* (about 290)
7. *Khafīf* (291–96)
8. *Ta'rikh* (294, 302) (cited in *Dhayl*)
9. *Dhayl* (after 300)

Incomplete at the time of Ṭabarī's death:

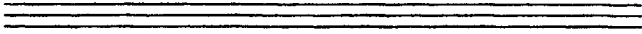
- Ādāb al-nufūs*
Basīṭ (quoted in *History* as forthcoming, but presumably to be placed between 4 and 5 as regards its starting time)
- Fadā'il*
Mūjaz
Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār (above 4)
Tahdhīb (to be placed between 2 and 3)

Projects that were not executed:

Al-Ādar (!) fī al-uṣūl
Aḥkām sharā'ī al-Islām
Dalālah (mentioned in History)
'Ibārat al-ru'yā
al-Qiyās (planned at the end of his life)

As yet unclassifiable:

Ādāb al-manāsik
Ādāb al-nufūs
Faṣl (fī al-qirā'āt) (after Ta'rīkh !)
Ṣarīḥ (before or after 6 ?)



From the Creation to the Flood





Translator's Foreword



The monotheistic environment of the Near East provided a powerful model for the idea that history must be written as beginning with the creation of the world. In Islam, the tradition continued, and history was presented as a continuum stretching seamlessly from the six days of creation to contemporary times, although neither before nor after Ṭabarī were histories so commonly composed in this manner as is often assumed. The material for primeval pre-Islamic history which was abundantly available to Ṭabarī was determined by the Qur'ān. A vast explanatory mythology developed in connection with it at an early stage. Some of the legends that were inherited or invented were occasionally ascribed to the Prophet directly. Much more frequently, they were credited to certain early Muslim authorities. Qur'ān commentaries drawing on this information were composed in unpublished, and soon also in published, form at least since the early eighth century. Ṭabarī, as the author of what in all likelihood was the most voluminous Qur'ān commentary ever assembled down to his time, was thoroughly familiar with most, if not all, of these works.

His basic task in the first part of his *History* was to make historical sense out of the material collected by earlier scholars and largely taken over into his own commentary, to which he refers by its proper title (below, n. 562)—here it is referred to simply as *Tafsīr*. In rearranging and presenting the material as sequential history, he used throughout the same literary method as *Tafsīr*, providing first a summary of the topic to be discussed, then quot-

ing the sources, and, finally, wherever he considered it necessary, giving a critical evaluation of them (frequently an effort to reach a compromise between divergent views). He succeeded in his effort to historicize legend as well as was possible in his time and age. Later Muslim historians who used Ṭabarī's *History* were considerably more skeptical than he as to the compatibility of all that legendary material with what they had come to consider history. Miskawayh, for instance, dared to dismiss all antediluvian accounts as being too poorly documented for consideration by historians. Ibn al-Athīr criticized Ṭabarī for bad historical and literary judgement with respect to some of the material the latter had thought worthy of consideration.¹

In keeping with the methods developed by the traditional religious science of his day, Ṭabarī rightly stressed the traditional nature of *all* historical knowledge. What happened in the past can be known only by reports originating with an eyewitness, or at least a contemporary, and handed down from one individual to another in successive stages. It was beyond his ken to realize that in dealing with what we call prehistorical happenings, "history" can be approached only by means of intellectual (or, nowadays, scientific) speculation. Ṭabarī did have a certain inkling of the problem involved. Repeatedly, he asserts that only traditional information can be counted on to prove the soundness of historical data and that the usefulness of intellectual speculation in this connection must be discounted. With respect to the former, his statement was apologetic; with respect to the latter, it was polemical. The stress on the supremacy of intellect and reason (*'aql*) was the hallmark of the Mutakallimūn, the philosophical theologians of his age, who tried with considerable success at the time to assert themselves, and it is their introduction of *'aql* into the Muslim view of the world that Ṭabarī attempted to reject while defending the supremacy of tradition.

In one respect, however, he clearly shows how deeply he was influenced by the new thought system. It cannot be decided whether he himself fully realized it—this may indeed have been the case—but he admitted (text below, I, 6) that his historical research did include a small measure of rational argumentation. At the begin-

1. See below, n. 3 of the Foreword and nn. 436 and 1029 to the translation.

ning of the *History*, he raises the question of the nature and definition of time as being fundamental to all history. His answer remains traditional, but the question could be raised in this form only after the Aristotelian analysis of the physical world in which human history evolves had become familiar in Muslim civilization. Ṭabarī argues that all history is a function of time and that, therefore, a definition of time that clearly establishes its meaning is the crucial starting point for historical investigation. This was an important insight, and there appears to be a strong possibility that Ṭabarī was in fact the first to introduce it prominently into historiography (as apparently suggested by one of his early biographers, see above, General Intro., n. 446). It is unfortunately true that most of the Arabic historical literature that could serve for comparison is yet to be recovered. The *History* of al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897–98 or later) is incomplete in the beginning, where the same argument regarding time might have been made. A century earlier, Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ (d. 204/819–20) had begun his *History* with no more than a brief note on the term *ta'rikh*, understood by him not as "history," but as the means for dating events—a note that is not at all informed by philosophical reflection.² Thus, Ṭabarī's approach to time in history may very well have been absent in earlier histories. It can be assumed, at any rate, to have developed at the earliest in the course of the third/ninth century. If it is indeed original with Ṭabarī, it is another truly remarkable testimony to his intellectual alertness. It may be added that Ibn al-Athīr was fully aware of the origin of Ṭabarī's speculation on the concept of time. It belonged, he states, in the discussion of the (theological) principles of the Mutakallimūn and had no place in a historical work.³

A particularly difficult challenge to the historian's critical acumen were views known in ninth-century Baghdad on the origin and early history of the world which competed and often were in conflict with the monotheistic tradition shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This had given pause to historians before Ṭabarī and had led to crude attempts at finding some common ground between the disparate traditions. Ṭabarī, like many of the leading scholars in Iraq, a man with ties to Iran, restricted himself to the

2. See also Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*,² 287, n. 4.

3. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, I, 12.

Magian (Zoroastrian) material and inserted rather brief reports on it in what he felt were appropriate places. He gives the impression of doing that with some reluctance and an apparent unwillingness to take those alien beliefs too seriously. Indeed, the very existence of competing mythological histories may have severely tested Ṭabarī as an historian and as a faithful Muslim.



The basis for the following translation has been the Leiden text as edited by the Semitist Jakob Barth in Leiden, 1879–81. It is, however, obvious that the Istanbul manuscript Topkapısarayı Ahmet III 2929/1,⁴ which was consulted by M. Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm for the Cairo edition, has a text that, in general, is superior to that of the manuscripts used in Leiden. At the very beginning, Ms. Ahmet III provides the only reliable text, but its superiority is evident nearly everywhere. In most cases, its readings therefore have been adopted from the Cairo edition with no further comment. The reader of this translation should, however, rest assured that while noteworthy, the variants hold no substantive implications for the understanding of the text.

No manuscripts have been consulted directly for the present translation. There are passages here and there where the manuscript situation remains slightly uncertain, and a look at the manuscripts might have been helpful. A great merit of the Cairo edition that deserves to be mentioned is its occasional use of *Tafsīr*, from which Ṭabarī drew much of his material for this volume.

For all practical purposes, the following pages are a commentary on Genesis, chapters 1–10, from the creation of the world to Noah and the Flood—a mirror reflecting centuries of thought and a new Muslim way of looking at the ancient story. This being the case, the greatest selectivity in the number and kind of notes to be included was required. The scholarly literature deserving attention is nearly unlimited, and the problems are numerous. Much that could and should have been said has been passed over in silence. The following considerations have guided the choice of notes:

1. Qur'ānic quotations have, of course, been always noted. How-

4. See Karatay, *Catalogue*, III, 339 f., no. 5730.

ever, the artful weaving together of quotations from and allusions to the Qur'ān, which is evident to anyone reading the Arabic text, could not always be brought out in translation.

2. The chains of transmitters (*isnād*) are a most important key to the early history of Muslim historiography. At least some information had to be provided for each individual occurring in them. All transmitters therefore have been briefly annotated at their first mention in the text. In order to facilitate their location through the Index, short forms of their names appearing in the text have often, but not consistently, been completed by additions in parentheses.

The identification of individual transmitters has been restricted here to basically two works, the *History of Baghdad* (*Ta'rikh Baghdād*, cited as *TB*) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb*. *TB* brings us quite close to Ṭabarī's time and environment. *Tahdhīb* was compiled in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century and constitutes the culmination of the labors of *ḥadīth* scholars in the field of biography. The information it contains is a summary of all the earlier literature. The significant dates for the life and death of the transmitters are all faithfully reported. Where Ibn Ḥajar fails to indicate such dates, it is almost certain that none ever existed in any earlier source. As a matter of fact, early biographical collections were much more chary with dates than later ones. This is proof that scholarly research and speculation, as against direct attestation, were responsible for providing many of the dates. Scholarship is never infallible, and, in certain cases, the very identification of an individual may have depended upon a kind of circular reasoning that reconstructed relationships on the basis of the *isnāds* as found in the *ḥadīth* collections and the *tafsīr* literature. Ibn Ḥajar often leaves us with a number of alternative dates to choose from. Usually no decision has been made here as to which of the divergent dates may be correct, even where this could possibly have been done. When references to the one or other biographical work in addition to *TB* and *Tahdhīb* have been given, this has been done for some reason, which, however, has been left unstated.

The role of *isnāds* as indications of Ṭabarī's sources has been somewhat obscured by the schematic representation adopted here, in which simple dashes separate individual transmitters.

However convenient, this scheme removes valuable if ambiguous hints at the various stages of the process of written transmission.

The material quoted here by Ṭabarī from *Tafsīr* was no doubt taken from earlier Qur'ān commentaries, most of them still lost or imperfectly known. Recensions of some of those commentaries have recently been published, such as the works of Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mujāhid, and Muqātil.⁵ It should be noted that the corresponding information provided by Ṭabarī in traditions with *isnāds* including these men can be only very rarely traced back to them. In view of the complex history of the compilation of those recensions, as discussed by G. Schoeler and others (below, n. 503), this is hardly surprising. It does not, however, cast doubt on the genuineness of the attribution.

Among the secondary literature on the transmitters, Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (GAS) has been cited as consistently as possible. It allows for checking the literary activities of a given scholar and, in particular, finding out whether he is known as the author of a Qur'ān commentary. The short article by Heribert Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar aṭ-Ṭabarīs," has been systematically referred to, not so much for its occasional additional information as for its concise discussion of the configurations of Ṭabarī's *isnāds*. The important study of G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), goes, as its title indicates, far beyond the elementary data of concern to us here.

3. Among the sources of the *History*, Ṭabarī's own *Tafsīr* has always been consulted and usually cited. Close parallels from earlier or contemporary works have occasionally been mentioned. As is the case with much of the earlier *ḥadīth* literature, his primary historical sources, such as the works of Ibn Ishāq and the Kalbī family, are also lost. Little use has been made of the *ḥadīth* literature. Works by later authors have been referred to only in exceptional cases. This also includes the literature on the prophetic stories (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*). W. M. Brinner's forthcoming translation of the closely related work by al-Tha'labī and W. M. Thackston's translation of the very different *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'i*

5. For the situation with respect to the *Tafsīr* of Mujāhid, however, see the introduction of the *Tafsīr*'s editor, 25-27.

(Boston, 1978) show the difference between their approach and that of the historian.

4. With respect to the sources of Ṭabari's sources—that is, the comparative data to be found in Christian, Jewish, and Middle-Persian literature (including the later Firdawsi)—only a few references have been given in the notes. The relationship of Ṭabari's material to the Book of Genesis requires many more references and discussions than appear in the notes here. The Jewish midrashic literature and secondary works, such as Speyer's *Bib-lische Erzählungen*, should have been referred to more frequently than is actually the case. A detailed analysis, for instance, of the role of the *Schatzhöhle* tradition was, of course, not possible here.⁶ The references given to non-Muslim sources can do no more than serve as a stimulus for further investigation.



In his review of E. Marin's translation of Ṭabari's section dealing with the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim, Helmut Ritter remarked that translations of difficult Arabic texts such as Ṭabari's *History* should preferably be undertaken as collaborative efforts of more than one translator, for, Ritter said, "someone who translates by himself falls all too easily into the unavoidable vicious traps waiting for translators from this harmfully deceptive ("heimtückisch") language. The collaboration of two or more scholars gives at least some protection against getting lost in the Arabian desert."⁷ My own lifetime experience has convinced me more and more of the truth of Ritter's impishly phrased remark. True collaboration in Ritter's sense has not been possible here, and mistakes can probably be found with comparative ease. But I have at least enjoyed and profited from the help of fellow scholars. I may mention G. Böwering, who gave me access to printed editions and manuscripts of early Qur'ān commentaries in his pos-

6. A. Goetze discusses the influence of the work on the histories of al-Ya'qūbi and Ṭabari in *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 3 [1924]: 60-71, 153-55.

7. See *Oriens* 6 [1953]: 157.

session, and J. Lassner, whose editorial work has gone far beyond the ordinary duty of an editor. Infelicities of style that will be encountered are the result of my having occasionally failed to accept my editor's suggestions.⁸

Franz Rosenthal

8. I may mention the frequent "He continued (said)" interrupting the narrative. I have retained it, although it will no doubt puzzle the reader. It can mean that the preceding statement is completed or, more commonly, that it is being continued. It can also indicate that there is a break in the narrative as compared to the source from which the statement is quoted. Often no decision is possible, and I have refrained from speculating about its meaning in a given context, or from simply omitting it.

(Invocation)

PRAISED BE GOD, first before any first and last after any last, enduring without cease and persevering in everything without moving away, Creator of His creation from no original or model! He is singular and unique without number. He remains after everyone infinitely without term. His are glory and greatness, splendor and might, authority and power. He is above having a partner in His authority, or in His uniqueness having one like Him, or in His administration an aid or helper, or having a child or spouse or "any equal."¹ He cannot be fully imagined and encompassed by the regions² and "reached by the eyes while He reaches them. He is subtle and knowledgeable."³ [1, 1]

I praise Him for His benefits and am grateful to Him for His favors in the manner befitting one who singles Him out for praise and who hopes to receive more (favors) from Him for having been grateful. I ask Him to grant me to say and do what will bring me close to Him and please Him. I believe in Him as one who declares oneness belonging exclusively to Him and who reserves glorification for Him alone. [2]

I confess that there is no God but God, being one and having no partner. I confess that Muḥammad is His noble servant and His trustworthy Messenger whom He chose for transmitting His message and sent with His revelation to call His creation to worship Him. He manifested His command,⁴ labored strenuously in His path, advised His nation (*ummah*), and worshiped Him until death came to him from God, never flagging in his effort and never relaxing in his strenuous labor. May God bless him with the most excellent and purest prayer and give him peace!

1. Qur. 112:4.

2. Cf. Qur. 55:33, referring to "regions of heaven and earth."

3. Qur. 6:103. Ms. Ahmet III supplies "while...them." Its omission in the Leiden edition may constitute Ṭabarī's more original text.

4. Cf. Qur. 15:94.

(Introduction)

And now: God—great is His majesty and His names are sanctified—created His creation without any necessity for Him to create them, and He brought them forth without any need for Him to bring them forth. Rather, He created those whom He singled out by His command and His prohibition and whom He tested by His worship, so that they would worship Him and He would in turn bestow generous favors upon them. They would thus praise Him for His favors and He in turn would give them more of His generosity and bounty and add to His superiority and power for their benefit, as He says: "I have created jinn and men only to worship me. I do not want any sustenance from them, and I do not want them to provide food for Me. God is the Sustainer, potent and firm."⁵

[3] In creating them as He did, He did not increase His authority by as much as the weight of a speck of dust beyond what it had always been before He created them. Nor does His annihilating them and making them nonexistent diminish Him by as much as the weight of a hair. For circumstances do not change Him, fatigue does not affect Him, and (the passing of) days and nights does not diminish His authority because He is the Creator of all eternal and temporal time.⁶

In this fleeting world, His many manifestations of generosity and bounty include and encompass all human beings. He gave them ears, eyes, and hearts and singled them out for possessing reason which makes it possible for them to distinguish between truth and falsehood and to recognize what is useful and what is harmful. He made the earth for them a carpet, so that they would have there passable roads to walk on,⁷ and "the heaven a well-guarded roof"⁸ and a lofty construction. From it He brought down for them plentiful rain and sizable sustenance. He made the moon of the night and the sun of the day run constantly one after the

5. Qur. 51:56–58.

6. *Al-duhūr wa-al-azmān*. For the various aspects of "time," see text below. What follows here is the customary summary of the contents usually provided by the author of a medieval Muslim book.

7. Cf. Qur. 71:19 f., quoted literally except for the substitution of the third person for the second of the Qur'anic text.

8. Qur. 21:32.

other for their welfare. He made for them "the night a garment" and "the day the time for a livelihood."⁹ In His benevolent concern for them, He made an alternation between the moon of the night and the sun of the day, blotting out the sign of the night and making the sign of the day something to see by, as He—great is His majesty and His names are sanctified—says: "And We have made the night and the day two signs. We have blotted out the sign of the night, and We have made the sign of the day something to see by, so that you may seek bounty from your Lord and so that you may know the number of years and the reckoning. For everything, We have made clear distinctions."¹⁰ And so that they may achieve knowledge of the times—the hours of night and day, the months and the years—when the religious duties God has imposed upon them are to be fulfilled, such as prayer, charity, pilgrimage, fasting, and their other religious duties, as well as the time for settling their debts and their claims, as He says: "They will ask you about the new moons. Say: They are fixed times for mankind and the pilgrimage."¹¹ He further says: "He is the one who made the sun a luminosity and the moon a light, setting up fixed stations for it so that you may know the number of years and the reckoning. God created that only because it is right, distinguishing the signs for people who know. In the alternating of night and day and whatever God has created in the heavens and on earth, there are signs for people who fear God"¹²—all this being kindness shown by Him to His creation and an expression of His favor and concern for them.

[4]

A large number of His creatures were grateful to Him for the favors which He bestowed upon them. Thus, He gave many of them more benefits and gifts in addition to the generous favors He had bestowed upon them earlier, as God promised them, saying: "Your Lord announced: If you are grateful, We shall give you more, and if you are ungrateful, the punishment meted out by Me will be great."¹³ He combined for them more (benefits) in this fleeting life of theirs with success in achieving bliss and eternal residence in blissful Paradise in their life to come in the other world. For many

9. Qur. 78:10 f.

10. Qur. 17:12.

11. Qur. 2:189.

12. Qur. 10:5 f.

13. Qur. 14:7.

of them, He postponed the promised increase to the time of their coming to Him, so as to show them more bounteous generosity on "the day when the innermost hearts are tested."¹⁴ A large number of them were ungrateful for His favors, denying His benefits and worshiping someone else. Therefore He deprived many of them of the generous kindness He had shown them earlier. He unleashed upon them destructive vengeance in this fleeting world and stored up for them shameful punishment in the life to come in the other world. He let many of them enjoy His favors while they were alive by way of deception, thus making their load heavier so that they would be deserving of the punishment prepared by Him for them in the life to come in the other world.

- [5] We take refuge in God against any activity that might bring (us) close to His wrath, and we ask Him for success with respect to everything that might lead (us) to His acceptance and love.



Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī) says: In this book of mine, I shall mention whatever information has reached us about kings throughout the ages from when our Lord began the creation of His creation to its annihilation. There were messengers sent by God, kings placed in authority, or caliphs established in the caliphal succession. God had early on bestowed His benefits and favors upon some of them. They were grateful for His favors, and He thus gave them more favors and bounty in addition to those bestowed by Him upon them in their fleeting life, or He postponed the increase and stored it up for them with Himself. There were others who were not grateful for His favors, and so He deprived them of the favors He had bestowed upon them early on and hastened for them His revenge. There were also others who were not grateful for His favors, He let them enjoy them until the time of their death and perdition. Every one of them whom I shall mention in this book of mine will be mentioned in conjunction with his time but (only) summaries of the events in his day and age will be added, since an exhaustive treatment is not possible in a lifetime and makes books too

14. Qur. 86:9.

long.¹⁵ This will be combined with references to the length of their natural life and the time of their death.

First, however, I shall begin with what for us comes properly and logically first, namely, the explanation of

What is time?

How long is its total extent?

Its first beginning and final end.

Whether before God's creation of (time) there was anything else.

Whether it will suffer annihilation and whether after its annihilation there will be something other than the face (*wajh*) of the Highly praised, the Exalted Creator.¹⁶

What was it that was before God's creation of time and what will be after its final annihilation?

How did God's creation of it begin and how will its annihilation take place?

Proof that there is nothing eternal (*a parte ante*) except God unique and powerful, to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them and what is underneath the soil.¹⁷

[6]

This must be done briefly and concisely, for in this book of ours we do not intend to present the arguments concerning time but rather the dates of past kings mentioned by us and summaries of their history, the times of the messengers and prophets and how long they lived, the days of the early¹⁸ caliphs and some of their biographical data, and the extent of the territories under their control,¹⁹ as well as the events that took place in their age. There-

15. The conventional fear of long-windedness is expressed repeatedly by Ṭabari, even in connection with his massive *Tafsīr*. See above, General Introduction, n. 214.

16. *Wajh* ("face") with reference to God in the Qur'ān is *pars pro toto* and means "person." The translation "face" has been retained here, because the word was a theological issue in the Muslim debate of anthropomorphism.

17. Cf. Qur. 20:6, combined with 3:189, 5:18, etc.

18. *Sālif* refers here to the early caliphs, presumably the first four. It should be noted that this introduction makes no reference to Umayyad or 'Abbāsīd history. It is concerned only with the companions of the Prophet, the Followers, and later transmitters as in the works on personality criticism of *ḥadīth* scholars. It would appear to have been written before Ṭabari himself was clear about the form his work would eventually take.

19. Or, perhaps: "the extent of time of their holding office" ?

fore, if God wills and gives me strength through help and power from Him, I shall continue and mention the companions of our Prophet, their names, their patronymics, the extent of their pedigrees, and how long they lived and when and where they died. I shall then mention those who followed them doing good, in accordance with the conditions we have set down for mentioning them. Then, in addition to them, I shall likewise mention those who came after them, giving additional data about them. I do this for the purpose of clarifying whose transmission (of traditions) is praised and whose information is accepted,²⁰ whose transmission is rejected and whose transmission is disregarded, and whose tradition is considered feeble and whose information is considered weak. In addition, I give the reason why someone's information is disregarded and the cause for someone's tradition being considered feeble.

I wish to God that He may help me in my intentions and aims and give me success in my purposes and desires, for He possesses might and strength. May God pray for His Prophet Muḥammad and give him peace!



[7] The reader should know that with respect to all I have mentioned and made it a condition to set down in this book of ours, I rely upon traditions and reports²¹ which I have transmitted and which I attribute to their transmitters. I rely only very exceptionally upon what is learned through rational arguments and produced by internal thought processes. For no knowledge of the history of men of the past and of recent men and events is attainable by those who were not able to observe them and did not live in their time, except through information and transmission provided by informants and transmitters. This knowledge cannot be brought out by reason or produced by internal thought processes. This book of mine may (be found to) contain some information,

20. Leiden: "is transmitted."

21. *Akhbār* and *āthār*, it seems, is used throughout with no clearcut distinction in meaning.

For this passage, see text below, I, 56. Cf. also the colophon of the entire *History*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. xvii.

mentioned by us on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of and the listener may find detestable, because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such cases, he should know that it is not our fault that such information comes to him, but the fault of someone who transmitted it to us. We have merely reported it as it was reported to us.

What Is Time?

(Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī) says: Time²² is the hours of night and day. This may be said of both long and short extents of time.

The Arabs say: "I came to you at the time—*zamāna* or *zamana*—of al-Ḥajjāj²³ (being) amīr." By this, they mean: during the period when (*idh*) al-Ḥajjāj (was) amīr.

They say: "I came to you in the time—*zamāna* or *zamana*—of cutting off (the dates from the palms)." By this, they mean: at the moment (*waqt*) of cutting (them) off.

They also say: "I came to you in the times—using the plural *azmān*—of al-Ḥajjāj (being) amīr." They intend thereby to make each moment (*waqt*) of his amīrate a certain period of time (*zamān*). Thus the *rajaz* poet says:

Winter has come, and my shirt is worn out,
tatters, being laughed at by al-Tawwāq.²⁴

22. Arabic possesses a number of words expressing the concept of time. Ṭabarī here distinguishes between the two most important of them, *zamān/zaman* and *waqt*, the former indicating extended time and the latter indicating moment of time. This basic distinction is made in the theoretical discussion of the concept of time. It is very often disregarded in actual linguistic usage. In this translation, the translation "moment" for *waqt* has often been used. It should be noted that *waqt* occurs in the Qur'ān, but *z-m-n* does not. In "night and day," the Arabic word for "daytime" (*nahār*) is used here. *Yawm* ("day") technically indicates the twenty-hour period, but in Ṭabarī as elsewhere it is also commonly used for daytime.

23. The famous Umayyad governor (d. 85/704). Cf. *EI*², III, 39-43, s. v. al-Ḥadjjādī.

24. For this verse in the *rajaz* meter, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, XI, 315, 376, XV, 215, where al-Tawwāq is said to be the name of the son of (the poet?). The form of the name appears to be uncertain; it is also read al-Nawwāq. The verse is ascribed to some unnamed bedouin in Dīnawārī, *Nabāt*, 239 f. The reading there is *minhā* (referring to the tatters as being laughed at) for *minhu* (referring, in general, to shirt) or *minnī* (referring to the poet). Attention to the passage in al-Dīnawārī has been called by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, I, 114. The verse is quoted in

The poet uses here the plural of "worn out" in connection with "shirt." He intends thereby to describe each piece of the shirt as being worn out. Similarly, one says: "a vast barren (pl. *sabāsib*) land, "and the like.

For the use of *zaman* for *zamān*, there is the verse of al-A'shā of the Banū Maymūn b. Qays:

[8] For a time (*zamanan*), I was a man in the Iraq
modest in (my) camping place, long in contentedly doing
without.²⁵

By *zamanan* he intends *zamānan*.

Thus, as mentioned by me and as I have described and explained it, *zamān* is a noun designating the hours of night and day.

*How Long Is the Total Extent of Time
from Beginning to End, First to Last?*

The early scholars before us differed in this respect. Some said that the total extent of time is seven thousand years.

Those who said this

According to Ibn Ḥumayd²⁶ — Yaḥyā b. Wāḍiḥ²⁷ — Yaḥyā b.

Tafsīr, XIX, 47 (ad Qur. 26:53-56).

25. See al-A'shā, *Dīwān*, 22, no. 2, verse 77. The difficult last word appears in various forms. *Al-taghann*, for *al-taghannī*, as in the edition of al-A'shā and the Cairo edition of Ṭabarī, is explained as *istighnā'* in Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, XIX, 373.

26. Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Rāzī, died in 248/862, apparently more than eighty years old. See *TB*, II, 259-64; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 127-31; Horst, 296, n. 3. He was one of Ṭabarī's most important authorities, in particular as a second-generation transmitter from the historian Ibn Ishāq. Ibn Ishāq's work on the *Beginnings* (*al-Mubtada'*, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 289) can be assumed to be the source of much of the material reported by Ṭabarī. On Ibn Ḥumayd in connection with *isnāds* in Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* and *History*, see also Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 29 f., 79, 242, 253. Relevant information on Ibn Ishāq's *Mubtada'* can be expected from G. D. Newby, see *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 [1986]: 123. See also above, General Introduction, 17f.

27. No dates are provided in either *TB*, XIV, 126-28, or *Tahdhīb*, XI, 293 f.

Ya'qūb²⁸ —Ḥammād²⁹ —Sa'īd b. Jubayr³⁰ —Ibn 'Abbās³¹ : This world is one of the weeks of the other world—seven thousand years. Six thousand two hundred³² years have already passed. (The world) will surely experience hundreds of years, during which there will be no believer in the oneness of God there.

Others said that the total extent of time is six thousand years.

Those who said this

According to Abū Hishām³³ —Mu'āwiyah b. Hishām³⁴ —Sufyān³⁵ —al-A'mash³⁶ —Abū Ṣāliḥ³⁷ —Ka'b³⁸ : This world is six thousand years.

According to Muḥammad b. Sahl b. 'Askar³⁹ —Ismā'il b. 'Abd

28. Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. Ya'qūb appears as an authority of Yaḥyā b. Wāḍiḥ in text below, I, 1284, as well as Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh*, IV, 2, 312. His pedigree is given as Yaḥyā b. Ya'qūb b. Mudrik b. Sa'd b. Habtah (Khaythamah) al-Anṣārī. He is listed in Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, VI, 282 f. There, as in Dhahabī, *Mizān*, IV, 415, he is said to have been the maternal uncle of the famous Ḥanafite judge Abū Yūsuf, whose great-grandfather was Sa'd b. Habtah. Habtah was the name of Sa'd's mother.

29. Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān Muslim died in 119 or 120/737-38. See *Tahdhīb*, III, 1-18; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, XIV, 136.

30. Ibn Jubayr died about fifty years old in 95/714. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 11-14; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 28 f.; Horst, 303, n. 8.

31. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, the Prophet's cousin and reputedly the greatest early authority on Qur'ān interpretation, died in 68/687[8]. See *EI*², I, 40 f., s. v. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās.

32. Ed. Leiden: six thousand and (several) hundred years. Quoting Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, XIV, 136, has 6,100.

33. Abū Hishām al-Rifā'ī, Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Muḥammad b. Kathīr b. Rifā'ah, died in 248/862. He was a judge in al-Madā'in and wrote on Qur'ān reading. See *TB*, III, 375-77; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 256, f.; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Ghāyah*, II, 280 f.

34. Died 204 or 205/819-20. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 218 f., where he is described as a transmitter from Sufyān al-Thawrī.

35. Sufyān al-Thawrī, ca. 96/714[5] to 161/778. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 111-15; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 518 f.; Horst, 296, n. 20. He and his younger contemporary and namesake Sufyān b. 'Uyaynah (below, n. 67) shared the same authorities and students and are often listed as "the two Sufyāns." Thus, it is sometimes difficult to know which "Sufyān" is meant.

36. Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-A'mash lived from ca. 60 or 61/679-80 to ca. 148/765. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 222-26; *EI*², I, 431, s. v. al-A'mash.

37. Presumably, Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān al-Sammān who died in 101/719[20]. See *Tahdhīb*, III, 219 f. Another of the many Abū Ṣāliḥs, Bādhām/Bādhān, a *mawlā* of 'Alī's sister Umm Ḥānī', was an authority of al-A'mash. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 416 f.

38. For the legendary transmitter Ka'b al-aḥbār, who is said to have died between 32 and 35/652-56, see *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 438-40; *EI*², IV, 316 f., s. v.; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 304f.

39. Died 251/865. See *TB*, V, 313 f.; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 207.

al-Karīm⁴⁰ — 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. Ma'qil⁴¹ I — Wahb⁴²: Five thousand six hundred years of this world have elapsed. I do not know which kings and prophets lived in every period (*zaman*) of those years. I asked Wahb b. Munabbih: How long is (the total duration of) this world? He replied: Six thousand years.

[9] Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī) says: The correct statement here is the one whose soundness is proved by information having come down from the Messenger of God.⁴³ It is what we were told by Muḥammad b. Bashshār⁴⁴ and 'Alī b. Sahl⁴⁵ — Mu'ammal⁴⁶ — Sufyān — 'Abdallāh b. Dīnār⁴⁷ — Ibn 'Umar⁴⁸: I heard the Messenger of God say: As compared to the term of those before you, your term is (like the time) from afternoon prayer to sunset.

According to Ibn Ḥumayd — Salamah⁴⁹ — Muḥammad b. Ishāq⁵⁰ — Nāfi'⁵¹ — Ibn 'Umar: I heard the Prophet say: As compared to the term of the nations of the past, your term is just like (the time)

40. For Ismā'il b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Ma'qil b. Munabbih b. Kāmil, see *Tahdhīb*, I, 315 f. He was a nephew of 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. Ma'qil and a grandnephew of Wahb b. Munabbih.

41. A nephew of Wahb b. Munabbih, 'Abd al-Ṣamad died in the first decade of the eighth century. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 328.

42. The celebrated Wahb b. Munabbih lived from ca. 655 to around 750, see, for instance, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 166–68; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 305–7; Horst, 303, n. 7.

43. Ṭabarī often argues in the same manner in his *Tafsīr*.

44. Ibn Bashshār lived from 167/783[4] to 252/866. See *TB*, II, 101–5; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 70–73; Horst, 296, n. 4.

45. 'Alī b. Sahl al-Ramlī often occurs as an authority in *Tafsīr*, but he apparently is not listed in either *TB* or *Tahdhīb*. He is mentioned as a student of Mu'ammal in *Tahdhīb*, X, 380. He apparently was the author of a letter in strong support of the Mujāhid tradition (see above, General Introduction, 71 ff.) quoted in Khallāl, *Musnad*, 91 f.

46. Mu'ammal b. Ismā'il died in 205 or 206/820–21. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 380 f. He has both Sufyāns as his authorities, and both of them are listed as students of 'Abdallāh b. Dīnār.

47. Died in 127/744[5]. See *Tahdhīb*, V, 201–3.

48. 'Abdallāh, a son of the caliph 'Umar, died in 73/692[3]. See *Tahdhīb*, V, 228 f.; *EI*², I, 53 f., s. v. 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar.

49. Abū 'Abdallāh Salamah b. al-Fadl al-Azraq died after 190/805[6], supposedly 110 years old. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 153 f.; Horst, 303, n. 3. He was entrusted with (*ṣāhib*) Ibn Ishāq's *Maghāzī* and transmitted both the *Maghāzī* and the *Mubtada'*.

50. The famous historian, author of the biography (*Ṣīrah*) of the Prophet and other historical works, was born ca. 85/704 and died in 150/767 or shortly thereafter. See *TB*, I, 214–34; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 38–46; *EI*², III, 810 f., s. v. Ibn Ishāq; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 288–90; Horst, 303, n. 4.

51. Apparently, Nāfi', the *mawlā* of Ibn 'Umar, who died in 119 or 120/737–38. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 412–15.

between the afternoon prayer to sunset.

According to al-Ḥasan b. 'Arafah⁵² —Abū al-Yaqzān 'Ammār b. Muḥammad, a son of the sister of Sufyān al-Thawrī⁵³ —Layth b. Abī Sulaym⁵⁴ —Mughīrah b. Ḥakīm⁵⁵ —'Abdallāh b. 'Umar: The Messenger of God said: Only as much of this world remains for my nation as the extent (of time that remains) for the sun when the afternoon prayer has been performed.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Awf⁵⁶ —Abū Nu'aym⁵⁷ —Sharīk⁵⁸ —Salamah b. Kuhayl⁵⁹ —Mujāhid⁶⁰ —Ibn 'Umar: We were sitting together with the Prophet when the sun was over Qu'ayqi'ān⁶¹ after the afternoon prayer. He said to us: As compared to the lives of those who have passed, your lives are like what remains of this day as compared to what has passed of it.

According to Ibn Bashshār and Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā⁶² —Khalaf b. Mūsā⁶³ —his father—Qatādah⁶⁴ —Anas b. Mālīk⁶⁵: One

52. He was supposedly 100 or 110 years old when he died in Sāmarrā in 257/870[1]. See *TB*, VII, 394–96; *Tahdhīb*, II, 293.

53. Died 182/798. See *TB*, XII, 252 f.; *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 305.

54. Layth supposedly died in 143/760–61 or 148/765. See *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 465–68; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 34. For his role in the transmission of the Mujāhid tradition, see above, General Introduction, n. 275.

55. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 258.

56. Died 272 or 273/885–86. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 383 f.

57. Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn lived from 130/747[8] to 219/834. See *TB*, XII, 346–57; *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 270–76; *El²*, I, 143, s. v. Abū Nu'aym; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 101.

58. Sharīk b. 'Abdallāh al-Nakhaī was born in 95/713[4] and died in 177 or 178/793–94. See *TB*, IX, 279–95; *Tahdhīb*, IV, 333–37.

59. Died 122 or 123/739–41. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 155–57.

60. Abū al-Ḥajjāj Mujāhid b. Jabr was born in 21/642. He died in 104/722[3] or possibly four years earlier. He was the author of a Qur'ān commentary much used by Tabarī. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 42–44; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 29; Horst, 295, n. 9. See above, General Introduction, 71.

61. A mountain about twelve *mīl* (24 km) south of Mecca. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, IV, 146.

62. Ibn al-Muthannā, Abū Mūsā al-Zamin, lived from 167/783[4] to between 250 and 252/864–66. See *TB*, III, 283–86; *Tahdhīb*, IX, 425–27. The Arabic text makes the following distinction: Ibn Bashshār said: I was told by Khalaf, whereas Ibn al-Muthannā said: We were told....

63. Khalaf b. Mūsā b. Khalaf al-'Ammī died between 220 and 222/835–37. See *Tahdhīb*, III, 155. His father Mūsā b. Khalaf is listed in *Tahdhīb*, X, 341 f.

64. Qatādah b. Di'āmah lived from ca. 60/680 to 117/735. See *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 351–56; *El²*, IV, 748, s. v. Qatāda b. Di'āma; Sezgin, I, 31 f.; Horst, 300, n. 6. An edition of his *Kitāb al-Nāsikh* appears to have been published in Beirut, 1984 (not seen).

65. The famous transmitter from the Prophet died very old, between 710 and 715. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 376–79; *El²*, 482, s. v. Anas b. Mālīk.

[10]

day the Messenger of God addressed his companions when the sun had almost set and only a small sliver of it remained visible. He said: By the One Who holds the soul of Muḥammad in His hand! As compared to what remains of our (life in this) world, that which has passed is like what remains of this day as compared to what has passed of it, and you will see only a little (more) of the sun.

According to Ibn Waki⁶⁶ — Ibn 'Uyaynah⁶⁷ — 'Alī b. Zayd⁶⁸ — Abū Naḍrah⁶⁹ — Abū Sa'īd⁷⁰: The Prophet said at sunset: What remains of this world as compared to what has passed of it is just like the rest of this day as compared to what has passed of it.

According to Hannād b. al-Sarī⁷¹ and Abū Hishām al-Rifā'ī — Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh⁷² — Abū Ḥaṣīn⁷³ — Abū Ṣālih⁷⁴ — Abū Hurayrah⁷⁵: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent (to transmit the divine message), I and the Hour were like these two, pointing at his index and middle fingers.⁷⁶

We were told about the same by Abū Kurayb⁷⁷ — Yaḥyā b.

66. Sufyān b. Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh appears to have been very old when he died in 247/861. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 123–25; Horst, 296, n. 7.

67. Sufyān b. 'Uyaynah lived from 107/725 to 196/812. See *TB*, IX, 174–84; *Tahdhīb*, IV, 117–22; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 96. See above, n. 35.

68. 'Alī b. Zayd b. 'Abdallāh b. Abī Mulaykah Zuhayr b. Jud'an died between 129 and 131/746–49. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 322–24.

69. Abū Naḍrah al-Mundhir b. Mālik al-'Abdī al-'Awqī died before al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, presumably in 108 or 109/726–28. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 302 f.

70. I am not sure which of the many companions of the Prophet called Abū Sa'īd may be meant here. The *Tahdhīb* reference to him in connection with Abū Naḍrah (n. 69) also has no further qualification.

71. Hannād b. al-Sarī b. Muṣ'ab b. Abī Bakr lived from 152/769 to 243/857. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 70 f.

72. For Ibn 'Ayyāsh (b. 95–96/713–15, d. 193–94/808–10), see *Tahdhīb*, XII, 34–37; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 325–27.

73. Abū Ḥaṣīn 'Uthmān b. 'Aṣim died between 127 and 132/744–50. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 126–28.

74. He is to be identified with Dhakwān (above, n. 37). See Ibn Ḥajar, *Faṭḥ*, XIV, 137, reporting the tradition from Ṭabarī and others with the same *isnād* to Ibn 'Ayyāsh.

75. Abū Hurayrah's death is placed in 58–59/677–79. See *Tahdhīb*, XII, 262–67; *El*², I, 129, s. v.; H. Hemgesberg, *Abu Huraira* (Diss. Frankfurt am Main, 1965).

76. See *Concordance*, III, 29b47–53. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Faṭḥ*, XIV, 134–38, which is largely a commentary on Ṭabarī with much additional information and various interpretations. It would seem obvious that the original meaning is the closeness of the index and middle fingers for pointing (in contrast to any other combination of two fingers). However, there is another interpretation, see below, n. 88.

77. Abū Kurayb Muḥammad b. al-'Alā', one of Ṭabarī's most frequently quoted immediate authorities here as well as in the *Tafsīr*, died in 248/862 or the year

Ādam⁷⁸ —Abū Bakr—Abū Ḥaşīn—Abū Şāliḥ—Abū Hurayrah—the Prophet.

According to Hannād—Abū al-Aḥwas⁷⁹ and Abū Mu'āwiyah⁸⁰ —al-A'mash—Abū Khālid al-Wālibī⁸¹ —Jābir b. Samurah⁸² : The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two.

According to Abū Kūrayb—'Aththām b. 'Alī⁸³ —al-A'mash —Abū Khālid al-Wālibī—Jābir b. Samurah: (I feel) as if I were looking at the two fingers of the Messenger of God—pointing to the forefinger and the one next to it—while he was saying: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like this one is in relation to that one.

According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Yaḥyā b. Wādih—Fitr⁸⁴ —Abū Khālid al-Wālibī—Jābir b. Samurah: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—holding his index and middle fingers together.

According to Ibn al-Muthannā—Muḥammad b. Ja'far⁸⁵ — [11] Shu'bah⁸⁶ —Qatādah—Anas b. Mālik: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two. Shu'bah said: I heard Qatādah say in his stories (*qiṣaṣihī!*):⁸⁷ like the excess length of the one over the other.⁸⁸ (Shu'bah) added: I do not know whether (Qatādah) mentioned it on the authority of Anas or reported it on his own.

before, at the age of eighty-seven. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 385 f.

78. A Qur'an reader who studied with Ibn 'Ayyāsh for three years, he died in 203/818. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 175 f.; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 363 f.

79. Not identified.

80. Abū Mu'āwiyah Muḥammad b. Khāzim al-Darīr was born in 113 or 114/731-32. He died in 195/810[1]. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 137-39.

81. Died 100/718[9]. See *Tahdhīb*, XII, 83 f.; Bukhārī, *Ta'riḫ*, IV, 2, 251; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, IV, 2, 120 f. See below, n. 577.

82. Died in the middle forties/692-95. See *Tahdhīb*, II, 39 f.

83. 'Aththām died in 195/810[1] or the year before. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 105 f.

84. Fitr b. Khalifah died between 153 and 155/770-72. See *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 300-2.

85. Apparently, Muḥammad b. Ja'far Ghundar who died between 192-94/807-10 at the age of ninety-three. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 96-98.

86. The famous scholarly authority Shu'bah b. al-Hajjāj lived from 82 or 83/701-2 to 160/776[7]. See *TB*, IX, 255-66; *Tahdhīb*, IV, 338-46.

87. This might be the title of a work, or part of a work, by Qatādah (?).

88. Here we have one of the traditions that understand the reference to the two fingers not as indicating closeness (*mujāwarah* in Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, see above, n. 76) but as indicating length (*tūl*). The length of the time remaining was indicated by the difference in length between the two fingers. See below, 181 f.

According to Khallād b. Aslam⁸⁹ —al-Naḍr b. Shumayl⁹⁰ —Shu'bah—Qatādah—Anas b. Mālik: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two.

We were told the same by Mujāhid b. Mūsā⁹¹ —Yazīd⁹² —Shu'bah—Qatādah—Anas b. Mālik—the Prophet, with the addition in his *ḥadīth*: and he pointed with the middle and index fingers.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam⁹³ —Ayyūb b. Suwayd⁹⁴ —al-Awzā'ī⁹⁵ —Ismā'īl b. 'Ubaydallāh⁹⁶: When Anas b. Mālik came to al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik,⁹⁷ al-Walīd asked him: What have you heard the Messenger of God mention about the Hour? Anas replied: I heard the Messenger of God say: You (pl.) and the Hour are like these two—pointing with his two fingers.

According to al-'Abbās b. al-Walīd⁹⁸ —his father—al-Awzā'ī—Ismā'īl b. 'Ubaydallāh: When Anas b. Mālik came to al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, al-Walīd asked him: What have you heard the Messenger of God mention about the Hour? Anas replied: I heard the

89. Khallād died ca. 249/863 in Sāmarrā. See *TB*, VIII, 342 f.; *Tahdhib*, III, 171 f.

90. Died 203 or 204/818–20. See *Tahdhib*, X, 437 f.; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. Margoliouth, VII, 123 ff., ed. Rifā'ī, XIX, 238–43; Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 102, *Suppl.*, I, 161; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 262.

91. Mujāhid b. Mūsā lived from 158/775 to 244/858. See *TB*, XIII, 265 f.; *Tahdhib*, X, 44 f.

92. Yazīd b. Hārūn b. Zādī b. Thābit was born in 118/736 or the year before. He died in 206/821. See *TB*, XIV, 337–47; *Tahdhib*, XI, 366–69.

93. A member of the well-known Egyptian family of traditionists and historians, the source also of many traditions in Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, he lived from 182/799 to 268 or 269/882–83. See *Tahdhib*, IX, 260–62; *IE²*, III, 674 f., s. v. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 474.; above, General Introduction, 28 f.

94. The dates of death indicated in *Tahdhib*, I, 405 f., are hard to reconcile with this chain of transmitters. If Ayyūb b. Suwayd drowned in 193/808[9], Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam would then have been only ten or eleven years old. 201 or 202/816–18 also seems unlikely. However, as a transmitter from al-Awzā'ī, he probably could not have died much later.

95. The jurist and founder of a short-lived legal school, al-Awzā'ī died in 157/773[4] at the age of seventy, according to Ṭabarī, *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*, ed. Leiden, III, 2514, ed. Cairo, XI, 656. Slightly different dates appear in *Tahdhib*, VI, 238–42. See also *IE²*, I, 772 f., s. v.

96. Born in 61/680[1], Ismā'īl b. 'Ubaydallāh died in 131 or 132/748–50. See *Tahdhib*, I, 317 f.

97. The two Umayyad caliphs reigned, respectively, in 685–705 and 705–15.

98. Al-'Abbās b. al-Walīd b. Mazyad lived from around 169/785[6] to 270/883[4]. Ṭabarī studied with him in Bayrūt. According to al-'Abbās, his father died in 203/818[9] at the age of seventy-seven. See *Tahdhib*, V, 131–133, XI, 150 f.; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhib*, VII, 272; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, XVI, 658.

Messenger of God say: All of you and the Hour are like these two.

According to Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Barqī⁹⁹ —'Amr b. Abī Salamah¹⁰⁰ —al-Awzā'ī—Ismā'īl b. 'Ubaydallāh: When Anas b. Mālik came to al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, and so on.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-A'lā¹⁰¹ —al-Mu'tamir b. Sulaymān¹⁰² —his father—Ma'bad¹⁰³ —Anas: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two. He added: With his two fingers, thus!

[12]

According to Ibn al-Muthannā—Wahb b. Jarīr¹⁰⁴ —Shu'bah—Abū al-Tayyāḥ¹⁰⁵ —Anas: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—the index and middle fingers. Said Abū Mūsā (Ibn al-Muthannā): Wahb pointed with the index and middle fingers.

According to 'Abdallāh b. Abī Ziyād¹⁰⁶ —Wahb b. Jarīr—Shu'bah—Abū al-Tayyāḥ and Qatādah—Anas: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—joining his two fingers.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Bazī¹⁰⁷ —al-Fuḍayl b. Sulaymān¹⁰⁸ —Abū Ḥāzim¹⁰⁹ —Sahl b. Sa'd¹¹⁰: I saw the Messenger of God, holding his two fingers, the middle finger and the one

99. The two brothers Ahmad and Muḥammad, the sons of 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm, are often referred to as (Ibn) al-Barqī and can then not be distinguished. Ahmad is listed in Ibn Abī Hātim, I,1, 61, Muḥammad in III,2, 301. The latter supposedly died in 249/863. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 263.

100. 'Amr b. Abī Salamah, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Tinnisi, died between 212 and 214/827-29. See *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 43 f.

101. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Ṣan'āni died in 245/859[60] in al-Baṣrah. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 289; Horst, 296, n. 1. Al-Mu'tamir b. Sulaymān is named as his authority in Bukhārī, *Ta'riḫ*, II,1, 174; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 395.

102. Born in or before 100/718[9]. al-Mu'tamir died in 187/802[3]. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 227 f. For his father Abū al-Mu'tamir Sulaymān b. Ṭarkhān (ca. 46-143/666-760), see *Tahdhīb*, IV, 201-3; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 285 f.

103. For Ma'bad b. Hilāl, see *Tahdhīb*, X, 225.

104. Wahb b. Jarīr died in 206 or 207/821-23. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 161 f.

105. Abū al-Tayyāḥ Yazīd b. Humayd died between 128 and 130/745-48. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 320 f.; Ibn Hajar, *Fathḥ*, XIV, 134.

106. 'Abdallāh b. Abī Ziyād al-Ḥakam al-Qaṭawāni died in 255/869. See *Tahdhīb*, V, 190.

107. Ibn Bazī' died in 247/861[2]. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 248 f.

108. Died around the middle of the 180s/799-802. See *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 291 f.

109. Abū Ḥāzim Salamah b. Dinār died between 130 and 140/747-57. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 143 f.

110. Sahl b. Sa'd al-Sā'idī was supposedly born in 617 and may have lived until 88/707 or even longer. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 252 f.; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, II, 664 f.

next to the thumb, thus! He said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two.

According to Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Adamī¹¹¹—Abū Ḍamrah¹¹²—Abū Ḥāzim—Sahl b. Sa'd al-Sā'idī: The Messenger of God said: I was sent with the Hour like these two—pressing the middle finger and the one next to the thumb together. He said: I and the Hour are just like two race horses (in a closely contested race).¹¹³ Then he said: I and the Hour are just like a man sent by people in advance as a scout. When he is afraid that he will be overtaken, he signals with his cloth: They have reached you! They have reached you! It is me! It is me!

According to Abū Kurayb—Khālid¹¹⁴—Muḥammad b. Ja'far—Abū Ḥāzim—Sahl b. Sa'd: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—holding his two fingers together.

[13] According to Abū Kurayb—Khālid—Sulaymān b. Bilāl¹¹⁵—Abū Ḥāzim¹¹⁶—Sahl b. Sa'd: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were thus—joining his two fingers, the middle finger and the one next to the thumb.

According to Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Barqī—Ibn Abī Maryam¹¹⁷—Muḥammad b. Ja'far—Abū Ḥāzim—Sahl b. Sa'd: The Messenger of God said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—holding his two fingers together.

According to Abū Kurayb—Abū Nu'aym—Bashīr b. al-Muhājir¹¹⁸—'Abdallāh b. Buraydah¹¹⁹—his father: I heard the Messenger of God say: I and the Hour were sent together. It almost preceded me.

111. Died 245/860. See *TB*, III, 374; *Tahdhib*, IX, 530.

112. Abū Ḍamrah Anas b. Tyād was born around 104/722[3] and died in 200/815. See *Tahdhib*, I, 375.

113. Cf. Rosenthal, *Gambling*, 117.

114. Khālid b. Makhlad died in the early 210s/825–30. See *Tahdhib*, III, 116–18.

115. Died in the 170s/ca. 788–93 in Medina. See *Tahdhib*, IV, 175 f.

116. Abū Sālim in the Leiden edition seems a simple mistake.

117. Sa'īd b. al-Ḥakam b. Abī Maryam lived from 144/761[2] to 224/838[9]. See *Tahdhib*, IV, 17 f.

118. See *Tahdhib*, I, 468 f.

119. Supposedly born in 637, 'Abdallāh b. Buraydah b. al-Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī died as judge of Marw, possibly as late as 115/733 (?). His father died between 60 and 64/679–84. See *Tahdhib*, V, 157 f., and I, 432 f.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Hayyā¹²⁰ —Yahyā b. 'Abd al-Rahmān¹²¹ —'Ubaydah b. al-Aswad¹²² —Mujālid¹²³ —Qays b. Abī Hāzim¹²⁴ —al-Mustawrid b. Shaddād al-Fihri¹²⁵: The Prophet said: I was sent immediately before the coming of the Hour. I preceded it like this one preceding that one—(referring) to his two fingers, the index finger and the middle finger. Abū 'Abdallāh¹²⁶ described (it) to us by holding the two fingers together.

According to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb¹²⁷ —Abū Naṣr¹²⁸ —al-Mas'ūdī¹²⁹ —Ismā'il b. Abī Khālid¹³⁰ —al-Sha'bi¹³¹ —Abū Jabīrah.¹³² The Messenger of God said: I was sent together with the Hour like these two—pointing with his two fingers, the middle finger and the index finger—like the excess length of this one over that one.

According to Tamīm b. al-Muntaṣir¹³³ —Yazīd (b. Hārūn)—Ismā'il (b. Abī Khālid)—Shubayl b. 'Awf¹³⁴ —Abū Jabīrah—some elders of the Anṣār: We heard the Messenger of God say: When I came, I and the Hour were thus! Al-Ṭabarī says: Tamīm demonstrated it to us. He pressed the index finger and the middle finger

[14]

120. Died 255/869. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 362 f.

121. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 250.

122. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 86.

123. Mujālid b. Sa'īd b. 'Umayr died in 144/762. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 39–41.

124. Qays b. Abī Hāzim seems to have died in the late 90s/712–17. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 386–89.

125. Al-Mustawrid died in 45/665[6] in Alexandria. See *Tahdhīb*, X, 106 f.

126. According to *Tahdhīb*, only Qays b. Abī Hāzim, among those mentioned in the chain of transmitters, had the patronymic Abū 'Abdallāh. Ibn Hayyā's patronymic supposedly was Abū 'Ubaydallāh.

127. Unidentified. His *nisbah* was al-Ṭūsī. See below, n. 226.

128. Unidentified. See below, n. 551.

129. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Abdallāh al-Mas'ūdī died in 165/781[2]. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 210–12. His descendant Yahyā b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī 'Ubaydah b. Ma'n (see *Tahdhīb*, XI, 174 f.) provided Ṭabarī with information through a family *isnād*. See, for instance, *Tafsīr*, V, 81, VII, 57, XIV, 20, XXIII, 91, XXVI, 17, XXVII, 117.

130. Died 146/763[4]. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 291 f.

131. The famous 'Amr b. Sharāḥīl al-Sha'bi was born in 640 and died sometime during the third decade of the eighth century. See *TB*, XII, 227–34; *Tahdhīb*, V, 65–69; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 277.

132. See *Tahdhīb*, XII, 52 f. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, IV, 1619, three companions of the Prophet bore the patronymic Abū Jabīrah.

133. Born in 169/785[6] or later, Tamīm died in 244/858[9], according to his grandson Baḥshal, the author of the *History of Wāsiṭ*, 233 f. See also *Tahdhīb*, I, 514 f.

134. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 311; Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 2, 259.

together and said to us: Yazīd pointed with his two fingers, the index finger and the middle finger, pressing them together. He continued. I preceded the Hour like this one precedes that one, immediately before the coming of the Hour, using the expression *nafas min al-sā'ah* or *nafas al-sā'ah*.

Thus, (the evidence permitting) a conclusion is as follows: The beginning of the day is the rise of dawn, and its end is the setting of the sun. Further, the reported tradition on the authority of the Prophet is sound. As we have mentioned earlier, he said after having prayed the afternoon prayer: What remains of this world as compared to what has passed of it is just like what remains of this day as compared to what has passed of it. He also said: When I was sent, I and the Hour were like these two—holding index finger and middle finger together; I preceded it to the same extent as this one—meaning the middle finger—preceded that one—meaning the index finger. Further, the extent (of time) between the mean time of the afternoon prayer—that is, when the shadow of every thing is twice its size, according to the best assumption (*'alā al-taḥarri*) —(to sunset) is the extent of time of one-half of one-seventh of the day, give or take a little. Likewise, the excess of the length of the middle finger over that of the index finger is something about that or close to it.¹³⁵ There is also a sound tradition on the authority of the Messenger of God, as I was told by Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Wahb¹³⁶—his paternal uncle 'Abd-allāh b. Wahb¹³⁷—Mu'āwiyah b. Ṣāliḥ¹³⁸—'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jubayr b. Nufayr¹³⁹—his father Jubayr b. Nufayr—the companion of the Prophet, Abū Tha'labah al-Khushanī¹⁴⁰: The Messenger of

135. Rough measuring of my middle and index fingers shows the proportion to be about 9 cm to 8.3 cm. Seven-tenths is slightly more than one-fourteenth of nine. The time of the afternoon prayer is mostly defined as beginning when an object's shadow is one-third of its size (in addition to what it was at noon), and extending to the time of the sunset prayer. One-fourteenth of a day apparently refers to one-fourteenth of a twenty-four hour period.

136. Died 264/877. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 54–56.

137. Born in 125/742[3], he died in 197/813. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 71–74; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 466; Horst, 305, n. 2.

138. Mu'āwiyah b. Ṣāliḥ died in the 170s/around 790, or in the 150s/around 770 (?). See *Tahdhīb*, X, 209–12; Horst, 293, n. 4.

139. He died in 118/736, and his father, who was born in pre-Islamic times, died ca. 80/699. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 154, and II, 64 f.; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, I, 234.

140. Abū Tha'labah died in or before 75/694. See *Tahdhīb*, XII, 49–51; Ibn 'Abd

God said: Indeed, God will not make this nation incapable of (lasting) half a day—referring to the day of a thousand years.

[15]

All these facts taken together make it clear that of the two statements I have mentioned concerning the total extent of time, the one from Ibn 'Abbās, and the other from Ka'b,¹⁴¹ the one more likely to be correct in accordance with the information coming from the Messenger of God is that of Ibn 'Abbās transmitted here by us on his authority: The world is one of the weeks of the other world—seven thousand years.¹⁴²

Consequently, because this is so and the report on the authority of the Messenger of God is sound—namely, that he reported that what remained of the time of this world during his life was half a day, or five hundred years, since five hundred years are half a day of the days, of which one is a thousand years—the conclusion is that the time of this world that had elapsed to the moment of the Prophet's statement corresponds to what we have transmitted on the authority of Abū Tha'labah al-Khushanī from the Prophet, and is 6,500 years or approximately 6,500 years. God knows best!

Our statement about the duration of the periods (*azmān*) of this world from its very beginning to its very end is the most firmly established of all the statements we have, on account of the testimony to its soundness as explained by us. Information has (also) been transmitted on the authority of the Messenger of God to prove the soundness of the statement that all of this world is six thousand years. If its chain of transmitters were sound, we would have to go no further. It is Muḥammad b. Sinān al-Qazzāz¹⁴³ —'Abd al-Ṣamad b. 'Abd al-Wārith¹⁴⁴ —Zabbān¹⁴⁵ —'Āṣim¹⁴⁶ —

al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, IV, 1618.

141. See text above, I, 8.

142. According to the Prophet, five hundred years remain, and they are one-fourteenth of the total duration of the world.

143. Muḥammad b. Sinān died in 271/884[5] at an advanced age, since some of his authorities died in the early years of the second century. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 206 f.

144. Died 206 or 207/821–22. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 327 f. His son 'Abd al-Wārith (d. 252/866) transmitted information to Ṭabarī, see, for instance, *Tafsīr*, II, 28.

145. If Zabbān is correct, he would be Zabbān b. Fā'id (text below, I, 318), who died in 155/771[2]. See *Tahdhīb*, III, 308. But note that *Tahdhīb*, VI, 327, lists Abān (below, n. 823) as one of the authorities of 'Abd al-Ṣamad.

146. 'Āṣim b. Bahdalah, the great Kūfan Qur'ān reader, is said to have died in 127 or 128/744–46, although earlier dates in the 120s were also suggested. See *Tahdhīb*, V, 38–40; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, 346–49; *ET*², I, 706 f., s. v.; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 7. The

[16] Abū Ṣālih—Abū Hurayrah: The Messenger of God said: *Al-ḥuqb* is eighty years. The day of them is one-sixth of this world.¹⁴⁷ According to this tradition, it is clear that all of this world is six thousand years. That is because, if one day of the other world equals one thousand years and a single such day is one-sixth of this world, the conclusion would be that the total is six of the days of the other world, and that is six thousand years.

The Jews assume that they can consider the total (age of the world) from God's creation of Adam to the time of the hijrah as firmly established at 4,642 years according to what is clearly stated in their Torah—the one they possess today.¹⁴⁸ They have made a detailed count by indicating the birth and death of each man and prophet from the time of Adam to the hijrah of our prophet Muḥammad. I hope to mention those details and other detailed counts made by scholars from among the people of the Scriptures and other scholars expert in biography and history when I get to it, if God wills.

The Greek Christians assume that the Jewish claim in this re-

identification of 'Aṣim with 'Aṣim (b. Bahdalah) b. Abī al-Najjūd is indicated in *Tafsīr* (see the following note).

147. *Huqb*, pl. *aḥqāb*, occurs in Qur. 18:60 and 78:23. The meaning appears to be something like "long time." In his *Tafsīr*, Ṭabari is very detailed in connection with Qur. 78:23 (*Tafsīr*, XXX, 8 f.). The tradition there, with the *isnād* from Abū Hurayrah to 'Aṣim, defines *ḥuqb* as being eighty years of 360 days, of which each day is a thousand years. Most of the other traditions cited are similar, but none of them speaks of the duration of the world, as is the case here. In "(The day of) them," the antecedent of "them" could only be "years." Unless the text was corrupt already in Ṭabari's original, his reasoning might be: Each day of those eighty years is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is one-sixth of the duration of this world. However, in the context, this seems to explain nothing.

148. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, I, 11, has 4,343. This is closer to the figure of 4,381-82 which is given by Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Annales*, 85 (cf. Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, text, 14 f., trans., 17 f.) and which corresponds to traditional Jewish usage. The figure 4,042 in Ḥamzah, 11, appears to be a simple mistake, with the three (six ?) hundred missing (?).

The Christian figure of 5,992 is close to that of 5,990 in Ḥamzah and that of 5,969 of the Antiochian era, to which Ginzler, III, 288, refers. Bīrūnī has 6,122-3.

The Persian figure of 3,139 years seems to have no counterpart elsewhere. It is always much higher, such as 4,182 or 4,409 in Ḥamzah, 11 and 29, and 4,287-8 in Bīrūnī. It is somewhat closer to the 3,725 or 3,735 years from the Flood to Yazdijard mentioned in the *zījes*. However, if the number of years from Adam to the Flood is added to that figure, the difference between the resulting figure and 3,139 is even greater. See Pingree, *Thousands*, 39 f., 130; Hāshimī, 'Ilal, 246.

The source for Ṭabari's precise figures remains to be found. See also text, below, I, 1068 ff., and, for instance, Stern, "Abū 'Isā."

spect is false. According to their view of the sequence in the Torah that they possess, the duration of the days of this world from the creation of Adam to the time of the hijrah of our Prophet Muḥammad is properly stated at 5,992 years and some months. They have made a detailed count to support their claim by indicating the birth and death of each prophet and ruler from the age of Adam to the hijrah of the Messenger of God. They assume that the smaller number of years in the Jewish chronology as against that of the Christians results from the fact that the Jews rejected the prophethood of Jesus, the son of Mary, since (for them) his description and the time of his being sent (as a prophet) are firmly established in the Torah.¹⁴⁹ They say: The time that is fixed for us in the Torah for the person whose description is that of Jesus has not yet come. They believe that they are waiting for his appearance and his time. [17]

I think that the person whom they are waiting for, claiming that his description is firmly established in the Torah, is the Antichrist (*al-Dajjāl*), whom the Messenger of God has described to his nation. He mentioned to them that most of the Antichrist's followers will be Jews. If the Antichrist is 'Abdallāh b. Ṣayyād,¹⁵⁰ he is a person of Jewish origin.

The Magians¹⁵¹ assume that the duration of time from King Jayūmart to the time of the hijrah of our Prophet is 3,139 years. They do not combine that with a known genealogy beyond Jayūmart, assuming that Jayūmart is Adam, the father of mankind—May God pray for and give peace to him and all the prophets and messengers of God!¹⁵² Historians continue to hold

149. According to Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, text, 15, trans., 18, the shorter chronology of the Jews resulted from their desire to have the appearance of Jesus occur in the fourth millennium, in the middle of the seven thousand years corresponding to their expectation for the world's duration.

150. For the legendary Ibn Ṣayyād, who is supposed to have contact with the Prophet and to have died in 63/682–83, see Wensinck, *Handbook*, 103b; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, I, 205; D. J. Halperin, "The Ibn Ṣayyād traditions."

151. See *El²*, V, 1110–18, s. v. Madjūs. The Zoroastrian mythology covered by Ṭabarī in this volume extends from Gayōmart to Jamshēd. It has been treated in considerable detail by A. Christensen in the two volumes of *Les types du Premier Homme et du Premier Roi*. Christensen includes translations of the relevant material from Ṭabarī and the later Muslim literature. The translation of the above passage appears in Christensen, I, 66 f.

152. See, further, text below, I, 147 f.

different opinions about him. Some say the same as the Magians. Others say that he took the name of Adam after he became ruler of the seven climes, and that he was none other than Gomer b. Japheth b. Noah.¹⁵³ He was pious, kind, and affectionate to Noah and attached to his service. Because of his piety and service to him, Noah prayed for him and his progeny to God to give him a long life, to have him firmly settled in the land, to grant him victory over those who opposed him and them, and to provide for him and his progeny royal authority that would last uninterruptedly. His prayer was heard. Jayūmart and his children were granted all of that. He is the father of the Persians. He and his children continued to rule until their royal authority came to an end when the Muslims entered Madā'in Kisrā¹⁵⁴ and took it away from them. Others say others things. We hope to mention the statements that have reached us, when we mention the chronology of the (Persian) rulers, how long they lived, their genealogy and the circumstances of¹⁵⁵ their royal authority.

[18]

*The Proofs for the Origination of Momentary
and Extended Time and Night and Day*

We have said earlier that time is but a noun designating the hours of night and day.¹⁵⁶ The hours of night and day are but measurements indicated by the running of the sun and the moon in the sphere, as God says: "And a sign for them is the night. We strip the day from it. So they are in darkness. And the sun: It runs to a place where it is to reside (at night). This is decreed by the One Mighty and Knowing. And the moon: We have decreed for it stations, until it becomes again (slender) and curved) like an ancient raceme of a palm tree (which has been left on the tree stripped of the dates). The sun must not reach the moon, nor does night precede day. All swim in a sphere."¹⁵⁷

Since time has to do with the hours of night and day as we have

¹⁵³ Gomer (see Genesis 10:2), whose name evoked that of Gayōmart, appears as Jāmīr in Arabic. See also text below, I, 216, etc.

¹⁵⁴ "The cities of Khusrāw (Chosroes)" refers to ancient Ctesiphon. See *EI*², V, 945 f., s. v. al-Madā'in.

¹⁵⁵ This may be meant rather than "the reasons for."

¹⁵⁶ See text above, I, 8.

¹⁵⁷ Qur. 36:37-40.

mentioned, and the hours of night and day are but the traversal by the sun and the moon of the degrees of the sphere, the conclusion is certain that time as well as night and day are originated and that the One Who originated that is God Who alone by Himself originated His entire creation. "He is the One Who created night and day, the sun and the moon. All swim in a sphere."¹⁵⁸ Even one not knowing that that originates from God's creation can indeed not be ignorant of the difference in the conditions of night and day, namely that one of them—the night—brings down blackness and darkness upon creation, and the other—the day—brings down light and luminosity upon them and the removal of the night's blackness and darkness.

Now if this so, and it is impossible that the two with their different conditions come together at any one moment anywhere, the certain conclusion is that one of them must be before the other, and whichever is before its companion has the other no doubt come after it. This is explanation and proof for their origination and for their being creatures of their Creator. [19]

A further proof for the origination of days and nights is that each day comes after a day that was before it, and before a day that will come after it. Now, it is known that what was not and came into being was originated and created and has a creator and originator. Still another proof is that days and nights are countable. Anything that can be counted must have either an even or an odd number. If it is an even number, it begins with two. This shows the soundness of the statement that it has a beginning and a start. If it is an odd number, then it starts with one. This proves that it has a beginning and a start. Now, whatever has a beginning must have one who begins (it), and that is its creator.

Whether God, before He Created Time and Night and Day, Created Any Other of the Created Things

We have stated before that time is but the hours of night and day and that the hours are but the traversal by the sun and the moon of the degrees of the sphere.

Now then, this being so, there is (also) a sound tradition from

158. Qur. 21:33.

the Messenger of God told us by Hannād b. al-Sarī, who also said that he read all of the *ḥadīth* (to Abū Bakr)¹⁵⁹ —Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh—Abū Sa'd al-Baqqāl¹⁶⁰ —'Ikrimah¹⁶¹ —Ibn 'Abbās: The Jews came to the Prophet and asked him about the creation of the heavens and the earth. He said: God created the earth on Sunday and Monday. He created the mountains and the uses they possess on Tuesday. On Wednesday, He created trees, water, cities and the cultivated and barren land. These are four (days). He continued (citing the Qur'ān): "Say: Do you really not believe in the One Who created the earth in two days, and set up others like Him? That is the Lord of the worlds. He made in it firmly anchored (mountains) above it and blessed it and decreed that it contain the amount of food it provides, [all] in four days, equally for those asking"¹⁶² —for those who ask.¹⁶³ He continued: On Thursday, He created heaven. On Friday, He created the stars, the sun, the moon, and the angels, until three hours remained. In the first of these three hours, He created the terms (of human life), who would live and who would die. In the second, He cast harm upon everything that is useful for mankind. And in the third, (He created) Adam and had him dwell in Paradise. He commanded Iblīs to prostrate himself before Adam,¹⁶⁴ and He drove Adam out of Paradise at the end of the hour. When the Jews asked: What then, Muḥammad? he said: "Then He sat straight upon the Throne."¹⁶⁵ The Jews said: You would be right, if you had finished, they said, with: Then He rested. Whereupon the Prophet got very angry, and it was revealed: "We have created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days, and fatigue did not touch Us. Thus be patient with what you say!"¹⁶⁶

159. The clarifying "to Abū Bakr" appears only in *Tafsīr*, XXIV, 61, as stated in the Cairo edition, but not in Tabarī's text here or below, I, 42 and 54.

160. Died in the 140s/757-66. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 79 f.

161. 'Ikrimah, a *mawlā* of Ibn 'Abbās and one of the most distinguished transmitters, is supposed to have died around 104-7/722-25 at the age of eighty. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 263-73; *El²*, III, 1081 f., s. v. 'Ikrimah; Horst, 295, n. 6.

162. Qur. 41:9 f.

163. For this paraphrase, see *Tafsīr*, XXIV, 61, l. 12; text below, I, 51.

164. See *El²*, III, 668 f., s. v. For a more detailed study of the controversial Iblīs figure in Islam, see Awn, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption*.

165. Qur. 7:54, etc.

166. Qur. 50:38 f. For the entire tradition, see *Tafsīr*, XXVI, 61.

According to al-Qāsim b. Bishr b. Ma'rūf¹⁶⁷ and al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Ṣudā'ī¹⁶⁸ —Hajjāj¹⁶⁹ —Ibn Jurayj¹⁷⁰ —Ismā'īl b. Umayyah¹⁷¹ —Ayyūb b. Khālid¹⁷² —'Abdallāh b. Rāfi', the *mawlā* of Umm Salamah¹⁷³ —Abū Hurayrah: The Messenger of God took me by the hand. Then he said: God created the soil on Saturday. Upon it, He created the mountains on Sunday. He created the trees on Monday. He created evil¹⁷⁴ on Tuesday. He created light on Wednesday. He scattered the animals on the earth on Thursday, and He created Adam as the last of His creatures after (the time of) the afternoon prayer in the last hour of Friday, in the time between the afternoon prayer and night(fall).¹⁷⁵

According to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Bazī'—al-Fuḍayl b. Sulaymān—Muḥammad b. Zayd¹⁷⁶ —Abū Salamah b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf¹⁷⁷ —Ibn Salām¹⁷⁸ and Abū Hurayrah who men-

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167. Al-Qāsim b. Bishr b. Aḥmad (or Aḥmad b. Bishr) b. Ma'rūf appears to be the individual meant here. See *TB*, XII, 427; *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 308. For the common *isnād* starting with al-Qāsim—al-Ḥusayn, see below, nn. 185 and 186. This is, in fact, the form in which the *isnād* appears in connection with the tradition in *Tafsīr*, XII, 3 (*ad Qur.* 11:7).

168. Al-Ṣudā'ī died in 246 or 248/860–62. See *Tahdhīb*, II, 359; Sam 'ānī, *Ansāb*, VIII, 283.

169. Hajjāj (or al-Hajjāj) b. Muḥammad, the transmitter of Ibn Jurayj's Qur'ān commentary, died in 206/821[2]. See *TB*, VIII, 236–39; *Tahdhīb*, II, 205 f.; Horst, 295, n. 3. The same chain of transmitters is found in connection with the *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 640; Ibn Hanbal, II, 327; *Concordance*, I, 268a23, VI, 5b42.

170. Ibn Jurayj, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, died seventy years old between 149 and 151/766–68. See *Tahdhīb*, VI, 402–6; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 91; Horst, 295, n. 4.

171. Ismā'īl b. Umayyah died between 139 and 144/756–61. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 283 f.

172. See *Tahdhīb*, I, 401, no. 739; Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 1, 413 f., where reference is made to the *ḥadīth* above.

173. For this *mawlā* of the Prophet's wife Umm Salamah, see *Tahdhīb*, V, 206.

174. *Al-makrūh* is explained as "evil," because it is considered as contrasting with the following "light," which is good. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāyah*, IV, 18. *Wörterbuch*, letter K, 158a, refers further to a late work translated by Rescher, *Orientalische Miszellen*, I, 173, which characterizes the days of the week and states that Tuesday is the most unlucky day of all. See also below, n. 369. However, the "evil" contrasted with "light" could conceivably be darkness. "Darkness" does appear, if rarely, as a separate creation, see text below, I, 36.

175. See *Tafsīr*, XII, 3 (*ad Qur.* 11:7).

176. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. al-Muhājir b. Qunfudh is stated to have lived a hundred years. See *Tahdhīb*, IX, 173 f.

177. For this son of the powerful member of the electoral council at the death of the caliph 'Umar, see *Tahdhīb*, XII, 115–18.

178. 'Abdallāh b. Salām supposedly died in 43/663[4] in Medina. See *Tahdhīb*, V, 249; *EI*², 52, s. v.; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 304.

tioned the hour (of Adam's creation) on Friday on the authority of the Prophet as he stated it. 'Abdallāh b. Salām said: I know which hour it is. God began the creation of the heavens and the earth on Sunday, and He finished in the last hour of Friday. Thus, it is the last hour of Friday (in which Adam was created).

According to al-Muthannā¹⁷⁹ —al-Ḥajjāj—Ḥammād¹⁸⁰ —'Aṭā' b. al-Sā'ib¹⁸¹ —'Ikrimah: The Jews asked the Prophet: What about Sunday? The Messenger of God replied: On it, God created the earth and spread it out. They asked about Monday, and he replied: On it, He created Adam. They asked about Tuesday, and he replied: On it, He created the mountains, water, and so on. They asked about Wednesday, and he replied: Food. They asked about Thursday, and he replied: He created the heavens. They asked about Friday, and he replied: God created night and day. Then, when they asked about Saturday and mentioned God's rest(ing on it), he exclaimed: God be praised! God then revealed: "We have created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days, and fatigue did not touch Us."¹⁸²

The two reports transmitted by us from the Messenger of God have made it clear that the sun and the moon were created after God had created many things of His creation. That is because the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of the Messenger of God indicates that God created the sun and the moon on Friday. If this is so, earth and heaven and what is in them, except the angels and Adam, had been created before God created the sun and the moon. All this (thus) existed while there was no light and no day, since night and day are but nouns designating hours known through the traversal by the sun and the moon of the course of the sphere. Now, if it is correct that the earth and the heaven and what is between them, except what we have mentioned, were in existence when there was no sun and no moon, the conclusion is that all that existed when there was no night and no day. The

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179. For Ṭabari's compatriot and early teacher al-Muthannā b. Ibrāhīm al-Āmulī, one of his most often quoted authorities in the *Tafsīr*, see Horst, 293, n. 2; above, General Introduction, n. 48. For al-Ḥajjāj, see below, n. 319.

180. Since 'Aṭā' had both Ḥammāds as his students, the one here could be either Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (above, n. 29) or Ḥammād b. Salamah b. Dinār. The latter died in 167/784. See *Tahdhīb*, III, 11–16. See also *TB*, III, 284, l. 16.

181. 'Aṭā' died in the 130s/750–55. See *Tahdhīb*, VII, 203–7.

182. Qur. 50:38.

same (conclusion results from) the following *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah reported on the authority of the Messenger of God: God created light on Wednesday—meaning by “light” the sun, if God wills.

Someone might ask: You have assumed that “day” is just a noun designating a period of time (*mīqāt*) between the rising of dawn and the setting of the sun, and now, you assume that God created the sun and the moon days after He began creating the things He did. Thus, you have established periods of time and called them “days” while there was no sun and no moon. If you have no proof for the soundness of this, it is a contradictory statement.

The answer is: God called what I have mentioned “days.” Thus, I have used for them the same designation He did. The use of “days” when there was no sun and no moon may be compared to [the use of “morning” and “evening” in] God’s word: “They have their sustenance in [Paradise] in the morning and in the evening”¹⁸³ —(using “morning” and “evening” in spite of the fact that) there is no morning or evening there, because there is no night in the other world and no sun and no moon, as God says: “Those who do not believe are in doubt about it, until the Hour comes upon them suddenly, or the punishment of a barren day comes upon them.”¹⁸⁴ God called the Day of Resurrection a “barren day”, because it is a day with no night after its coming. Speaking of the “days” before the creation of the sun and the moon was intended to refer to a period of a thousand of the years of this world, each of which has twelve of the months of the people of this world. Their hours and days are counted by the traversal by the sun and the moon of the course of the spheres. Likewise, “morning” and “evening” in connection with the sustenance provided for the inhabitants of Paradise were used for a period of duration with which they were familiar in this connection as “time” in this world. That is, “time” as indicated by the sun and its running in the sphere, although, for the inhabitants of Paradise, there is no sun and no night. [23]

Similar statements have been made by early scholars, such as, for instance

183. Qur. 19:62.

184. Qur. 22:55. “Barren” is “childless,” because the Day of Resurrection produces no night to follow upon it.

According to al-Qāsim¹⁸⁵ —al-Ḥusayn¹⁸⁶ —Ḥajjāj—Ibn Jurayj—Mujāhid: God entrusts the management of everything to the angels for a thousand years, and then again until another thousand years have elapsed, repeating the process forever. He said: "(In) a day whose measure is a thousand years".¹⁸⁷ "Day" is His saying to what He entrusts to the angels for a thousand years: "Be! And it is."¹⁸⁸ But He called it "day", calling it just as He pleased. All this is on the authority of Mujāhid. He continued. God's word: "A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of your counting,"¹⁸⁹ is entirely the same thing.¹⁹⁰

Reports similar to the one that has come down on the Prophet's authority, namely, that God created the sun and the moon after His creation of the heavens and the earth and other things, have come down from a number of early [scholars], as follows:

According to Abū Hishām al-Rifā'ī—Ibn Yamān¹⁹¹ —Sufyān—Ibn Jurayj—Sulaymān b. Mūsā¹⁹² —Mujāhid—Ibn 'Abbās, commenting on: "And He said to (the heaven) and the earth: Come willingly or unwillingly! They said: We come willingly,"¹⁹³ as follows: God said to the heavens: Cause My sun and My moon to rise and cause My stars to rise, and to the earth He said: Split your rivers¹⁹⁴ and bring forth your fruit. Both replied: "We come willingly."¹⁹⁵

185. Al-Qāsim always appears in Ṭabarī as the transmitter from al-Ḥusayn b. Dāwūd. Horst, 295, n. 1, identifies him with al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan b. Yazīd al-Hamadhānī, who died in 272/885. See *TB*, XII, 432. *TB* mentions as one of his authorities Mūsā b. Ismā'īl al-Tabūdhakī who, like al-Ḥusayn b. Dāwūd, died in the 220s (see below, n. 270).

186. Al-Ḥusayn b. Dāwūd, who died in 226/840[1] was known as Sunayd. He studied Ibn Jurayj's collection of traditions, entitled *al-Jāmi'*, with Ḥajjāj. See *TB*, 42-44; *Tahdhīb*, IV, 244 f.; Horst, 295, n. 2.

187. Qur. 32:5.

188. Qur. 2:117, etc.

189. Qur. 22:47.

190. See *Tafsīr*, XXI, 59.

191. Yahyā b. Yamān transmitted from Sufyān al-Thawrī and died in 188-89/803-5. See *Tahdhīb*, XI, 306 f.

192. Died between 109 and 115/727-33. See *Tahdhīb*, IV, 226 f.

193. Qur. 41:11.

194. That is, splitting the surface of the earth so as to create river beds. For the association of "river" with "splitting," cf. Ethiopic *falag* ("river").

195. For the comment of Ibn 'Abbās, see also *Tafsīr*, XXIV, 64.