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The Manda Family: A Dynasty of Isfahani Scholars

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Abstract

The Manda family was an important scholarly dynasty in Isfahan. From the beginning of the third century/*ca* 816 until the Mongol conquest of Isfahan in 632/1235-633/1236, its members were active in the fields of *ḥadīṯ* transmission and criticism, theology, and historiography. Despite its significance for the Ḥanbalī scholarly tradition, Āl Manda has remained marginal in the works of Western Islamicists during the last fifty years, whereas Muslim scholars have focused almost exclusively on the most prominent representative of the family, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (d. 395/1005), and, to a lesser extent, on his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 470/1078). In this essay, I catalogue all members of the Manda family who are mentioned in Arabic bio-bibliographical sources. I study in detail the theological views of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda and his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, as well as Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's contribution to the development of *ḥadīṯ* criticism.

Keywords

Ibn Manda, *ḥadīṯ* criticism, theology, historiography, Ḥanbalī, *madar*, *kalām*, God's attributes, speech, created, uncreated, Isfahan

Résumé

La famille Manda était une importante dynastie d'érudits à Ispahan. Du début du IIIᵉ siècle/*ca* 816 jusqu'à la conquête d'Ispahan par les Mongols en 632/1235-633/1236, ses membres étaient actifs dans les domaines de la transmission et de la critique du *ḥadīṯ*, de la théologie et de l'historiographie. Malgré leur importance pour la tradition

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savante ḥanbalite, les Āl Manda sont demeurés marginaux dans les études des islamisants occidentaux ces cinquante dernières années, alors que les savants musulmans se sont concentrés presque exclusivement sur le plus éminent représentant de la famille, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (m. 395/1005), et, dans une moindre mesure, sur son fils ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (m. 470/1078). Dans cet article, nous répertorions tous les membres de la famille Manda mentionnés dans les sources bio-bibliographiques arabes. Nous étudions en détail les points de vue théologiques de Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda et de son fils ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, ainsi que l'apport de Muḥammad b. Isḥāq au développement de la critique du ḥadīṯ.

Mots clefs

Ibn Manda, critique du ḥadīṯ, théologie, historiographie, Ḥanbalisme, *madar*, *kalām*, attributs de Dieu, discours, créé, incréé, Ispahan

1 Introduction

From the beginning of the third century/*ca* 816 until the Mongol conquest *ca* 632/1235-633/1236, the Manda family was positioned at the heart of intellectual endeavor in Isfahan. More than thirty men and women from this remarkable scholarly dynasty attained prominence in the fields of ḥadīṯ science, Ḥanbalī theology, and historiography. Western prosopographical research on the Manda family is confined to Franz Rosenthal's enlightening overview, published in 1968 in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*,[1] at which time works associated with several members of the family were known only in manuscript. Rosenthal raised questions concerning the apparent thematic overlap of some of these texts and the accuracy of their ascriptions. Over the next fifty years, most of these manuscripts have been edited and published, but, to the best of my knowledge, no Western scholar has taken up the task of examining the texts and addressing Rosenthal's questions.[2] Muslim

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1 Franz Rosenthal, "Ibn Manda," *EI*².

2 This is not to say that the Manda family was neglected by Western scholarship. Most notably, David Durand-Guédy studied the role that several members of the family played in the social and intellectual history of Isfahan: David Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers: A History of Iṣfahān in the Saljūq Period*, London-New York, Routledge ("Studies in the History of Iran and Turkey"), 2010, p. 19, 29, 36-7, 44, 135-7, 313, and *passim*. Jonathan Brown highlighted the contribution of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda to the formation of the ṣaḥīḥ canon: Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon*, Leiden-Boston, Brill ("Islamic History and Civilization", 69), 2007,

scholarship on Āl Manda centered on the best-known representative of the family, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda,[3] at the expense of its other scions, including Muḥammad's son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, a theologian of exceptional learning and perspicacity. Prosopographical studies of various quality and length are included in the prefaces to the printed editions of the works by several members of the Manda family.[4] A synoptic article on the family is found in *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif-i buzurg-i islāmī*.[5] Like the other publications on the topic, it pays no attention to the large number of Manda's less well-known descendants, who are mentioned, sometimes only by name, in a handful of biographical sources.

In this essay, I catalogue all members of the Manda family I could unearth in Arabic bio-bibliographical sources (see fig. 1). Some of them merited separate biographical entries, whereas others were mentioned only as transmitters in the *isnād*s of traditions or received fleeting remarks in the biographies of other scholars. Whenever works by these scholars are published, as is the case with Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (d. 395/1005), his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 470/1078), and his grandson Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 511/1118-512/1119), I analyze in some detail their theological views and approaches to *ḥadīṯ*-criticism. I also attempt to answer the questions about the ascriptions of some of these works raised by Rosenthal half a century ago.

Throughout the essay, I sometimes refer to the social and political context in which members of the Manda family acted. My purpose, however, is to analyze

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p. 147-148. Scott Lucas identified some of the members of the Ibn Manda dynasty and touched upon ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq b. Manda's theological dispute with Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī: Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal*, Leiden-Boston, Brill ("Islamic History and Civilization", 51), 2004, p. 97.

3   Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Māǧid, "Manhaǧ Ibn Manda fī uṣūl al-īmān wa-masāʾili-hi," MA thesis, Ǧāmiʿat al-imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-islāmiyya, 1422/2001, http://elibrary.mediu.edu.my/books/MAL02727.pdf; ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ al-ḥāfiẓ Abī ʿAbd Allāh b. Manda fī l-ḥadīṯ wa-ʿulūmihi*, Jeddah, Dār al-minhāǧ, 1431/2010, which is a doctoral thesis defended in 1427/2006. Both works are purely descriptive collections of the extant biographical information about Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda and his exegetical and *ḥadīṯ*-critical statements.

4   *E.g.* ʿAlī al-Fuqayhī, introduction to Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa-maʿrifat asmāʾ Allāh wa-ṣifāti-hi ʿalā l-ittifāq wa-l-tafarrud*, ed. ʿAlī al-Fuqayhī, Medina, 1409, I, p. 5-61; ʿĀmir al-Tamīmī, introduction to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ min kutub al-nās li-l-taḏkira wa-l-mustaṭraf min aḥwāl al-nās li-l-maʿrifa*, ed. ʿĀmir al-Tamīmī, Bahrein, Wizārat al-ʿadl wa-l-šuʾūn al-islāmiyya, n.d., p. 9-161; Ibrāhīm al-Hāšimī, introduction to Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda, *Ǧuzʾ fī-hi ḏikr Abī Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Hāšimī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-Rayyān, 1428/2007[2], p. 7-24.

5   Kāẓim Mūsavī Buǧnūrdī (ed.), *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif-i buzurg-i islāmī*, Teheran, Markaz-i Dāʾirat al-maʿārif-i buzurg-i islāmī, 1367/1988-1391/2012, IV, p. 697-701.

the textual legacy of the family's outstanding scions, with the aim of reconstructing the intellectual currents that underlay their scholarly activities and fostered theological encounters with Isfahani Ašʿarīs. Admittedly, theological debates might reference political agendas, since theological preferences went hand in hand with legal affiliation, which often had the dual function of cause and means of factional politics in medieval Iranian cities. But in the case of Āl Manda, who, unlike the Isfahani Ḥanafīs and Šāfiʿīs, were disinclined to curry the rulers' favor, political agenda is opaque and difficult to unveil. The student of theological debates reflected in the works of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda and his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, is thereby prevented from readily making out their political background, as has been done, for instance, by Durand-Guédy with respect to the social and political implications of the works of local historiography and biographical dictionaries devoted to Isfahani scholars.[6]

Because of the quantitative and substantive unevenness of the source material, the essay is organized chronologically (one might say, as *ṭabaqāt*) and is divided into four sections: (1) the early history of the Manda family, (2) its outstanding members, (3) its less-prominent members, and (4) the family's decline. I hope that the present study will stimulate a more thorough academic engagement (perhaps at the level of a doctoral dissertation) with this fascinating dynasty of Isfahani scholars.

2   The Early History of the Family

The family's eponym, Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd b. Sanda b. Buṭṭa b. al-Fērōzān b. Jahārbuḫt, known as Manda, reportedly died in the reign of the Abbasid caliph Muḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218/833-227/842). Yaḥyā b. Manda, whose death date is unknown,[7] had limited pursuits as a *ḥadīṯ* transmitter.[8] Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (b. *ca* 220/835; d. 301/914) was an expert in the traditions of Sufyān

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6   David Durand-Guédy, "The Political Agenda of an Iranian *Adīb* at the Time of the Great Saljuqs: Māfarrūḫī's *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān* Put into Context," *NOUR*, 1/1 (2008), p. 67-105.

7   In order to have met in person al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834), as asserted by Abū Nuʿaym, Yaḥyā must have been born towards the end of the second century/*ca* 815. Abū Nuʿaym also reports that Yaḥyā transmitted *ḥadīṯ* to Abū ʿAlī l-Ṣaḥḥāf (d. 334/945-946), which suggests that he probably survived into the sixties or the seventies of the third century/*ca* 873-893. Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, ed. Sayyid Kasrawī Ḥasan, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1410/1990, II, p. 339.

8   Apart from al-Ḥumaydī, he transmitted on the authority of ʿAmr b. Yaʿqūb b. al-Zubayr, who is known to have transmitted on the authority of his father unrecognized, hence repudiated, traditions (*manākīr*). Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, I, p. 458. His third informant was the ascetic, Abū Sufyān Ṣāliḥ b. Mihrān al-Šaybānī. *Ibid.*, II, p. 339.
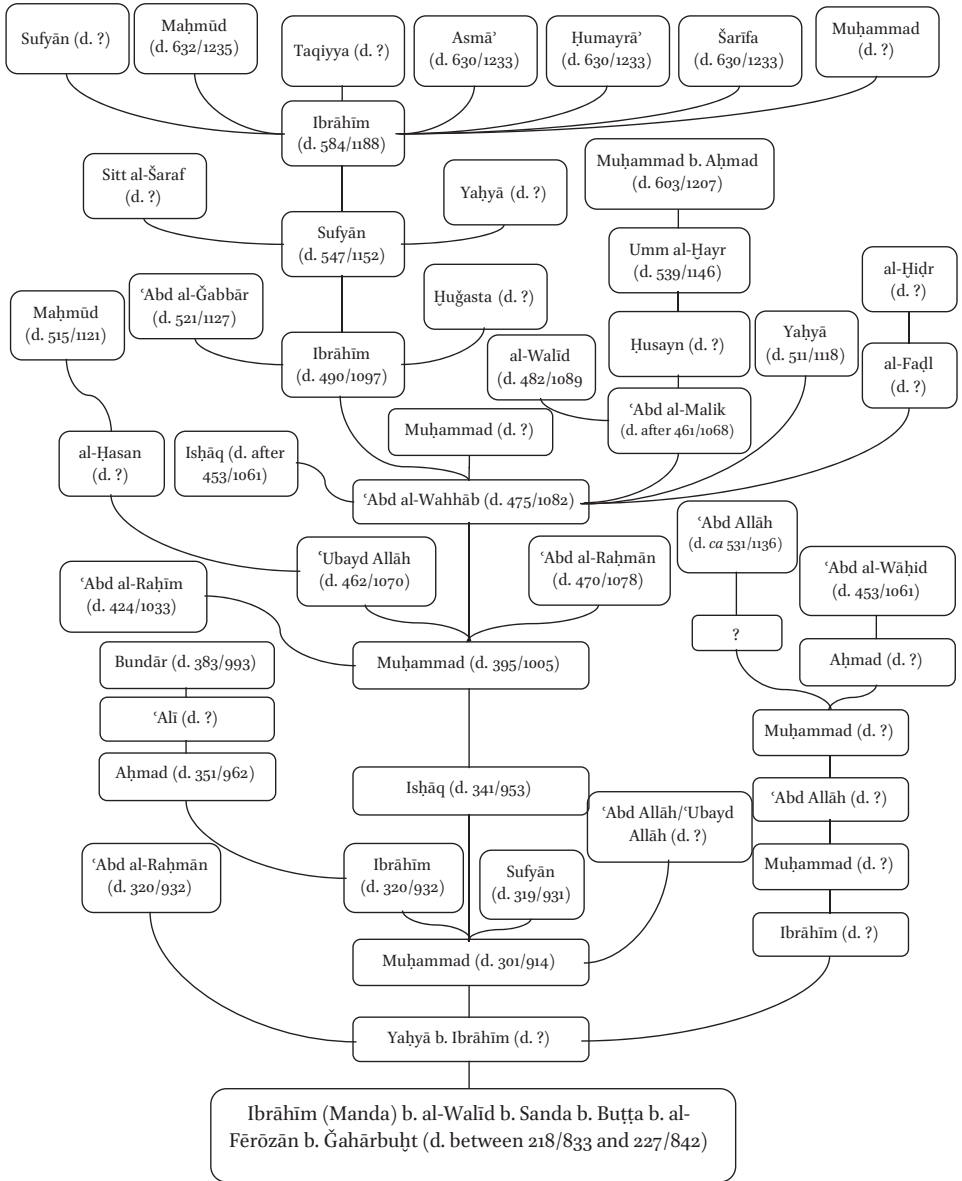
FIGURE 1   The Manda family of scholars in Isfahan

al-Ṯawrī (d. 161/778).[9] Although Muḥammad could not have met Sufyān in person, this report indicates his leaning towards the traditionist party. Whether it betrays Āl Manda's early association with Ibn Ḥanbal's partisans, perhaps under the judgeship of his son, Ṣāliḥ (d. *ca* 266/880), is impossible to say;[10] during the same period, Sufyān's traditions were transmitted by Isfahani semi-Ḥanafīs.[11] I was unable to find source confirmation of Durand-Guédy's assertion that Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā was a student of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855),[12] but, given that Muḥammad was born *ca* 220/835, he could have hardly studied with Aḥmad before the onset of his tribulations in 218/833 and his subsequent retirement from teaching. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā reportedly composed a *Taʾrīḫ Iṣfahān* (*History of Isfahan*),[13] which, according to Durand-Guédy, may have been organized as *ṭabaqāt* with a general introduction.[14]

Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 341/953) transmitted *ḥadīṯ* on the authority of the traditionist Aḥmad b. ʿAmr al-Bazzār (d. 291/903-904), the ascetic ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān (d. *ca* 290/902-903), and the Ẓāhirī jurisprudent Aḥmad b. ʿAmr b. Abī ʿĀṣim (d. 287/900), who succeeded Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad as the *qāḍī* of Isfahan.[15] Apparently, to Isḥāq b. Muḥammad *ḥadīṯ* transmission took precedence over theological agenda. The latter came to the fore in the œuvre of his son Muḥammad and his grandson ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad.

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9   Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, Hyderabad, Maǧlis Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-niẓāmiyya, 1952-1953, VIII, p. 125. About Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā's dates of birth and death, see al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Šuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1402/1982-1417/1996, XIV, p. 188-189.

10 The date of Ṣāliḥ's appointment is unknown, but I assume that it occurred after the end of the *miḥna* in 234/849. See also Nurit Tsafrir, "The Beginnings of the Ḥanafī School in Iṣfahān," *Islamic Law and Society*, 5/1 [1998], p. 17. At the time of Ṣāliḥ's appointment, Aḥmad's supporters in Isfahan are said to have been numerous. Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XII, p. 530.

11 Tsafrir, "The Beginnings," p. 6, 12-13.

12 Durand-Guédy, *Elites*, p. 36. According to Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, "Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā [...] transmitted from (*ʿan*) Aḥmad," but the generic preposition *ʿan* implies uncertainty about their having come together. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUṯaymīn, Mecca, Ǧāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1419/1999, II, p. 391.

13 Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1397/1977, IV, p. 289 (cited by Durand-Guédy, "Agenda," Appendix 1).

14 Durand-Guédy, "Agenda," Appendix 1.

15 Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, I, p. 266. About Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, see Tsafrir, "Beginnings," p. 17.

3   The Outstanding Representatives of the Manda Family

3.1   *Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Manda*

Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (310/922-395/1005) is remembered as the most
eminent representative of the family, and it is his name that inevitably comes
to mind whenever one encounters source references to the generic teknonym,
"Ibn Manda."[16] Muḥammad started his study of traditions at the age of eight.[17]
Between 330/941-942 and 375/985-986, he travelled widely and heard tradi-
tions from more than 1700 shaykhs,[18] carefully avoiding the company of any-
one he deemed a heretical innovator (*mubtadiʿ*).[19] He held a license (*iǧāza*)
to transmit on the authority of the renowned *ḥadīṯ* critic and founder of the
genre of *al-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* (impugning and accrediting of *ḥadīṯ* transmitters),
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), and a number of *ḥadīṯ*
collectors.[20] That he was one of the four transmitters of Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Kitāb
al-ʿIlal*[21] attests to his profound interest in *ḥadīṯ* criticism. Sometime before
his death, Muḥammad established a pious foundation (*ribāṭ*) in Mecca for
the accommodation of travelers.[22] Towards the end of his life, Muḥammad
suffered from dotage and senility (*iḫtalaṭa*), which led him to attribute state-
ments about dogma (*muʿtaqadāt*) to persons other than their actual sources.[23]
Muḥammad died at the age of eighty-four lunar years, an age, which, accor-
ding to al-Ḏahabī (d. 748/1348), was not too advanced.[24] Muḥammad was on
close terms with the famous Sufi shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī (d. 418/1027),
who even married Muḥammad's widow upon his death and had two daughters

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16   Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's renown was certainly responsible for the fact that Gautier H.A.
        Juynboll mistook him for his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in a later source citation. Gautier H.A.
        Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2007, p. 677.

17   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVII, p. 29.

18   *Ibid.*, XVII, p. 30; Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, Brill, 1967,
        I, p. 214. Al-Ḥusayn al-Ḫallāl's tradition that Muḥammad b. Isḥāq met thirty thousand
        shaykhs, divided into three groups, each numbering ten thousand is, of course, a legen-
        dary topos. Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVII, p. 35.

19   Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 300; al-Māǧid, *Manhaǧ*, p. 67.

20   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVII, p. 30.

21   Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-ʿIlal*, ed. Saʿd b ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥumayyid and Ḫalid b. ʿAbd
        al-Raḥmān al-Ǧuraysī, Riyadh, 1427/2006, I, p. 296-297.

22   Richard T. Mortel, "*Ribāṭs* in Mecca during the medieval period: a descriptive study based
        on literary sources," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 61/1 (1998), p. 31.

23   Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, II, p. 278, nᵒ 1711. This report should be taken with a grain
        of salt, owing to the bitter enmity between Abū Nuʿaym and Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (see
        below).

24   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVII, p. 30.

by her.[25] Muḥammad's floruit coincided with the office of the powerful Būyid vizier Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād (officiated 368/976-385/995), a staunch supporter of Muʿtazilī rationalism, who, nevertheless, maintained agreeable relations with the Isfahani Ḥanbalī population.[26]

In theology, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq composed several works, of which *Kitāb al-Īmān, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, and *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā l-ğahmiyya*, all polemical treatises, have been published. Muḥammad does not identify his opponents, whose teachings the reader must recognize from the counter-arguments presented. Muḥammad makes his theological points by accumulating textual evidence while avoiding rational explanation and personal opinion.[27] Apparently, he regarded fideist argumentation, unsullied by reasoning, as a bulwark against all kinds of rational objections. A point in case is his refutation of rationalist opponents, probably Muʿtazilīs and Ašʿarīs, who held that believers will not be able to see God in the Hereafter. Against them, Muḥammad adduces Qurʾānic verses and prophetic *ḥadīṯ* that mention God's bodily parts: leg (*riğl*), shank (*sāq*), hand (*yad*), forearm (*sāʿid, ḏirāʿ*), palm (*kaff*), fist (*qabḍa*), finger (*iṣbaʿ*), and face (*wağh*).[28] Another important piece of evidence, routinely deployed by advocates of the beatific vision, including Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, is the Prophet's statement that on the Judgment day the believers will gaze at God as harmlessly as they gaze at the moon on a cloudless night.[29]

Regarding the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God, Muḥammad argued that they should be accepted as described in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīṯ*, without asking how they relate to God's essence (*takyīf*) or likening them (*tašbīh*) to the ostensibly similar yet transient qualities of created beings.[30] In contrast to the Muʿtazilīs (whom he would dub Ğahmīs), he taught that the Qurʾān is uncreated both in its essence as God's speech (*kalām*) and in its liturgical recitation (*tilāwa*).[31] Muḥammad's assertion that the speech of God is consubstantial with God[32]

25   Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Abū Manṣūr al-Iṣfahānī," *EI*[3].

26   Hossein Kamaly, "Isfahan: Medieval Period," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

27   Also noted by al-Māğid, *Manhağ*, p. 30-37.

28   Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *al-Radd ʿalā l-ğahmiyya*, ed. ʿAlī l-Fuqayhī, Riyadh, Maktabat al-ġurabāʾ al-aṯariyya, 1414/1994[3], p. 35-46, 74-103; cf. *id.*, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, ed. ʿAlī al-Fuqayhī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1406/1985[2], II, p. 779 ff. About the exegesis of God's bodily parts, see Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1991-1997, III, p. 700-701; IV, p. 396-401 and passim.

29   Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 35-36.

30   *Id.*, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Muḥammad al-Wuhaybī and Mūsā al-Ġuṣn, Cairo-Riyadh, Dār al-hady al-nabawī-Dār al-faḍīla, 1428/2007, p. 439-443.

31   *Ibid.*, p. 441, 594-656.

32   *Ibid*, p. 601-604 (Refuge is sought in God's speech just as is sought in God Himself).

was apparently directed against the adherents of Abū Ḥanīfa's opinion that one may not swear an oath by the Qurʾān, because it is different from God.[33] Muḥammad excoriated Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) for asserting that the pronunciation of the Qurʾān during its *tilāwa* is created.[34]

Muḥammad rejected the teaching of Ǧahmī and Murǧiʾī theologians that faith (*īmān*) consists of the profession of belief, and that its degree remains constant and unaffected by human acts of obedience or disobedience to the divine ordinances. The Ḥanbalī dogma, advocated by Muḥammad, postulates that *īmān* comprises both the profession (*qawl*) of belief and deeds (*ʿamal*), and it increases and decreases with every good and bad deed.[35] Against the Muʿtazilī concept of divine justice (*ʿadl*), whereby God will inevitably punish the perpetrator of a grave sin, Muḥammad taught that the sinner might be spared from Hellfire by an act of repentance (*tawba*) and divine mercy.[36]

Muḥammad subscribed to a deterministic theodicy, according to which human destiny was predetermined at the moment of God's creation of Adam. Disobedience to God's orders is incidental to Adam's inherent forgetfulness (*nisyān*; hence, the appellative *insān* [human being]), which led him and his progeny to deny their erstwhile covenant (*mīṯāq, ʿahd*) with God.[37]

In *Kitāb al-Īmān*, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq makes his theological points in long section headings, like the following one: *Ḏikr mā yadullu ʿalā anna muwāǧahat al-muslim bi-l-qitāl aḫāhu kufr lā yabluǧu bi-hi l-širk wa-l-ḫurūǧ min al-islām* ("About that which indicates that a Muslim who faces his brother in combat commits [an act of] unbelief that does not rise to the level of associating [other deities with God] or renouncing Islam").[38] Under this heading, Muḥammad cites a single tradition: "If two Muslims face each other with their swords, both go to Hell." The heading makes it clear that Muḥammad was disinclined to interpret the tradition as denying the sinner the status of a Muslim. His reading presumably was directed against radical Ḫawāriǧ, as the Ṣufriyya and the Azāriqa, who relegated the perpetrator of a grave sin to the status of an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and polytheist (*mušrik*).

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33   Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, I, p. 192.

34   Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim, Riyadh, Ǧāmiʿat al-imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-islāmiyya, 1411/1991², I, p. 268. For a detailed discussion of the pronunciation dispute, see the section on ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda below.

35   Muḥammad b. Manda, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, I, p. 305-363.

36   *Ibid.*, II, p. 578-579; *id.*, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, p. 672.

37   *Id.*, *al-Radd*, p. 47-73. The motif about Adam's forgetfulness originates from Kor 20, 115.

38   *Id.*, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, II, p. 586, cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 305.

Kitāb al-Īmān and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* include occasional comments that are not consistent with Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's method of arguing exclusively on the basis of revelatory evidence. Such digressions leave the impression of later editorial insertions, perhaps marginal notes, as, for instance, expositions on the relationship between *īmān* (belief) and *islām*,[39] the Murǧi'ī, Ḫāriǧī, and Ḥanbalī understandings of *īmān*,[40] and the eternity of the divine attributes.[41]

Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā l-ǧahmiyya does not include the explanatory headings found in *Kitāb al-Īmān* and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. It is, in fact, a *ḥadīṯ*-based commentary (*tafsīr*) on selected Qur'ānic verses, including short authorial notes about the quality of the *isnād*s, variant readings, as well as grammatical and lexical explanations. In the *Kitāb al-Radd*, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq focuses on two theological issues: beatific vision[42] and divine predestination.[43] Strikingly, he does not discuss other contentious theological points, such as divine attributes (*ṣifāt*) and the ontological status of God's speech. Compared to *Kitāb al-Īmān* and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, the *Kitāb al-Radd* appears to be both thematically incomplete and exegetically unaccomplished. This suggests that the former two works may have been substantially reworked by Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's son, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, who was their main transmitter to posterity.

In *ḥadīṯ* criticism, Muḥammad b. Manda wrote the treatise *Risāla fī bayān faḍl al-aḫbār wa-šarḥ maḏāhib ahl al-aṯār wa-ḥaqīqat al-sunan wa-taṣḥīḥ al-riwāyāt*, wrongly called by its modern editor as *Šurūṭ al-a'imma* (*Conditions of the imams*).[44] The treatise follows the generational sequence (*ṭabaqāt*) of *ḥadīṯ* transmitters and critics. In its opening part, the author emphasizes the importance of the Qur'ān and the prophetic Sunna for the knowledge of law and ritual practices. He goes on to highlight the merits of the Companions and the Successors.[45] His collective accreditation of the first two generations of Muslims is consistent with the position of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/928) but not with that of Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), who accredited only

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39 *Ibid.*, I, p. 322-323.

40 *Ibid.*, I, p. 331-332.

41 *Id.*, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, p. 439-443. One must remain alert to the editors' regrettable practice of inserting their own comments in the original text, without delimiting the added passages. For such a supplement see, for instance, *id.*, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, p. 467-469.

42 *Id.*, *al-Radd*, p. 35-46, 72-103.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 47-73.

44 *Id.*, *Šurūṭ al-a'imma: risāla fī bayān faḍl al-aḫbār wa-šarḥ maḏāhib ahl al-aṯār wa-ḥaqīqat al-sunan wa-taṣḥīḥ al-riwāyāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faryawā'ī, Riyadh, Dār al-muslim, 1416/1995. The title *Conditions of the imams* is not mentioned in the manuscript with Ibn Manda's work, nor is it known to his biographers (for more on the issue, see al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ*, p. 411-413).

45 Muḥammad b. Manda, *Šurūṭ al-a'imma*, p. 25-28.

the Companions.[46] In the next part of the *Risāla*, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq records the classes of *ḥadīṯ* scholars (*ḥamalat al-ʿilm min al-sunan wa-l-āṯār*) from the third generation until his own time.

Muḥammad accredited traditions and their transmitters (*riǧāl*) using ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī's (d. 234/849) nomenclature of pivotal transmitters, with a remarkable turn. Instead of Ibn al-Madīnī's statement that "the *isnād* turns" (*yadūru l-isnād*)[47] upon six outstanding transmitters from the first half of the second/eighth century,[48] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq states, "the science of the *isnād*s turns" (*yadūru ʿilm al-asānīd*).[49] Thus, he transformed Ibn al-Madīnī's quantitative conception of pivots of *isnād* convergence into the qualitative notion of expert knowledge (*ʿilm*) of *ḥadīṯ* and its transmitters. By equating large-scale *ḥadīṯ* transmission with *ḥadīṯ*-critical acumen, Muḥammad paved the way for the addition of two groups of third-/ninth-century collectors-*cum*-critics to Ibn al-Madīnī's list. The first, smaller, group includes eight imams. The four most outstanding of these are al-Buḫārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/875), Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889), and al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915). The others, presumably less talented four, are al-Dārimī (d. 255/869), al-Tirmiḏī (d. 279/892), Ibn Ḫuzayma (d. 311/923), and Aḥmad al-Nabīl (d. 287/900).[50] The second, much larger, group of *ḥadīṯ* collectors and critics owes its existence to Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's assumption that the first group of eight imams excelled in *riǧāl* criticism and reported on the authority of other imams whose transmission is accepted even when isolated (*qubila nfirāduhum*) and may serve as a trump argument in legal disputes (*ǧuʿilū ḥuǧǧa ʿalā man ḫālafahum*). Based on this premise, Muḥammad

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46   Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite* Ḥadīth *Criticism:* The *Taqdima* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938), Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill ("Islamic History and Civilization", 38), 2001, p. 47, 82, 120-123; Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press ("Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization"), 1983, p. 194-195.

47   About the conception of *madār* in classical *ḥadīṯ* criticism and its relation to modern-day *ḥadīṯ*-critical terminology, see Gautier H.A. Juynboll, "(Re)appraisal of Some Technical terms in Ḥadīth Science," *Islamic Law and Society*, 8/3 (2001), p. 307-315, and Halit Ozkan's reply "The *Common Link* and Its relation to the *Madār*," *Islamic Law and Society*, 11/1 (2004), p. 42-77. In the more recent book Muḥammad Muǧīr al-Ḫaṭīb al-Ḥasanī, *Maʿrifat madār al-isnād wa-bayān makānatihi fī ʿilm ʿilal al-ḥadīṯ*, Riyadh, Dār al-maymān, 2007, the author, Muḥammad Muǧīr al-Ḫaṭīb al-Ḥasanī, is unaware of Juynboll's groundbreaking research.

48   Ibn al-Madīnī, *Kitāb al-ʿIlal*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā l-Aʿẓamī, Beirut, al-maktab al-islāmī, 1980, p. 36-37.

49   Muḥammad b. Manda, *Šurūṭ al-aʾimma*, p. 33, 40.

50   *Ibid.*, p. 42-43. According to ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, his father told him that al-Buḫārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Nasāʾī had been the most reliable compilers of *ṣaḥīḥ* works. Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XIV, p. 135.

augmented Ibn al-Madīnī's succinct list with 224[51] second-/eighth- and early-third-/ninth-century master *ḥadīṯ* transmitters and critics, whose names he extracted from the *ḥadīṯ* collections of the eight outstanding imams.[52]

As criteria of transmitter appraisal worked out and applied by Muslim and al-Buḫārī, Muḥammad mentions the following disqualifying characteristics: "[disparaging] statements about someone's traditions" (*kalām fī ḥadīṯihi*), "extreme sectarianism" (*ġulūww fī maḏhabihi*), "excessive errors" (*kaṯrat al-wahm*), "bad memory" (*sūʾ al-ḥifẓ*), disregard of subtle defects (*ʿilal*) in transmission, being "unknown" (*maǧhūl*) or "suspect" (*muttaham*), and "notoriety for lying" (*šuhra bi-l-kaḏib*).[53] Regarding al-Nasāʾī, Muḥammad states that he cited everyone who is not abandoned according to consensus. Abū Dāwūd adduced even weak *isnād*s, lest he rely on discretionary opinion (*raʾy*).[54] As noted by Jonathan Brown, Muḥammad's classification of master *ḥadīṯ* transmitters was an important step towards the formation of the Sunni six-book canon.[55]

Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's biographical works, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba* (*Knowledge of the Companions*; preserved only in part) and *Fatḥ al-bāb fī l-kunā wa-l-alqāb* (a collection with the teknonyms of transmitters), exhibit the northeastern tendency towards studying the *isnād*s and compiling alphabetical records of names, albeit without any biographical details.[56] Based on an analysis of one hundred entries in each work,[57] I have established that sixty-eight percent of the entries in *Maʿrifa* include traditions from which Ibn Manda extracted the names of Companions of the Prophet. In *Fatḥ al-bāb*, likewise, lines of transmission serve as an important source for extracting names and determining

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51 This number includes several of Ibn al-Madīnī's names (*e.g.* Mālik b. Anas) and a few repetitions (*e.g.* Abū Bakr and ʿUṯmān b. Abī Šayba). Probably on this account, al-Muqbil reduced his count to "approximately two hundred imams." Al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ*, p. 264.

52 Muḥammad b. Manda, *Šurūṭ al-aʾimma*, p. 44-67. Later on, al-Siǧzī (d. 444/1052) regarded some of these men as "the pivots of sharia" (*ʿalay-him madār al-šarīʿa*) and linchpins of Sunni theological concepts. Abū Naṣr al-Siǧzī, *Risālat al-Siǧzī ilā ahl Zabīd fī l-radd ʿalā man ankara al-ḥarf wa-l-ṣawt*, ed. Muḥammad Bā ʿAbd Allāh, Riyadh, Dār al-Rāya, 1414/1994, p. 186.

53 Muḥammad b. Manda, *Šurūṭ al-aʾimma*, p. 71, 74.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 72-73.

55 See note 2 above.

56 About the northeastern tendency in the science of transmitters, see Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and early Hadith Criticism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 121/1 (2001), p. 16-19 and passim.

57 Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿĀmir Ḥasan Ṣabrī, United Arab Emirates, Maṭbūʿāt Ǧāmiʿat al-Imārāt al-ʿArabiyya al-Muttaḥida, 1426/2005, p. 174-233, 490-562, nᵒˢ 1-50, 300-350; *id.*, *Fatḥ al-bāb fī l-kunā wa-l-alqāb*, ed. Abū Qutayba al-Fāryābī, Riyadh, Maktabat al-Kawṯar, 1417/1996, p. 90-98, 218-223, nᵒˢ 550-600, 1800-1850.

scholarly networks (who transmits on whose authority).[58] Dates of death are mentioned for eight percent of the names in *Maʿrifa* and two percent of the names in *Fatḥ al-bāb*. Networks of transmission are included in thirty-one and ninety-two percent of the entries in each work respectively, and locations of activity in twenty-four and nineteen percent respectively.

Another biographical work composed by Muḥammad b. Isḥāq is *Asāmī mašāyīḫ al-Buḫārī*, an alphabetical list with the names of al-Buḫārī's informants. Unlike the *Maʿrifa* and the *Fatḥ al-bāb*, it has a strong interest in dates of death and locations of activity (thirty-two and forty-three percent of the entries) and pays significantly less attention to networks of transmission (fourteen percent).[59] None of the three works manifests an interest in biographical anecdotes and personal evaluations, as do the Iraqi *riǧāl* collections.

One of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's published works is a *Musnad* with fifty homiletic traditions associated with Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 163/779).[60] The collection's title is a misnomer: the structure of the work is not consistent with that of the second-/eighth- and third-/ninth-century representatives of the *Musnad* genre. Whereas those *Musnad*s are organized according to the names of Companion transmitters in the oldest parts of the *isnād*s, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's collection is based on Ibn Adham's transmissions from authorities belonging to the third generation of Muslims. Consequently, the work is better seen as Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's thematic selection (*ǧuzʾ*) of Ibn Adham's traditions.[61] Given Muḥammad's interest in the concept of pivotal transmitters, one may think that he regarded Ibn Adham as the pivot (*madār*), hence, the earliest ascertainable collector, of second-/eighth-century homiletic traditions.

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58   *E.g.*, p. 91, nᵒˢ 552, 553, 556; p. 92, nᵒ 560; p. 94, nᵒ 571; p. 95, nᵒ 580; p. 222-223, nᵒ 1844.

59   Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *Asāmī Mašāyīḫ al-imām al-Buḫārī*, ed. Abū Qutayba al-Fāryābī, Riyadh, Maktabat al-Kawṯar, 1412/1991, p. 36-49, 67-73, nᵒˢ 50-100, 200-250. About the significance of defining the networks of transmission as against providing the death-dates of transmitters, see Dickinson, *The Development*, p. 115-118.

60   Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *Musnad Ibrāhīm b. Adham al-zāhid*, ed. Maǧdī l-Sayyid Ibrāhīm, Maktabat al-Qurʾān, 1988.

61   Al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166) describes the work as "Abū ʿAbd Allāh b. Manda's thematic selection 'from Ibrāhīm b. Adham's traditions'": al-Samʿānī, *al-Muntaḫab min Muʿǧam al-šuyūḫ*, ed. Muwaffaq b. ʿAbd al-Qādir, Riyadh, Dār ʿālam al-kutub, 1417/1996, III, p. 1347. Ibn Ḥaǧar (d. 852/1449) refers to the same work as *Musnad Ibrāhīm b. Adham by Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Manda*: Ibn Ḥaǧar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Maǧmaʿ al-muʾassas li-l-muʿǧam al-mufahras*, ed. Yusuf al-Marʿašlī, Beirut, Dār al-maʿrifa, 1413/1992-1415/1994, II, p. 66, noted by al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ*, p. 85, note 3. Sezgin identifies the manuscript, upon which the contemporary edition is based, as *Ǧuzʾ fīhi musnad aḥādīṯ Ibrāhīm b. Adham az-Zāhid*: Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, p. 215.

Despite his interest in *ḥadīṯ* evaluation and the science of *riǧāl*, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq was criticized by al-Ḏahabī for "tacitly transmitting forged traditions (*mawḍūʿāt*)."[62] This blanket statement is unusual, given the great attention Muḥammad payed to the *ḥadīṯ*-critical methods of Muslim, al-Buḫārī, and other third-/ninth-century scholars. It would seem that al-Ḏahabī had in mind Muḥammad's theological works, in which he adduces both reliable and unreliable traditions.

Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, is said to have composed *al-Radd ʿalā al-lafẓiyya, al-Ṣifāt, Amālī, al-Sunna, al-Nāsiḫ wa-l-mansūḫ, Taʾrīḫ Iṣfahān*,[63] and many other works that are no longer extant.[64]

3.2 *Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq*

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (b. 381/991-992 or 383/993-994, d. 470/1078) began his studies at the age of ten. He travelled to Ḫurāsān, Iraq, and the Hijaz, and visited Baghdad in 406/1015-1016.[65] He met numerous shaykhs, but reported only on the authority of those from whom he held a license (*iǧāza*).[66] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was an influential, albeit controversial, theologian who, towards the end of his life, had a group (*ṭāʾifa*) of followers known as ʿAbd Raḥmāniyya.[67] We do not know if this group was involved in rioting against theological adversaries and political opponents as it happened in Baghdad more than a century earlier under the slogan of "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong" under

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62 Al-Ḏahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-riǧāl*, ed. ʿAlī Muʿawwaḍ and ʿĀdil ʿAbd al-Mawǧūd, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1416/1995, I, p. 251, noted by Jonathan Brown, "Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of *Ḥadīth*s in Early Sunnism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 129/2 (2009), p. 282.

63 This work may have survived until the Mongol conquest of Isfahan. Jürgen Paul, "The Histories of Herat," *Iranian Studies*, 33/1-2 (2000), p. 94, note 8.

64 About Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's works, see Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, p. 215. Al-Muqbil has compiled a list with the names of forty-three works associated with Ibn Manda, but the authorship of many of them is impossible to verify. Al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ*, p. 85-94.

65 Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 350; *id.*, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Sallām Tadmurī, Beirut, Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1410/1990-1421/2000, XXXI, p. 328; Ibn Raǧab, *al-Ḏayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al-ʿUṯaymīn, Riyadh, Maktabat al-ʿUbaykān, 1425/2005, I, p. 54; al-Tamīmī, introduction to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, p. 26-36.

66 Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 350-351; *id.*, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXI, p. 329.

67 Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Carl Johan Tornberg, Leiden, Brill, 1864-1876, X, p. 74. According to al-Ḏahabī, "he had companions and followers who followed in his footsteps." Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXI, p. 328.

al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941).[68] That such rioting was at least possible is suggested by Yaḥyā b. Manda's statement that his uncle, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, was a sword against the heretics and an ascetic who unremittingly commanded the right and forbade the wrong.[69] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's controversial stature, to which the biographical sources bear lucid witness, suggests that his theological and legal positions, and perhaps actions to enforce them, were detested by his contemporaries. Members of the Manda family as part of the Isfahani elite would have taken particular issue with an involvement in mob politics, which could bring about more theological and political harm than benefit.[70] Although we do not possess information about ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's relationship with the Seljuq ruling elite, towards the end of his life, his militant anti-Ašʿarī polemic, which more later, may have been directed against the policy of the famous Seljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), who was markedly sympathetic towards Ašʿarīs.[71]

In his surviving treatise, *al-Radd ʿalā man yaqūlu "Alif-lām-mīm ḥarf"* (*Rebuttal of those who state* "alif lām mīm *is a word*"),[72] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān departs from his father's habit to present arguments without identifying the opponents' teachings. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān outlines the tenets he rebuts, albeit in a terse and allusive manner whereby the identity of his opponent, habitually chastised as a "[heretical] innovator" (*mubtadiʿ*), is never specifically mentioned.

From ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's terse statements, we learn that he engaged a party who considered the Qurʾānic sigla (*al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿa*)—in this case, the letters *alif lām mīm* (الم) at the beginning of *sūrat al-Baqara*—as forming a single word (*ḥarf*, pl. *ḥurūf*).[73] This party is said to have distinguished between scripture (*kitāb*) and Qurʾān, as well as between ritual recitation (*tilāwa*), which they regarded as "an action of the tongue," and the object of recitation (*matlū*), which "is not a movement of the tongue and does not include letters."[74] In their view, "the Qurʾān is the substance of each verse or word (*al-Qurʾān*

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68   Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law: 9th-10th Centuries CE*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill ("Studies in Islamic Law and Society", 4), 1997, p. 150-155.

69   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 352.

70   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān himself may have disowned his ardent supporters: Durand-Guédy, *Elites*, p. 141-142, note 47. For more on the political passivity of the Isfahani Ḥanbalīs, see *ibid.*, p. 139-142.

71   *Id.*, *Elites*, p. 138.

72   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, *al-Radd ʿalā man yaqūlu "Alif lām mīm ḥarf,"* ed. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ǧudayʿ, Riyadh, Dār al-ʿāṣima, 1409/[1989?].

73   *Ibid.*, p. 42, 62 and *passim*.

74   *Ibid.*, p. 46, 47, 48, 51, 54, esp. p. 75-76. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's opponents also "consider as [resulting from] their own action the dotted letters and the grammatical composition [of scripture]." *Ibid.*, p. 57.

ʿinda ḥaqīqa āya aw kalima), whereas *alif, lām*, and *mīm* [as separate letters] do not constitute Qurʾān."[75] From this description, one infers that while arguing that God's speech is not composed of letters and sounds, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's theological adversaries regarded it as comprising essential units of meaning. These units, which they designated *ḥurūf*, are inarticulate[76] and inscrutable.[77] They are the opposite of the created verses (*āyāt maḫlūqa, ḥurūf maḫlūqa*) of the recited scripture (*kitāb*), which consists of conventional words (*kalimāt mawḍūʿa*)[78] and is only a created metaphor of the uncreated *qurʾān*.[79]

To fill some of the semantic lacunae in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's *Radd*, I turn to the epistle *al-Radd ʿalā man ankara l-ḥarf wa-l-ṣawt* (*Rebuttal of those who deny the letter and the sound*)[80] by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's contemporary, Abū Naṣr ʿUbayd Allāh b. Saʿīd al-Siǧzī (d. 444/1052).[81] Unlike ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, al-Siǧzī points unequivocally to the identity of his adversaries, in this instance, Kullābīs[82] and Ašʿarīs. They taught that "the Qurʾān is uncreated and whoever asserts its createdness is an infidel," but, at the same time, they held that "God does not speak in Arabic or any other language, and His speech is not composed, arranged, or sequential, and it does not consist of letters and sounds."[83] In this manner, they separated God's eternal indivisible speech (which they called *qurʾān*

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75   *Ibid.*, p. 50; also *ibid.*, p. 65.

76   *Wa-yunkiru an yakūna l-ḥarf maqrūʾ* ("And [the innovator] denies that the *ḥarf* is possible to recite"). *Ibid.*, p. 62.

77   *Wa-yunkiru an [y]akūna [...] l-ḥarf maʿrūf* ("And [the innovator] denies that the *ḥarf* is possible to know"). *Ibid.*, p. 65.

78   *Ibid.*, p. 66, 75.

79   *Ibid.*, p. 76.

80   The work is also known as al-Siǧzī's "Epistle to the people of Zabīd" (see note 44 above). Zabīd is a city in western Yemen, founded in the reign of ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn (r. 198/813-218/833). Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1397/1977, III, p. 131-132.

81   In addition to being contemporaries, both ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda and al-Siǧzī travelled in pursuit of knowledge to Ḫurāsān, Iraq, and the Hijaz (al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVII, p. 654-655; XVIII, p. 350-351), which indicates that, even if they did not meet in person, the two men were educated in the same scholarly milieu.

82   The name of the sect derives from its eponymous founder, the Basran scholar Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Kullāb al-Tamīmī (d. 241/855). For details about Ibn Kullāb and his teaching, see al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ḫtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Helmutt Ritter, Beirut, n.d. (reprint of the edition of Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1963), p. 584-585; Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ*, p. 260-271; Josef Van Ess, "Ibn Kullāb et la *Miḥna*," trad. de l'allemand par Claude Gilliot, *Arabica*, 37/2 (1990), p. 189 ff. (the article was originally published as "Ibn Kullāb und die Miḥna," *Oriens*, 18-19 [1965-1966], p. 92-142); *id.*, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, IV, p. 180-194; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Cambridge, Cambridge-London, Harvard University Press ("Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza", 4), 1976, p. 248-251.

83   Al-Siǧzī, *Risālat al-Siǧzī*, p. 106-107.

and *maqrū’*) from its recitation (*qirā’a*), which consists of created letters and sounds.[84] The dichotomy *qirā’a*/*maqrū’*, which is characteristic of Ibn Kullāb's teaching,[85] immediately brings to mind the adversaries of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, said to have deployed the synonymous dichotomy *tilāwa*/*matlū*.

Al-Siǧzī's epistle suggests important conclusions about ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda's opponents. Whereas al-Siǧzī attacks a group whose members "denied the letter and the sound" (*ankara l-ḥarf wa-l-ṣawt*),[86] Ibn Manda engages opponents who claim that *alif lām mīm* constitute a single word (*ḥarf*). The switch from negative to positive mode of expression and the shift in the understanding of *ḥarf* from "letter" to "word" indicate a significant development in the polemical inventory of the opponents. Al-Siǧzī faced rationalist adversaries who rejected the idea that God's speech is an aggregate of letters and sounds; by contrast, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's opponents, who likely represented the same theological current, conceded that God's speech, albeit inarticulate, comprises units of meaning called *ḥurūf*. In this manner, arguably, they countered criticism of their teaching on the part of the partisans of the Sunna and the Ḥanbalīs, as follows.

In his *Radd*, al-Siǧzī adduces linguistic, theological, and legal arguments to prove that God's uncreated speech and the recited Qur’ān are identical.[87] Against the Ašʿarī statement that God's speech proper is inarticulate *qur’ān*, which is not expressed in any specific language, al-Siǧzī maintains that "Qur’ān" is "the specific name of God's Arabic scripture."[88] If Qur’ān stood for God's speech in general, he argues, it would have been identical to the scriptures of Christians and Jews; hence, "the believer in the Tora" (*mu’min bi-l-tawrāt*) would be "a believer in the Qur’ān" (*mu’min bi-l-qur’ān*) and therefore exempted from paying the poll tax (*ǧizya*).[89] Moreover, if there is an inarticulate Qur’ān distinct from its articulate counterpart, the laws of the *šarīʿa* would be abolished, for, in this case, no one would know the content of the Qur’ān proper, which, according to the Ašʿarīs, is represented only metaphorically in

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84　*Ibid.*, p. 109-110; 117-118.

85　Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, IV, p. 182-184.

86　That al-Siǧzī does not take *ḥarf* to denote "word" is clear from his statement that according to Ibn Kullāb and his ilk, "each *ḥarf* has its specific place of articulation." Al-Siǧzī, *Risālat al-Siǧzī*, p. 84. From this description, *ḥarf* appears to carry the dual signification of a letter (*ḥarf*) and its phonetic content (*ṣawt*). The understanding of *ḥarf* as "letter" may be inferred from al-Siǧzī's statement that something may be read (*maqrū’*) only when it consists of *ḥurūf* (that is, letters) and *aṣwāt* (that is, sounds). *Ibid.*, p. 110.

87　*Ibid.*, p. 105-110.

88　*Ibid.*, p. 107.

89　*Ibid.*, p. 109.

the articulate scripture.[90] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda uses a similar argument when he tells his adversary that "the Qurʾān has become two *qurʾān*s: a metaphoric and a proper one;"[91] al-Siǧzī's work allows us to identify that adversary as an Ašʿarī theologian.

Al-Siǧzī's legal and epistemological counterarguments sound compelling, and his rationalist opponents seem to have taken them seriously. While continuing to deny the existence of sounds (*aṣwāt*) in God's speech, they modified their terminology so as to establish a formal link between that speech and its articulate representation in the recited scripture. This was achieved by interpreting the word *ḥarf* as signifying not "letter" but a "word" in the recited scripture. This "word" is mirrored by a *ḥarf* in the uncreated Qurʾān.[92] Although the ontological relationship between the two types of *ḥarf* poses a mystery, the unity of expression makes it harder to argue that the Ašʿarīs presume an ineffable speech of God. Their modified argument elicited a corresponding Ḥanbalī response articulated in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda's *al-Radd ʿalā man yaqūlu "alif lām mīm ḥarf"*.

As a counter-argument ʿAbd al-Raḥmān cites a tradition in which the Prophet states, "Whoever recites a *ḥarf* from God's scripture, may He be exalted, God writes down for him ten benefactions. I do not say, '*alif lām mīm* is a [single] word (*ḥarf*), but *alif* and *lām*, and *mīm* [make up] thirty benefactions.'"[93] Insofar as some variants of the tradition include the locution "God's scripture", (*kitāb Allāh*) while others have the word "Qurʾān" in its place, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān concludes that the two are synonymous.[94] Accordingly, if the recited scripture consists of individual letters, the same must apply to God's speech (*qurʾān*), a conclusion that subverts his opponents' claim that the two are different and that God's eternal speech has no letters.[95] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's argumentation

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90   *Ibid.*, p. 110; cf. *ibid.*, p. 155-157. A remarkable concomitant of the teaching that the articulated Qurʾān is created is that, in this case, it may be revealed and recited in any language. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

91   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 76.

92   About the polysemy of the term *ḥarf*, see Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, p. 284; IV, p. 617; Cornelius H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qurʾānic Exegesis in Early Islam*, Leiden-New York-Köln, Brill ("Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics", 19), 1993, p. 103-104. Al-Siǧzī and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda deploy—confusingly—the almost entire semantic gamut of *ḥarf*, aptly described by Van Ess' as signifying "das jeweils kleinste abtrennbare Redeelement, ohne Ansehen seiner Realisation: den Laut ebenso wie den Buchstaben, aber auch die Partikel und sogar das Wort." Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, p. 284.

93   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 41.

94   *Ibid.*, p. 62-63; 70-71, 76, and *passim*.

95   *Ibid.*, p. 71-72.

has the added benefit of avoiding the pitfalls of reasoning, albeit at the price of acquiescing in traditions that do not inspire much *ḥadīṯ*-critical confidence.[96]

The terminology that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān uses to describe his opponents' teaching raises two important questions:

First, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān occasionally states that the heretical innovators differentiate between God's eternal speech (*qurʾān*) and its articulate form (*kitāb*), or between the *matlū* and its *tilāwa*.[97] At other times, he distinguishes between "this Qurʾān" and "a *qurʾān* that is not a movement of the tongue,"[98] or between "this Qurʾān" and "a Qurʾān in which there is no *alif, lām*, and *mīm*."[99] Moreover, in several places he speaks only about the Qurʾān, leaving it, perhaps intentionally, to his audience to make the subtle distinction.[100] The ambiguous use of the word "Qurʾān" instead of the conceptually transparent pair "recited scripture"/"inarticulate *qurʾān*" may reflect a primitive conceptual layer that dates back to a period when the respective polemical terminology had yet to crystallize and mature. Alternatively, one may think that just as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's adversaries used the polysemy of the word *ḥarf* as a polemical device, so too they seized upon two different concepts that may be attached to the word "qurʾān."[101] This ambiguity may have helped them to undermine al-Siǧzī's line of reasoning, according to which, if one uses the word "qurʾān" to designate God's inarticulate speech, it would become indistinct from the Torah and the Gospels. By positing the existence of an articulate Qurʾān, the Ašʿarīs would have effectively dealt with this counterargument. A hint in this direction is found in the two seemingly contradictory opinions of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's opponent: (1) he claims, "the Qurʾān consists of [individual] verses or words," whereas "*alif, lām*, and *mīm* [as separate letters] do not constitute Qurʾān,"[102] and (2) he "considers the letters, the words, the verses, and the *sūra*s as the Qurʾān."[103] Thus, he uses the word "qurʾān" to designate both God's speech and

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96   About these issues, see the study of the editor of Ibn Manda's *al-Radd*, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ǧudayʿ. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 83-103.

97   *Ibid.*, p. 42-43, 45-48, 62-63, 71, 75-76.

98   *Ibid.*, p. 51, 54.

99   *Ibid.*, p. 77.

100   *E.g., wa-aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ lā yarawna bi-l-ḥarf al-qurʾān* ("And the *ḥadīṯ* folk do not consider that *ḥarf* stands for Qurʾān"): ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 57; *wa-l-mubtadiʿ yarā ḥarf al-qurʾān āya maḥlūqa aw kalima mawdūʿa* ("And the heretical innovator considers the letters [*ḥarf*] of the [recited] Qurʾān as created verses and conventional words"). *Ibid.*, p. 66.

101   About the polemical employment of the polysemy of the word *qurʾān*, see Van Ess, "Ibn Kullāb," p. 188-190.

102   Abd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 50.

103   *Ibid.*, p. 55.

the recited scripture, which, of course, differs from the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

Second, according to al-Ašʿarī's description of Ibn Kullāb's teaching, the latter used the phrase *kalām Allāh* to refer to God's eternal speech and the word *qurʾān* to designate its rendering into created and finite letters and sounds.[104] By contrast, the opponents of Ibn Manda did not speak about *kalām Allāh* but preferred the dichotomy *qurʾān/kitāb* instead. Nor did they resort to the term *rasm* (trace), used by Ibn Kullāb to designate the written and recited form of the Qurʾān,[105] or the term *ʿibāra* (manifest expression), used by him to refer to the modalities of expression of God's speech (command, prohibition, statement, etc.).[106] They also occasionally deployed the word *qurʾān* in an equivocal manner. And, most significantly, they appear to have considered the uncreated Qurʾān as not including letters and sounds but, nevertheless, comprising individual units of meaning, which they called *ḥurūf*. By contrast, Ibn Kullāb regarded God's speech as constituting a "single meaning" (*maʿnā wāḥid*), an expression which, although not entirely clear, seems incompatible with the plurality of units of meaning in God's speech postulated by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's rationalist adversaries. Three explanations may be suggested for these terminological inconsistencies. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān may have encountered opponents who did not adhere punctiliously to Ibn Kullāb's tenets and formulations, or he may have deliberately eschewed the terminology of the speculative theologians.[107] It is also possible that different conceptual and polemical layers were inserted into Ibn Manda's work over the course of its transmission.

Although some of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda's contemporary scholars and later biographers praise his knowledge, modesty, and unwavering orthodoxy, others are critical of him. Abū Ismāʿīl al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1088-1089) asserted, "for Islam, his harm exceeded his benefit," while al-Ḏahabī recorded his "overzealous traditionalism" (*tasannun mufriṭ*).[108] From Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) *Šarḥ ḥadīṯ al-nuzūl* (treating the Prophet's famous saying that, each night, God descends to the lowest heaven), we learn, ironically, that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was

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104 Al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, p. 584. *Pace* Van Ess, "[d]as Wort *qurʾān* scheint Ibn Kullāb in diesem Zusammenhang vermieden zu haben." Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, IV, p. 182.

105 Al-Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, p. 584.

106 Van Ess, "Ibn Kullāb," p. 193.

107 Ibn Taymiyya reportedly frowned upon the use of such terminology by some less stringent Ḥanbalīs. Van Ess, "Ibn Kullāb," p. 193.

108 Al-Ḏahabī, *al-ʿIbar fī ḫabar man ġabar*, ed. Muḥammad Saʿīd Zaġlūl, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1405/1985, II, p. 328.

disparaged for his unremitting defense of Ḥanbalī orthodoxy.[109] A case in point is his treatise *al-Radd ʿalā man zaʿama anna Llāh fī kull makān wa ʿalā man zaʿama anna Llāh laysa la-hu makān wa-ʿalā man taʾawwala l-nuzūl ʿalā ġayr nuzūl* (*A rebuttal of those who contend that God abides everywhere, those who contend that God abides nowhere, and those who interpret His descent as [being] no descent*). ʿAbd al-Raḥmān used a *mélange* of textual and rational arguments to disprove the established Ḥanbalī teaching that when God descends to the lowest heaven, His Throne is not vacated:

Ibn Ḥanbal's tradition on the authority of the Prophet that God descends to the lowest heaven without vacating His throne is unrecognised (*munkar*), hence objectionable. It also accords with the opinions of those heretics who claim that no place is void of God and those who claim that God abides in no place.[110]

The statement of the Basran authority Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795), "God is on His throne, but He draws nigh unto His creation as He wills," implies that He leaves His place. To interpret it otherwise would be to ascribe to Ḥammād a statement that contradicts the Book and the Sunna and serves the interest of speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*).[111]

The same follows from Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ's (d. 187/803) statement that whenever a Ǧahmī disputant says, "I do not believe in a Lord who vacates His place," the advocate of orthodoxy should answer, "I believe in a Lord who does what He wills."[112] In this context, "does what He wills" can only mean that God does indeed vacate His place. Any other interpretation would support the heretics (*zanādiqa*).

The Ḫurāsānī jurist Isḥāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853) explained to ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṭāhir, the governor of Ḫurāsān between 214/829-830 and 230/844, the meaning of the Prophet's statement, "Each night God descends to the lowest heaven, and He says: 'Whoever bids to Me, I shall answer; whoever asks Me, I shall give; whoever implores My forgiveness, I shall forgive'." In one variant of the report, Ibn Rāhwayh suggested that the ruler enquires from his Ǧahmī antagonists whether God is capable of descending so that the Throne becomes vacant. If they answer in the negative, they would assert that He is powerless (*ʿāǧiz*), like human beings. If they answer that God is capable of descending, but the Throne is not vacated, they are asserting that "He descends to the

109   Ibn Taymiyya, *Šarḥ ḥadīṯ al-nuzūl*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḫamīs, Riyadh, Dar al-ʿāṣima, 1414/1993, p. 161-201.
110   *Ibid.*, p. 162-174.
111   *Ibid.*, p. 179-180.
112   *Ibid.*, p. 180.

lowest heaven as He wills, and no place becomes void of Him."[113] Next, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān cites another tradition, in which Ibn Rāhwayh tells ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṭāhir, "These [viz. the descent] traditions came down to us as did the [obligatory] norms about the licit and illicit. The scholars transmitted them and they cannot be rejected. They are as they came down to us—without 'How?'".[114] Based on the two reports, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān concludes, "[the statement] 'and no place becomes void of Him' is [tantamount to asking] 'How?'—which subverts the [fact of God's] descent."[115] Hence, this statement must be an illegitimate addition (*ziyāda*) to Ibn Rāhwayh's original *matn*. Remarkably, apart from his use of reasoning, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān undertook a rare exercise in *matn* criticism. Neither technique would have been liked by his fellow Ḥanbalīs.

The points raised by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda bear witness to a polemical *Sitz im Leben*. The rationalist party argued that the Ḥanbalī theologians' literalist understanding of God's descent to the lowest heaven is logically inconsistent with their assertion that God does not vacate His Throne. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān tended to agree. From a polemicist's standpoint, the Ḥanbalī teaching was a concession to the Ašʿarī tenet that God does not move from one place to another because His essence (*ḏāt*) is immutable, and, thus, amounted to an illegitimate figurative interpretation of the divine attributes of action (*ṣifāt al-fiʿl*). To defend Ḥanbalī literalism, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān asserted that God, indeed, vacates His Throne as He descends to the lowest heaven. Ironically, this literalist exegesis brought ʿAbd al-Raḥmān into conflict with Ḥanbalī orthodoxy. Its followers resented his use of unreliable *ḥadīṯ* and illegitimate *matn* criticism. In their view, his liberal application of reasoning contradicted the Ḥanbalī principle "without [asking] 'How?'" (*bi-lā kayfa*) and, when applied to the issue of God's descent to the lowest heaven, transformed into heretical innovation (*bidʿa*),[116] most likely anthropomorphism.[117]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's *al-Radd ʿalā l-ǧahmiyya* is not extant. From a later description, we learn that it debunked hostile reports about Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's

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113   *Ibid.*, p. 186.

114   *Ibid.*, p. 187.

115   *Loc. cit.*

116   Ibn Taymiyya, *Šarḥ*, p. 174, 179-182; 184-193; 195-196, 201; al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 351, 353-354; *id.*, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXI, p. 330; Ibn Raǧab, *Ḏayl*, I, p. 58-59; al-Tamīmī, introduction to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, p. 77-78.

117   As ʿAbd al-Raḥmān acknowledged, with regret, regarding those whose views he wanted to defend, "When I would relate a tradition about the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), they would call me an anthropomorphist (*mušabbih*)." Ibn Raǧab, *Ḏayl*, I, p. 58.

exegesis of the tradition, "God created Adam in His/his image".[118] If correct, this report indicates that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's work, as suggested by Rosenthal,[119] differs from the similarly entitled work authored by his father. The latter treatise refers to the tradition in question only once, in passing.[120]

In 1968, Rosenthal pointed out that the relationship between the then unpublished *al-Mustaḫraǧ wa-l-mustaṭraf* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda and his father's *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba* "remains to be investigated." My comparison of the two works, both preserved only in part, has shown that only one-fifth of *al-Mustaḫraǧ* represents an epitome of the *Maʿrifa*.[121] The remaining part of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's treatise is an annalistic chronicle up to the year 195/810-811. While reading the treatise, one immediately notes that, in a northeastern manner, it comprises numerous lists with names and has virtually no historical narrative.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān is said to have written a book with the dates of death of traditionists,[122] a history of Mecca, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣfahān*,[123] *Kitāb al-Īmān, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Kitāb Akl al-ṭīn*, which contained many forged traditions,[124] and many other works.[125]

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118 *Ibid.*, I, p. 61. A hint about ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's thesis may be gleaned from the treatise *Ibṭāl al-taʾwīlāt* by the Ḥanbalī jurist Abū Yaʿlā b. al-Farrāʾ (d. 458/1066). According to Ibn al-Farrāʾ, in his currently lost *Kitāb al-Islām* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda transmitted a tradition in which Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal interprets the *ḥadīṯ*, "God created Adam in his image," to mean "in God's image," because there existed no image of Adam before his creation (*wa-ayy ṣūra kānat li-Ādam qabl an yuḫlaqa?*). Ibn al-Farrāʾ, *Ibṭāl al-taʾwīlāt*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh al-Naǧdī, Kuwait, Dār īlāf, n.d., I, p. 88. This is likely a polemical response to an attempted association of Aḥmad with the opinion of his contemporary Abū Ṯawr (d. 240/854), who alleged that God first created the image of Adam and then created him in this image (*ṣawwara Ādam qabl ḫalqihi ṯumma ḫalaqahu ʿalā tilka l-ṣūra*). Ibn al-Farrāʾ, *Ibṭāl*, I, p. 89-90; about Abū Ṯawr, see Melchert, *Formation*, p. 72-73.

119 Rosenthal, "Ibn Manda."

120 Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Radd*, p. 41-42.

121 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, II, p. 58-392, *pace* al-Tamīmī, who considers the entire work as an epitome of his father's work. Al-Tamīmī, introduction to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, p. 134, 158.

122 Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden, Brill, 1968², p. 165, 513.

123 Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil*, X, p. 74.

124 Al-Tamīmī, introduction to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, p. 79-83.

125 *Ibid.*, p. 78-93.

3.3   *Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (388/998-475/1082)*

ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's third oldest son. A merchant by vocation, he travelled frequently and collected traditions in Naysābūr, Shiraz, Hamadan, Mecca, and Rayy.[126]

The editor of the collection *Fawāʾid Ibn Manda*,[127] published in Beirut in 2002, identified ʿAbd al-Wahhāb as its compiler. This ascription is dubious: the book comprises forty-eight quires (*ǧuzʾ*, pl. *aǧzāʾ*) containing traditions associated with different authorities, which were apparently collected by Ibn Ḥaǧar al-ʿAsqalānī's maternal grandson, Yūsuf b. Šāhīn (828/1425-899/1493). ʿAbd al-Wahhāb is mentioned as a transmitter of Ibrāhīm b. Adham's *Musnad*[128] and a collector of a separate *ǧuzʾ* that includes mainly homiletic *ḥadīṯ*.[129]

Apart from *Musnad Ibrāhīm b. Adham*, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb transmitted his father's *Kitāb al-Īmān* and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.

3.4   *Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Manda (b. 434/1043, d. 511/1118 or 512/1119)*

Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda was the last outstanding scholar in the Manda family.[130] He travelled to Naysābūr, Hamadan, and Basra. In 498/1104-1105, he visited Baghdad, where he delivered lectures in the al-Manṣūr mosque.[131]

Yaḥyā composed a collection with the names and short biographical anecdotes about the Companions who rode behind (*ridf*, pl. *ardāf*) the Prophet,[132] which includes thirty-three men and two women. Four of them are members of the Umayyad clan; four are sons of al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib; three are from Abū Ṭālib's progeny, and six are Anṣār. Among those who rode behind the Prophet were Abū Bakr, ʿUṯmān, ʿAlī, and Zayd b. Ḥāriṯa, who was first adopted then repudiated by the Prophet; strikingly the list does not include ʿUmar.

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126   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 440; al-Sarīfīnī, *al-Muntaḫab min al-siyāq li-Taʾrīḫ Naysābūr*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1409/1989, p. 355.

127   ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda, *Fawāʾid*, ed. Ḫallāf ʿAbd al-Samīʿ, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1423/2002.

128   *Ibid.*, II, p. 153-168.

129   *Ibid.*, II, p. 18-35.

130   According to Muḥammad al-Laftūwānī, "the house of Manda began with Yaḥyā [b. Ibrāhīm b. Manda] and ended with Yaḥyā [b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Manda]. Al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr fī l-Muʿǧam al-kabīr*, ed. Munīra Sālim, Baghdad, al-Ǧumhūriyya l-ʿirāqiyya-Riʾāsat dīwān al-awqāf, 1395/1975, II, p. 378-379.

131   Ibn al-Naǧǧār, *al-Mustafād min Ḏayl Tārīḫ Baġdād*, in al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1425/2004, XXI, p. 195.

132   Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda, *Kitāb Maʿrifat asāmī ardāf al-nabī*, ed. Yaḥyā Ġazzāwī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-Rayyān, 1410/1990.

Yaḥyā composed a collection with the names of fourteen prophetic Companions who lived 120 years;[133] a work partially preserved in Istanbul as MS Laleli 3767, fols I35ᵃ-I36ᵃ and associated with Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda[134] bears the same name. The relationship between the two works remains to be studied. Yaḥyā's collection suggests that elevated (ʿālⁱⁿ) isnāds through long-lived (muʿammarūn) Companions were highly valued in his lifetime. Like his Ardāf collection, this work includes biographical anecdotes, and often mentions dates of death. In order to make some Companions fit in the category of those who lived 120 years, Yaḥyā apparently stretched their lives.[135] He also employs numerical topoi. Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām, Saʿīd b. Yarbūʿ, and Ḥassān b. Ṯābit are said to have lived sixty years in the ǧāhiliyya and as many years in Islam.[136] Longevity must have been a feature of Ḥassān b. Ṯābit's family: He, his father, grandfather, and great grandfather each lived 120 years.[137]

Yaḥyā also compiled a bio-bibliographical treatise (ǧuzʾ) about al-Ṭabarānī, which, apart from the short note in al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 430/1038) Taʾrīḫ Iṣfahān, is the earliest biography of this prolific ḥadīṯ transmitter.[138] Yaḥyā b. Manda characterizes al-Ṭabarānī as an adamant adherent of Sunni orthodoxy. Consistent with Ḥanbalī tenets, al-Ṭabarānī censures those who refuse to accept the caliphate of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (that is, the Šīʿīs)[139] and those who deny the beatific vision and accuse its advocates of anthropomorphism (that is, the Ašʿarīs).[140] On the other hand, he praises the ḥadīṯ folk (aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ) as those upon whom God bestowed His help.[141] In the field of ḥadīṯ criticism, Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb set great store in visionary dreams, which he treated as a variety of prophecy.[142] He considered as compelling ḥadīṯ-critical evidence al-Ṭabarānī's oneiric visions in which the Prophet pronounces as sound or weak traditions on his authority.[143]

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133   Id., Man ʿāša miʾa wa-ʿišrīn ʿām min al-ṣaḥāba, ed. Maǧdī Ibrāhīm, Cairo, Maktabat al-Qurʾān, 1989.

134   Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, p. 215.

135   See, for instance, the entries about ʿĀṣim b. ʿAdī and Saʿīd b. Yarbūʿ. Yaḥyā b. Manda, Man ʿāša, p. 27-28, 43.

136   Ibid., p. 21-22, 43, 46.

137   Ibid., p. 46-47.

138   Yaḥyā b. Manda, Ǧuzʾ.

139   Ibid., p. 45-46.

140   Ibid., p. 53-54; 59-62.

141   Ibid., p. 37-39.

142   Ibid., p. 40.

143   Ibid., p. 39-45. About the role of dreams in ḥadīṯ criticism, see Dickinson, Development, p. 59-63.

Yaḥyā is our only source of information about the possible existence of se-
veral works by Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī that are no longer extant.[144] He transmit-
ted ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Manda's treatise *al-Radd ʿalā man yaqūlu "alif lām mīm*
ḥarf," al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muʿǧam al-kabīr,* Aḥmad b. Manīʿ's *Musnad* (no longer
extant), and a number of other *ḥadīṯ* collections.[145] He may have written a
Mustadrak[146] of his grandfather's collection, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba.*[147] His other
works include *Manāqib Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,* several passages of which are pre-
served by Ibn Raǧab,[148] *Manāqib al-Ṭabarānī,*[149] *Manāqib al-ʿAbbās,*[150] *Taʾrīḫ*
Iṣfahān,[151] *Taʾrīḫ Naysābūr,* and *al-Ṣaḥīḥ ʿalā kitāb Muslim b. al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ.*[152]

4   Other Members of the Manda Family

(1) Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Manda is mentioned by al-
Iṣfahānī,[153] along with his brother.

(2) Abū l-Ḥusayn ʿUbayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Manda.[154] ʿAbd Allāh and
ʿUbayd Allāh may be the same person. Both are said to have transmitted on
the authority of Muḥammad b. ʿĀṣim and to have been shaykhs of Abū Isḥāq
al-Sīrǧānī (d. 358/969). Muḥammad b. ʿĀṣim and al-Sīrǧānī share the *kunya,*
al-Madīnī, which suggests that they were Medinese transmitters. Thus, ʿAbd
Allāh/ʿUbayd Allāh was apparently active, or at least studied, in Medina.

(3) Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā b. Manda is known to have met al-Ṭabarānī
(260/873-360/971) in Isfahan.[155]

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144   *Ibid.,* p. 29.

145   For an extensive catalogue of these collections, see al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr,* p. 380-382.

146   The *Mustadrak* genre includes traditions conforming to an earlier collector's template but
        absent in his original work, *e.g.* al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's famous *Mustadrak* to the collec-
        tions of Muslim and al-Buḫārī.

147   Ibn Ḥaǧar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba,* ed. ʿĀdil ʿAbd al-Mawǧūd and ʿAlī Muʿawwaḍ,
        Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1415/1995, v, p. 228, nº 6871.

148   Ibn Raǧab, *Ḏayl,* I, p. 295-306.

149   Brown, *Canonization,* p. 77, note 99.

150   Ibn Raǧab, *Ḏayl,* I, p. 294.

151   Ibn Nuqṭa, *al-Taqyīd li-maʿrifat al-ruwāt wa-l-sunan wa-l-masānīd,* Hyderabad, Maǧlis
        Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-niẓāmiyya, 1403/1983, II, p. 302.

152   Ibn Raǧab, *Ḏayl,* I, p. 294.

153   Al-Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīḫ,* II, p. 46.

154   *Ibid.,* II, p. 68.

155   Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda, *Ǧuzʾ,* p. 31.

(4) Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā b. Manda.[156] Usually iden-
tified as Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā's brother, he is mentioned by a handful of
biographers.[157] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's reported year of death, 320/932, raises a mild
concern: he appears to have died almost simultaneously with his presumably
much younger nephews Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 320/932) and
Sufyān b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 319/931). This coincidence may be explained
by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's longevity[158] or by a blending of biographical details about
these poorly attested members of the Manda family.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā is known exclusively from the transmissions of
Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda. He is cited in no less than eighty *isnād*s in
Kitāb al-Īmān, fifty-six *isnād*s in *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, twenty-five *isnād*s in *Kitāb
al-Tawḥīd*, and seven *isnād*s in *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā l-ǧahmiyya*. Strikingly, the
Mustaḫraǧ wa-l-mustaṭraf by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, about
one-fifth of which derives from Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*,
includes only seven *isnād*s through ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā. All seven pass
through Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, but only two of them carry *matn*s that are found
in his *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*.[159]

Muḥammad b. Isḥāq always reports directly on the authority of ʿAbd al-
Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā. Since ʿAbd al-Raḥmān died when Muḥammad was only ten
years old, it is possible that Muḥammad used a written source with his uncle's
traditions, or that he concealed an intermediate transmitter of these traditions.
Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's direct citations offer a hint about the above-mentioned

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156   This *kunya* (teknonym), which is cited only by Ibn al-Muqriʾ, may be a misreading of *aḫū
       Muḥammad*. Ibn al-Muqriʾ, *Muʿǧam*, ed. Sayyid Kasrawī Ḥasan, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-
       ʿilmiyya, p. 325, nº 1075.

157   Abū al-Šaykh al-Anṣārī, *Ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddiṯīn bi-Iṣbahān wa-l-wāridīn ʿalay-hā*, ed. ʿAbd
       al-Ġafūr al-Ballūšī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1412/1992, III, p. 596; Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ
       Iṣbahān*, II, p. 79-80; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXIII, p. 609.

158   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's most frequently cited authority, Abū Masʿūd Aḥmad b. Furāt, died in
       258/872. Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Tahḏīb al-Tahḏīb*, Hyderabad, Maǧlis Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-niẓāmiyya,
       1325[/1907], I, p. 66. ʿUqayl b. Yaḥyā, another important informant of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān,
       died in the same year. Abū al-Šayḫ, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, p. 418. In order to have heard traditions
       from these two shaykhs, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān must have been born in the second half of the
       240es, at the latest. In this case, he would have died in his seventies.

159   ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, I, p. 97 = Muḥammad b.
       Isḥāq b. Manda, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, p. 508-510; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda,
       al-Mustaḫraǧ, I, p. 241 ≠ *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Manda,
       al-Mustaḫraǧ, I, p. 340 ≠ *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b.
       Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, I, p. 359 ≠ *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad
       b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, I, p. 385 ≠ *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad
       b. Manda, *al-Mustaḫraǧ*, I, p. 416 ≠ *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*; 2:175 = *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, p. 784.

longevity of his uncle. His lifespan may have been extended as to allow for an unmediated communication with his famous nephew.

In sum, it seems that, as a traditionist, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā b. Manda was discovered, if not invented, by his nephew Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda.

(5) Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā died in ramaḍān 320/ September 932.[160]

(6) Abū Saʿd Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Manda (d. 351/962) had some involvements with *ḥadīṯ* but later abandoned them. He was renowned for his piety and sponsorship of science.[161]

(7) Abū Aḥmad Bundār b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Manda (d. 383/993) is mentioned by Abū Nuʿaym as an expert in positive law (*fiqh*).[162] He may have been Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. Manda's grandson. It is reported that Aḥmad was nearly 100 years old when he died in 351/962; if so, he might have had a grandson who died only thirty lunar years later.

(8) Abū Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā b. Manda al-Muʿallim (d. 453/1061) was a grain-grocer (*baqqāl*) by vocation. According to al-Ḏahabī, he was one of the relatives (*aqārib*) of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, and he transmitted the *Musnad* of Ibn Manīʿ (160/777-244/859).[163]

(9) ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Manda (b. after 388/998, d. 424/1033). Like many of his relatives, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm was a merchant.[164] Al-Muqbil believes that he may have been born in 386/996,[165] but al-Ḏahabī stated that ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Manda (b. 388/998) was Muḥammad's third oldest son after ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and ʿUbayd Allāh. If so, then ʿAbd al-Raḥīm could not have been born until 388/998 at the earliest. Apparently, he died too young to have engaged in scholarly activities of note.

(10) Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Manda. This obscure Qurʾān reciter, mentioned only by Ibn al-Ǧazarī,[166] is most likely Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Manda. Ibn al-Ǧazarī, or one of his informants, probably duplicated his first two names by way of an error. The sameness of the two scholars is suggested by the *kunya*, Abū Yaʿqūb, which is shared

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160 Abū al-Šayḫ, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV, p. 226; Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, I, p. 239.

161 Abū Nuʿaym, *Taʾrīḫ Iṣbahān*, I, p. 191.

162 *Ibid.*, I, p. 285.

163 Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XVIII, p. 96. About ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, see also Ibn Nuqṭa, *al-Taqyīd*, II, p. 159; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXX, p. 344; *id.*, *al-ʿIbar*, II, p. 300.

164 Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXIX, p. 132.

165 Al-Muqbil, *Manhaǧ*, p. 50, note 3.

166 Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *Ġāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrāʾ*, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1427/2006, I, p. 143, nº 733.

by each of them, as well as by Ibn al-Ǧazarī's report that Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad was Ismāʿīl b. Šuʿayb al-Nihāwandī's teacher in Qurʾān readings (ḥurūf).[167] Al-Nihāwandī, who died in 350/961-962, could have transmitted only from Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 341/953) but not from his putative grandson Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad. At the time of al-Nihāwandī's death, Isḥāq, the grandson, would have been too young to be an expert in Qurʾān science.

(11) Abū l-Ḥasan ʿUbayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (b. 384/994-995, d. 462/1070 or 464/1072). Rosenthal asserts that his name was ʿAbd Allāh, but he was "occasionally but wrongly" called ʿUbayd Allāh.[168] *Pace* Rosenthal, al-Ḏahabī reports that Muḥammad b. Isḥāq married in the 380es and had four sons: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, ʿUbayd Allāh, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.[169] Other biographers agree on ʿUbayd Allāh.[170] Rosenthal was probably misled by al-Iṣfahānī's mention of ʿAbd Allāh and ʿUbayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Manda (nᵒˢ 1 and 2 above), who are apparently the same person.

No works by ʿUbayd Allāh, who was a merchant, are extant, but the traditions on his authority mentioned by al-Ǧawzaqānī[171] bear witness to his interest in Ḥanbalī theology (God descending to the lowest heaven each night [nᵒ 81]), the magic force of Qurʾānic verses (nᵒ 722), homiletics (the merits of fasting [nᵒ 473]), law (how properly to swear an oath [nᵒ 559]), and Qurʾān science (how to correctly recite the Qurʾān [nᵒ 727]).

(12) Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (432/1040-490/1097) was a *ḥadīṯ* transmitter known for his piety.[172]

(13) Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Manda is known as the maternal grandfather of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṣaydalānī (nᵒ 29 below).

167　*Ibid.*, I, p. 149, nᵒ 767.

168　Rosenthal, "Ibn Manda."

169　Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXVII, p. 323.

170　Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Madīnī, *Ḏikr Abī ʿAbd Allāh b. Manda wa-man adraka-hum min aṣḥābihi al-imām Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ḫallāl*, ed. ʿĀmir Ṣabrī, Beirut, Dār al-bašāʾir al-islāmiyya, 1425/2004, p. 76; Ibn Nuqṭa, *Takmilat al-Ikmāl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qayyūm ʿAbd Rabb al-Nabī, Mecca, Ǧāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1408/1987, I, p. 305; al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr*, I, p. 249, and many other sources.

171　Al-Ǧawraqānī, *al-Abāṭīl wa-l-manākīr wa-l-ṣiḥāḥ wa-l-mašāhīr*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār al-Faryawāʾī, Nāris, Idārat al-buḥūṯ al-islāmiyya wa-l-daʿwa l-iftāʾ bi-l-ǧāmiʿa l-salafiyya, 1403/1983, I, p. 86, nᵒ 81; II, p. 87, nᵒ 473; II, p. 165, nᵒ 559; II, p. 308, nᵒ 722; II, p. 313, nᵒ 727.

172　Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīḫ al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1412/1992-1413/1993, XVII, p. 40; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXIII, p. 331-332.

(14) Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Abī ʿAbd Allāh b. Manda (d. 515/1121).[173]

(15) Abū l-Wafāʾ ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Manda l-Daštī (b. *ca* 460/1067; d. *ca* 531/1136)[174] was a pious scholar and Qurʾān reciter. His name suggests that he was Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Manda's son. This possibility is contradicted by the existence of ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad (n⁰ 8 above), who died in 453/1061. That is to say, he was Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad's grandson who, strikingly, died close to the birth date of Abū l-Wafāʾ al-Daštī, who would seem to have been Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad's son. Apart from the meagre possibility that Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad was blessed with a son, Abū l-Wafāʾ al-Daštī, at an advanced age, perhaps seventy or more years, while his grandson, ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad, died as a young scholar, it is a reasonable guess that al-Samʿānī omitted one generation between al-Daštī and Muḥammad, in which case al-Daštī would be Muḥammad's grandson.

(16) al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad (d. 482/1089) was a merchant.[175]

(17) Umm al-Ḫayr ʿĀfiya bt al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (d. 539/1146) reportedly transmitted a copy of the *ḥadīṯ* collection of Luwayn al-Miṣṣīṣī (d. 246/860).[176] ʿĀfiya, who was the daughter of Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Mālik (n⁰ 13 above), may have been the mother of his grandson Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṣaydalānī (n⁰ 29 below).

(18) Abū Muḥammad Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (d. 547/1152) was a pious shaykh. He heard traditions from the famous Isfahani traditionist Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl b. Aḥmad al-Ṯaqafī (d. 489/1096) and from Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḏakwānī (d. 484/1092). At some point, Sufyān travelled to Baghdad, where he heard from Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh Abū l-Ḫaṭṭāb b. al-Baṭir (d. 494/1101), who was a local *ḥadīṯ* transmitter of an uncertain stature.[177]

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173   Abū Masʿūd al-Ḥāǧǧī, *Ǧuzʾ fī-hi wafayāt ǧamāʿa min al-muḥaddiṯīn*, ed. Ḥātim al-ʿAwnī, Dār al-hiǧra, 1415/1995, p. 49, n⁰ 65.

174   Al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yamānī, Cairo, Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1400/1980-1404/1984, V, p. 315-316.

175   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXIII, p. 104.

176   Al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr*, II, p. 425.

177   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXXVII, p. 271-272. About Ibn al-Baṭir, see *ibid.*, XXXIV, p. 204-207.

(19) Umm Šams Ḫuǧasta bt Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was a pious woman who fasted frequently and performed many charitable works.[178]

(20) Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (468/1075-521/1127). At an early age, he heard traditions from his grandfather, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad, and from his uncle, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad. The many years that he spent in Mecca earned him the honorific title, "the shaykh of the sacred precinct."[179]

(21) Sitt al-Šaraf bt Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda (d. ?) is mentioned by Ibn al-Naǧǧār.[180]

(22) Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 584/1188) was a prolific *ḥadīth* transmitter.[181]

5   The Demise of the Manda Family

The Mongol conquest of Isfahan in 632/1235-633/1236 put an abrupt end to the four-century long history of the Manda family. We know about several family members who lived into that tumultuous period in the history of Iran or close to it, but none seems to have survived after 632/1235.

(23) Abū l-Wafāʾ Maḥmūd b. Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda (b. 550/1155-552/1158, d. 632/1235). A merchant by vocation, Maḥmūd delivered lectures in Baghdad and in other Islamic centers of learning. He transmitted Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda's *Kitāb al-Īmān* and *Kitāb Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba*, and several homiletic works by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894).[182] In šawwāl 632/June-July 1235, he was slaughtered by the invading Mongols, alongside other Isfahani scholars and many townsfolk.[183] Infighting between

178   Al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr*, II, p. 404; Ibn Nuqṭa, *Takmila*, II, p. 400.

179   Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, XVII, p. 246; al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-ṯamīn fī taʾrīḫ al-balad al-amīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Fīqī, Fuʾād Samīr and Maḥmūd al-Ṭannāǧī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1406/1986², V, p. 324-325.

180   Ibn al-Naǧǧār, *al-Mustafād*, XVII, p. 180; XIX, p. 220.

181   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLI, p. 169.

182   Al-Munḏirī, *al-Takmila fī wafayāt al-naqala*, ed. Baššār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1405/1984, III, p. 400; al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XXII, p. 382-383; *id.*, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLVI, p. 125-126; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Šaḏarāt al-ḏahab fī aḫbār man ḏahab*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Arnāʾūṭ and Maḥmūd al-Arnāʾūṭ, Beirut-Damascus, Dār Ibn Kaṯīr, 1406/1986-1414/1993, VII, p. 272.

183   Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Šams al-Dīn, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1413/1992, VI, p. 259. Ibn Taġrībirdī's report almost tallies with Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's report that the Mongols conquered Isfahan in 633/1235-1236. John E. Woods, "A Note on the Mongol Capture of Iṣfahān," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 36/1 (1977), p. 50-51, and the references cited thereto.

local Šāfiʿīs and Ḥanafīs, with no indications of it being joined by the Ḥanbalīs, was reportedly the main cause for the bloody sacking of the city.[184] Maḥmūd was the last renowned representative of the Manda dynasty of scholars, which died out in the social and political upheaval that engulfed Iran following the Mongol invasion.

(24) Abū Muḥammad Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Manda (d. ?) is mentioned in the *isnād*s of four homiletic traditions in Ibn al-Naǧǧār's *Takmila*, the last of which includes his brother, Maḥmūd b. Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān.[185] That two of these *isnād*s pass through Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, suggests that Sufyān shared his brother's interest in the traditions of this asce-tic. A homiletic tradition through Ibn al-Naǧǧār → Sufyān is cited by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505).[186] It is not known whether Sufyān survived the Mongol subjuga-tion of Isfahan or, like his brother, was executed by the conquerors.

(25) Taqiyya bt Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was born in 552/1157-1158.[187] Ibn al-Ṣābūnī had *iǧāzāt* to transmit on her authority. We do not know if she survived until the Mongol conquest of Isfahan, when she would have been about eighty years old.

(26) Asmāʾ bt Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb died in šawwāl 630/July-August 1233.[188] Al-Fāsī reports that she heard from Abū l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal b. ʿĪsā b. Šuʿayb al-Siǧzī (d. 553/1158) parts of ʿAbd b. Ḥumayd's (d. 249/863-864) *Musnad*.[189] The Ḥanbalī *qāḍī* Sulaymān b. Ḥamza (b. 628/1231; d. 715/1316) had an *iǧāza* to transmit on her authority.

(27) Ḥumayrāʾ bt Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb died in ǧumādā l-ūlā 630/February-March 1233.[190] According to al-Ḏahabī, she at-tended the sessions of Abū l-Waqt, perhaps as a small child (*samiʿat min-hu ḥuḍūran wa-samāʿan min ġayrihi*). Abū l-Faḍl b. Aḥmad b. Hibat Allāh b. ʿAsākir (b. 614/1217; d. 699/1300) and Sulaymān b. Ḥamza transmitted from her by *iǧāza*. Al-Fāsī repeats this information, excluding the mention of Abū l-Faḍl b. ʿAsākir, but cites her name as Ḥumayrāʾ bt Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd b. Manda.[191]

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184   *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

185   Ibn al-Naǧǧār, *Takmila*, XVI, p. 156; XVII, p. 130; XVIII, p. 14; XX, p. 91.

186   Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ziyādāt ʿalā l-Mawḍūʿāt*, ed. Rāmiz Ḥāǧǧ Ḥasan, Riyadh, Maktabat al-maʿārif, 1431/2010, II, p. 667.

187   Al-Ṣābūnī, *Takmilat Ikmāl al-Ikmāl fī l-ansāb wa-l-asmāʾ wa-l-alqāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ǧawād, Baghdad, Maṭbūʿāt al-Maǧmaʿ al-ʿilmī l-ʿirāqī, 1377/1957, p. 50.

188   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLV, p. 383.

189   Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Fāsī, *Ḏayl al-Taqyīd li-maʿrifat al-sunan wa-l-masānīd*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Murād, Mecca, Ǧāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1418/1997, III, p. 392, nº 1797.

190   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLV, p. 387. I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers of the article, for drawing my attention to Asmāʾ and her sister, Ḥumayrāʾ (nº 27 below).

191   Al-Fāsī, *Ḏayl*, III, p. 401-402, nº 1809.

The considerable degree of overlap between the entries devoted to Asmāʾ and Ḥumayrāʾ suggests that, with the passage of time, the biographical data about the two transmitters, who may not have been sisters, became entangled and impossible to tell apart.

(28) Šarīfa bt Ibrāhīm b. Sufyān b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb died in ḏū l-qaʿda 630/August-September 1233.[192] Apart from a possible error, the death of Asmāʾ, Ḥumayrāʾ, and Šarīfa within the short span of seven months may indicate that, like their brother Maḥmūd, they may have fallen victims to the Mongol conquest of Isfahan.

(29) Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr b. Abī l-Fatḥ al-Ṣaydalānī l-Silafī (509/1116-603/1207), a druggist by vocation,[193] was the maternal grandson of Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Manda.[194] The sources are silent about the name of his mother, who may have been ʿĀfiya bt al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Malik (nº 17 above). At the age of eleven, Muḥammad heard al-Ṭabarānī's entire *al-Muǧam al-kabīr* from Fāṭima bt ʿAbd Allāh al-Ǧūzdāniyya (*ca* 430/1038-524/ 1130).[195]

6   Conclusion

The Manda family pursued *ḥadīṯ* scholarship and Ḥanbalī theology in Isfahan over a period of four centuries. A considerable number of the family's descendants are said to have made their living as merchants. This, no doubt, allowed them to maintain their scholarly activities and to travel in pursuit of knowledge to centers of learning in Iran, Iraq, and Arabia. By combining profitable trade with religious scholarship, they tapped at least two of the three major sources of social influence in medieval Iranian cities, which Richard Bulliet defines as landholding, trade, and religion.[196] In this manner, scholars of the Manda family could avoid the vagaries of political patronage, which was vigorously sought by the Isfahani Šāfiʿīs and Ḥanafīs,[197] and thereby perpetuate their pursuits until the major historical disruption brought about by the Mongol conquest of Iran.

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192   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLV, p. 388.

193   Ibn al-ʿImād, *Šaḏarāt*, VII, p. 20.

194   Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XLIII, p. 125-126.

195   Al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar*, XXI, p. 430.

196   Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press ("Harvard Middle Eastern Studies", 16), 1972, p. 20.

197   Tsafrir, "Beginnings," p. 2, 14, and *passim*.

The Manda family's retreat from political engagement, on the official level, is suggested by the silence of the sources about their assuming the post of qāḍīs and muftīs, or their maintaining a close relationship with the ruling elite. On the popular level, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad and his ṭāʾifa may have combined pietistic observances with mob violence as a means to endorse them. Such excesses, however, could have hardly been to the taste of the Manda family in general. Like many Ḥanbalīs outside Baghdad,[198] this family belonged to the prosperous mercantile elite and was likely to avoid joining forces with the rioting rabble that could imperil its own interests.

A number of scholars from the Manda family manifested an interest in homiletic traditions, which often went hand-in-hand with notable personal piety. Although we lack source evidence about specific aspects of their piety, these scholars may have shared in what Christopher Melchert has identified as the two leading aspects of ḥadīṯ-folk piety: unremitting seriousness and membership in an equalitarian moralistic community that avoided the rigors of mystical asceticism.[199] Their ascetic attitudes may have kept Āl Manda away from the trappings of mundane politics.

Throughout the sixth/twelfth and at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, a considerable number of scholars from the Manda family were women. Thus, we observe in Isfahan the tendency towards reemergence of female ḥadīṯ transmitters that Asma Sayeed detected in other regions of the Islamic world during the same period.[200]

The most prominent members of the family flourished between 310/922, the date of birth of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Manda, and 511/1118, the date of death of his grandson, Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. The theological oeuvre of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq and his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, bears witness to a heated polemic in Isfahan between Ḥanbalī traditionalists with anthropomorphist leanings, on the one hand, and Kullābī and Ašʿarī rationalists, on the other hand, over the course of the second half of the fourth/tenth and most of the fifth/eleventh century. During the debates, which centered on divine attributes, vision of God in the Hereafter, and free will, the opposing parties refined their polemical methodology. Whereas Muḥammad b. Isḥāq showered his opponents with citations from the Qurʾān and ḥadīṯ, without identifying their teachings or making comments, except for the short chapter headings in his Kitāb al-Īmān,

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198   Melchert, *Formation*, p. 154.

199   Christopher Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34/3 (2002), p. 427-431.

200   Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, New York, Cambridge University Press ("Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization"), 2013, p. 108-143.

his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, modified his father's method in two critical, yet controversial, ways. First, he began to describe briefly his opponents' tenets, and second, he engaged them with an armory of textual witnesses and rational arguments. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's polemical acumen, probably sharpened under the influence of ʿUbayd Allāh al-Siǧzī and other rationalistically inclined polemicists from among the partisans of the Sunna, triggered accusations that he abandoned his father's method and ultimately turned him into a misfit among fellow Ḥanbalīs, who disliked his use of reasoning and took offence at the anthropomorphist ring of his theological deliberations.

The effectiveness of his rational methodology is evidenced by the manner in which his opponents refined their understanding of the eternal speech of God. Whereas adversaries of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's older contemporary, al-Siǧzī, adhered to the Kullābī doctrine that the speech of God does not comprise individual letters (ḥurūf) and sounds (aṣwāt), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān faced disputants who used the word ḥarf to designate both the words in the recited Qurʾān and the ineffable, yet somehow discrete and meaningful, units of divine speech. In this manner, they responded to the traditionalist charges that they had postulated a notional divine speech that cannot be proven to have anything in common with the recited Qurʾān.

In the field of ḥadīṯ-criticism, Muḥammad b. Isḥāq's contribution was unmatched by any other member of the family. He transformed Ibn al-Madīnī's identification of six second-century pivots of ḥadīṯ transmission into a fully-fledged doctrine about master ḥadīṯ critics living in the second/eighth century who were the precursors of the third-/ninth-century collectors-cum-critics. This back-projection of a third-century conception onto the previous century was aimed at supporting the existence of uninterrupted and largely credible transmission from the early days of Islam.

After Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Manda's death, the scholarly activity of the Manda family was confined to ḥadīṯ transmission, perhaps reflecting a stagnancy of theological debates in Isfahan.