

# Ibn Ḥanbal's Refutation of the Jahmiyya: A Textual History

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This article documents the main developments in the textual history of a short polemical treatise ascribed to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*. In particular, I show that three different, if related, recensions of the text exist in manuscript. Then, drawing on evidence from the text and biobibliographical sources, I show that *al-Radd* only emerged over several centuries. The idea for the text finds its roots in the earliest elaborations of Hanbali theology, perhaps even in the notebooks of Ibn Ḥanbal himself. The first recension of the text, however, only emerged after the mid-fourth/tenth century in Baghdad. Another recension appears at the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century, perhaps also in Baghdad. These recensions were combined to form a third recension no later than the eighth/fourteenth century, and it is the third recension that became the basis for most print editions of the work.

## INTRODUCTION

This article is a history of a short polemical treatise ascribed to the prolific Baghdadi *muḥaddith*, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). The treatise, usually entitled *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya* (Refutation of the heretics and the Jahmiyya; henceforth *al-Radd*), contains a variety of arguments about the proper interpretation of the Quran with regard to several classical theological questions about the nature of Muḥammad's message: Was the Quran created (and when)? What does it mean for the Quran to be the speech of God? Did God really speak to Moses? *Al-Radd* provides answers to these questions by adducing and interpreting groups of verses from the Quran. Although there is often an imagined "opponent" making problematic claims, as in other theological texts of the time the debate is driven by the priorities of the author.

Some scholars, beginning with the Damascene al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348?), have doubted the work's authenticity, seeing its style of argumentation as too close to a sort of theological reasoning rejected by Ibn Ḥanbal himself.<sup>1</sup> It must have been, these skeptics argue, a retrospective attempt by later Hanbalis to outfit their master with a more developed take on the theological conflict over the nature of the Quran in which he had been embroiled during

*Author's note:* Many teachers and colleagues aided me in the preparation of this article, and I have tried to acknowledge their guidance in the appropriate places. I owe special gratitude, however, to Matthew L. Keegan, whose insightful critiques bailed out a floundering seminar paper, to Michael Cook, Katharina Ivanyi, and George McLaren for patching up the sails on earlier drafts, and to Peri Bearman and the two anonymous reviewers, whose comments shored up a number of breaches in the hull. Above all, I thank my advisor, Najam Haider, whose seminar launched this paper five years ago and whose unflinching support kept it afloat till completion. As named author, however, I reserve an exclusive right to all remaining errors.

1. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Sh. al-Arnāʾūṭ et al. (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1417/1996), 11: 286–87. For modern instances, see M. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmūn* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 125, 151–52; Ch. Melchert, *Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 101. On Ibn Ḥanbal's opposition to *kalām* more generally, see Ch. Melchert, "The Adversaries of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal," *Arabica* 44.2 (1997): 234–53, at 243–44. Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (hereafter *EI*) *Three*, s.v. "Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal" (L. Holtzman). A slightly more detailed critique of the text's purported authorship has been offered by Saud AlSarhan, to which I will return below.

the Abbasid inquisition (*miḥna*, ca. 218–237/833–851f.).<sup>2</sup> Of course, not all scholars agree. Most editors of the text have defended its authenticity, citing arguments made in its favor by later Hanbali luminaries such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) or pointing to mentions in biobibliographical texts of a work ascribed to Ibn Ḥanbal under the same title or a related one.<sup>3</sup>

A closer look at the manuscripts of the text, however, reveals significant complications. Modern arguments about *al-Radd*'s authenticity have been based on print editions of the text, which has been published several times since the thirteenth/nineteenth century. As a result, the conclusions present a binary—either the entire text was authored by Ibn Ḥanbal or it was not.<sup>4</sup> As I document here, however, the matter is significantly more complicated. The text underwent several developments after the death of Ibn Ḥanbal but it seems to find its roots in the earliest attempts to work out a Hanbali theology. In any given form, the text may postdate the life of Ibn Ḥanbal, but its growth is part and parcel of the attempt by Ibn Ḥanbal's followers to work out the meaning of the master's doctrine.

In what follows I make three main arguments. First, an examination of the manuscript tradition reveals three different recensions of *al-Radd* traveling under the sign of Ibn Ḥanbal's authorship. The print editions, with one exception, are based on a recension of the text not attested by any manuscript witnesses predating the thirteenth/nineteenth century. Second, the three recensions are not entirely separate: I argue that the earliest recension (which I call "Recension 1") was edited to produce the second recension ("Recension 2"); the third recension ("Recension 3") was the product of combining the earlier two recensions. Third, the manuscript data alone are insufficient to determine the historical origins of the various recensions. Therefore, drawing on biobibliographical literature (Hanbali and otherwise), a critical examination of the text's contents, and a comparison with other Hanbali theological works, I argue that Recension 1 must have originated ca. 350–390h (960–1000) in Baghdad. Recension 2 seems to have originated in the first half of the sixth/twelfth century, also in Baghdad. Recension 3 emerges in the Hanbali oeuvre in the eighth/fourteenth century in Damascus, but its origins remain obscure.

## 1. MANUSCRIPTS AND RECENSIONS

Most print editions of Ibn Ḥanbal's *al-Radd* contain three parts: a very short introduction attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal detailing the importance of learned people (*ʿulamāʿ*) for guiding the community in periods lacking a prophet ("introduction"); a brief refutation of the Zanādiqa's claims that the Quran contradicts itself ("RefZan"); and a somewhat longer refutation of

2. On the inquisition, see *EI2*, s.v. "Miḥna" (M. Hinds).

3. The arguments of Daghsh al-ʿAjmi (thus vowelled in the edition) in the introduction to his edition are exemplary of this; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya fīmā shakkat fihi min mutashābih al-qurʿān wa-taʿawwalathu ʿalā ghayr taʿwīlihi*, ed. D. al-ʿAjmi (Kuwait: Ghirās, 1426/2005), 85–116. All citations of the text in this article will be from al-ʿAjmi's edition (cited as Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*). I extend my thanks to Saud AlSarhan for pointing it out to me. Although my conclusions disagree with those of al-ʿAjmi, I am deeply indebted to his work on *al-Radd*.

4. (1) Ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*, in al-Ījī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-qurʿān*, ed. M. Ghaznawī (Delhi, 1879), 561–73 (= 31–43 in the second series of pagination, which begins on p. 531 of the main work). (2) ʿA. S. al-Nashshār and ʿA. J. al-Tālibī, eds., *Aqāʿid al-salaf* (Alexandria: Munshaʿat al-Maʿārif, 1391/1971), 51–103. (3) *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafiyya, 1393/1973f.). (4) *al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya wa-l-zanādiqa*, ed. ʿA. ʿUmayra (Riyadh: Dār al-Liwāʿ, 1397/1977). This edition differs from the others in the placement of several passages. For instance, the last ten lines on p. 141 and the first five lines on p. 142 appear in the wrong place—they belong to the section that abruptly cuts off on p. 139. (5) *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa*, ed. Y. Murād (Cairo: Kutub ʿArabiyya Online, 1428/2007) seems to be based on no. 3. (6) Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, ed. al-ʿAjmi (cited above).

claims attributed to followers of the heresiarch Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746) regarding the nature of God, the nature of the Quran, and so on (“RefJahm”).

Some editions are lacking one of these elements. In 1961 Morris Seale published a translation of the text based on a single manuscript in the British Library that excludes the RefZan, and three years later Muḥammad Shaqfa produced an edition of the text based on a single manuscript in the Zāhiriyya library in Damascus that also excluded the RefZan.<sup>5</sup> This discrepancy points already to what is revealed fully in the manuscript tradition, namely, that there are different versions of *al-Radd*.

I was able to identify thirteen extant manuscript witnesses in total and consulted eight of the nine earliest witnesses.<sup>6</sup> Examination of this manuscript tradition reveals that there were three separate but related recensions of the text (see appendix one for a full listing.) Recension 1 appears in the earliest surviving manuscripts and is the same version published by Seale and Shaqfa—as said, it includes only the introduction and the RefJahm.<sup>7</sup> Recension 2, of which there are two witnesses, omits the introduction, including only the RefZan and the RefJahm.<sup>8</sup> Recension 3, finally, joins all three elements together.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, some of the manuscripts include one of two statements about the transmission of the text (*riwāya*). The four earliest links in each transmission agree, but they then split off after the mid-fourth/tenth century. I shall refer to them as “Riwāya X” and “Riwāya Y.”<sup>10</sup> (See appendix two for a table listing the constituents of each.) All manuscripts of Recension 1 include Riwāya X.<sup>11</sup> Recension 2 manuscripts have no *riwāya*.<sup>12</sup> The Recension 3 manuscripts are mixed: Leiden MS Or. 6275 has Riwāya X; the two late Kuwaiti manuscripts of Recension 3 include Riwāya Y; and the rest have no *riwāya*.<sup>13</sup> These combinations are summarized in Table 1.

5. M. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with Reference to the Church Fathers* (London: Luzac, 1964), 96–125; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ‘alā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*, ed. M. F. Shaqfa (Hama: Maktabat Ibn al-Haytham, 1386/1967).

6. For assistance in accessing manuscripts I thank Najah Ahmad, Jonathan Brockopp, Ahmad El Shamsy, Najam Haider, Nejmeddine Hentati, Sarah Omar, and library staff at the British Library, Leiden University, Princeton University, and the Topkapı Palace.

7. Dār al-Kutub (Tunis) MS Zaytūna 10192, 1b–2a (introduction), 2a–19b (RefJahm); Damascus MS Zāhiriyya 116 (3852)—see *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 27–28 (introduction), 28–95 (RefJahm); British Library (BL) MS Or 3106, 1b–2a (introduction), 2a–19b (RefJahm); Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) MS 4807, 76b (introduction), 76b–85b (RefJahm); Topkapı Sarayı MS Revan 510, 49b (introduction), 49b–56a (RefJahm); Princeton University MS Garrett 1876Y, 1b.11–21 (introduction), 1b.21–14b.8 (RefJahm).

8. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS Tal‘at Tafsīr 326, 1b–7b (RefZan), 7b–24a (RefJahm). Relying on Ṣ. M. al-Khiyamī, *Fihriṣ makhḥūḥāt dār al-kutub al-zāhiriyya: ‘Ulūm al-qur‘ān al-karīm* (Damascus: Majma‘ al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya, 1403/1983), 2: 55–56, it appears that MS Zāhiriyya 7540 is also of Recension 2, but I have been unable to consult the manuscript itself.

9. Leiden MS Or 6275, 75a (introduction), 75a–78b (RefZan), 78b–88a (RefJahm); MS Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal (no number; hereafter MS MMF); MSS Wizārat al-Awqāf al-Kuwaytiyya (WAK) 171 and 345; and Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’ (NU) MS Munāzara 27. For the last four manuscripts, I have relied primarily on al-‘Ajmi’s descriptions, plates, and notes, as I have been unable to consult them directly.

10. Riwāya Y also appears in Ibn Abī Ya‘lā (d. 527/1133), *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. M. Ḥ. Fiqī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1371/1952), 2: 48.1–4.

11. MS Zaytūna 10192, 1b.2–7 (not counting the obviously interpolated line); MS Zāhiriyya 116/1 = *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 27.2–7; MS BL Or 3106, 1b.2–6; MS BNF 4807/16, 76b.2–5; MS Revan 510/4, 49b.2–5; MS Garrett 1876Y, 1b.3–8.

12. MSS Tal‘at Tafsīr 326 and Zāhiriyya 7540.

13. Riwāya X: MS Leiden Or. 6275, 75a.5–9. Riwāya Y: MS WAK 345/10; MS WAK 171/3—see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 155–58 (plates). No *riwāya*: MSS MMF and NU Munāzara 27.

Table 1. Recensions of the Text

Recension	Contents	Riwāya	Manuscripts
1	Intro + RefJahm	X	Zaytūna 10192; Zāhiriyya 116; BL Or 3106; BNF 4807; Revan 510/4; Garrett 1876Y
2	RefZan + RefJahm	none	Ṭalʿat Tafsīr 326; Zāhiriyya 7540(?)
3	Intro + RefZan + RefJahm	mixed	Leiden Or. 6275 (Riwāya X); MMF (none); WAK 171/3, 345/11 (Riwāya Y); NU Munāzara 27 (none).

What is the relationship among the three recensions? First, it is possible that Recension 3 is indeed the original form and that only late copies have survived. In this case, Recensions 1 and 2 would be abridgments of Recension 3, with each eliminating one of three elements. Second, it is possible that Recension 2 is the first recension. In this case, Recension 1 would have dropped the RefZan and added the introduction, and Recension 3 would be the result of simply adding the introduction to the existing recension. Third, it is possible that Recension 1 is the original. In this case, Recension 2 would abridge Recension 1, and Recension 3 would again be the product of combining Recensions 1 and 2.<sup>14</sup> These possibilities are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Recension Arithmetic

Possibility 1	If Recension 3 is original, then: Recension 1 = Recension 3 – RefZan Recension 2 = Recension 3 – intro
Possibility 2	If Recension 2 is original, then: Recension 1 = Recension 2 – RefZan + intro. Recension 3 = Recension 2 + intro
Possibility 3	If Recension 1 is original, then: Recension 2 = 1 – intro + RefZan Recension 3 = 1 + RefZan (or perhaps 2 + intro)

The third option—that Recension 1 is the original and that the other two are later modifications—seems most probable for several reasons. First, there is a clear pattern in terms of the manuscripts' copy dates: the earliest three manuscripts are all of Recension 1, and a fourth witness to Recension 1 is roughly contemporary to the earliest securely dated copy of Recension 2, which is dated 906/1500f.<sup>15</sup> (The other witness to Recension 2 is of unclear dating.<sup>16</sup>) The latest origin for any text is Recension 3: the first dated witness was copied in

14. Other relationships are imaginable—e.g., there is another common source, unattested in manuscript form. I have found no evidence to support this, however, either in the biobibliographical literature or elsewhere in the Hanbali oeuvre.

15. MSS Zaytūna 10192 (dated 719/1319); Zāhiriyya 116/1 (821/1419); BL Or 3106 (898/1492f.); and BNF 4807/16, which G. Vajda estimated to be from the ninth/fifteenth century. The 906/1500f. copy is MS Zāhiriyya 7540; see Khiyamī, *Fihris*, 2: 55–56.

16. F. Sezgin, in vol. 1 of *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 507 (cited hereafter as *GAS*, 1: 507), reports that MS Ṭalʿat Tafsīr 326 is dated 824, but he must be mistaken, as there is no date (or any other identifying marks) on the manuscript itself. His source for the description is A. F. Sayyid, “Nawādir

1227/1812.<sup>17</sup> Most telling is that all copies of Recension 1 predate all copies of Recension 3. Because the manuscripts all postdate the life of the purported author, the general pattern suggested by the manuscripts' relative dating is far from secure. Similarly, because manuscripts may be lost, it is possible that the pattern suggested by the known manuscripts does not represent fully the history of the text. Still, the pattern initially seems clear.

A second reason to think that Recension 1 is earlier than the others has to do with the texts' order: the way the RefZan fits into Recension 3 makes it appear to be an interpolation. There, the RefZan comes after the short, general introduction and before the body of the RefJahm. In Recension 1, however, the introduction is organically linked with the RefJahm. This organic link depends on a logic of specification, which is preserved only in Recension 1. The introduction reads:

Praise be to God who, in every era lacking prophets, causes the excellent among the people of knowledge to summon from error to proper conduct, to withstand tribulation, to restore life by the Book of God to the dead, and to restore sight by the Light of God to the blind. How many felled by Iblīs have they revived, and how many lost and straying have they guided! How wonderful their effect on the people, and how repugnant the effect of the people on them! They preserve the Book of God from the distortions of the excessive, the false ascriptions of the erroneous, and the over-interpretations of the ignorant, those who hoist the banners of innovation and let loose the reigns of strife. They disagree regarding the Book, they oppose the Book, and they seek consensus on that which contradicts the Book. They pronounce about God and the Book of God without knowledge. They discuss the ambiguities of the word, and they deceive the ignorant of the people by that which is ambiguous to them. We take refuge with God from the discords of the fallacious. Thus (*ka-dhālika*) are al-Jahm and his party, who draw people to the ambiguous in the Quran and the hadith, thereby erring and causing many people to err by their discoursing.<sup>18</sup>

This introduction articulates the general idea that the ulema fill in for the prophets in times when the community is left without guidance.<sup>19</sup> It is in these times, Ibn Ḥanbal adds, that fallacious thinkers distort the meaning of the Quran and use its ambiguous verses to deceive the ignorant. In the context of the entire passage, the “thus” (*ka-dhālika*) marks a specifica-

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al-makhtūṭāt fi maktabat Tal'at.” *Majallat ma'had al-makhtūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya* 3 (1957): 197–236, at 226 (no. 91), where the manuscript immediately following Tal'at Tafsīr 326 (*ibid.*, 226, no. 92) is dated to 824, so perhaps it is a case of simple contamination.

17. Leiden MS Or. 6275/16.

18. MS Zaytūna 10192, 1b.11–2a.6; MS Zāhiriyya 116 = *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 27–28; BL MS Or 3106, 1b.9–2a.7 (introduction); BNF MS 4807, 76b.7–16; MS Revan 510, 49b.7–16; MS Garrett 1876Y, 1b.11–21; Leiden MS Or. 6275, 75a.12–20; *Radd*, 169–74, save the last sentence, which appears on p. 196. The first part of this introduction (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 170.3–7) is nearly verbatim the same as part of a speech attributed to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644) in Ibn Waḍḍāh, *al-Bidaʿ wa-l-nahy ʿanhā*, ed. M. I. Fierro (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 157–58 (no. I,3) = trans., 273–74. The connection between the introduction and the report of ʿUmar is pointed out by M. Ghaznawī in a marginal note to al-Ījī, *Jāmiʿ*, 561 (31). On Ibn Waḍḍāh and his work, see *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, ed. D. Thomas et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009–2018), s.vv. “Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Waḍḍāh ibn Bazīʿ al-Umawī al-Marwānī al-Qurṭubī” and “Kitāb al-bidaʿ wa-l-nahy ʿanhā” (both M. I. Fierro). Ibn Taymiyya makes the same connection in his *Darʿ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, ed. M. R. Sālim (Riyadh: Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd, 1411/1991), 1: 19.1–2.

19. The renunciant Bishr b. al-Ḥārith (d. 227/842f.) reported that Ibn Ḥanbal “stood in the place of the prophets,” as noted in Ibn ʿAsākir’s (d. 571/1176) *tarjama* of Ibn Ḥanbal: *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ʿU. al-ʿAmrawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995–2001), 5: 318–19. For a Hanbali treatment of this theme, see the biography of Ibn Ḥanbal’s great-grandson, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ, in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 65.4–23, where Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal says that the scholars have passed on the particular knowledge of the Prophet about the Quran. On the idea of heirship to the prophets more generally, see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 13–18, 152 (also citing the report from Bishr).

tion: the general error Ibn Ḥanbal has addressed in the introduction—leading people astray by recklessly discussing the Quran’s ambiguous verses—is assigned specifically to Jahm and his partisans.

In Recension 3, however, the logic of the passage is broken: the introduction transitions rather abruptly to the RefZan, marked only by a section title: “Chapter Explaining How the Zanādiqa Erred Regarding the Ambiguous [Verses] of the Quran.”<sup>20</sup> This section title, moreover, is the same as the first sentence of Recension 2: “Ibn Ḥanbal said, ‘This is an explanation of that in which the Zanādiqa erred regarding the ambiguous [verses] of the Quran’.”<sup>21</sup> Here, too, one of the Recensions seems more tightly knit than the other—the opening line in Recension 2, the inaugurating comment of its purported author, is converted into a paratextual section head in Recension 3. To put it more concretely, it is not difficult to imagine a copyist inserting the RefZan into Recension 1 by converting its first sentence into a section head, replacing “this” (*hādhā*) with “chapter” (*bāb*).

The third piece of evidence for the precedence of Recension 1 is that the titles given in the various manuscripts attest to the RefZan being added later to Recension 1. In all of the manuscripts of Recension 1, the title pages (where they exist) include something quite close to the title of the work as we know it in print editions: *al-Radd ‘alā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*.<sup>22</sup> These titles stem from the incipits of the text. In each case they begin with ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal narrating, “This is what my father produced in refutation of the Zanādiqa and the Jahmiyya regarding what they doubted of the ambiguous [verses] of the Quran and what they interpreted according to something other [than the proper interpretation].”<sup>23</sup>

Why should a text addressing only the Jahmiyya mention the Zanādiqa in the title? Although the term “Zanādiqa” may refer to a specific doxological group (usually Manichaeans), the term was used differently at different times; in many cases it referred to heretics or hypocrites broadly.<sup>24</sup> It is in one of these broader senses that the term is used—only once, in the RefJahm—when Ibn Ḥanbal describes an argument made by Jahm as “like the argument of the Zanādiqa of the Christians (*zanādiqat al-naṣārā*).” The argument is that God’s spirit (*rūḥ*), which is of God’s essence, was incarnated in Jesus. In this way, Jahm argued, God may speak through one of his creatures rather than speaking himself, which Jahm deemed impossible for God, a being unlike any other.<sup>25</sup> Daniel Gimaret thought a Marcionite argu-

20. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 175: *bāb bayān mā ḍallat fīhi al-zanādiqa min mutashābih al-qur’ān*.

21. MS Tal’at Tafsīr 326, 1b.1–3: *qāla ... Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal raḍiya Allāh ‘anhu wa-arḍāhu hādhā bayān mā ḍallat fīhi al-zanādiqa min mutashābih al-qur’ān*. The same incipit is recorded for Zāhiriyya MS 7540 by al-Khiyamī (*Fihris*, 2: 55–56).

22. MS Zāhiriyya 116 = *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 22 (plate, adding *hādhā* before *al-radd*); MS BL Or 3106, 1a.1; MS BNF 4807, 76a (adding *kitāb fīhi* before *al-radd*); MS Revan 510, on both 1b and 49a; MS Garrett 1876Y, 1a.1 (also adding *kitāb fīhi* before *al-radd*). Cf. MS Zaytūna 10192, 1b.8–9 (not counting the interpolated line 2, which is in a different hand). There is a title at *ibid.*, 1a.2–3, which is mostly erased but seems to follow the incipit closely.

23. *Hādhā mā akhrajahu abī rahimahu allāh fī al-radd ‘alā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya fī mā shakkat fīhi min mutashābih al-qur’ān wa-ta’awwalat ‘alā ghayr ta’wīlihi*. See MS Zaytūna 10192, 1b.9–11; MS Zāhiriyya 116/1 = Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 22 (plate), 27–28 (text) (with *ta’awwalūhu* in place of *ta’awwalat*); MS BL Or 3106, 1b.6–8; MS BNF 4807, 76b.6–7; MS Revan 510, 49b.5–6; MS Garrett 1876Y, 1b.8–10 (adding *ilayya* after *akhrajahu*, i.e., “this is what my father produced for me”). We will return to ‘Abd Allāh’s role in the production and transmission of the text below.

24. *EI2*, s.v. “Zindīk” (F. C. de Blois); M. Chokr, *Zandaqa et zindīqs en Islam au second siècle de l’hégire* (Beirut: Presses de l’Ifpo, 1993), chap. 1; S. Jackson, tr., *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islām wa al-Zanādiqa* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 55–57.

25. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 198.9–199.2.

ment was described here; Josef van Ess suggested it might be an Arian one.<sup>26</sup> But as Melhem Chokr has pointed out, *zandaqa* in many cases referred to a “dualist family” that included the Manichaeans, the Daysanites, and the Marcionites: he cites a variety of fourth/tenth- and fifth/eleventh-century thinkers as grouping the three together.<sup>27</sup> Whatever the case, if “the Zanādiqa” may be found within other confessional lines, it would suggest that the term does not refer to an exclusive communal identity per se but to certain kinds of theological ideas that might appear in any community, referring specifically to dualists or to “heretics” more generally.

Thus, it seems likely that the Recension 1 title simply contains a parallelism: the Jahmiyya are described as Zanādiqa; the Jahmiyya’s conception of God and his nature is *zandaqa*. Indeed, the Jahmiyya are described precisely in these terms in other early Hanbali theological texts. In one of the early creeds attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal, the Jahmiyya are specifically referred to as Zanādiqa.<sup>28</sup> Abū Bakr al-Khallāl’s (d. 311/923) creedal collection *al-Sunna* includes one report in which an authority judges the Jahmiyya to be Zanādiqa; in another report, Ibn Ḥanbal declares that Jahmī thought is *zandaqa*.<sup>29</sup> In this light, it seems more likely that the reference to the “Zanādiqa” was not to a group separate from the Jahmiyya. As with the link between the introduction and the contents of the work, the connection seems most “organic” in Recension 1. The fact that the manuscripts of Recension 3 usually include the same incipit as Recension 1, in light of the above, can then be interpreted as indicating their ultimate dependence on Recension 1.<sup>30</sup>

Alone, any of these pieces of evidence might not be decisive, but the combination of the three—the patterns of manuscript survival, the link between introduction and contents, and the likely parallelism in the title of Recension 1 (and by extension, Recension 3)—strongly suggests that Recension 1 predates the other two. If, however, the manuscripts are sufficient to establish the likely sequence of the recensions’ emergence, it still does not tell us when any of this happened, which may have been before any of the existing manuscripts were copied. For other evidence for when the text emerged, I will address the recensions in reverse order.

## 2. TERMINUS ANTE QUEM: IBN AL-QAYYIM CITES RECENSION 3

As noted, *al-Radd* remained a source of some significance for centuries after Ibn Ḥanbal’s lifetime, and there is already an accessible (and abundant) archive of quotations from it

26. D. Gimaret, “Bouddha et les bouddhistes dans la tradition musulmane,” *Journal asiatique* 257 (1969): 273–316, at 314 n. 169; J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, vol. 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991–1997), 503–4 = *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, vol. 2, tr. G. Goldbloom (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 567–68.

27. Chokr, *Zandaqa et zindiqs*, 48–61.

28. Ibn Abī Ya‘la, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 32. This creed is transmitted on the authority of (and thus appears in the *tarjama* for) Aḥmad b. Ja‘far al-Iṣṭakhrī. Al-Dhahabī (*Siyar*, 11: 287) thought it too was spurious.

29. Al-Khallāl, *al-Sunna*, ed. ‘A. al-Zahrānī (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1989–2000), 5: 90–91 (no. 1694), 123 (no. 1774). The report mentioning the Zanādiqa is analogous to ones quoting authorities describing the Jahmiyya as infidels (*kuffār*) (ibid., 89–91, nos. 1692, 1694, 1697). See also Ibn Baṭṭa, *al-İbāna ‘an shar‘at al-firqa al-nājiyya wa-mujānabat al-firqa al-madhūma*, ed. R. Mu‘ī‘ et al. (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1415/1994), 3.2: 185, where Ibn Baṭṭa refers to the *zandaqa* of the Jahmiyya.

30. A notable exception is the title of the two Kuwaiti manuscripts: *Kitāb Radd al-imām Aḥmad ‘alā al-jahmiyya wa-l-mu‘tazila*. See the plates of the two Kuwaiti manuscripts on which al-‘Ajmī relied: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 155, 157. The Mu‘tazila are not discussed explicitly in the text; their appearance in this title is a retrospective interpretation of the supposed addressees. For the relative insignificance of the Mu‘tazila at the time of the *miḥna*, see Melchert, “Adversaries of Aḥmad,” 238–40.

found in later works of Hanbali theology.<sup>31</sup> A reexamination of where and when it was quoted provides more specific evidence for the provenance of Recension 3, which seems to have emerged around the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century.

Ibn Taymiyya, the dissident Hanbali theologian, cited the work often: nearly one hundred citations across a dozen works have been found.<sup>32</sup> To take one example, Table 3 lists Ibn Taymiyya's citations or quotes from the introduction and the RefJahm in his *Fatāwā*.<sup>33</sup> It was evidently a productive source for his broader arguments.

Table 3. Ibn Taymiyya Cites *al-Radd*

In the <i>Fatāwā</i>	Corresponding passage in <i>al-Radd</i>
4: 217–18, 16: 316, 17: 300–301, 17: 308	169–73 (intro)
4: 218–19, 17: 381–82, 384	196–208 (RefJahm)
5: 310	287–88 (RefJahm)
6: 154–55	265–68 (RefJahm)
12: 277	193 (RefZan)

He cites the RefZan in just one place, however, quoting an oft-cited passage in which Ibn Ḥanbal seems to allude to figurative speech in the Quran:

The term “figurative” (*majāz*) is not known [to appear] in the speech of any of the imams, save for that of the imam Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] when he said in what he wrote in refutation of the Zanādiqa and the Jahmiyya, “This [verse] is among the figurative [language] in the Quran” (*hādhā min majāz al-qurʿān*).<sup>34</sup>

The phrase that Ibn Taymiyya quotes (*hādhā min majāz al-qurʿān*) is not what is found in the text, however—*al-Radd* itself has, “This is permitted in language” (*hādhā mujāz fī al-lughā*).<sup>35</sup> The citation is decidedly ambiguous. On the one hand, Ibn Taymiyya is clearly referring to a specific work in which Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion is known to appear; on the other hand, he misquotes the passage, which seems to suggest that he knew the idea better than the text. As al-ʿAjmi already noted, this passage is commonly cited in works of Hanbali jurisprudence theory, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, so it is possible that Ibn Taymiyya found it there and thus had only indirect access to the passage in question.<sup>36</sup> What is more, this passage is the only one from the RefZan that al-ʿAjmi knew Ibn Taymiyya to cite, and in checking the citations he assembled, I found no others.<sup>37</sup> In other words, it seems that Ibn Taymiyya knew only the RefJahm and the introduction directly, suggesting he had access to Recension 1 of *al-Radd*.

Ibn Taymiyya's younger contemporary and student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) also cites *al-Radd* in more than one of his works.<sup>38</sup> One passage suggests decisively that Ibn al-Qayyim had access to Recension 3. In *Ijtimaʿ al-juyūsh al-islāmiyya*, he sets out to prove that God is seated upon the heavenly throne using a variety of proofs, including a section on

31. See, for instance, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 86–109, noting references to and citations from it down to modern times.

32. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 97–98.

33. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ fatāwā shaykh al-islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, ed. ʿA. Ibn Qāsim et al. (Medina: Mujaḥmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 1425/2004).

34. Ibn Taymiyya, *Fatāwā*, 12: 277.11–13.

35. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 193.ult.

36. See §3 below for the works on *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

37. He cites the passage in question at Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 193 n. 3.

38. See al-ʿAjmi's collection at Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 98–100 (sixteen passages in a half dozen works).



relevant arguments made by Ibn Ḥanbal. In this passage he quotes the entire introduction of *al-Radd* followed immediately by the first part of the RefZan, which discusses Quran 4:56.<sup>39</sup> This combination of the introduction and the beginning of the RefZan is known only from Recension 3 witnesses to the text.<sup>40</sup>

It is perhaps unexpected that Ibn al-Qayyim should know a different version of the text than Ibn Taymiyya. It is possible that Recension 3 was circulating without Ibn Taymiyya's knowledge, but given how frequently he cited *al-Radd*, he cannot have had only a passing acquaintance with it. Since Ibn al-Qayyim is remembered as a fervent collector of books, perhaps his bibliophilia led him to a "newer" version of the text than the one his teacher knew.<sup>41</sup> At any rate, it is clear that Recension 3 was circulating in Damascus (where both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim lived) sometime between the death of Ibn Taymiyya in 728/1328 and that of Ibn al-Qayyim in 751/1350.

The window might be slightly narrowed by the fact that Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ijtimāʿ* was not the last work he wrote: as one editor, ʿAwwād al-Muʿtiq, pointed out, Ibn al-Qayyim cites *al-Ijtimāʿ* in other texts.<sup>42</sup> But there has been little work done on the chronology of Ibn al-Qayyim's works, aside from a relative sketch by Joseph Bell, later retooled by Livnat Holtzman.<sup>43</sup> They both hold that most of Ibn al-Qayyim's works must have been written after the death of Ibn Taymiyya, since the pious invocation used after the latter's name (*raḥimahu Allāh*) tends to be used for the names of the deceased.<sup>44</sup> Bell reckoned *al-Ijtimāʿ* among Ibn al-Qayyim's "early works," since it is cited in his other texts; Holtzman listed it among his "middle works."<sup>45</sup> There is one key piece of evidence that helps to narrow the dating: it is cited in Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ḥādī al-arwāḥ ilā bilād al-afrāḥ*, an autograph manuscript in Mosul written in 745/1344f.<sup>46</sup> This in turn suggests that Recension 3 circulated in the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century in Damascus, perhaps between 728/1328 and 745/1344f.

39. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ijtimāʿ al-juyūsh al-islāmīyya ʿalā ghazw al-muʿaṭṭila wa-l-jahmiyya*, ed. ʿA. al-Muʿtiq (Riyadh: Maṭābiʿ al-Farazdaq, 1408/1988) 2: 202.5–203.4.

40. Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 169–75.

41. Ibn Rajab, *Kitāb al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. M. H. al-Fiḳī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1372/1952), 2: 449.6–7; and Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-miʿa al-thāmina*, ed. S. al-Krankawī et al. (Haydarabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1349–1353/1930–1932), 3: 401.ult–402.2. Cited in B. Krawietz, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: His Life and Works," *Mamluk Studies Review* 10.2 (2006): 19–64, at 26.

42. Noted by al-Muʿtiq, *Ijtimāʿ*, 2.5 (no. 2). Cf. B. Abū Zayd, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: Ḥayātuhu, āthāruhu, mawāriduhu* (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀshima, 1423/2002f.), 201. See, for instance, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Fawāʿid*, ed. M. ʿU. Shams (Mecca: Dār ʿĀlam al-Fawāʿid, 1429/2007f.), 4–5.

43. J. N. Bell, *Love Theory in Later Ḥanbalite Islam* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1979); L. Holtzman, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, ed. J. Lowry et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 202–33.

44. As Holtzman notes ("Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah," 205a), however, it would not be unheard of for a later copyist to interpolate such phrases.

45. Bell, *Love Theory*, 97–103, esp. 95 nn. 19, 27; Holtzman, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah," 202a.

46. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ḥādī al-arwāḥ ilā bilād al-afrāḥ*, ed. Z. al-Nashīrī (Mecca: Dār ʿĀlam al-Fawāʿid, 1426/2006), 843.6–7. For the autograph, S. ʿA. Aḥmad, *Fihrist makhtūṭāt maktabat al-awqāf al-ʿamma fī al-Mawṣil* (Baghdad: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʿūn al-Dīniyya, 1403/1982), 2: 31 (no. 6/2). Cited by the editor in *Kitāb al-Ṣawāʿiq al-mursala ʿalā al-jahmiyya wa-l-muʿaṭṭila*, ed. ʿA. al-Dakhīl Allāh (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀshima, 1408/1987), 82–83. I owe the reference to Y. Qadhī, "The Unleashed Thunderbolts of Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyyah: An Introductory Essay," *Oriente Moderno* 90.1 (2010): 135–49, at 136–37 and n. 5.

## 3. RECENSION 2 AND THE ORIGINS OF THE REFZAN

So far I have argued that the RefZan must represent a secondary development in the history of the text, and shown that Recension 3, which incorporates the RefZan, was known around the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century in Damascus. Now we can turn to consider the origins of Recension 2 and the RefZan. It is worth asking first, however, who the Zanādiqa are. In the titles of Recension 1, the term was used as another name for the Jahmiyya. Yet in the RefZan, the Zanādiqa are portrayed as making positive theological claims about the Quran—namely, that it contradicts itself.<sup>47</sup> That is, they criticize the Quran as a theological keystone rather than attempting to elucidate it (incorrectly per the Hanbalis), as in the case of Jahm and his ilk.

There are two pieces of evidence linking the RefZan to the first half of the sixth/twelfth century. The first is a brief reference to it appearing in Baghdadi Hanbali works of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, e.g., Abū al-Wafāʾ Ibn ʿAqīl (d. 513/1119) in his *al-Wāḍiḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*. Discussing the possibility that there might be “figurative” language (*majāz*) in the Quran, Ibn ʿAqīl nods to Ibn Ḥanbal: “Aḥmad (may God be pleased with him) indicated that some of the Quran is figurative. Regarding the verse, ‘We are with you, listening,’<sup>48</sup> he said, ‘This is figurative language’.”<sup>49</sup> The same reference was made by Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Kalwadhānī (d. 510/1116) in his work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, although he quotes only the opinion and not the text itself.<sup>50</sup> As al-ʿAjmī says, if Ibn Ḥanbal really meant it as such, it would have been a relatively early reference to the concept.<sup>51</sup>

It is unsurprising that two major denizens of Baghdadi Hanbali circles should be familiar with the text given their connections to the broader circles of textual transmission in the school. Because they only cite one minor part of the RefZan, however, it remains unclear how much of the text they knew and when, providing only minimal insight into the text’s history. This is particularly true given that, like Ibn Taymiyya, their quotation of Aḥmad differs from the text of *al-Radd* itself: Ibn ʿAqīl says, “This is figurative language” (*hādhā fī majāz al-lughā*), but *al-Radd* reads, “This is permitted in language” (*hādhā mujāz fī al-lughā*).<sup>52</sup> Moreover they cite this opinion without reference to the specific argument of the RefZan (in which Ibn Ḥanbal seeks to refute arguments that the Quran contradicts itself). Similarly, given their contemporaneity, it is somewhat difficult to find any particularities that reveal where they might have heard the text. For instance, both Ibn ʿAqīl and al-Kalwadhānī studied *fiqh* with the qadi Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrāʾ (d. 458/1066), but, as will be discussed below, there is no evidence that Ibn al-Farrāʾ himself knew the RefZan or any recension of the text

47. The claims of the Zanādiqa are presented formulaically: first are cited verses from the Quran, then comes the claim that they contradict one another. On these grounds, it is repeated, the Zanādiqa “doubted the Quran.” See, e.g., Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 176–77, pointing out that the damned are described as “deaf, dumb, and blind” on the day of judgment (Q 17:97), but that the damned are also described as calling out to the saved (Q 7:44, 50). Ibn Ḥanbal explains this problem away by claiming that these two things will happen at different points during the eschaton.

48. Q 26:15: *innā maʿakum mustamiʿūna*. In this passage, God is reassuring Moses and Aaron that he will be “with them” when they confront Pharaoh.

49. Ibn ʿAqīl, *al-Wāḍiḥ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. ʿA. al-Turkī (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1420/1999), 2: 386.2–3: *qad naṣṣa Aḥmad raḍīya Allāh ʿanhu ʿalā kawn baʿd al-qurʾān majāzan fa-qāla fī qawlihi innā maʿakum mustamiʿūna hādhā fī majāz al-lughā*. Noted by al-ʿAjmī in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 94–95.

50. Al-Kalwadhānī, *al-Tamhīd fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. M. M. Abū ʿAshma and M. Ibn Ibrāhīm (Jedda: Dār al-Madanī, 1406/1985), 2: 265–66. Noted by al-ʿAjmī in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 97.

51. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 96n. and 193n. There is an earlier discussion of the Quran’s figurative language in *Majāz al-qurʾān* by Abū ʿUbayda Maʿmar b. al-Muthannā (d. 209/824).

52. *Ibid.*, 193.ult.

other than Recension 1.<sup>53</sup> This leaves the possibility that either the RefZan or Recension 2 emerged sometime between the mid-fifth and early sixth/mid-eleventh and early twelfth centuries. It also seems likely that it was in Baghdad that this happened, given the biographies of the two scholars cited.

A second piece of evidence for the RefZan's origins comes in a work on the eponymous founders of the four surviving Sunni schools of jurisprudence (sg. *madhhab*) written by a largely unknown preacher named Yahyā b. Ibrāhīm al-Salmāsī (d. 550/1155f.).<sup>54</sup> There he mentions that Ibn Ḥanbal wrote both *Kiāb al-Radd 'alā al-jahmiyya* and *al-Radd 'alā al-zanādiqa fī da'wāhum al-tanāquḍ 'alā al-qur'ān*.<sup>55</sup> Al-Salmāsī's reference is notable for two reasons. First, the title he gives for the Zanādiqa-related work is specific. That is, unlike the manuscript titles, which speak only of general errors regarding the ambiguous verses of the Quran, this title refers particularly to claims that the Quran contradicts itself. In the RefZan, all twenty-two claims made by the Zanādiqa depend on pointing out contradictions among groups of verses from the Quran. The claim of contradiction is made specifically in thirteen instances.<sup>56</sup> In six other instances, the charge raised by the Zanādiqa is that the cited verses cannot be considered among those verses regarded as "clear" (*muḥkam*).<sup>57</sup> It is likely, however, that contradiction is still meant in these six instances. In the eighth point of dispute, the problem raised by the Zanādiqa with a group of verses is that they are not *muḥkam*, which is then explained as meaning that the verses contradict one another.<sup>58</sup> In short, the specific issue raised in al-Salmāsī's title clearly describes the contents of the RefZan, which discusses only that issue.

Second, al-Salmāsī is already explicitly linked with the transmission of some form of *al-Radd*: he is named in Riwāya Y, the one given in the two Kuwaiti witnesses to Recension 3.<sup>59</sup> Appearing in a *riwāya* suggests that he knew more of the text than its title, but which version of the text did al-Salmāsī know? There is one specific reason to suspect that Riwāya Y pertains only to Recension 1—namely, al-Salmāsī's source, Ibn Abī Ya'fā, quotes passages from the RefJahm in his biographical compendium of Hanbalis but never mentions the RefZan or anything like it.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, because the two transmissions have their first four authorities in

53. Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, 1: 116 (al-Kalwadhānī), 142 (Ibn 'Aqīl). Cf *EI2*, s.v. "Ibn 'Aqīl" (G. Makdisi).

54. For the province and urban center Salmās (whence the *nisba* al-Salmāsī) in Iranian Azerbaijan, see *EI2*, s.v. "Salmās" (C. E. Bosworth).

55. Al-Salmāsī, *Manāzil al-a'imma al-arba'a*, ed. M. Qadaḥ (Medina: al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna al-Munawwara, 1422/2002), 239.4–6 = ed. 'A. al-Kundurī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1420/1999), 133.3–5. None of the manuscripts bears this title. The later Palestinian Hanbali Muḥjir al-Dīn al-'Ulaymī (d. 928/1522) gives the same two titles, perhaps indicating knowledge of al-Salmāsī's work: *al-Manhaj al-aḥmad fī tarājim aṣḥāb al-imām Aḥmad*, ed. 'A. Arnā'ūt et al. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997), 1: 85–86. Noted in al-Nashshār and al-Ṭālibī, *Aqā'id al-salaf*, 15–16.

56. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 175, 175–76, 178–79, 179–80, 181–82, 182–83, 184–85, 185–86, 186–87, 187–88, 188, 189–90, 191.

57. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 176–77, 177–78, 181, 189, 189–90, 192–93.

58. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 181–82. In each case, moreover, it is clear that contradiction is implied. For instance, in the last issue (ibid., 193–96) the two verses mentioned are Q 20:46 and 26:15. In the former God says, "I am with you two, listening and hearing" (*innanī ma'akumā asma'u wa-arā*); in the latter God says, "We are with you, listening" (*innā ma'akum mustami'ūna*). The implication is that God's speaking in both the singular and the plural suggests contradictory conceptions of the God's personhood—this is why Ibn Ḥanbal responds (ibid., 195–96) by claiming that using multiple grammatical persons is permitted in language. On the issue of "clear" versus "ambiguous" verses (*muḥkam* and *mutashābih*, respectively), see *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. J. D. McAuliffe et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006), s.v. "Ambiguous" (L. Kinberg).

59. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 169.

60. Ibn Abī Ya'fā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 48. His father also adduced many such passages. See below.

common (ʿAbd Allāh b. Ibn Ḥanbal; al-Khadīr b. al-Muthannā; Abū Bakr al-Khallāl; Ghulām al-Khallāl), it seems most likely that both were originally for Recension 1 of the text.

Thus, although it seems clear that al-Salmāsī was describing the RefZan, the other evidence only connects him to the transmission of the RefJahm. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure exactly where al-Salmāsī got the text or from whom.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that he received it in Baghdad, which would tally well with Ibn ʿAqīl and al-Kalwadhānī’s citing the text in the late fifth/eleventh century. Ibn ʿAsākir, who apparently met al-Salmāsī, reports that al-Salmāsī’s father took him to hear teachers (*shuyūkh*) in Baghdad as a boy; Riwayā Y indicates that he heard the text from Ibn Abī Yaʿlā in the Bāb al-Marātīb neighborhood of east Baghdad during Rabīʿ II 504 (October–November 1110), i.e., when al-Salmāsī was some thirty years old.<sup>62</sup>

Al-Salmāsī was far from being a Baghdadi Hanbali, and he is imbricated in multiple networks of transmission. Thus, Ibn ʿAsākir mentions his having heard teachers in Azerbaijan (specifically in Khuy and Marand) and in Mosul.<sup>63</sup> Among his Mosuli teachers was the well-known Shafīʿi judge Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn al-Shahrazūrī (d. 538/1143), from whom Ibn ʿAsākir also transmitted hadith.<sup>64</sup> Al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166) notes that Ibn al-Shahrazūrī’s father, al-Qāsim, studied with one of the figures in Riwayā Y, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAlī al-Azājī (d. 444/1052).<sup>65</sup>

Enlightening in this regard is Ibn ʿAsākir’s comment that al-Salmāsī followed al-Shāfiʿī in particular positions (*furūʿ*) but Ibn Ḥanbal in theological principles (*uṣūl*).<sup>66</sup> That is, al-Salmāsī rejected the Shafīʿiyya in their acceptance of Ashʿari creedal principles (*uṣūl al-dīn*) and hewed to the credo of the Hanbalis instead.<sup>67</sup> In other words, he was invested in what George Makdisi called “traditionalist” theology, which might also explain why he

61. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 64: 44–46. It has been noted (al-Salmāsī, *Manāzil*, ed. Qadaḥ, 16 n. 1) that the manuscript behind ʿAmrawī’s edition of Ibn ʿAsākir mistakenly gives his birthyear as 494, which disagrees with the other dates in the biography. A different manuscript, as well as the *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn ʿAsākir, gives his birthyear as 474, which tallies better with the other dates; see also al-Salmāsī, *Manāzil*, ed. Kunderī, 9. *Sabʿ* (“seven”) and *tisʿ* (“nine”) are consonantly similar and thus easily mistaken in copying. For other biographies, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mashyakhat Ibn al-Jawzī*, ed. M. Maḥfūz (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2006), 145–47; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. M. ʿAṭā and M. ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1412/1992), 18: 105; al-Dhahabī, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-muḥtāj ilayhi min Taʾrīkh Ibn al-Dubaythī*, ed. M. Jawād and N. Maʿrūf (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿārif and Maṭbaʿa al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī, 1371–1397/1951–1977), 3: 237 (no. 1333); idem, *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ʿA. M. al-Bajāwī (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), 4: 360 (no. 9449).

62. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 64: 45.1; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 169.6. For Bāb al-Marātīb (“Gate of Degrees”), near the later Abbasid palace, see G. Le Strange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate from Arabic and Persian Sources* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 276–77.

63. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 64: 45.1–8. It is difficult, however, to find these teachers in other sources, and Ibn ʿAsākir mostly mentions their names in hadith chains of transmission quoted elsewhere in the *Taʾrīkh*, e.g., 19: 22.1–2, 27: 97.12–14, 55: 228.10–11 (al-Salmāsī > Niʿmat Allāh al-Marandī > etc.). My impression is that some of Ibn ʿAsākir’s comments about al-Salmāsī are garnered from the chains of the reports he received from al-Salmāsī.

64. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 55: 101–2; Ibn al-Mustawfī, *Taʾrīkh Irbil*, ed. S. al-Ṣāqār (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd, 1980), 1: 203–6; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20: 139; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyya al-kubrā*, ed. M. M. al-Ṭanāḥī and ʿA. al-Ḥilw (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1383/1964), 8: 174–75.

65. Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, ed. S. Aḥmad et al. (Haydarabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1397/1977), 8: 180.15.

66. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 64: 45.13–14.

67. Henri Laoust explains (“Le Hanbalisme sous le califat de Bagdad,” *Revue des études islamiques* 1 [1959]: 67–128, at 89) that some of the Shafīʿis rejected the dialectical theology of the Ashʿaris as a foundation for “doctrine” (presumably *uṣūl al-dīn*) and claimed to follow Ibn Ḥanbal in this field instead. For instances of Hanbali action against the Ashʿariyya around the time al-Salmāsī lived, see M. Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 119–20.

was involved in the transmission of this text.<sup>68</sup> *Al-Radd* presents the opponents of the ulema as a group of generic “heretics” who doubt the scripture, and the largely mythical sect of a heresiarch often identified as the origin for the very idea against which Ibn Ḥanbal made his martyr-like resistance, a sect whose name was used as an epithet for the Muʿtazila.<sup>69</sup> Surely these are the enemies of the traditionalist.<sup>70</sup>

There is little else in the biography of al-Salmāsī that helps to narrow down the origins of the RefZan. Ibn ʿAsākir mentions that al-Salmāsī “had many books with him, but he had audited few of them with authorized transmitters.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, Ibn ʿAsākir doubted al-Salmāsī was technically authorized to teach all those books. Perhaps in al-Salmāsī’s biography we find a hint of how a shifting text like *al-Radd* might pass through Hanbali circles of learning, carried by an ambiguous thinker more interested in making his points than in scholarship’s every nicety. At any rate, it is clear that the RefZan was known in Baghdad in the first part of the sixth/twelfth century; Recension 2 must have been born nearby.

#### 4. RECENSION 1 AND THE ORIGINS OF THE REFJAHM

There is a great deal more evidence for the origins of Recension 1, and it seems to have emerged relatively early: already Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) ascribes to Ibn Ḥanbal a text entitled *al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*.<sup>72</sup> There is a relatively stable terminus ante quem since verbatim quotations of lengthy passages from *al-Radd*, although not from the RefZan, are found in fifth/eleventh-century Hanbali theological works;<sup>73</sup> and there is a relatively clear terminus post quem for Recension 1: both Ibn Ḥanbal’s son ʿAbd Allāh (d. 290/903) and Abū Bakr al-Khallāl quote lists of quranic verses that Ibn Ḥanbal “used to make arguments against the Jahmiyya,” but neither connects this explicitly to a text he wrote. Rather, they are purportedly drawn from Ibn Ḥanbal’s notebooks and are simply copied into the flow of both ʿAbd Allāh’s and al-Khallāl’s texts. One imagines that if either of those scholars knew about *al-Radd*, they would have mentioned it, especially if it had been actually written by Ibn Ḥanbal. Still, there is some evidence to suggest that the thinking behind *al-Radd* arose in Ibn Ḥanbal’s time or soon after.

68. George Makdisi suggests, in the now somewhat outdated “Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History” (*Studia Islamica* 17 [1962]: 37–80; 18 [1963]: 19–39), that the Shafīʿiyya were split: some regarded the Ashʿari dialectical method as a sound basis for *uṣūl al-dīn*, but others regarded it as an innovation on their “traditionalist” theology, which held that scriptural accounts should be accepted without investigation. Thus, the traditionalist Shafīʿiyya was more closely aligned with the traditionalist Hanbalis than with the Ashʿari Shafīʿiyya (Makdisi 1962: 79; 1963: 38).

69. Melchert argues in “Adversaries of Aḥmad” that the Muʿtazila did not become the focus of Hanbali opprobrium until the late third/ninth century, but for the link between the Jahmiyya and the Muʿtazila, see *EI2*, s.v. “Djahmiyya” (W. M. Watt). This link is perhaps why the Kuwaiti manuscripts mention the Muʿtazila in their title.

70. See Makdisi 1962: 48–52. For a study of how Ibn Ḥanbal’s views fit into the landscape of early third/ninth-century theology, see Melchert, “Adversaries of Aḥmad,” which relies especially on the creeds recorded by Ibn Abī Yaʿlā.

71. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 64: 45.7. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for the revision to this passage.

72. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. A. F. Sayyid (London: Muʿassasat al-Furqān, 2009): 2.1: 100. Noted by C. Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Longmans and Company, 1894), 100–101 (no. 169); al-ʿAjmī in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 85, 90.

73. S. S. AlSarhan, “Early Muslim Traditionalism: A Critical Study of the Works and Political Theology of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal,” (PhD diss., Univ. of Exeter, 2011), 48–53.

#### 4.1. *Quranic Arguments in the “Family” Biographies*

Along with many others, Ibn Ḥanbal was famously interrogated in the *miḥna* over his theological positions (and, implicitly, his loyalty to temporal rule).<sup>74</sup> Although there is some evidence to suggest he may have capitulated, many Hanbalis and others commemorate his forbearance; he is said to have resisted all manner of attacks, both theological and physical.<sup>75</sup> Particularly important in the growth of this literature are what Michael Cooperson has called the “family biographies,” two early accounts of Ibn Ḥanbal’s experience purportedly written on the basis of extensive recounting from Ibn Ḥanbal himself. One was written by Ibn Ḥanbal’s son Ṣāliḥ (d. 265/878), the other by his cousin Ḥanbal b. Ishāq (d. 273/886f.).

In one scene from Ṣāliḥ’s account, after Ibn Ḥanbal’s interrogation has ground to a halt, the caliph al-Muṭṭaṣim (r. 218–227/833–842) dispatches two agents to interrogate him a second time at the behest of Ibn Ḥanbal’s uncle, desperate to provide his nephew one last chance to avoid execution. Instead, Ibn Ḥanbal ends up accusing one of the caliph’s agents of disbelief (*kufḥ*) for asserting that God’s knowledge is created. The prefect of Ibn Ḥanbal’s neighborhood intervenes:

“Aḥmad, it’s your life at stake! [The caliph] has vowed not to kill you by the sword, but to flog you blow after blow and then throw you in a place in which the sun is never seen! Indeed, has not God (exalted) said, ‘We made it an Arabic Quran?’<sup>76</sup> And is not a thing ‘made,’ a thing created?” [Ibn Ḥanbal] replied, “God (exalted) has also said, ‘He made [the Army of the Elephant] as a field of chaff.’<sup>77</sup> Did God ‘create’ them that way?” [The prefect] said, “Take him away.”<sup>78</sup>

It is difficult to know if Ibn Ḥanbal himself made this argument in precisely the way that Ṣāliḥ described. In the cousin’s account, the same scene is given, but Ibn Ḥanbal makes no such argument then; Ibn Ḥanbal does adduce an argument about the semantics of the verb *jaʿala* later, but in a different debate with a different caliphal representative.<sup>79</sup> Yet the fact that he is portrayed as making this style of argument so soon after his death and by people who knew him personally is surely significant: even if the argument did not happen, it was at least imaginable to his milieu.

What is more, the family biography argument is precisely the sort made in *al-Radd*, when Ibn Ḥanbal says that the Jahmiyya has no proof text from either the Quran or the Sunna of Muḥammad to support its argument that the Quran is created. The best it can do, he says, is adduce that same verse (Q 43:3, “We made it an Arabic Quran”) and argue that “made” really means “created.” But Ibn Ḥanbal identifies three separate meanings for *jaʿala* as it appears in the Quran—one is simply to name something (*ʿalā maʿnā al-tasmiya*), the other two are actions (*fiʿl min afʿāl*) either meaning “to create” (*ʿalā maʿnā khalaqa*) or something else

74. For a prosopographical examination of scholars interrogated in the *miḥna*, see J. A. Nawas, “The *Miḥna* of 218 A.H./833 A.D. Revisited: An Empirical Study,” *JAOS* 116.4 (1996): 698–708.

75. On the growth of this literature, see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 117–51.

76. Q 43:3: *innā jaʿalnāhu qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan*.

77. Q 105:5: *fa-jaʿalahum ka-ʿaşfin maʿkūlin*. For the latter phrase, see E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1968), 2064a: “Like corn of which the grain has been eaten and the straw thereof remains.”

78. Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Sīrat al-imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. F. ʿA. Aḥmad (Alexandria: Muʿassasat al-Jāmiʿa, 1401/1981), 54.2–8. Cf. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 119–20, to which my debt should be clear, though I have freely altered his translation.

79. Ḥanbal b. Ishāq, *Dhikr miḥnat al-imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. M. Naghsh (Cairo: Dār Nashr al-Thaqāfa, 1398/1977), 45–46 (same scene), 58–59 (analogous argument).

(*‘alā ma‘nā ghayr khalaqa*).<sup>80</sup> He adduces many verses as instances of these various meanings (although not Q 105:5, mentioned in both Ṣāliḥ’s and Ḥanbal’s accounts), all to say: How is one to know precisely what God means if God says, “We made it an Arabic Quran,” given that the verb “made” is used in multiple ways in the scripture?<sup>81</sup>

What we may conclude from the appearance of these kinds of arguments in the early family biographies of Ibn Ḥanbal is that the idea of *al-Radd*, if not its precise form, goes right back to the commemoration of Ibn Ḥanbal’s life by the first generation of his followers.<sup>82</sup> Still, there remains some ambiguity in how the first phrasing of the argument in the biographies is to be connected to the text of *al-Radd* as it finally developed. There is a difference between making specific arguments in response to a particular theological question and having a general doctrinal position; similarly, there is a difference between the establishment of a general position or idea and the writing of an independent and identifiable text. Fortunately, the ideas informing *al-Radd* left other traces in the Hanbali oeuvre, to which we now turn.

#### 4.2. *The Lists of ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Bakr al-Khallāl*

The seeds of quranic argumentation planted in the family biographies sprouted in two early Hanbali doctrinal works, both called *al-Sunna*.<sup>83</sup> One was by Ibn Ḥanbal’s son ‘Abd Allāh, best known as the primary transmitter and shaper of his *Musnad*,<sup>84</sup> and the other was by Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, best known as the great collector of the various strands of Ibn Ḥanbal’s thought (most famously in *al-Jāmi‘ li-‘ulūm Aḥmad*).<sup>85</sup> Both contain lists of verses from the Quran purportedly made by Ibn Ḥanbal to refute the claims of the Jahmiyya about the nature of the Quran. Described thus, the lists sound a lot like *al-Radd* in a prototypical form, but analysis reveals that the lists of verses are ultimately so different from *al-Radd* that they cannot have been direct sources for any of the historical recensions. If the lists provide further attestation that the earliest Hanbalis were engaged in *Radd*-like argumentation, they also suggest that Recension 1 must have emerged sometime after ‘Abd Allāh and al-Khallāl wrote.

80. An instance of the latter is God’s declaration (Q 2:124) that he made Ibrāhīm an imam for the people. Ibn Ḥanbal says (*Radd*, 217), “[Here] it does not mean, ‘We created you as an imam for the people’, because the creation of Ibrāhīm was earlier.”

81. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 214–20 (the moral of the story comes at 219.1–3). It is worth noting that these kinds of arguments do not deal with the eternity of the Quran; rather, the issue is what the status of the revelation reveals about the nature of God. For the strictly anti-anthropomorphist Jahmiyya, the Quran could not possibly be “God’s speech,” for this implies that God has human organs through which to speak. See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 265–71. Whether or not this point revealed anything about the Quran’s temporality is an issue that only came up toward the end of the third/ninth century—see W. Madelung, “The Origins of the Controversy Concerning the Creation of the Koran,” in *Orientalia hispanica sive studia F. M. Pareja octogenario dicata* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 504–25, esp. 512–15; cf. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 118, 123–35.

82. Cooperson notes (*Classical Arabic Biography*, 122) that some of the caliph’s scholars, rank rationalists as they were, refused to acknowledge the hadith as proof texts and demanded only citations from the Quran. Perhaps this would explain why *al-Radd* has so few hadith in it.

83. ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Sunna*, ed. M. al-Qaḥṭānī (al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Qayyim, 1406/1986) = ed. ‘A. Āl al-Shaykh et al. (Mecca: al-Maṭba‘a al-Salafiyya, 1349/1930f.). (The latter edition is attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal himself.) See also al-Khallāl, *Sunna*.

84. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rīkh madīnat al-salām*, ed. B.‘A. Ma‘rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1422/2002), 11: 12–13; Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 180–88. On ‘Abd Allāh’s role in the composition of Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad*, see Ch. Melchert, “The *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books,” *Der Islam* 82 (2005): 32–51, at 41–43, 47–49.

85. Al-Khaṭīb, *Ta’rīkh*, 6: 300–301; Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 12–15. *EI2*, s.v. “al-Khallāl” (H. Laoust). On this in-gathering of materials, see Laoust, “Hanbalisme sous le califat,” 79–80; Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law, 9th–10th Centuries CE* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 143–47.

In general, both *al-Sunna* works consist of reports about the opinions of Ibn Ḥanbal and his peers on what they consider to be the various problematic lines of thinking in early Islamic theology (the Muʿtazila, the Murjiʿa, the Khawārij, and so on).<sup>86</sup> One common theme in these passages is the issue of social interaction with holders of problematic views: is it permissible to greet them in the street or to pray alongside them? Ibn Ḥanbal and like-minded contemporaries tended to recommend avoiding such people altogether.<sup>87</sup> The lists are embedded in this otherwise broad section on dealing with the Jahmiyya.

There are two versions of the lists transmitted by three authorities.<sup>88</sup> The first version is that given directly by ʿAbd Allāh. He says little, however, about how these verses were used in argumentation. Moreover, the report recorded by Ibn Abī Yaʿlā about the transmission of Ibn Ḥanbal’s texts to ʿAbd Allāh does not mention *al-Radd* among the things he heard.<sup>89</sup> The second version is that by al-Khallāl, who seems to have compiled it from two slightly earlier versions: one he transmits from Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 275/888),<sup>90</sup> one of Ibn Ḥanbal’s companions, and the other stems ultimately from ʿAbd Allāh, transmitted to al-Khallāl by a little known early Hanbali named al-Khaḍir b. Aḥmad b. al-Muthannā.<sup>91</sup> The lists are announced by the following three comments:

[ʿAbd Allāh:] In my father’s notebook, I found in his handwriting [a list] of the verses used to make arguments against the Jahmiyya regarding the Quran.<sup>92</sup>

[Khallāl 1:] Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī reported to us, “This [list of verses] is what [Ibn Ḥanbal] used to make arguments against the Jahmiyya regarding the Quran. He wrote it in his hand, and I copied it from his notebook.” Then al-Marrūdhī related to us many verses from the Quran that al-Khaḍir did not relate from ʿAbd Allāh. [Al-Marrūdhī] said, “And I heard [Ibn Ḥanbal] make arguments [with these verses] against them—i.e., the Jahmiyya—regarding the Quran in another place.”<sup>93</sup>

86. Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions on these groups being recorded alongside those of other scholars has been interpreted by Laoust (“Hanbalisme sous le califat,” 75) as a sign that the early Hanbalis were not so much attached to Ibn Ḥanbal as to the way of thinking he represented. Melchert also notes (*Formation*, 143) that al-Khallāl’s collection of Ibn Ḥanbal’s teachings “included much discussion of dogma and piety alongside jurisprudence.” In both cases, it seems, Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions on practical and theological matters were considered parts of a whole.

87. See, for instance, al-Khallāl, *Sunna*, 5: 91–93 (nos. 1698–1703).

88. ʿAbd Allāh, *Sunna*, 1: 512–520 (no. 1202) = 1: 169–77; al-Khallāl, *Sunna*, 6: 48–73.

89. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 183.16–21, although the report (given on the authority of Abū al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Munādī, d. 336/947—see al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, 5: 110–11) says “along with other compositions,” which are not named.

90. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 56–63.

91. *Ibid.*, 2: 47–48. I have been unable to find information about al-Khaḍir. He is occasionally cited in transmission chains as an authority for Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (e.g., Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Abī ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. and tr. M. Cooperson [New York: New York Univ. Press, 2013], 2: 62–63) or as a transmitter from ʿAbd Allāh (e.g., al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 13: 517. *ult.*). The last reference I owe to one of the *JAOS* anonymous reviewers. Ibn Rajab refers to him as an “unknown source who only transmitted rejected opinions from ʿAbd Allāh.” See his *Taqrīr al-qawāʿid wa-tahrīr al-fawāʿid*, ed. M. ʿĀl Salmān (Khubar: Dār Ibn ʿAffān, 1999), 2: 405.2–3 (cited in AlSarhan, “Early Muslim Traditionalism,” 49). In his *Ijtimāʿ* (2: 209.8–11), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya explains: “Al-Khallāl said that he copied the book from ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad, and that ʿAbd Allāh copied it from his father. It is clear that al-Khallāl only transmitted it from al-Khaḍir because he wished to have a continuous chain of transmission in the fashion of hadith transmitters and appended it to his written transmission. Al-Khaḍir was a child when he heard it from ʿAbd Allāh, and he was not among the long-lived or those famed for knowledge, nor was he one of the masters (*shuyūkh*).”

92. ʿAbd Allāh, *Sunna*, 1: 512 (no. 1202) = 1: 169.12–13: *wajadtu fī kitāb abī bi-khaṭṭ yadihi mim mā yuḥtajju bihi ʿalā al-jahmiyya min al-qurʿān*. The former edition adds *al-karīm* after *al-qurʿān*.

93. Al-Khallāl, *Sunna*, 6: 48–49 (no. 1906): *hādhā mā aḥtājja bihi [Ibn Ḥanbal] ʿalā al-jahmiyya fī al-qurʿān katabahu bi-khaṭṭi min kitābihi fa-dhakara al-Marrūdhī āyāt kathīra dūna mā dhakara al-Khaḍir b. Aḥmad ʿan*



[Khallāl 2:] Al-Khaḍir b. Aḥmad b. al-Muthannā al-Kindī reported to us, “I heard ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal say, ‘I found this notebook in the hand of my father regarding that which was argued by against the Jahmiyya.’ He had arranged the verses according to the verse order of the chapters of the Quran.”<sup>94</sup>

In addition to the apparent similarities in phrasing, it is worth noting that Riwāya X and Y only mention al-Khaḍir as playing any part in the text’s transmission, omitting all mention of Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī.<sup>95</sup>

Al-Khallāl’s explanation of what he thinks the list of verses accomplishes is also relevant to determining which version of the text he knew. He writes:

[1a] [Ibn Ḥanbal] made clear, with the names of God that he wrote out (*kharrajahā*)<sup>96</sup> and these signs and aspects (*aḥruf*)<sup>97</sup> in the Quran, that the Quran is not created in any aspect, in any manner (*sabab*), or in any sense whatsoever.<sup>98</sup>

[1b] This is a rebuttal of the opinion of the erring Jahmiyya because these other verses and the names make clear that no part of the Quran is created.<sup>99</sup> [2a] As for the names of God (blessed and exalted), I have also found those who took them (*akhrajahā*) from the book of Aḥmad and explained their context in the Quran, and [2b] this is a verification of what [Ibn Ḥanbal] mentioned in this regard about the Quran and the names.<sup>100</sup>

Al-Khallāl makes two claims here, drawing an implication from each. First, he says that Ibn Ḥanbal demonstrated the Quran cannot be called created in any sense (1a); the Jahmiyya’s claim that the Quran is created is therefore shown to be erroneous (1b). Second, al-Khallāl says that other scholars have made the same point using the names of God, as mentioned by Aḥmad (2a), which, he asserts, attests to the validity of Ibn Ḥanbal’s claim (2b). Neither of these claims, however, really explains how the verses cited in the lists dem-

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‘Abd Allāh wa-qāla wa-fīhi sami‘tu [Ibn Ḥanbal] yaqūlu fī al-qur‘ān ‘alayhim fī ghayr mawḍi‘ ya‘nī al-jahmiyya. The phrase *fī ghayr mawḍi‘* is obscure to me.

94. Ibid., 6: 49 (no. 1907): *sami‘tu ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal qāla wajaḍtu hādihā al-kitāb bi-khaṭṭ abī fī mā yuḥajju bihi ‘alā al-jahmiyya wa-qad allafa al-āyāt ilā al-āyāt min al-sūra*. I am grateful to Michael Cook for correcting several errors in my translations.

95. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 142–43 (introduction, describing both chains), 169 (text, giving Riwāya Y).

96. The verb *kharraja* might also mean “explained,” but I find the former meaning more probable in the context of the claim that these lists were written in Aḥmad’s hand. Cf. MS Zaytuna 10192, 1b.9–11; MS Zāhiriyya 116/1 in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 22 (plate), 27–28 (text), where ‘Abd Allāh is quoted as saying, “This is what my father brought out for me” (*hādihā mā akhrajā abī ilayya*). For the meaning, see Lane, *Lexicon*, 718b; J. Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, tr. G. French and ed. R. Hillenbrand (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 24–25.

97. *Wa-hādhihi al-āyāt wa-l-aḥruf fī al-qur‘ān*. Yasin Dutton has argued (“Orality, Literacy, and the ‘Seven Aḥruf Ḥadīth,’” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23.1 [2012]: 1–49, esp. 23–25) that the most likely explanation of the quranic *aḥruf* among the ones offered by commentators is that they were permitted dialectical variations in the Quran’s recitation; drawing on Perry and Lord’s “oral-formulaic” theory, he argues (ibid., 30–43) that the memory of permitted variation indicates the Quran’s origination as a multiform oral text. It is unclear to me, however, how they would then demonstrate the Quran’s uncreatedness. The other possibility Dutton mentions (pp. 24–25) as cited by classical commentators is “types of discourse” (including permissions and prohibitions, clear and ambiguous, parables, and commands and warnings). I owe the Dutton reference to Matthew Keegan.

98. Cf. Ibn Baṭṭa, *Ibāna*, 3.1: 337–38 (no. 142), in which Aḥmad is quoted as saying the Quran is not created in “all facets” (*bi-jamī‘ al-wujūh*) in response to someone asking whether or not the pronunciation (*lafz*) of the Quran was a creation. All my citations to Ibn Baṭṭa are to the third *kitāb* (vols. 4–6) and I cite by the parts within it, which are marked on the spine of the book (i.e., *al-kitāb al-thālith*, *al-juz’ al-awwal* = 3.1 = vol. 4).

99. *Li-anna hādhihi al-āyāt al-ukhrā wa-hādhihi al-asmā’ tubayyin annahu lā yakūnu min al-qur‘ān shay’ makhliq*.

100. Al-Khallāl, *Sunna*, 6: 73.2–8.

onstrate that the Quran is uncreated. It is difficult to do more than speculate based on adjacent texts—something of a problem for a text we have seen traveling under multiple guises.

Saud AlSarhan was quick to identify these lists as two “versions” of *al-Radd*, based, it seems, on the death dates of their transmitters—the “first” one transmitted by ‘Abd Allāh and Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī and the “second” by al-Khallāl.<sup>101</sup> These two earlier versions are “completely different” from the “third” version, *al-Radd*.<sup>102</sup> The model of linear development implied by this grouping—where first “version” becomes second becomes third—requires revision for several reasons.<sup>103</sup> In particular, I think it is clear that *al-Radd* as a text is only loosely related to the lists transmitted by ‘Abd Allāh and al-Khallāl.

Most tellingly, the literal contents of the lists and *al-Radd* are quite different. ‘Abd Allāh’s list (197 verses + 18 repetitions<sup>104</sup>) is relatively close to al-Khallāl’s lists (283 verses + twelve repetitions) overall—to wit, al-Khallāl’s list includes nearly ninety percent (177/197) of the verses in ‘Abd Allāh’s list.<sup>105</sup> Still, al-Khallāl’s list is considerably longer: the shared verses represent only about sixty-three percent (177/283) of al-Khallāl’s entire list.<sup>106</sup> Al-Khallāl himself provides a plausible explanation for this (e.g., regarding the ten verses from sura 40 that are absent with ‘Abd Allāh) when he says, “al-Marrūdhī mentioned many verses other than those al-Khaḍīr mentioned from ‘Abd Allāh.”<sup>107</sup>

*Al-Radd*, however, includes relatively few of the verses from the lists,<sup>108</sup> and a large majority cited does not appear in either of the earlier lists. Among verses adduced in the RefJahm, *al-Radd* includes only eighteen percent (35/197) of ‘Abd Allāh’s list.<sup>109</sup> Although *al-Radd* shares seven additional verses with al-Khallāl’s list, it includes even less of his overall list at fifteen percent (42/283) of the total.<sup>110</sup> If it might be argued that the “versions” are united by their common idea of refuting the Jahmiyya’s theological claims, it is clear that this

101. AlSarhan, “Early Muslim Traditionalism,” 48–49.

102. *Ibid.*, 49.

103. There are already issues with the grouping: The “second” version transmitted by al-Khallāl from ‘Abd Allāh via al-Khaḍīr ought, in theory, to be the same as the “first” version—both take ‘Abd Allāh as their ultimate source. Indeed, al-Khallāl points out (*Sunna*, 6: 50.7) that it was al-Marrūdhī and al-Khaḍīr who transmitted the text with differences—presumably they all had as their source Ibn Ḥanbal’s notebook. Thus, the differences would have, again at least in theory, originated with al-Marrūdhī and not with al-Khallāl.

104. All three texts contain repeated verses (i.e., a verse will be quoted twice in different places). Because the lists give us so little context, it is difficult to know why verses are repeated: Are they errors? Do they indicate that the same verse might be used for multiple proofs? The latter seems to be the case with *al-Radd*, which occasionally does redeploy verses in different arguments, but the lists’ repetitions remain ambiguous. For this reason, I compared the lists both with and without the repetitions (I would be happy to share the comparisons with curious readers) and the values are quite similar. Calculations excluding repetitions are given in the text; calculations including them are given in the footnotes. For statistical first aid, I owe thanks to Liron Ganel.

105. With repetitions: eighty-six percent (185/215). Perhaps this high level of agreement suggests that two lists indeed share a source, albeit via intermediaries. Moreover, in more than one case al-Khallāl’s list lacks a repetition of verses in ‘Abd Allāh’s list. If this represents later editing, then the rate of coincidence between the lists is probably slightly higher. It is difficult to interpret these repetitions, however, given the possibility that a verse might be cited as a proof text in more than one context.

106. With repetitions: sixty-three percent (185/295).

107. *Sunna*, 6: 48.9–10.

108. RefJahm: 180 verses + 30 repetitions; RefZan: 75 verses + 27 repetitions.

109. With repetitions: nineteen percent (41/215).

110. With repetitions: fifteen percent (45/295). For reasons to be explained below, I do not think the earlier Baghdadī Hanbalis knew of the RefZan, so I do not think they can be quoting it, but the lists do share a few verses with the RefZan: about two percent (4/215) of ‘Abd Allāh’s list and one percent (4/297, no additional verses) of al-Khallāl’s list.

unity did not extend to the verses selected for that purpose. In particular, one wonders why the later author of *al-Radd* had to pick so many different verses to make his points.

Part of the problem is the already identified ambiguity—the lists give nothing more than fragments<sup>111</sup> of quranic verses, organized by sura, and neither ʿAbd Allāh nor al-Khallāl gives us any concrete examples of how Ibn Ḥanbal (or anyone else) argued with these verses.<sup>112</sup> By contrast, *al-Radd* is a dialectical text, giving both an opponent's claim and a refutation of that claim; its refutations are clinched (rhetorically, anyway) by producing a more "correct" understanding of each verse. But even within the broad outline of refuting the Jahmiyya, the focus is not exactly the same. The context for the list provided by al-Khallāl's comment in his *Sunna* suggests that arguments based on the lists were directed particularly at the Jahmiyya's assertion of a created Quran. *Al-Radd*, however, refutes Jahmī positions on a number of issues, of which the Quran's (un)createdness is one. Ultimately, then, *al-Radd* differs in both form and content from the lists.

Thus, the interpretation of these lists as the earliest versions of *al-Radd* must be substantially qualified. The way *al-Radd* is described by its two transmissions (i.e., as arguments refuting the Jahmiyya transmitted from ʿAbd Allāh to al-Khaḍīr to al-Khallāl) does seem to reference or be modeled on at least one of al-Khallāl's versions of the list, yet *al-Radd*'s author apparently felt a great deal of freedom: he used a largely different archive of quranic proof texts. At the least, the lists by themselves cannot be taken as evidence of *al-Radd*'s transmission, in whole or in part, directly from Ibn Ḥanbal.

Given the high level of agreement between ʿAbd Allāh and al-Khallāl's lists and al-Khallāl's explanation that al-Marrūdhī added verses not appearing in al-Khaḍīr's list, the lists may well stem from a common source, which, in light of the temporal proximity of both ʿAbd Allāh and al-Khallāl to Ibn Ḥanbal, would either have been Ibn Ḥanbal's own list or one created by his close companions (and then its ascription to Ibn Ḥanbal quickly acknowledged by a broader group).<sup>113</sup> Both Riwaya X and Riwaya Y appear to be later fictions, however, given that neither al-Khallāl nor ʿAbd Allāh seems to have known *al-Radd*, despite being given credit for its transmission.<sup>114</sup> The case is not aided by the fact that the third transmitter, al-Khaḍīr, is unknown save from al-Khallāl's mention of his transmitting the list and Ibn Abī Yaʿlā's mention of his transmitting *al-Radd*.<sup>115</sup>

Barring the discovery of other references, the precise form and content of the RefJahm must postdate the life of ʿAbd Allāh and at least the writing career of al-Khallāl—i.e., a terminus post quem of ca. 300/912f.<sup>116</sup> Additionally, the lists offer nothing in the way of evidence for the RefZan's existence at this point: they mention neither the Zanādiqa nor the

111. By "fragments," I mean they give the operative language, so to speak, rather than the entire verse.

112. It is not difficult to imagine that what is presented in the list is a set of private notes intended as a memory aid in lecturing; see G. Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, tr. U. Vagelpohl and ed. J. Montgomery (London: Routledge, 2006); idem, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, tr. S. Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2009), passim.

113. Then again, who would have more authority to say that the lists genuinely did come from among Ibn Ḥanbal's papers than his son or the man widely known for collecting his opinions in writing?

114. Admittedly, this is something of an argument from silence. I have been unable to find any mention of *al-Radd* anywhere in their works. They do mention opinions attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal about the Jahmiyya, but these reports do not take on a form similar to *al-Radd*, dealing instead with issues such as whether it is acceptable to pray behind someone one knows to be a Jahmī. Still, I find it difficult to conceive of a plausible reason why they would have transmitted both the lists and *al-Radd* separately. Since the latter is attested by the transmissions, then one imagines they would have mentioned the text or quoted passages from it.

115. Khallāl, *Sunna*, 6: 49.2 (no. 1908); Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 47–48 (no. 592), where the author also quotes a passage from *al-Radd* (compare *ibid.*, 2: 48, with Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 265.1–69.2).

116. One assumes that if the text emerged after ʿAbd Allāh's death, al-Khallāl might have known it. We have

issue of contradiction in the Quran, a point that will find further attestation in the discussion of the works of Ibn al-Farrāʾ below.<sup>117</sup>

Something more specific seems to have emerged within the next century since Ibn al-Nadīm already knows of a text ascribed to Ibn Ḥanbal called *al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*—a phrase used only in *al-Radd*, never in the lists.<sup>118</sup> Was this text already Recension 1? It is unclear. Unlike the title al-Salmāsī gave for the RefZan, Ibn al-Nadīm’s mention is none too specific. If, as I have argued in the preceding paragraphs, there is a clear difference between the lists and *al-Radd*, we cannot yet say much about the particular origins of Recension 1.

#### 4.3. Al-Radd Appears: Ibn al-Farrāʾ

“Maybe Baghdad, sometime between 290/903 and 385/995?” is not a terribly specific provenance for the RefJahm, especially because we do not know what happened between the lists of ʿAbd Allāh and al-Khallāl and the writing out of Recension 1.<sup>119</sup> If there is room to wonder which *Radd* recension Ibn al-Nadīm knew, we can state with some confidence that materials from Recension 1 were circulating in Baghdadi Hanbali circles in the fifth/eleventh century: Ibn Abī Yaʿlā’s father, the qadī Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrāʾ, quotes passages from *al-Radd* in his *Ibtāl al-taʾwīlāt li-akhbār al-ṣifāt*, a creedal work written in response to a work correcting anthropomorphist hadith by the Shafiʿi-Ashʿari Abū Bakr Ibn Fūrak al-Iṣfahānī (d. 406/1015f.), and in his *al-ʿUdda fī uṣūl al-fiqh*.<sup>120</sup> Ibn al-Farrāʾ calls the text by several names, once most notably as *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*, the closest I have seen to the title usually ascribed the work.<sup>121</sup> Most of the quotations are verbatim or very nearly so, but they only come from the RefJahm.<sup>122</sup> I have not seen mention of the Zanādiqa or of quranic contradiction.

To what extent can we date Ibn al-Farrāʾ’s quotations? Ibn Abī Yaʿlā provides a terminus ante quem for its completion by reporting that in the year 432/1040f., “when *Ibtāl al-taʾwīlāt* started to be widely read” (*lammā shāʿa qirāʾat Kitāb Ibtāl al-taʾwīlāt*), the caliph al-Qāʾim (r. ca. 422–467/1031–1075) sent Ibn al-Farrāʾ a note thanking him for his work.<sup>123</sup> Since Ibn

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relatively little information about al-Khallāl’s life, and it is difficult to gauge his career since the birth dates of his students are unknown (e.g., Ghulām al-Khallāl).

117. The level of agreement between verses cited in the lists and verses cited in the RefZan (see n. 110 above) is, in my opinion, insignificant. Moreover, if al-Khallāl’s claim that the lists deal primarily with the question of the Quran’s createdness is true, a low level of coincidence would be unsurprising, given that the RefZan evinces no particular interest in that question.

118. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 2.1: 100.

119. Some readers may think I read too much into ambiguous citations, such as the mentions of titles, or into problematic assumptions, e.g., that ʿAbd Allāh and al-Khallāl would have mentioned *al-Radd* had they known of it.

120. Respectively, ed. M. al-Ḥamūd al-Najdī (Kuwait: Dār al-Īlāf al-Dawī, n.d.), 1: 41–42, and ed. A. al-Mubārakī (Riyadh: 1414/1993), 4: 1283–85.

121. *Ibtāl al-taʾwīlāt*, 1: 298 (no. 293, *Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*); see also pp. 233 (no. 227, *Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*), 396 (no. 373, *Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*), 444 (no. 418, *Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya*), 447–48 (no. 418, *Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa*).

122. *Ibid.*, 233 (no. 227 = Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 290–91), 2: 298 (no. 293 = *Radd*, 251–52), 2: 396 (no. 373 = *Radd*, 320.4–5, 322.1), 2: 444 (no. 417 = *Radd*, 300–301), 2: 447–48 (no. 418 = *Radd*, 251–52). By way of example of differences, in the first citation, *Ibtāl al-taʾwīlāt* is missing a few words from one of the quranic citations, omits a second one, and reads (1: 233.8–9) *fa-qad akhbāra Allāh subhānahu annahu fī al-samāʾ wa-huwa ʿalā al-ʿarsh* where *al-Radd* has (291.1) *fa-hādhā khābar Allāh, akhbāranā annahu fī al-samāʾ*. See also *al-ʿUdda*, 4: 1274.1–5 (= *Radd*, 282–83), 1274.6–8 (= *Radd*, 329.9–12), 1274.9–1275.3 (= *Radd*, 293.6–294.3). Al-ʿAjmī notes (*Radd*, 92) that Ibn Taymiyya quotes a lost work from Ibn al-Farrāʾ that quotes *al-Radd*, but I leave that reference aside for now.

123. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 197.13–18. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā also provides a terminus post quem; see *ibid.*, 196.11, where he says that Ibn al-Farrāʾ began teaching and writing after the death of his teacher Ibn Ḥamid al-Warrāq, who died in 403/1012 from injuries sustained in an attack on pilgrims returning east from the hajj.

al-Farrāʾ provides quotations only from the RefJahm under the title *al-Radd ʿalā al-zanādiqa wa-l-jahmiyya*, it seems most likely that he had a copy of Recension 1, which provides some further ground for interpreting Ibn al-Nadīm's mention of a *Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya* only a few decades earlier as referring to Recension 1 as well.<sup>124</sup>

Alas, one searches in vain for earlier quotations from *al-Radd*, but there is some reason to suggest that Ibn al-Farrāʾ may indeed be the first of the prominent Hanbalis to quote from it. For instance, Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 387/977), a student of Ghulām al-Khallāl, included a long section called *al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya* in his *al-Ibāna al-kubrā*, a summa of traditionalist theological opinions.<sup>125</sup> His method in *al-Ibāna* is close to that of *al-Radd*—refutations of problematic Jahmī ideas are offered alongside quranic proof texts, and the work is dialectical in its approach<sup>126</sup>—and Ibn Baṭṭa often cites from reports of Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion,<sup>127</sup> occasionally credits the formulation of ideas of refuting the Jahmiyya directly to Ibn Ḥanbal,<sup>128</sup> and even provides a list of Quran verses that can be used to argue against the Jahmiyya,<sup>129</sup> but he does not reference Ibn Ḥanbal as the author of *al-Radd*. Ibn Baṭṭa even quotes from a well-known disputation between Jahm and the Sumaniyya, which is also reproduced at the beginning of the RefJahm, but he cites Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) as the ultimate source for the account of the debate (*al-Radd* mentions no source for it at all).<sup>130</sup>

This seems like a dead end, but it is worth pausing over Ibn Baṭṭa's biography because he was a contemporary of Ibn al-Nadīm, the earliest writer known to ascribe a text called *al-Radd* to Ibn Ḥanbal, and the one knew of the text but the other did not. We cannot, of course, guarantee that Ibn Baṭṭa would have cited the text, even had he known of it. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā reports that Ibn Baṭṭa himself said he was born in early Shawwāl 304 (April 917); it is generally agreed that he died in Muḥarram 387 (January 997).<sup>131</sup> The first transmitter of his *Ibāna*, Abū al-Qāsim Ibn al-Busrī, was reportedly born in Šafar 386 (March 996), less than

124. One other reference to *al-Radd* bears mention: al-Sijzī (d. 444/1052), *Risālat al-Sijzī li-ahl zabīd*, ed. M. Bā Karīm Bā ʿAbd Allāh (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1413/1994), 166, 169. As the editor notes, however, both passages are ascribed to *al-Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya* of ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, and both passages are actually found in his *Sunna*. Neither appears in *al-Radd*.

125. A shorter, perhaps related, version (usually called *al-Ibāna al-ṣuḡhrā*) was translated by Laoust as *La profession de foi d'Ibn Baṭṭa* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1958). All biographical details for Ibn Baṭṭa are drawn from *EI2*, s.v. "Ibn Baṭṭa" (H. Laoust), and Laoust, *Profession de foi*, xlii–xlvii and the sources cited there.

126. See, e.g., Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 235–36; Ibn Baṭṭa, *Ibāna*, 3.1: 318, where both use Q 9:6 to differentiate what God calls God's word, *kalām*, from its mere recitation, *ḥikāya*—on the other hand, Q 7:204 used by Ibn Baṭṭa to make much the same point, does not appear in *al-Radd* at all. Ibn Baṭṭa also uses hadith to make a similar point, which appears much less often in *al-Radd*.

127. See Ibn Baṭṭa, *Ibāna*, 3.2: 353–65 (an index of opinions cited in vols. 3.1 and 3.2).

128. *Ibid.*, 318, where he says that Ibn Ḥanbal is the one who understood and exposed the "reprehensible" ideas of the Jahmiyya.

129. *Ibid.*, 216. In a comparison to the lists by ʿAbd Allāh and al-Khallāl and to *al-Radd*, the results are ambiguous: without repetitions, 59 percent (32/54) of Ibn Baṭṭa's verses are found in ʿAbd Allāh's list, 72 percent (39/54) are found in al-Khallāl's, and 31 percent (17/54) are found in *al-Radd*.

130. *Ibāna*, 3.2: 86–89. Cf. *Radd*, 197–207. A bit of the debate is given in L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam* (Paris: P. Guenther, 1929), 210–11. On the debate, see Sh. Pines, "A Study on the Impact of Indian, Mainly Buddhist, Thought on Some Aspects of Kalām Doctrines," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994): 182–203; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 2: 4–5, 20–22, 503–4 (= trans., 2: 4–5, 23–25, 566–68). Van Ess notes that, at least in Basra, the Sumaniyya is more of a polemical stereotype ("a label for everything that contradicted revealed religion") than a historical sect. On the other hand, Jahm b. Šafwan is portrayed in *al-Radd* as being from Tirmidh; this information tallies relatively well with van Ess's claim (*ibid.*, 2: 21 = trans., 2: 24) that the Sumaniyya might have referred to Buddhists in eastern Iran.

131. Al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, 12: 105 (citing three different authorities); Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 145; Ibn al-Jawzī, 14: 390 (birth), 393 (death).

two years before Ibn Baṭṭa died.<sup>132</sup> It is most likely that Ibn al-Busrī was taken to “hear” the text as a child, but this tells us little about when *al-Ibāna* was written. It is also reported that Ibn Baṭṭa traveled widely in search of knowledge before retiring to a life of pious seclusion for forty years, presumably in his native village of ʿUkbarā (where most students were said to have studied with him, though he also taught some in Baghdad).<sup>133</sup> There is not much in Ibn Baṭṭa’s biography to suggest an answer to his omitting any mention.

Ibn al-Nadīm’s biography is also on the thin side: Devin Stewart has argued that Ibn al-Nadīm seems to have lived and worked in Mosul until ca. 346–348/957–959, when he relocated to Baghdad (likely to al-Karkh, a Shiʿi enclave).<sup>134</sup> Several notes in the earliest manuscript of the text indicate that Ibn al-Nadīm was producing what he called a “fair copy” of his *Fihrist* in 377/987, but other evidence suggests he worked on it for decades, perhaps even right up to his death in 380/990.<sup>135</sup> Thus, it is entirely conceivable that Ibn Baṭṭa might have written *al-Ibāna* before the writing of the RefJahm or Recension 1 (say, ca. 340–350) and that Ibn al-Nadīm heard about the RefJahm or Recension 1 in the next few decades. Moreover, if Ibn Baṭṭa lived in ʿUkbarā the last forty years of his life, when he might have ceased learning (of) new texts, he must have retired there just about the time Ibn al-Nadīm is thought to have arrived in Baghdad.<sup>136</sup> If all the assumptions suggested above are sound, the RefJahm and/or Recension 1 must have emerged between 347 and 377/958 and 987.

#### CONCLUSION

I have tackled two tasks above. First, with reference to manuscript witnesses, I showed that the version of *al-Radd* that has most often been printed represented a recension (Recension 3) that is not attested until the eighth/fourteenth century in Damascus and exists only in thirteenth/nineteenth-century manuscripts. Second, I attempted to reconstruct the history of the text, identifying the emergence of the two earlier recensions (first Recension 1, then Recension 2) that served as the basis for Recension 3. I suggested that Recension 2 (which contains the refutation of the Zanādiqa, RefZan, and that of the Jahmiyya, RefJahm) could not have emerged long before the first half of the sixth/twelfth century—nobody seems to know anything about it until then. Recension 1 (which includes an introduction and the RefJahm) left more of a mark. Using traditionalist understandings of quranic proof texts to make theological arguments against the Jahmiyya seems to go back to the very earliest period of Hanbali thought, perhaps even to Ibn Ḥanbal himself, in the form of lists of quranic verses recorded by his son ʿAbd Allāh and by one of his major intellectual descendants, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl. A comparison of the verses in those lists with the verses in *al-Radd*, however,

132. Al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, 13: 242. Cited by Wābil in Ibn Baṭṭa, *Ibāna*, 3.1: 160.

133. Al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, 12: 101.5–6 (“he was a frequent traveler to Basra, Syria, and other countries”), 101.7–10 (where it is noted that all but one student heard from him in ʿUkbarā), and 102.10–11 (“when he returned from his travels, he kept to his house for forty years”).

134. D. Stewart, “Ibn al-Nadīm’s Ismāʿīlī Contacts,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, ser. 3, 19.1 (2009): 21–40, at 30–31; idem, “Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm,” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 925–1350*, ed. T. DeYoung et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 129–42, esp. 129a–35b; and, in summary form, idem, “Editing the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm,” *Journal of the School of Abbasid Studies* 1 (2014): 159–205, at 168–69.

135. Stewart cites Ibn al-Nadīm’s asking a jurist in 340/951 about things the jurist wrote as evidence that Ibn al-Nadīm was already gathering materials for *al-Fihrist* then. There are also some suggestions that the text was unfinished at Ibn al-Nadīm’s death, e.g., blank spaces left in the text to be filled in and passages out of order due (it seems) to space constraints. See Stewart’s discussions in “Ismāʿīlī Contacts,” 21; “Abū al-Faraj,” 133b and esp. 137–38, and “Editing the *Fihrist*,” 167.

136. The fact that Ibn Baṭṭa is himself absent from *al-Fihrist* also seems to attest to their not having crossed paths.

indicated that it is really only the idea that the lists and the text share, rather than particular arguments. Passages from *al-Radd* that match the manuscripts and modern editions begin to appear around 432/1040f. in the works of the qādi Abū Yaʿla Ibn al-Farrāʿ, a prominent Baghdadi Hanbali. Checking the biographical details of another prominent Hanbali theologian just before that time who ought to have known *al-Radd* (Ibn Baṭṭa) against the biographical details of the Baghdadi bookman who did know *al-Radd* (Ibn al-Nadīm) argued for the RefJahm to have emerged sometime in the third quarter of the fourth/tenth century. Such is *al-Radd's* textual history.

What is the broader significance of this particular history? On the one hand, it indicates that Ibn Ḥanbal probably did not write *al-Radd*; he certainly could not have had a hand in the modifications it underwent in the five centuries following his death. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that anyone would have bothered to return to the text had it only been meaningful in the context of Islamic theology's earlier history or the particular context of post-*mihna* Baghdad, yet Hanbalis from a variety of intellectual contexts cite the text.<sup>137</sup> What is perhaps most striking, however, is what is not revealed by this history, namely, there is little direct evidence of who edited or expanded the text, leaving an inscrutable silence about what drove the text's growth and reception.

As noted at the beginning of the article, al-Dhahabī doubted the work's authenticity, but few others seem to have commented directly on it. Did most Hanbalis simply accept the text as authentic? If they did, who would have been responsible for modifying the text? Was it already an open secret among them that the text was not really penned by Ibn Ḥanbal? Any assiduous collector of Hanbali tomes (as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya reportedly was) might have come across the different recensions of the work. And not everyone who transmitted the text was a Hanbali—al-Salmāsī was a liminal figure between the Shafiʿi and Hanbali schools. Perhaps the text's instability was simply difficult to discern against the background of a written culture with a flexible conception of how fixed a text's boundaries were. After all, al-Khallāl noted that Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī freely amended the list he copied from Ibn Ḥanbal.

Ultimately, *al-Radd* is probably best understood as a work of “corporate authorship” by the Hanbali *madhhab* across time.<sup>138</sup> The oft-renewed efforts made on the text were palpably connected to the person of Ibn Ḥanbal: Recall that ʿAbd Allāh, al-Marrūdhī, and al-Khaḍīr (the latter two *apud* al-Khallāl) all said that the lists were found in notebooks written in Aḥmad's own hand, and later scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim adduced this claim as one piece of evidence for the text's authenticity. While every Hanbali, borne aloft on the raft of historical Prophetic knowledge, imagined scholarship as defending the proper understanding of God and Creation, the currents of history cast the school against ever-changing waves of opposition. New arguments were necessary to keep the Hanbali raft afloat. Even if Ibn Ḥanbal did famously declare that he did not wish his writings to be reproduced lest they lead others into error or his motives be mistaken, “God decreed that his works should be copied, organized, and spread.”<sup>139</sup>

137. The term “Jahmiyya” was clearly used in a broader sense. In a polemical letter directed at Ibn al-Qayyim, his contemporary, the Shafiʿi jurist Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, accuses Ibn al-Qayyim of using the word to refer to all the Ashʿariyya, a rival school of theology. See C. Bori and L. Holtzman, “A Scholar in the Shadow,” *Oriente Moderno* 90.1 (2010): 11–44, at 25.

138. The term is borrowed from C. Novetzke, *Religion and Public Memory: A Cultural History of Saint Namdev in India* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008), chap. 2.

139. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 1: 356–63; cf. Melchert, *Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, 65–70.

APPENDIX 1: MANUSCRIPTS OF *AL-RADD ʿALĀ AL-JAHMIYYA WA-L-ZANĀDIQA*

My list is the product of joining two earlier ones, the first made by Fuat Sezgin, the second by al-ʿAjmi in his edition of *al-Radd*.<sup>140</sup> The later manuscripts are missing from Sezgin’s tally; al-ʿAjmi overlooked both the oldest manuscript (Zaytūna 10192) and a witness to the second recension (Ṭalʿat Tafsīr 326). In addition, I have encountered three manuscripts of uncertain or mistaken identification.

The first is referenced by ʿUmayra in his edition. In the introduction he notes that it was kept at the old library at Maydān Dikhna in Riyadh, but this library has been closed for some time.<sup>141</sup> Although it initially seemed plausible that the manuscript had simply been relocated to another collection in Riyadh, ʿUmayra notes that the manuscript is undated—unlike the Riyadh manuscript currently at the King Faisal Center in Riyadh. It is unclear to me at this point what became of this manuscript. The second is mentioned by Sezgin, but he gives no specific catalogue source; checking his other sources for Bengali collections did not turn up a manuscript of *al-Radd*.<sup>142</sup> I suspect that this manuscript may not actually be *al-Radd*; according to Sezgin, Bengal 866 runs over fifty folios, much longer than the other manuscripts (which tend to cover only ten to twenty folios). The third is mentioned by al-Nashshār and al-Ṭālibī, but the text they refer to is a *Radd ʿalā al-jahmiyya* by a later Hanbali scholar of Iṣfahān, Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005).<sup>143</sup>

In the table below, bolded entries represent the manuscripts I have been able to consult. An asterisk (\*) denotes that *al-Radd* is in a *majmūʿa* (a group of texts bound into one codex). Where possible, I have indicated the relative position of *al-Radd* within the sequence of the *majmūʿa* following a slash.

Collection	Manuscript	Date	Recension	Riwaya
1. Dār al-Kutub (Tunis) <sup>144</sup>	<b>Zaytūna 10192</b>	29 Rajab 719 (23 September 1319)	1	X
2. Zāhiriyya (Damascus) <sup>145</sup>	<b>116/1*</b>	3 Dhū al-Ḥijja 821 (10 January 1419)	1	X
3. British Library <sup>146</sup>	<b>Or 3106</b>	898 (1492f.)	1	X

140. F. Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 507; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 133–43.

141. Pers. comm. Saud AlSarhan, May 2, 2015.

142. Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 507: “MS Bengal 866.”

143. Al-Nashshār and al-Ṭālibī, *ʿAqāʿid al-salaf*, 16. The first lines of that text read: “The imam and ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq b. Yaḥyā b. Manda informed us.” See MS Revan 510 56b.2; cf. *EI2*, s.v. “Ibn Manda” (F. Rosenthal), which mentions this manuscript. Al-Nashshār and al-Ṭālibī, citing F. Sayyid, *Fihrist al-makḥṭūʿāt al-muṣawwara* (Cairo: Dār al-Riyād, 1954–1960), 1: 125 (nos. 99, 101), claim that Revan 510/5 is also part of *al-Radd*. Al-Sayyid is right that MS Revan 510/4 (fols. 49b–56a) is a copy of Recension 1, but it certainly does not include eighty-five folios. Neither can they be referring to the length of the *majmūʿa*, which is 148 folios (thus, Karatay, *Katalogu*, 4: 521–22; Ritter, “Philologica II,” *Der Islam* 17 [1927]: 249–57, at 254).

144. *Al-Fihris al-ʿāmm li-l-makḥṭūʿāt* (Tūnis: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Muḥāfaẓa ʿalā al-Turāth, 2008), 2.2: 226–27 (no. 0875).

145. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, ed. Shaqfa, 19–20; *GAS*, 1: 507; Khiyamī, *Fihris*, 2: 137–38 (no. 3852); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 133–34 (al-ʿAjmi uses both 116 and 3852).

146. C. Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Long-



4. BN (Paris) <sup>147</sup>	<b>4807/16*</b>	ninth/fifteenth century	1	X
5. <i>Zāhiriyya</i> (Damascus) <sup>148</sup>	7540	before 906/1500f.	2	n/a
6. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) <sup>149</sup>	<b>Ṭalʿat Tafsīr 326</b>	?	2	n/a
7. Topkapı Sarayı <sup>150</sup>	<b>Revan 510/4*</b>	1084/1673	1	X
8. Princeton University <sup>151</sup>	<b>Garrett 1876Y</b>	14 Rabīʿ I 1117 (6 July 1705)	1	X
9. Leiden University <sup>152</sup>	<b>Or. 6275/16*</b>	8 Muḥarram 1227 (23 January 1812)	3	X
10. Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal (Riyadh) <sup>153</sup>	[MMF]	16 Jumādā II 1247 (22 November 1831)	3	n/a
11. Wizārat al-Awqāf al-Kuwaytiyya (WAK) <sup>154</sup>	MS 345/10*	Jumādā I 1295 (May 1878, a Friday)	3	Y
12. Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ (NU) <sup>155</sup>	Munāzara 27	1295/1878?	3	n/a
13. WAK <sup>156</sup>	171/3*	8 Shawwāl 1296 (25 September 1879)	3	Y

mans and Co., 1894), 100–101 (no. 169). Rieu dated the manuscript to 898 based on a collation note in the margin on fol. 19. The Arabic of the note is unpointed, however, so it might also be read as 878 (1473f.).

147. E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes des nouvelles acquisitions, 1884–1924* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1925), 22. The dating was estimated by G. Vajda in “Notices de manuscrits arabes rédigées par Georges Vajda.” Both manuscript and Vajda’s notes are available through the BNF’s online collection, [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr).

148. Khiyamī, *Fihrist*, 2: 55–56, where he remarks that a note on the front of the manuscript gives the year 906/1500f., meaning the manuscript was copied before then. I have been unable to consult the manuscript itself.

149. Sayyid, “Nawādir al-makḥṭūʿāt,” 226 (no. 91). As noted above, Sezgin (*GAS*, 1: 507) seems to take his date (824) from a description of a different manuscript in Sayyid’s article (*ibid.*, no. 92). Tentatively, I placed this manuscript next to the dated one of the same Recension.

150. Karatay, *Katalogu*, 4: 521–22. Cf. the description in Ritter, “Philologica II,” 254. As both Karatay and Rieu note, the *majmūʿa* as a whole is dated 1084/1673.

151. R. Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), 224 (no. 2621); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 138–39, 153–54 (plates).

152. P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands*, 2nd ed. (The Hague: Leiden Univ. Press, 1981), 281; J. J. Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts in Leiden University Library*, vol. 7 (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2007), 101; online at <http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/inventories/leiden/index.html>.

153. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 140–41, 165–66 (plates). Al-ʿAjmī does not give a number for this manuscript, and I was unable to locate it in *Fihrist al-makḥṭūʿāt fī markaz al-malik Fayṣal li-l-buḥūth wa-l-dirāsāt al-islāmiyya*, ed. Z. b. ʿA. al-Zayd, 8 vols. (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal, 1415/1994).

154. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 136–37, 157–58 (plates). The day is given, but I cannot make it out; the copyist notes that it was a Friday.

155. *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-yi ʿarabī-yi Kitābkhāna-yi Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ-i Lukhnaw* (New Dehli: Markaz-i Taḥqīqāt-i Zabān-i Fārsī dar Hind, 1986), 397–98 (no. 34) (I thank Quinn Clark for providing me with a scan of the relevant entry). Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 137–38, 159–60 (plates). The manuscript is described slightly differently by the catalogue and by al-ʿAjmī (who worked from a photocopy). Most importantly, neither the catalogue nor the manuscript gives a date of completion—I am unsure where al-ʿAjmī got the date he gives.

156. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd*, 135–36, 155–56 (plates).

## APPENDIX 2. TRANSMISSIONS FOR THE TEXT

<i>Riwāya X</i>	<i>Riwāya Y</i>
Ibn al-Maʿqūsh (507–599/1114–203) <sup>157</sup>	Yaḥyā al-Salmāsī (474–550/1100f.–1156)
Ibn al-Muhtadī (435–517/1044f.–1123) <sup>158</sup>	Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (451–527/1059f.–1133) <sup>159</sup>
	Ibn al-Ṭuyūrī (411–500/1020f.–1107) <sup>160</sup>
Abū al-Qāsim al-Azajī (356–444/957–1052) <sup>161</sup>	Ibrāhīm al-Barmakī (361–445/972–1054) <sup>162</sup>
Abū Bakr Ghulām al-Khallāl (d. 363/979) <sup>163</sup>	Ghulām al-Khallāl
Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923)	Abū Bakr al-Khallāl
al-Khaḍir b. al-Muthannā al-Kindī (d. ?)	al-Khaḍir
ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 290/903)	ʿAbd Allāh

157. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 21: 400–401. In favor of concision, I give only one citation for each figure. The other sources mentioning them can be found in the footnotes to al-Dhahabī.

158. *Ibid.*, 19: 469.

159. *Ibid.*, 19: 601–2.

160. *Ibid.*, 19: 213–16.

161. *Ibid.*, 18: 18–19.

162. *Ibid.*, 17: 605–6.

163. *Ibid.*, 16: 143–45.