

Did the *Masā'il* 'Abdallāh ibn Salām Originate with the Karrāmiyya? *Ḥadīth*, Conversion, and Popular Religious Literature in 4th/10th century Khurāsān

On the Transmission of the *Masā'il* 'Abdallāh ibn Salām

1. The 'long recension' preserved in the *Kharīdat al-'ajā'ib* attributed to Ibn al-Wardī

The longest extant, Arabic version of the *Masā'il* appears in multiple manuscripts of the cosmogony known as *Kharīdat al-'ajā'ib wa-farīdat al-gharā'ib* attributed most commonly to the Syrian scholar Sirāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (d. 861/1457).¹ Some manuscript witnesses give the title of the *Masā'il* as *Durar al-kalām fī masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*. The *Kharīdat al-'ajā'ib* has been published no fewer than fifteen times, if not more, and enjoys a broad manuscript attestation. Yet, as highlighted in a recent study by BELLINO, the actual authorship and provenance of the *Kharīdah* is problematic and uncertain.² Furthermore, the contents of the work vary greatly between manuscript witnesses. Indeed, one of the oldest manuscript witnesses to the *Kharīdah*, dated to the mid-fifteenth century and held in the Lawrence J. Schoenberg Collection at the University of Pennsylvania, excludes the text of the *Masā'il* altogether.³ The current evidence seems to suggest that the long redaction of *Masā'il* found in some MSS of the *Kharīdah* did not originally belong to the work but, rather, was subsequently grafted onto the *Kharīdah*.

2. The 'partial recension' found in Pseudo-Mufid's *Ikhtisāṣ*

A partial recension of the *Masā'il* also appears in the *K. al-Ikhtisāṣ* erroneously attributed to the Shi'ite scholar al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022). The iteration of the *Masā'il* preserved in the *Ikhtisāṣ* suffers from gaps due to the poor state of manuscript tradition and also abruptly breaks off in the middle of the narrative.⁴ This partial version appears also in the encyclopedic *Bihār al-anwār* of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), but Majlisī's text relies directly on the version in the *Ikhtisāṣ* known to modern scholar. Despite iterative difference in wording between the texts in the *Ikhtisāṣ* and the *Bihār*, the text is essentially the same.

¹(Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1923), 164-179; *ibid.*, ed. Anwar Muḥammad AL-ZANĀTĪ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2007), 392-415. The latter edition essentially plagiarizes the first.

² Francesca BELLINO, "Sirāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī and the *Ḥarīdat al-'ajā'ib*: Authority and Plagiarism in a Fifteenth-Century Arabic Cosmography," *Eurasian Studies* 12 (2014):277 ff.

³ BELLINO, 270. The manuscript has been digitized and is accessible online at: http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/medren/record.html?id=MEDREN_4650884& (last accessed 27 October 2015). BELLINO elsewhere states (op. cit., 276) that the *Masā'il* was inserted into the *Kharīdah* from the *Kitāb al-Bad'* of Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934); however, here she is misled by the shoddy editing of the *Kharīdah* found in its published version. The printed versions place the following sentence immediately after the *Masā'il*: "This is an excerpt taken from (*hādhihi nubdhah manqūlah min*) the *Kitāb al-Bad'* of Abū Zayd al-Balkhī"; however, this refers not the preceding *Masā'il* but, rather, to the text that follows. These subsequent passages were lifted from Abū Naṣr Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī's *Kitāb al-Bad'* which was (widely) misattributed to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī. On this misattribution, see *Elr*, art. "al-Bad' wa'l-Ta'rīk" (M. MORONY.) Cf. *Kharīdah*, 180 ff; ed. Zanātī, 416 ff. and Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-Bad' wa-l-tārīkh*, ed. Cl. Huart (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899-1919), II, 56ff.

⁴ *Ikhtisāṣ*, 42-51.

The date of the *Ikhtisāṣ* is uncertain because of its authorship is uncertain; and no extant manuscript of the work predates the 11th/17th century.⁵ As Hassan ANSARI's has argued, the *Ikhtisāṣ* is, rather than a unified work of a single author, a collection of discrete *ḥadīth* works (a *majmū'ah*).⁶ Although the *majmū'ah* certainly post-dates Mufīd, that the work contains work that pre-date Mufīd's career is also apparent;⁷ however, the problems surrounding the provenance of the *Ikhtisāṣ* itself mean that the work can scarcely aid us to uncover the provenance of the *Masā'il* with an degree of certainty..

3. Recensions attested in manuscript

DATA INCOMPLETE

For most of the MSS we've relied upon the initial work G. F. PIJPER.⁸ The MSS exhibit a high degree of textual variants and are all quite late. The earliest witnesses tend to derive from MSS of Ibn al-Wardī's *Kharīdah*. The Arabic text has been published once in Cairo in very rare version published at the turn of the century and subsequently republished. But, the text was so short (16 pages, I think) that one rarely finds it. (Here in the US at least, I've had trouble tracking it down.) There is, also, a polemical, likely very poor, English translation from the mid-19th century unfortunately titled "The Errors of Mohammedanism Exposed"

AMBROSIANA

C 188 VI (copied 1159/1746), fol. 74v-82

D 292 I (copied 1070/1659), *Kharīdat al-'ajā'ib* with *Durar al-kalām* at the end

Also: see R. Traini, *I manoscritti arabi di recente accessione della Fondazione Caetani* (Rome 1967), 43 describing *Kharīdat al-'ajā'ib* in MS Caetani 333, ff. 187v-197r.

D 381 II (copied 1201/178), fol. 76-81

BERLIN (from Ahlwardt's catalogue of der Kön. Bibliothek), 3: 296 f., 7:735, 8: 20.

no. 3561, fol. 4a-25a (1114 AH)

no. 8857, fol. 91a-99b No. 8987, fol. 74a-81b (1137 AH)

no. 8988, fol. 113a-128b (n.d.)

CHICAGO (Northwestern University, 'Umar Falke Collection)

MS Falke 127.1

MS Falke 1074

MS Falke 2180

DRESDEN (Fleischer, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum...*, p. 29,

no. 198, 67r-74r (1085 AH)

GOtha (Persch, *Die arabischen Handschriften ...*, 1: 166, 3: 391)

⁵ *Dharī'ah*, 1:358-59.

⁶ *Barresihā-ye tārikhī dar ḥawza-ye islām wa tashayyo'* (Tehran: Ketābkhāna, Mūza wa Markaz-e Asnd-e Majles-e Shūrāy-e Islāmī, 2012), 705-717

⁷ *Ibid.*, 716.

⁸ in his *Het Boek der duizend Vragen* (Leiden: Brill, 1924), 35-38.

majmū'a, no. 93, fol. 151a-165b (n.d.)

no. 1831

no. 1832

LEIPZIG (Vollers, *Katalog der islam. ... Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*, p. 238)

no. 739, fol. 58b-64 (n.d.)

OXFORD (Nicoll, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum orientalium ... Bodleianae pars secunda, Arab...*, p. 68 seq.)

no. 27

PARIS

BnF, arabe no. 1973, ff. 1-22.

Date: 15th century

Description: Paper, 111 folios; 175x130mm; 11 lignes/page; numbered pages; "titres rubriqués; vocalized text; a number of notes and corrections

BnF, arabe no. 1974, ff. 1-73

Date: 17th century

Description: Paper; 83 folios, 265x175 mm; 11 lines/page

VATICAN CITY

Vat. Ar. 416, fols. 245v-259 where the title is given as *Radd al-kalām fi masā'il ...*

(see Levi della Vida, p. 45 ; copied in Malta by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ṣā'idi al-'Adawī who, after converting to Christianity, took the name Clemente Caraccioli⁹)

Vat. Ar. 1791, fols. 1-20v (part of a *majmū'a*) gives the title *Qiṣṣat 'Abdallāh b. Salām*

As can be gleaned from the above survey of its extant versions, the *Masā'il* has a complex textual history. Add to this complexity the fact that the *Masā'il* was translated into every major Islamic language (Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Javanese, Tamil, Malay, etc.). Extraordinarily, the text was also very popular in the Latin West where it influenced European perceptions of Islam from the 12th century onwards, in the Latin translation undertaken by Hermannus de Carinthia in 1142 as a part of the famous *Collectio Toledana* and given the title *Liber de Doctrina Mahumet*.^{10 11}

⁹ On whom, see Samir Khalil Samir, "Un Imām égyptien copiste au Vatican: Clement Caraccioli (1670-1721)," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996) : 111-54.

¹⁰ See Óscar DE LA CRUZ PALMA and Cándida Ferrero HERNÁNDEZ, "Liber de doctrina Mahumet," in David THOMAS and Alex MALLETT, eds., *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 3 (1050-1200)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 503-507. For excerpts of the Latin text, see Michelina Di Cesare, *The Pseudo-Historical Image of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2012), 116-118. The full Latin text is found in *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran* (1543), 189-200.

Any astute observer can perceive that history of the text's evolution and reception attained a scale that—even with the path-breaking studies of Pijper and, more recently, Ricci into the reception of the text in the Subcontinent and Malay archipelago¹²—has hardly been sufficiently measured.

The Origins of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*

This study adopts a different tact inasmuch as it aims to unearth the provenance of the *Masā'il* in the hope of discovering the religious community with which the earliest iterations of the text originated. However, it is helpful to cover the basic ground previously surveyed by Pijpers.¹³

The *Masā'il* is lengthy work that ultimately expands upon a narrative kernel encapsulated by several *ḥadīth* that narrate the conversion of a Jew to Islam after he challenges the Prophet Muḥammad to answer a series of arcane questions. Not all versions name the Jew in the dialogue as 'Abdallāh ibn Salām. A Syrian tradition related on the authority of Thawbān (d. 54/674), a Yemeni freedman (*mawlā*) of Muḥammad who settled in Ḥimṣ during the conquest,¹⁴ in fact keep the Jew who participated in the dialogue anonymous. This *ḥadīth* reads as follows:¹⁵

While I was with the Messenger of God at his home, one the Jews' rabbis came and said, "Peace be upon you, O Muḥammad," whereupon I shoved him so hard he nearly fell to the ground.

"Why did you push me?" he asked.

"You failed to say, 'O Messenger of God,'" I said.

And the Jew replied, "I've merely called him by the name that his people gave to him."

"Indeed," the Messenger of God said, "Muḥammad is my name, a name given to me by my people."

"I came to seek answers (*ji'tu as'aluka*)," the Jew said.

"May you find benefit in all I tell you (*a-yanfa'uka shay'un mā ḥaddathtuka*)," said the Messenger of God.

"I lend you my ears," he said.

God's Messenger then scratched the ground with a wooden staff of his and said, "Ask away."

The Jew then asked, "Where will humanity be on the day the earth and heavens are exchanged for another?"

¹¹ See also Pim VALKENBERG, "Una Religio in Rituum Varietate: Religious Pluralism, the Qur'an, and Nicholas of Cusa," in *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam*, eds. Ian Christopher Levy, Rita George-Tvrtkovic, and Donald F. Duclow (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 30-48.

¹² Ronit RICCI, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹³ *Het Boek der Duizend Vragen*, 30-34

¹⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, VII, 400; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 1172.

¹⁵ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 141-42 (*k. al-ḥayḍ*, no. 742)

“They will be in the abyss under the Bridge (*fī l-ẓulmah dūna l-jisr*),¹⁶” the Messenger of God answered.

“Who are first granted access [to Paradise] (*awwalu l-nāsi ijāzatan*)”, he asked.

“The poor Emigrants (*fuqarā’ al-muhājirīn*),” he answered.

Then the Jew asked, “What delight has been prepared for them (*tuhfatuhum*) when they enter Paradise?”

“The largest slice of the whale’s liver (*ziyādat kabad al-nūn*),” he answered.

“And what shall their meal be after that (*fa-mā ghidā’uhum ‘alā atharihā*)?” he asked.

“The bull of Paradise (*thawr al-jannah*),” he answered, “which once grazed along its edges, will be slaughtered for them.”

“And what shall they drink?” he asked.

“From a spring in Paradise called Salsabīl,”¹⁷ he answered.

“You speak truly,” he answered, “I had come to ask you about things none on Earth know except a prophet—or perhaps or single man or two.”

“May what I’ve spoken to you benefit you,” he replied.

“I lend you my ears,” he answered, “I came also to ask about children.”

He answered, “The liquid of men is white, but the liquid of women is yellow. So when they to copulate, if the strength of the man’s sperm exceeds the strength of the woman’s sperm (*fa-‘alā manīyu l-rajuli manīya l-mar’ah*), they produce a boy by God’s leave. If the strength of the woman’s sperm exceeds the strength of the man’s sperm, they produce of female by God’s leave.”

“You speak truly,” the Jew replied, “and you are truly a prophet!”

Then he departed and was gone, whereupon the Messenger of God said, “He asked me what he asked me, and I knew nothing about such things until God granted me knowledge thereof.”

Another *ḥadīth*, somewhat more widespread, names the prophet’s Jewish interlocutor explicitly as being Muḥammad Jewish Companion ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām. This *ḥadīth* originates from Baṣrah in Iraq rather than Syria and is by the Baṣran traditionist Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl (d. 142/759) on the authority of the Anṣārī Companion Anas ibn Mālīk. This tradition reads:¹⁸

Word of the Prophet’s arrival in Medina reached ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām, so he came to see him and ask him a question concerning several things. He said, “I will ask you three questions known to no one except a prophet: [1] What are the signs of the Hour (*ashrāt al-sā‘ah*)? [2] What is the first thing that the inhabitants

¹⁶ Like a reference to bridge of Ṣirāt over which the believers must pass on the day of Resurrection; cf. Lange

¹⁷ Cf. Q. Insān 76:18.

¹⁸ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 780 (*k. manāqib al-anṣār*, no. 3986); cf. *ibid.*, II, 648-49 (*k. aḥādīth al-anbiyā’*, no. 3364), 795-96 (*k. al-tafsīr*, no. 4520)

of Paradise will eat? [3] What makes a boy resemble his father and what makes him resemble his paternal uncles?"

"Gabriel informed me of this already," he replied.

"Of all the angels, that Gabriel is the Jews' enemy!" Ibn Salām replied.¹⁹

The Prophet continued, "As for the first, the signs of the Hour,²⁰ fire will gather humankind from East and West. As for the second, the first food eaten by the inhabitants of Paradise, the largest slice of the whale's liver (*ziyādat kabad al-ḥūt*). As for the boy, when the man's sperm precedes the sperm of the woman (*idhā sabaqa mā'u l-rajul mā'a l-mar'ah*), he resembles the boy; but if the woman's sperm precedes the man's sperm, the boy resembles her."

He replied, "There is no god but God and you are the Messenger of God!" He continued, "O Messenger of God, verily the Jews are a deceitful people, so ask them about me before they learn that I have become a Muslim."

When the Jews came, the Prophet said, "What of sort of man is this 'Abdallāh ibn Salām in your eyes?"

"Why he's the best of us, and on the son of the best of us—our most favored and the son of our most favored!" they replied.

"What would you think if 'Abdallāh ibn Salām became a Muslim?" he asked.

"We pray that God would save him from such a thing!" they said. He repeated what he said to them, and they repeated the like of which they said before. 'Abdallāh then came out to face them and said, "I bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God."

"The worst of us and the son of the worst of us!" they said and reviled him.

"Such is what I feared, O Messenger of God," replied 'Abdallāh ibn Salām.

Although certainly marked by important differences in content, the two *ḥadīth* relate essentially the same story. In both *ḥadīth* Muḥammad Jewish interlocutor questions Muḥammad regard matters that require preternatural knowledge of eschatological realities or the mysteries of human nature. Composed as a conversion story, the questions provide the prophet an occasion to display, with Gabriel's help, the veracity of his prophethood and the astounding depths of his prophetic knowledge. Each question in these two shorter *ḥadīth*, as well as the frame story for the Ibn Salām and Muḥammad's encounter, play a role in the lengthy account of the *Masā'il* (e.g., see *Masā'il*, §§ 131, 190)

Viewed against the backdrop of early Islam, one can easily see how these traditions (and by extension, the *Masā'il*) engage with a number of themes current in all religious communities of the early Islamic period and even with the Qur'ān itself. The interest, for example, in the so-called Signs of the Hour draws from not merely Qur'anic discourse, but also the trajectory of late-antique apocalyptic currents more generally.²¹ The eschatological scenes described in the *ḥadīth* exhibit the Islamization of several themes from the eschatology

¹⁹ Q. Baqarah 2:97.

²⁰ Cf. Q. Muḥammad 47:18.

²¹ See especially J. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 106-9

and cosmology of late-antique Jewish literature. The first feast of the inhabitants of Paradise draws upon themes found Talmudic and Jewish pseudepigrapha: the ‘whale’ (Ar. *nūn* or *ḥūt*) upon liver they feast and slaughtered bull of Paradise (*thawr al-jannah*) reflect the biblical Leviathan and Behemoth respectively (cf. Job 40:25 - 41:26). In late antique Jewish literature one already finds the expectation that the whale-like Leviathan and Behemoth—also called *šôrhavar*, ‘the wild ox’—will be slaughtered to feed the righteous.²² The tradition Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj relates on the authority on Thawbān further adds that the bull slaughtered for the inhabitants “would eat along outskirts of Paradise (*kāna ya’kulu min aṭrāfihā*),” an image that strongly resembles the depiction of the Behemoth in the Enochic literature as residing the desert of Dendayn east of Eden (1 Enoch 60: 7-8). Finally, the theory of human resemblance expressed in both versions of the *ḥadīth* likewise draws the Greek medicine, in particular the Hippocratic corpus, which regarded children as the product of male *and* female sperm and which attributed the resemblance of the child to either the parental or maternal line as due to the dominance of the man’s or woman’s respective sperm at the moment of copulation.²³

Pijpers long ago speculated that the earliest witness the existence of the *Masā’il* as a standalone work dates to the at least mid-10th century CE.²⁴ To support this claim, he cited a citation of the *Masā’il* in a passage from the *Tārīkhnāmah* commissioned by the Sāmānid ruler Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ (d. 365/976) in 352/963 from his vizier Abū ‘Alī Bal‘amī (d. 363/974). Although ostensibly commissioned to be a Persian translation (*tarjamah*) of the *Tārīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk* of Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Bal‘amī’s *Tārīkhnāmah* was, rather than a straightforward, word-for-word translation of the Arabic text of Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*, in fact a loose, Persian-language adaptation of Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh*. The *Tārīkhnāmah*, in addition to omitting Ṭabarī’s extensive and abundant *isnāds*, freely abridges, supplements, and reorganizes its Arabic source material. Indeed, the passage that cites the *Masā’il* ranks among the numerous addenda to Ṭabarī’s *Tārīkh* found in the *Tārīkhnāmah*. Commenting of Ṭabarī’s narrative gloss of Moses splitting the sea,²⁵ the *Tārīkhnāmah* adds:²⁶

It is written concerning the *Masā’il* ‘*Abdallāh ibn Salām* that [‘Abdallāh] was a scholar (‘*ālimī*) from the scholars of the Jews who had brought forth many questions from the Scriptures (*az kutub mas’alhā-ye āvardah būd*) and posed them to the Prophet. The Prophet gave him answers to each question and convinced ‘Abdallāh that he was indeed a prophet. From that moment, he began to follow him and became a Muslim.

Among these questions, one was: “Upon which place on the earth did the sunshine fall and the wind blow but once, yet then never again touched?” The Prophet (ṣ) then said: “That is the river

²² 2 Baruch 29:4; b.BB 14b-15a; cf. ERB, III, 775b, art. “Behemoth” (B. Breed).

²³ The theory appears in the sixth and eighth chapters of Hippocrates *Peri gonês* (*On Generation*); cf. Iain M. Lonie, *The Hippocratic Treatises “On Generation,” “On the Nature of the Child,” “Diseases IV”* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1981), 137 f. The Hippocratic corpus, of course, enjoyed a wide reception in Arabic, as did the theory of male and female sperm. See Kathryn M. Kueny, *Conceiving Identities: Maternity in Medieval Muslim Discourse and Practice* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 53-61.

²⁴ *Het Boek der Duizend Vragen*, 31

²⁵ As narrated in Q. Shu‘arā’ 26:63b, “and the sea parted, each portion like a great soaring mountain (*fa-nfalaqa fa-kāna kullu firqin ka-l-tawdi l-‘aẓīm*).”

²⁶ Abū ‘Alī Bal‘amī, *Tārīkh-e Bal‘amī: takmelah va tarjamah-ye Tārīkh-e Ṭabarī*, 2 vols., eds. Muḥammad Taqī Bahār MALIK AL-SHU‘ARĀ’ and Muḥammad Parvīn GUNĀBĀDĪ (Tehran, 1974), 1: 419 and n. 1 thereto.

Nile, which Moses struck with his staff sending the water into the air and causing the earth to become visible and the wind to gust thereupon. Never shall the Sun shine again thereon until the Day of Resurrection.”

This passage is genuine in that it appears in more than one extant version of the *Masā'il*, so it would seem that Pijper uncovered a solid testimony to the circulation of the *Masā'il* in Eastern Islamic lands during the tenth century CE.

However, there are sound reasons to reject this conclusion. Although it is tempting to use this citation of the *Masā'il* in the *Tārīkh-nāmah* in order to postulate the circulation of our text in Khurāsān and Transoxania by the mid-4th/mid-5th century, any such attempt to do so runs up against at least two major problems. The first is the formidably complex textual history of the *Tārīkh-nāmah*. The citation does not appear in all—or for that matter even the earliest—surviving versions of the *Tārīkh-nāmah*. This observation leads this us to the second major problem. As CRONE and JAFAR JAZI have recently emphasized, the *Tārīkh-nāmah* available to modern scholars “is not really Bal'amī's adaptation [of Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*], but rather the versions in which it survives.”²⁷ And these versions of the *Tārīkh-nāmah* are indeed numerous: spread over a manuscript tradition that numbers over 160 witnesses, even the earliest testimonies to Bal'amī's text exhibit profound divergences in content.²⁸ Facing the textual fluidity of the manuscript tradition of the *Tārīkh-nāmah*, PEACOCK has recently concluded that “the case of al-Ṭabarī and Bal'amī shows us exceptionally clearly the futility of attempting to establish stemmata in the case of many Islamic textual traditions.”²⁹ PIJPER's evidence for the 10th-century origin of the *Masā'il* is, therefore, a dead end.

Rather than the *Tārīkh-nāmah*, the best evidence for the provenance of the *Masā'il* 'Abdallāh ibn Salām derive from the *ḥadīth*-critics who happen upon the text denounce it as a manifest forgery. The denunciations begin appear as early as early as the 4th/10th century and are indispensable for identifying the origins of the text with the early Karrāmiyyah. Among those *ḥadīth* scholars who denounce the text most ardently is the Shāfi'i ḥadīth-scholar Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), who actually wrote an entire exposé of the text titled *Ḥadīth Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Juwaybārī fi Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*. In his scathing exposé, Bayhaqī attributes the forgery of the *Masā'il* to a much-reviled Ḥanafī scholar of Herat named Aḥmad b. 'Abdallāh al-Juwaybārī (fl. early-3rd/9th century).³⁰ Although many extant versions of the *Masā'il* attribute the

²⁷ Patricia CRONE and Masoud JAFARI JAZI, “The Muqanna' Narrative in the *Tārīkh-nāmah*: Part I, Introduction, edition and translation,” *BSOAS* 73 (2010): 157.

²⁸ The seminal article laying out the scope and nature of the problem is Elton L. DANIEL, “Manuscripts and Editions of Bal'amī's *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*,” *JRAS* 2 (1990): 282-321.

²⁹ Andrew PEACOCK, “The Mediaeval Manuscript Tradition of Bal'amī's Version of al-Ṭabarī's *History*,” in *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*, eds. Judith Pfeiffer and Manfred Kropp, BTS 111 (Beirut: Ergon, 2007), 103. Even with his pessimistic conclusion, however, PEACOCK also provided modern scholars with the most compelling argument for the scope of Bal'amī's original project—ironically made possible by a translation of Bal'amī's *Tārīkh-nāmah* back into Arabic. See *ibid.*, 97-100. Although PEACOCK's verdict regarding the futility of reconstructing the codicological stemmata for the *Tārīkh-nāmah* may be correct, the sources and provenance of individual accounts contained within versions of the *Tārīkh-nāmah* may be fruitfully excavated, as has been done in at least one instance by CRONE and JAFAR JAZI, “The Muqanna' Narrative in the *Tārīkh-nāmah*: Part II, Commentary and Analysis,” *BSOAS* 73 (2010): 408-13.

³⁰ The text has been published in Abū 'Ubayda Mashūr b. Ḥasan ĀL SALMĀN, ed., *Majmū'a ajzā' ḥadīthiyya: al-Majmū'a al-thāniya* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2001), 206-24

narration to the Prophet Muḥammad’s cousin ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abbās, no extant version preserves a full *isnād*, or chain of authorities, let alone a *riwāyah*, or chain of transmission, for the work. Yet, Bayhaqī preserves exactly that, which he lists as follows:

1. Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Khālid al-Juwaybārī al-Harawī
2. Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Filistīnī
3. Juwaybir ibn Sa‘īd al-Balkhī (d. ca. 140-150/757-767)³¹
4. al-Daḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim (d. 105/723)
5. Ibn ‘Abbās (d. ca. 68/687)

Bayhaqī launches a spirited attack against each figure in the *isnād* of the *riwāyah*, although he lays most of the blame for the text at the feet of al-Juwaybārī. Although he omits the text of the *Masā’il* from his tract—indeed, integral to his case against the *Masā’il* is that is impious and illicit to transmit materials originating from such famously mendacious sources—Bayhaqī actually excavates and documents the transmitters in the *isnād* so thoroughly that he effectively unearths the provenance of our text.

Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Juwaybārī had a reputation as scholar willing to forge reams *ḥadīth* for the founder and namesake of the Karrāmiyyah movement, Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad Ibn Karrām (d. 251/865). Al-Juwaybārī allegedly forged over a thousand *ḥadīth* in accord with Ibn Karrām’s wishes—*ḥadīth* which Ibn Karrām, in turn, would include in his books on the authority of ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Shaybānī’, an alias for al-Juwaybārī.³² Writing a full century early than Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) also regarded al-Juwaybārī as instrumental in forgery and spread of *ḥadīth* for the early Karrāmiyyah movement and mentioned other scholars who aided him in this aim, such as Muḥammad ibn Tamīm al-Sa‘dī.³³ Ibn Ḥibbān even knew of a second *riwāyah* of the *Masā’il* from a companion of al-Juwaybārī named ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb al-Nasawī, and he describes the *Masā’il* as lengthy enough to fill an entire quire (*bi-ṭūlihi fi juz’*),³⁴ which indicates that its length approximated the length of the redaction of the *Masā’il* found in the *Kharīdat al-‘ajā’ib*. Yet, Ibn Ḥibbān also makes explicit that this Nasawī was a close companion of al-Juwaybārī—a figure whom Ibn Ḥibbān disdains as passionately as does Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī—writing:³⁵

It is as though [‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb al-Nasawī] convened with Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Juwaybārī and the two agreed to forge *ḥadīth* (*ittafaqā ‘alā waḍ‘ al-ḥadīth*). For rarely have I seen one of the rejected *ḥadīths* of al-Juwaybārī that he alone transmits without finding it transmitted by ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb.

Abū l-‘Abbās Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Sarrāj claimed that once he showed one of the books of Ibn Karrām of the famed *ḥadīth* scholar Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), and upon seeing the forged *ḥadīth*

³¹ On whom, see VAN ESS, *TG*, 2: 509.

³² ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Jūraqānī (d. 543/), *al-Abāṭil wa-l-manākīr wa-l-ṣiḥāḥ wa-l-mashāḥir*, 2 vols., ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Jabbār AL-FURAYWĀ’Ī (Varanasi: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1983), I, 19.

³³ Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-muḥaddithīn wa-l-ḍu‘afā’ wa-l-matrūkīn*, 3 vols., ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm ZAYID (Aleppo: Dār al-Wa‘ī, 1976), I, 142 and II, 306.

³⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, II, 44; however, the intermediary authority between him and Juwaybir was ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Himmānī rather than Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Filistīnī as in the previous.

³⁵ *Majrūhīn*, II, 43-43.

therein, Bukhārī wrote on the back of the book, “Whosoever transmits this deserves a good beating and a lengthy imprisonment (*man ḥaddatha bi-hādhā istawjaba l-ḍarb al-shadīd wa-l-ḥabs*).”³⁶

Other transmissions attested:

‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562/1166) provides yet another line of transmission (*riwāyah*):³⁷

1. ‘Abd ibn ‘Ābid of Ribāṭ al-Jawzanāwus
2. ‘Abd[allāh] ibn Sa‘d al-Zāhid al-Kardānī
3. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Bukhārī³⁸
4. Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Abī Sa‘īd
5. Abū Mūsā ‘Abdallāh ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭawāwīsī³⁹
6. ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Ḥanīfa al-Dabūsī⁴⁰
7. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Marwazī
8. Abū Qatāda ‘Abdallāh ibn Wāqid al-Harrānī (d. c. 207-210/)⁴¹
9. Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanzalī
10. Juwaybir ibn Sa‘īd al-Balkhī
11. al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāhim
12. Ibn ‘Abbās

Ibn Mākūlā (d. 475/1082) also knows of the work noting, like Ibn Ḥibbān two centuries earlier, that its length is a single quire long (*wa-hiya fi juz*):⁴²

1. Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Ya‘qūb ibn al-Mubārak al-Ṣayrafī al-Baghdādī “Ibn al-Rabbāb”
2. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Thābit al-Ṣayrafī (fl. 340s)⁴³

Likely writing in the first half of the fourth/tenth century, the Ismā‘īlī *dā‘ī* Abū Tammām writes down some interesting remarks regarding the Karrāmiyya and their flexible attitude towards prophet traditions. He notes that the Karrāmiyya, “whenever in the middle of a dispute with opponents and the opponent asks them for a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet ... in accord with their doctrine,” they permit their associate, “to invent the *ḥadīth* spontaneously for that particular occasion and attribute it to the Prophet (*an yada‘ū l-ḥadīth ikhtirā’an minhum*)”

³⁶ Ibid., I, 19-20.

³⁷ *Ansāb*, 8:341

³⁸ *Ḥadīth*-transmitter of Samarqand; see Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), *al-Qand fi dhikr ‘ulamā’ Samarqand*, ed. Yūsuf AL-HĀDĪ (Tehran: Āyenah-ye Merāth, 1999), 51. He is perhaps identical with the coppersmith Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq ibn Mādhak al-Bukhārī mentioned in Ibn Mākūlā, *Ikmāl*, 7: 198.

³⁹ *Ḥadīth*-transmitter of Samarqand and student of ‘Alī ibn Ishāq al-Samarqandī (d. 237/852); see Nasafī, *Qand*, 304.

⁴⁰ Abū Ḥamid al-Bāhili, transmitted from his father, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna, ‘Abdallāh ibn Mubārak among others. Nasafī, *Qand*, 303 f. His father, ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥarb al-Bāhili appears in Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, 5: 376.

⁴¹ Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 16:259-62.

⁴² *Ikmāl*, 4: 3.

⁴³ Khaṭīb, *Madīnat al-Salām*, 6: 77.

fi dhālika l-waqt wa-yasnadūhu ilā l-nabī).” Even more curious is the argument Abū Tammām claims the Karrāmiyya put forward to justify this practice.

Their argument for this is that their doctrines are true (*anna madhhabahum al-ḥaqq*) and the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, would only have spoken the truth and summoned to it (*kāna yaqūlu l-ḥaqq wa-yad‘ū ilayhi*). Thus, when they relate of him, God bless him and his family, that he said this or that in which they believe, they have been quite truthful.⁴⁴

Aside from incredulity he displays towards the Karrāmiyya, Abū Tammām’s observations likely derive from a Khurāsānī context and, hence, a firsthand perspective.⁴⁵

Juwaybārī was Ḥanafī forged a *ḥadīth*, “In my community will arise a man called Muḥammad ibn Idrīs who shall do more harm to my community than Iblīs! And there will arise a man called Abū Ḥanīfah, and he is the lamp of my community! He is the lamp of my community!”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Wilferd MADELUNG and Paul E. WALKER, *An Ismaili Heresiography: The “Bāb al-shayṭān” from Abū Tammām’s Kitāb al-Shajara* (Leiden, 1998), 58 (Eng.), 55-6 (Ar.).

⁴⁵ P. Walker, “Abū Tammām and His *Kitāb al-shajara*: A New Ismaili from Tenth-century Khurasan,” *JAOS* 114 (1994): 343-52.

⁴⁶ Jūraqānī, *Abāṭil*, 1, 283.