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**ABSTRACT** The authenticity of the *Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla* by the Nestorian convert to Islam, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. ca. 251/865), has been discussed since the publication of the text by A. Mingana in 1922/23. A comparison between the chapter of the Twelver Shi‘ī Sa‘dīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ʿAlī al-Ḥimmāṣī al-Rāzī’s (d. after 600/1204) Munqīd ṭ al-taqlīd discussing the biblical predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the corresponding sections of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1209) *Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb* reveals a substantial degree of verbal and structural agreement. It becomes evident that Fakhr al-Dīn, like al-Ḥimmāṣī, are using material from Ibn Rabban’s *Al-dīn wa-al-dawla*, although they were both relying on an intermediate source, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s (d. 436/1045) *Kitāb ghurar al-adilla*.

In 1922, Alphonse Mingana published an English translation of the *Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla* by the Nestorian convert to Islam, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. ca. 251/865), followed in 1923 by an edition of the text on the basis of the single known manuscript owned by the John Rylands Library in Manchester (MS Crawford 631). The manuscript, which had been purchased by Alexander William Crawford Lindsay (1812–1880) in 1843, is concluded by a colophon (dated 4 Muḥarram 616/22 March 1219) stating that it was transcribed in Baghdad from an autograph rough copy of the text. Soon after the publication of the edition of the text in 1923, Paul Peeters (1924) and, shortly thereafter, Maurice Bouyges (1924) questioned the authenticity of the work, suggesting that it was a twentieth-century forgery. Peeters (1929) and particularly Bouyges (1925, 1934, 1949–50) repeated these charges on various occasions and, although numerous scholars have put forth convincing arguments for the authenticity of the work, the issue continues to be discussed until today.\(^\text{1}\)

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One of the arguments put forward by Peeters and Bouyges was that there is no positive evidence that any later author ever used the book and the rich material it contains. Among the defenders of its authenticity, only few were able to respond to this particular charge. Writing in 2007 and fully convinced of the authenticity of the work, David Thomas (1986, p. 141) still states that ‘little use was made of them [i.e., the arguments put forward in the Kita¯b al-dīn wa-al-dawla] by Muslim authors in the centuries immediately following’—the only author likely to have used the book being Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) in his Kitāb al-rīlām bi-manāqib al-Islām. By contrast, Ibn Rabban’s earlier refutation of Christianity, which is referred to twice in Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla, and which has been incompletely preserved in what seems to be a unique manuscript (Bouyges, 1934; Khalife ´ & Kutsch, 1959), is known to have been used by at least two later authors: quotations from his Al-radd ʿalā [aṣnāf] al-Naṣārā are preserved in a later refutation of Christianity by the fourth/tenth-century convert from Christianity al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb (Sepmeijer, 1985), and parts of it have been refuted by the seventh/thirteenth-century Coptic author al-Ṣafī Ibn al-ʿAssūl (Samir, 1983).²

It seems to have escaped the attention of most participants in this debate that already in 1888 Martin Schreiner had provided an important clue to prove that the Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla had in fact been used by later scholars. In his ‘Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Mohammedanern’ he pointed out (pp. 642ff.) that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) in his commentary on the Qurʾān, Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb, adduced some biblical passages containing predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad which he had gleaned from ‘Ibn Razīn’ al-Ṭabarī, as he explicitly states (ḥākadāhu nuqila `an Ibn Razīn al-Ṭabarī). Schreiner correctly identified him as Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (Schreiner, 1888, pp. 645f., n. 4). However, he was writing ten years before the publication of the Handlist of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana (Lindsay, 1898) containing the first published description of Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla and was therefore unable to identify the exact source. In his doctoral dissertation submitted in September 1940 and subsequently in a brief note published in 1941 (reprinted in 1942), Moshe Perlmann followed up Schreiner’s remark. Comparing the scriptural quotations adduced by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī with those included in Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla, Perlmann argued for the authenticity of the work. The note is written in Perlmann’s characteristic brief style covering less than a page. It seems that in the subsequent debate surrounding the Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla his contribution was often overlooked, except by Bouyges, who remained unconvincing and in an article published in 1949–50 renewed his attack on Mingana (who had passed away in 1937) and on other defenders of the work’s authenticity.

In 2007, Camilla Adang published another important piece of evidence for the later use of Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla on the basis of the comprehensive kalām treatise Kitāb al-munqidh min al-taqlīd of the Twelver Shiʿī Sadūd al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ʿAlī al-Ḥimmaṣī al-Rāzī (d. after 600/1204), completed on 9 Rabil I 581/9 June 1185. This work contains a chapter dealing with the biblical passages that were adduced by Muslims as proof of the veracity of the prophethood of Muḥammad. These were gleaned, as al-Ḥimmaṣī states explicitly, from ‘Ibn Rabba̱ al-Ṭabarī’/‘Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabiḥ’. Moreover, Adang was able to show that al-Ḥimmaṣī took the entire material quoted in this chapter not directly from Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla, but rather from an intermediate source, the Kitāb ghurar al-adilla by Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī
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(d. 436/1045), founder of the last innovative school of Mu'tazilism. The latter work is apparently no longer extant, and its contents can only partly be recovered on the basis of quotations in later books.3

When inspecting Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s quotations from Ibn Rabban in his Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb, Schreiner duly noticed that the reference to Ibn Rabban is followed by an additional reference to Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Kitāb al-ghurar. However, the way Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī refers to the two authors does not suggest that Abū al-Ḥusayn may have been his source for the quotations from Ibn Rabban (see below, Appendix 2, end of Section 3b, beginning of Section 3c). Moreover, on the basis of the little that was known by the end of the nineteenth century about the Mu'tazila, Schreiner was unable to identify Abū al-Ḥusayn. Perlmann for his part was in no better position, for although some few authentic Mu'tazilite texts had come to light during the first half of the twentieth century, virtually nothing was known about the later development of the school or about Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī which could have helped him to draw further conclusions as to Fakhr al-Dīn’s source. Confronted in the Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb with the two references that do not suggest any link between Ibn Rabban and Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, Perlmann omitted the reference to the latter altogether.

A comparison between the chapter of al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh min al-taqlīd discussing the biblical predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the corresponding sections of Fakhr al-Dīn’s Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb reveals a substantial degree of verbal and structural agreement. It becomes evident that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, like al-Ḥimmaṣī, did not have Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla at his disposal, but was relying on an intermediate source, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s Kitāb al-ghurar. In theory, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī may also have used al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh rather than Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar – the Munqidh had been completed a few years before Fakhr al-Dīn embarked upon writing his exegesis,4 and the latter was, according to Twelver Shi'i sources, a student of al-Ḥimmaṣī.5 However, Fakhr al-Dīn’s section on biblical predictions contains material that is not included in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh and which is mostly taken, directly or indirectly, from Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-Dawla. Assuming that Fakhr al-Dīn did not have Ibn Rabban’s work itself at his disposal, it is most plausible that he gleaned his entire material from Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar. Moreover, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is known to have been closely familiar with the writings of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, which further supports the assumption that he was drawing on the same source as al-Ḥimmaṣī, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s Ghurar al-adilla, rather than using al-Ḥimmaṣī’s work.6

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s discussion of biblical predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad is included in his exegesis of Qurʾān 2.40 and is introduced by him as follows: ‘We now mention some [evidence] of what has been adduced in the books of the former prophets announcing the advent of Muḥammad, God bless him and grant him peace’ (wa-la-nadh-kuru al-ān baʿd mā jāʾa fī kutub al-anbiyaʾ al-mutaqaddimīn min al-bishāra bi-maqdam Muḥammad saḥall Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam). The biblical material is then presented in seven numbered sections, each consisting of one or several related scriptural quotations followed by a discussion. This numbered arrangement of the material, which is characteristic of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, has no parallel in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh.7 Moreover, while the parallel introductory passage in the Munqidh explicitly identifies Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s Ghurar as the source for the following biblical predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī refrains from identifying his source.
Section 1 is an abbreviated version of a scriptural passage also found in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh min al-taqlīd (vol. 1, pp. 504:17–506:3). Both authors have it from Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla (ed. Mingana, 1923, p. 67:11–18 [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 78:17–79:2], corresponding to Genesis 16.6–12). This is not clear from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who does not mention his source, but al-Ḥimmaṣī explicitly refers to Ibn Rabban in the Munqidh (vol. 1, p. 505:7: wa-hākadhā naqala Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī wa-ﬁ ba’d al-nusakh Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabiḥ). Al-Ḥimmaṣī also cites Abū al-Ḥusayn for the explanation of the passage given in his and Fakhr al-Dīn’s work alike (vol. 1, p. 504:19: qa¯la al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥusayn), showing that both are drawing on Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar, though Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī omits a passage from a Jewish informant that al-Ḥimmaṣī retains.

Section 2 follows immediately upon Section 1 both in Fakhr al-Dīn’s Mafaṭīḥ al-ghayb and in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh, whereas in Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla the relevant scriptural passages (Deuteronomy 18.15, 18.18–19) are adduced only somewhat later (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 73:13–74:1 [trans. Mingana, 1922, p. 85:17–29]). The verbal agreement between the quotations leaves no doubt that Ibn Rabban was the ultimate source. The entire section in Mafaṭīḥ al-ghayb is again an abbreviated version of what can be found in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh (vol. 1, pp. 506:4–507:7). The explicit references in the Munqidh to Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Ṭabarī (vol. 1, p. 506:9: qāla al-Shaykh; p. 506:19: qāla) indicate that the entire section in the Munqidh and therefore also in the Mafaṭīḥ, where no source is indicated, is again based on Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar al-adilla.

Section 3a follows immediately upon Section 2 in the Mafaṭīḥ and in the Munqidh (vol. 1, pp. 507:8–508:11), and also in Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla the scriptural passages adduced (Deuteronomy 33.2–3; Genesis 21.20–21) follow immediately upon the passage adduced in the passage corresponding to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s Section Two (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 74:16–75:1 [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 86:24–87:7]). The following discussion of the passage in the Mafaṭīḥ is again an abbreviated version of what can be found in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh. The renewed reference in the Munqidh to Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Ṭabarī (vol. 1, p. 507:13: qāla al-shaykh) shows once more that the entire section in the Munqidh and therefore also in Fakhr al-Dīn’s Mafaṭīḥ is based on Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar.

Section 3b follows immediately upon Section 3a both in the Mafaṭīḥ and in the Munqidh (vol. 1, pp. 508:12–509:1), while Ibn Rabban adduces the scriptural passage in question (Habakkuk 3.3–13) in a later chapter of his Al-dīn wa-al-dawla (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 103:5–104:a [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 119:6–120:4]). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī presents a slightly abbreviated version of the scriptural passage, but as is the case with al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh, he concludes the passage with an indication of the source: hākadhā naqila ʿan Ibn Razīn al-Ṭabarī in the Mafaṭīḥ and hākadhā naqala Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī in the Munqidh (vol. 1, p. 509:1). The similarity of the concluding remark suggests that both authors gleaned this from their shared source, Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar al-adilla as it seems.

Section 3c follows immediately upon Section 3b both in the Mafaṭīḥ and in the Munqidh (vol. 1, pp. 509:2–510:16) and contains a detailed discussion of the scriptural passages adduced in Sections 3a and 3b that is largely independent from Ibn Rabban’s interpretation of these verses. The text in the Mafaṭīḥ is a considerably abbreviated version of what can
be found in the Munqidh. At the beginning of the section, Fakhr al-Dīn explicitly mentions Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Kitāb al-ghurar as his source (amma al-Naṣṣārī fa-qāla Abū al-Ḥusayn raḥimahu Allāh fī Kitāb al-ghurar). Al-Ḥimmaṣī also introduced two passages of this section with ‘qāla’ (vol. 1, p. 509:2, 5), both again referring to Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī’s Ghurar.


Section 5 of the Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb, quoting Genesis 17.20, has no parallel in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh, but the passage is also found in Ibn Rabban (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 66:17–67:5 [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 77:23–78:4]), from whom it undoubtedly comes. The argument based on it, introduced by wa-al-istidāl bihi, is not in Ibn Rabban’s work, however. This again suggests that Fakhr al-Dīn was quoting Ibn Rabban via Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, for as has been seen, it is a characteristic feature of Abū al-Ḥusayn that his discussion of the scriptural passages is quite different from that in his source.

Section 6 of the Mafāṭīḥ has likewise no parallel in al-Ḥimmaṣī’s Munqidh, but this time it is not even clear that it came from Ibn Rabban. The scriptural passage is an amalgamation of John 15.26 and 16.7, and though Ibn Rabban discusses similar biblical passages concerning the Paraclete in a chapter entitled ‘The Prophecy of the Christ about the Prophet’ (nubuwwat al-masıḥ ‘alā al-nabı¯ ṣalcam) (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 118–124 [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 140–146]), he does not have this amalgamation. One would assume Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī still to be using Abū al-Ḥusayn, who may have preferred other sources to Ibn Rabban for his New Testament quotations.

Section 7 of the Mafāṭīḥ consists exclusively of a long quotation from Daniel (Daniel 2.31–45). The same passage is found with minor differences in Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla (ed. Mingana, 1923, pp. 113:5–114:6 [trans. Mingana, 1922, pp. 133:12–134:17]). Since Ibn Rabban is so far the only medieval Muslim author known to have quoted this passage (see Adang, 1996, p. 265), there can hardly be much doubt that it comes from him, presumably via Abū al-Ḥusayn’s Ghurar once again, though it is impossible to tell, since Ḥimmaṣī does not cite it.

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Notes


2. Sepmeijer argues (1985, pp. 4–9) that al-Hasan b. Ayyūb almost certainly used Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla as a source for Chapter Four of his refutation, although al-Hasan does not explicitly refer to either the author or the work there.


5. See the editor’s introduction to Al-munqīd min al-taqlīd, vol. 1, pp. 5–12.

6. That Ibn Rabban’s Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla was widely transmitted through Abū al-Husayn’s Kitāb al-ghurar is corroborated by Zaydī sources; see my Biblical predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad: Ibn Qutayba’s Aclaṃ al-nubwāt and Ibn Rabban’s al-Dīn wa-l-dawla and their reception (forthcoming).

7. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s text is reproduced in Appendix 2.

8. The page numbers of the Qum edition are indicated in square brackets in the edition and the translation prepared by Adang, 2007.

9. That it was also quoted by Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) is of little relevance for our context as there is so far no evidence that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was familiar with the writings of Ibn Hazm.

30. رجزاً: زواجًا والتصحيح عن كتاب الدين والدولة لابن رين.
31. تراتب: تراب، والتصحيح عن كتاب الدين والدولة لابن رين.
32. فإن ابن ربين الشرقي: كتاب الدين والدولة، ص 103:2-5:1، قال حفيظ نبي الله السلام، إن الله جاعه من النسيم والقدوس من جبل
33. أرضه لقدماء الإسهام من نفاذ وعطاء الأزاء من جديدة يكون من نفاد وعطاء الأزاء بعد وقع تسمية الناس ماما والتصحيح
34. سباع الأطراف جاعه فنص الأزاء ثم تملأ الأمة ورحباً عنها التسمية جمع الألقان والصوت الروامي النافعة. وتزعمب عن أعزل
35. أدى هذا حلف للساعاد والجسد فأصبح الأزاء حالة صوته في الأرض، ركب الإبل وعلم مراقبة الأزاء، ورثة البسوم للساعاد، ويعتبر الأرض بالساعاد. ولقد ظل أريكة الإبل فاراة والحرذ
36. عذب تأويل السيب، وتعزز اليد، ومعان، وبعض الألف، ووفق الفاروق، وعاد أجهزة وحقوق الألف، وما تعرض لحوار
37. وإلى الأمر، وإلى الأزاء، وإن دائرة الأفكار، وإلى الأزاء، وإلى الأزاء، وإلى الأزاء، وإلى الأزاء، وإلى الأزاء.
38. فقلاً: أبى ما تقدم، وإلى الإبل، وإنما يجد الفنون في كتاب الدين والدولة لابن رين.
39. يضمنها: الكتب، والتصحيح عن كتاب الدين والدولة لابن رين.
40. وفقاً، وفقاً، والتصحيح عن كتاب الدين والدولة لابن رين.

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Lindsay [Crawford], J. L. (1898) Bibliotheca Lindesiana. Handlist of Oriental Manuscripts, Arabic, Persian, Turkish (Aberdeen).
Appendix 1

Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarî and his Kitāb al-dīn wa-al-dawla in Modern scholarship: A Chronology of the Relevant Publications


[1924] Maurice Bouyges, Le ‘Kitab ad-Din wa’d-Dawlat’ récemment édité, traduit et défendu par Mr A. Mingana est-il authentique? Lettre à Monsieur le Directeur de la John Rylands Library, Manchester, Beirut, 1924.


[1925] Maurice Bouyges, Le ‘Kitab ad-Din wa’d-Dawlat’ récemment édité, traduit et défendu par Mr Mingana n’est pas authentique. Seconde Lettre à Mr. Le Directeur de la John Rylands Library, Manchester, Beirut, 1925.


Appendix 2


The text of the Mafāṭīḥ is rendered in bold in all sections 1–7, following the Tehran edition, variations in the Cairo edition being mentioned in {}.10 In Sections One to Four, the text has been collated with the corresponding sections of al-Himmaṣī’s Munqidh; any variants and especially additional material in the latter text has been
indicated in square brackets, with the exception of obvious scribal errors, misprints and variations in eulogies for God or the Prophet Muhammad. The scriptural quotation in Section Five has been collated with the corresponding passage in Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla and variants in the latter work are indicated in square brackets. The text of Section Six is given as it appears in the consulted prints of the Mafaṭīḥ. Section Seven has again been collated with the corresponding passage in Ibn Rabban’s Al-dīn wa-al-dawla; variants are once more indicated in square brackets. Wherever possible, the text of the Mafaṭīḥ has been improved in all seven sections, with emendations being mentioned in the notes.
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Abū al-Husayn al-Baṣrī and his Transmission of Biblical Materials

[Image: 71x77 to 428x622]

[128x650]Abu¯ al-

[147x650]_.

[158x650]_al-Ba

[158x650]_srı¯ and his Transmission of Biblical Materials

[228x650]117

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