Ziad Bou Akl, Une doxographie sunnite du IVe/Xe siècle. « Kitāb al-Maqālāt » d’Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Qalānīsī

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*Une doxographie sunnite du ive/xe siècle.*
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**Mots-clés:** théologie islamique, sunnisme, al-Qalānīsī, al-Asḥ’ārī, Ahmad ibn Hanbal

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Ziad Bou Akl provides an edition with translation and commentary of a reconstructed statement of containing theological positions apparently from the 10th century ce. His text comes from the margins of a 543/1148 Escorial manuscript of Gazālī, al-Iṣlaṣṣād fi al-iṭiqād. They seem to be quotations from an earlier work, arranged as a sort of commentary on Gazālī. Their concern strays often enough from Gazālī’s to reassure us that they do faultfully reproduce passages from an earlier work. Regrettably, they cannot be depended on to reproduce the whole of the earlier text. On the basis of some poor joins, Bou Akl thinks they probably do preserve the original sequence of topics. However, he also points to the imamate as a topic absent from the marginal quotations but doubtfully from the earlier text. Other early controversies not covered include whether faith increases or decreases, whether one should say I am a believer, God willing, whether Adam was created in the image of God, and whether one should say one’s pronunciation of the Koran is create.

As for the authorship and title of the earlier text, al-Nasafi, Taḥṣirat al-adilla, quotes Abū al-ʾABBās, Kitāb al-Maqālāt, as saying that mercy and generosity may be counted among the divine attributes of action, matching a sentence in the margin of al-Iqaṭṣād. The latest authors cited are the Muʿtazila Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥaṣyāṭ (d. ca 300/912-13) and Abū ʿAli al-Ǧubbaʾī (d. 303/915-16), apparently furnishing a terminus post quem. Abū al-ʾABBās al-Qalānīsī’s name and dates have both been hard to pin down. However, Bou Akl stresses a passage quoted by various later authors from al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Tārīḥ Naysābūr, remarked by Gimaret and others as well, according to which someone consulted Abū al-ʾABBās al-Qalānīsī about a theological dispute that had erupted in Niṣāpur in 309/921, which clearly implies that he died some time later than this. (1)

By far the most prominent name in the text is the Basran ʿAbd Allāh ibn Kullāb (d. ca 240/854-5), spotted by Josef van Ess as an early advocate of Sunni *kalām* in a pathbreaking article of the late 1960s. The text also refers to ʿashāb Ibn Kullāb, which agrees with the prominence of the Kullābiyya as a negative reference group for Ibn Ḥuzayma on the occasion of that dispute in Nishapur. Two positions (qawlān) are attributed to Ibn Kullāb concerning whether God can be in some place and not another. Bou Akl infers that the second position was a retrospective attribution by followers who wished to dissociate Ibn Kullāb from Muʿtazī ideas.

Indeed, Bou Akl characterizes al-Qalānīsī in the end as the last representative of the Kullābiyya. Hanbali hostility led to the extinction of the school after him, giving way to the more self-effacing Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAṣʾārī and his followers. Gimaret has argued for regarding al-Qalānīsī as a predecessor to al-ʾAṣʾārī, against van Ess’s identifying him as a contemporary. Bou Akl would stress their contemporaneity, but he does make out that al-ʾAṣʾārī sometimes depends on al-Qalānīsī for his information about the positions of past theologians, especially Ibn Kullāb. Indeed, there is some apparent verbal dependence. I would cite for example the positions of al-Talīg (Ibn Ṣuḡāʿ) and Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī (al-Zāhirī) as to whether the Koran is *muḥdāt*, meaning that there was a time when it was not. They are separated by al-Qalānīsī (§§ 34, 41) but brought together by al-ʾAṣʾārī in the same words (Maqālāt, ed. Ritter, 583).

It is striking that the text never mentions Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal. True, his usual position was that if the Companions did not discuss something, neither need those who have come after. Al-Qalānīsī doubtfully would have attributed to him any of the six creeds quoted centuries later in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, ʿTabaqāt al-Ḥanābīla. Still, it should have been easy to add his name to the two Companions, two Followers, and three later authorities cited as agreeing with ʿAbd Allāh ibn Kullāb that the speech of God is increate; yet al-Qalānīsī submerges Ahmad among *kull ahl al-ḥadīt.*

Al-Qalānīsī seems generally reluctant to name adherents of the ninth-century Šāfīʿī school, as well. Al-Muhāṣibi is cited not for his theological positions but only once as reporting the position of some Ġahmiyya. Abū ʿṬawr, al-Zaʿfarānī, and Ibn Suryāq are completely missing. Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī is named for a few times, including for the proposition, otherwise unattested, that what God speaks is a language. Al-Karābīsī is named only once, as

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maintaining alongside Dāwūd that the speech of God is pronounced (yulfaṣu bihi, when someone recites the Koran). He does not mention their more notorious position that one’s pronunciation of the Koran is create.

As for terminology, ašhāb al-hadīth is ubiquitous. Ahl al-hadīth sometimes comes up as, apparently, an alternative name. There are also mutakallimū ašhāb al-hadīth but no mention of ahl al-ʾitbāt, the term van Ess proposed (used by al-ʾAṣ’ārī, among others) for the middle party prepared to use kalām to defend traditionalist theological tenets. (2) Ahl al-qadar come up, once mutakallimū al-qadariyya, the former once as an apparent sub-group of the Muʿtazila. This documents the absorption of the Qadariyya by the Muʿtazila but not how distinct they were early in the ninth century.

The translation looks good. Baʾd is consistently interpreted as ‘some’ rather than ‘a certain one of’, but admittedly it never clearly must be one or the other. Bou Akl generally maintains a high standard of accuracy, but there are a few questionable trans-literations; e.g., salḥī rather than suḥūt, suḥūṭ, or saḥāṭ, al-Raqqāshī rather than al-Raqqāshī (Samʿānī). Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) the Sunni tradition-ist is repeatedly confused with Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/933-4) the Ismaʿīlī propagandist. Names in the text and commentary are indexed separately with some omissions; e.g., al-Talği. On the whole, the text and commentary are both highly valuable, so that this work belongs in every library that includes the longer Maqālāt of al-ʾAṣ’ārī.

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