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Ibn al-Malāḥimī on Zoroastrianism

The Kitāb al-mu‘tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī (d. 536/1141) belongs to the Mu‘tazilī theological works that present valuable insight into the intricate history of religions and their contacts. Recently, scholars have identified other manuscripts of this book which comprise passages absent in previously known manuscripts. The enlarged edition of 2012 now comprises the complete chapter on Zoroastrianism, of which only a short part was extant in the first edition. This article translates the whole chapter on Zoroastrianism, along with the vocalized Arabic original text, to make it more accessible to historians of Iranian religions. This translation is then followed by a discussion of the implications of this piece for the history of Zoroastrianism after Islam. After discussing the inner-textual structure of the text the inter-textual relations of this text are examined, along with al-Shahristānī’s account on Zoroastrianism. Through this comparison, it is shown that the major part of both texts most probably originates from the Radd ‘alā l-Majūs (Refutation of Zoroastrians) by Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq. In this way, the article shows that both al-Shahristānī’s and Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s texts are relevant for the history of Zoroastrianism in ninth-century Baghdad.

Keywords: Ibn al-Malāḥimī; al-Mu‘tamad; al-Shahristānī/al-Shahrastānī; Abū ‘Isā; Islamic heresiography; Zoroastrianism; Iran and Islam; religious contact

Introduction

By nature, heresiographers write with a polemical bias: their aim is to prove that the heretical doctrines they discuss contain errors and inconsistencies. Yet even while narrating the heresies’ inconsistencies, they often inadvertently transmit insightful details about them. Sometimes this outsider perspective on doctrine is not present in the tradition’s own sources; or, in some cases, no original source from the corresponding

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period is available, and the heresiographical perspective may be our only resource. But even when an emic perspective is available, the heresiographical perspective can still serve as a valuable complement.

A few heresiographical treatises in Arabic dating from the first centuries of Islam include discussion of Zoroastrian doctrines. The best known among these is *al-Milal wa-l-nihāl* composed by Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī¹ (d. 548/1153), which offers a detailed account of Zoroastrian beliefs. Next to this treatise, we have several Islamic theological works from the first centuries of Islam which deal with heresies, including Zoroastrianism. Like the heresiographical treatises, these theological works aim to demonstrate the inconsistencies inherent in the heretical doctrines. One such theological work, written in the tradition of Mu‘tazilī theology, provides us with insight into Zoroastrian doctrines: *Kitāb al-mu‘tamad fi ‘uṣūl al-dīn* of Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī (d. 536/1141), known as Ibn al-Malāḥimī.

In this article, we will introduce Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s report on Zoroastrian doctrine and render an English translation of it that we hope will make it accessible to scholars of Iranian religions. Then we will contextualize the Zoroastrian cosmogonies introduced by Ibn al-Malāḥimī within other reports from Zoroastrian and Islamic sources. Finally, we explore the relationship between the accounts of al-Shahristānī and Ibn al-Malāḥimī—two central Islamic writings that both discuss Zoroastrianism and that seem to share similar sources.

On Ibn al-Malāḥimī. Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī (d. 536/1141), a distinguished Mu‘tazilī theologian of Khwārazm in the sixth/twelfth century, is the last well-known representative of this influential school of Muslim theology. Little is known of his person and life. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Murtaḍā, known as Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1436), a biographer of Mu‘tazilī theologians, introduces him as one of the pupils of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī, an eminent theologian and founder of a school of Mu‘tazilī theology.² However, al-Baṣrī died in the year 436/1044, meaning that Ibn al-Malāḥimī lived almost a full century after the death of his master. It thus seems that Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s frequent reference to and defense of al-Baṣrī’s thoughts has caused Ibn al-Murtaḍā to count him as of one the pupils of al-Baṣrī.³

¹This heresiographer and theologian was born in the small town Shahristān, near to Nasā, in Khurasan. Accordingly, his *nisba* should be rendered correctly al-Shahristānī, and not al-Shahristānī. Therefore, we prefer not to follow this customary vocalization in the scholarship.

²Ibn al-Malāḥimī is the main representative of the school of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī in the first half of the sixth/twelfth century; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb al-mu‘tamad fi ‘uṣūl al-dīn*, 1991, viii. For Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī’s theology, see *ibid.*, vii–viii and Schmidtke, “Neuere Forschungen zur Mu‘tazila,” 398–401.

³See al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb al-mu‘tamad fi ‘uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, v. For further discussion on Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s date of death, see *ibid.*, v–xvi. In the second edition of the book, the introduction to the first edition appears after the introduction to the second edition, and has different pagination than the first edition. Therefore, we refer to each introduction separately. We have used the introduction of the first edition, which is placed after the introduction of the second edition. The second edition has also a Persian introduction written by Hassan Ansari.

It appears that Ibn al-Malāḥimī was a leading authority of the Muʿtazilī school in Khwārazm. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), the renowned Ashʿarī theologian and Qurʾanic exegetist, learned about the standpoints of al-Baṣrī and Ibn al-Malāḥimī while traveling to Khwārazm. He often quotes them in his works. However, it seems that Ibn al-Malāḥimī's authority was restricted to the Muʿtazilī scholars of Khwārazm. Among the Shīʿite Muʿtazilī scholars, namely Zaydīs and Imāmīs of Khurasan, Ray and North Iran, Ibn al-Malāḥimī's ideas were largely not accepted, and sometimes were even the object of criticism.⁴

Our sources are silent about the immediate masters of Ibn al-Malāḥimī, nor does he mention any names. He cites the works of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī and quotes from them, but cites no works from other members of al-Baṣrī's school.⁵ We know that it was Abū Muḍar Maḥmūd b. Jarīr al-Ḍabbī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 507/1114), a Muʿtazilī theologian of the fifth/eleventh century, who disseminated the school of Muʿtazilī and the ideas of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī in Khwārazm; Ibn al-Malāḥimī might have been one of al-Ḍabbī's pupils.⁶

On *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*. *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn* offers a comprehensive treatise on Muʿtazilī theology. A biographical note by ʿAbd al-Salām b. Muḥammad al-Andarāsbānī, a Khwārazmian contemporary of Ibn al-Malāḥimī, who mentions *al-Muʿtamad* as a book by the latter, observes that the book was composed in four volumes.⁷ After finishing this voluminous work, Ibn al-Malāḥimī wrote an abridged version of it, which bears the title *Kitāb al-Fāʾiq fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*.⁸ The first edition of *al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm*, prepared by Wilfred Madelung and Martin McDermott in 1991,⁹ was based on two incomplete manuscripts from the Great Mosque of Sanʿāʾ. In recent years, two additional—but also incomplete—manuscripts of the book were found in Yemen. Hence, we are not in possession of a complete manuscript of *al-Muʿtamad*.¹⁰ The four manuscripts provided the basis for an extended edition of the book, including chapters which were not present in the first edition.¹¹ According to the editors, however, a full four-fifths of this tome are still missing.¹² Hence, it is important to stress that the first edition of the *Kitāb al-muʿtamad* contained only about 15 percent of Ibn al-Malāḥimī's report on Zoroastrianism.¹³ Hence, previously, it was not possible to conduct a thorough study of that section on the basis of the available edition of the *Kitāb al-muʿtamad*.

⁴See Persian introduction in al-Malāḥimī al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, 10 f. On the perception of the works of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī, Ibn al-Malāḥimī's master, by Zaydīs and Imāmīs, see Schmidke, "The Karaites' Encounter," 111.

⁵al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, vii.

⁶al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 1991, vii–viii.

⁷al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, v–vi.

⁸Wilfred Madelung and Martin McDermott edited this book; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-fāʾiq fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*.

⁹al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 1991.

¹⁰al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, Persian intro., 8f.

¹¹al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fi ʿuṣūl al-dīn*, 2012. For the four consulted manuscripts see *ibid.*, vi–viii.

¹²*Ibid.*, v–vi.

In their introduction to the first edition,¹⁴ the editors discuss in detail Ibn al-Malāḥimī's methodology for dealing with various Islamic and non-Islamic doctrines in *al-Mu'tamad*, the relationship between this text and the works of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī, the author's sources, and his contribution to Mu'tazilī theology.¹⁵ According to the editors, in the heresiographical sections of the *al-Mu'tamad*, Ibn al-Malāḥimī relies on two main sources: al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī's *Kitāb al-ārā' wa-l-diyānāt*, and Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's *Kitāb al-maqālāt*.¹⁶ Neither work is extant.

In his introduction to the *al-Mu'tamad*, Ibn al-Malāḥimī asserts that he will discuss the doctrines of dualists and Zoroastrians in more detail than other masters of the Mu'tazilī school had previously done, and specifically, that he will discuss some of these groups' speculations (*min shubāḥihim*) in detail.¹⁷ Hence, this work may be considered a main source of our knowledge about the doctrines of various groups of dualists and Zoroastrians in the late fifth/eleventh and early sixth/twelfth century. But which books served as sources for Ibn al-Malāḥimī's account? According to the editors, Ibn al-Malāḥimī quotes considerable parts of the *Kitāb al-maqālāt* of Abū 'Īsā, which he refers to as *Kitāb fī al-diyānāt*, and in his discussion on dualism and Christianity he seems to mainly rely on this work.¹⁸ Consequently, we may consider Abū 'Īsā, and to some extent al-Nawbakhtī, to be Ibn al-Malāḥimī's primary sources on Zoroastrianism. As we will see below, Ibn al-Malāḥimī begins his report by referring to Abū 'Īsā as (one of) his sources. We must, however, scrutinize the extent to which he has relied on the works of Abū 'Īsā on Zoroastrianism in that section of this book (see below).

On Zoroastrianism in the first centuries of Islam. After the Arab conquest of Iran, the position of Zoroastrianism changed considerably: the state religion of the Sasanians was forced into minority status after centuries of Islamic domination. This reduced status is attributable not only to a reduced Zoroastrian population; the tradition also had to operate without the financial and authoritative assistance from the state. The favorable position that Zoroastrianism had enjoyed for more than four centuries in the Sasanian empire was supplanted by Islam. The first two centuries of Islam seem to have produced few Zoroastrian works, but the third and fourth centuries testify to intensive activity by Zoroastrian theologians. Judging by the transmitted material, these activities constituted the most productive phase in the history of

¹³Below we have marked the place in the Arabic text where the report of Ibn al-Malāḥimī in the first edition of the *Kitāb al-mu'tamad* comes to end. See n. 42.

¹⁴al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fī 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 1991, xiv–xvi.

¹⁵Ibn al-Malāḥimī took the *Taṣaffuḥ al-adilla* of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī as his model in composing *al-Mu'tamad*; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fī 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, xiv–xv, also Schmidtke, "The Karaites' Encounter," 122–4, where she compares parts of the two texts.

¹⁶al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fī 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, vi.

¹⁷Ibn al-Malāḥimī writes that other Mu'tazilī masters discuss only the principles of the doctrines of these groups and refrain from discussing the details in order to disrespect their doctrines; see *ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸If we accept that Ibn al-Malāḥimī learned the ideas of Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī in Khwārazm and never traveled to Baghdad, it is possible to assume that copies of Abū 'Īsā's book, as a scholar who worked in Baghdad, were at his disposal in Khwārazm.

(late) antique Zoroastrian literature.¹⁹ These texts, mostly apologetic, not only reflected a reformed form of Zoroastrian theology, but also shaped a new form of theology in the mirror of rising Islamic prominence, which was not present in Sasanian Zoroastrianism. What is relevant for our discussion is that a significant new theological point of view is advocated in these texts, namely dualism. Zoroastrianism, famous for its dualism,²⁰ seems not to have been so dualist before encountering Islam. Michael Stausberg points out that a Middle Persian term for “dualism” is lacking in the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian literature, whereas we find *dōīb*, “dualism,” in the Pahlavi literature of the third/ninth century.²¹ He emphasizes, moreover, that the classifications monotheism–dualism–polytheism were of little theological concern in Zoroastrianism before its encounter with Islam. This development comes to the fore in the polemical text under discussion here (see below).

It is ironic that Ibn al-Malāḥimī strove to prove that Zoroastrians advocated dualistic cosmogonies, but at the same time chose to reiterate the Zurwān myth,²² a Zoroastrian monistic cosmogony with Eternity as the ultimate principle. This myth appears otherwise mainly in some Sasanian and especially non-Zoroastrian sources. Iranian scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries intensely debated the position of this myth in the history of Zoroastrianism.²³ Of special importance in these discussions was R. C. Zaehner’s *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, which incorporated almost all the known texts related to the Zurwān myth and many others besides; it is by any measure a methodologically problematic work.²⁴ The studies of this period constructed a Zoroastrian heresy called “Zurvanism,” but without substantial reflection on underlying methodological issues. It took a groundbreaking article by Shaul Shaked to change scholars’ views on the Zoroastrian cosmogonies and the position of the Zurwān myth among them.²⁵ Based on Shaked’s more moderate perspective, which considers Zoroastrianism a dynamic socio-cultural entity, Kianoosh Rezania has tried to depict the historical development of the Zoroastrian cosmogony beyond the sectarianist framework.²⁶ Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s account on Zoroastrianism includes some versions of Zurwān myth, and so fruitfully contributes to the discussions about it, as well as to the history of Zoroastrian cosmogonies in the early Islamic period.

¹⁹For a learned survey of this literature see de Menasce, “Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest.”

²⁰It is worth mentioning that the term “dualism” seems to have been coined by Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum* to describe the Zoroastrian notion of gods; see Stroumsa, “Dualismus, I. Religionswissenschaftlich,” 1004.

²¹Stausberg, “Monotheismus, Polytheismus und Dualismus im alten Iran.”

²²See below.

²³For a history of Zurvanite studies see Rezania, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*, 12–24; an abstract review can be found in de Jong, “Zurvanism.” and de Jong, “Zurvan.”

²⁴Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*. On the methodological problems of Zurvanite research see Rezania, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*, 24–31.

²⁵Shaked, “The Myth of Zurvan: Cosmogony and Eschatology.” For a detailed discussion of the transformation of Zoroastrian dualism see Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation*.

²⁶Rezania, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*.

Some Arabic sources present a thorough account of Zoroastrian doctrines and introduce the Zurwān myth in this frame. The most important of these is al-Shahristānī's *al-Milal wa-l-nihāl* which narrates an abridged version of the myth. Two other Arabic authors, Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd-al-qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) and Shahfūr b. Ṭāhir al-Isfarā'inī (d. 471/1079), mention the myth as well. The text under discussion here presents the most detailed Arabic version of the Zurwān-cosmogony.²⁷

Zoroastrianism and Arabic sources. The Arabic reports on Zoroastrianism are of great importance for reconstructing the history of this religion in the early Islamic period.²⁸ There are several reasons for this circumstance: firstly, the major²⁹ Arabic sources on Zoroastrianism³⁰ are only around two centuries younger than the Zoroastrian literature from the Islamic period. Therefore, we can consider them primary sources on early Islamic Zoroastrianism alongside the Pahlavi literature from this period. Secondly, the authors of the Arabic sources must have had satisfactory knowledge of Zoroastrianism through direct and indirect contact with it, stemming from their probable Zoroastrian family lineage and/or the common presence of Zoroastrianism in their environment. In many cases, the Arabic authors inform us that they engaged in intellectual interaction with Zoroastrians.³¹ Thirdly, the Arabic sources are not written from the orthodox point of view of Zoroastrian theologians, and therefore present a variety of Zoroastrian ideas current in the early Islamic period, some of which are not reflected in the Zoroastrian sources. To these characteristics, also pointed out by Shaked,³² we have to add, fourthly, the geographical variety of the regions from which the authors of the Arabic compositions arose. This suggests some geographical variety in local Zoroastrian traditions, which contrasts with the homogeneous picture presented in the Pahlavi sources written in Baghdad and Fars. *In toto*, Shaked summarizes the potential of Arabic sources in comparison to their Pahlavi contemporaries as follows: "The Arabic books provide us therefore with a

²⁷al-Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa-l-nihāl*, al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq wa-bayān al-firqa al-nājiyya minhum*, and al-Isfarā'inī, *al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn wa-tamyīz*. It is worth remembering that descriptions of Zoroastrianism in Arabic sources are not restricted to the works mentioned here. Thanks to Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," some of these have been made accessible to scholars of Zoroastrianism.

²⁸In contrast to Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 43f., 46, we do not project the presented picture of Zoroastrianism in the Islamic sources onto Sasanian Zoroastrianism. We prefer to keep in mind that the earliest of these sources appeared at least 300 years after the fall of the Sasanians.

²⁹By this we mean a theological assessment or a more comprehensive representation of Zoroastrianism. This excludes (short) references to Zoroastrian notions in historical sources. For this classification see *ibid.*, 44.

³⁰The list includes the following authors in chronological order: Maṣ'ūdī (b. <280/893) (see Pellat, "Al-Maṣ'ūdī"), Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) (see Fück, "Ibn Al-Nadīm"), 'Abd al-Jabbār (325–415/937–1024) (see Heemskerck, "'Abd Al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī"), Shahristānī (d. 548/1153), and now Ibn al-Malāḥimī (d. 536/1141).

³¹For an example of such interaction depicted in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's text see its §§17 and 18 below.

³²Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 43f.

point of view that is both close and intimate, and at the same time detached enough to be free from the inhibitions that a Zoroastrian writer is in danger of suffering from.”³³

We can thus affirm the variety of early Islamic Zoroastrianism as standing in contrast, to some degree, to the homogeneity of priestly Zoroastrianism; we should point out, however, that some of the authors of the Arabic sources were Muslim theologians. As such, they discuss Zoroastrian notions of gods and especially Zoroastrian cosmogonies from the perspective of Islamic theology. In doing so, they occasionally construct fictive discussions with a hypothetical opponent. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether these theological treatises represent an actual or merely a hypothetical Zoroastrian position. With respect to the Arabic reports on Zoroastrianism we encounter another methodical problem: the reports potentially fail to differentiate clearly between Zoroastrianism and other forms of religiosity in early Islamic Iran. Naturally, the religious environment of early Islamic Iran cannot be reduced to Zoroastrianism alone. Nor can Zoroastrianism be reduced to its portrayal in the Pahlavi sources. The reality must lie somewhere in between. Beside this synchronous problem, a diachronic problem emerges as well: we do not know the extent to which the Arabic sources relied on older historical sources and, by doing so, may have depicted circumstances that were no longer a reality in the early Islamic period. We are aware of this threefold problem, and must unfortunately admit that the available sources and methods do not allow us to fully resolve these issues. Nevertheless, we tacitly assume that the Arabic reports represent early Islamic Zoroastrianism with reasonable historical veracity, except where the facts hint otherwise. In any case, we can infer that Zoroastrianism was not a monolithic construct. Zoroastrian literature of the third and fourth centuries mediates only one part of the Zoroastrian cosmogonic spectrum, and the dualism represented by these theological treatises is only one of these cosmogonies.

Some editorial notes. As we assume that many scholars read Arabic more easily in its original script, we present a vocalized account of the text instead of transcription. In our discussion, however, we render the original text in transcription, if necessary. We provide text paragraphs as well as smaller units in paragraphs with numbers for ease of referencing them in the subsequent discussion, and to make it easier for readers to move between the translation and the original Arabic text. At the beginning of each paragraph the corresponding place in the edition has been indicated. The beginning of a new page in the edition is marked as well. Our paragraph divisions generally follow those of the text editors. We mark deviations in footnotes.

We have aimed to produce a readable translation, rather than a literal one. Nevertheless, we try to hold the translation as closely as possible to the original Arabic text. Ibn al-Malāḥimī employs a nuanced language comprising differentiated vocabulary and theological terms. We have tried to reflect his sophisticated language in our translation.

³³Ibid., 44.

Arabic Text and Translation

[p. 638, l. 8] وَصَفُ مَقَالَاتِ الْمَجُوسِ

Portrayal of Majūs' Doctrines

[1.1] [p. 638, l. 9] قَالَ أَبُو عَيْسَى: فَأَمَّا الْمَجُوسُ فَلَهُمْ أَقَاوِيلٌ مُخْتَلِفَةٌ. رَزَعَمَ صِنْفٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنَّ النُّورَ لَمْ يَزَلْ وَخَذَهُ وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ ذَا أَشْخَاصٍ وَصُورٍ وَأَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ مِنْ شَكَّةِ شَكَّهَا زُرْوَانَ فِي صَلَاتِهِ، وَزُرْوَانَ عِنْدَهُمْ شَخْصٌ عَظِيمٌ مِنْ أَشْخَاصِ النُّورِ. [1.2] وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: هُوَ النُّورُ الْأَعْظَمُ، [1.3] وَقَالَ: إِنَّمَا صَلَّى زُرْوَانَ تِلْكَ الصَّلَاةَ يَلْتَمِسُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ ابْنٌ، وَكَانَ هُرْمُزٌ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ تِلْكَ، وَهُرْمُزٌ هُوَ الَّذِي تَرَعَمُ الْعَامَّةُ أَنَّ الْمَجُوسَ تَعْبُدُهُ. [1.4] قَالُوا: فَلَمَّا مَثَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، فَرَأَهُ وَمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الشَّرَارَةِ وَالْخُبْثِ وَالْفُجْحِ، كَرِهَهُ وَلَعَنَهُ. [1.5] وَرَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ الْخَيْرَ وَالصَّلَاحَ وَالْمَنَافِعَ مِنَ النُّورِ وَأَنَّهُ لَا يَفْعَلُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الشَّرِّ، وَلَكِنَّهُ قَدْ يَنْدَفِعُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ إِذَا تَعَدَّى عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ الدَّفْعُ ضَرَرًا عَلَى عَدُوِّهِ، [1.6] وَرَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ الْقَتْلَ وَالْفَسَادَ وَالضَّرَرَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ. وَاسْتَحْجُوا لِقَدَمِ النُّورِ وَحِكْمَتِهِ بِنَحْوِ مَا يَحْتَجُّ بِهِ أَهْلُ التَّوْحِيدِ لِإثْبَاتِ الصَّانِعِ الْحَكِيمِ. وَاسْتَحْجُوا أَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَيْسَ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، [قَالُوا:] إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ شَرٌّ وَهُوَ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى، [1.7] وَالْحَكِيمُ لَا يَقْصِدُ إِلَى خَلْقِ الشَّرِّ عَنْ غَيْرِ ضَرُورَةٍ وَلَا إِلَى أَنْ [p. 639, l.1] يَخْلُقَ لِنَفْسِهِ ضِدًّا يَتَلَمَّحُ أَنَّهُ يُعَادِيهِ وَيُفْسِدُ فِي عَالَمِهِ وَيَصِلُ خَلْفَهُ، [1.8] وَرَزَعَمَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَنَّ النُّورَ كَانَ خَالِصًا لَمْ يَزَلْ، ثُمَّ انْمَسَخَ بَعْضُهُ، فَصَارَ ظِلْمَةً، فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا النُّورُ كَرِهَهَا وَدَمَّهَا، وَأَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ مِنْ تِلْكَ الظُّلْمَةِ.

[1.1] Abū Īsā said: Regarding Majūs, they have diverse beliefs: One group believes that light alone is eternal, and it has (various) persons and forms. And Satan³⁴ was (born) from a doubt which Zurwān had in his prayer. For some, Zurwān is a great person of the persons of light; [1.2] and others believe he is the greatest light.³⁵ [1.3] They³⁶ say: Zurwān prayed³⁷ that prayer in order to have a son and from that prayer Hurmuz was (born). And Hurmuz is the one whom ordinary people think that the Majūs worship. [1.4] They say: As Satan appeared in front of him [= Zurwān], and he saw him [*scil.* Satan] and saw that which was in him of wickedness and malice and shamefulfulness [*lit.* lies], he [= Zurwān] loathed him [*scil.* Satan] and cursed him. [1.5] And they claim that goodness and welfare and benefit come from the light, and that it does not commit any evil deed. However, when it [*scil.* the light] is assaulted, it sometimes defends itself, even if that defense causes its enemy harm. [1.6] And they believe that homicide and viciousness and harm come from Satan. And they argue for the pre-existence of light and its wisdom in the (same) way as the monotheists argue in order to prove the Creator and the All-Wise. [1.7] And they argue that Satan was not created by God, the Exalted.³⁸ [They believe:]³⁹ Satan is evil, and he is an enemy of God, the Exalted, and the All-Wise does not aspire to create evil without

³⁴We translate the Arabic *al-shaiṭān* as “Satan” and leave *iblis* untranslated; however, we assume that the author uses the terms *shaiṭān* and *iblis* interchangeably.

³⁵This differs from the notion represented in §1.2: There, Zurwān is one of the *persons* of light and here the pre-existent light.

³⁶This pronoun and the same in §1.4 and §1.5 refer to “some of them” in §1.2.

³⁷The text has *ṣallā*. The act of Zurwān’s veneration has been differently depicted in different sources; for this see Rezania, *Die zoroastriische Zeitvorstellung*, 177–80.

³⁸We translate both Arabic words *rabb* and *allāh* as “God.” Interestingly, the author uses the word *allāh* to designate the highest Zoroastrian god as well.

³⁹This phrase is the editor’s addition.

necessity, and to create an opponent for Himself, while He knows that he [*scil.* Satan] will quarrel with Him, will act wickedly in His world and will lead His creatures astray. [1.8] Some of them [= a second group of Majūs⁴⁰] believe that light was pure from eternity, but a part of it later underwent metamorphosis [*inmasakha*] and became darkness. As light observed this [*scil.* darkness], it detested and blamed it. And (they believe) that Satan (came into being) from this darkness.

[2.1] [p. 639, l. 4] وَمِنْهُمْ صِنْفٌ ثَالِثٌ أَتَّبَعُوا قَدَمَ النُّورِ وَالظُّلْمَةِ وَرَعَمُوا أَنَّهُ كَانَ بَيْنَهُمَا خَلَاءٌ كَانَ جَوْ لَابَهُمَا وَأَخْتِلَاطُهُمَا فِيهِ، وَلَمْ يَبْنُوا الْخَلَاءَ مَعْنَى ثَالِثًا. [2.2] وَرَعَمُوا أَنَّ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ مِنَ النُّورِ وَأَنَّ الشَّرَّ مِنَ الظُّلْمَةِ، [2.3] وَأَعْتَلُوا ذَلِكَ بِمَثَلِ عِلَلِ الْمَنَانِيَةِ. [2.4] وَيُقَالُ: إِنَّ الْخُرْمَدِيَّةَ تَقُولُ بِهَذِهِ الْمَقَالَةِ. وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ يَحْكِي عَنِ الْمَجُوسِ أَنَّهُمْ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّ النُّورَ لَمْ يَزَلْ وَأَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ⁴¹ حَدَثَ مِنْ عُفُونَةٍ كَانَتْ هُنَاكَ. [2.5] فَهَذِهِ جُمْلَةٌ مِنْ أَقْوَالِهِمْ فِي كَوْنِ الشَّيْطَانَ.⁴²

[2.1] A third group among them establishes the pre-existence of light and darkness and believes that there was a void between them where their wandering and blending took place. They do not consider that space a third concept [*ma'na thālithan*].⁴³ [2.2] They believe that the whole goodness is from light, and evil is from darkness. [2.3] They adduce reasons for this, similar to the reasons of Manichaeism [*al-manāniya*].⁴⁴ It is said that it is the *Khurramdiniyya*, which believes in this doctrine. [2.4] Many people narrate from the Majūs that they believe that light is eternal [*lit.* exists from eternity] and Satan came into being from vileness, which existed there. [2.5] This is the sum total of their beliefs about the genesis [*kawn*] of Satan.

[3.1] [p. 639, l. 9] ثُمَّ رَعَمَ الْمُخْبِرُونَ عَنْهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا: إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا كَانَتْ دَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ وَسُرُورٍ سَلِيمَةٍ عَنِ الْأَفَاتِ، وَإِنَّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ بِمَعْرَلٍ مِنَ النُّورِ وَكَانَ مَحَلَّهُ فِي الظُّلْمَةِ، [3.2] فَدَارَ بِشِبَابِيهِ حَوْلَهَا وَرَامَ دُخُولَهَا فَتَعَدَّرَ عَلَيْهِ، [3.3] فَاسْتَعْمَلَ الْكَيْدَ فَبَلَّهَا بِنُطْفَةٍ وَحَرَقَهَا بِأَنْبِيَاءِهِ وَدَخَلَهَا بِجُنُودِهِ [3.4] وَهَزَمَ الرَّبَّ بِجُنُودِهِ وَمَلَانِكْتِهِ، وَتَبِعَهُ إِبْلِيسُ حَتَّى حَاصِرَهُ بِجَنْبِهِ وَجَارَبَهُ ثَلَاثَةَ آلَافِ سَنَةٍ، [3.5] فَصَالِحَ بَيْنَهُمَا مَهْرٌ وَسُرُورٌ وَسَهْلٌ وَرَامَشَانٌ عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ إِبْلِيسُ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي قَرَارِ الصُّوِّ بِسَعَةِ آلَافِ سَنَةٍ بِالثَّلَاثِ اللَّآلِافِ سَنَةٍ الَّتِي كَانَ يُعَاتِلُ فِيهَا الرَّبَّ، [3.6] وَرَأَى الرَّبُّ الْفَضْلَ فِي ذَلِكَ الصُّلْحِ وَفِيمَا تَحْتَمَلُ مَلَانِكْتُهُ وَخَلَقَهُ مِنَ الْمَكْرُوهِ إِلَى انْقِصَاءِ السَّنِينَ. [3.7] وَقَالَ: وَاشْتَرَطَ إِبْلِيسُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَجُنُودِهِ ثَمَانِيَةَ عَشَرَ شَرْطًا، ثُمَّ عَدَّدَهَا، جُمَلَتْهَا تَعَوُّدًا إِلَى أَنْ يَصِيرَ لِإِبْلِيسَ حَظٌّ فِي خَلْقِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي الرِّيَاحِ وَالْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ وَالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنْ يُسَلِّطَ خَلْفَهُ عَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى.

[3.1] In addition to this, reporters claim about them that they believe that the world used to be in happiness and joy, and free from calamities; and that Iblīs was in isolation

⁴⁰The author speaks of a third group in §2.1. Therefore, it seems that he here represents the belief of the second group.

⁴¹This is the last word of this section in the first edition of the book; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fi 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 1991, 598.

⁴²The editor of the Arabic text links this sentence to the next paragraph. We assume that the sentence refers to the Zoroastrian beliefs mentioned in the last paragraphs and prefer to link it to the current paragraph.

⁴³The author might mean that this group of Zoroastrians did not consider space a third *pre-existent* entity.

⁴⁴The author discusses the Manichaean beliefs earlier in his book; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fi 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, 607–26.

from light and was placed in darkness. [3.2] He turned around it [*scil.* the world] with his demons [*shayātīnīhī*] and sought to penetrate it, but it was not possible for him. [3.3] Then, he applied a stratagem, moistened it [*scil.* the world] with a drop, tore it with his tusks and penetrated it with his host. [3.4] And put God with His host and angels to flight. Iblīs pursued Him until he encircled Him from His side,⁴⁵ and fought Him for 3,000 years. [3.5] Then, Mihr, Surūsh, Sahl and Rāmishān made peace between them with the condition that Iblīs and his host would settle in brightness for (only) 9,000 years, which includes the 3,000 years when he was fighting God. [3.6] God saw favor in that peace and in the hardship that his angels and his creatures will bear until the termination of these years. [3.7] He⁴⁶ said: Iblīs stipulated eighteen conditions for himself and his host. And further he [*scil.* the reporter] enumerated them [*scil.* the eighteen conditions]. All of them refer to the point that Iblīs must have a share in the creatures of God, the Exalted, in plants, water, fire and love. And he must (have the ability to) dominate his creatures over God's creatures.

[4.1] قَالُوا: فَلَمَّا اسْتَقَامَا عَلَى شُرُوطِهِمَا أَشْهَدَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمَا بِذَلِكَ عَدْلَيْنِ، وَدَفَعَا بَسِيْفَهُمَا إِلَى مَنْ صَالِحَ بَيْنَهُمَا عَلَى أَنْ مِنْ رَجَعَ عَنْ شَرْطِهِ وَنَكَثَ عَهْدَهُ قَتِلَ بِسَيْفِهِ. [4.2] قَالُوا: وَأَمَرَ اللَّهُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالْكَوَاكِبَ أَنْ تَجْرِيَ لِمَعْرِفَةِ عَدَدِ السَّنِينَ الَّتِي جَعَلَهَا غَايَةً لِكُونَ إِبْلِيسَ فِي الْعَالَمِ، ثُمَّ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ. [4.3] وَقَالُوا: إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ عِنْدَ دُخُولِ إِبْلِيسَ فِي الْعَالَمِ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْإِنْعَامِ، وَلَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْإِنْعَامِ إِلَّا نُورٌ وَرَجُلٌ وَاحِدٌ يُسَمَّى كَيُومَرْتَ، [4.4] فَبَدَأَ قَتْلَهُمَا [p. 640, l.1] إِبْلِيسُ، فَنَبَتَ مِنْ مَسْقَطِ الرَّجُلِ مِنْ نُطْقَتَيْهِ أَضَلُّ مِنْ رَيْنَاسِ، [4.5] وَخَرَجَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْأَضَلِّ رَجُلٌ كَانَ يُسَمَّى مَشْمِيَهُ، وَفِي أَضَلِّ آخَرَ مَشْنِيَهُ، وَأَمْرَةٌ كَانَتْ تُسَمَّى مَشِيَانَهُ، فَهُمَا أَبَوَا الْبَشَرِ، [4.6] وَنَبَتَ مِنْ مَسْقَطِ النُّورِ مِنْ مَائِهِ الَّذِي صَارَ بِالْأَرْضِ الْإِنْعَامُ وَالطُّيُورُ وَالسَّمَكُ وَكُلُّ دَابَّةٍ مِمَّا هُوَ لِلَّهِ وَفِي حُوزَةِ إِبْلِيسِ، إِلَّا مَا تَفَرَّدَ اللَّهُ بِخَلْقِهِ، مَعَ أَعَاجِيبَ كَثِيرَةٍ.

[4.1] They believe that as they [*scil.* God and Iblīs] stipulated the conditions of their (treaty), they called two trustworthy persons⁴⁷ to bear witness for this. Then, they handed their swords to the ones who settled peace between them in order to kill the one who deviates from his condition and violates the pact with his (own) sword. [4.2] They believe that God ordered the sun, the moon and the stars to move in order to reckon the number of the years which He set as the expiration of Iblīs' presence in the world. Hereafter, he [*scil.* Iblīs] will exit it [*scil.* the world]. [4.3] And they believe that as Ahreman penetrated the world, there was no creature in the world and there were no cattle on the earth except for an ox, and a single man by the name of Kayūmarth. [4.4] Afterwards, Iblīs killed them. Then, a trunk of rhubarb grew from the semen of the man at the place where he fell. [4.5] From that trunk sprang forth a man, who is called /*msbmbh*/, and according to another source [*as*] /*msbh*/, and a woman, who is called /*msb'nh*/.⁴⁸ They are the parents of mankind.

⁴⁵This spatial representation, Iblīs encircling God from His side, is unclear to us.

⁴⁶He presumably refers to Abū 'Īsā, the authority of Ibn al-Malāhimi, mentioned at the beginning of the text. Also, it might refer to Abū 'Īsā's source for this account; for a discussion on this see below.

⁴⁷In Arabic text *adlayn*. The same term has been used by Shahrstāni; see below.

⁴⁸The phonetic value of the corresponding proper names is not clear, not even from the Zoroastrian writings. They are often rendered as *masī* and *masyāni* or *mahlī* and *mahlīyāni* in the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts.

[4.6] And in the place of the fall of the sperm of the ox, which went into the earth, grew forth cattle, birds, fishes, and all things that belong to God, but in the possession of the devil, except for the ones that God created Himself. They related this with many marvelous stories.⁴⁹

[5.1] [p. 640, l. 5] وَحُكِيَ عَنْ بَعْضِهِمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى كَانَ قَادِرًا عِنْدَ دُخُولِ إِبْلِيسَ أَنْ يَرْتَفِعَ عَنْهُ بِخَلْقِهِ، [5.2] وَلَكِنَّهُ خَيَّرَ خَلْقَهُ، وَهُمُ إِذْ ذَلِكَ أَرْوَاحٌ بِلَا أَجْسَادٍ، بَيَّنَّ أَنْ يَرْفَعَهُمْ عَنْ مَوْضِعِ إِبْلِيسَ فَلَا يُخَارِبُونَهُ، وَبَيَّنَّ أَنْ يَلْبَسَهُمُ الْأَجْسَادَ فَيَحْمِلُونَ مَكْرُوهُهُ، وَيَكُونُ لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ جَزِيلُ النَّوَابِ فِي الْعَاقِبَةِ، فَاخْتَارُوا ذَلِكَ، [5.3] فَلَمَّا خَارِبُوهُ أَسَرَ الشَّيْطَانَ بَعْضَهُمْ.

[5.1] It is narrated from some of them [that they believe] that God, the Exalted, was able to eliminate Iblīs from Himself at the time of Iblīs' penetration (into the world) by His creatures. [5.2] He, however, gave His creatures, who were at the time spirits without bodies, the choice either to relieve them of Iblīs, so that they do not fight him, or to clothe them with bodies so that they bear his [*scil.* Iblīs'] nuisance, and for which they will receive rich rewards at the end of time. They chose the latter. [5.3] And when they fought him [*scil.* Satan], Satan captured a number of them.

[6.1] [p. 640, l. 9] وَرَعَمُوا أَنَّهُ إِذَا انْقَضَتْ الْمُدَّةُ الْمَضْرُوبَةُ بَيْنَهُمَا خَلَا النُّورُ مِمَّنْ عَصَاهُ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ فِي يَدَيِ إِبْلِيسَ (-) تِسْعَةَ الْأَفِ سَنَةٍ، لَا يَزِيدُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا (-)⁵⁰ بِمَا اجْتَرَحُوهُ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ، ثُمَّ يَظْهَرُ عَلَى إِبْلِيسَ، فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: يَقْتُلُهُ وَيَسْتَرْيَحُ مِنْهُ، [6.3] وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ يَحْبِسُهُ فِي أَصْقِي حَبْسٍ، [6.4] وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: [6.2] يَبْذُلُهُ وَيُقْنِيهِ.

[6.1] They believe that once the fixed time between them [*scil.* God and Iblīs] terminates—which amounts to 9,000 years, and nothing will be added to it—light will be devoid from those creatures who disobeyed Him in the hands of Iblīs by committing sin. Afterwards, He will vanquish Iblīs. [6.2] Some of them say that He will kill him and will rest from him. [6.3] Others believe that He will imprison him in a cramped prison. [6.4] Still others believe that He will slay and destroy him.

[7.1] [p. 640, l. 13] وَرَعَمَ صَنَفٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنَّ زُرَّوَانَ الْكَبِيرَ قَامَ فَدَمَدَمَ سِتَّةَ الْأَفِ سَنَةٍ وَتِسْعَمِائَةَ وَتِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُ ابْنٌ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ، [7.2] ثُمَّ حَدَّثَ نَفْسَهُ وَتَفَكَّرَ وَقَالَ: لَعَلَّ هَذَا الْعَالَمَ لَيْسَ بِشَيْءٍ، فَمِنْ هَذَا الْهَمِّ كَانَ إِبْلِيسَ، [7.3] وَمِنْ ذَلِكَ الْعِلْمِ كَانَ هُرْمَزُ، [7.4] وَكَانَا جَمِيعًا فِي بَطْنٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَإِنَّ هُرْمَزَ الَّذِي اتَّخَذُوهُ رَبًّا كَانَ قَرِيبًا مِنْ بَابِ الْخُرُوجِ، [7.5] فَمَكَرَ إِبْلِيسُ حَذْرًا أَنْ يَخْرُجَ هُرْمَزُ قَبْلَهُ فَيَأْخُذَ الدُّنْيَا، فَشَقَّ بَطْنَ أُمِّهِ وَخَرَجَ. [7.6] وَاخْتَجَّوْا فِيمَا ادَّعَوْا مِنْ ذَلِكَ بِالْأَخْبَارِ عَنْ أَسْلَافِهِمْ وَمُلُوكِهِمْ، وَادَّعَوْا الْجَمَاعَةَ مِنْ أَسْلَافِهِمْ، [7.7] وَادَّعَوْا لِمُلُوكِهِمْ النُّبُوَّةَ وَعَظَّمُوا شَأْنَهُمْ، ثُمَّ عَدَّوْا مُلُوكَهُمْ عَلَى تَرْتِيبِهِمْ إِلَى أَنْ انْتَهَوْا إِلَى زَرْدُشْتٍ. [7.8] قَالُوا: كَانَ مَبْعُوثُهُ عَلَى عَهْدِ بِيشْتَأَسَفٍ، وَكَانَ صَابِنًا فَجَاءَهُ بِالْمَجُوسِيَّةِ، [7.9]

⁴⁹From this point of view, all of the creatures that emerged from the fall of the sperm of the ox are considered the production of Ohrmazd's and Ahreman's interaction. According to this passage, there are in addition creatures which are not grown from the sperm of that ox and are created by Ohrmazd alone.

⁵⁰We modified the editor's punctuation at this point, which was originally as follows: [...] *fi yaday iblisa tas'atu ālāfi sanatin, lā yazidu 'alā dhālika shay'an, bi-mā ijtarahūhu min al-dhunūb* [...]. According to this punctuation one has to relate the expression of time *tas'ata ālāfi sanatin*, 9,000 years, to the nearest verb *khalā* "will be devoid." From the Zoroastrian cosmogony, we know that the time expression should refer to the verb *'anqaḍat* "determined." Therefore, we assume that the sentence should be punctuated as rendered above.

وَيَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُ يَجِيءُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ نَبِيٌّ لَهُمْ عَلَى دِينِ زُرْدُشْتِ وَأَنَّ الْمَلَكَ يُعَوِّدُ إِلَيْهِمْ. [7.10] وَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ وَأَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ خَلَقَ الْأَسَدَ وَالذَّبَابَ وَالْهَوَامَّ الْمُؤَدِّيَّةَ، [7.11] وَزَعَمُوا أَنَّهُمْ عَبِيدُ الْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ، وَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَهُمْ بِالْأَكْلِ وَالشَّرْبِ وَالنِّكَاحِ وَنَهَاهُمْ عَنِ الصَّوْمِ، [7.12] وَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ الْقِيَامَةَ أَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ يَبِيدُ وَكَذَلِكَ الظُّلْمَةُ، وَيَكُونُ عَالَمٌ جَدِيدٌ لَيْسَ فِيهِ ظُلْمَةٌ وَلَا مَوْتُ.

[7.1] A group of them believe that the great Zurwān stood and murmured⁵¹ for 6,999 years, so that a son will be for him, but it did not happen.⁵² [7.2] Then, he spoke to himself and reflected and said: “Perhaps this world⁵³ is not worthwhile.” [7.3] From this concern [*hamm*] emerged Iblis, and from that knowledge [*ilm*] emerged Hurmuz. [7.4] They were both in the same belly. Hurmuz, the one whom they [*scil.* this group of Zoroastrians] chose as god, was next to the exit door. [7.5] Then, Iblis deceived (him [*scil.* Hurmuz]) because of his concern that if Hurmuz would exit (the belly) before him, he [*scil.* Hurmuz] would seize the world. Therefore, he [*scil.* Iblis] split the belly of his mother and exited. [7.6] They argue for what they claim on the basis of the reports from their ancestors and kings, and they claim the consensus (?) [*al-jamā'a*] of their ancestors [on these beliefs]. [7.7] And they proclaim prophet-hood for their kings and glorify them. Furthermore, they list their kings according to the order of their reign until they end with Zardusht. [7.8] They say that his [*scil.* Zardusht's] appearance was in Bīshnāsf's [i.e. Wishtāsp's] reign, who was Sabean and he [*scil.* Zardusht] brought him [*scil.* Wishtāsp] Zoroastrianism [*madjūsiyya*]. [7.9] And they believe that at the end of time, a prophet of the religion of Zardusht will come to them, and the kingdom will return to them. [7.10] And they believe that God created human beings, and Iblis created the lion and the flies and the harmful insects. [7.11] They believe, moreover, that they are servants of the water and the fire, and that God commanded them to eat and to drink and to marry and prohibited them from fasting. [7.12] And they believe that at resurrection, Iblis will perish and so will the darkness, and a new world will appear in which neither darkness nor death will exist.

[8.1] [p. 641, l. 1] فَهَذِهِ جُمْلَةٌ مِمَّا حُكِيَ عَنْهُمْ، [8.2] فَحَصَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ بَعْضَهُمْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ وَالشَّيْطَانَ قَدِيمَانِ، [8.3] وَبَعْضُهُمْ يَقُولُ أَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ مُخْدَتٌ، وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ وَالشَّيْطَانَ جِسْمَانِ، [8.4] وَحُكِيَ عَنْ بَعْضِهِمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ جِسْمٌ وَالشَّيْطَانَ لَيْسَ بِجِسْمٍ، [8.5] وَحَصَلَ أَنَّهُمْ يَنْسِبُونَ الْخَيْرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَهُوَ النُّورُ عِنْدَهُمْ، وَأَنَّهُمْ يَنْسِبُونَ الشَّرَّ إِلَى إِبْلِيسَ وَأَنَّهُ مِنَ الظُّلْمَةِ عِنْدَ أَكْثَرِهِمْ، [8.6] وَتَقَرَّبَ أَقَاوِيلُهُمْ مِنْ أَقَاوِيلِ النَّوَيْيَةِ، وَحُكِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَنَّ

⁵¹This is the Arabic technical term used by Islamic heresiographers to designate Zoroastrian recitation, *damdama* or *zamzama*; see note 37 above as well.

⁵²Lit. “but it was not for him” (*fa-lam yakun lahū*).

⁵³Al-Shahristānī's text edited by Kīlānī (*al-Shahristānī, al-Milal wa-l-nihal*) has at the corresponding place *al-ilm*. Gimaret and Monnot (*al-Shahristānī, Livre des religions et des sectes*, 638 n. 22) emend it to *al-ʿamal* “(ritual) action.” Abolqāsemī, *Dīn-hā va kish-hāye irānī dar dawrān-e bāstān be ravāyat-e Shah-restānī*, 136, 29, 72 n. 48 follows them whereas Shaked, “Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism,” 57 n. 29 follows Kīlānī. Gimaret and Monnot (*al-Shahristānī, Livre des religions et des sectes*, 638 n. 22) point out that one manuscript has *ʿilm*. This is the case in al-Shahristānī's text accompanying Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Faṣl fi-l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-nihal* Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl fi-l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-nihal*, 74 as well. In conformity with Ibn al-Malāḥimī, we assume that al-Shahristānī's text should be emended to *al-ʿālam*. The confusion might have been because of the orthographically similar lexeme *al-ilm* in the following sentence in al-Shahristānī.

الْأَرْوَاحِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالْأَجْسَادَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، [8.7] وَحَصَلَ مِنْ جُمْلَةٍ مَا حَكِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ مُقَلِّدُونَ فِي ذَلِكَ لِأَوْلِيَائِهِمْ وَأَسْلَافِهِمْ، وَإِذَا اعْتَقَدُوا فِيهِمُ النَّبُوَّةَ كَانَ الْأَمْرَ فِي تَقْلِيدِهِمْ أَكْبَدًا.

[8.1] This is the sum of what has been narrated from them. [8.2] From this, it becomes apparent that some of them claim that God and Satan are pre-existent. [8.3] Others say that Satan is created in time, and that God and Satan are material [*jismān*].⁵⁴ [8.4] It has been narrated by some of them that God is material and Satan does not exist in material (form).⁵⁵ [8.5] It is apparent that they ascribe goodness to God, and He is the light according to them, and ascribe evil to Iblīs, who arose, according to the majority of them, from darkness. [8.6] Their beliefs resemble those of the dualists. It has been narrated from them that the spirits are from God, the Exalted, and the bodies from Satan. [8.7] From all that which has been narrated from them it is apparent that in this they follow their predecessors and forefathers. And if they believed in them as prophets, then imitating them was absolute.

[9.1] [p. 641, l. 8] [9.1] فَيَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُقَالَ لَهُمْ أَوْلَا: إِذَا كَانَ إِبْلِيسُ يَتَمَكَّنُ مِنَ الشَّرِّ التَّمَكَّنَ الَّذِي ذَكَرْتُمُوهُ فَمَا أَنْكَرْتُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَنْ قَلَدْتُمُوهُ مِنْ مُلُوكِكُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَقَدْتُمْ فِيهِمُ النَّبُوَّةَ هُمْ مِنْ رُسُلِ الشَّيْطَانِ، [9.2] أَرْسَلَهُمْ لِيُضِلُّوا الْخَلْقَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ، وَيُلَقِّنُوهُمْ السَّخْفَ وَالْخُرَافَاتِ الَّتِي تَذْهَبُونَ إِلَيْهَا، [9.3] وَأَنْ مَنْ جَاءَ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ مُذَكِّرِينَ لِلْمَجُوسِيَّةِ وَمُطْبِلِينَ لَهَا هُمْ مِنْ رُسُلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، أَرْسَلَهُمْ لِيَهْدُوا الْخَلْقَ إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَيُبَيِّنُوا لَهُمْ بُطْلَانَ الْمَجُوسِيَّةِ؟ [9.4] وَلَا بُدَّ لَهُمْ مِنْ تَجْوِيزِ ذَلِكَ، فَمَتَى أَنْصَفُوا وَجَوَّزُوهُ بَيِّنًا لَهُمْ بُطْلَانَ مَا ذَهَبُوا إِلَيْهِ بِمَا تَقَدَّمَ عَلَى الثَّنَوِيَّةِ وَبِمَا أَلَزَمَهُمْ عُلَمَاءُ الدِّينِ.

[9.1] It must be told them, firstly: If Iblīs possesses control of evil as you say, then how⁵⁶ do you deny that those, among your kings, whose (teachings) you follow, whom you believe in as prophets, are Satan's messengers [9.2] sent in order to deceive mankind from truth and teach them the ridiculous and superstitious things that you follow; [9.3] and that the ones among the messengers who are refuters of Zoroastrianism and its invalidators must be the messengers of God, the Exalted, whom He sent to lead mankind to truth and show them the invalidity of Zoroastrianism?⁵⁷ [9.4] They simply must accept this. If they are just (to our premise) and accept it, then we have demonstrated to them the invalidity of what they adhere to, according to what preceded about dualism,⁵⁸ and according to what the theologians [*ulamā' al-dīn*] obligated them.

⁵⁴In the Arabic text *jismān* lit. 'two bodies.'

⁵⁵This rendering undoubtedly alludes to the Zoroastrian concept of the non-existence of Ahreman and demons, as against gods, in the material world; see note 114 below. In light of this concept, the sentence '*anna allāha jismun* which has been literally translated in 'God is a body,' should be understood as God's existence in the bodily world.

⁵⁶Here the word "how" has been chosen for the Arabic *mā*, which must be translated into "what." We chose to use "how," because it fits into the sentence we used in the English translation. See next footnote.

⁵⁷According to the reading of the editors, here we have a long rhetorical question. The sentence should be, therefore, read as: [...] if Iblīs possesses the control of evil as you claimed, then you have not refuted that those [...]. We kept the structure of the rhetorical question in the translation. Grammatically speaking, it seems possible to read this sentence as a non-interrogative sentence, too. However, we decided to follow the punctuation of the editors.

⁵⁸Ibn al-Malāḥimī's chapter *al-Kalām 'alā al-thanawīyya wa-hikāyatū maqālātihim* (remark on dualism and report on their thoughts) opens a sub-chapter (*faṣl*) and replies to dualists, arguing

[10.1] [p. 641, l. 15] [10.1] أَمَا قَوْلُهُمْ بِقَدَمِ النُّورِ وَالظُّلْمَةِ، وَقَوْلُهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ جِسْمٌ وَأَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ جِسْمٌ وَأَنَّهَمَا قَدِيمَانِ، فَقَدْ ظَهَرَ بطلَانُهُ بِمَا تَقَدَّمَ. [10.2] [وَمَا قَدَمْنَاهُ مِنْ أَنَّ الْقَدِيمَ يَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَادِرًا لِذَاتِهِ وَقَادِرًا عَلَى مَا لَا يَتَنَاهَى، فَيُبْطَلُ مَا هَدُّوا بِهِ مِنْ أَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ حَارَبَهُ وَهَزَمَهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ صَالِحُهُ، [10.3] وَلَوْ جَازَ ذَلِكَ لَجَازَ أَنْ لَا يَتِمَّكَرَنَّ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْ قَتْلِهِ أَوْ ذِبْحِهِ أَوْ حَبْسِهِ، [10.4] فَيَبْقَى الْعَالَمُ عَلَى مَا عَلَيْهِ الْآنَ مِنَ الْمَكْرُوهِ، فَيُبْطَلُ مَا اعْتَقَدُوهُ مِنْ أَنَّ الْعَالَمَ يَخْلُصُ مِنَ الشُّرُورِ.

[10.1] Concerning their statement about the pre-existence of light and darkness, and their statement that God and Iblis are material, and both of them are pre-existent, the falsity of these (statements) becomes apparent from what preceded. [10.2] And what we mentioned earlier, that the pre-existent must of necessity be capable of its own being [*dhātihī*], and capable of what is endless, invalidates that they say irrationally that Iblis fought Him and defeated Him, and that God reached an agreement with him. [10.3] If this were permissible, then it would be permissible that God, the Exalted, is not capable of slaying him, beheading him or imprisoning him. [10.4] Consequently, the world would remain in its current undesirable (state). Therefore, this falsifies their belief that the world will be freed from evils.

[11.1] [p. 641, l. 20] [11.1] وَيُقَالُ لِمَنْ ذَهَبَ إِلَى أَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ مُخْدَعٌ : [11.2] لَيْسَ يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ حَدَثَ لِمُحَدِّثٍ أَوْ لَا لِمُحَدِّثٍ، [11.3] وَالثَّانِي يَقْتَضِي تَجْوِيزَ خُدُوثِ الْخَوَادِثِ كُلِّهَا لَا لِمُحَدِّثٍ، فَيُبْطَلُ الطَّرِيقُ إِلَى اثْبَاتِ الصَّانِعِ الْحَكِيمِ وَإِلَى اثْبَاتِ إِبْلِيسِ الشَّرِيرِ، [11.4] وَإِنْ حَدَثَ لِمُحَدِّثٍ لَمْ يَخْلُ إِمَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ الْمُحَدِّثُ مُوجِبًا أَوْ مُخْتَارًا، [11.5] فَإِنْ كَانَ مُوجِبًا كَمَا قَالُوهُ أَنَّهُ يُؤَلِّدُ مِنْ شَكِّ رَدِيءٍ أَوْ فِكْرَةٍ رَدِيئَةٍ أَوْ غَفْوَةٍ، قِيلَ لَهُمْ: إِنَّ الشَّكَّ وَالْفِكْرَ لَا يَجُوزَانِ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، [p. 642, l. 1] [11.6] لِأَنَّ الشَّكَّ يَقْتَرِنُ بِالْفِكْرِ، وَالشَّكُّ يَقْتَرِنُ بِهِ الْجَهْلُ الَّذِي هُوَ نَفْيُ الْعِلْمِ بِالشَّيْءِ، وَذَلِكَ نَقْصٌ وَ شَرٌّ، [11.6] وَلَوْ جَازَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْجَهْلُ الَّذِي هُوَ نَفْيُ الْعِلْمِ لَجَازَ عَلَيْهِ الْجَهْلُ [الَّذِي هُوَ اعْتِقَادُ الشَّيْءِ عَلَى خِلَافِ مَا [هُوَ] عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَكُونُ شَرًّا. [11.7] وَعَلَى أَنْكُمْ وَصَفْتُمْ شَكَّهُ بِالرَّدَاءَةِ فَقُلْتُمْ شَكًّا رَدِيئًا، وَلِذَلِكَ تَقُولُونَ أَنَّهُ يُؤَلِّدُ مِنْهُ الشَّيْطَانَ الَّذِي هُوَ شَرٌّ، وَالرَّدِيءُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا شَرًّا، فَكَيْفَ يَصْدُرُ مِنَ النُّورِ الشَّرُّ؟ وَلِأَنَّهُ يَلْزَمُ [أَنْ يَكُونَ النُّورُ عَالِمًا لِذَاتِهِ وَقَادِرًا لِذَاتِهِ عَلَى مَا قَرَّرْنَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى التَّنْوِيَةِ، وَالْعَالِمُ [11.8] لِذَاتِهِ لَا يَجُوزُ عَلَيْهِ الشَّكُّ وَالْفِكْرُ الَّذِي يَقْتَرِنُ بِهِ الشَّكُّ. [11.9] وَلِأَنَّهُ إِذَا نَفَكَرَ الْمُتَمَامِلُ لَتَعَلَّمَ مَا لَا يَعْلَمُ، وَالْعَالِمُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَا يَجُوزُ عَلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ.

[11.1] And one may say to the person who believes that Satan is created in time: [11.2] There is only one of two options: Either he is created by a creator, or by a non-creator.⁵⁹ [11.3] This second (option) would necessitate the permissibility of the creation of all contingencies by a non-creator. Consequently, the way to prove the Creator, the Omniscient, and to prove Iblis, the Evil, is annulled. [11.4] If he [*scil.* Iblis] is created in time by a creator, there are only these options: Either the creator is a cause [*mawjib*] or he is a free agent [*mukhtār*]. [11.5] If he [*scil.* the creator] is

similar to this place of the section on Zoroastrianism; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazm, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fi 'usūl al-dīn*, 2012, 624f.

⁵⁹The Arabic text reads *qad ḥadatha li-muḥdithin 'aw lā li-muḥdithin*.

a cause—as they believe that he [*scil.* Iblīs] was born from a foul doubt [*shakkin radi*] or foul reflection [*fikratin radi'a*] or vileness—one may say to them that doubt and reflection are not permissible (to be ascribed) to God, the Exalted, because doubt is associated with reflection, and reflection is associated with ignorance, which is denial of [having] knowledge of entities, and this is deficiency and evil. [11.6] And if the ignorance which is the denial of knowledge were permissible for God, the Exalted, then the ignorance, which is belief in something in opposition to what it (really) is, would be permissible for Him (as well). (Therefore) it [*scil.* the ignorance] would not be evil. [11.7] And since you described his [*scil.* Zurwān's] doubt with the attribute of vileness, and claimed that He doubted a vile doubt—and therefore you claimed that Satan who is evil was born from Him, and the vileness is nothing but evil—then how does evil arise from light? [11.8] Furthermore, as we established (before) for dualism,⁶⁰ it is necessary for light to have knowledge of its essence and be capable of it, and doubt and the reflection associated with doubt are not permissible for the one who has knowledge about its essence [*al-ālim li-dhātihī*]. [11.9] Moreover, the one who contemplates [*al-muta'ammil*] speculates only in order to learn what he does not know, and this is not permissible for the one who is omniscient.

[12.1] [p. 642, l.9] فَإِنْ قَالُوا : نَعْنِي بِالْفِكْرِ الْهَمَّ وَالْحُزْنَ ، قِيلَ لَهُمْ : إِنَّ النُّورَ يَجِبُ أَنْ يَسْتَجِيلَ عَلَيْهِ الضَّعْفُ وَالْخَوْفُ مِنْ وُصُولِ الْمَضَارِّ إِلَيْهِ ، فَيَسْتَجِيلُ عَلَيْهِ الْهَمُّ وَالْحُزْنُ ، [12.2] وَلَوْ جَازَ أَنْ يَصْدُرَ مِنَ النُّورِ شَكٌّ رَدِيءٌ أَوْ فِكْرَةٌ رَدِيئَةٌ لَجَازَ أَنْ تَصْدُرَ مِنْهُ الشُّرُورُ كُلُّهَا ، وَفِي ذَلِكَ الْإِسْتِغْنَاءُ عَنِ الشَّيْطَانِ . [12.3] وَلِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ الْفِكْرَ إِنْ كَانَ مِثْلَ أَفْكَارِنَا ، وَذَلِكَ الشُّكَّ إِنْ كَانَ مِثْلَ شُكُوكِنَا ، لَزِمَ أَنْ يَتَوَلَّدَ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنْ أَفْكَارِنَا وَشُكُوكِنَا لِأَنَّ الْمُؤَلَّدَ لَا يَخْتَلِفُ تَوَلِيدُهُ بِاخْتِلَافِ الْأَرْمَنِ وَالْأَمْكِنَةِ . [12.4] وَإِنْ كَانَ مُخَالَفًا لِمَا نَعْقِلُهُ مِنَ الْأَفْكَارِ وَالشُّكُوكِ فَمَا لَا يُعْقَلُ يَجِبُ نَفْيُهُ .

[12.1] And if they say: “By reflection we mean concern and grief [*al-hamm wa-l-huzn*],” it should be said to them that it must be impossible for light to be weak and to be fearful of getting harmed. Hence, concern and grief are impossible for it [*scil.* light], as well. [12.2] And if it were permissible for a foul doubt or a foul reflection to arise from light, then it must be permissible for all sorts of evil [*al-shurūr kulluhā*] to arise from it, and this would mean that there is no need for Satan (to exist). [12.3] (Furthermore) if that reflection resembles our reflections, and that doubt resembles our doubts, this would necessitate that Satan can be born from our reflections and doubts (as well), since the created one [*al-muwallad*] would not change its nature by the change of time and space. [12.4] And if (this reflection or doubt) differs from the kinds of reflections and doubts which we can comprehend, one must refute things that cannot be comprehended.

[13.1] [p. 642, l. 16] وَأَمَّا قَوْلُ بَعْضِهِمْ أَنَّهُ تَوَلَّدَ مِنْ عُفُونَةٍ قَدِيمَةٍ فَهُوَ بَاطِلٌ ، لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَلْزِمُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مُتَوَلِّدًا مِنْهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ لِأَنَّ الْمَوْجِبَ قَدِيمٌ ، [13.2] وَيَلْزِمُهُمْ أَنْ يَجُوزُوا أَنْ تَتَوَلَّدَ الشُّرُورُ كُلُّهَا وَالْحَيَوَانَاتُ الْمُؤَدِّيَّةُ مِنَ الْعُفُونَةِ الْقَدِيمَةِ ، [13.3] وَفِي ذَلِكَ الْإِسْتِغْنَاءُ عَنِ الشَّيْطَانِ .⁶¹

⁶⁰This has been discussed in al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb al-mu'tamad fi 'uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, 635.

⁶¹We prefer to set a new paragraph at this point, deviating from the edition.

[13.1] As for the belief of some of them that he [*scil.* Satan] was born from a pre-existent vileness: this is false (as well), because this would necessitate him [*scil.* Satan] to be born from it [*scil.* vileness in light] everlastingly, since (its) cause is pre-existent. [13.2] This (also) obligates them to accept the birth of all sorts of evil and that of the harmful animals from the pre-existent putridity. [13.3] With this (assumption) there is no need of Satan.

[14.1] [p. 642, l. 18] وَأَمَّا خُذُوهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنْ فَاعِلٍ مُخْتَارٍ، وَهُوَ النُّورُ عِنْدَهُمْ، فَلَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ يَخْدَيْتَ عَنْهُ عَنْ سَهْوٍ أَوْ قَصْدٍ، [14.2] وَالسَّهْوُ لَا يَجُوزُ عَلَى الْقَدِيمِ الْعَالَمِ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَلَوْ جَازَ أَنْ يَخْدَيْتَ مِنْهُ الشَّرُّ الَّذِي هُوَ الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْ سَهْوٍ، جَازَ أَنْ تَخْدَيْتَ مِنْهُ الشَّرُّورُ كُلَّهَا عَنْ سَهْوٍ، وَفِي ذَلِكَ الْإِسْتِعْنَاءُ عَنِ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَلَوْ جَازَ عَلَيْهِ السَّهْوُ لَجَازَ أَنْ يَخْدَيْتَ الْجَبْرَ أَيْضاً عَنْ سَهْوٍ، وَيَكُونُ فَاعِلَ الْخَيْرِ وَالشَّرِّ وَإِجْدَاءً. [14.3] وَإِنْ أُحْدِثَهُ عَنْ قَصْدٍ جَازَ أَنْ تُحْدِثَ الشَّرُّورُ كُلَّهَا وَالْحَيَوَانَاتِ الْمُؤَدِّيَةِ عَنْ قَصْدٍ، لِأَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ أَبْلَغَ فِي الشَّرِّ مِنَ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ الْمُؤَدِّيَةِ، [14.5] [p. 643, l. 1] لِأَنَّهُ يُمَكِّنُنَا الْإِحْتِرَاسَ مِنْهَا وَأَمَكَّنَتْهَا بَعِيدَةً مِنَّا، وَلَا تَعْمَلُ الْمَكَانِدُ فِي الْإِضْرَارِ بِنَاءً، وَلَا يُمَكِّنُنَا الْإِحْتِرَاسُ مِنْ مَضَارِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَكَانِدِهِ.

[14.1] The emergence of Satan from a free agent—and this is light according to them—is not free (from these two options): He [*scil.* Satan] arises from it [*scil.* light] either inattentively or attentively. [14.2] Inattentiveness is not allowed for the pre-existent one who is omniscient. And if it is permitted that evil, which is Satan, arises from it [*scil.* light] inattentively, then it is permitted that all sorts of evil arises from it [*scil.* light] inattentively. By this (assumption) there is no need of Satan. [14.3] Furthermore, if inattentiveness is permitted for it [*scil.* light], then it is permitted in the same way that goodness arises (for it) inattentively, and the agent [*fā'il*] of goodness and evil would become the same. [14.4] If it [*scil.* light] creates him [*scil.* Satan] attentively, then it is permitted that all sorts of evil as well as the harmful animals arise attentively because Satan beats the harmful animals in evilness. [14.5] The reason (for this) is that it is possible for us to be wary of them [*scil.* harmful animals], and they can stay away from us and they do not trick to harm us. However, it is not possible for us to be wary of the harms of Satan and his tricks.

[15.1] [p. 643, l. 3] فَإِنْ قَالُوا: إِنَّا نَقُولُ فِي إِحْدَاثِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الشَّيْطَانَ كَقَوْلِكُمْ فِي إِحْدَاثِهِ، قِيلَ لَهُمْ: إِنَّا لَا نَصِفُ ذَاتَ الشَّيْطَانِ بِأَنَّهُ شَرٌّ، [15.2] فَجَازَ أَنْ نَقُولَ أَنْ خَلَقَهُ حَسَنًا، خَلَقَهُ تَعَالَى لِلْإِحْسَانِ إِلَيْهِ وَكَالْفَهْ إِحْسَانًا إِلَيْهِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَفْعَالُهُ هِيَ الشَّرُّورُ، [15.3] فَإِذَا أَتَرَ الْمَعَاصِي وَالشَّرُّورَ أَتَى مِنْ قِبَلِ نَفْسِهِ، وَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ قَوْلِكُمْ، لِأَنَّ ذَاتَهُ عِنْدَكُمْ شَرٌّ بِمَنْزِلَةِ السَّمِّ. [15.4] فَإِنْ قَالُوا: إِنَّا نَحْسُنُ خَلْقَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَنَقُولُ: ذَاتُهُ لَيْسَتْ بِشَرٍّ، قِيلَ لَهُمْ: فَقَدْ بَطَلَ قَوْلُكُمْ أَنَّهُ تَوْلَدَ مِنْ أَصْلِ هُوَ شَرٌّ، [15.5] وَمَتَى قَلْتُمْ بِذَلِكَ فَقُولُوا أَنْ ذَوَاتِ الْحَيَاتِ وَالذُّوَابِ وَالهُوَامِ الْمُؤَدِّيَةِ لَيْسَتْ بِشَرٍّ وَأَنْ خَالَقَهَا هُوَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى خَلَقَهَا لِيَنْفَعَهَا، وَإِنَّمَا أَفْعَالُهَا هِيَ الشَّرُّ.

[15.1] If they would say: “Our belief in bringing forth of Satan by God, the Exalted, resembles your belief about the bringing forth of him [*scil.* Satan],” then it should be said to them: We do not describe the nature of Satan as being evil. [15.2] Therefore, it is permitted (to us) to claim that his [*scil.* Satan’s] creation is acceptable [*hasan*]. He, the Exalted, created him [*scil.* Satan] to make a favor to him and assigned him (responsibility) as a favor, and only his [*scil.* Satan’s] deeds are evil. [15.3] Consequently, if he chooses (to commit) sins and evils, these arise from him himself. This, however, is not your belief, because according to you, his nature is evil, like poison. [15.4] If they

would say that we regard Satan's creation (by God) as acceptable and believe that his nature is not of evil, it should be said to them: (In that case) your belief is falsified that he is born from an origin which is evil. [15.5] When you say this (that the nature of Satan is not evil), then accept that the animate beings⁶² and (harmless) animals and harmful animals are not from evil and their creator is God, the Exalted! He created them to benefit them, and it is only their actions which is evil.

[16.1] [p. 643, l. 10] وَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ: إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ إِبْلِيسَ عَنِ قَصْدٍ فَلَا بُدَّ لَهُ فِي خَلْقِهِ مِنْ عَرَضٍ، وَإِلَّا كَانَ خَلْقُهُ عَثْبًا فَبِيحًا، [16.2] وَلَا وَجَهَ فِي ذَلِكَ يَحْسُنُ لِأَجْلِهِ خَلْقَهُ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ إِحْسَانٌ إِلَيْهِ، وَكَذَلِكَ تَكْلِيفُهُ إِيَّاهُ، [16.3] فَإِذَا مَكَّنَهُ مِنْ نَفْعٍ نَفْسِهِ، وَمَكَّنَنَا مِنَ الْإِحْتِرَاسِ مِنْهُ، فَمَتَى خَالَفَ هُوَ أَمْرَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَتَى مِنْ قِبَلِ نَفْسِهِ، وَمَتَى تَرَكْنَا الْإِحْتِرَاسَ مِنْهُ أَتَيْنَا مِنْ قِبَلِ أَنْفُسِنَا، [16.4] وَمَتَى قَلِمْتَ بِذَلِكَ قِيلَ لَكُمْ: فَجَوِّزُوا أَنْ يَخْلُقَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْحَيَوَانَاتِ الْمُؤَدِّيَةَ لِنَفْعِهَا وَنَفَعِنَا بِهَا وَإِرْهَابِنَا بِهَا لِنَعْتَبِرَ بِذَلِكَ وَنَحْتَرِسَ مِنَ الْمَعَاصِي الْمُوَدِّيَةِ إِلَى عِقَابِهِ، كَمَا نَحْتَرِزُ مِنَ مَضَارِّهَا، [16.5] وَمَتَى اسْتَضَرَّرْنَا بِهَا عَوَّضْنَا بِعَوَضٍ مُقَابِلِ لِدَلِكِ الضَّرَرِ أَوْ مَوْفٍ عَلَيْهِ، فَبِأَنَّ بِمَا ذَكَرْنَا بَطْلَانَ قَوْلِهِمْ مِنْ جَمِيعِ وَجُوهِهِ.

[16.1] Moreover, it should be said to them that if God, the Exalted, created Satan attentively, then it must be an intention for Him [*scil.* God] in his [*scil.* Satan's] creation. Otherwise His [*scil.* God's] creation (of Satan) would be absurd and repulsive. [16.2] There is no reason that makes his [*scil.* Satan's] creation (by God) acceptable, unless to make a favor to him and to assign him (responsibility). [16.3] If He enables him to be beneficent for Himself, and enables us to be wary of him, whenever he opposes the command of God, the Exalted, this (opposition) arises from him himself, and whenever we are not wary of him, it arises from us ourselves. [16.4] When you accept this, it should be said to you that you must permit that God, the Exalted, creates harmful animals due to their benefit (for God) as well as our benefit from them, and due to frightening us by them so that we take lesson by this, and are wary of the sins which lead to His punishment, as we are wary of their [*scil.* harmful animals'] harms. [16.5] When we are harmed by them [*scil.* harmful animals], we are given (equal) compensation [*lit.* replacement] in response to that harm or (a compensation) which exceeds (an equal) compensation (to that harm). Consequently, by our discussion the falsehood of all aspects of their belief becomes evident.

[17.1] [p. 643, l. 18] حِكَايَةٌ عَنْ أَبِي الْهُدَيْلِ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ، [17.2] قَالَ: خَرَجْتُ إِلَى الْأَهْوَازِ وَأَنَا غُلَامٌ ابْنُ ثَمَانِي عَشْرَ سَنَةً وَلَيْسَ فِي وَجْهِهِ شَعْرٌ، فَلَمَّا اسْتَمَرَّ بِنَا السَّيْرَ فِي السَّيْفِيَّةِ فَإِذَا مَعَنَا مَجْرُوسِي يُقَالُ لَهُ مِبْلَاسٌ، فَأَقْبَلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْمُ يَنْظُرُونَهُ وَيَقُولُونَ: [17.3] أَنْتُمْ تَزَوِّجُونَ الْإِخْوَةَ بِالْأَخَوَاتِ، فَيَقُولُ لَهُمْ: إِنْ أَدَمَ زَوْجُ الْإِخْوَاتِ بِالْإِخْوَةِ، [17.4] وَيَأْتُونَهُ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْ هَاهُنَا وَمِنْ هَاهُنَا وَهُوَ يَصُولُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَوَابِهِ، فَدَنَوْتُ مِنْهُمْ وَقُلْتُ: [17.5] اجْعَلُوا لِي قَصْدًا مِنْ مَجْلِسِكُمْ بِحَقِّ الصَّحْبَةِ، فَإِنِّي أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَدْنَيْتَ، [17.6] فَقَالَ: يَا صَبِي، هُوَ لَاءِ مَشَايِخٍ لَا يَقُورُونَ عَلَيَّ، وَأَنْتَ تَرِيدُ أَنْ تَفْذِفَ نَفْسَكَ فِي بَحْرِي؟ [17.7] فَقُلْتُ: إِنْ رَأَيْتَ أَنْ تَدْعَ هَذَا وَتَسْعِفَنِي بِالْجَوَابِ فَأَفْعَلْ، فَقَالَ: سَلْنِي. [17.8] قُلْتُ: حَدِّثْنِي عَنْ أَرْوَاحِ الْخَلْقِ، مِمَّنْ هِيَ؟ قَالَ: مِنَ اللَّهِ، [17.9] قُلْتُ: فَأَلْجَسَادُ؟ قَالَ: مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، [17.10] قُلْتُ: فَمَا دَعَاكَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ: لِأَنَّ الْأَجْسَادَ [p. 644, l. 1] تَكُونُ مِنْهَا الْمَضَارُّ، وَالْأَرْوَاحُ تُبَيِّنُ فَتَدْهَبُ بِالطَّهَارَةِ،

⁶²The Arabic text reads *dhawāt al-ḥayāt*. As the author uses this phrase in a conjunctive phrase with "animals" (*dawābb*), it seems that it means "plants."

قُلْتُ: أَلَيْسَتْ الْأَرْوَاحُ إِذَا كَانَتْ فِي الْأَجْسَادِ يَكُونُ مِنْهَا الْكُذْبُ وَالنَّمِيمَةُ وَسَفْكَ الدَّمَاءِ وَصُنُوفُ [17.11] الْمَضَارِّ، فَإِذَا فَقَدَتْ الْأَرْوَاحُ فَقَدَتْ هَذِهِ الْمَضَارَّ مِنَ الْأَجْسَادِ؟ قَالَ: بَلَى، [17.12] قُلْتُ، فَأَضْفِ الْمَضَارَّ إِلَى الَّذِي إِذَا جَاءَ جَاءَتْ مَعَهُ الْمَضَارُّ، وَإِذَا فَقَدَ فَقَدَتْ مَعَهُ فَقَدِهِ، أَوْ أَشْرِكَ بَيْنَهُمَا، فَقَالَ لِي: إِنْ كَفَفْتَ عَنِّي، وَالْأَطْرَحْتُ نَفْسِي فِي هَذَا الْبَحْرِ. [17.13] فَكَفَفْتُ عَنْهُ وَافْتَرَقْنَا.

[17.1] A narration about Abū al-Hudhail, may God have mercy upon him. [17.2] He said: “As I was a boy of eighteen years old and there was no beard grown on my face, I left for Ahwaz.⁶³ As we proceeded on our journey in a ship, there was a Zoroastrian with us called Milās.⁶⁴ Later, the people went to him and disputed with him saying: [17.3] ‘You consent to the marriage of brothers with sisters’. He responded to them: ‘Adam consented to the marriage of brothers with sisters (as well).’ [17.4] They were bringing speeches from here and there and he was attacking them with his responses. Meanwhile, I approached them and said: [17.5] ‘By our companionship, allow me to participate in your gathering! I would like to ask you about something, if you permit me.’ [17.6] He said: ‘Oh youth! Those elders are not able to tackle me, and you want to throw yourself in my sea (of knowledge)?’ [17.7] I said: ‘If you accept to let this (discussion between us) take place, and resign from answering (to others), then let it happen [*lit.* do it].’ He said: ‘Ask me!’ [17.8] I asked:⁶⁵ ‘Tell me about the spirits of (animated) creatures [*khalaq*]! Who caused them?’ He replied: ‘God.’ [17.9] I asked: ‘What about the corpse?’⁶⁶ He replied: ‘(They belong to) Satan!’ [17.10] I asked: ‘What led you to this?’ He replied: ‘Since the corpses [p. 644] become harmful, and the spirits remain clean and leave (the world) with purity’. [17.11] I asked: ‘Do not the spirits lie, slander, drive bloodshed and do all kinds of harms, once they are still in the bodies,⁶⁷ but as soon as they leave the corpses they cease to do harm?’ He replied: ‘Yes!’ [17.12] I said: ‘Then you should either attribute the harms to an instance that once it comes, the harms come with it, and once it leaves, the harms disappear with its absence, or (you should) associate them [*scil.* harms] with both of them [*scil.* corpse and spirit]’. He replied to me: ‘Give up (discussing with me) or I will throw myself in this sea!’⁶⁸ [17.13] Then I gave up, and we separated.

⁶³The departure point of Abū al-Hudhail’s journey is not specified in the text. He, however, was a native of Baṣra, who later in his old age moved to the court of al-Ma’mūn the Abbasid Caliph (r. 813–33) in Baghdad (for more details on his biography, see below). Therefore, since he was eighteen at the time, we can assume that he was on a trip from Baṣra to Ahwaz.

⁶⁴On Milās see below.

⁶⁵The verbs translated here as “asked” and “replied” are from the same root *qāla* “to speak, say,” translating them differently aims to demonstrate the dialogue more clearly.

⁶⁶Ar. *al-ʿajsād* can be translated into “bodies” as well. In this context, it definitely means “corpses” because Abū al-Hudhail and Milās discuss in the following about the departure of the soul and the state of the body after death.

⁶⁷The same word which has been translated above into “corpse,” *al-ʿajsād*, is used here. As the author speaks about the lifetime of living beings, the more fitting equivalent here is “body.”

⁶⁸The narration linguistically plays with the word “sea” (*baḥr*): In §17.6, Milās uses it to signify his sea of knowledge, into which, from Milās’ point of view, his young conversationalist is going to throw himself because of his ignorance. In §17.12, the narration puts the same word in Milās’ mouth to signify the sea

[18.1] [p. 644, l. 6] فَلَمَّا كَانَ الْحَوْلُ الثَّانِي لَقِينِي ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ عَلَى قَنْطَرَةِ الْهِنْدُؤَانِ، فَأَخَذَ بَطْرَفِ رِدَائِي فَقَالَ: يَا صَبِيَّ، تَعَالَ فَإِنَّ الْعَقْدَةَ الَّتِي عَقَدْتَهَا قَدْ حَلَلْتَهَا، فَسَلْنِي عَنْ مُسْأَلَتِكَ، [18.2] فَأَعَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ الْمَسْأَلَةَ إِلَيَّ قَوْلِي: فَمَا دَعَاكَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ: مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ الْأَرْوَاحَ تَنْبِيَنَّ بِالطَّهَارَةِ وَالْأَجْسَادَ تَنْتِنَنَّ، [18.3] قُلْتُ: فَأَيُّ الصَّرْرَيْنِ أَعْظَمُ، مَا كَانَ مَعَ الْأَرْوَاحِ مِنَ الْكُذْبِ وَالسَّرْقِ وَالزَّنَا وَسَفْكِ الدَّمِ وَالظُّلْمِ، أَوْ مَا كَانَ مِنْ تَنْتِنِ الْأَجْسَادِ أَيَّامًا، ثُمَّ تَفْعَلُ وَتَنْقَطِعُ رَاحَتُهَا؟ [18.4] وَقُلْتُ لَهُ: خَبِّرْنِي عَنِ الْحَيَّةِ، أَلْتَلْسَعُ إِلَّا إِذَا كَانَتِ الرُّوحُ فِيهَا؟ فَأَيُّهُمَا أَعْظَمُ فِي الصَّرْرِ، مَا كَانَ مَعَ الْأَرْوَاحِ أَوْ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْ تَنْتِنِ الْأَجْسَادِ أَيَّامًا، ثُمَّ تَعُودُ إِلَى طَيِّبِ الرَّائِحَةِ؟ [18.5] عَلَى أَنْ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا مَرَّ بِجَسَدِ الْمَيِّتِ أَجْزَاهُ أَنْ يَضَعُ ثَوْبَهُ عَلَى أَنْفِهِ، ثُمَّ يَجْتَازُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَنْبُلْهُ مِنْ شُرُورِهِ شَيْءٌ، [18.6] فَقَالَ: فَمَا أَجِدُنِي أَفَلْتُ مِنْكَ فِي بَرٍّ وَلَا بَحْرٍ. [18.7] قَالَ: ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي: كَيْفَ قَوْلِكَ عَلَى الرِّئَاقَةِ؟ [18.8] ثُمَّ حَكِي مَا حَكَيْتَهُ فِي الرِّدِّ عَلَى التَّنْوِيَةِ، وَفِي الْحِكَايَةِ أَنَّ أَبَا الْهُذَيْلِ قَالَ لَهُ: [18.9] أَكَلْتُمُهَا عَلَى أَنْ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْكَ إِنْ أَنَا قَطَعْتُهُمْ أَنْ تَسْلِمَ؟ فَقَالَ لِي: اللَّهُ لَكَ عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَفْعَلَ ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَنْتَ قَطَعْتَهُمْ، [18.10] فَلَمَّا قَطَعْتُهُمْ عَلَى حَسَبِ مَا حَكَيْتَهُ أَسْلَمَ مِيلَاسٌ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ. [18.11] قَالَ أَبُو الْهُذَيْلِ: فَحَكَيْتُ بَهْدًا لِلْمَأْمُونِ، وَأَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ الْكَاتِبِ حَاضِرٌ، [18.12] فَقَالَ: أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مِيلَاسًا رَأَيْتُهُ مَجُوسِيًّا يُخَاصِمُ فِي الْمَجُوسِيَّةِ، ثُمَّ رَأَيْتُهُ مُسْتَبْصِرًا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ بِخَاصِمِ الْمَجُوسِ.

[18.1] “One year later [*lit.* When it became the second year] (after our first meeting) he saw me one day on the Bridge of Hinduwān⁶⁹ and he took the edge of my garment and said: ‘O youth! Come! I solved the problem which you had raised. Ask me your question (again)!’ [18.2] Then I repeated the question for him until I reached my statement ‘What leads you to this?’⁷⁰ He replied: ‘Because souls leave with purity and corpses spoil.’ [18.3] I asked: ‘Which of these two harms is greater: the one that results from souls, such as lying, stealing, adultery, bloodshed and injustice, or the one that results from the perishing of the corpses (only) for some days, and later the corpse dries up and its stink disappears?’ [18.4] Furthermore, I asked him: ‘Inform me about the snake! Does not it sting only when the soul is in it? Which one of these both is greater in harm: the one when the soul is within it [*scil.* snake], or the one which appears from the perishing of the corpse for some days, and then it turns into the scent?’ [18.5] Moreover, if one passes by a dead corpse, it suffices to put cloth on one’s nose, then nothing of its [*scil.* of the corpse] evils traverses to him and reach him.’ [18.6] Thereupon, he said: ‘Nobody more astute than you faced me on the land and on the sea.’” [18.7] He [*scil.* Abū al-Hudhail] narrated (further): “Then, he [*scil.* Milās] said to me: ‘What is your position in regard to the Manichaeans [*al-zanādiqa*]?’” [18.8] Then, it was narrated [*hukūya*] what we [*scil.* Ibn al-Malāḥimī] have depicted [*ḥakaynā*] on the refutation of the dualism.⁷¹ According to this narration, (thereupon,) Abū al-Hudhail said to him [*scil.* Milās]: [18.9]

on which their ship is traveling and how he would be obliged to throw himself in it because of his ignorance if the disputation were to continue.

⁶⁹Ar. *qanṭarat al-hinduwān*. Al-Maqdisī (d. after 380/990) describes it as a bridge from backed bricks (*ājūm*) between the two banks of the river in the city of al-Ahwāz. al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 411.

⁷⁰See §17.10 above.

⁷¹Ibn al-Malāḥimī discusses the teachings of Manichaeism in the chapter on dualism, of which the section ‘Portrayal of the Majūs’ Doctrines’ is a part. Manichaeism is the first group of dualists whose teachings Ibn al-Malāḥimī discusses; see al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb al-muṭamad fī ‘uṣūl al-dīn*, 2012, 607–25. It is interesting to notice that Ibn al-Malāḥimī refers to his discussion on Manichaeism as being the same as what Abū al-Hudhail said to Milās.

“Should I dispute with them [*scil.* Manichaeans], and God, the Exalted, witnesses that you will accept Islam, if I will defeat them?’ He [*scil.* Mīlās] replied to me [*scil.* Abū al-Hudhail]: ‘God is for you, I will do so, if you defeat them.’” [18.10] As he [*scil.* Abū al-Hudhail] defeated them, according to what we [*scil.* Ibn al-Malāḥimī] related [*ḥakaynā*],⁷² Mīlās converted to Islam by his [*scil.* Abū al-Hudhail’s] hand. [18.11] (Further,) Abū al-Hudhail said: “Later I narrated this to al-Ma’mūn,⁷³ while Aḥmad b. Yūsuf, the scribe, was present’. [18.12] He [*scil.* Aḥmad b. Yūsuf] said: ‘I testify that I witnessed Mīlās who was Zoroastrian and was fighting in favor of Zoroastrianism. Later, I saw him who had embraced Islam [*mustabṣir fi al-islām*] and was fighting against the Zoroastrians.’”

[19.1] [p. 644, l. 21] فَأَمَّا مَا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِهِ الْمَجُوسُ مِنْ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَاضَ وَالْأَسْقَامَ وَالْحَيَوَانَاتِ الْمُؤَذِيَّةَ شَرًّا، فَلَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، [19.2] فَسَيُظْهِرُ الْجَوَابُ عَنْهُ فِي بَابِ الْأَلَامِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، وَيَبْطُلُ بِذَلِكَ نَطْرُقُهُمْ إِلَى اثْبَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ.

[19.1] Regarding what belongs to Zoroastrians’ (teaching), that diseases, illnesses and harmful animals are evil, and it is not permissible that they are the creation of God, the Exalted: [19.2] The answer to this will appear in the chapter (about) ‘Sufferings’⁷⁴—so God, the Exalted, will—and by this their endeavor to prove Satan is falsified.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s Discussion of Zoroastrianism

Inner-textual structure. Before elaborating on Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s discussion of Zoroastrianism it is helpful to see how this section is contextualized in the whole book. The section on Zoroastrianism is located in the chapter *al-kalām ‘alā al-ṭhanawīyya wa-ḥikāya maqālātihim*, “Discussion on Dualism and Narration of their Doctrines.” Beside Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism, it comprises discussions of Dayṣanīsm (*dayṣ-āniyya*), Marcionism (*marqiyūniyya*), *Māhāniyya*, Buddhism (*sumaniyya*), Sabianism (*ṣābi’īn*), Harranian (*ḥurmāniyya*) and astrologers’ doctrines. The chapter on dualism is flanked by two chapters on monotheism: “Monotheism” and “The Doctrines of Philosophers on the Origination of the World and the Proof of God and their Beliefs in Monotheism.” The section on Zoroastrianism is the second-largest section in the chapter on Dualism, after the section on astrological doctrines. It consists of ca. 2,100 words in its Arabic original.

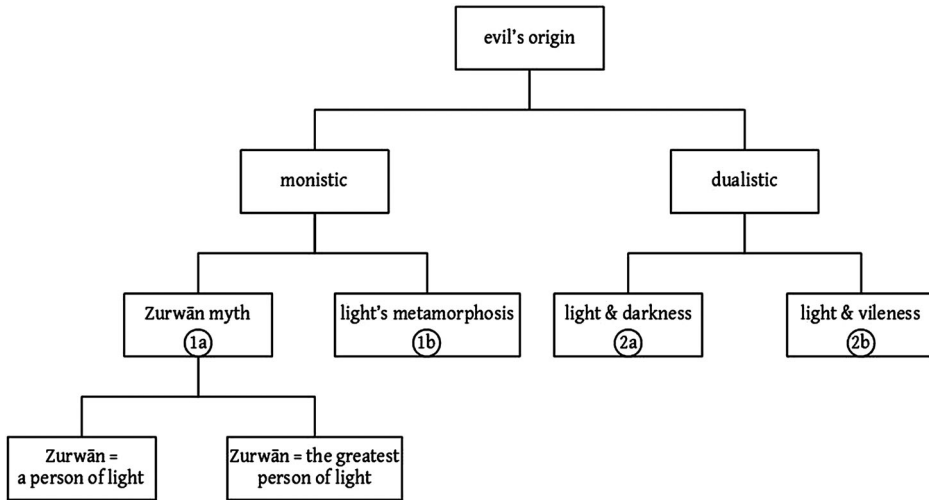
The general structure of Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s chapter on Zoroastrianism can be depicted as follows: firstly, he presents different Zoroastrian notions of the origin of evil and different Zoroastrian cosmogonies. (§§1–7) In the first two passages of

⁷²Ibn al-Malāḥimī places the disputation between Abū al-Hudhail and a group of Manichaeans in a church, while Mīlās is present there; see *ibid.*, 636f. For a German translation of this passage and a discussion on its authenticity see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, 5/391f.

⁷³We know that in his old age, Abū al-Hudhail was invited to the court of al-Ma’mūn, the Abbasid caliph. See below.

⁷⁴We could not locate this chapter in the edition of the text. Apparently, it is still missing; see above.

Figure 1. Zoroastrian notions of the origin of evil according to Ibn al-Malāḥimī.



his text, Ibn al-Malāḥimī briefly classifies the Zoroastrian views on the genesis of evil known to him. Then, he elaborates on these Zoroastrian positions (§§3–7) and subsequently summarizes them (§8). In this passage, we observe a transition from report to disputation, which is presented in subsequent paragraphs (§§9–16). The two following passages, §§17–18, contain a sort of appendix in which Ibn al-Malāḥimī describes an encounter and discussion between a young Abū al-Hudhail and a Zoroastrian named Milās. The author ends his comments with a general refutation of Zoroastrianism (§19). Strikingly, Ibn al-Malāḥimī designates the discussion of other dualist groups with a singular noun, *qaṭl* or *maqāla*, but labels the section on Zoroastrianism with the plural noun *maqālāt*. This demonstrates that the author views Zoroastrianism as a variety of cosmogonical concepts, rather than being a simple error; and indeed, he presents an entire series of Zoroastrian doctrines and refutes all of them. Ibn Malāḥimī’s text has the great advantage that it, like Eznik’s refutation of Zoroastrianism for example,⁷⁵ clearly separates his description of different Zoroastrian cosmogonic ideas from his own refutation of them; this differentiation allows us to more easily separate the factual from the polemical.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s presentation of Zoroastrianism concerns itself primarily with the different ways the Zoroastrians justify the existence of evil in the world. The last sentence of the second passage clarifies this interest: “These are a number of their beliefs about the genesis of Satan” (§2.5). Ibn al-Malāḥimī divides the Zoroastrian cosmogonies into two broad groups with regard to the genesis of Satan: monistic and dualistic (see Figure 1). He divides the former, presented in the first passage, into two sub-

⁷⁵Rezania, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*, 7 and 169.

groups: First, the major monistic cosmogony, which is the famous Zurwān myth (§§1.1–7), which we know from the Armenian and Syriac side-traditions of Sasanian Zoroastrianism (see below). Ibn al-Malāḥimī subtly differentiates Zurwān’s position in this cosmogonic myth according to two Zoroastrian groups: one regards light alone as eternal and Zurwān as a great person of the persons of light (§1.1); the other believes Zurwān to be the greatest light (§1.2). This second monistic subgroup advances the view—according to Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§2.4)—that light alone was pre-existent and it has been pure from eternity.⁷⁶ One part of the light, however, later underwent a metamorphosis and transformed into darkness. This darkness was the origin of evil (§1.8).

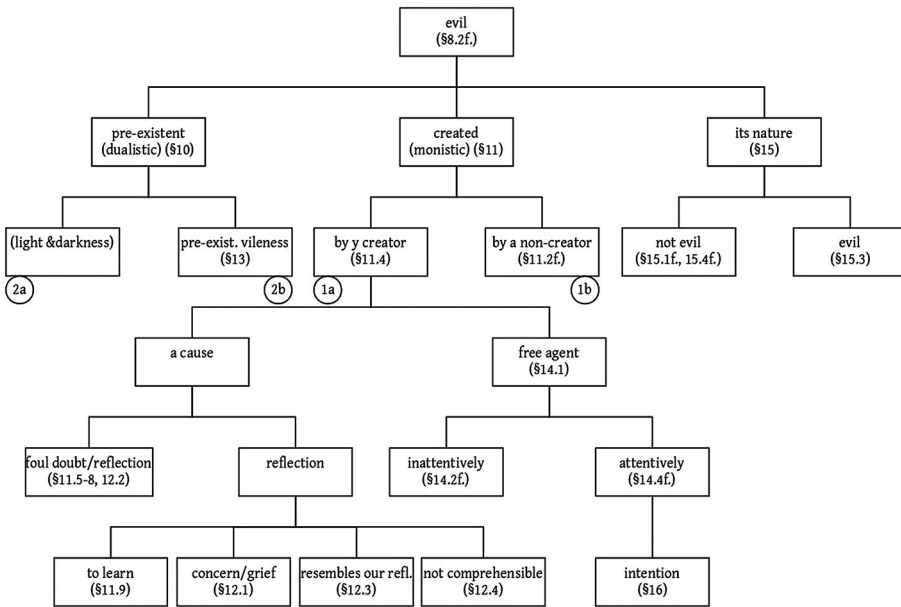
In the second passage of his text, Ibn al-Malāḥimī portrays the dualistic cosmogonies of Zoroastrianism, which we know mainly from the Pahlavi literature of the early Islamic period. In their view, light and darkness were both pre-existent, and there was an empty space between them. Ibn al-Malāḥimī emphasizes that this cosmogony is not a triadic one because these Zoroastrians do not consider space to be a third pre-existent entity (§2.1). According to Ibn al-Malāḥimī this group advances a view similar to that of Manichaeism. Significantly, he reports that it is the Khurramdinis who support this dualistic view (§2.3). Another Zoroastrian cosmogony, which Ibn al-Malāḥimī describes as a dualistic cosmogony, includes the view that light alone was pre-existent; this is similar to the second monistic subgroup above. In contrast to the first dualistic group, however, they believed that vileness co-existed with light from eternity.

In his refutation, Ibn al-Malāḥimī is mainly concerned with the “errors” inherent in the Zoroastrian doctrines regarding the origin of evil. Yet even here, he only occasionally adopts a strongly polemical tone; a clear Islamic insider perspective is only to be found in the first paragraph of the refutation (§9). Subsequently, he discusses Zoroastrian theories from a philosophically neutral position in order to demonstrate their logical inconsistencies. For this, he adopts a structured style of argumentation (see Figure 2). He starts with the categorical question of whether Satan is pre-existent or created (§8.2f.). He refutes the dualistic cosmogony known from the Pahlavi literature (2a in Figure 1) by referring to arguments against dualism (§§10.1f.) and by summarizing the reasons for his critique (§§10.3f.). The belief in a pre-existent vileness in light (2b in Figure 1) is refuted later in §§13.1–3. In order to argue against the dualistic cosmogonies, Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§§11–16) first has to intensively discuss the Zoroastrian monistic cosmogonies.⁷⁷ He includes the categorical division of Satan’s creation by a creator or by a non-creator (§11.2). He soon discredits this latter possibility (§11.3), whereas he discusses the former at length. He considers two possibilities for Satan’s creator: He is a cause or free agent (§11.4). Ibn al-Malāḥimī seems to ascribe the Zoroastrian notions of Satan’s genesis to a foul doubt or a foul thought,

⁷⁶The belief in its pureness from eternity differentiates this group from a dualistic group who believed in the existence of a vileness from eternity with light.

⁷⁷This point evidently disproves Mary Boyce’s (“Some Further Reflections on Zurvanism,” 26) suggestion, followed by Alan Williams (“Later Zoroastrianism,” 35), that the mention of the Zurwān myth in Muslim polemical writings may have been partly because of its doctrinal weaknesses.

Figure 2. The structure of Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s refutation of Zoroastrianism.



Note: Paragraph numbers refer to the passages of Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s account, numbers in circles to the nodes in Figure 1.

as expressed in the Zurwān myth, to the creator as a cause (§§11.5–8, 12.2). Moreover, he considers the following possibilities for Zurwān’s reflection as the cause of Satan’s genesis: reflection as learning (§11.9), reflection as concern or grief (§12.1), reflection resembling human reflections (§12.3) and finally a reflection that is not comprehensible by human beings (§12.4). As to the possibility of the creator as a free agent, he describes two possibilities: Satan arises from the free agent either attentively or inattentively (§14.1) The author refutes this latter option (§§14.2f.) and then the former one (§§14.4f.). At the end of his refutation, Ibn al-Malāḥimī addresses the possibility that Satan’s creation was intentional and attentive (§§16.1–5). It should be pointed out that Ibn al-Malāḥimī was a Muʿtazilī theologian; as such, the idea that God intentionally created Satan was unacceptable to him. Ibn al-Malāḥimī then addresses the nature of Satan, and again he lists two possibilities: Satan’s nature is not evil but his deeds are, as in Islamic teachings (§§15.1f., 15.4f.); or Satan’s very nature was evil, as Zoroastrians believed but which Ibn al-Malāḥimī refutes (§15.3).

Inter-textual relations. Before the reappearance of the complete report of Ibn al-Malāḥimī on Zoroastrianism in the new edition of his book, al-Shahristānī’s account was the most comprehensive Arabic report on Zoroastrianism in the early Islamic period up to the twelfth century. These authors were more or less contempor-

aries of one another and lived in the same geographical area and cultural environment, namely in eleventh/twelfth-century Khurasan. The comprehensiveness of these reports, their chronological proximity, as well as the shared geographical and cultural milieu of both authors, all invite comparison of their contributions. In doing so, we hope to better illuminate the background of these Arabic reports as well as the history of Zoroastrianism in this period. The following section illuminates the similarities and differences between these two accounts.⁷⁸

At the beginning of his chapter on Zoroastrianism, Ibn al-Malāḥimī directly refers to Abū ʿĪsā (see below) as his source (§1.1). Al-Shahristānī cites the same authority in his report on dualists,⁷⁹ but remains silent regarding his sources on Zoroastrianism. The scholarship has repeatedly pointed to Abū ʿĪsā as the source of Ibn al-Malāḥimī and al-Shahristānī.⁸⁰ Therefore, in this analysis we will scrutinize the possibility of whether Abū ʿĪsā can be considered the common source of their accounts on Zoroastrianism.

An important shared component of both texts is the Zurwān myth.⁸¹ This cosmogony has been indirectly referred to at the earliest by Theodor of Mopsuestia (AD 352–428), as cited by Photios (AD 810–93), and directly by Eznik of Kolb's *Against the Sects*, written between AD 441 and 448. The latter work transmits the most comprehensive version of the myth known to us,⁸² which seems to represent the official Zoroastrian cosmogony in the latter half of the Sasanian period.⁸³ The citation of the myth at the beginning of Ibn al-Malāḥimī's text (§1.1–4) suggests its importance for Zoroastrian-Islamic theological discussions as well as its relevance in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's period.⁸⁴ The author presents a more detailed version of the cosmogony in passages 7.1–5, which follows al-Shahristānī's text almost literally (§8). One difference, however, is worth mentioning here: according to passage §7.3 in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's text, Iblīs emerges from Zurwān's concern (*al-hamm*) and Ohrmazd from his knowledge (*al-ʿilm*). Al-Shahristānī and other authors, including Ibn al-Malāḥimī himself,

⁷⁸Providing al-Shahristānī's text with passage numbers, Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism" and Abolqāsemī, *Dīn-hā va kīsh-hāye irānī dar dawrān-e bāstān be ravāyat-e Shāhrestānī* make possible to refer to specific units in this text. As Shaked's article might be more accessible to the readers of this article than Abolqāsemī's edition, we refer here to the passage numbers from Shaked's translation. For editions of the text see al-Shahristānī, *al-Milāl wa-l-nihāl* as well; for translations see al-Shahristānī, *Religionsparteien und Philosophen-Schulen* (by Haarbrücker) and al-Shahristānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes* (by Gimaret and Monnot).

⁷⁹See Abolqāsemī, *Dīn-hā va kīsh-hāye irānī dar dawrān-e bāstān be ravāyat-e Shāhrestānī*, 45.

⁸⁰See for example Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 194–6, 202, 221 nn. 2, 230, 322, 362, 368 as a more recent application of this hypothesis in her evaluation of Khurramīs and Mazdakites.

⁸¹Ibn al-Malāḥimī, §1.1–4, al-Shahristānī, §7.

⁸²For a tabular synopsis of known narrations of the Zurwān myth see Rezaia, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*, 281–304.

⁸³For the historical contextualization of this cosmogony see *ibid.*, 212–24, for a reassessment of the evidence from the perspective of the interaction of Zoroastrianism with Manichaeism and Islam see Rezaia, "Reforming Cosmologies in Contrast."

⁸⁴For Arabic Islamic sources on the Zurwān myth see Rezaia, "Reforming Cosmologies in Contrast."

however, depict a version of the Zurwān myth that presents Ahreman as a result of Zurwān's doubt and Ohrmazd of Zurwān's certainty.

Another shared theme in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's and al-Shahristānī's texts, in regard to the Zurwān cosmogony, is the designation of Zurwān as a person of light. Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§1.1f.) designates Zurwān a great person (*shakhs*) among the persons of light, or the greatest light; al-Shahristānī (§7) similarly calls him the greatest person among the persons of light. The term "person" (*shakhs*) has been used by al-Shahristānī (§2) to designate the first principle, actually the prototypical man, Kayūmarth, as well. The Zoroastrian term "person of light" remains specific to these two works.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§1.8) and al-Shahristānī (§14) also share the theme of the metamorphosis of light. According to both authors, a group of Zoroastrians believed that only light, which was pure, was pre-existent. A part of the light, however, underwent a metamorphosis and was turned into darkness. In this case, not only the concepts but even the linguistic formulations show striking similarities between both authors.⁸⁵

Both narrate a dualistic version of Zoroastrian cosmogony that resembles the account known from Pahlavi literature.⁸⁶ According to this cosmogony, Ohrmazd was on high in the light from eternity. In contrast, Ahreman was deep down in the darkness. Between the two realms there was empty space where goodness and evil mixed. Ibn al-Malāḥimī's presentation of the existence of an empty space between the realms of Ohrmazd and Ahreman (§2.1) neatly resembles the presentation of this realm in the *Great Bundahišn*.⁸⁷ Al-Shahristānī (§13) introduces this concept as well. However, it is not correctly rendered in Shaked's translation.⁸⁸ Interestingly, both authors attribute dualism to Khurramdīniyya.⁸⁹

Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§2.4) mentions Satan's genesis from pre-existent vileness, which existed in pre-existent light. He seems to classify this notion as a sub-belief of Zoroastrian dualism. A similar notion has been attested to by al-Shahristānī (§10) as being a subgroup of Zurwāniyya. Accordingly, "there has been something vile with God from eternity, [...], and that this is the origin of Satan."⁹⁰ We can regard this cosmogony as a

⁸⁵ Al-Shahristānī: *'inna al-nūra kāna waḥdahū nūran maḥḍan, thumma inmasakha ba'duhū fašāra zulmatun*; Ibn al-Malāḥimī: *'anna al-nūra kāna khāliṣan lam yazal, thumma inmasakha ba'duhū fašāra zulmatun*.

⁸⁶ See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, 2.1f., al-Shahristānī, 13, Pakzad, *Great-Bundahišn* (GBd), 1.5, Gignoux and Tafazzoli, *Anthologie de Zādspram (Wizīdagībā ī Zādspram)* (WZ), 1.1–4.

⁸⁷ This resemblance occurs even on the literal surface: *annahu kāna baynabumā khala'un kāna jawlā-nubumā wa-khilātubumā* (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, 2.1); *u-šan mayān tubīgīh būd ast kē Way kē gumēzišn padīš* "There was a void between them {Some (call) it Way} in which the mixture (occurs)" (GBd, 1.5).

⁸⁸ Al-Shahristānī's text reads: *'anna al-majūs za'amat anna iblis kāna lam yazal /fy 'lzlmt w'ljw khf/* and can be vocalized either as *fi-l-zulmati wa-l-jawi khala'i* "[...] in darkness, in the air, in empty space." Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 58 or *fi-l-zulmati wa-l-jawu khala'u* "[...] in darkness. And space was empty." Abolqāsemi, *Dīn-hā va kish-hāye irāni dar dawrān-e bāstān be ravāyat-e Shabrestānī*, 30. In accordance with Pahlavi literature, and now with Ibn al-Malāḥimī, we can assume that the latter reading is more fitting.

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Malāḥimī, 2.3, al-Shahristānī, 14; see Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 195 as well.

⁹⁰ Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 57.

model that lies somewhere between the monistic cosmogony of the Zurwān myth and the dualistic cosmogony of Pahlavi literature. This point elucidates why the two authors classify the concept differently; Ibn al-Malāḥimī classifies it as dualism and al-Shahristānī as monism. In his refutation of the Zurwān myth, Ibn al-Malāḥimī alludes to vileness again and states that “they believe that he [*scil.* Iblīs] was born from a foul doubt or foul reflection or vileness” (§11.5). Al-Shahristānī (§5) and ‘Abd al-Jabbār (§2)⁹¹ mention the motif of “vile thought,” as well.

Another notion in Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s text that deserves our attention is Ahreman and his demons encircling the world (§3.2). The vision of Ahreman standing at the beginning of the creation outside the world, piercing the sky and penetrating it, can be found in al-Shahristānī (§10f.) as well as in Pahlavi literature (Pakzad, *Great-Bundahišn* [GBd], 4.10, WZ, 2.5). However, the motif of applying a stratagem to enter the world or entering Ohrmazd’s realm is attested to in Arabic sources, as well as in Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§3.3) and al-Shahristānī (§§10f., 13), but not in Zoroastrian texts. This notion is also present in the Zurwān myth, where Ahreman splits Zurwān’s belly in order to be born before Ohrmazd, although his androgenic father, Zurwān, had predetermined that Ohrmazd should be born first. Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s report is unique in this regard, as it describes in detail the stratagem Ahreman applied to enter the world, namely moistening it with a drop, tearing it with his tusks and penetrating it. This motif is not known, to our knowledge, from other Islamic or Zoroastrian sources.

Al-Shahristānī (§§5, 11) uniquely suggests that angels mediated between Ohrmazd and Ahreman in their struggle. As Shaked points out,⁹² this idea can be partly found in the narration of *Great Bundahišn* (GBd, 1.27), in which the struggle between Ohrmazd and Ahreman is likened to a duel. The motif of angelic mediation is absent in Pahlavi literature, but attested to in some Arabic sources.⁹³ In none of the known Arabic sources, however, are the mediating angels introduced by name. Shaked persuasively pointed out that this “mediation” corresponds to the Middle Persian *mayānǰīgīh* and designates “the act of judgment.”⁹⁴ Consequently, he suggests that the three Zoroastrian deities Mihr, Srōš and Rašn, who are represented in Zoroastrian literature as judges, might have provided the basis for the mediating angels in Arabic sources.⁹⁵ Ibn al-Malāḥimī is the only author who introduces these angels by name; passage §3.5 reads: *fa-šālahā baynahumā mihr wa-surūsh wa-sahl wa-rāmishān*. We can easily recognize two Zoroastrian deities, namely Mihr and Srōš,⁹⁶ and in the last lexeme of the phrase, we can recognize the name of the deity Rām, to whom the twenty-first day of the month in the Zoroastrian calendar is dedi-

⁹¹On ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fi abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l’-adl*, see Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes*.

⁹²Shaked, “Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism,” 57 n. 32.

⁹³See *ibid.*, 55 n. 22.

⁹⁴See Shaked, “Mihr the Judge,” 1–10 = Shaked, *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam. Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts*, IV, 1–10.

⁹⁵See Shaked, “Mihr the Judge,” 17 = Shaked, *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam. Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts*, IV, 17, and Shaked, “Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism,” 57 n. 22.

cated. It seems that his name has been confused here with the verbal noun *rāmišn*, which is morphologically built on the same verb as *rām*. *rāmišn* means “peace, ease, pleasure.”⁹⁷ This meaning provides us with a clue for deciphering *sabl* in this phrase. This latter lexeme, from the root *sabula* “It was, or became, smooth or soft, plain or level, or smooth and soft,”⁹⁸ seems to gloss *rāmišn*, or, in other words, *sabl* is the Arabic designation of the deity, whose original (Middle) Persian name has been rendered subsequently. This raises the question of whether the third deity of the mediating angels is Rām, or *rāmišn* is a corrupt rendering or a confusion of Rašn. As the three deities Mihr, Srōš and Rašn frequently appear together,⁹⁹ we might prefer to see in this phrase this triad of Zoroastrian judging deities and by this a proof of Shaked’s ingenious suggestion.

In the context of mediation between Ohrmazd and Ahreman, both Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§3.7) and al-Shahristānī (§38 and alluded to in §11) mention a pact between them including eighteen conditions that Ahreman demands from Ohrmazd. Ibn al-Malāḥimī states that Iblīs stipulated eighteen conditions but he (or his source) does not list them; however, he does mention that his source has recorded the conditions. Al-Shahristānī not only mentions Ahreman’s eighteen conditions but also enumerates them in full. In a recent article, Mojtabā Āqāyī¹⁰⁰ aptly points out that Ahreman’s eighteen conditions appear in Pahlavi literature, namely in the *Handarz ī dastwarān ō web-dēnān*.¹⁰¹ The twelfth and thirteenth passages of the text read:

(12) *pursīd kū andar xrafstarān gyān kē kard?* (13) *guft hād ohrmazd u-š ēd rāy kard čē ahremen tan ī xrafstar dēsīd haštđah paymān ō ohrmazd drāyīd kū gyān andar awēšān kunē ayāb ēnyā pašt nē awāšam.*¹⁰²

(12) One asked: “Who gave the harmful animals life?” (13) One answered: “Ohrmazd. He did this because when Ahreman built the body of harmful animals, he chattered 18 conditions to Ohrmazd: ‘either you will give them life or I would not seal this pact.’”

As Āqāyī states, the evidence makes it probable that we are dealing with an Arabic translation of a lost Zoroastrian Middle Persian text. Al-Shahristānī introduces these conditions in a section titled “Zardusht’s Treatise on Origins” (*maqāla zardusht*

⁹⁶It is worth noting that al-Shahristānī, §26 mentions Srōš by name; see Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 202 and n. 60.

⁹⁷MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (CPD), 70.

⁹⁸Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon*, 1453.

⁹⁹This fact has been represented for example in the Zoroastrian calendar in the dedication of three subsequent days, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth, to these three deities.

¹⁰⁰Āqāyī, “Didgāh-e sevvom dar khelqat-e kherafstarān,” 67–70.

¹⁰¹This text has a parallel in the *Wizikerd ī dēnīg*, 8; see Sanjana, *Vajarkard ī Dīnik*, 3; Sheffield, “The Wizirgerd ī Dēnīg and the Evil Spirit,” 183.

¹⁰²Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, 123.

fi-l-mabādi). At the beginning of this text, he refers to al-Jayhānī as his source.¹⁰³ Therefore, we can assume that Ahreman's eighteen conditions are attributable to al-Jayhānī as well. Ibn al-Malāḥimī's report, however, realizes a difficulty about his source here. He starts the sentence with the verb *qāla* without specifying the subject. One possibility is that the subject of the verb is Abū 'Īsā, mentioned at the beginning of the text. The other possibility is that the name of his authority for this sentence was lost during the process of the transmission of the text. In any case, Ibn al-Malāḥimī's source on this topic must have not only mentioned the motif of Ahreman's conditions, but also enumerated them (*thumma 'addadabā*). Ibn al-Malāḥimī, however, instead of listing the conditions, merely summarizes them in the phrase: "All of them refer to the point that Iblīs must possess a share in the creatures of God" (§3.7). If we accept that Ibn al-Malāḥimī and al-Shahristānī both used Abū 'Īsā's *Refutation of Zoroastrianism* in their discussion (see below), we may conclude that the motif of Ahreman's conditions was not present in Abū 'Īsā's book, because al-Shahristānī cited it in his work from writing of al-Jayhānī. Therefore, we might assume that the name of Ibn al-Malāḥimī's authority for Ahreman's conditions was lost during the process of text transmission. Ibn al-Malāḥimī's addition of the verb *qāla* further in this passage may be evidence that his authority was someone other than Abū 'Īsā, whom Ibn al-Malāḥimī mentions at the beginning of his report on Zoroastrianism as his authority, and on whom his whole report implicitly relies.

Handing the swords to two trustworthy persons and bearing witness is another detail of the mediation present in both Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§4.1) and al-Shahristānī (§§11, 39). To some extent, here we can even identify an analogy in the formulation of the two authors. According to both authors, Ohrmazd and Ahreman asked two presumably trustworthy deities to bear witness to their pact. They handed the mediating deities their swords and agreed that these deities would kill the one who violated the pact with his own sword. Al-Shahristānī's citation of al-Jayhānī narrates this motif after the enumeration of Ahreman's conditions (§38).¹⁰⁴ In §11, al-Shahristānī alludes to Ahreman's conditions, according to which Ohrmazd should enable him to act in Ohrmazd's creation.¹⁰⁵ Subsequently, he mentions the motif of two trustworthy mediators and the handing over of the swords. Both motifs are narrated in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's text as well, and in fact in the same order. Therefore, we can conclude that both al-Shahristānī §11 and Ibn al-Malāḥimī §4.1 rely on a common source, namely Abū 'Īsā. The source of al-Shahristānī, §38f., however, was not Abū 'Īsā but al-Jayhānī, as he explicitly mentions. Accepting this, we can assume that Abū 'Īsā's text—

¹⁰³ Al-Jayhānī is apparently the surname of three Samanid viziers from three subsequent generations in the fourth/tenth century. They presumably co-authored the lost voluminous *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*; see Pellat, "Al-Djayhānī." From which book al-Shahristānī's citation stems, is not known; for his account on Zoroastrianism see de Menasce, "Le témoignage de Jayhānī sur le mazdéisme."

¹⁰⁴ de Menasce, "Le témoignage de Jayhānī sur le mazdéisme," 58.

¹⁰⁵ The motif goes back to a notion of Ahreman which considers him as unable to act in the material world; see Āqāyī, "Dīdgāh-e sevvom dar khelqat-e kherafstarān va hijdah peymān kē ahrīman be hormozd dar-āyīd," 66f. as well as note 114 below.

cited by these authors—did not contain the list of conditions. This verifies the hypothesis proposed above, namely that Ibn al-Malāḥimī's source in paragraph 3.7 was not Abū ʿĪsā's book. Apparently, Ibn al-Malāḥimī makes a short excursus at that point.

The notion of cosmic history, which is of great significance in Zoroastrian cosmogony, is discussed by Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§§3.5, 6.1) as well. In passage 3.5, he gives the figure of 9,000 years as the length of the cosmic history, or—to use an emic Zoroastrian notion—of the limited time. The author points out that this period includes the 3,000 years mentioned earlier (§3.4), that is, the period in which Ahreman fought Ohrmazd. Therefore, the period of 9,000 years refers to the whole cosmic history.¹⁰⁶ Similar to Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§3.5), al-Shahristānī (§§2, 11) cites the figure of 9,000 years, including the fighting period; and again here we can identify analogous wording. According to the Zoroastrian literature, cosmic history is divided into three equally long periods: creation (*bundahišn*), mixture (*gumēzišn*) and separation (*wizārišn*).¹⁰⁷ As Shaked has pointed out,¹⁰⁸ al-Shahristānī (§2) and Ibn al-Malāḥimī both present another division, namely a 3,000 year period of fighting (= mixture), followed by a period of redemption. Another figure relevant to cosmic history is similarly found in both sources: in his narration of the Zurwān myth, Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§7.1) states that Zurwān prayed for 6,999 years.¹⁰⁹ This figure echoes the age that al-Shahristānī (§5) gives for the world, 7,000 years, which is known from other Arabic sources as well.¹¹⁰ This number is not attested in Zoroastrian literature.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī, moreover, presents another division of limited time, namely its division into static and dynamic periods. According to the Zoroastrian cosmogony, Ohrmazd created the sun, moon and stars, but they stood without movement in the middle of the sky. After Ahreman's onslaught, Ohrmazd set them in motion. This is reflected in both Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§4.2) al-Shahristānī (§39). The concept is well-known from Pahlavi literature and is present in older Zoroastrianism.¹¹¹ The motif of setting light for the sun and the moon, and phases for the latter, are stated in Qur'an 10:5, as well.

¹⁰⁶There are two figures for the length of the limited time in Pahlavi literature: 9,000 or 12,000 years. It has been shown that the shorter period was the original, and was extended later; see Rezanía, *Die zoroastriſche Zeitvorstellung*, 124–7.

¹⁰⁷This model is alluded to by al-Shahristānī (§11).

¹⁰⁸Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 47.

¹⁰⁹Al-Shahristānī (§8) gives the figure 9,999 in his narration of the Zurwān myth, corresponding to this passage.

¹¹⁰Shaked, "Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism," 55 n. 21.

¹¹¹For some Avestan passages on this see Rezanía, *Die zoroastriſche Zeitvorstellung*, 74–6; for the static and dynamic phase in the Zoroastrian cosmogony see Kreyenbroek, "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony," 97–102, Kreyenbroek, "Mithra and Ahreman in Iranian Cosmogonies," 173–81, Kreyenbroek, "Mithra and Ahreman, Binyāmin and Malak Ṭāwūs," 58–63, Kreyenbroek, "Cosmogony and Cosmology i. in Zoroastrianism/Mazdaism," 303–6 and Rezanía, *Raumkonzeptionen im fröhren Zoroastrismus*, 208–11.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§4.3) cites the prototypical figures of Zoroastrian cosmogony, the prototypical man, Gayōmart, and the prototypical animal, *gāw ī ēk-dād* “the sole-created ox,” as well. He also depicts the process of differentiation in Zoroastrian cosmogony, which is known from Pahlavi literature,¹¹² namely how the prototypical couple, Mašī and Mašyānī, originated as a trunk of rhubarb from Gayōmart’s semen, and how diverse species of animals went forth from the ox’s semen (§§4.4–6). The same presentation can be read in al-Shahristānī’s report (§5), while we can again assert an analogy even in their phrasing. Ibn al-Malāḥimī explicitly expresses that there was, at the beginning of the creation, no creature in the world except for Gayōmart and the ox. Al-Shahristānī seems to give voice to the same circumstance but some translations have misunderstood his text.¹¹³

Ibn al-Malāḥimī and al-Shahristānī both narrate another topic known from Pahlavi literature: According to the cosmogony presented in the Zoroastrian literature of early Islamic period, Ohrmazd first created his creatures in a spiritual state without material bodies, and afterwards transformed them so that they would have a material state. Before this transformation, according to the *Great Bundahišn* (§§3.23f.), Ohrmazd offered his creatures two choices: either be transformed into material creation and materially fight with evil and finally get rid of Ahreman, and so become eternal at the end of the limited time; or be endlessly forced to protect themselves from evil. Ohrmazd’s creatures accordingly decided to be transformed into the material state. Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§§5.1f.) and al-Shahristānī (§6) closely recount this motif.

After the Zurwān myth, Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§§7.6, 8.7) notes that Zoroastrians refer to their ancestors and kings as the authorities of their beliefs. Subsequently (§7.7), he briefly represents the structure of Iranian historiography. This is in alignment with al-Shahristānī’s (§16) assertion about Sasanian historiography and what we know about this topic from Pahlavi literature (GBd, 35). Moreover, it fits, in our improved understanding of the Sasanian *Xwadāy-nāmag*.¹¹⁴

The last motif common between Ibn al-Malāḥimī and al-Shahristānī to be mentioned here is the topic of the non-existence of Ahreman and his demons in the

¹¹²See Dresden, *Dēnkart: A Pahlavi Text* (Dk) III, 80.8, Jaafari-Dehaghi, *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (Dd), 63, Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat* (PRivDd), 46.37, WZ 2.8–10, 3.42–76, GBd, 1A.12f., 4.10–26, 6E, 6F, 14.6.

¹¹³Al-Shahristānī’s corresponding text reads: *wa-l-ladhīna kānū fi-l-dunyā qabla l-ṣulhi `abādahum wa`abhlakahum. Thumma bada`a bi rijāli yuqālū labu Kayūmarth wa-ḥaywāni yuqālū labu thaur faqatalahumā*. Shaked, “Some Islamic Reports Concerning Zoroastrianism,” 55f. translates the sentence as “He destroyed and annihilated those who were in the world before the settlement. He then turned to a man, called Kayūmarth, and to an animal, called Ox, and killed them.” This translation gives the impression that al-Shahristānī meant that Ahreman killed Gayōmart and the prototypical ox after having killed all other creatures in the world. Abolqāsemī’s *Dīn-hā va kish-hāye irānī*, 28. The Persian translation is more fitting in this regard and is consistent with Pahlavi literature and Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s text: “*va abreman hame-ye kasānī ra, ke pish az solh vojūd dāshtand, nābūd va halāk kard. pas az mardī, ke kayūmarth, heyvānī ke gāw nāmīde mī-shodand, āghāz kard, va ān do rā kosbt*.” Accordingly, al-Shahristānī’s sentence can be translated into English as follows: “He destroyed and killed those who were in the world before the peace. He started then to kill the man, called Kayūmarth, and the animal, called Ox.”

¹¹⁴On *Xwadāy-nāmag* see Hämeen-Anttila, *The Khwadāy-nāmag*, 213–32.

Table 1. Synopsis of common topics in Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s and al-Shahristānī’s reports on Zoroastrianism.

	Topic	Malāḥ.	Shahr.	Analogous formulation
1	The Zurwān myth	1.1–4	7	
2	The Zurwān myth	7.1–5	8	
3	The person of light	1.1	7	✓
4	Metamorphosis of light to darkness	1.8	14	✓
5	Dualism	2.1–2	13	
6	Space between light and darkness	2.1	13	
7	Ahreman’s genesis from a pre-existent vileness	2.4	10	
8	Belief of Khurramdīniyya (as believing in the eternity of light and darkness, i. e. darkness is not a corrupted part of light)	2.4	14	
9	Ahreman’s genesis from a foul thought	11.5	5	
10	Ahreman penetrating the world	3.2	10–1	
11	Ahreman’s stratagem	3.3	10–11	
12	Mediating deities	3.5	5, 11	
13	Cosmic history	3.5, 6.1	2, 11	✓
14	Cosmic history	7.1	5	
15	Ahreman’s 18 conditions	3.7	38	
16	Two reliable mediators	4.1	11, 39	✓
17	Static and dynamic phases of the cosmogony	4.2	39	
18	Prototypical man	4.3	5	✓
19	Prototypical human pair	4.4–5	5	✓
20	Prototypical animal	4.6	5	✓
21	Choice of transformation to the material state	5.1–2	6	
22	historiography	7.7	16	
23	Ahreman’s non-existence in the material world	8.4	18	

material world.¹¹⁵ In terms of placing Ahreman into an analogy of shadow, al-Shahristānī’s text (§18) is ambiguous, whereas Ibn al-Malāḥimī (§8.4) presents this Zoroastrian notion more than clearly. The analogies of al-Malāḥimī’s and al-Shahristānī’s accounts on Zoroastrianism are summarized in Table 1.

¹¹⁵For a discussion of this topic presented in the Middle Persian texts see Shaked, “Some Notes on Ahreman, the Evil Spirit,” 227–34, Gnoli, “Einige Bemerkungen zum altiranischen Dualismus,” 216–18, and Schmidt, “The Non-Existence of Ahreman,” 79–82; in the Avestan texts Gnoli, “Einige Bemerkungen zum altiranischen Dualismus,” 216–26, and Schmidt, “The Non-Existence of Ahreman,” 82–84; see also note 104 above.

The source of Ibn al-Malāḥimī and al-Shahristānī on Zoroastrianism. The similarities between the reports of these two Islamic theologians suggest that one text may depend on the other, or they may depend on a common source. Simultaneously, however, a sufficient number of existing differences attest to their independent authorship. Some of the differences include the following: Ibn al-Malāḥimī writes an elaborated refutation of the Zoroastrian notion of evil, whereas al-Shahristānī narrates Zarathustra's vita and the Zoroastrian anthropology, which are absent in Ibn al-Malāḥimī. At the beginning of the previous section, we pointed out that the scholarship regards Abū ʿĪsā as a source for these two reports. Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-Warrāq, an apologist for Shīʿī principles,¹¹⁶ lived as a bookseller and publisher in Baghdad in the mid-third/ninth century. He penned nearly twenty books, almost all of them lost.¹¹⁷ Among the works ascribed to him, we find three titles related to Zoroastrianism: *Refutation of Zoroastrianism* (*Radd ʿalā al-Majūs*), *On the Heresies of Dualists and Refutations of Them* (*Iqtisāṣ madhāhib aṣḥāb al-ithnayn wa-l-radd ʿalayhim*) and *Book of the Narrations of People and Their Distinctions* (*Kitāb maqālāt al-nās wa-ikhtilāfihim*). Abū ʿĪsā was celebrated for his accounts on dualism as well as his refutations of it.¹¹⁸ Based on the similarities between al-Shahristānī's and Ibn al-Malāḥimī's accounts, we can assume that much of their reports are derived, directly or indirectly, from Abū ʿĪsā's *Radd ʿalā al-Majūs* or his other two books. Chronologically, this shifts our focus from the sixth/twelfth century to the third/ninth century and geographically from Khurasan to Baghdad. By this, the two reports on Zoroastrianism do not necessarily reflect the Zoroastrianism of the sixth/twelfth century Khurasan, but the Zoroastrian beliefs of third/ninth-century Baghdad. We know that Baghdad was a significant center of knowledge production for Zoroastrianism in third/ninth century,¹¹⁹ and it is quite possible that Abū ʿĪsā composed his works on the basis of knowledge gained about Zoroastrianism there.¹²⁰ Abū ʿĪsā's discussion of Zoroastrianism, moreover, reveals the strong interactions between Zoroastrian and Muslim theologians in third/ninth-century Baghdad.

¹¹⁶Van Ess assumes that he was a Shiite scholar; see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 4/293 and Zaryāb Khuyī, "Abū ʿĪsā Al-Warrāq," where he discusses all accusations against him and refutes them as not convincing, and comes to the conclusion that he was a Shiite scholar as well. Sarah Stroumsa, however—analyzing al-Warrāq's vocabulary, the titles of his works, and his discourse methods, as well as comparing him with other theologians—argues that he was very likely a Manichean; see Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, 41–4.

¹¹⁷His refutation of Christianity, the *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā*, has survived in its two main parts, the part against trinity Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam* and against incarnation Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, *Early Muslim Polemic against Christianity*, both edited and translated by David Thomas.

¹¹⁸See Thomas, "Abū ʿĪsā Al-Warrāq"; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft i*, vol. 4, 289–94.

¹¹⁹The Zoroastrian office of the Leader of Religion was located in Baghdad; see Rezania, "*Hū-Dēnān Pēšōbāy*." Two holders of this office, Ādurfarnbay, son of Farrozzād, and Ādurbād, son of Ēmēd, wrote and edited the most comprehensive Zoroastrian text, the *Dēnkard*, in this city. Rezania, "The *Dēnkard* against Its Islamic Discourse." On Zoroastrian of Baghdad see also de Jong, "The *Dēnkard* and the Zoroastrian of Baghdad."

¹²⁰It is of course difficult to determine how Abū ʿĪsā obtained his material regarding various religious groups, including Zoroastrianism. In our case, for example, did he have access to Zoroastrian books, or

If the two authors likely shared a common source, it raises the question of the origins of the unique passages (present in one author, but not the other). Here, there are two possibilities: either they were inserted by each author independently; or their content was likewise derived from Abū ʿĪsā, but either excluded or included based on the respective author's interests. This raises the question of whether Ibn al-Malāḥimī's refutation of Zoroastrian doctrine was written by Ibn al-Malāḥimī himself, or whether he cited it from one of Abū ʿĪsā's works. Significantly, there are no analogous passages among Ibn al-Malāḥimī's refutation and al-Shahristānī's account, as Table 1 shows. Taking into consideration that Abū ʿĪsā's *Radd ʿalā al-Majūs* involved a refutation of Zoroastrianism, as its title suggests, it is difficult to decide whether Ibn al-Malāḥimī's refutation is his own contribution or a citation from Abū ʿĪsā. However, in his introduction to the *Kitāb al-muʿtamad* Ibn al-Malāḥimī points out that he discusses the doctrines of dualists and Zoroastrians in more detail than other masters of the Muʿtazilī school; this suggests that his refutations of Zoroastrian doctrines stem from his own pen. At any rate, Ibn al-Malāḥimī certainly demonstrates greater interest in scholastic theology and polemics than does al-Shahristānī. Significant in this regard are designations such as Zarādush-tiyya, Zurwāniyya and Kayūmarthiyya, which al-Shahristānī assigns to different Zoroastrian myths, so that his text gives the impression that these terms designate different Zoroastrian schools that were active either in his time or historically. The absence of these designations in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's text verifies the conclusion, suggested by other scholars,¹²¹ that these assignments are the result of al-Shahristānī's heresiographic interest and do not reflect Zoroastrian socio-religious entities.

A final question regarding Ibn al-Malāḥimī's sources on Zoroastrian doctrines concerns his sources for the discussion between Abū al-Hudhail and a Zoroastrian, Milās, placed at the end of his report. Firstly, we give an account of the two figures, who represent two sides of an apologetic discussion.

Abū al-Hudhail Muḥammad b. al-Hudhail al-ʿAllāf (c. 135–c. 227/752–842) was an early Muʿtazilite theologian from Baṣra who was apparently of Persian descent.¹²² He did not have a prominent position as a scholar in Baṣra. He has been reported to have had theological disputes with theologians of other religions

possibly contact with Zoroastrian theologians? There are some speculations in the scholarship regarding this question. Wilfred Madelung, for example, assumes that Abū ʿĪsā's reports on Bardesanites in his *Kitāb al-maḡālāt* are not first-hand reports, but that he gained access to the beliefs of this religious group through the reports about the debates of Muslim theologians with dualists in the early Abbasid period; see Madelung, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq," 214. Josef van Ess, however, notes that next to the reports about the doctrines of a religion, Abū ʿĪsā occasionally mentions that he himself has heard the narration from the representatives of that group; see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, I/431. Van Ess, moreover, emphasizes that even in this case we do not know where those representatives came from and where Abū ʿĪsā met them; see *ibid.*, I/431. Elsewhere, he stresses that the question regarding the sources of Abū ʿĪsā in his *al-Maḡālāt* remains open; see *ibid.*, 6/431.

¹²¹See Reizenstein and Schaefer, *Studien Zum Antiken Synkretismus*, 236f., Rezanian, *Die zoroastrische Zeitvorstellung*, 216f.

¹²²For a comprehensive analysis of the theological teachings of Abū al-Hudhail see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 3/209–96.

as a young man.¹²³ In his old age he obtained access to the court of al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–33), the Abbasid caliph. He is said to be a prolific author,¹²⁴ and most of his works were polemical books against non-Muslim religious communities such as Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and various groups of dualists.¹²⁵ As for *Milās*, we do not find much detail about his life and his person.¹²⁶ Next to the two anecdotes in the *Kitāb al-mu'tamad* informing us about his religious affiliation, we find a short anecdote about him in Ibn al-Nadīm's *al-Fihrist*, which is in fact a combined summary of the two anecdotes in the *Kitāb al-mu'tamad*: While ascribing a book to Abū al-Hudhail entitled (*Kitāb*) *Milās*, Ibn al-Nadīm introduces *Milās* as a Zoroastrian who arranged a debate between Abū al-Hudhail and a group of dualists. After Abū al-Hudhail defeated the dualists in the debate, *Milās* converted to Islam.¹²⁷

Regarding Ibn al-Malāḥimī's source for this anecdote, and therefore the two anecdotes mentioned in *Kitāb al-mu'tamad*, they might have their origins in the lost (*Kitāb*) *Milās*, as in both of them *Milās* is involved in debate or conversation with Abū al-Hudhail.¹²⁸ Ibn al-Malāḥimī could have used the (*Kitāb*) *Milās* of Abū al-Hudhail directly, or may have found quotations from it in one of the books of Abū 'Īsā.

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¹²³In addition to the anecdote in our passage, van Ess mentions a dispute between Abū al-Hudhail and a Jewish theologian when Abū al-Hudhail was fifteen years old; see *ibid.*, 3/220.

¹²⁴For a list of his works according to Ibn Nadīm (altogether fifty-six titles) provided with comments on some of them, see *ibid.*, 5/367–9. For a contextualization of his works within their historical and intellectual milieu see *ibid.*, 3/220–3.

¹²⁵See van Ess, "Abu'l-Hodayl al-'Allāf," Mourad, "Abū L-Hudhayl," and Nyberg, "Abu 'l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf." None of Abū al-Hudhail's works are extant. However, material from his works can be found in later sources. For a German translation of extant material from his works in various fields provided with notes and commentaries, see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 5/372–457. There have been treatises composed against his theories and teachings as well. For a list of them see *ibid.*, 5/370.

¹²⁶Justi assumes that the name goes back to Miles, the Syriac form of the Greek name Milos; see Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 206.

¹²⁷See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 204.

¹²⁸Van Ess refers to the first anecdote cited by Ibn al-Malāḥimī before his report on Zoroastrianism to (*Kitāb*) *Milās*, and on this basis discusses the style of the *Kitāb Milās* of Abū al-Hudhail. As for the authenticity of this anecdote, and consequently of the whole work, he points out that although Abū al-Hudhail could have related memories of his discussions with theologians of other religions in his youth, it does not seem that such anecdotes represent what actually happened. Van Ess argues that the *Kitāb Milās* should have been composed in form of self-report, as the narrated anecdote indicates. Therefore, he adds, it is very probable that the material of the book has been carefully arranged in terms of style; see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, 5/392, 3/271f. Van Ess did not have access to the anecdote mentioned in our text, which has a very similar style compared to the anecdote he discusses. Therefore, we can assume that the same statement applies to the authenticity of the anecdote in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's report on Zoroastrianism.

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