THOMAS EICH
(Hamburg University, Germany)

The Topos of the Unborn in Early Islamic Predestination Debates:
A Study of the ḥadīṯ of Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*

Abstract

This article provides an isnād cum matn analysis of a ḥadīṯ transmitted by Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd describing how an angel visits the unborn in the womb. During the visit, several things are predestined. The ḥadīṯ has a prominent position at the beginning of the chapter on predestination in the ḥadīṯ collection of Muslim. The article shows, how the arrangement of the material in that opening section, which has to be dated to the 9th century CE, had the effect of closing a debate whether the individual’s destiny in the hereafter is predestined.

Keywords: ḥadīṯ, predestination, isnād cum matn analysis, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

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In his Ṣaḥīḥ, Muslim chose to open his chapter on Qadar with an arrangement of three ḥadīths describing prenatal human development (henceforth “the unborn”) and how an angel visits the unborn, whose fate is then predestined. I have labelled these three ḥadīths according to the names of their first transmitters: the Ibn Masʿūd, Ḥuḏayfa, and Anas Ibn Mālik ḥadīths, respectively. Parts of this material have been touched on or dealt with in the work of Wensinck, Watt, Ringgren, van Ess, and Cook. Wensinck and Watt essentially provided translations of two ḥadīths in their larger overview of ḥadīth material relating to predestination. Ringgren drew attention to the fact that comparable material relating to the unborn and predestination also exists in other religious traditions written in Syriac and Hebrew. Van Ess focused most of his study on the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīth, but also integrated a brief analysis of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth. He referred only to parallels in Hebrew material, for which he was later criticised by Cook who focused more on the Syriac material. Although his primary focus is on the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīth, van Ess considered the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth as a sort of support tradition, bolstering the positions expressed in the Ibn Masʿūd material. A major finding was that the idea that all human deeds are predestined and was only added at a later stage of the transmission of the ḥadīth material on the unborn predestination.

In this article, I will focus on the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth, since it has not been the focus of attention in previous studies. First, I will give an overview of the topos of the unborn in the early Muslim Qadar debate until the 10th/4th century based on Sunni ḥadīth collections. This will help to identify the specificity of the arrangement Muslim chose in his Ṣaḥīḥ. A major element of this specificity is his inclusion of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth. Due to the overarching importance which Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim eventually gained throughout Sunni Islamic intellectual history, this inclusion had a significant impact on the way in which Muslim religious scholars debated issues relating to the unborn. This became most obvious during the 1980s when scholars tried to answer the question of when human life began “according to the Islamic view”. In the course of these debates, some argued for the 120th day and others for the 40th day. While the former perspective essentially relied on a long-established reading of the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīth, the latter focused more prominently on the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth, among other things. A major part of this article will therefore provide an in-depth analysis of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth. Then I will examine its relation to its two neighboring ḥadīths, the Ibn Masʿūd and Anas Ibn Mālik ḥadīths in Muslim’s Qadar chapter and thus provide a sound basis for assessing the effect of its inclusion in the collection.

In my analysis I combine two approaches: context analysis and isnād cum matn analysis (ICMA). The first approach has recently been flagged for Sunni ḥadīth collections

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2 Van Ess, Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie, p. 16 and Cook, Muslim Dogma, pp. 145–149 with Fn 37 on page 216.

by Burge. This approach assumes that the authorial voice of hadīṯ collectors can be heard by analyzing the specific hadīṯ material they included in their collections, what they did not include, and in which specific arrangement they eventually chose to present that material. While this approach focuses more on the analysis of the hadīṯ collector as an author, i.e. in a relatively narrow point in time, ICMA analyses hadīṭs stemmatically in order to elaborate the processes of text development over several generations before their inclusion into certain collections. The method analyzes the two parts of a hadīṭ: the matn, i.e. the text of what the prophet Muhammad (or one of his Companions) is remembered to have said, and the isnād, the chain of transmitters who are said to have related this text to each other over the generations. Both, isnād and matn, often show repetitious patterns. In the case of the matn this is often immediately obvious, while patterns in isnāds are often not immediately visible to the same extent and need to be visualized. Here the terminology of common link (CL) and partial common link (PCL) is crucial. The isnād could state that a person said that he or she had heard the prophet say something. That person A related this to B, and B in turn related this to two people, C and D. C might have related this to 5 different people, whereas D only related it to one person. The overall pattern of the isnāds would be that all lines converge in the person B, who would be the common link (CL). Since some of those lines converge in C before moving to B, this C would be termed a partial common link (PCL). Only one line goes through D and it does not get a specific label. It might be that in later times the person C became the target of criticism for some reason (e.g. his transmission practice might not have lived up to the standards of later generations or doubts about his personal integrity were voiced). In such a situation a later transmitter might have equipped the matn as he had received it in the transmission via PCL C with a different isnād which he considered more reliable. This would then become the transmission via D. In ICMA parlance such a redaction step is called a dive.

In order to achieve results as reliable as possible, factors need to be reduced which could distort the repetitious patterns. For example, if one would rely only on hadīṭs from a collection with a focus on Iraq, there would be a great likelihood that the isnāds would show Iraqi transmissions in a disproportionate ratio. Therefore, in a first step it is necessary to gather material from a wide stretch of sources in order to reduce the likelihood and impact of confounding variables. For these reasons ICMA only produces good results in cases where a) the repetitious patterns can be established, which are b) derived from a considerable variety of collections. Once the repetitious patterns of isnād and matn are established, the question can be addressed if there is a form of correlation between the two.

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An additional problem for the interpretation of the correlation between patterns is the available information on transmitters. Usually this is drawn from biographical dictionaries. However, this biographical material has to be assessed carefully. For example, it might be entirely based on isnāds, i.e. the entry merely states that X transmitted from Y and Z to A and B, information matching 100% with the isnād one wants to analyze. In such a case the independence of the biographical entry is highly questionable and it is difficult to be used for an assessment of the isnād.6

This entire exercise aims at possible conclusions about the original matn as the CL transmitted it “and the one responsible for whatever changes have occurred in the course of the transmission after the common link.”7 This way a diachronic, contextualized analysis of the hadīṯ material in question becomes possible. Early versions or text layers can be identified, which, together with tentatively safe dating, can help to position those versions or layers in their “original” Sitz im Leben.

In my application of ICMA to the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ, I will provide conclusions in this direction of research. However, the major aim of ICMA here is to combine it with an approach to context analysis: the ICMA of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ provides material for the better assessment of the actual authorial choices Muslim made in the specific presentation of the Ibn Masʿūd, Ḥuḍayfa, and Anas Ibn Mālik ḥadīṣ at the beginning of his Qadar chapter.

The topos of the unborn in Qadar-related ḥadīṯ texts until the 10th/4th century

When Muslim decided to include the unborn-angel-predestination topos into his Qadar chapter, he acted as practically any major Sunni ḥadīṯ collector of the 9th century CE/3rd century h.8 An analysis of the earlier collections of Mālik Ibn Anas (d. 795/179) and Maʿmar Ibn Rāšid (d. 770/153) shows that this was a new phenomenon at the time.

The chapter on Qadar in Mālik’s Muwaṭṭa’ does not contain any reference to the unborn.9 An initial examination of the Kitāb al-Qadar in Maʿmar’s Ġāmiʿ presents a different picture:

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8 The collections differ as to how extensively the material is covered and where in the chapter it is positioned, i.e. the beginning of the chapter (Muslim, Sahih, p. 991; Buḫārī, Sahih, p. 1174; Ibn Māġa, Sunan, I, p. 29 and Ibn Ḥibbān, Sahih, XIV. p. 52f) or further on (Abū Dawūd, Sunan, VII, p. 93; Tirmiḏī, Ġāmiʿ, IV, p. 15; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, Sunna, I, pp. 77–83). The Sunan of Naṣāʾi do not have a comparable Qadar chapter.
1. It contains a statement by ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar (d. 693/73) referring to the nasama, which could mean the unborn.
2. It contains the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ. However, the first is likely an example of an early usage of nasama not referring to the unborn, while the second is a result of a later redaction process.

Ad 1: The opening part of Kitāb al-Qadar in the Ḡāmiʾ contains a statement attributed to ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar (d. 693/73), that says that during God’s creation of the nasama, sex and šaqiṣaʿīd are ordained after an angel asks about them. Here, nasama very likely does not refer to the unborn. Around 800, the term was often used in contexts referring to the idea that all human souls had been created before the world began. The context in Maʿmar’s Ḡāmiʾ suggests exactly this, since the statement is followed by two traditions about Moses criticizing Adam, to which Adam replies that his deed had been predestined, i.e. before the world began. This context-based interpretation from the Qadar chapter of Maʿmar’s Ḡāmiʾ, where the term nasama originally referred to pre-eternal souls rather than embryos, becomes even clearer when compared to a similar passage composed roughly 100 years later by ʿUṯmān ad-Dārimī (d. 894/280). In this passage, the arrangement of the material clearly indicates that Ad-Dārimī must have understood nasama as referring to the unborn without any reference to concepts about pre-eternal existence. By contrast, the arrangement of the material in Maʿmar’s Qadar chapter strongly suggests that roughly one hundred years earlier, nasama was understood to refer to pre-created souls.

Ad 2: Other than the material referring to nasama, the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ clearly relates to prenatal life (a translation of the rather long ḥadīṯ is provided below). In the modern edition of Maʿmar’s Ḡāmiʾ, the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ occurs later on in the Qadar chapter. The Ḡāmiʾ has the basic structure of teachings related by Maʿmar to his pupil, ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, as is indicated in most of the isnāds. In his study on the transmission

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10 ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, XI, pp. 111–126, here p. 123.
11 ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, XI, p. 112.
13 On this topos, see also Van Ess, Zwischen Ḥadīṭ und Theologie, pp. 161–168. Admittedly, the statement is preceeded by a story where someone is identified as “one of those for whom blessedness [in the afterlife] had already been written down while they were in the wombs of their mothers” (ḥāḏāʾ miman kūṭuḥ labhu as-suʿāda wa hum fī buṭūn ummahātihi). However, “wombs of their mothers” (buṭūn ummahātihi) is likely to be a passing reference in the Qurʾān (Q 16:78, 39:6, 53:32), which, in two of the three instances, uses the expression together with the creation of Adam (Q 39:6; 53:32).
14 Dārimī, Ridd, pp. 127–130.
15 The passage opens with a reference to the fate in the hereafter of deceased children, followed by Qurʾanic verses including Q 53:32 (buṭūn ummahātihi). A following quote by Muḥammad about the newborn (mawlūd) indicates unambiguously that the topic remains with the child. A statement by ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar about nasamas follows (now related as a prophetic ḥadīṯ) and is immediately succeeded by the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ (see below), which unambiguously speaks about prenatal development. The passage closes with a prophetic statement about predestination triggered by a burying ceremony – arguably of a child.
history of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s work, Motzki has shown that Ma’mar’s Ġāmiʿ was transmitted early on as an independent collection together with the Muṣannaf of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq. Further, Motzki argues for the Muṣannaf that ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s pupil, Ishāq ad-Dabarī (d. 898/285), was pivotal. I assume the same for Ma’mar’s Ġāmiʿ. Motzki states that while Dabarī had very likely received a book probably reflecting ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s lectures, the transmission history of the text allowed for redactional processes until the early 10th century.

In the Ġāmiʿ, the isnād authorisation structure is generally ‘Abd ar-Razzāq → Ma’mar. However, there are exceptions to this rule. I perused the Ġāmiʿ until the end of the Kitāb al-Qadar, a segment comprising 372 entries according to the edition’s numbering systems, i.e. 23% of the total 1614 ḥadīths. In this sample, 27 entries refer to authorities other than Ma’mar. Of these 27 entries, 13 appear at the end or close to the end of the respective chapter. It would be possible to see this as a reflection of a ranking of authorities by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq or someone after him in the transmission history. However, the remaining other cases, where other isnād structures appear at the beginning or middle of a chapter, seem to contradict this. The most likely explanation to me is that the material of isnāds other than Ma’mar reflect a redaction history and were added to a core of Ma’mar-traditions. This could have happened either through addition at the end of a chapter, where some empty space might have been left – a reasonably expected procedure for later insertions of shorter material. However, for later additions of larger material groups, a different path was likely necessary. Recent research on ḥadīṯ papyri has found that scribes could add larger amounts of material through writing it on the blank verso of the previous page.

In the Ġāmiʿ, one of the largest sets of material breaking away from the isnād structures of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq → Ma’mar, is a group of four cases in the Kitāb al-Qadar which include the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ. Against this background, I consider the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ

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19 Properly speaking it is pupil → Ahmad Ibn Ḥālid → Dabarī → ‘Abd ar-Razzāq → Ma’mar.

20 I include one case where the reference might have been lost (XI, p. 49).

21 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, XI, pp. 11 (2x), 21, 23 (2x), 24, 25, 26, 39, 40, 54, 84 (2x). Many of these cases occur in short chapters.

22 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, XI, pp. 3, 13 (2x), 17 (2x), 19, 42, 49, 77, 88, 122f (4x).

23 Mathieu Tillier, Naïm Vanthieghem, ‘Une oeuvre inconnue de Waki’ Ibn al-Garrāḥ (m. 197/812?) et sa transmission en Égypte au Ille/Ixe siècle’, Arabica 65 (2018), pp. 677f. show that the recto and verso of a ḥadīṯ papyrus were written at different times, i.e. the verso spaces which were left blank in the 8th/2nd century were filled with additional ḥadīṯ material with a differing isnād structure in the 9th/3rd century.

24 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, XI, p. 122f (one to ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s father and three to Sufyān at-Ṭawrī (d. 777/161)).
as a later addition to the Ġāmiʿ and assume the lifetime of ʿAbd ar-Razzāq’s pupil Isḥāq ad-Dabarī (d. 898/285) as the earliest safe date for this redaction process.25

Taken together with the entire absence of the topos in the Qadar section of the Muwatṭa’ Mālik, the material strongly indicates that around 800, references to the topic of the unborn in the Qadar debate were not common, while almost all thematic ḥadīṯ collections of the later 9th century included these references in their respective Qadar chapters.

Reference to the unborn in late antiquity’s resurrection debates

A likely explanation for this phenomenon is that before roughly 800, reference to the unborn was linked to other topics, as is suggested in the semantical change of nasama briefly outlined above.

As recent research has shown, reference to the unborn had become an intrinsic component in late antiquity’s Mediterranean eschatology debates by the 5th century CE at the latest. In particular, the question of whether abortivi would be resurrected and, if yes, in which form, had become “something of an eye-catching topic”.26 By the late 5th century, the issue had obviously become important enough to be highlighted in biographies about Augustine and some of his Donatist interlocutors.27

Also, in Syriac Christianity, the unborn became the subject of theological deliberations. For example, Aphrahat’s (d. circa 345) gloss of Ezekiel 37, “The valley of the dry bones”, with vivid descriptions of the resurrection of scattered bones, can be interpreted as an analogy for embryonic growth.28 In the hymns of Ephraim (d. 373), the resurrection of embryos who died with their mothers in sexualised, grown-up bodies is endorsed — a concept possibly ascribed to Ephraim in textual developments during the 7th century.29

As Patricia Crone has convincingly argued, the Qur’an engages considerably with late Antiquity resurrection debates, and the Qur’an’s interlocuting deniers of resurrection obviously used many arguments known from comparable discussions in monotheistic

25 Of course, it is imaginable that the addition might have occurred during a later session of ʿAbd ar-Razzāq teaching Maʿmar’s Ġāmiʿ. However, such substantial additions would then raise the question of why the work was still spread as a work attributed to Maʿmar.
27 Mistry, Abortion, pp. 266–272 focusing on Augustine. Excluding abortivi from bodily resurrection in the debate raised serious questions. What will then happen to the soul, that had already settled in that entity? And how should the scenario of a pregnant woman dying be dealt with? Basically, Augustine opined that the dead embryo would be resurrected in a perfect, i.e. a grown, body (he took the same stand in connection with infant death).
29 Bynum, Resurrection, pp. 76f. Since this passage in Sermo I, line 517–54 is in tension with other writings of Ephraem, Edmund Beck (the editor and translator) considers them as the work of a 7th century Syriac monk (see Ephraem, V–X). The resurrection of unborns who have died with the mother is also referred to in passing in Ephraem’s Carmina Nisibena (Des Hligen Ephraem-des Syrens Carmina Nisibena (Zweiter Teil), transl. by Edmund Beck, Louvain 1963, p. 92), which I take as an additional indication of how well-established the topic was.
communities in the time up to the 7th century when Muḥammad was preaching his message.\textsuperscript{30} The Qur'an repeatedly refers to the unborn in these contexts.\textsuperscript{31}

Thus, it can be seen that in the beginnings of Islamic history, reference to the unborn was a well-known phenomenon in debates relating to eschatology. The Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth might also have been remembered first as an eschatological tradition. This is suggested to a certain degree by the structure and context in which this tradition was remembered in the earliest Musnads.

The first two transmitters in the different variants of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth are always Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd → Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl. The chapters devoted to Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd in the collection of Ṭayālisī (d. 819/204), Ḥumaydī (d. 834/219), Ibn Abī Šayba (d. 849/235), and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855/241) exclusively record material transmitted via Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl, while the later Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360) recalls three additional persons to have transmitted from Ḥuḍayfa. All of the respective chapters in the four early Musnads have an eschatological tradition relating to the signs of the last hour (āyāt as-sāʿa), three of them relating to the tradition of the unborn, two relating to the prophet ordering a prayer on behalf of the deceased Negus of Ethiopia,\textsuperscript{32} and one relating to an explanatory tradition about the beast (dāba) mentioned in the eschatological tradition.\textsuperscript{33} In Ṭabarānī’s Musnad, the list of topics had further grown, partly through the addition of decidedly pro-alid traditions.\textsuperscript{34} Obviously, the early collectors only knew of Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd’s material transmitted via Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl. In this transmission material, evident eschatological content (āyāt as-sāʿa) had a strong presence. In this context, it is noteworthy that ḥadīth experts of the 9th/3rd century preserved a memory of Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl as somebody who participated in the revolt of Al-Muḥtār (685–687 CE/66–67 h), which was influenced by apocalyptic ideas.\textsuperscript{35}

Given the fact that, by the 7th century, reference to the unborn had become a standard topic in theological resurrection debates throughout the Mediterranean, including in the Qur’an, I do not consider it a coincidence that early ḥadīth experts remembered the Ḥuḍayfa → Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl link as transmitting overwhelmingly eschatological material and, to an only slightly lesser degree, the tradition of the unborn. Together with the memory


\textsuperscript{32} This is linked to “Basran, Qadarite discussions on funeral prayers over non-Muslims, which group included Christians, but also ‘Muslims’ whose conduct was considered un-Islamic.” (Wim Raven, ‘Some Early Islamic Texts on the Negus of Abyssinia’, Journal of Semitic Studies XXXIII (1988), pp. 209f.).

\textsuperscript{33} Unborn: Ḥumaydī, Ibn Abī Šayba, Ibn Ḥanbal; Negus: Ṭayālisī, Ibn Ḥanbal; dāba: Ṭayālisī, with one added alternative isnād.

\textsuperscript{34} Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, pp. 189–202, followed by transmissions (until p. 204) from the three other transmitters, partly giving the eschatological material again.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibn Qutayba, Al-Maʿārif, pp. 341f.; idem, Taʿwil muḥtalif al-ḥadīth, 57; G.R. Hawting, ‘al-Muḵṭār b. Abī ‘Ubayd’, EP. In contrast to almost any other biographical information about Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl (see below), I consider this piece of information to be reliable, since I see no reason why it should have been fabricated.
that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl took part in the revolt of Al-Muḥtār, which followed apocalyptic ideas, I interpret the remembered transmission of the unborn material through Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl as pointing to a milieu discussing eschatology.36

This scenario receives further support through the strong presence of sex determination in the material – in fact, it is the only topic which is always present (see below). One of the core issues concerning resurrection in late antiquity (including resurrection of abortivi) was the question of whether it had to refer to gendered bodies or not.37

Triangling with biographical material

Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd is mentioned in the Tārīḫ Ṭabarī in two contexts.38 The first is a change of administration staff in central Iraq during the time of ʿUmar Ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb.39 The second context is the conquest of Al-Bāb, a key pass and fortress for controlling the Caucasus, recorded as 22 hiǧra (643 CE). From Al-Bāb, the chief commander sent out four leaders (quwwād) to Armenian regions for further conquests, but only one of them was successful. Ḥuḍayfa was sent to Ğibāl al-Lān, today’s Ossetia.40 This is the last time he is mentioned in Ṭabarī’s Tārīḫ and the impression is that Ḥuḍayfa died during the campaign.

Among the biographical dictionaries of ḥadīṯ transmission, Ibn Ḥibbān states that Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd would have died in Armenia in 42 hiǧra (662 CE).41 This is surprising, given the suggestion in Ṭabarī that his death was in Ossetia twenty years earlier. Ibn Ḥibbān does not give a source and the date can be further questioned by the entry for the following person (a Ḥabīb Ibn Maslama), which also posits 42 as year of death in Armenia. It seems likely that this is a mistake (a missed line) in the – possibly aural – transmission history of the text.

In addition, Ibn Ḥibbān’s two neighbouring entries on Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd and Ḥuḍayfa Ibn al-Yamān suggest that ḥadīṯ experts sometimes had difficulties separating the two. Ibn Ḥibbān records the kunya Abū Sarīḥa for both of them and states that both would have

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37 Bynum, Resurrection, pp. 74f, esp. pp. 90f and p. 98 (about Augustine).

38 Much of the material referenced in the following two sections has already been touched upon briefly in van Ess, Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie, pp. 23f.

39 Ṭabarī, Tārīḫ, IV, pp. 23 and 139. Nearly identical events are recorded twice, for the years 16 and 21 hiǧra (637 and 642 CE). The first refers to the harraḡ and the building of bridges and the second to irrigation. In both cases, the course of events and exchange of staff is identical. Ḥuḍayfa’s transfer to Kufa is already mentioned in earlier sources such as Ḥalīfa Ibn Ḥayyāt, Ṭabaqāt, I, p. 32.


41 Ibn Hibbān, Ṭiqāt, III, p. 81, quoted as an example in Ibn Haqr, Tahqīb, I, p. 367.
dwelt (*sakana*) at Kufa.42 For Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd, the latter statement is not supported by Ṭabarī’s *Tārīḫ*: the administrative changes mentioned only indicate that he turned down an administrative position and was substituted by Ḥuḏayfa Ibn al-Yamān, who then stayed longer in the Kufa region.43

It is my opinion that for Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd, the biographical data in the dictionaries is hardly reliable.44 I presume that a historical person of that name possibly existed and likely played a role in the military expansion into Armenia in the early 640s, where he very likely died.

**Biographical material II: Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl**

For Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s biography, Aṭ-Ṭayyib al-ʿAšāš has already produced a critical synopsis45 pointing out that the sources vary considerably with respect to Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s exact name46 and his year of death (ranging between 100 and 110 hīǧra (718 and 728 CE)).47 This considerably challenges the reliability of the biographical information about him. Additional caveats concern two regularly recurring pieces of information: first, that he was the last surviving *ṣaḥābī*, and second, that he had shared eight years of Muhammad’s lifetime.

Ad 1: In his *Al-Maʿārif*, Ibn Qutayba produces a quote from Al-Wāqidī (d. 822/207) in which Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s name is apparently added to a list of four “last surviving *ṣaḥābīs*” who died during the 80s or early 90s of the hīǧra era (ca. 700s and 710s CE) in Kufa, Medina, Basra and Šām. The passage does not identify the place where Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl died. Mecca can be inferred from the topical arrangement of the passage, of course, and several biographical dictionaries – including the comparatively early Ṭabaqāt of Ḥalīfa Ibn Ḥayyāṭ (d. 854/240) – state that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl died there.48 However, differing opinions existed as late as the lifetime of Ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 1233/630), who states that “some say” (*qīla*) that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl actually died at Kufa.49 The only unambiguous statement about Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl having died at Mecca in the topical form of “I was at

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42 For the kunya, the editor assumes this to be a mistake concerning Ḥuḏayfa Ibn al-Yamān (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṭiqāt*, III, p. 80 Fn13), but points out that the “erroneous” kunya is attested in both of his collated manuscripts. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Iṣṭāʿab*, p. 335f writes that Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd died in Kufa (like Ḥuḏayfa Ibn al-Yamān (p. 335)).
43 Ṭabarī, *Tārīḫ*, IV, pp. 23 and 139. The latter passage in particular clearly establishes a connection between Kufa and Ḥuḏayfa Ibn al-Yamān and not Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd. The two neighboring entries in Buḫārī, *Tārīḫ kabīr*, III, pp. 95f show no such confusion (the Abū Sarīḥa-kunya and Kufa are only mentioned for Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd) but provide almost no biographical information and consist essentially of several ḥadīṯ-the Ḥuḏayfa Ibn Asīd entry of not more than the name, *nazala al-kūfa*, and one hadīṯ transmitted via Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl.
46 See also Al-Ḥaṭṭīb al-.createServer harassment, *Ṭarīḫ*, I, p. 198.
47 See also Dahabi, *Ṣiyār*, III, p. 470.
49 Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Usad*, p. 1351. The other entries at pp. 623 and 956 do not mention this.
X in the year Y and saw a funeral and asked who it was” goes back to Ǧarīr Ibn Ḥāzim and was transmitted through his son Wahb (d. 822/206).\(^{50}\) Of course, such statements are hardly reliable as historical sources because of their topical form. In the concrete case studied here, there are also strong indications that Ǧarīr Ibn Ḥāzim or his son might have had an interest in making Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl “the last surviving ṣaḥābī”. Ḏahabī writes about Ǧarīr:

Some say that he transmitted from Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl ʿĀmir Ibn Wāṭila. It is recorded that he saw his funeral in Mekka. I saw more than one who counted Ǧarīr among the sigār at-tābiʿīn. ʿAlī related to me that he heard from Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl, the seal (ḥātima) of the ṣaḥāba and he is the seal of the ones who were in touch (laḥaqa) with Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl.\(^{51}\)

Obviously, it became desirable at some point to access the transmission from the last surviving ṣaḥābī. Maybe, not surprisingly, the only explicit and unambiguous source for Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl having died at Mecca in 110 hiǧra (728 CE) was spread by persons from exactly such a transmission line. This piece of information thus cannot be considered independent information.

The overall picture is, then, that the information about Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl’s date and place of death is not remembered as such unisono. Rather, the claim that he died at Mecca between 100 and 110 hiǧra (718 and 728 CE) had the effect of the city now also having a “last surviving ṣaḥābī”, even outcompeting the four other cities as the place with the definite and ultimate last dying ṣaḥābī. These temporal and spatial aspects give the story a strong topical flavor and I therefore consider it to be unreliable.\(^{52}\)

Ad 2: The construct of Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl having been the last surviving ṣaḥābī logically implies an overlap between his and the prophet’s lifetime. Ibn Ḥanbal’s Musnad preserves clear traces that this was a contested issue for some time. Ibn Ḥanbal devoted an extra chapter to Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl in his own right, independently of Ḥuḍayfa. This consists of 24 entries which can be broken down into 9 lines of transmission after Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl.

\(^{50}\) Ḏahabī, Siyar, III, p. 470; ʿAṣbahānī, Maʾrifā, IV, p. 2067.

\(^{51}\) Ḏahabī, Siyar, VII, pp. 99f; see also ʿAṣbahānī, Maʾrifā, IV, p. 2067 (Ǧarīr in the list of persons who transmitted from Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl).

\(^{52}\) I can only point in passing to some interesting similarities in the development of the early memory of the collection of the Qur’an under ʿUṯmān: in a group of depictions, there were four copies at Medina, Kufa, Basra, and Damascus, to which Mecca was later added. (Theodor Nöldeke, Friedrich Schwally, Geschichte des Qorāns. Zweiter Teil: Die Sammlung des Qorāns: mit einem literarischen Anhang über die muhammedanischen Quellen und die neuere christliche Forschung, Leipzig 1919, pp. 112f) It was remembered that it was Ḥuḍayfa Ibn al-Yamān who triggered ʿUṯmān to order the establishment of a Qur’anic codex and Ḥuḍayfa was essentially remembered as “ʿUṯmān’s man” in Kufa (Balāḏurī, Ansāb al-ʾaṣrāf, V, pp. 31, 46f, 62, 82, 92, in particular the topos of his standard biography that he died “40 days after the murder of ʿUṯmān” (for example, Ibn Ḥaṯar, Taḥqīḥ, I, p. 367)). The key/only informant in Buḥārī’s Sahīḥ for his presentation of the collection of the Qur’an is Mūsā Ibn Iṣmāʿīl (Viviane Comerro, Les traditions sur la constitution du musḥaf de ʿUṯmān, Beirut 2012, pp. 89–101), who was also pivotal in spreading certain elements of the biography of Abū ʿṭ-Tufayl.
Roughly in the middle of the chapter, there is a group of four entries, which, taken together, establish that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl said of himself that 1) he saw the prophet but never spoke to him, 2) he was the last one to have seen the prophet, 3) that he saw the prophet perform a ritual, and 4) that he knew (adraktu) eight years of Muḥammad’s lifetime and that he was born in the year of the battle of Uḥud, i.e. the year 3 hiǧra (625 CE). From this, I conclude that ḥadīṯ experts of Ibn Ḥanbal’s time obviously debated the reliability of Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl as a source because of his assumed life dates and that there was a strong tendency to assume that he might be used, not for verbatim quotes of Muḥammad, but rather for things he might have seen when he was a child. A closer inspection of the material in Ibn Ḥanbal’s Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl chapter supports this impression: there is only one instance of a tradition in this chapter where there are no indications that the early ḥadīṯ experts did not express their doubts about Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl being a reliable source, namely a tradition that he saw the prophet move quickly between two stones.54

Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s statement of his birth in the year 3 hiǧra (625 CE), reinforced by a reference to Uḥud, was spread by a certain Ṭābit Ibn al-Walīd, who had heard it from his father.55 This family isnād is the only one for which Ṭābit was remembered.56 This situation makes the information suspicious.

Additionally, Buḥārī’s biographical dictionaries preserve variations of a tradition supporting this year of birth in four different places. In the – rather complicated – tradition, an aged Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl talks to a certain Sayf Ibn Waḥb and makes statements about his age at the time of speaking (often 90.5 years) and asks his interlocutor about his age, which is given as 33 or 30 years. In two variants, he also refers to a story where he went together with a certain ʿAmrū to a meeting with Ḥuḍayfa. He adds that ʿAmrū

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54 Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXXIX, pp. 219 and 222. For the first ḥadīṯ in the chapter (related to the Ġazwat Tābūk), an alternative isnād exists, which makes one of the commanders of this razzia Ḥuḍayfa Ibn al-Yamān, the source from whom Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl would have later heard the story. The second entry is not a ḥadīṯ at all, but rather a statement about Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl himself, while the third (two versions on p. 213 and 218) relates a story about Muḥammad clearly before Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s alleged birth. In the fourth, a variant exists that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl would have said “it reached me about the prophet” (balaganī an an-nabī). The following four (pp. 214–217) are statements about Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl himself (the first of them has additional extensive material with quotes from Muḥammad, but for this part similar versions exist with totally different first informants). The next ḥadīṯ (p. 218) also exists in a mursal-version from Hasan al-Baṣrī, then follows the story of Muḥammad moving quickly between two stones (p. 219, 222), followed by a long tradition spread by Zuhrī in two versions, one with and the other without Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl. Finally, there is a story clearly related to the Ḫārīǧīs, where it is shown that the contemporaries of Ibn Ḥanbal understood it as something that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl had heard from a man (the father of the respective son in the story) who quoted Muḥammad. See the extensive footnotes by the editors.
55 Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXXIX, p. 217 Fn 1 with the identification of three isnāds meeting in Ṭābit.
56 Rāzī, Ġarḥ, II, p. 458; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭuqāṭ, VIII, p. 158. Besides information extracted from the isnāds the biographers knew nothing about him.
and himself were both the same age, equaling the age of the interlocutor at the time of speaking, and that ʿAmrū was one of the ṣaḥāba.57

The reference to Ḥuḍayfā in this story was later interpreted as meaning Ḥuḍayfā Ibn al-Yamān,58 who died in Al-Madāʾin in the year 36 hiǧra (657 CE).59 If we subtract 33 years from 36 hiǧra, the story would support the information that Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl was born in 3 hiǧra (625 CE). However, the reference to ʿAmrū is linguistically, semantically and stylistically clearly a secondary addition to the text with the function of establishing a certain age for Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl at a certain time, and that this age necessarily resulted in his ṣaḥābī status. Therefore, the redaction history of this story is a strong indication that Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl’s status as a ṣaḥābī, i.e. his year of birth, is severely disputed.60

I thus conclude that for Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl, much of the biographical material is also unreliable in the sense of hard historical information. Rather, it reflects several possibly separate processes surrounding his biography aimed at establishing that a) he was one of the ṣaḥābā, b) who was the last of them to pass away “after 100”, c) in Mecca. In summary, the Ḥuḍayfā Ibn Asīd → Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl link cannot be considered hard historical evidence for the transmission of the respective texts from the former to the latter. As mentioned above, the only element from the sporadic information on Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl, for which I cannot see a reason why it should have been invented later, is his participation in the revolt of Al-Muḥṭār, which saw an apocalyptic role for itself.

Isnād cum matn analysis (ICMA)

The structure of the isnāds of the Ḥuḍayfā ḥadīṯ can be gleaned from the accompanying tables. There is one single strand Ibn Lahīʿa (Egyptian, d. 790/174) and the common links (CLs) ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUṯmān Ibn Ḫuṯaym (Meccan, d. 750/132), Rubayʿiya Ibn Kulṯūm (Basran, d. ?), and ʿAzra Ibn Ṭābit (Basran, d. ?). In a first step, I will show that that this material cannot be used meaningfully for a reconstruction of early transmission layers.

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57 Buḫārī, Ṭārīḫ kabīr, IV, p. 170 (only information about Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl’s and Sayf’s age); VI, p. 344 (reference to the visit, no mention of concrete ages) and 446f (the most elaborate version); Buḫārī, Ṭārīḫ ṣaḡīr, I, p. 286 (here, Sayf is 30 years old).
58 Al-Ḥafīb al-Ḥaǧdādī, Ṭawīḥ, I, p. 198.
60 The isnād of this story ends in Mūsā Ibn Ismāʿīl (Basran, d. 838/223), just like the isnād of the only tradition explicitly mentioning an act of transmission from Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl in Mecca in 107 hiǧra (725 CE). In both cases, next to nothing is known about the first transmitters of the respective information. (Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭaqāṭ, IV, p. 339 (Sayf Ibn Wahh) and V, p. 333 (Ḵafṣ Ibn Aʿyūn) essentially only provide the information of the isnāds of the two traditions under study here.) Thus, I consider it very likely that this biographical information reflects attempts by Mūsā Ibn Ismāʿīl to bolster Abū ʿt-Ṭufayl’s position as the last surviving ṣaḥābī, possibly in order to tap into the resulting social capital as being connected to him.
Then I will address the CLs ‘Amr Ibn Dinār (Meccan, d. 744/126), Abū az-Zubayr (Meccan, d. 742/124 or 746/128), and Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr (d. 823/208). This material forms the bulk of the several variants of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ, which Muslim chose to include in the Qadar chapter in his Sahīḥ. An in-depth analysis of these clusters will therefore lay the foundation for an assessment of the redactional choices Muslim made.

The matn of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ consists of up to three elements:

I) A framing story where Abū at-Ṭufayl hears Ibn Masʿūd make a statement about predestination before birth, is bewildered and then meets Ḥuḍayfa, who supports the statement.

II) A first part in the ḥadīṯ matn describing the angel and the physicality of the unborn.

III) A second part in the ḥadīṯ matn describing the predestination of a set of things in the format of the angel asking God.

The single strand via Ibn Lahī’a (table 1) is recorded in the comparatively late collection of Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360).61 The isnād is entirely Egyptian, before leading to ʿUbayd Ibn Abī Ṭalḥa al-Makkī, who connects to Abū at-Ṭufayl. I could not find a year of death for ʿUbayd, however, his Egyptian student in the isnād, Yazīd Ibn Ḥabīb, was recorded to have passed away in 746/128.62 The dictionaries do not describe the ʿUbayd → Yazīd link, but rather a direct transmission Abū at-Ṭufayl → Yazīd. Ḍahabī

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61 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, pp. 197f. I have decided to always provide the collector’s dates of death to give the reader an impression of the time span between the demise of a CL and the demise of the collector eventually recording the transmission. I have decided not to label certain collections as “early” and others as “late”, because of pragmatic difficulties to decide where to draw the line between the collections of Muslim (d. 875/261), Ibn Abī ʾĀṣim (d. 900/287), Bazzār (d. 910/297), Al-Firyābī (d. 914/301), and Ṭaḥāwī (d. 933/321).

62 For ʿUbayd see Ibn Ḥaǧar, Tahḏīb, III, p. 38, for Yazīd see Ḍahabī, Siyar, VI, pp. 32–34.
records doubts about the latter link. Thus, it is possible that in the Ibn Lahīʿa transmission being studied here, ʿUbayd was inserted into the isnād exactly to address these doubts.

The matn differs for element II and III from all the other transmissions of the Ḥuḍayfa material. It is likely that Ibn Lahīʿa’s transmission developed further matn material, which is otherwise known from a material cluster ascribed to ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar.63 In summary, the material cannot be used meaningfully to reconstruct early transmission layers.

The CL ʿAzra Ibn Thābit (table 1) is recorded in the collections of Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim (d. 900/287), Firyābī (d. 914/301), and Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360).64 The biographical information does not record ʿAzra’s death date and mostly provides information extracted from isnāds. He is considered to be Basran.65 The isnāds state that he received the transmission from a Yaʿqūb and Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAqīl al-Makkī, neither of whom I could identify. After this, CL ʿAzra, Ṭabarānī records three different isnāds. Two Basran isnāds grouped together have an entire matn. The third isnād only quotes the start of the matn. In this third isnād I am unable to unambiguously identify the first transmitter after ʿAzra.66 The transmitters after ʿAzra in the two Basran isnāds died in 824/209 and 827/212 respectively.67 On the other hand, the isnād recorded by Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim and Firyābī has two successive transmitters after ʿAzra, who died earlier in 792/176 and 803/187, respectively.68 This renders the two Basran isnāds in Ṭabarānī highly suspicious. Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim and Firyābī both received their material from Abū Masʿūd and before him there is no place where transmissions meet in the isnāds apart from ʿAzra. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that Ṭabarānī’s single strands bypassing Abū Masʿūd are inventions. As a result, this data suggests that the material in the CL ʿAzra cluster, as we have it, is likely a late redaction, which can only be dated safely to the lifetime of Abū Masʿūd al-Ḡahdarī (Basran, d. 862/248).

In the matn, elements I and III in particular show phenomena of late redaction layers. In the framing story, it is specified that Ibn Masʿūd spoke in the mosque (of Kufa)69 and that Ḥuḍayfa insisted that Ibn Masʿūd was right, adding that he heard the prophet

63 The major two elements are the opening formula “If God wants to create the human” (iḍār arāda Allāh an yaḥluq al-ʿabd) and that among the things the angel writes down, “what is attached” (mā huwa lāq) is mentioned, which are well represented in the material from ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar (see Eich, ‘nasama’, 31–37).

64 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, pp. 196f; Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 114; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, Sunna, I, p. 79.


67 On ʿAwn Ibn Ṭamāmā see Mīzū, Tahḏīb, XXII, pp. 461–463 on ʿUṯmān Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Fāris see Ḍahābī, Ṣiyār, IX, p. 558.

68 On Abū ʿAwāna and Muʿtamar Ibn Sulaymān see Ḍahābī, Ṣiyār, VIII, pp. 218f, 478f.

69 Masḡūd: Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, Sunna, I, p. 79; Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 115; Kufa: Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 176. Only the transmission from CL Rubaiʿiya in Ṭabarānī also has the specification of Kufa. For more, see below.
say. These are typical later additions to an earlier core of the narrative. In element III, the predestination of a list of things, the phrasing after the questions is “so God ordains to it [what he wants] and [the angel] writes” (fa-yaqūd Allāh ʾilayhi [mā yāṣa] wa yaktub [al-malak]), i.e. it uses a developed theological terminology (yaqūd) and disambiguates who is actually writing. The overall picture is therefore that this is a late redaction layer and it is not possible to push the dating to earlier than Masʿūd (d. 875/261), Bazzār (d. 910/297), and Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360). 72 Muslim only records the beinning of the matn. All three mention that a process of elevation to the prophet (rafa) has taken place with the material. The early biographical dictionaries only have information on Rubaiʿiya extracted from isnāds, mentioning that he transmitted from his father (as in the material in this study) and Al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī). They record no death date. 73 For Rubaiʿiya’s father, Kuṭūm Ibn Ǧabr, the early dictionaries do not mention that he transmitted to his son. 74

The assessment of Rubaiʿiya as a CL is further challenged by the matns.

Muslim does not record that the material had a framing narrative, 75 while the version in Bazzār shows minuscule traces of this. 76 In Ṭabarānī’s version, the framing narrative is much more extensive, constituting a pastiche of elements from several other transmissions, especially the Basran CL ʿAzra and the PCL Ibn Ǧurayḥ’s transmission. 77 In element III the phrasing after the questions is “your Lord ordains and the angel writes” (yaqūd rabbuka wa yaktub al-malak). The overall picture is therefore that this is late redaction layer. In

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70 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 9.6
71 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992.
72 Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, VII, p. 356; Buḥārī, Tārīḥ kabīr, VII, p. 227. In addition, they do not mention teachers for Kuṭūm. Ibn Ḥibbān also states that he transmitted mursal-hadīṣ, i.e. he did not mention the saḥābī from whom he received the hadīṣ, which ties in nicely with the raf statement by all three collectors concerning the present material. Only Ibn Ḥibbān records a death date for Kuṭūm, which is the source for Ibn Ḥaǧar, Tāḥfīḥ, III, p. 472.
73 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 9.6; Bazzār, Bahīr, IV, p. 280; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992.
74 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 9.6; Bazzār, Bahīr, IV, p. 280; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992.
75 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992. He records only the matn’s beginning: “An angel assigned for the uterus. If God wants to create something with the permission of God, on 40 plus some nights …” (anna malakan muwakkaalan bi-ar-rajīm idā arāda Allāh an yaḥlūq ʿayn bi-iḥn Allāh lī-biḍa’ wa arbaʿ in Laylā). Two elements of this formulation – the specification for the angel and the expression “if God wants to …” – are well attested in other Basran angel and unborn material via Anas ibn Mālik. See Eich, ‘nasama’, pp. 38–43.
76 “The wretched is wretched in the womb of his mother” (aš-ṣaqī man ʿaqīya ʾfi baṭn ummihi) (Bazzār, Musnad, IV, p. 280).
77 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 9.6. The Basran ‘Azra’s transmission element is the specification that Ibn Masʿūd made his statement during the ḥujja (i.e. in the mosque) at Kuṭa, the element otherwise only to be found in the PCL Ibn Ǧurayḥ, is that Ḥuḍayfa is asking Abū ʿAbd Allāh “shall I inform you about …” (a-fa-lā ʿuḥbiruka). The statement by Ibn Masʿūd is now rendered as aš-ṣaqī man ʿaqū ʾfi baṭn ummihi wa as-saʿīd man ʿaṣ-aʿ ad ʾfi baṭn ummihi, i.e. the parallelism is now broadened to the entire structure.
addition, the incoherence of the parts of the material, together with the results of the biographical analysis, rule out using the CL Rubai‘iya’s material for a reconstruction of the earlier development of the material.

The **CL ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUṭmān Ibn Ḥuṭaym** (table 2) is recorded in the collections of Ibn Abī Āṣim (d. 900/287), Ṭabarānī (two different collections) (d. 971/360) and Rāzī (d. 1023/414).⁷⁷ For the CL ʿAbd Allāh, the early biographical dictionaries already note that he transmitted from Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl. His death date is not clear, possibly in the 130s and surely before 761/144. The three men from the student generation after the CL ʿAbd Allāh in this study, are not recorded among his students in the dictionaries.⁷⁹

The names in the student generation are given in the isnāds as Wuhayb, al-Qāsim, and Ibn ʿIyāš. The latter two are only recorded in the later collections of Ṭabarānī and Rāzī, which raises the question of why the transmissions were not recorded anywhere else for centuries. These structural doubts are supported by the biographical record.⁸⁰ For the isnād via Wuhayb, at least two Wuhaybs from the dictionaries are possible candidates, since their death dates are relatively close to each other, ranging between roughly two to three decades after the CL’s demise. Their biographical entries neither mention the CL as a teacher nor the following ʿAbd al-Aʿlā in the isnād as one of their pupils. Only the entry on ʿAbd al-Aʿlā (Basran, d. 851/237) in Ibn Ḥibbān disambiguates that he transmitted from Wuhayb Ibn Ḫālid (Basran, d. 782/165). However, Buḥārī only mentions “he heard a [certain] Wahb” (samiʿa Wahban).⁸¹ This obvious uncertainty in the sources about the Wuhayb (or Wahb?) → ʿAbd al-Aʿlā link plus the considerable time span of 70 years between the two death dates make this isnād unreliable, and thus for the dating of the accompanying text material only ʿAbd al-Aʿlā’s lifetime can be used as a terminus ante quem.

This Wuhayb isnād only recounts the framing narrative, which is entirely lacking in the transmission via Al-Qāsim. Only the transmission via Ibn ʿIyāš recorded by Rāzī (d. 1023/414) has elements I, II, and III of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ. In the versions with

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⁸⁰ The isnād via al-Qāsim [Ibn Yahyā al-Hilālī] from Wāṣiṣ through his nephew Muqaddam, who is also the only source for his death date (Buḥārī, *Ṭarīḥ ṣaḡīr*, II, p. 259: “My Uncle al-Qāsim … died 51 years and some months ago, as if it was the year [1]97” (kaʿannahu sanaʿa wa tisʿīn)). Only later dictionaries record that he transmitted from the CL ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUṭmān (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṭiqāṭ*, VII, p. 336; Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tahdīb*, III, p. 423; Mizī, *Tahdīb*, XXIII, pp. 459f). For (Ismāʿīl) Ibn ʿIyāš from Homs, early dictionaries already record the death date as 797/181, but not the transmission under discussion here. Also, the early dictionaries do not record the link to his student Marwān from Damascus in the present isnād. Ibn ʿIyāš was severely contested as a transmitter (Buḥārī, *Ṭarīḥ kabīr*, I, pp. 369f (Ibn ʿIyāš), VII, p. 373 (Marwān); Ḍahābī, *Sīvar*, VIII, pp. 313–328 (Ibn ʿIyāš), IX, pp. 511–513 (Marwān); Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṭiqāṭ*, IX, p. 179 (Marwān)).

element III, the formulation after the angel’s questions is “so the Lord dictates and the angel writes” (fa-yamlī ar-rabb wa yaktub al-malak). This is unique in the corpus and probably a climax of theological disambiguation processes, i.e. a mechanism to reiterate that the angel is merely God’s execution tool and has no impact whatsoever on the process of predestination. The overall picture is, therefore, that there is a late redaction layer and it cannot be used for reconstructing the early transmission phases. For element I, the framing narrative, the earliest possible dating in this group is the lifetime of ʿAbd al-Aʿlā (d. 851/237).

The Ḥuḏayfa material in Muslim’s Qadar Chapter

I now turn to the CLs ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār (Meccan, d. 744/126), CL Abū az-Zubayr (Meccan, d. 742/124 or 746/128), and Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr (d. 823/208), which constitute the bulk of the Ḥuḏayfa material in Muslim’s chapter on predestination.

The isnāds

In the clusters of the first two abovementioned CLs, there are two partial common links (PCLs) that following them. For the CL ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār, these are Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Tāʾifi (Meccan, d. 793/177) and Sufyān Ibn ʿUyayina (Kufan/Meccan, d. 814/198), and for the CL Abū az-Zubayr, these are Ibn Ğurayġ (Meccan, d. 770/153) and ʿAmr Ibn al-Ḥārīt (Meccan/Egyptian, d. 765/148) → Ibn Wahb (Egyptian, d. 813/197, the PCL).

As for the CL ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār (Meccan, d. 744/126) (table 3), early sources already recount material which is not only extracted from isnāds, and that he was an important teacher for Sufyān Ibn ʿUyayina, whereas Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Tāʾifi is not mentioned. Only the later dictionaries mention that ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār heard from Abū at-Ṭufayl.83

For the cluster of PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Tāʾifi, the following structural observations can be made. Only one rather late collection (Ṭabarānī, d. 971/360) disambiguates Muḥammad Ibn Muslim as At-Tāʾifi in an isnād.84 The transmission is recorded in six collections, in five cases together with the transmission from PCL Sufyān Ibn ʿUyayina.85 There are four transmitters after the PCL. Among these, the death date of the Kufan Isḥāq Ibn Manṣūr (d. 820/205) stands out as considerably earlier than the other three. This Kufan isnād is already recorded in the collection of Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Šayba

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84 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 195.
85 Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 195; Ibn Abī Āṣim, Āḥād, II, p. 257 (nahwu); Ibn Baṭṭa, Iḥāna, II, p. 26 (nahwu); Lālakāʿī, Sharḥ, IV, p. 592; Firyābī, Qadar, I, pp. 115–117. The only one not to record the transmission via Sufyān is Ibn Abī Šayba, Musnad, II, p. 318.
(d. 849/235). The three other isnāds are only recorded in the much later collections of Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360), Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 997/387), and Lālakā’î (d. 1027/418). This structure considerably challenges the position of Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifi as PCL, because the non-Kufan isnāds are possibly later constructions. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the time span between the death dates of the transmitters in the three non-Kufan isnāds is always in the range of 60 to 90 years, while the Kufan isnād has shorter periods. The biographical record for Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifi complements these doubts: the dictionaries only present material extracted from the isnāds and the early ones do not record further genealogical information about him or his year of death. Later sources state that his more elaborate name was Muḥammad Ibn Muslim Ibn Sawsan or Sūs or Sunayn or Šunayr and that he died in 793/177. This year of death is likely gleaned from Ḥalīfa Ibn al-Ḩayyāt’s entry on a Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifi Ibn Hayyān, and it is not completely clear if this was really the same person. Against this background, I do not regard Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifi as a reliable PCL. As a consequence, the CL ‘Amr Ibn Dīnār now loses its status as a common link. For the sake of clarity in referencing, however, I will continue to use the labels of (P)CL when referring to the three transmitters.

The **PCL Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyayina** was a Kufan transferring to Mecca, where he transmitted to many students and died in 814/198. His link to ‘Amr Ibn Dīnār (d. 744/126) is already attested to in early dictionaries. However, the long time span between the deaths of Sufyān and ‘Amr gives reason for some reservation and ḥadīṯ dictionaries noted Sufyān’s practice of taldīs, i.e. his habit of suppressing the names of his direct informants. While Motzki considered this transmission line as basically reliable, Pavlovitch has challenged this view. This debate relates to examples where parallel isnāds exist from ‘Amr Ibn Dīnār to Sufyān and Ibn Ğurayġ. These parallels are central to Motzki’s argument for the reliability of the ‘Amr → Sufyān link. In the material being studied here, this parallel does not exist: while there is an isnād via Ibn Ğurayġ, it does not lead to ‘Amr Ibn Dīnār but to Abū az-Zubayr. Therefore, I consider the ‘Amr → Sufyān link to be questionable in the material being studied here.

The transmission from Sufyān to his student generation is recorded by the highest number of collectors in the sample, two of which are direct collectors (DCRs): Ibn

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86 Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqātī, VII, p. 399; Buḥārī, Ṭarīḥ kabīr, I, pp. 223f.
87 Ibn Ḥaǧar, Tahḏīb, III, p. 695; Mizzī, XXVI, p. 412. These later sources record many more students of Muḥammad Ibn Muslim than the earlier ones, which do not explicitly mention the transmission lines being studied here.
88 Ḥalīfa Ibn al-Ḩayyāt, Ṭabaqāt, p. 275.
89 Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqātī, VI, pp. 403f; Buḥārī, Ṭarīḥ kabīr, VI, pp. 328f.
90 See also Susan A. Spectsory, ‘Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyayna’, in: *EJP*.
Hanbal and Ḥumaydī. In its entirety, this material proves that a transmission via the historical Sufyān took place.

In summary, I consider the link Sufyān → students to be the earliest reliable transmission level in this cluster.

As for the CL Abū az-Zubayr (table 4), the early dictionaries only record material extracted from isnāds. Abū ʿUṯ-Thuwayl is not mentioned among his teachers or the students in the isnāds being studied here. The only teacher mentioned in the early dictionaries is Ĝābir Ibn ʿAbd Allāh, and we will return to this point. Interestingly, the early dictionaries only record that he died earlier than ʿAmr Ibn Dinār, who passed away in 744/126. Later dictionaries claim that Abū az-Zubayr died in 746/128.

After Abū az-Zubayr, one branch of the isnād connects ʿAmrū Ibn al-Ḥāriṯ → PCL Ibn Wahb. This line, via four pupils after Ibn Wahb, is recorded in the collections of Muslim (d. 875/261), Ṭahāwī (d. 933/321), Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 965/354), Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360), Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 997/387), and Bayhaqī (d. 1066/458). Note that all four students were Egyptian and their link to Ibn Wahb is already mentioned in early dictionaries. After these, all but two transmissions of the material being studied here left Egypt through transmitters with a Central Asian background. For Ibn Wahb’s teacher, ʿAmrū Ibn al-Ḥāriṯ, the early dictionaries already provide material which is not only extracted from the isnāds and that he died in 765/148. He transferred from Medina to Egypt. The link to the PCL Ibn Wahb is already attested early on, while the link to the CL Abū az-Zubayr is not. On the whole, I consider Ibn Wahb a reliable PCL and I see no immediate indications for challenging his link to ʿAmrū Ibn al-Ḥāriṯ, who could have brought material from the Ḥiǧāz to Egypt and would have passed it on to Ibn Wahb. The link between ʿAmrū and Abū az-Zubayr, however, can be challenged.

The material of the PCL Ibn Ğurayǧ is recorded by Muslim (d. 875/261), Firyābī (d. 914/301), Āgurṛ (d. 971/360), and Lālakāʾī (d. 1027/418), and consists of three isnāds, two Basran and one Syrian. For Ibn Ğurayǧ, the early dictionaries do not note a transmission from Abū az-Zubayr.

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92 Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, XXVI, pp. 64f; Ḥumaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75. For DCRs and their elevated position in the reconstruction of early text layers, see Pavlovitch, Kalāla, pp. 25f and 40.
93 See also Juynboll, Encyclopedia, pp. 259f.
94 Buḫārī, Tārīḥ kabīr, I, pp. 221f (mentions no teachers at all); Ibn Ḥibbān, Tiqāṭ, V, pp. 351f; Ḏahabī, Siyar, V, pp. 381–386.
95 Muslim, Ǧabīḥ, 991; Ṭahāwī, Muṣkil, VII, p. 93; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ǧabīḥ, XIV, p. 52; Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 198; Ibn Baṭṭa, İbana, II, p. 24; Bayhaqī, Asmā, I, p. 350.
96 ʿAmr Ibn Ǧalīl (Ibn Ḥibbān, Tiqāṭ, VIII, pp. 25f), Ahmad Ibn ʿAmrū (ibidem, VIII, p. 29); ʿAmr Ibn ʿĪsā (ibidem, VIII, p. 15).
97 I label the cohort “Central Asian” for the sake of simplicity, while comprised men from Central Asia as well as Northeastern Iran.
98 Buḫārī, Tārīḥ kabīr, VI, pp. 320f; Ibn Ḥibbān, Tiqāṭ, VII, pp. 228f; Ḏahabī, Siyar, VI, pp. 350–354; Ibn Ḥaḡar, Tahdīb, III, pp. 261f. See also Juynboll, Encyclopedia, pp. 11f.
99 Buḫārī, Tārīḥ kabīr, V, pp. 422f; Ibn Ḥibbān, Tiqāṭ, VII, pp. 93f; Ḏahabī, Siyar, VI, pp. 326–336 (entry on Ibn Ğurayǧ) also does not mention Abū az-Zubayr as a direct teacher, while V, pp. 381–385 (entry on Abū
Muslim arranges his Basran isnād together with the PCL Ibn Wahb material, which he gives in extenso. For the isnād via the PCL Ibn Ġurayġ, he omits the respective matn.\textsuperscript{100} The life dates of Ibn Ġurayġ (d. 770/153) → Abū ʿĀṣim (d. 827/212) constitute a 60-year period for one transmission step, which is remarkable, but possible. The biographical information about Abū ʿĀṣim goes well beyond isnāds only, and his transmission from Ibn Ġurayġ has already been recorded by Buḫārī.\textsuperscript{101}

The Syrian isnād is recorded by Firyābī, from whom Ağurrī then received it. Ibn Ġurayġ’s pupil in this isnād, Al-Walīd Ibn Muslim (d. 811/195), became an object of considerable debate among ḥadīṯ scholars. Apparently, specifically for his Ibn Ġurayġ-transmission.\textsuperscript{102}

The other Basran isnād (with matn) is only preserved in later collections: Ağurrī and Lālakā’ī. After two Basran transmitters, Muḥammad Ibn Abī ʿAdī (d. 810/194) → Abū al-Ašʿaṭ (d. 867/253), the transmission diverges to two Baġdādīs.\textsuperscript{103} According to the dictionaries, among the many men from whom Muḥammad Ibn Abī ʿAdī transmitted, the name Ibn Ġurayġ is suspiciously absent.\textsuperscript{104}

In summary, the link between Abū az-Zubayr and Ibn Ġurayġ can be challenged. The earliest recorded transmission line after Ibn Ġurayġ, the Basran isnād in Muslim, has reached us without matn. The earliest record for isnād plus matn in this bundle is the Syrian transmission recorded by Firyābī (d. 914/301). For this isnād, considerable debate is recorded making it very likely that the second Basran isnād, recorded only in later collections, is a dive. However, the splitting of transmission lines after Abū al-Ašʿaṭ (d. 867/253) allows for a safe dating within his lifetime. In summary, Ibn Ġurayġ’s position as a PCL is very difficult to assess, especially given the small number of isnāds leading to him. As in the case of the PCL Ibn Wahb, I will continue using the terminology PCL Ibn Ġurayġ for the sake of clarity.

The CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr (table 4) is recorded in Muslim (d. 875/261), Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360), and Bayhaqī (d. 1059/451).\textsuperscript{105} There are three transmitters between the CL and Abū at-Ṭufyal. It is not possible to identify the first two after Abū at-Ṭufyal beyond

\textsuperscript{100} Muslim, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, pp. 991f.


\textsuperscript{102} Ibn Ḥaǧar, \textit{Tahḏīb}, IV, pp. 325ff; Daḥabī, \textit{Siyar}, IX, pp. 212–221. Daḥabī defends Al-Walīd against this criticism. Early dictionaries do not mention this transmission line (Buḫārī, \textit{Tārīḫ kabīr}, VIII, pp. 152f).


\textsuperscript{104} Ibn Ḥaǧar, \textit{Tahḏīb}, III, p. 492; Daḥabī, \textit{Siyar}, IX, pp. 221f.

any doubt. The last person before Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr in the isnād is Zuhayr Ibn Muʿāwiya from Kufa. Additional biographical information on Zuhayr Ibn Muʿāwiya exists, which shows that the dictionaries did not only rely on isnāds, and there is a death date already recorded in the earlier dictionaries. The early dictionaries do not record the link from Zuhayr to Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr.

The CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr was Kufan and became the qāḍī Kirmān. Early biographical dictionaries record neither the student names of the transmission line being studied here nor his exact death date, while later sources give this as 208 or 209 hiǧra (823 or 824 CE).

For the three students of the common link in this bundle the biographical record is at times meagre and there is a considerable distance in time between the available death dates of two of these students. This means that the link between Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr to his teacher Zuhayr is possibly reliable, while the link to his students went undocumented for some time. As a result, this transmission needs to be analysed together with the matn before a reliable statement about Yahyā’s position as a CL can be made.

The analysis of the isnāds thus provides the following picture:

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106 There are several possibilities for ‘Ikrima Ibn Ḫālid (Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, V, p. 231, VII, p. 49 and VII, p. 294) and ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ’Atā (ibidem, VII, p. 29 and 41; VIII, p. 331 or maybe even V, p. 33). Concerning the latter, Ibn Ḫaǧar, Tahḏīb, II, p. 386 says that for ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Atā, at-Ṭā‘īfī al-Makkī is sometimes called al-Kūfī, al-Wāsiṭī or al-Madani, and that he was equated with two different Mawlās who in turn would sometimes be treated as three persons. He was said to have also transmitted directly from Abū at-Ṭufayl, but also from ‘Ikrima, among others.

107 Buḫārī, Ṭarīḵ kabīr, III, p. 427; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, VI, p. 337; Ḏabīh, Ṣiyar, VIII, pp. 182–187 has the link. Note that Ḏahabī also writes that Zuhayr would have transmitted from Ibn Ġurayğ and Ibn Iṣḥāq and adds that the two are among his shayḥs. I read this as an indication that Ḏahabī noted the phenomenon that Zuhayr (d. 789/173 or 790/174) would have survived his teacher Ibn Ġurayğ, for example, by more than 20 years.

108 Buḫārī, Ṭarīḵ kabīr, VIII, p. 264; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, IX, p. 257; Ḏahabī, Ṣiyar, IX, p. 498f also does not mention the persons in the isnād being studied here, who might be subsumed under the “and many others” he uses twice.

109 For ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Abī Yaʿqūb al-Kirmānī (recorded by Ṭabarānī) see Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, VIII, p. 368, who notes that he heard transmissions in Tustar going back to him and records a link to Yahyā Ibn Abī Kaṯīr (sic). Ibn Ḫaǧar, Lisān, V, p. 43 collapses this biography with ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kirmānī (instead of Ibn Abī Yaʿqūb), which I consider a mistake. None record a death date. For Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Iṣḥāq as-Ṣaġānī (recorded by Bayhaqī), see Ḏahabī, Ṣiyar, XII, p. 593, which records a death date of 884/270. For Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ḥalaf (recorded by Muslim,) Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, IX, p. 91 already records 851/237 as a death date, but not the transmission line being studied here, which contrasts with later dictionaries (e.g. Mizzī, Tahḏīb, XXIV, pp. 347–349) possibly extracting this piece of information from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

110 Muslim’s composite presentation of the Ḥuḏayfa ḥadīṯ combines material and isnāds from the following: the CL Yahya Ibn Abī Bakīr, the CL Rubaiyiʿa Ibn Kulṭūm (only the start of the matn), the CL ‘Amrū Ibn Dīnār via the PCL Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyayina, the CL Abū az-Zubayr via the PCL Ibn Wahb (in extenso) and the PCL Ibn Ġurayğ (only nahwahu).
The matns

I will now analyse the matns in the respective clusters in order to test, substantiate, and, where necessary, refine the findings of the isnād analysis. As already mentioned, three parts can easily be distinguished in the material of the Ḥuḍayfa-hadīṯ:

I) A framing story.
II) A first part in the hadīṯ matn describing the angel and the physicality of the unborn.
III) A second part in the hadīṯ matn describing the predestination of a set of things.

I will first analyse I. This section will show that the frame was first developed independently of the Ḥuḍayfa hadīṯ and was later added to it. The overall development of this originally independent frame was an expansion of a statement about the wretched/unlucky (ṣaqī) to a dichotomous formulation about the wretchedness and the blessedness in the hereafter (ṣaqī/saʿīd). I will then approach III, the list of predestined things, among which the ṣaqī/saʿīd dichotomy is prominent. I will show that at a certain stage of development of the material, the question of whether fate in the hereafter is predestined, was a major bone of contention. Finally, I will turn to II and show how different phrasings of the descriptions of the unborn’s physicality bolstered the respective position in the ṣaqī/saʿīd debate.

**Element I: The Frame**

The framing story is represented in Ḥuḍayfa PCL Ibn Wahb in Muslim’s Qadar chapter:

“… from Abū az-Zubayr al-Makkī that ‘Āmir Ibn Wāṭila narrated to him (haddatahu) that he heard ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Masʿūd say: The wretched is the one who is wretched in the womb of his mother and the blessed is the one who is warned by [the example of] somebody else. Then he met a man from the ʾaṣḥāb of the messenger of God, who was called Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd al-Ǧifārī, and he told him that from what Ibn Masʿūd
had said and said: How is a man wretched regardless of his acts? So he [Huḏayfa] said: Are you bewildered by that? I heard the messenger of God say [then follows the hadīth].111

There are strong indications that the framing story was added to the Ḥuḏayfa material in a later transmission phase. It is entirely absent in the PCL Suṭyān Ibn ‘Uyayna, the cluster containing relatively early documentation,112 while it is well represented in material which is unquestionably late.113 Also, several transmissions record the story independently from the angel and unborn hadīth.114 These observations strongly suggest that the framing story and the Ḥuḏayfa hadīth were put together in a secondary process.

In a previous study on predestination and the unborn in hadīth material, Josef van Ess interpreted this frame as an exegetical mechanism in order to disambiguate the material as speaking about the hereafter. This would have been necessary, because šaqī and saʿīd in 7th and 8th century Arabic would have referred to earthly (un)happiness.115

It is true that in the Qur’ān the root š-q-ya often clearly refers to inner-worldly “unprosperity” (Arberry translation) rather than wretchedness in the hereafter (e.g. Q 19:4, 32, 48; 20:2, 117, 123). However, in Q 11:103–109, it clearly refers to the hereafter in a unique Qur’ānic passage with the systematic use of š-q-ya together with the root s-ʿ-d, which is only used here in the entire Qur’ān.116 Against this background, I assume that the reference to the word-pair šaqī/saʿīd is a deliberate step to reference this specific Qur’ānic usage relating to the hereafter rather than inner-worldly things.

In a critical engagement with the work of van Ess, Michael Cook has suggested that the statement attributed to Ibn Masʿūd had its origin in Psalm 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb”. Reference to this biblical verse is documented in predestination
debates of Syriac Christianity from around 700. Cook’s linking of the narrative frame to Psalm 58:3 is rather speculative insofar as Ibn Masʿūd refers šaqī/saʿīd and the Psalm only to the wretched. A rare tradition transmitted via Awzāʾi as preserved in the Musnad of Tayālisī (d. 819/204) now provides the missing link, showing that the statement, later generally attributed to Ibn Masʿūd in an earlier version, consisted only of the first half, aš-šaqī man šaqiya fī baṭn ummihi, and did not refer to the root s-ʿīd.

Thus, the extension of the statement through the addition of as-saʿīd man wuʿīza bi-gayrihi indicates a process of orienting the statement towards the dichotomous šaqī/saʿīd of Q 11:105. The resulting sentence is quite remarkable, and states that humans are born in a wretched state and can gain saʿīd status only through the acts of other people. Of course, such a view fits well with the self-perception of a proselytizing mission. Of most importance, it expresses a position diametrically opposed to the fitra concept as it became the dominant dogma during the first centuries of Islamic history, i.e. that humans are born into a state of perfect religion and are only opposed to the religion. However, it might also considerably smack of the pessimistic anthropology of Augustine Christianity, for example. Most importantly, it expresses a position diametrically opposed to the fitra concept as it became the dominant dogma during the first centuries of Islamic history, i.e. that humans are born into a state of perfect religion and are only led into aberration through the education of their non-Muslim parents. How was one supposed to make sense of all of this without disposing of the idea of God’s justice? Connecting the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth to the statement can thus be seen as an attempt to solve these considerable problems: everything, whether one was the blessed or wretched, was predestined. This direction in the development of the material can additionally be witnessed in later versions, rendering the dichotomy in a fully fledged parallelism with definitions of the šaqī- and saʿīd groups, respectively.

In order to analyse the transmission of the narrative in the three CLs, Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr, ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār, and Abū az-Zubayr, I will now break the narrative frame into

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117 Cook, Muslim Dogma, pp. 145–148.
118 Ibn al-Daylami said to ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Amrū [al-ʿĀṣ]: “It has reached me that you say that the wretched is wretched in the womb of his mother. He said: I do not allow anybody to lie about me. I heard the messenger of God say: God created his creation in darkness then he threw towards it a light from his light. Who is hit by some of that light is rightly guided, and who is missed by it goes astray. Innuhu balaqaṭī annaka tuḥadditu anna aš-šaqī man šaqiya fī baṭn ummihi fa-qāla ammā innī lā uhil lī-ahād an yakṣīb ‘alayya inni samī tu rasul Allāh šallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa sallam yaqūl inna Allāh ‘azza wa gālla ḥalaqa ḥilqahu fī žulma ṣumma alqā ‘alayhim nūrān min nūrīhī fa-man ašābahu šay ʿīn dhīlika on-nūr iḥtādā wa maḥta’ahu dālla. Tayālisī, Musnad, IV, p. 47; Ibn Ḥiibbān, Sahīḥ, XIV, p. 43f. Shortly after Tayālisī’s lifetime (d. 819/204), the tradition had already undergone a considerable redaction process (Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XI, pp. 291f). Versions of the Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīth with only the first half of the Ibn Masʿūd statement are rare and late (see e.g. Rāzī, Fawāʿīd, II, pp. 16f).
120 My interpretation differs from van Ess, Zwischen Ḥadīth und Theologie, p. 27, who saw its function in creating a connection between Ibn Masʿūd and the material of the Ḥuḍayfa-hadīth with the aim of bolstering the transmission via Ḥuḍayfa with a reference to the much more prominent Ibn Masʿūd. My reconstruction sees an opposite direction of the process aimed at re-directing the framing statement’s content.
121 Ţabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 196 (PCL Rubaiʿiya): aš-šaqī man yaṣqī fī baṭn ummihi wa as-saʿīd man saʿada fī baṭn ummihi. See also Aǧurrī, Šarīʿa, I, pp. 368f with an identical independent transmission of only the statement as prophetic speech via Abū Hurayra.
its composite parts and relate them to the clusters. The story consists of three elements: (A) Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl hears Ibn Masʿūd make a statement, (B) he reacts critically, and (C) he speaks to Ḥuḍayfa, who says that he heard the prophet say XYZ. Element B can either be an immediate reaction and occur earlier in the narrative, or it could be part of the exchange with Ḥuḍayfa. In all cases it has the form of a critical question or rephrasing of the statement.

In the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr material, the frame is preserved in two extensive versions by Bayhaqī and Ṭabarānī, and there are strong indications that in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim most of the framing story was cut away. The two extensive versions have these three exclusive characteristics: (1) Ḥuḍayfa is additionally identified as Abū Sarīḥa; (2) Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl in his bewilderment leaves the place and enters (ḥaraqtu ... wa ḍaḥaltu ‘alā) at Ḥuḍayfa’s, who says, that (3) he heard with his own ears (bi-uḏnay hātayn) the prophet say … Elements 1 and 3 are documented in Muslim’s version. The second half of element 2 is present, i.e. Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl enters but he never exited anywhere. I interpret this as a strong indication of a redaction process of cutting something away. Bayhaqī’s and Ṭabarānī’s versions are almost identical and match the segments of the material preserved in Muslim. Thus, I conclude that the version that Muslim received originally also contained the framing story and this was cut away. All three elements are typical later additions to or extensions of an earlier core of the narrative. This matches with the results of the isnād analysis that the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr (d. 824/209) represents a late transmission layer.

The versions with the frame in the material of the PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifī do not show anything exclusive to this cluster and the two specific arrangements differ from each other. They are recorded in only two out of six collections: Firyābī (d. 914/301) and Ṭabarānī (d. 971/360).

The isnād of Firyābī’s version with the frame meets with another, earlier recorded isnād in the transmitter Iṣḥāq Ibn Ṭāimidūr (d. 819/204, Kufa). This earlier recorded version lacks the frame. It is unlikely that such a significant difference in the transmission can be attributed to the same source and I conclude that the frame in the transmission via ’Uṯmān was added later.

Ṭabarānī reproduces the frame with a composite isnād, i.e. the Basran/Meccan and the Syrian/Egyptian isnāds together. It is thus impossible to know to which of the two exactly he ascribes the specific text. In addition, the Basran/Meccan isnād overlaps with

122 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992; Bayhaqī, Qadar, I, p. 149; Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 194.
123 Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 117; Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 195.
124 The isnād is Iṣḥāq Ibn Ṭāimidūr (d. 819/204, Kufa) → ’Uṯmān Ibn Abī Śayba (d. 853/239, Kufa) → Firyābī (Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 117). The other, earlier isnād is Iṣḥāq → Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Śayba, the collector and brother of ’Uṯmān (Ibn Abī Śayba, Musnad, II, p. 318). Dahābī, Siyar, XI, pp. 152–154 (’Uṯmān); Mizẓī, Tahdīb, II, p. 480; Ibn Ḥaǧar, Tahfīḥ, I, p. 128; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭaḏār, VIII, p. 112; Buḥārī, Tārīḥ kabīr, I, p. 403 (Iṣḥāq).
another entirely Basran isnād recorded by Ṭabarānī (PCL Rubaiʿiya), which also has the narrative frame. It is thus possible that we have in front of us a Basran development which was later added to the material and cannot be ascribed to the PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭaʿīfī.

In summary, the narrative frame was clearly a later addition to the transmission of the PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭaʿīfī. The two versions in this cluster were very likely added to the material in two independent processes, which would also explain their differences. Structural observations support this, namely that the link from Aṭ-Ṭāʿīfī to the CL ʿAmr Ibn Dīnār can be rejected and that the transmission CL ʿAmr → PCL Sufyān is entirely lacking the narrative frame.

In the PCL Ibn Wahb material, there are four isnāds containing the narrative frame and two lacking it. Here, the frame has two exclusive characteristics: (1) the person Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl meets is introduced as: “he was called (yuqāl lahu) Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd” and (2) the entire narrative is related in the third person singular, rather than the first person. I assume the material represents a redactionally reworked version of others in the first person. It is likely that this version is represented in the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr. The most important witness in this regard is the specific way in which Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl expresses the reason for his bewilderment and how Ḥuḍayfa responds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCL Ibn Wahb</th>
<th>CL Yaḥyā</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kayfa yašqī raḡul bi-ḡayr ʿamal(^a)</td>
<td>a-yašqī aḥad bi-ḡayr ʿamal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-taʿḡab min ḍālika(^b)</td>
<td>min ay ḍālika taʿḡab(^c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\) Muslim, Şahīh, 991 and Bayhaqī, Asmā, p. 351f. Ibn Ḥibbān, Şahīh, XIV, p. 52 and Ibn Baṭṭa, ḫāna, p. 24 have slightly different phrasings. All contain the decisive expression bi-ḡayr ʿamal, which could theoretically also mean “without having acted, yet”, but at least in the versions having “an adult man” (raḡul) (Bayhaqī and Muslim), this would clearly not make any sense.

\(^{b}\) Muslim, Şahīh, 991, Bayhaqī, Asmā, p. 351f. Ibn Baṭṭa, ḫāna, p. 24 drops the question particle ʿa, while Ibn Ḥibbān, Şahīh, XIV, p. 52 does not have the question. The PCL Ibn Ḥarayyū does not have this section at all and the CL ‘Azra has clearly different phrasings (mā ankarta (Ṭabarānī), lā taʿḡab (Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim), limā taʿḡab aw lā taʿḡab (Firyābī)).

\(^{c}\) Bayhaqī, Qadar, I, p. 149. Ţabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 194 has ʿaḡabta.

There are also noticeable differences between the two presentations. In the PCL Ibn Wahb, the person is consistently called ‘Āmir Ibn Wāṭila, not Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl as in the CL Yaḥyā. Ḥuḍayfa’s eponym Abū Sarīḥa from the CL Yaḥyā is dropped in the PCL Ibn Wahb, where he appears as somebody obviously in need of introduction to the audience (specific element I mentioned above). However, these differences can still be understood

\(126\) The overlap is in ‘Alī Ibn ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz.

as a redactor’s work, in addition to the switch from the first to third person perspective, and therefore do not outweigh the similarities.\footnote{Van Ess, Zwischen Hadīṯ und Theologie, p. 23 interprets element 1 as an indication that Ḫudayfa Ibn Asīd was not well known beyond Iraq.}

As noted above, the shortened version of the CL Yaḥyā in Muslim indicates that a large part of the story was cut away. It seems likely that Muslim himself moved it to the CL Ibn Wahb, for two reasons. First, within the Ibn Wahb cluster, only the isnāds with a central Asian transmitter after Ibn Wahb’s Egyptian student generation have the story, while the two isnāds, which remained Egyptian, do not.\footnote{These are Ṭaḥāwī, Muṣkil, VII, p. 93 and Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 198. On their transmitters Yūnis ‘Abd al-A’lā al-Aylī (Ṭaḥāwī) and Aḥmad Ibn Ṣāliḥ → Aḥmad Ibn Rušdīn (Ṭabarānī), see Ḏahabī, Siyar, XI, pp. 349–351, XII, p. 160; XV, pp. 240f.} This suggests that the addition of the story to the ḥadīṯ was carried out in the Central Asian cohort. Second, among the Central Asian transmitters, Muslim (d. 875/261) has the earliest death date,\footnote{Abū Dawūd as-Siǧistānī (d. 888/275), Muḥammad Ibn Ismāʿīl al-Naysābūrī (d. 908/295), ʿImrān Ibn Mūsā al-Ǧurǧānī (d. 917/305) (Ḏahabī, Siyar, XIII, pp. 204ff, XIV, pp. 118 and 136f).} which makes him the most likely candidate among the four to have carried out the redactional changes and then have influenced the others. I thus conclude that in its earlier redaction layers, the material from the PCL Ibn Wahb also did not contain the narrative frame. Rather, it was added in the second generation of transmitters after Ibn Wahb, when the isnāds left Egypt, i.e. at the latest 250 hiǧra (864 CE), when the last Egyptian transmitter linking to a Central Asian transmitter died.\footnote{On this Abū ʿAt-Ṭāḥir Aḥmad Ibn ‘Amrī see Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāṭ, VIII, p. 29.}

The PCL Ibn Ğurayğ material shows two exclusive characteristics: (1) Abu ʿAt-Ṭufayl expresses his bewilderment immediately upon hearing Ibn Masʿūd’s speech, before meeting Ḥuḍayfa and (2) before Ḥuḍayfa gives the ḥadīṯ there is the following dialogue: he [Ḥuḍayfa] said: Shall I tell you about what I heard from the prophet?\footnote{a-fa-lā uḥbiruka in the transmissions meeting in Abū al-Aš al-Asīd and a-fa-lā uḥaddīṭuka in the line Firiyābī → Ḍāʾūrī.} I said: Yes. He said: I heard the prophet say … Element 2 is a typical example of a redactional expansion. On the other hand, the unique feature of element 1 in this group possibly reflects a redaction layer earlier than the other versions, i.e. Abū ʿAt-Ṭufayl expresses his bewilderment immediately upon hearing Ibn Masʿūd’s statement. The narrative arrangement leaves one with the impression that Abū ʿAt-Ṭufayl exclaimed his counterposition immediately. Later, when he meets Ḥuḍayfa, he does not need to explain his concerns to him at all (through repeating his sentence). In all the other (P)CLs, this slight incoherence in the staging (“How could Ḥuḍayfa know what exactly troubled Abū ʿAt-Ṭufayl so much?”) is smoothed by allowing Abū ʿAt-Ṭufayl to ask his critical question after quoting Ibn Masʿūd’s statement to Ḥuḍayfa. This phenomenon suggests that the arrangement of the framing narrative in the Ibn Ğurayğ transmission represents an earlier redaction stage than the material in all the other (P)CL transmissions.

For a better assessment of the peculiarities of the frame in the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ, a broader look at comparable material is necessary. Mostly, the frame develops around the
core element that Ibn Masʿūd would have said: the wretched is wretched in the mothers womb and the blessed is the one who lets himself be warned by somebody else (aš-šaqī man šaqiya fī baṭn ummihi wa as-saʿīd man wuʿīza bi-ṣayrihi). The central dichotomy in this statement is clearly the word pair šaqī/saʿīd with differing definitions for the šaqī- and the saʿīd-groups. In the PCL Ibn Ḥurayḥ material, Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl exclaims immediately after hearing Ibn Masʿūd’s statement: “Shame on Satan! Is the human (al-insān) blessed or wretched before having acted?”

Note that parts of the Arabic rhyme: ḥizyān li-aš-ṣayṭān! yasʿad al-insān wa yašqī qabla an yaʿmal, which puts emphasis on al-insān.

The word insān allows for two different interpretations of the meaning of the entire passage. Interpretation 1 takes it as simply referring to “the human”. The clear temporal perspective of the formulation “before having acted” (qabla an yaʿmal) indicates that Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s concern was about humans who died before having acted at all or having reached an age at which they could be held responsible for their acts. The debate is then clearly about neonatal and infant death.

However, for earlier stages of this material, it should be kept in mind that a) the framing narrative developed independently of the hadīṯ matn, and b) it did not have the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy but only referred to the wretched (šaqī), which might then not refer to the hereafter at all, but rather inner-worldly unhappiness.

This leads us to interpretation 2. As noted above, the version in the PCL Ibn Ḥurayḥ highlights the term al-insān, which is only used in this cluster. In Qur’anic usage, al-insān very often clearly refers to Adam (e.g. 15:26, 23:12, 55:14). A reference to the example of Adam as a critical reaction to predestinarian views is far from uncommon in theological debates in the 7th century in the Eastern Mediterranean. The point of the example: Adam first had to sin of his own will and then he was punished. What if all this had been predestined? For this, I suggest reading an earlier text layer of Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl’s exclamation: “Was Adam wretched even before he had sinned?!”. Against this background the ḥazyān li-aš-ṣayṭān would then be more than a mere curse, but for an additional statement in an old theological debate: “The blame for the original sin is on Satan”.

A very slight phenomenon in the material of the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr supports this interpretation. Here, Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl only asks about sh-q-ya and not saʿīd, thus indicating

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133 Version in Firyābī, Qadar, p. 119.
134 This ties in very well with the Basran material under the PCL ‘Azra where Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl explicitly asks “What about the (little) child?”. The safe dating of the PCL ‘Azra before 248 and of the PCL Ibn Ḥurayḥ before 253, both at Basra, thus strongly indicates that in the first half of the 3rd century hijra (9th century CE), Basran circles highlighted the problem of neonatal/infant death within the predestination debate. The Ḥuḍayfa ḥadīṯ then clearly addressed exactly this issue: it is all predestined at an early stage of pregnancy. The two versions under the PCL ‘Azra and the PCL Ibn Ḥurayḥ differ so much to make it likely that they represent different stages of a redactional reworking of the same or at least similar material.
135 See also Theodor Frankl, Die Entstehung des Menschen nach dem Koran, Prag 1930, p. 13.
136 See, for example, Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, 145.
137 Lane, Edward William, An Arabic-English Lexicon, Edinburgh 1874–1893, II, p. 735 has for ḥazyān, among other things, “with much shame, on account of a bad, or foul, deed that he has done”.

that an earlier version of the story did not have the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy. In other 
words, the earlier layer likely did not speak about the fate in the hereafter, but rather an 
inner-worldly punishment such as Adam’s.

I consider this to be a likely reconstruction of the earlier Sitz im Leben of the 
material in the narrative frame. In the version that we have in front of us today, this 
was already lost, especially through the introduction of the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy, moving 
the meaning away from the specific question of Adam’s sin to the issue of humans in 
general, predestination and the hereafter. The link to the Ḫuḍayfā ḥadīṯ finalised this 
development, since reference to pregnancy does not make sense in connection with 
Adam. Unfortunately, the material does not allow us to narrow down the time span of 
when these changes were carried out.  

**Element III: The predestined things**

The previous analysis has shown that earlier material referring only to šaqī was 
expanded through the introduction of the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy as a deliberate move to 
orientate the discussion towards the Qur’an and the issue of predestination and fate in 
the hereafter. This leads us to the list of the predestined things in the Ḫuḍayfā ḥadīṯ, 
where the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy is very prominent. As a representative example, I quote 
the entire ḥadīṯ via the PCL Sufyān in Muslim’s version:

“The angel enters upon the semen after it has established itself in the 
uterus within 40 or 45 nights. Then he says: Oh Lord! Wretched or 
blessed? And the two are written down. Then he says: Oh Lord! Male 
or female? And the two are written down. And his deeds, his work, time 
of death and his sustenance are written, then the pages are folded and 
nothing is added and nothing is taken away.”

In its entirety, the material shows traces of a redaction process in which a first set 
of things to be predestined was later expanded through an additional list of things: as 
can be witnessed here, in some versions the angel asks first about šaqī/saʿīd and ḍakar/ 
unṭā before the answers to these questions are written down, and after this a summary 
list of other things is noted without the angel even having asked. The arrangement

138 Text as it is in Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992 and Bayhaqī, Ḩaṣmā, I:350.
139 This is because of the following reasons: 1) The narrative frame developed independently of the ḥadīṯ matn for some time, 2) only three extensive variants of the material survive, all of them through comparatively later collectors (the earliest being Fīrūz [d. 914/301]), and 3) the structure of the isnāds only allows for using Abū Aṣʿāf al-Miqdām (d. 867/253) as the lynchpin for a safe dating.
140 As noted above, I will now jump from element I to III, because both refer to the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy.
141 For example, in the PCL Sufyān: Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXVI, pp. 64f; Ḥumaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75; in the PCL Muhammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’fī: Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 175; in the PCL Ibn Ǧurayġ: Fīrūzī, Qadar, pp. 119f.
and phrasing of the material make it plausible that the first group was earlier and the second was added to it in a redaction process.

The studies of van Ess and Cook on this hadīṭ material have placed different emphasis on different aspects of the second, later-added list. Cook saw the major emphasis on the date of death (aḡal), while van Ess mostly focused on ‘ʿamal, i.e. the question of whether all deeds are predestined.142 A look at the entirety of the Ḥuḍayfa material suggests that in this corpus, aḡal was likely a much less contested issue than ‘ʿamal: aḡal is present in all the (P)CL clusters,143 while ‘ʿamal is missing entirely in several clusters and especially in the PCL Sufyān.144 All in all, the items on the second, added list were likely influenced by different factors, such as changes in the word order that occur naturally in the transmission process,145 aspects of internal coherence in the arrangement,146 or substitution of terms.147 Some of these movements, especially concerning the terms ‘ʿamal and aṯar, could constitute cases where the items were meant as explanatory reasonings in the exact way that the predestination of ʿaṣqī/saʿīd should be understood.

Now, I analyze element III: The predestined things with respect to three characteristics. (1) Are there traces of two lists? Or have these traces already been erased? The latter will then be considered a later redaction layer? (2) Does the ʿaṣqī/saʿīd formula appear at the beginning of the predestined things or at the end? I will show that the final position likely represents a later redaction layer. (3) What vocabulary does the phrasing use that

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142 The question of aḡal was a major item among authors of different denominations at that time (additionally to Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, 145–152 see Van Ess, Josef, Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. Und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam, Berlin-New York 1997, IV, pp. 494f with references), while debate about the predestination of deeds is documented in Jewish circles (van Ess, Zwischen Haddīṭ und Theologie, 16, and critical comments in Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, 148 with Fn 37). Note that both authors mostly focus on the Ibn Masʿūd Ḥadīṣ, but also touch on the Ḥuḍayfa Ḥadīṣ.

143 What’s more, in the CL ʿAzra and the CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bakr groups, aḡal is present in all variants, in the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ, it is missing in only 1 out of 4 (Lālakāʿī, Ṣharḥ, IV, p. 543, which is the latest collector in this cluster and the version lacks all of the predestined things except ʿaṣqī/saʿīd), and in the PCL Ibn Wahb it is missing in only 1 out of 6 (Ṭabarānī, Ḥabīb, III, p. 198).

144 Entirely missing in the CL ʿAzra, the PCL Ibn Wahb and the CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr. Examples are in the PCL Sufyān: Ibn Abī Ṭāḥā, Abī Ṭāḥā, II:257 and Sunna, I, p. 80 and especially Ṭabarānī, Ḥabīb, II, p. 176, depending on Ḥumaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75, who has ʿʿamal. These are possibly examples for aṯar substituting ʿʿamal, but it has to be noted that comparatively early collectors already recorded lists containing both terms (e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXVI, pp. 64f). The two DCRs in this cluster, Ḥumaydī and Ibn Ḥanbal, use ʿʿamal, which means that it was probably early. Among the clusters lacking ʿʿamal, several are late (the CL ʿAzra and the CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bakr). For this reason, I will refrain from stating that a successive growth of aḡal is an earlier addition than ʿʿamal.

145 For example, rizq followed by aṯar in Ibn Abī Ṭāḥā, Ṣunnah, I, p. 80 and inverted in idem, Ḥabīb, II, p. 257 with the identical isnad.

146 E.g. aḡal (i.e. the death date) moved into the final position on the list in Ṭabarānī, Ḥabīb, III, p. 176 as compared to Ḥumaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75 on which the isnad depends.

147 In addition to the possible ʿʿamal ↔ aṯar example mentioned above, aḡal might sometimes have been substituted with muṣība, i.e. calamity/misfortune as in Q 64:11, for example (see for e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXVI, pp. 64f, Ṣaḥāwi, Muṣki, VII, p. 92). Again, there are several cases where both terms occur together on the list (see e.g. Ibn Abī Ṭāḥā, Ṣunnah, I, p. 80).
describes what happens after the angel asks God what to do? Some versions insist on clarifying that God ordains (yaqḍī) what he wants (mā shā’a) and it is the angel (al-malak) who writes, while others do not. I interpret versions showing such characteristics as later redactional layers, because they use specific theological terminology (qadā’) and disambiguate material, which otherwise might blur the lines between God and the angel in the description.

The **CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr**\(^{148}\) (1) has traces of there once having been two lists in the version recorded by Muslim: several items in the middle (rizq, āḡal, ḥalq) are asked in summary fashion. (2) It has šaqī/saʿīd in the final position. Generally, the three versions open with the ḍakar/ʿuntā question, which is followed by other questions before arriving at the šaqī/saʿīd question. The versions in Muslim and Bayhaqī finish with “then he makes him wretched or blessed” (ṭumma yaḡʿalulu šaqīyan aw saʿīdan) without the angel asking about it, whereas Ṭabarānī’s version inserts a question here. Muslim clearly has the earliest version in this cluster and I interpret the material as a strong indication that šaqī/saʿīd was moved to the final position as a deliberate redaction for a more inherent coherency: the fate of the hereafter is predestined only after all the other things.\(^{149}\) (3) After the questions it states: “so God makes it XYZ” (fa-yajʿalulu Allāh ...).\(^{150}\) This formulation already considers it obviously necessary to indicate that it is God who does the respective things. On the other hand, the formulation does not use standard theological vocabulary from the Qaḍā’ wa l-qadar debate. The specific characteristics 1 and 3 of the **CL Yahyā Ibn Bukayr** (d. 823/208) in particular make it possible for us to have a version in front of us reflecting an earlier stage, i.e. his teacher’s level.

The **PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim aṭ-Ṭā’ifi**\(^{151}\) (1) has traces of two lists. (2) Šaqī/saʿīd always appears early on, mostly at the start.\(^ {152}\) (3) The formulation after the questions is: “so God ordains and the angel writes” (fa-yaqḍī Allāh wa yaktub al-malak). Characteristics 1 and 2 reflect early redaction layers, whereas 3 shows that the material has gone through a deliberate redaction process. As noted above, the earliest recorded version in this cluster is Ibn Abī Shayba’s (d. 849/235), who received it from Ishāq Ibn Manṣūr (d. 820/205), while the PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim is rejected as a historical transmitter. I consider

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\(^{148}\) Muslim, Šaḥīḥ, 992: ḍakar/ʿuntā, sawīgāy r sawī, rizq, āḡal, ḥalq, ṭumma yaḡʿalulu Allāh šaqī/saʿīd. Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 194: ḍakar/ʿuntā, sawīgāy r sawī, āḡal, wa yaḡʿalulu Allāh šaqī/saʿīd. Bayhaqī, Qadar, pp. 149f: ḍakar/ʿuntā, sawīgāy r sawī, āḡal, rizq, ṭumma yaḡʿalulu šaqī/saʿīd. The dichotomy sawīgāy r sawī is unique to the corpus.

\(^{149}\) The other direction (šaqī/saʿīd in the final position, from earlier and later moved to the beginning) is contradicted by the first recorded versions, which have it at the beginning (for example Ḥumaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75).

\(^{150}\) This is so for the three dichotomous questions in the list, the single items in between āḡal, rizq, ḥalq are asked in a cluster and are not followed by this formula.

\(^{151}\) Identical summary of the second list āḡal, rizq, ṭumma (Ibn Abī Shayba, Musnad, II, p. 318; Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 117; Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 195 (the order varies between versions)). The version in Firyābī, Qadar, I, pp. 115f only has šaqī/saʿīd, ḍakar/ʿuntā.

\(^{152}\) The exception is the version in Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 195: ḍakar/ʿuntā, šaqī/saʿīd.
the specificities in the *matn* sufficient grounds to hypothesise that it at least partly represents an earlier layer, i.e. on the level of Ishāq Ibn Manṣūr.

The *PCL Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyayina* has (1) traces of the two lists. (2) Ṣaqī/saʿīd always appears early on, mostly at the beginning. (3) The formulation after the questions varies considerably, ranging from “so he writes/it is written” (fa-yaktub/yuktab) to “so God says and the two are written” or “he writes/it is written” (yaqūl Allāh wa yuktabān/yaktub/yuktab) to “and the angel writes” (yaktub al-malak).

This substantiates the previous assessment that we have an early layer in front of us, and the material provides sufficient ground to hypothesise that the material from the PCL Sufyān represents the earliest traceable redaction layers of the entire Ḥuḍayfa material. I find it plausible to assume that the PCL Sufyān material served as a sort of template for the later material attributed to the PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ṭā’ifi, where element 3 was adjusted.

The *PCL Ibn Wahb* (1) does not have traces of two lists. (2) Ṣaqī/saʿīd is entirely lacking. This is unique to the corpus. (3) The formulation after the questions is always: “So your Lord ordains what he wants and the angel writes” (fa-yaqūl rabbuka mā shā’a wa yaktub al-malak). These characteristics suggest a secondary redaction layer which is later than the material under PCL Sufyān. The *īsnād* analysis shows a reliable transmission at the level of Ibn Wahb (d. 813/197) to his students, which is the same time frame as for the PCL Sufyān. I interpret the uniformity of the material under PCL Ibn Wahb as an indication that writing was assigned a strong role in this transmission process. Elements 1 and 3 in particular show that Ibn Wahb subjected the material to a deliberate redaction process. Besides these two elements, did Ibn Wahb also erase Ṣaqī/saʿīd from the list? In other words: was Ṣaqī/saʿīd already on the list early on or not?

I will address this question in two steps. First I will analyse the material under the PCL Ibn Ğurayği, which has the Ṣaqī/saʿīd and technically shares the CL Abū az-Zubayr with the PCL Ibn Wahb. I will show that the similarities in the *matn* of the two groups do not prove that they developed from the same source. Second, I will scrutinise traces in the material under the PCL Sufyān which suggest that Ṣaqī/saʿīd was added at some point to an earlier version.

The *PCL Ibn Ğurayği* (1) shows traces of the list and (2) has Ṣaqī/saʿīd in the initial position. The phrasing after the questions is always: “So your Lord ordains what he wants and the angel writes” (fa-yaqūl rabbuka mā shā’a wa yaktub al-malak), i.e. it

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153 In order not to overburden the text with large footnotes, I do not recount all the lists in detail here.


155 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 991.

156 First version e.g. in Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, II, pp. 75, second version in Dūlābī, *Asmā*, I, p. 223.


is identical to the PCL Ibn Wahb. Theoretically, this phenomenon could be explained in two ways. First, that it developed from a common source, which here would be the CL Abū az-Zubayr (d. 746/128). If this were the case, the material of the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ would clearly reflect an earlier layer than the PCL Ibn Wahb because it shows traces of the two lists. As a consequence, the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ would strongly suggest that the list of predestined things originally contained šaqī/saʿīd and therefore it would have been erased in the transmission of the PCL Ibn Wahb. However, in addition to the results of the isnād analysis, two matn-related arguments make this scenario unlikely. To start with, the fully fledged phrasing of element 3, which is identical in both the PCLs, would be a clear anachronism if already ascribed to the time of the CL Abū az-Zubayr when these theological debates had surely not yet developed to such a stage.160 Furthermore, such identical phrasing would be highly surprising in a scenario of two independent transmission processes over a time span of more than 100 years.

Based on this information, I consider another explanation much more likely: that the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ was redacted before 867/253 (death date of Abū al-Ašʿaš) and given this isnād. This brings us back to the above-mentioned observation that the dictionaries do not mention Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl among the teachers of Abū az-Zubayr, but rather Ğābir Ibn ‘Abd Allāh.161

There is a rare ḥadīth about the angel, the unborn, and predestination from the isnād Ğābir → Abū az-Zubayr → CL Ḥaṣīf (Ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, d. 130s (mid 740s–mid 750s CE)).162 Ḥaṣīf was remembered as belonging to the murğiʿa and his transmission was later rejected.163 It is thus possible that material from this transmission might have used a different isnād. The transmission Ğābir → Abū az-Zubayr is already recorded in Ibn Ḥanbal’s Musnad (d. 855/241), and the earliest recording of the transmission Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl → Abū az-Zubayr is in Muslim (d. 875/261), who has both the PCLs Ibn Wahb and Ibn Ğurayğ. I rule out that a switch in the isnād from Ğābir to Abū aṭ-Ṭufayl occurred in the PCL Ibn Wahb transmission for the following reason: as has been shown above, the transmission of the PCL Ibn Wahb → student generation is reliable. This would leave us only with PCL Ibn Wahb himself as a possible originator for the switching of isnāds and therefore his death date 197 hiǧra (813 CE) would be the terminus ante quem. However, this would occur very early164 and would make it difficult to explain why the transmission via Ḥaṣīf could still spread over such a considerable period of time after

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160 This critique is also supported by the fact that the PCL Sufyān (d. 814/198), reflecting the earliest reliable redaction layers, does not yet use any of these techniques of clarification and disambiguation.
161 Ibn Hibbān, Ṭuḥāt, V, pp. 351f; Ḍahābi, Siyar, V, pp. 381–386.
162 Firyābī, Qadar, I, pp. 121f; Ṭahāwī, Muṣkil, VII, pp. 94f (two versions); Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, XXIII, pp. 413f.
163 This was especially the case for the transmission through his pupil Ṭāḥīb Ibn Baṣīr (d. 804/188 or 806/190) (Ibn Ḥaǧar, Taḥḏīb, I, p. 543 (Ḥaṣīf) and III, p. 48 (Ṭāḥīb)), who is in all the isnāds being studied here except for that of Ibn Ḥanbal. In the edition used here, Ṭahāwī records isnāds to Ḥaṣīf via Ġiyāṭ Ibn Baṣīr, while Firyābī has Ṭāḥīb Ibn Baṣīr. This can be explained through the writing of the rasīm without dots. Confusion about the transmitter’s name might have added to the critique.
164 Only ten years would lie between the death date of Ṭāḥīb Ibn Baṣīr (d. 804/188 or 806/190), Ḥaṣīf’s contested pupil, and of Ibn Wahb.
Ibn Wahb. As a result, I rule out that a switch in the isnād from Ḥābir to Abū ʿat-Ṭufayl occurred in the PCL Ibn Wahb transmission.

A different scenario seems much more likely: over the course of the 3rd century hiǧra (9th century CE), the transmission of Ḥābir → Abū az-Zubayr → Ḥaṣīf was increasingly frowned upon, because of the transmitter Ḥaṣīf. A much more commonly known transmitter of material from Ḥābir → Abū az-Zubayr was Ibn Gūrayḵ. At the same time, the version from the isnād Abū ʿat-Ṭufayl → Abū az-Zubayr → PCL Ibn Wahb became increasingly known outside of Egypt: all the three Egyptian transmitters after the PCL Ibn Wahb that related the ḥadīṯ to non-Egyptian students had passed away by 250 hiǧra (864 CE). As has been repeatedly shown, the lack of šaqī/saʿīd in the matn as transmitted via PCL Ibn Wahb is a unique and outstanding phenomenon within the corpus. One way to address this problem was the addition of the narrative frame to the ḥadīṯ, probably an action carried out by Muslim. Another way was to create a pastiche of the Ḥaṣīf material and the PCL Ibn Wahb, not so much as a means of outright forgery, but rather a work of redaction criticism starting from the assumption that both sets of material could be traced back to Abū az-Zubayr. This would exactly match the time frame of the first safely datable layer in the PCL Ibn Gūrayḵ material: before 253 hiǧra (867 CE) (death date Abū al-Ašʿath).

The following chart shows the elements in the matns which support this scenario (see below for further explanations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ḥaṣīf</th>
<th>PCL Ibn Gūrayḵ</th>
<th>PCL Ibn Wahb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening verb istaqarrat</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening verb marrat e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 nights</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 nights/mornings[^a]</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to unborn’s body</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traces of two lists</td>
<td>X[^b]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological formulation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel leaves afterwards</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^a] The Ibn Gūrayḵ material has ṣabāḥ, which indicates a later redactional stage, because it exchanges a period (night) for a specific point in time (morning), thus possibly reacting to the question of what “42 nights” exactly means.
[^b] Version in Ṭaḥāwī, Muṣkil, VII, p. 94.

I consider it hardly a coincidence that all elements in the PCL Ibn Gūrayḵ can be found either in the PCL Ibn Wahb or the material via Ḥaṣīf. In both cases, there are structural overlaps (the PCL Ibn Gūrayḵ and Ḥaṣīf: traces of two lists; the PCL

Ibn Ǧurayǧ and the PCL Ibn Wahb: reference to the unborn’s body and angel leaving afterwards) as well as verbatim matches (the PCL Ibn Ǧurayǧ and Ḩaṣīf: opening verb istaqarrat; PCL Ibn Ǧurayǧ and PCL Ibn Wahb: 42 days/mornings and the theological formulation).

Against this overall background, I find it much more convincing to assume a redaction process amalgamating material from the PCL Ibn Wahb with material via Ḩaṣīf until approximately 250 ḥiǧra (864 CE), rather than the scenario of two transmission processes via the PCL Ibn Wahb and the PCL Ibn Ǧurayǧ going back to a common source, Abū at-Ṭufayl → CL Abū az-Zubayr. This means that the material from the PCL Ibn Ǧurayǧ cannot be used to argue that the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy was part of an earlier layer of the material and would have been erased in the transmission via the PCL Ibn Wahb.

Rather, a very slight phenomenon in the PCL Sufyān material suggests that šaqī/saʿīd was added at some early point to the material: the alternative questions “wretched or blessed?” and “male or female?” are followed in the two earliest recordings by “and so the two are written”, i.e. a dual verb form. Of course, this can be interpreted to mean that each of the questions receives one (word) as an answer, which explains the dual. However, this is evidently not how the transmitters perceived this, as indicated by versions having the dual form after every single question of the two166 and others changing the verb to singular.167 This suggests a scenario that an earliest layer would have had one alternative question and the angel would have written down any of the two possible answers. Through adding a second question allowing two alternative answers, the verb in dual became confusing and the transmitters developed different redactional strategies to resolve this. In the light of all the previous analysis, I find it much more plausible that šaqī/saʿīd was added to an earlier layer having ǧakar/ʿunṯā rather than the other way around.

In summary, this section argues that the PCL Sufyān and the PCL Ibn Wahb are the two earliest layers in the material being studied here. Both show traces of redaction, which overall indicate that šaqī/saʿīd was added to an earlier version. From this, one could conclude that the PCL Ibn Wahb material represented the earlier version more closely than the version spread by PCL Sufyān. However, other elements (lack of traces of two lists; more developed theological formulation) put the PCL Ibn Wahb material later than PCL Sufyān. How can this apparently contradictory situation be solved? In my eyes, the most convincing explanation is that the two versions reflect a debate on whether šaqī/saʿīd should be added to the list or not. This leads us to the first half of the matn, element II.

166 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 991; Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 176; Ṭahāwī, Maškīl, VII, p. 92; Bayhaqī, Qadar, p. 150 and ʿIʿtiḍād, I, p. 172 (identical isnād).
Element II: The embryo

The version under PCL Sufyān always begins with:

“The angel enters upon the semen after it has solidified in the uterus in 40 or 45 nights. So he says: Oh Lord…”

The version under PCL Ibn Wahb is as follows:

“When 42 nights have passed over the semen God sends to it an angel. He then shapes it and creates his hearing, seeing, skin, flesh and bones. Then he says: Oh Lord…”

The passage about the shaping of the unborn in the PCL Ibn Wahb is a significant extension and, together with the arguments presented above, strongly suggests that it has to be situated chronologically after the version under the PCL Sufyān.

It is tempting to interpret the list of “hearing, seeing, skin, flesh and bones” as being first about capabilities – i.e. the capability to perceive the religious message – and thereafter about bodily creation, effectively from the outside in: skin, flesh, bones. Such a specific embryology is attested in Job 10:11. However, I find it much more convincing that the tradition makes a reference to Q 41:19–21 (Arberry translation):

“Upon the day when God’s enemies are mustered to the Fire, duly disposed, till when they are come to it, their hearing, their eyes and their skins (samʿuhum wa bāṣūruhum wa ḡulūduhum) bear witness against them concerning what they have been doing, and they will say to their skins, ‘Why bore you witness against us?’”

In its composite use of s-m-ʿ, b-ṣ-r and ǧ-ℓ-d, this passage is unique in the Qur’an. With this reference, the material from the PCL Ibn Wahb bolsters the position that

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168 For the sake of clarity, I will now mostly focus on the PCL Sufyān and the PCL Ibn Wahb.
169 Yadḥul al-malak ʿalā an-nuṭfa baʿdamā tastaqIRR fi ar-raḥim bi-arbaʾin aw ḥams wa arbaʾin layla fa-yāqīl yā rabb... (Version in Muslim, Ṣaḥīh, 991).
170 Iḏā marra bi-an-nuṭfa ḱuktān wa arbaʾin layla baʿaṭa ilayhā malakan fa-sāwvarahā wa ḥalaqa samʿahā wa bāṣrāhā wa ġildāhā wa laḥmahā wa ʿizāmahā ḥumma qāla yā rabb... (Version in Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 991).
171 I thank Reuven Kiperwasser for alerting me to this possible parallel.
172 The Qur’an has nominally used the root ǧ-ℓ-d in the following contexts: ġilha for counting lashes (24:2 and 4), the skins of those punished in the fire are boiled or melted (4:56, 22:20), animal skins used for housing (16:80), the skin of those fearing God reacts upon hearing the message (39:23). The nominal usage of the roots s-m-ʿ and b-ṣ-r, mostly occurring together and often extended with qalb or fuʿād (or their plurals, often meaning “intellect/apprehension”), is semantically more stable and usually refers to the capacity to be perceptive of the religious message in this world without specific reference to judgement day. See especially Tilman Seidensticker, Altarabisch ‘Herz’ und sein Wortfeld, Wiesbaden 1992, pp. 63–114.
šaqī/saʿīd are not on the list of the predestined things. It will be decided on behalf of the record of the deeds at the end of days. The continuation of “its flesh and bones” (lahmahā waʿizāmahā) in the material is then a generic reference to bodily existence without a specific intertext just like its equivalent in English or German.

I situate this discussion at a layer before the two PCLs Sufyān (d. 814/198) and Ibn Wahb (d. 813/197) for the following reasons. As shown above, the PCL Sufyān material has considerable traces of an earlier layer, whereas the PCL Ibn Wahb material reacts to this with a considerable addition of an entire segment, probably deliberately arguing against including the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy, which was recently added and was therefore still debatable. Such redactional work and the theological debates underlying them need time. In order to allow these debates to have taken place, one needs to move them some time away from the death dates of the two PCLs. Also, adding an entire segment to a ḥadīṯ through insertion, as was probably the case in the material under the PCL Ibn Wahb, is a phenomenon which I find more difficult to imagine the further one moves over time towards the end of the 2nd century hiǧra (8th century CE) and the demise of the two PCLs. In light of my above finding that the link ‘Amrū Ibn al-Ḥārith (d. 765/148) → Ibn Wahb is reliable and that ‘Amrū probably was a historically attested person who relocated from Mecca to Egypt, I find it plausible that he would have brought this tradition with him. This makes his year of death a terminus ante quem for the time when the addition of the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy was still a recent phenomenon and was thus possible to contest. Given the ultimately wide spread of the dichotomy within all ḥadīṯ material about the angel, the unborn and predestination topos,173 I find it reasonable to assume that the further one moves over time, it become more difficult, and ultimately impossible, to question the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy on the list of things to be predestined. This also suggests the earlier dating, and I thus find it plausible to position the contestation of šaqī/saʿīd in the material in the first half of the 2nd century hiǧra (8th century CE).

This early dating of the debate in the first half of the 2nd century hiǧra (8th century CE) is further substantiated through the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr. The analysis of the second half of the matn has shown that this material likely contains early redaction layers. Another example is found in the first half:

“the drop falls into the uterus 40 nights, then the angel yataṣawwawar ʿalayhā, Zuhayr said: I think he [his informant] said: [the angel] which creates it (ḥ-l-q), so he says: Oh Lord …”174

174 Version in Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992 (inna an-nuṭfa taqāʿ fi ar-raḥim arbaʿīn layla ṭumma yataṣawwawar ʿalayhā al-malak qāla zuhayr ḥasabtuhu qāla alladīḏ yakhlughah ḥa-yaqūl ya rabb…), see also Bayhaqī, Qadar, I, p. 149. Ṭabarānī, Ḵabīr, III, p. 194 drops the reference to Zuhayr.
Here, the CL Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr recorded an instance where his teacher Zuhayr Ibn Muʿāwiya (d. 789/173 or 790/174) was uncertain about a part of the matn.\textsuperscript{175} I see no reason why this should have been invented\textsuperscript{176} and therefore take the reference to Zuhayr in the matn as reflecting a historical transmission process which allows the dating to be pushed to before 173/4 hiǧra (789/90 CE) for those elements in the matn representing earlier redaction layers according to form critical considerations. This is particularly the case for the passage rendered above, in which I deliberately left a section untranslated. The expression yataṣawwar ʿalayhā does not make sense: the combination of stem V of ｓ-ｗ-r with ʿalā is not lexicalised\textsuperscript{177} and the possible meanings of “it was formed” or its derivative “he imagined” would demand a different construction.\textsuperscript{178} Later commentaries struggled considerably to make sense of this expression, for example suggesting a writing yatasawwar ʿalayhā, i.e. a writing with sīn, which would then mean that the angel descends upon the drop.\textsuperscript{179} While this ṣād ↔ sīn exchange is attested in Arabic papyri until the 10th century CE,\textsuperscript{180} I consider a mistake in the transmission process much more likely. The only thing which can be safely gleaned from this material is that somehow the verbal root ｓ-ｗ-r and ḥ-ł-q was understood by Zuhayr to have been part of the matn. The transmission under the PCL Ibn Wahb is the only place in the corpus being studied here where this is the case. This strongly suggests that in Zuhayr’s transmission (i.e. before 789/90/173/4) we can already see an echo of the šaqī/saʿīd debate discussed above. This is in accordance with a dating of the respective material in the first half of the 2nd century hiǧra (8th century CE).

The PCL Ibn Ğurayğ material later glossed over this debate, not only by adding šaqī/saʿīd, but also through a careful rearrangement of the matn’s first half: while the PCL Ibn Wahb has “hearing, seeing, skin, flesh and bones”, the PCL Ibn Ğurayğ has “flesh, bones, hearing, seeing”, i.e. the skin is not mentioned and the unborn’s bodily existence precedes the creation of the capability to see and hear. In the first place, this a redactional process that rearranges the material in a more intuitive order: the bodily existence intuitively precedes the hearing and seeing facilities. The reference to the skin then possibly did not make sense anymore, since it is not mentioned in Qur’anic embryology, or it was deliberately deleted in order to erase the link to Q 41:19–21. Eventually, a later redaction

\textsuperscript{175} Zuhayr was Kufan and lived in the Ǧazīra, where he possibly died a violent death. Among other things, he was later remembered to have transmitted clearly 12er shīʿi material (Buḫārī, Ṭārīḥ kabīr, III, p. 427; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭiqāǧ, VI, p. 337; Dahabī, Siyar, VIII, pp. 182–187).

\textsuperscript{176} As pointed out above, the isnād analysis questioned Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bukayr as the CL, while the matn analysis showed traces of early redaction layers.

\textsuperscript{177} Lane, Lexicon, IV, p. 1744.

\textsuperscript{178} Either yataṣawwar (“[the drop] is formed”) without ʿalayhā and a connecting particle introducing the angel would then be necessary, or yatasawwaruhā (no ʿalayhā) al-malak (“the angel imagined it”, but what does this mean?).

\textsuperscript{179} Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, Ikmāl, VIII, p. 128.

changed “flesh and bones” to “bones and flesh”.\(^{181}\) The order in which the terms appear in Q 23:12–14, the only place in the Qur’an where the word pair is mentioned in the context of speaking about the unborn.\(^{182}\)

### The different numbers in the transmissions

A final major difference between the material groups lies in the numbers indicating when the angel comes to the unborn. These differences are not related to the Qadar debate or the šaqī/șaˈīd dichotomy. The PCL Sufyān has “40 or 45 nights” and the PCL Ibn Wahb has 42 nights.

In the PCL Sufyān material, one variant uses only 40, while the wording of others is “40 or he said 45”.\(^{183}\) Ibn Ḥanbal disambiguates this as “40 and once Sufyān said (qāla Sufyān marra): or 45 nights”.\(^{184}\) The PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim at-Ţāʾiṭī material (earliest reliable layer with Isḥāq Ibn Maṣūr (d. 820/205, Kufa)) uniformly mentions 45 nights only.\(^{185}\) This overall picture suggests that the two numbers, 40 and 45, had independent origins and were collated in the PCL Sufyān cluster, maybe during one specific teaching session, as the variant of Ibn Ḥanbal seems to suggest.

This scenario is strongly supported – maybe surprisingly – by the 7th century writings of the so-called school of Canterbury. The influential teacher in that school was Theodorus of Tarsus (d. 690). Probably born in 602, he had been raised and educated in Syria (Antiochia and Edessa). By the 630s at the latest, he relocated to Byzantium and then

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\(^{181}\) Firyābī, Qadar, I, pp. 119f and Aǧurrī, Šarīʿa, II, p. 780 compared to ibidem, II, p. 781 and Lālakāʿī, Šarḥ, IV, p. 593.

\(^{182}\) The material under the CL ’Azra broadens the description of the unborn’s features to “so [the angel] shapes his bones, flesh, blood, hair, skin, hearing and seeing and says …” (fa-ṣawwara ʾazmahu wa laḥmahu wa damahu wa šaʾrahu wa ṣawwara huwa samahu wa ṣawwara huwa). The gender of the pronoun –hu referring back to nuṭfa does not fit nuṭfa. Again, this expansion, particularly by adding hair and skin, is a feature of a later redaction layer and possibly reflects descriptions of embryonic development in variants of ḥadīth material ascribed to Ibn Maṣʿūd, which were spread by Abū Ḥudayfa Mūsā Ibn Maṣʿūd (d. 825/210), a Basran transmitter (see Eich, “Patterns”, pp. 144f). This ties in with the dating before 248 hiǧra (862 CE). Note that the CL ’Azra material with extensive mats is entirely Basran, and the earliest datable material under the PCL Ibn Ğurayyū goes back to Abū al-Asʿāt (d. 867/253), a Basran transmission line. I consider the reduction processes interlinked, and this is strengthened by the fact that only these two clusters of the Ḥudayfa ḥadīth identify the angel as malak al-arḥām (the PCL Ibn Ğurayyū) or malak ar-raḥim (the CL ’Azra), respectively. This term might be a contamination of similar ḥadīth material first ascribed to ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿUmar (see Eich, “nasama”, 31–37).

\(^{183}\) Ṭaḥāwī, Muṣkil, VII, p. 92 (only 40). Examples of the ambiguous formulation include Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, Sunna, I, p. 80 and especially Humaydī, Musnad, II, p. 75, the earliest DCR.

\(^{184}\) Ibn Hanbal, Masnad, XXVI, pp. 64f.

\(^{185}\) Also, while PCL Sufyān uses the verb istaqarrat [an-nuṭfa] (“has established itself”), PCL Muḥammad Ibn Muslim always uses different verbs, variants possibly owing to ambiguities of script: idā maḍat ʾalā an-nuṭfa (Ṭabarānī, Kabīr, III, p. 175) or Inna an-nuṭfa idā makanat (Ibn Abī ʾĀṣim, Aḥād, II, p. 257)/makaṣat (the rest). In unpunctuated script, the latter two cannot be discerned. A confusion between maḍat and makanat/makaṣat is also perceivable for scripts not using an additional diagonal stroke to disambiguate the kāf. In this setting, a collapsing of the two letters kāf – nūn/ṇa into one undotted letter dād (or the reverse) might occur.
moved to Rome, probably by the late 640s. In 668 he was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury where he finally arrived in 669. The research on Theodorus generally agrees that his writings testify to his academic training in the Eastern Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{186} Two writings attributed to Theodorus are of interest here: his penitentials, a genre of collecting statements on how certain misdeeds should be sanctioned, and his \textit{Laterculus Malalianus}, an exegetical treatise consisting of a world history and an exegetical account of the life of Jesus. In his penitentials, when dealing with abortion Theodorus made the 40\textsuperscript{th} day of pregnancy the central criterion for deciding whether the act should be considered murder or not, equating the 40\textsuperscript{th} day with ensoulment. This view stands out in writings on abortion in late Antique/early Medieval Western Europe and is an example of the Eastern Mediterranean training background of Theodorus.\textsuperscript{187}

In his \textit{Laterculus}, Theodorus has a passage on Mary’s pregnancy which depends heavily on a section in a tractate of Augustine of Hippo (d. 430). Late Antique Galenic medicine had developed a concept in which pregnancy duration was calculated in a specific ratio of three distinct phases, the overall duration depending on the length of the first phase.\textsuperscript{188} In order to establish the extraordinary position of Jesus, Augustine posited that in the case of Mary’s pregnancy with Jesus, the first phase had been one day longer than in usual pregnancies, where it would last 45 days.\textsuperscript{189}

The writings of Theodorus of Taurus thus prove that in learned circles of Syria and Iraq in the first half of the 7\textsuperscript{th} century, the numbers 40 and 45 circulated as an intrinsic element of the way prenatal life was imagined. The material also shows that the two numbers ranged in different sets of material, i.e. independently of each other. This structural description exactly fits the record of the \textit{ḥadiṯ} material: the two pivotal transmitters Sufyān Ibn ʿUyayina and Isḥāq Ibn Manṣūr were both from Kufa, and the two numbers very likely entered the \textit{ḥadiṯ} material independently of each other and were only later collated into one tradition. Therefore, I consider the explanation of the two different numbers in the \textit{ḥadiṯ} material from the writings of Thedorus

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{187} Mistry, \textit{Abortion}, 145–148. It is likely that the underlying ensoulment concept was influenced by the Greek idea of three consecutive manifestations of the soul (vegetative, animal, rational soul). The 40\textsuperscript{th} day could refer to the animal soul through which the embryo acquired the faculty to feel, react and move (Henri Hugonnard-Roche, ‘La question de l’âme dans la tradition philosophique syriaque (VI\textsuperscript{e}–IX\textsuperscript{e} siècle)’, \textit{Studia Graeco-Arabica} 4 (2014), p. 48 for Jacob of Edessa (d. 708); see also Marie-Hélène Concourdeau, ‘Debating the Soul in Late Antiquity’, in: \textit{Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day}, eds. N. Hopwood et al., Cambridge 2018, pp. 113f; Eich, Thomas, ‘Zur Abtreibung in frühen islamischen Texten’, \textit{Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft} 170.2 (2020), pp. 351–354).
\item \textsuperscript{189} Mistry, \textit{Abortion}, 148–150; Jane Stevenson, \textit{The ‘Laterculus Malalianus’ and the school of Archbishop Theodore}, Cambridge 1995, pp. 138f (text with translation), pp. 196f (commentary with quote from Augustine). The exegetical aim of Augustine was to establish a numeric parallel between Mary’s pregnancy and the building of the temple of Solomon which would have taken 46 years.
\end{itemize}
justified. The 40 relates to the idea of a major shift in status for the unborn, which was mostly familiar from deliberations about the ethico-legal assessment of abortion, and that shift was related to ensoulment in at least some writings. The 45 came from medical writings and had been popularised in circles of religious learning since the early 5th century.

The number 42 is specific to the Ibn Wahb material, i.e. the Egyptian transmission. In late Antique medical writings about the unborn, 42 is a specific number in the Hippocratic corpus, which posited gender-specific durations before the unborn acquired human shape, 30 days for male and 42 days for female embryos. In the context of the Ḥuḍayfa hadīt, I read the 42 as a redactional process to create inner coherence: if the first and most prominent question of the angel is about sex (“is it male or female?”), the question makes most sense only on the 42nd day, according to the Hippocratic model. Given the importance of Alexandria in late antiquity as a major intellectual center where, among other things, medical knowledge was promoted and developed, I find it unsurprising that the number 42 appears in the Ḥuḍayfa material first spread in Egypt.

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190 In Jewish material in late Antiquity, the 40th day and the motive of the soul-infusing angel were also prominent. However, it is not so clear whether ensoulment was imagined on this very day of pregnancy (Doru Doroftei, ‘When the Angel infuses the Soul… Some aspects of Jewish and Christian embryology in the cultural context of Late Antiquity’, Judaica. Beiträge zum Verstehen des Judentums 74.1–2 (2018); Daniel Schiff, Abortion in Judaism, Cambridge 2002, pp. 36f, 56). The version of the CL ‘Azra material preserved by Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, Sunna, I, p. 79 has “when the semen has fallen into the uterus for 40 nights – and my companions said 45 nights – the soul is blown into him” (inna an-nuṭfa idā waqa‘at fī ar-raḥim arba‘īn Layla wa qāla aṣḥābī ħamsa wa arba‘īn layla nufsha fīhi ar-rīḥ). Clearly, the 45 is a later insertion and the ensoulment was originally perceived to happen on the 40th day. This is the only instance in the Ḥuḍayfa material where the soul is explicitly mentioned. The version in Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 114 depending on the same informant Masʿūd al-Ǧaḥdarī (d. 862/248) does not have the ensoulment passage. Therefore, I consider it an explication added by Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim (d. 900/287) in the early half of the 3rd century hiǧra (9th century CE).


192 Two out of three versions in the CL Rubai‘iya have the expression “40 and some nights”, which I interpret as an awareness of the different numbers in the various transmissions. Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992; Ṭabarānī, Kābīr, III, p. 196; Bazzār, Bahār, IV, p. 280 (no number). The other isnād clusters mostly have the number 40, while the single strand via Lahī‘a (Ṭabarānī, Kābīr, III, pp. 197f) has no number at all. The CL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr (Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 992; Bayhaqī, Qadar, I, p. 149; Ṭabarānī, Kābīr, III, p. 194); the CL ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ḥuṭaym (Rāzī, Fawā’id, II, pp. 16f (40 days); Ṭabarānī, Awsat, II, pp. 148f (40 nights); the other material in this cluster consists only of the frame); the CL ‘Azra (Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, Sunna, I, pp. 79 (40 or 45 nights); Firyābī, Qadar, I, p. 114 (40 nights); Ṭabarānī, Kābīr, III, p. 196 (40 or 48 nights). The version in ibidem, III, p. 177 gives only the start of the matn and stops before giving numbers. The two versions with 45 or 48 nights, respectively, add these numbers clearly as a later insertion. The number 48 is only mentioned here and I have no explanation for it.
The opening of Muslim’s Qadar chapter

Finally, we are in a position to better analyse the opening Muslim chose for his chapter on Qadar:

(Ibn Masʿūd) “One of you, his creation is collected in the womb of his mother for 40 days, then it is in this a blood-clot (ʿalaqa) likewise, then it is in this a lump of flesh (muḍġa) likewise, then the angel is sent to him and he breathes into him the soul, and he is ordered to write down four words: his sustenance, his time of death, his deeds and whether he will be wretched or blessed. And by the one, for who [this is true:] there is no God apart from him. One of you does what the people of paradise do until there is nothing left between him and paradise but a cubit, then the book precedes him and he does what the people of the fire do and he enters it. One of you does what the people of fire do until there is nothing left between him and fire but a cubit, then the book precedes him and he does what the people of the paradise do and he enters it.”

(Ḥuḍayfa PCL Sufyān) “The angel enters upon the semen (nutfa) after it has established itself in the uterus within 40 or 45 nights. Then he says: Oh Lord! Wretched or blessed? And the two are written down. Then he says: Oh Lord! Male or female? And the two are written down. And his deeds, his work, time of death and his sustenance are written, then the pages are folded and nothing is added and nothing is taken away.”

(Ḥuḍayfa PCL Ibn Wahb) (ʿĀmir Ibn Wāthila heard) Ibn Masʿūd say: “The wretched is the one who is wretched in the womb of his mother and the blessed is the one who has been promised otherwise”. He [ʿĀmir] then met a man from the companions of the messenger of God, called Ḥuḍayfa Ibn Asīd al-Ǧifārī, and told him this from what Ibn Masʿūd had said adding: How is a man wretched without having acted. So the man [Ḥuḍayfa] said: Are you surprised by this? I heard the messenger of God say: “When the semen (nutfa) has passed 42 nights God sends an angel to it and he forms it and creates his ability to hear and see and his skin, flesh and bones. Then he says: Oh Lord! Male or female? And your Lord ordains as he likes and the angel writes. Then he says: Oh Lord! His time of death?, so your Lord says as he likes and the angel writes. Then he says: Oh Lord! His sustenance? And your Lord ordains

193 A passage on minor variants of the Ibn Masʿūd ḥadīṯ follows. The main version has *inna aḥadakum yuğmaʾ ḥalqahu fi baṭn ummihi arbaʾin yawman* (lafẓ li-Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Numayr al-Hamadānī), the variant (with four isnāds) has *inna ḥalq aḥadikum yuğmaʾ fi baṭn ummihi arbaʾin Layla*, followed by two variants regarding the counting word of the 40 (nights, days, or nights and days).
as he likes and the angel writes. Then the angel exits with the page in his hand and he does not add anything to what he has been ordered and he does not take anything away.”

(Ḥuḍayfā PCL Yahyā Ibn Abī Bukayr) Abū ʿal-Ṭufayl said: I entered at Abū Sarīḥa Ḥuḍayfā Ibn ʿAsīd al-Ǧīfārī and he said: I heard the messenger of God with these my two ears say: “The semen (nuṭfa) falls in the uterus 40 nights, then the angel yataṣawwaru ʿalay-hā and says: Oh Lord! Male or female? So God makes it male or female. Then he says: Oh Lord! Even or uneven? So God makes it even or uneven. Then he says: Oh Lord! What is his sustenance? What is his time of death? What are his personal characteristics? Then God makes him wretched or blessed.”

(Ḥuḍayfā CL Rubaiʿiya) “An angel assigned for the uterus. If God wants to create something (iḏā arāda Allāh an yahluqa šayʿan) with the permission of God, on 40 plus some nights. After this, he mentioned a hadīṯ similar to the others.”

(Anas Ibn Mālik) “God has assigned an angel for the uterus. And he says: Oh Lord! Semen (nuṭfa), oh Lord, blood-clot (ʿalaqa), oh Lord, lump of flesh (muḍġa). And if God wants to ordain a creation says the angel: Oh Lord! Male or female? Wretched or blessed? And what is his sustenance? And what is his time of death? So he writes likewise in the womb of his mother.”

The Ibn Masʿūd material first gives the hadīṯ in extenso, followed by minor variants without quoting the entire matn again. The Ḥuḍayfā material follows, with three extensive versions, and a fourth variant quoting only the opening passage. The hadīṯ via Anas Ibn Mālik is given in only one version. After this, the chapter moves away from the angel and unborn topos. This arrangement has several effects:

1. The three groups of hadīṯ material use (slightly) different expressions for the unborn: The opening Ibn Masʿūd material uses a tripartite structure, ġamʿ-ʿalaqa-mudīṯa. The Ḥuḍayfā material mostly uses only the term nuṭfa (only the final Ḥuḍayfā PCL Rubaiʿiya does not use any specific term). The Anas Ibn Mālik material speaks about nuṭfa-ʿalaqa-mudīṯa. Taken by themelf, without any reference to other texts, the three groups of material build a seamless picture: the Ibn Masʿūd material more or less leaves a blank space in the first position of the tripartite structure (ḡamʿ, but what could this mean?) and the Ḥuḍayfā material introduces the term nuṭfa consistently. In its version of the Ḥuḍayfā hadīṯ, the PCL Rubaiʿiya, of which Muslim only quotes the first words, the material speaks about an angel assigned to the uterus, which provides a seamless

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194 I skip the following reference to the PCL Ibn Ǧurayǧ, of which Muslim only gives the isnād.
195 The Arabic is here clearly elliptic: anna malakum muwakkaṯan bi-ar-rahim.
topical bridge to the final hadīt transmitted by Anas Ibn Mālik about this very angel. This material uses the tripartite nutfa-ʿalaqa-mudga term — something perceived by the reader/listener as a natural, self-evident conclusion due to the specific arrangement of the material chosen by Muslim. What a reader or listener will take away from this passage in its entirety is that it constantly refers to the tripartite nutfa-ʿalaqa-mudga, which is also in Q 22:5 and 23:12–14, while in fact only the Anas Ibn Mālik hadīt matches this terminology exactly.

2. All the material, except the matn of the Ibn Wahb variant of Ḥuḍayfa, has the šaqī/saʿīd dichotomy. At the end of the passage, the reader/listener has read or heard it in four of five extensive matns. Additionally, the framing story speaking about the dichotomy has been moved to the PCL Ibn Wahb material, probably by Muslim himself. As a result, the fact that the matn in this variant does not mention šaqī/saʿīd will usually go unnoticed.

3. The passage probably expresses a specific position about the development of the unborn. In a landmark article on the Ibn Masʿūd hadīt, Sulaymān al-Ašqar pointed out that among the canonical sunnī hadīt collections, Muslim is unique in including the Ḥuḍayfa hadīt. Furthermore, Al-Ašqar paid attention to a very slight detail in Muslim’s version of the Ibn Masʿūd hadīt, which is usually understood to speak about three consecutive phases (nutfa-ʿalaqa-mudga) each lasting 40 days, and adding up to 120 in total. After this, the soul would be blown into the unborn. However, the version in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim states that “One of you, his creation is collected in the womb of his mother for 40 days, then it is in this ʿalaqa likewise, then it is in this mudga likewise, …” Ašqar argues that “in this” (fa ḍālika) would refer back to the 40 days, so the three phases taken together would last 40 days. This is also suggested by the fact that Muslim placed the Ḥuḍayfa hadīt in this section. The findings of this article strongly support Ašqar’s interpretation. This suggests that in the first centuries of Islamic history, the concept of ensoulment on the 40th day was cherished by such a prominent scholar as Muslim Ibn al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ (d. 875/261). In this period, the ideas about ensoulment were thus flexible and diverse, and only in processes after Muslim’s lifetime did the idea that the soul is blown into the unborn on the 120th day become almost universally widespread among Muslim religious scholars.

196 In later transmissions of the Ibn Masʿūd-hadīt, the term nutfa was often added to the structure (see Eich, ‘Patterns’, pp. 141f).
197 I would also speculate that this is the reason why Muslim gathers so many different extensive variants of Ḥuḍayfa material. However, testing this scenario of a textual strategy in the Sahīḥ would require a study of comparative instances of the accumulation of extensive variants in other places, which is surely beyond the scope of this paper.
199 On this, see van Ess, Zwischen Hadīt und Theologie, pp. 3f and 12.
Table 1. Single strand via Ibn Lahī’a, CL ‘Azra b. Thābit, CL Rubai‘iya b. Kulthūm

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<th>Author</th>
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Dotted line: only isnad or only partial matn.
Table 2. CL ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUṭmān b. Ḥuṭaym
Table 3. CL ʿAmrū b. Dīnār

Dotted line: only isnad or only partial matn.
Table 4. CL Yaḥyā b. Abī Bukayr, CL Abū l-Zubayr

Dotted line: only isnad or only partial matn.
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