

3.3• Divine Grace and Predestination

Of course, criticism also made an impression because government authority advocated a different ideology. It made the claim for itself that God was on its side; the caliph was also in the literal sense “God’s deputy”.¹ He was regarded as *mahdī* “rightly guided” and probably had himself addressed as such before this word came to be used by the Umayyads’ opponents in the context of a historical Utopia.² Indeed, when shortly before his death in Ṭāʾif, Muʿāwiyā had a dam built, he had himself modestly described in the foundation inscription as “God’s servant”;³ but the rulers’ consciousness of having a mission was indeed great.⁴ One could easily present and understand this as if divine predetermination guided everything they did; Jubbāʾī maintained that Muʿāwiyā was the first adherent of predestination.⁵ But one should not too readily agree with this; in the statement Jubbāʾī’s Muʿtazilite-Qadarite image of history simply reveals itself. Muʿāwiyā’s successor, Yazīd I, even stated in his accession speech that if God punished his father, He would do so because of the latter’s own guilt;⁶ divine grace and religious determinism do not necessarily have anything⁷ to do with one another. But from the second half of ʿAbd al-Malik’s rule both ideas continue to draw ever closer together. Under Walīd I a *ḥadīth* is supposed to have been in circulation according to which God only records the good and not the bad deeds of the ruler.⁸ Yazīd II, on his accession to government, allegedly had forty (!) *shuyūkh* confirm that a caliph does not have to give account of his behaviour before God.⁹ Walīd II, as pretender to the throne, excused his vices and frivolities, for which he was famous at the time, as being willed by God.¹⁰

- 1 The book of P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God’s Caliph*, passim, provides materials about this.
- 2 Ibid. 36 f.; on the conceptual environment also 34, fn. 57.
- 3 Published by G. C. Miles in: *JNES* 7/1948/236 ff.
- 4 Cf. Crone/Hinds 27 f. on the relationship between the caliph and the prophets or angels; also Donner in: *JAOS* 106/1948/236 ff., about “the royal imagery” on buildings and the idea of law and authority.
- 5 *Afānge* 241; on this the evidence in HT 181 f.
- 6 Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn* 11, 239, l. 1; on this Rotter, *Zweiter Bürgerkrieg* 249.
- 7 Strongly emphasized in Crone/Hinds 117 f.
- 8 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd* 1, 60, ll. 11 ff.; cf. with this the tradition according to which Walīd wanted to know from a court theologian whether at all the caliphs would be held to account by God (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* VI, 55, ll. 16 ff.; Suyūfī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ* 223, ll. 5 ff. from bot.).
- 9 Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 1X, 232, ll. 7 f.
- 10 In a letter to Hishām (Ṭabarī 11, 1746, ll. 11 ff.; on this also below pp. 96 f.). But in his case one must always reckon with the fact that his image has been demonized (see below p. 95 f.).

posse nemo obligatur, or the dictum by Celsus the younger (ca. 100 CE): 'Impossibilium nulla obligatio est' (Dig. 50, 17, 185). A detailed discussion of the subject may be found in Brunschvig, *Devoir et pouvoir. Histoire d'un problème de la théologie musulmane*, in: SI 20/1964/5ff.; more briefly Daiber, *Mu'ammār* 102ff.

2.1.1.1 The Predestination of the Date of Death

The idea that death was inevitable was expressed insistently in the Quran as well as in pre-Islamic poetry, but while the poets of the Jāhiliyya spoke of the lot of death (*maniyya*),¹ the Quran used the term (*ajal*) allocated by God;² this word was adopted in hadith, too.³ The Qadarites, at least those in Basra, were at first not against it; both Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and 'Amr b. Fā'id al-Uswārī believed the date of death to be predestined.⁴ The Qadarite *Risāla* transmitted under Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's name does not touch upon the subject, although the author was presumably familiar with the prophetic dictum cited above that postulates predestination from the womb onwards.⁵ Christian theology, on the other hand, discussed the question. Jacob of Edessa (d. 89/708) felt compelled to write about it after an inquiry;⁶ at the same time Germanus, who became ecumenical patriarch in Byzantium in 715 at an advanced age, expressed his opinion on it.⁷ Earlier, maybe even during Muḥammad's lifetime, Theophylact Simocatta, the secretary and prefect under Heraclius, had already done so.⁸ The *locus classicus* on the subject was found in the Church Father Basil's (ca. 330–379) works;⁹ later it was treated stereotypically in the Ἑρωταποκρίσεις literature.¹⁰ What exercised the Christians was that death, which is predestined by God, may be harmful; they probably meant that it arrived too early for many people. The rekindling of interest during the seventh century may be linked to the deterioration of the quality of life in the wake of the Persian wars and the expansion of Islam; at a later stage the Quranic view may have become better known,

1 Caskel, *Das Schicksal in der altarabischen Poesie* 22ff.; Ringgren, *Arabian Fatalism* 16ff.

2 Sura 63:11, with the parallels listed in Paret, *Kommentar* 479.

3 Cf. *Conc.* I 22f.; also HT 85.

4 See vol. II 54 and 95 above.

5 *Risāla* 74, 17ff.; also HT 31.

6 See vol. II 499 above; in more detail Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* 145ff.

7 *Germanos on Predestined Terms of Life*. Greek Text and English Translation by Charles Garton and Leendert G. Westerink (Arethusa Monographs VII. Buffalo 1979).

8 His text was edited and translated by the same authors as Arethusa Monograph VI (Buffalo 1978): *Theophilactus Simocates on Predestined Terms of Life*. The treatise is structured as a dialogue (*in utramque partem disserere*).

9 *Homilia quod Deus non est auctor malorum*; PG XXXI 333 B.

10 *Germanos*, intro. xxiv f.