

intention to commit a mortal sin as a misdeed deserving of the eternal fires of hell; again, quite a severe and pietistic view. However, it is linked not only with him but also with Abū l-Hudhayl and Jubbā'ī – and sometimes only with them – which once again leads us to suspect projection.⁵ Furthermore, Ibn al-Rēwandī claims the opposite, and we are not able to determine any more whether Khayyāṭ was correct to protest against it.⁶

Wāṣil only considered those responsible whose actions were carried out during adulthood; God does not hold children accountable, and they go to paradise. This sounds reliable; he agreed in this with Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and the pietistic circles of the time. In addition the doctrine was phrased in the way in which it had been seen as a problem at first, with respect to the children of those unbelievers fought in wars and often killed together with their offspring.⁷ – With reference to sura 2:174 Wāṣil, like Ḥasan before him, emphasised that on the Day of Judgment God does not speak to the damned but only addresses good people.⁸

2.2.6.1.7.2 Wāṣil's Relationship with Khārijites and Murji'ites

These fragmentary accounts do not allow conclusions regarding Wāṣil's doctrine of the intermediate status. Results are similarly scant when we examine what the sources have to say regarding his relationship with Khārijites and Murji'ites. He already distinguished several varieties (*aṣnāf*) of Murji'ites;¹ even so we do not even know whether he considered Faḍl al-Raḡāshī, who may have been with him when he spoke before 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, to be one of them. We do, however, have the text of a guideline for debating he was believed to have given to his pupil Ḥafṣ b. Sālim when he challenged Jahm b. Ṣafwān in Tirmidh.² We might wonder whether it was from a textbook used by the pupils, possibly the *K. al-sabīl ilā ma'rifat al-ḥaqq* or the *K. fī l-da'wa*.³ The exemplary style, on the other hand, makes us doubt the genuineness of the text; it recalls the discussion said to have taken place between 'Umar al-Shimmaẓī, a pupil of 'Amr b. 'Ubayd's, and Abū Ḥanīfa.⁴ The Murji'a's minimalist concept

5 Text 9, also Text XXI 156.

6 Text 8.

7 Text 10, presumably after Ka'bī; regarding the question see vol. I 24 above.

8 Tūsī, *Tibyān* II 89, 13ff.; differently Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* 3:111 330, 1ff., who assumes a *ḥadhf* in this case: God does not address the evil persons with friendly words.

1 Cf. the title at Catalogue of Works no. 4.

2 Text 11.

3 Catalogue of works no. 10 and 11.

4 Text 11, b–e and 7; cf. vol. I 232, and p. 366f. below.

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denomination got its name;³ recollection of the past had been lost. Modern scholarship has not been able to provide clarity in this matter, either. We must not avoid the problem, but it would seem advisable, as we have done so far, to consider the biographies of the most important protagonists first.

2.2.6.1 Wāṣil b. 'Atā'

The image of history mentioned above usually assigns two founders to the Mu'tazila: Wāṣil b. 'Atā' and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd. This, however, is only true to a degree, as it is a secondary combination like "Marx and Engels" or "Goethe and Schiller". The two were contemporaries, but 'Amr b. 'Ubayd had heard the call to the cause later, "converted" by Wāṣil. Thus according to later Mu'tazilite narrative; but in reality, matters were probably rather more complicated.¹ Not only the name of the organisation, but its entire early period is shrouded in mystery. This did not prevent biographers writing about Wāṣil, and sometimes about 'Amr as well, again and again; after all, they were both famous men. But the information available was sparse, and the material was usually simply re-arranged. Above all, tradition started far too late. The doxographers, on the other hand, were noticeably reticent; Ash'arī mentioned Wāṣil only once in his *Maqālāt*, and in the context of a problem that was hardly characteristic of the Mu'tazila.² Shahrastānī built him up as a "church father", but his work is most scholarly and exceedingly problematic.³ Bibliographical tradition relies entirely on Ibn al-Nadīm; it, too, presents cause for concern.⁴ Anything else *Fihrist* contains in the way of biographical material is also known to us from other sources.

The earliest information we have about Wāṣil is at the beginning of Jāḥiẓ' *K. al-bayān wal-tabẓīn*, but he is described as a *khaṭīb* rather than a *mutakallim*. It is difficult to determine whether he merely adhered to the intention of his book, or whether he really did not see Wāṣil as a Mu'tazilite in the later sense. The material he collected under this aspect was barely expanded later; Mubarrad, our next witness, did not provide anything new in this respect, but included some additional anecdotes (*Kāmil* 921, pu. ff.; also 891, apu. ff.). Ka'bī's *K. al-Maqālāt* was the first instance of

³ See p. 382 below.

¹ See p. 292ff. below.

² As Strothmann observed already (*Der Islam* 19/1931/231).

³ See p. 311f. below.

⁴ Cf. Catalogue of Works IX.